

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

November 17, 2021

The 365th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on November 17, 2021. Due to public health measures being implemented across the Commonwealth to address the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Board and members of the public participated in the meeting virtually via webinar and teleconference. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 1:06 p.m. by Chair Karen Farmer White.

Attending:

James Agras	Pamela Gunter-Smith	Jonathan Peri
Hon. Carol Aichele	Sarah Jordan	Eva Rankin
Nathan Barrett	Hon. Maureen Lally-Green	Karen Farmer White
Jamie Bracey-Green	Hon. Mark Longietti	Lee Williams
Sandra Dungee Glenn	Hon. Scott Martin	Hon. Lindsey Williams
Reva Gandhi		

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 9, 2021, meeting of the Board were approved on a **Lally-Green/Dungee Glenn** motion.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Secretary Noe Ortega shared updates on behalf of the Department of Education. He said the Department continues to work closely with schools, administrators, and other key stakeholders to address missed learning due to the pandemic and to provide guidance about the use of federal ARP ESSER and GEERS funds to address learning loss and guide students back to a path of success. He acknowledged the human capital needs that Pennsylvania's schools continue to face, and said the Department is working with professional associations and the General Assembly to find solutions to these workforce needs. Secretary Ortega also noted that the Governor expects the masking order for schools to be lifted and that schools are equipped to use data collection tools to make informed policy decisions that will keep teachers and students healthy. He noted that the Department's goal always has been to return to in-person instruction and to do so safely.

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL
OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Dr. Jonathan Peri provided an update on the Council of Higher Education's effort to develop a new Master Plan for Higher Education. He welcomed Hadass Sheffer, founder of the Graduate Network, who recently was engaged to provide support for the development of a new

Master Plan. He also provided an update on the submission of long-range plans by institutions of higher education in response to a request previously made by the Council and noted that four additional long-range plans were submitted for review since the time of his last report, bringing the total number of submissions to 68.

Dr. Peri shared that the Council of Higher Education and the Master Plan for Higher Education Advisory Committee met earlier in the day and provided a summary report of their working session. The working session focused on the plan's strategic priority for "Erasing Equity Gaps to Increase Postsecondary Attainment in Pennsylvania". The session included a presentation related to that strategic priority by Dr. Tanya I. Garcia, Acting Deputy Secretary and Commission for Postsecondary and Higher Education, followed by three panel discussions of national experts, higher education leaders, and students who focused their comments on strategies to close equity gaps. Dr. Peri said the session closed with time for open dialog and reflections by members of the Council and the Advisory Committee related to the strategic priority around which the working session was centered.

PRESENTATION
LEARNING FROM PENNSYLVANIA'S INSTITUTIONAL PASS RATES
ON ELEMENTARY CONTENT TEACHER LICENSURE TESTS

Ms. Hannah Putman, Managing Director of Research with the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), presented new research released by her organization on first-time pass rates on elementary content teacher licensure tests. The report produced by NCTQ includes both a national overview as well as dashboards containing state specific data.

PRESENTATION
ACT 101 PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Ms. Elizabeth McCloud, Vice President of State Grant and Special Programs for the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA), presented the agency's annual report on Pennsylvania's Act 101 Program for 2020-2021. The report contains profiles for participating institutions and students, including data on student retention, graduation rates, and academic performance.

PRESENTATION
REPORT OF THE COLLEGE TEXTBOOK POLICIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. Kim McCurdy, Bureau Director for Postsecondary Adult Education with the Department of Education, presented the updated report of the College Textbook Policies Advisory Committee. Per statute, the Advisory Committee is required to develop an updated report every three years that is focused on increasing access to and reducing costs of college textbooks and course materials. The Board will transmit the Advisory Committee's updated report to the Governor and the General Assembly.

PRESENTATION
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Mr. Shane Crosby, Executive Director of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission, presented the Commission's Annual Report for 2020. The report details all public adjudications that were issued during the calendar year along with a summary of those adjudications. Mr. Crosby noted that public disciplinary actions were down in 2020 largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Donna Marie Cole-Mallot, with the Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium, sought to bring attention to the need to include culturally responsive and sustaining education competencies in teacher education in Pennsylvania, specifically in Chapter 354. Dr. Cole-Mallot said research demonstrates that all students benefit from having educators of color and educators who deliver culturally-relevant instruction for all students. Dr. Cole-Mallot said data on culturally relevant and sustaining education demonstrates its importance in aiding in the facilitation of brain processing, promoting and cultivating critical thinking and problem solving, motivating and engaging students, strengthening students' racial and ethnic identities, and promoting a sense of safety and belonging for students. She applauded the inclusion of culturally relevant and sustaining education in Chapter 13 and Act 13's call for social and emotional competencies, but said we can't just allude to it and need to say what we mean. Dr. Cole-Mallot said her consortium has developed culturally relevant and sustaining education competencies that should be offered to teacher preparation programs. She said Pennsylvania data further demonstrates the need for these guidelines and that we are in a state of regression when it comes to education diversity relative to the state's student population.

Toya Algarin, a black female mother and grandmother, asked the Board to support including culturally relevant and sustaining education in Chapter 354. She said she believes culturally responsive teacher also will support the need to hire more teachers of color. Ms. Algarin share that she chose to send her son to a school with a black male educator at the helm because she knew that would be valuable to him. She said culturally responsive teaching was successful for her son and gave him the opportunity to celebrate his culture while, at the same time, gaining knowledge in an engaging school setting. She asked the Board to consider how important it is for children to have a teacher that reflects their values.

Laura Boyce, Pennsylvania Executive Director of Teacher Plus and Policy and Advocacy Chair of the Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium, said she is a strong advocate for culturally responsive education. Ms. Boyce said culturally responsive education is connected to another important priority of diversifying the educator workforce. She said Teach Plus has released two reports on retention of teachers of color and held focus groups of teachers of color to better understand why they leave and what would make their schools more culturally affirming. In both report, she said they heard from focus groups that if principals and colleagues, particularly their white colleagues, were training to be more culturally responsive they would be more likely to stay. Ms. Boyce said this also connects to outcomes and achievement for students of color who would benefit from being in culturally responsive and culturally affirming spaces. She echoed the call from the previous speakers. Ms. Boyce applauded the Board for include culturally responsive and sustaining education in Chapter 49, and called on the Department to continue that charge in further regulatory action. Ms. Boyce said she recently presented to PAC-TE and heard that they are trying to embed culturally responsive and sustaining education but are

waiting for the competencies to be finalized, waiting to see if it also will be in Chapter 354, and wondering how it will connect to ongoing professional education. Ms. Boyce asked the Board and the Department to keep its foot on the gas to finalize the competencies and implementation guidelines quickly.

Andrea Terrero Gabbadon introduced herself as a former teacher and high school administrator, present Ph.D. candidate and teacher of aspiring educators, and member of the Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium. She spoke in support of including culturally relevant and sustaining education competencies in Chapter 354 and for holding institutions of higher education accountable for their implementation in teacher education programs. Ms. Gabbadon noted that Pennsylvania's educator workforce does not reflect the rich diversity of the students it serves. She said a 2020 report by Research for Action showed that 12% of Pennsylvania students identify as Latino and that, in contrast, Latino teachers are only 1.1% of the educator workforce. Ms. Gabbadon said she often was the only Latino teacher in her building and often felt invisible or only seen for her ability to work with Spanish speaking students and to serve as an impromptu translator. She reflected on how her teacher preparation program prepared her for this isolation and invisibility and shared that she considered changing her major until working with a professor who encouraged her to infuse her culture into her lessons. She said culturally relevant teaching methods can have positive impacts on student achievement and on improving the pipeline of teachers of color. To effectively address teacher diversity, Ms. Gabbadon said teacher education programs must see us and inspires us through culturally relevant practices.

Beth Patten introduced herself as a seventh grade social student teacher in the Kutztown Area School District and a Bloomsburg University graduate. Ms. Patten said she works with a lot of student teachers. She advocated for more training for preservice teachers to become culturally relevant and sustaining educators. She said Kutztown University's coursework does not include any required courses for English Language Learners and that there is not a lot of training in English Language Learners or culturally relevant or sustaining pedagogies at all, which is reflected in national trends as well. Ms. Patten shared that when a student from the Dominican Republic joined her classroom she felt completely unprepared to talk to or engage the student and the student spent most of the day with headphones on watching YouTube. She said she reached out to Kutztown University for help in supporting her student and now serves on the ESL Advisory Board at Kutztown University. Ms. Patten said the state should approve culturally relevant and sustaining education pedagogy and that teachers will benefit from such training.

Kristen Haase, an English Language Development teacher in the School District of Lancaster and a Teach Plus Fellow, said the importance of teachers receiving training in culturally relevant education is tied to the importance of diversifying the teacher pipeline. She said public schools across the country are becoming more diverse, but teachers are not. Ms. Haase shared demographic data from the school district in which she is employed and the district in which she resides that illustrated such gaps. She said research shows that all students benefit from having teachers of color and the having culturally relevant teachers benefits all learning communities.

Two students addressed the Board and said there is a need for more culturally responsive teachers and teachers of color. They shared personal anecdotes about the bonds they formed with

teachers who used culturally relevant practices. The students said the state must include culturally relevant and sustaining education in teacher preparation guidelines.

Elaine Wells, the parent of three black sons, spoke in support of culturally relevant and sustaining education because of its positive impact on children of color. She said the majority of black and brown children have been taught by teachers who don't look like them, live like them, or culturally relate to them. She said some studies show that having just one black educator in a student's lifetime for any student can greatly increase educational outcomes. Ms. Wells shared the her son's experience as a sixth graders in an all boys charter school and said he liked his history class – one of the only classes he excelled in – because he felt like he could just be himself with his history teacher. Ms. Wells said students need to see themselves reflected in space of success. She said watching a majority African American male enrollment in her son's school be educated by a majority of white women did not sit well with her and that she feels there needs to be an opportunity to see yourself reflected in those that students are spending the majority of their day with during their formative years.

Two Memphis Street Academy students spoke in support of having more culturally responsive educators in schools. They said culturally responsive and sustaining education competencies must be included in teacher preparation guidelines.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Karen Farmer White announced that the Academic Standards/Chapter 4 Committee will hold a special meeting on December 1, 2021, to receive recommendations from the Science Standards Content Committee and Steering Committee. Recommendations will be delivered in response to a charge previously adopted by the Academic Standards/Chapter 4 Committee regarding further revising the proposed academic standards adopted by the Board in response to content-specific concerns raised in public comment. Chair Farmer White said the meeting will be held virtually via Zoom at 10:00 am.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:31 p.m. on an **Lally-Green/Barrett** motion.



Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant