

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

January 8, 2020

The 354th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Wednesday, January 8, 2020. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 1:27 p.m. by Chair Karen Farmer White.

Attending:

James Agras *(via phone)*
Carol Aichele
James Barker *(via phone)*
Nathan Barrett
Jamie Bracey-Green

Nicole Carnicella *(via phone)*
Sandra Dungee Glenn *(via phone)*
Anne Griffin
Kirk Hallett
Jeffrey Keeling

Maureen Lally-Green
Sen. Wayne Langerholc *(via phone)*
Jonathan Peri
Arynn Pratt
Karen Farmer White
A Lee Williams *(via phone)*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 14, 2019, meeting of the State Board of Education were approved on a **Peri/Lally-Green** motion.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Secretary Pedro Rivera provided a report on the following topics:

Aspiring to Educate

Secretary Rivera announced that the School District of Philadelphia will spearhead a new pilot program, *Aspiring to Educate*, that aims to cultivate and diversify the Commonwealth’s educator pool. The pilot is a partnership between the Department of Education (PDE), the School District of Philadelphia, the Community College of Philadelphia, and other educational institutions across southeastern Pennsylvania. The School District will select the first cohort of participants consisting of 20 junior and senior students who excel academically and have expressed interest in becoming teachers. Participants will enroll in a series of dual enrollment courses with upwards of 30 credits available and will be mentored through a partnership with The Center for Black Educator Development and supported by The Philadelphia Youth Network.

Reach Out PA

The Secretary shared that Governor Wolf announced a focused all-agency effort and anti-stigma campaign, *Reach Out PA: Your Mental Health Matters*, aimed at expanding resources and the state’s comprehensive support of mental health and related health care priorities. As part of this campaign, PDE will explore pathways to increase the number of highly qualified social

workers trained to work in schools. PDE and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) also will evaluate how to ensure every school district can provide a full-time counselor, social worker, and nurse, along with increasing more counseling and mental health services at post-secondary institutions.

Teacher in the Workplace Grants

Secretary Rivera announced that \$2.2 million in Teacher in the Workplace grants were awarded to 92 local education agencies (LEA) to enable teachers to visit local employers and learn skills and industry trends to enhance their classroom instruction, student learning, and career readiness. Each LEA will receive a \$25,000 Targeted Grant.

It's On Us PA Grants

Since 2016, nearly \$3 million in It's On Us PA grants have been awarded to more than 60 postsecondary institutions across the state. Grant funds support implementation of strategies on their campuses to battle sexual assault. This year, in addition to the program grants, PDE will also issue a research-based grant to support projects designed to assess the statewide impact of the It's On Us PA program.

PAsmart Grants

A second round of targeted PAsmart grants will be announced to accelerate learning and professional development in the fast-growing fields of STEM and computer science.

Dr. Jonathan Peri asked how Teacher in the Workplace grants are distributed geographically. Secretary Rivera shared that there is a deliberate distribution across the Commonwealth to ensure representation from rural, urban, and suburban communities.

Hon. Maureen Lally-Green asked for more information regarding PCCD's role as it pertains to addressing the school to prison issue and suggested that there is a role to be played by district attorneys in the juvenile justice arena. Secretary Rivera offered that PDE works closely with the Department of Corrections, State Police, and Homeland Security, but was not aware of a particular relationship with district attorneys.

Dr. Jamie Bracey-Green asked if the Teacher in the Workplace grants align with the Department of Labor and Industry's priorities. Secretary Rivera replied that the connection is strategic and that Teacher in the Workplace grants provide a first-level connection to Advancing Grants from L&I that provide more robust systems of continuing support.

Dr. Bracey-Green then asked how many current community colleges are designated as minority serving institutions. Secretary Rivera shared that he did not have the specific number on hand, but he is aware that the number is growing.

REPORT OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Dr. Nicole Hill provided comments from the Professional Standards and Practices Commission's (PSPC) regarding on Chapter 49. Dr. Hill said the comments follow-up on recommendations submitted by the PSPC in May 2019 which sought an inclusion of professional ethics in educator preparation programs, induction, and continuing education in Chapter 49. The additional remarks provide more detailed recommendations on the definition of professional ethics, recommended clock hours for pre-service instruction, and available resources to support implementation.

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF CHIEF COUNSEL

Sarah DiRito, Assistant Chief Counsel with PDE, provided an update on the work of the Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) relative to educator misconduct complaints. Ms. DiRito said the OCC has 2,336 open educator misconduct complaints, of which 402 are designated as high priority because they involve allegations of sexual misconduct, sexual abuse/exploitation, serious physical abuse of students or criminal charges. She said the OCC continues to work closely with the Office of Administration's IT Department to develop a robust case tracking and case management system. In the interim, the OCC has created a portal through PDE's website where administrators can file a complaint or mandatory report and learn about the Educator Discipline process.

Dr. Jamie Bracey-Green asked about the timeframe to process, litigate, and form a resolution for these cases. Ms. DiRito shared that educators are entitled to full due process under the law and, sometimes, that process can take years.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bishop Dwayne Brock, pastor of Victory Christian Center, said he has been serving as a pastor in Erie for more than 40 years and also serves on the Hammond UPMC Hospital Board and the Housing Authority of Erie City. Bishop Brock asked the Board to support the county's community college proposal. He said he hoped that politics wouldn't enter the deliberations and fears they have. Bishop Brock stated that a missing ingredient for creating a pathway for young adults in Erie is a community college. Bishop Brock also shared that Senator Scarnati recently stated that the majority of the Board will not endorse the proposal, and the Bishop said he found the Senator's remarks offensive and reprehensible.

Matthew Harris, Erie resident, said that, after retiring as a State Trooper, he created a character education program that puts law enforcement officers in classrooms. Mr. Harris believes that too much funding goes toward reaction and not prevention. He said students in Erie are lacking hope toward postsecondary education and do not want to spend \$50,000 at a four-year university that they can't afford.

Pastor Marcus Atkinson, Erie resident, Trustee with the Erie Community Foundation, and the Board Chair of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center, spoke to economic fairness in equity and education in Erie. He advocated for the creation of a community college to help level the playing field for a demographic of students in the inner city that he said have been forgotten about time and time again.

Bishop-Elect Danny Stanton, current Pastor of the Friendship Baptist Church, said he believes it is vitally important that students have access to workforce training, which would be available at a community college. He asked the Board to support creating a community college in Erie.

Gary Horton, Founding Director and President of the Urban Erie Development Corporation and Erie NAACP President, shared that he is the product of parents that married at age 16 and had 15 children, of which he is one of eleven with a college degree. Mr. Horton asked the Board not to give up on establishing a community college in Erie. Mr. Horton said he serves as the Director of a non-profit, whose mission is to promote economic growth and revitalization through small business development and the creation of employment opportunities in Erie.

Ron DiNicola, Co-founder of Empower Erie, commented that his organization has been pursuing a community college in Erie for quite some time and believes they have presented a fine application built upon the experience in the Erie community and dedicated experts. Mr. DiNicola said he hopes that the Board will take the community college plan to a vote swiftly and efficiently and that the proceedings do not become overly complicated in applying the criteria set by the Board.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Farmer White called for an Executive Session of the Board for the purpose of consulting with counsel about legal procedures and to receive an update on litigation.

The Board adjourned its Executive Session and the Chair reconvened the 354th meeting of the Board.

ACTION ITEMS

PETITIONS TO INTERVENE IN THE MARCH 18, 2020, HEARING ON THE ERIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PLAN

Upon review of the Petition to Intervene in the hearing on the Erie County Community College Plan filed by the Northern Pennsylvania Regional College, and with due regard to the answer, a motion to grant the Petition, subject to procedural limitations to be developed by the Board in accordance with the General Rules of Administrative Practice and Procedure, was made by Jonathan Peri and seconded by Carol Aichele.

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

Upon review of the Petition to Intervene in the hearing on the Erie County Community College Plan filed by Sen. Joseph Scarnati, III, and with due regard to the answer, a motion to grant the Petition, subject to procedural limitations to be developed by the Board in accordance with the General Rules of Administrative Practice and Procedure, was made by Jonathan Peri and seconded by James Agras.

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

Upon review of the Petition to Intervene in the hearing on the Erie County Community College Plan filed by Empower Erie, and with due regard to the answer, a motion to grant the Petition, subject to procedural limitations to be developed by the Board in accordance with the General Rules of Administrative Practice and Procedure, was made by Jonathan Peri and seconded by James Barker.

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

Upon review of the Petition to Intervene in the hearing on the Erie County Community College Plan filed by Brent Davis, and with due regard to the answer, a motion to deny the Petition for failure to demonstrate the standard set forth in Section 35.28 was made by Maureen Lally-Green and seconded by Nathan Barrett.

VOTE: The motion passed by a vote of 13-1.

Upon review of the Petitioner's emailed request to participate in the March 18, 2020, hearing on the Erie County Community College Plan submitted by Charles Bennett, a motion to deny the request for failure to comply with the rules of Administrative Practice and Procedure for motions for intervention was made by Maureen Lally-Green and seconded by Nathan Barrett.

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

MOTION TO APPOINT A COMMITTEE ON THE ERIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PLAN HEARING

A motion to have the Chair of the State Board of Education appoint a Committee to develop procedural rules for the hearing on the Erie County Community College Plan, subject to the General Rules of Administrative Practice and Procedure, and that the Committee be comprised of the existing members of the Special Committee on the Erie County Community College Plan and additional members appointed by the Chair was made by Maureen Lally-Green and seconded by Jonathan Peri

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant