

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF BASIC EDUCATION**

**333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126**

March 8, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Ms. Karen Farmer White.

Attending:

James Agras <i>(via phone)</i>	Sandra Dungee Glenn	Jonathan Peri <i>(via phone)</i>
Andrew Ahr	James Grandon	Colleen Sheehan
Carol Aichele	Pamela Gunter-Smith	Craig Snider <i>(via phone)</i>
Jay Badams	Kirk Hallett	Lavinia Soliman
James Barker <i>(via phone)</i>	Shirlann Harmon	Joshita Varshney
Nathan Barrett	Maureen Lally-Green	Karen Farmer White
Nicole Carnicella	<i>(via phone)</i>	Larry Wittig

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 11, 2017, meeting of the Council of Basic Education were approved on a **Williams/Aichele** motion.

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem made a presentation on the indicators that would be included in the administration's proposed Future Ready PA Index. The Deputy Secretary reviewed in detail the indicators related to the three components of the Index – state assessment measures, on-track measures, and college and career readiness measures.

Mr. Stem described the purpose of the Future Ready PA Index as establishing a system of school performance measures that moves beyond point-in-time achievement and values schools' efforts to help all students learn, grow and succeed in the classroom and beyond. The Deputy Secretary also discussed the process used to engage stakeholders in identifying the proposed indicators and how they would be applied in the Index.

The Council engaged in discussion on the proposed benchmarks related to career standards that focus on career preparation, readiness and planning. Mr. Stem explained that the intention is to make students aware of opportunities that are available to them so that they are better-informed in their future decision-making.

Colleen Sheehan expressed caution about identifying the aptitudes of children at an early age in a manner that may confine their future opportunities. She stressed that liberal education is not just about careers and said other enriching components of liberal education should not be diminished in pursuit of sheer practicality.

Mr. Stem replied that the indicators proposed by the Department are about career exploration and not tracking students. He noted that Career Education and Work Standards (CEWS) already are in place, and that those standards are not just about career exploration but also speak to soft skills related to collaboration and communication.

Sandra Dungee-Glenn said the focus on career readiness seems to cover both exposure for students, which she noted as important for students who have a limited view, and intentionality, which she noted as important for helping students to make connections on next steps in their education.

James Grandon stated that students need to be taught everyday skills in addition to academics. Mr. Stem replied that the CEWS also address practical skills. Mr. Wittig commented that much of this seems to focus on soft skills that should be taught at home and now fall to schools.

Lee Williams commented that career exposure is important because, at times, parents aren't always aware of what career paths are available to their child. However, she noted that the devil is in the details in how such exposure is provided.

Mr. Stem replied that the Department also is scaling up its educator in the workplace program so that teachers also have a better awareness of careers available through local industries. Pamela Gunter-Smith echoed concerns about proceeding carefully with how students are exposed to potential career pathways.

Wil Del Pilar, Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education, noted that the Department is working with school counselors to stress that exposure must be culturally relevant and appropriate.

Joshita Varshney shared that a requirement to design a career portfolio in 8th grade following exposure to people working in different professional was an exciting opportunity for her as a student.

Nicole Carnicella spoke in support of career planning and exposure at younger grade levels and commented that such efforts could help to stem a waste of time and money when students either change college majors or change course with postsecondary plans.

Mr. Stem replied that he has worked with students who didn't know what was available to them because they could not see beyond their neighborhood. Thus, some students did not see an incentive to make good choices because they did not understand what was possible.

Lavinia Soliman shared her experience as a student that was told she likely would not attend college and that was not aware of AP classes and other programs that placed her peers at

an advantage. She stated that she would have benefitted from earlier exposure to different career options, and noted that students like her very much were thinking to the future already in 8th grade while some were balancing mature circumstances in their home lives without the necessary parental support to inform career planning.

After closing discussion on the Future Ready PA Index, Deputy Secretary Stem reviewed two items that the Department is preparing for forthcoming Board approval. Mr. Stem recognized Bob Measel, PDE's Bilingual Education Advisor, who reported on the Department's efforts to update the English Language Proficiency Standards. Mr. Measel said the standards will be re-named the English Language Development Standards to follow suit with national work and said the standards represent support materials focused on language development pathways for students, not standards related to proficiency. He said the updated standards would include more exemplars of sample language objectives and that the content was being updated to align to the Pennsylvania Core Standards.

Lee Williams noted that she has experience using the standards with pre-service teachers and spoke in support of including more exemplars in the document to make them more useful for regular classroom teachers.

The Deputy Secretary then noted that in the near future the Department plans to present standards setting related Alternate Eligible Content (AEC) on the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) which stems from the alignment of the AEC to the Pennsylvania Core Standards. Mr. Stem asked the Board to identify any specific information members feel is necessary from the Department so that members are thoroughly briefed on this topic.

Dr. Sheehan closed by commenting that there is a hefty body of literature about college readiness programs pushed by Common Core and again expressed caution about concerns related to the impact of such programs on substantive education.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEM

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m. on a **Williams/Aichele** motion.

Stephanie Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant