# MINUTES
# STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology**
**750 East King Street, Lancaster, PA 17602**

**May 18, 2011**

The 300th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Wednesday, May 18, 2011. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Larry Wittig, Chairman.

**Attending:**

James Barker
Wendy Beetlestone
Connie Davis (phone)
Kirk Hallett
Francis Michelini
Ivory Nelson
Jonathan Peri
Mollie O'Connell Phillips
Edward Sheehan
Shannon Sullivan
Karen Farmer White
Lee Williams
Larry Wittig

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the March 16, 2011, meeting of the State Board of Education were approved unanimously on a **Williams/Nelson** motion.

## CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

Chairman Wittig thanked Dr. Griscom for his hospitality in hosting the Board at Thaddeus Steven College of Technology.

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Secretary Tomalis commented on the facilities at Thaddeus Stevens College and thanked Stevens' administrators for allowing the State Board to convene there. Secretary Tomalis officially welcomed new Chairman Larry Wittig to his new role with the State Board.

Mr. Tomalis reported that he has been traveling across the Commonwealth meeting with superintendents regionally at the state's Intermediate Units and that the state budget is their number one concern. He remarked that he has been struck by the new generation of education leaders that have been in their position for five years or less, who he felt possess a new view on their job responsibilities and expressed interest in more state support on improving teacher effectiveness.

Mr. Tomalis also reported on the proposed state budget under consideration in the Pennsylvania House. He noted that the House budget proposed a cut to the state assessment line item which conveyed a concern of members about the direction the state is going with testing.

The administration continues to speak with members about this portion of the education budget. He also noted the burgeoning pension costs facing the state with PSERS costs alone projected to increase by more than $1 billion over the next four years.

The Secretary also noted that the U.S. Department of Education has announced another round of Race to The Top with an emphasis on early childhood education. He said the Department will participate in a USDE conference call to ascertain more details of the new federal competition, including whether the state would be required to resubmit Pennsylvania's old application or could tailor a new plan. Secretary Tomalis also suggested there would need to be a cost benefit analysis by PDE to see if this new RTTT application is worthwhile.

Finally, Secretary Tomalis said the Department continues to keep in touch with Congress regarding reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and noted that if reauthorization does not happen this year it likely will not occur until 2013. He noted that concerns have been expressed over AYP because we are getting to the "steep end of the J curve".

## INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Chairman Wittig provided updates on two initiatives the Board has been charged with undertaking by the General Assembly.

### School Safety Reporting and Response Advisory Committee

Chairman Wittig announced that Jonathan Peri will Chair the School and University Safety Committee, which had been led by Mr. Wittig prior to his tenure as Board Chairman. Mr. Wittig then asked Mr. Peri for a report on the work of the School Safety Advisory Committee, established by Act 104, that is serving as a liaison with the School and University Safety Committee to provide input on safety-related regulations the Board is charged with promulgating. Mr. Peri reported that the State Board ratified the committee membership at its March meeting and that the Advisory Committee met for the first time on April 14, 2011. The meeting clearly recognized tension between uniform reporting rules and the need to be sensitive to students with significant disabilities.

Mr. Peri also reviewed the Board's statutory charge under Act 104 that directs the State Board, by February 2012, to adopt a regulation to accomplish the following:

- Provide a model MOU between school entities and local police departments that will aim to improve the consistency of reporting of school safety incidents
- Set protocols for the notification of the police department when certain offenses occur on school property
- Establish protocols for the notification of the police for other less serious offenses
- Set protocols for emergency and non-emergency response by police which will include a requirement that the district supply the police with a copy of its Comprehensive Disaster Response and Emergency Preparedness plan
- Provide procedures and protocols to respond to incidents that involve a special needs student

**School Library Study**

Mr. Wittig provided an update on the school library study the Board was requested to undertake by House Resolution 987. Mr. Wittig reminded member that, in January, the Board approved a resolution expressing its support for using $12,500 in State School Funds to support this study. He reported that the Board has secured $12,500 in matching funds to support this work through federal LSTA dollars, and notes that the Board would seek formal authorization to draw down State School Funds to execute a contract to complete the study now that matching funds are available. In the interim, Mr. Wittig reported that the Board has moved ahead with the data collection necessary to complete this study by conducting a survey of school districts and charter schools. Finally, Mr. Wittig announced the appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee on School Libraries to oversee this study. Chairman Wittig appointed Mollie Phillips to Chair the Ad Hoc Committee. Connie Davis and Karen Farmer White also will serve on the committee.

Wendy Beetlestone commented that in Philadelphia some schools had completed the survey while others had not. She asked if there was a method in place to make sure that each school completes the survey. State Board Executive Director Adam Schott said the Board worked with the School Librarians Association to get back as many results as possible and also granted some exceptions to the response deadline for districts who contacted the Board seeking more time. Mr. Schott said the Board can note a caveat in the report's narrative that not all schools provided survey data, however, schools were not required to respond by the House resolution and, based on other statewide surveys, our response rate was pretty high.

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Carolyn Angelo reported that the PSPC's 2010 Annual Report was given to all Board members at this meeting. The report provides information on the commission and its mission and goals and outlines the names of educators and the actions that were taken against them this year. In summary, there were 104 disciplinary actions taken against educators. Sixty-nine of those actions involve sexual misconduct; sixty-three of them involved misconduct with students; and six involved accessing school resources to access sexually explicit materials while at school. Ms. Angelo also made Board members aware of a House Bill that would increase the range of criminal counts for educators convicted of institutional sexual assault. Finally, Ms. Angelo reminded the State Board of PSPC's expertise in the area of keeping schools safe from within.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

## ACTION ITEMS

### 0518.1 RESOLUTION REGARDING STANDARDS FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM REQUESTS

A motion to approve the resolution regarding standards for consideration of future alternative certification program requests was made by Lee Williams and seconded by Ivory Nelson.

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote. (Fogarty and Dungee Glenn – by proxy)

**0518.2 AUTHORIZATION TO UTILIZE $12,500 FROM THE STATE SCHOOL FUND TO SUPPORT A STUDY ON PENNSYLVANIA'S SCHOOL LIBRARIES, AS REQUIRED BY H.R. 987**

A motion to approve the authorization to utilize $12,500 from the State School Fund to support a study on Pennsylvania's School Libraries was made by Larry Wittig and seconded by Francis Michelini.

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote. (Fogarty and Dungee Glenn – by proxy)

**0518.3 RESOLUTION HONORING JOSEPH TORSELLA**

A motion to approve the resolution honoring Joseph Torsella was made by Francis Michelini and seconded by Ivory Nelson.

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote. (Fogarty and Dungee Glenn – by proxy)

**0518.4 RESOLUTION HONORING ANDY YOUSTIC**

A motion to approve the resolutions honoring Andy Youstic and Travis Gilbert was made by Francis Michelini and seconded by Mollie Phillips.

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote. (Fogarty and Dungee Glenn – by proxy)

**0518.5 RESOLUTION HONORING TRAVIS GILBERT**

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote. (Fogarty and Dungee Glenn – by proxy)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Stephanie L. Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant