

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

May 5, 2021

The 362nd meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on May 5, 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 1:35 p.m. by Chair Karen Farmer White.

Attending:

James Agras
Hon. Carol Aichele
Nathan Barrett
Anne Griffin
Pamela Gunter-Smith

Jeffrey Keeling
Hon. Maureen Lally-Green
Hon. Scott Martin
Jonathan Peri
Eva Rankin

Hon. Curt Sonney
Taiba Sultana
Karen Farmer White
Lee Williams
Hon. Lindsey Williams

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 10, 2021, meeting of the Board were approved on a **Lally-Green/Lee Williams** motion.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Acting Secretary Noe Ortega began by acknowledging Teacher Appreciation Week and the hard work and dedication teachers devote to their classrooms and the added support to students during the past year during the pandemic of COVID-19.

Acting Secretary Ortega reported that Governor Wolf announced yesterday that COVID-19 mitigation orders, except for masking, will be lifted on Memorial Day. In light of the Governor's announcement, Mr. Ortega said the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will factor into the planning of school guidance. Mr. Ortega said the Department of Education (PDE) will continue to focus on creating conditions for schools to resume normal operations with decisions around such centered at the local level.

Mr. Ortega said PDE also has been working closely with members of the General Assembly surrounding decisions that need to be made related to federal funds Pennsylvania is slated to receive. He said the Department will engage in larger stakeholder discussions on those federal funds as its next steps. Elementary and Secondary Education will receive nearly \$5 billion in federal funds to be spent over the course of the next three years, and approximately 90% of those funds will be distributed directly to schools through Title I. To address learning loss due to pandemic-related disruptions, Mr. Ortega said PDE also is working with members of the

General Assembly to determine how the Commonwealth set aside funds can be used to address learning gaps, accelerated learning, summer enrichment programs, and other immediate needs.

Finally, Mr. Ortega announced that \$10.8 million in PAsmart Advancing Grants were awarded to expand access to computer science and STEM education for Pennsylvania learners. Combined with PAsmart Targeted Grants announced in 2020, Mr. Ortega said the Wolf administration has awarded nearly \$20 million to bolster STEM and computer science in schools during the 2020-21 school year. Mr. Ortega said the PAsmart initiative established Pennsylvania as a nationwide leader in computer science and STEM learning and, while the pandemic placed a temporary halt in the distribution of PAsmart resources, PDE is pleased to announce that they are now able to provide these grant funds to schools that are doing great work to advance STEM programs in the Commonwealth.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION HONORING JILLIAN SWEIGARD

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Jillian Sweigard was made by Jonathan Peri and seconded by Jeffrey Keeling.

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

RESOLUTION HONORING ANNE GRIFFIN

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Anne Griffin was made by James Agras and seconded by Maureen Lally-Green.

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

RESOLUTION HONORING MATTHEW STEM

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Matthew Stem was made by Hon. Maureen Lally-Green and seconded by Lee Williams.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Karen Farmer White recessed the meeting and announced that the Board would reconvene for Executive Session following the meeting of the State Board of Career and Technical Education. Ms. Farmer White said the purpose of the Executive Session was to receive an update from counsel on litigation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The State Board of Education reconvened at 2:09 p.m. for an Executive Session to receive an update from counsel on litigation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m. on a **Lee Williams/Agras** motion.

Stephanie L. Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant