

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

July 11, 2019

The 351st meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Wednesday, July 11, 2019. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. by Chair Karen Farmer White.

Attending:

James Agras
Carol Aichele
James Barker
Jamie Bracey-Green
Sandra Dungee Glenn

Anne Griffin
Pamela Gunter-Smith (*via phone*)
Kirk Hallett (*via phone*)
Jeffrey Keeling
Maureen Lally-Green

Sen. Wayne Lancerholc (*via phone*)
Jonathan Peri
Ashley Svec
Jillian Sweigard
A Lee Williams
Karen Farmer White

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 8, 2019, meeting of the State Board of Education were approved on a **Dungee Glenn/Aichele** motion.

COMMITTEE REPORT
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ESSA IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT

Chair Farmer White said the Committee met on July 10 to receive a six-month follow-up report from the Department of Education on activity related to implementation of the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. Adam Schott, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Education, and Sherri Smith, Special Advisor to Deputy Secretary Stem, addressed the Committee.

Ms. Farmer White said the Committee was pleased to learn that the U.S. Department of Education had granted tentative approval for the amendments to Pennsylvania's ESSA State Plan and said the Department is awaiting formal approval letter shortly. The Department also will be working to put out guidance to the field on the Plan amendments.

Mr. Schott reviewed specific amendments related to the process for designating schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement. This fall, the Department will begin issuing annual designations for school improvement in a third category called Targeted Support and Improvement. Chair Farmer White said these improvements will serve as an early warning system for schools to address achievement gaps before potentially falling into a more intensive school improvement cycle.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Secretary Rivera was unavailable to attend the meeting. Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem delivered a report on the items delineated below on his behalf.

National Leadership

Governor Wolf was named as the new Chairman of the Education Commission of the States. At the same time, Secretary Rivera serves as Chairman of the Council of Chief State School Officers. Pennsylvania is honored to have both the Governor and the Secretary leading these two premier organizations at national level

State Budget

The General Assembly recently passed the 2019-20 state budget, including significant increases in funding for basic education, special education, and early childhood education. The \$30 million increase for early childhood education creates approximately 2,600 new slots in Pre-K Counts and 465 new slots in Head Start. The budget also includes an increase for preschool Early Intervention services. In the past five years, funding for early childhood education has doubled.

It's on Us

The It's on Us campaign was renewed to provide grants for another year. Two campus safety initiatives proposed by the governor were enacted as part of the new state budget package. One proposal requires post-secondary institutions to offer online, anonymous options for students to report sexual assaults. The other protects students reporting sexual assault from being disciplined for violating school drug, alcohol, or other policies.

PAsmart

PAsmart, the administration's innovative approach to proliferating computer science opportunities, was renewed for a second year. Over the past three years, the Commonwealth has invested more than \$40 million in STEM programming.

Compulsory School Age

Deputy Secretary Stem thanked the State Board for its advocacy on the Governor's compulsory school age proposal. He said the proposal was passed and changes to both lower and raise the compulsory school age to 6 and 18, respectively, will take effect. The Department will issue guidance to the field on implementing these new requirements.

Flexible Instructional Days

Act 64 of 2019 added a section to the Public School Code permitting public school entities to develop a Flexible Instructional Day (FID) program through which public school entities can meet the state's 180 instructional day requirement. The FID program may be online,

offline, or a combination of the two. While public school entities are expected to build make-up days into their local school calendars, FIDs can support public school entities in certain circumstances such as a disease epidemic, a hazardous weather condition, a law enforcement emergency, the inoperability of school buses or other equipment necessary to the public school entity's operation, and damage to a school building.

Safe Schools

Governor Wolf signed into law Senate Bill 621 (Act 67) which clarifies existing law to mandate explicit and more robust training requirements for armed school security personnel and to further prevent the arming of untrained non-security personnel, including teachers. Secretary Rivera issued initial guidance to schools which reiterated that, effective fall 2019, only school resource officers and security guards will be permitted to carry a firearm.

Keystone Exams

Deputy Secretary Stem addressed recent questions that have been raised regarding the Keystone Exams. Mr. Stem said federal law requires states to administer exams at the high school level in English language arts, math, and science, and that the federal law is clear that the exams must be aligned to the depth and breadth of the state's academic standards. The Deputy Secretary said Pennsylvania's Keystone Exams are fully aligned to state standards and have met federal peer review standards. He reminded the Board that the content of the Keystone Exams was developed by Pennsylvania teachers. Mr. Stem then reviewed recent actions the Department of Education has taken to ensure that standardized assessments do not have an oversized impact on what happens in schools, including decreasing time spent on testing, moving test administration later in the school year, and decreasing the average annual spending on Keystone Exams by 30%.

The Deputy Secretary said he is aware of interest in pursuing exams other than the Keystone Exams. He said the Department is open to looking at other options, but alternative exams must be fiscally responsible, be aligned to state standards, and provide accommodations for students with special needs. Mr. Stem said no state has fully met the requirements of federal peer review with some of the national assessments that have been discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Remington, National STEM Teacher Ambassador and a STEM educator from the Palmyra Area School District, applauded the STEM Mini Bootcamp that he attended. Mr. Remington said Pennsylvania is headed in a good direction regarding STEM education and workforce readiness with PAsmart, SWEAP, Act 339, Computer Science for All, and a commitment to early childhood education. However, he said there is much work to be done to go from good to great STEM and workforce readiness.

Since NCLB, Mr. Remington said PA has treasured the silent subjects of math and language arts at the expense of traditional vocational education, the creative arts, and sciences. He argued that we have a generation of elementary teachers that have little experience or

confidence in teaching science and technology, and our workforce readiness is paying the price as a result.

Mr. Remington offered the following suggestions from a STEM lens to take the Commonwealth from good to great:

- 1) Adopt modern, three-dimensional STEM standards like over 40 other states have done;
- 2) Evolve the Science PSSAs and the singularly focused Biology Keystone into comprehensive, authentic STEM assessments;
- 3) Add accountability to the recently adopted K-12 Computer Science Standards;
- 4) Cultivate authentic subject integration in classrooms;
- 5) Consider a STEM pathway diploma seal;
- 6) Consider STEM opportunity designation levels for schools; and
- 7) Consider STEM language in Act 82's educator effectiveness model.

ACTION ITEMS

KEYSTONE EXAM COMPOSITE SCORE

A motion to establish a satisfactory Keystone Exam Composite Score at 4452, as recommended by the Council of Basic Education and by the Secretary of Education, was made by Jeffrey Keeling and seconded by James Barker.

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

PERFORMANCE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS AND CUT SCORES FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA ALTERNATE SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS

A motion to approve revised Performance Level Descriptors and cut scores for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as recommended by the Council of Basic Education and by the Secretary of Education, was made by Maureen Lally-Green and seconded by Carol Aichele.

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

2020 MEETING CALENDAR

A motion to approve the State Board of Education's 2020 meeting calendar was made by James Agras and seconded by Jamie Bracey-Green.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Karen Farmer White invited Board members to stay after the meeting for a Study Session on effective practices in reading instruction presented by the Department of Education.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m. on a **Lally-Green/Peri** motion.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Jones".

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant