MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

November 16, 2011

The 305th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Wednesday, November 16, 2011. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. by Larry Wittig, Chairman.

Attending:

Erin Agnew	Sandra Dungee Glenn	Ivory Nelson
Jim Agras (via phone)	Paul Ferrera	Jonathan Peri
Jim Barker (via phone)	Kirk Hallett	Karen Farmer White
Wendy Beetlestone	Francine McNairy	Lee Williams (via phone)
David Collins	Francis Michelini	Larry Wittig
Connie Davis (via phone)		

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the September 21, 2011 meeting of the State Board of Education were approved unanimously on a **Michelini/Nelson** motion.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Legislative Activity

Secretary Tomalis noted that there are the four pieces of education-related legislation that may see action by the House and Senate in the next few weeks. Those bills address: extension of the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC), charter school reform, school vouchers and teacher evaluation.

Teacher Evaluation

A web-based town-hall meeting on the new teacher evaluation system under development by the state was held in October. Secretary Tomalis reported that more than 1,400 participants joined in the event, hosted by the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU) and Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children. The Secretary also reported that over 100 LEAs are participating in Phase II of the teacher evaluation pilot program. He noted that state laws regarding teacher evaluation have not been substantively changed in more than 40 years.

Race to the Top

Secretary Tomalis report that, by the end of December 2011, the Department will know the outcome of its application for a Race to the Top Early Childhood Education grant. The Department awaits final guidance from the U.S. Department of Education on round III of the other Race to the Top competition, and the Secretary reported that Pennsylvania we will apply for at least a $28 million grant. A main component of the application will center around what Pennsylvania is doing to increase teacher effectiveness.

TeamPA

The Secretary reported that, last week, Executive Deputy Secretary Amy Morton, met with TeamPA to discuss the strategic plan being developed for the Department. TeamPA will advise PDE on economic development issues and help shape and implement the strategic plan.

Pennsylvania State University

Secretary Tomalis reported that The Pennsylvania State University Board of Trustees, of which he is a member, called for a special internal investigation to look into the indictment of former Penn State football coach Jerry Sandusky and other university employees. Ken Frazier, CEO of Merck, was named Chair of the internal investigative panel and Secretary Tomalis was named Vice Chair. The Secretary also reported that he and Governor Corbett recently met with PSU students representing student body organizations on campus and were very pleased to hear students' concerns about restoring Penn State's reputation and ensuring the university is known not for the events that allegedly took place on campus, but by the academic excellence and character of the students that attend the institution.

United States Department of Education (USDOE)

Secretary Tomalis will meet with USDOE Secretary Arne Duncan in December to discuss possible alternatives to the waivers the federal department plans to offer to the No Child Left Behind Act.

During discussion following the Secretary's report, Dr. Barker complimented the initiative of Secretary Tomalis on the teacher evaluation pilot program and the handling of recent issues at The Pennsylvania State University. Chairman Wittig also complimented the Department's efforts related to teacher evaluation and noted that his local school district, Tamaqua, has effectively used a similar system to provide support for struggling teachers.

Ms. Glenn highlighted a recent NASBE report on the teacher pipeline and teacher quality issues and requested that the Department prepare an analysis of where Pennsylvania policy stands on the issues addressed in the report and how the Board may help fill in any gaps. Ms. Glenn also asked whether there is a formal role for the State Board in the strategic planning process referenced by the Secretary. Mr. Tomalis responded that the plan is for PDE's internal

use, not for the Commonwealth, to ensure that the actions of the Department are focused on meeting its needs.

Junior student member Paul Ferrera, a Penn State student, echoed the Secretary's comments regarding the desire of Penn State students to be recognized for their academic achievements, not for the events highlighted recently in the media, following the indictment of university employees and the firing of the head football coach and university president

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Executive Director Carolyn Angelo reported on the following updates for the PSPC:

- At its most recent meeting on November 14, the Commission considered seven cases related to: corruption of minors; endangering the welfare of children; dissemination of explicit sexual material to minors; sexual abuse of children; and, insurance fraud. Mr. Angelo noted that three of the cased involved educators who hold a Pennsylvania certification but work outside the state and were disciplined by another jurisdiction.

- At the beginning of 2011, the PSPC received funding from the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education to develop an online ethics course for teachers. The Commission worked with a Millersville University professor to develop the toolkit, which was recently previewed at the PAC-TE Teacher Assembly. PSPC hopes to roll out this project statewide in January 2012.

- The Department's Office of Chief Council has a total of 278 active educator disciplinary cases at this time; 71 are designated as high-priority.

During discussion, Dr. McNairy inquired about what occurs when an individual loses or surrenders a Pennsylvania certificate and then moves out of state – does the state conduct follow-up to ensure other states are aware of the educator's status? Ms. Angelo said the PSPC sends notice of certification actions to all higher education institutions and posts decisions on its public web site. In addition, anytime an adverse action is taken against an educator, the information is entered into a national clearinghouse maintained by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification. Candidates who apply for certification in Pennsylvania are checked against this database.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sallie Lynagh, with the Disabilities Rights Network (DRN) of Pennsylvania, spoke on behalf of herself and Deborah Gordon Klehr, of the Education Law Center (ELC), regarding Chapter 10. Ms. Lynagh thanked both Senator Piccola & Representative Roebuck for opening the door to diverse stakeholder input by establishing a School Safety Advisory Committee as the vehicle for drafting the Chapter 10 regulations. Ms. Lynagh also thanked Jon Peri and the Board's School and University Safety Committee for being receptive and responsive to the input of those committee members and the subsequent recommendations of the DRN, ELC and its advocacy partners. Finally, Ms. Lynagh thanked all State Board members for recognizing the

need to appropriately support students with disabilities from criminalization of behavior that is a manifestation of the student's disability.

ACTION ITEMS

1115.1 FINAL-OMIT REGULATION: CHAPTER 10 (SAFE SCHOOLS)

A motion to approve the Final-Omit Regulation: Chapter 10 (Safe Schools) was made by Jonathan Peri. The motion was seconded by Dr. Nelson.

VOTE: Roll Call vote: 13-**YES**, 0-**NO**, 0-Abstentions. *(Agras, Barker, Beetlestone, Davis, Dungee Glenn, Hallett, McNairy, Michelini, Nelson, Peri, Farmer White, Williams and Wittig)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Witting announced that the final Pennsylvania School Library Study, approved by the Board in September, had been distributed publicly and a copy of the report was provided to each Board member as part of the November meeting materials.

Chairman Wittig also shared that the Pennsylvania Senate recently confirmed the nomination of Colleen Sheehan to serve on the State Board of Education. Ms. Sheehan will serve the remainder of the term vacated by Joe Torsella's departure from the Board and will join the Board at its January 2012 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m. on a McNairy/Michelini motion.

Stephanie L. Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant