

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

January 11, 2018

The 342nd meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Thursday, January 11, 2018. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 8:50 a.m. by Chair Karen Farmer White.

Attending:

James Agras <i>(via phone)</i>	Caroline DeWitt	Kirk Hallett
Andrew Ahr	Sandra Dungee Glenn	Shirlann Harmon
Carol Aichele <i>(via phone)</i>	Hon. John Eichelberger	Maureen Lally-Green
James Barker <i>(via phone)</i>	Donald Fey	Jonathan Peri
Nathan Barrett	James Grandon	Colleen Sheehan <i>(via phone)</i>
Nicole Carnicella	Pamela Gunter-Smith <i>(via phone)</i>	Karen Farmer White

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 9, 2017, meeting of the State Board of Education were approved on a **Dungee Glenn/Grandon** motion.

**REPORT OF THE
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION**

Dr. George Drake provided an update on behalf of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC).

Dr. Drake said the Commission’s Practice Committee has completed its work on proposed amendments to the Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators. The proposed amendments articulate standards of practice and conduct with respect to social media use by educators, electronic communications with students, and appropriate student-teacher boundaries. He said the committee will vote to approve the amendments at its meeting in January.

Dr. Drake further reported that the Commission’s Standards Committee has formed a workgroup to develop recommended program guidelines addressing professional ethics for use by educator preparation programs at colleges and universities across the Commonwealth. In addition to developing the guidelines, the workgroup also will identify tools and strategies to assist teacher education programs in meeting the guidelines.

Next, Dr. Drake announced that the Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) currently has 2,068 open educator misconduct complaints, 448 of which are designated as “high priority” because they involve allegations of sexual abuse or physical abuse of children or criminal charges/convictions

for certain crimes identified in the School Code. He said there are 120 cases pending litigation before the Commission and one case pending in Commonwealth Court.

In the 2017 calendar year, Dr. Drake said the OCC received a total of 823 educator misconduct complaints (up from 672 in 2016) and 342 mandatory reports (up from 324 in 2016). The OCC closed approximately 518 complaints in 2017.

Jonathan Peri asked Dr. Drake about the cycle for receiving a 2016 annual report in 2018. Dr. Drake shared that the 2016 PSPC Annual Report has been completed for some time, however did not receive all the approvals needed in a timely manner. Mr. Peri also asked about federal mandates for postsecondary institutions who are required to make reports annually and suggested that the state should hold itself to a similar standard.

Senator John Eichelberger inquired about social media interactions where teachers use a pseudonym on Facebook to communicate with students. Dr. Drake agreed that such communication should not happen, and said such behavior is unethical and interacting with students in that manner is not appropriate.

Sandra Dungee Glenn asked if school districts have guidelines for best practices around policies and procedures related to social media. Dr. Drake shared that the PSPC's Practices Committee is working on such information that will be disseminated to school districts and that the Standards Committee is working with the Department of Education toward incorporating related instruction into the requirements for certification for teacher preparation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
BRIEFING BY COUNSEL ON THE WILLIAM PENN SCHOOL DISTRICT
LITIGATION

Chair Farmer White reminded the Board that it was named as a party in the William Penn School District Litigation and provided an update on recent action by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court that has positioned the litigation to go to trial. Due to a potential conflict of interest with the counsel assigned to the Board through the Governor's Office of General Counsel, Ms. Farmer White announced that the Board has been assigned a new counsel for this litigation only. Ms. Farmer White then introduced Thomas Blackburn, an attorney with the Department of State, who will represent the Board in this matter. The Chair then called for an Executive Session for the purpose of receiving a legal briefing from counsel on the litigation

The Board adjourned its Executive Session and the Chair re-convened the 342nd meeting of the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION ENDORSING K-12 COMPUTER SCIENCE STANDARDS DEVELOPED BY THE COMPUTER SCIENCE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

A motion to approve a resolution endorsing the K-12 Computer Science Standards developed by the Computer Science Teachers Association for voluntary use by school entities in the Commonwealth was made by Kirk Hallett and seconded by Nathan Barrett.

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote.

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

A motion to approve the Board's 2017 Annual Report was made by James Grandon and seconded by Sandra Dungee Glenn.

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Farmer White reported that Highmark agreed to renew its commitment to the Board's Student Leadership Program with another \$20,000 grant. She thanked Highmark for its generosity to sustain the program that had been in jeopardy due to depleting grant funds. Ms. Farmer White said she found it heartening that Highmark continues to see value in including a student voice in the Board's policymaking.

Shirlann Harmon, Senior Student Representative to the Council of Basic Education, expressed gratitude on behalf of the Board's student members for all the work that was done to secure the additional grant funding and for valuing the students' voice on the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m. on a **Dungee Glenn/Agras** motion.



Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant