MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

July 12, 2012

The 309th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Thursday, July 12, 2012. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Larry Wittig, Chairman.

Attending:

James Agras	Maureen Lally-Green	Mollie Phillips
James Barker	Paul Ferrera (via Phone)	Colleen Sheehan (via Phone)
Kevin Bates	Kirk Hallett	Karen Farmer White
Wendy Beetlestone	Francis Michelini	Lee Williams
Connie Davis (via Phone)	Jonathan Peri	Larry Wittig

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Larry Wittig recognized and thanked Dr. Michelini for hosting a State Board picnic for 14 consecutive years.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the May 10, 2012 meeting of the State Board of Education were approved unanimously on an **Agras/Phillips** motion.

COMMITTEE REPORT

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE RIEGELSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Wendy Beetlestone gave an update to her report at the May meeting on the actions taken by the Special Committee and the State Board on the application of the Riegelsville Independent School District for transfer from the Easton Area School District to the Palisades School District. Ms. Beetlestone reported that the Special Committee met on July 11 and voted to approve and forward to the State Board its report and recommendation on the Riegelsville application. The Committee developed its report and recommendation findings based on a public hearing in Riegelsville and a review of the court records related to the case. A copy of the report was provided to all Board members. The report recommended that the State Board approve the application for transfer of the Riegelsville Independent School District to the Palisades School District.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Executive Director, Carolyn Angelo reported the following updates on behalf of the PSPC:

- At its meeting on July 9, the Commission considered 25 discipline cases in the following categories:
  - 2 immediate suspensions (Corruption of Minors & Endangering Welfare of Children);
  - 18 Motions for Summary Judgment for Revocation (Sexual Abuse of Children, Tampering with Evidence, Endangering the Welfare of Children, Indecent Assault, Corruption of Minors, Theft by Unlawful Taking, Selling or Furnishing Alcohol to a Minor; Theft by Failure to Make Required Disposition of Funds Received, Unlawful Sexual Intercourse with a Minor (CA), Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor (SC), Contribution to the Delinquency of a Minor (VA), Lewdness (NJ), Public Decency (OH), Sexual Battery of a Child (FL), Lewd Molestation (FL), Sexual Battery (VA), DUE-Manslaughter, and Rape (DE));
  - 3 Surrenders (sexual abuse, sexual contact with another employee on school grounds, inappropriate relationship with students, providing alcohol to students);
  - 2 Suspensions (reciprocal discipline for inappropriate discipline and providing alcohol to students)

- Currently, the Department's Office of Chief Counsel has a total of 354 active educator discipline cases, 114 of which are designated as "high priority" because they involve allegations of sexual abuse or physical abuse of children. To date, 199 complaints have been filed with PDE in 2012.

- Three individuals have been nominated to serve on the PSPC: Douglas Enders, Camp Hill; Thomas Baker, Pittsburgh; and Lisa Barbour, Mars.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Terry Blue, an education advocate, thanked the State Board for its dedication to teacher educators.

Kathy Anderson, Riegelsville Independent School District Board Member, thanked the State Board for its effort in determining the approval for the transfer of Riegelsville to the Palisades School District.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Chairman Wittig announced that the Board recently received an application for a school district boundary change seeking to transfer the geographical area of Porter Township, Pike County, from the East Stroudsburg Area School District to the Wallenpaupack Area School District.

On August 3, 2011, the Court of Common Pleas of Pike County created an independent school district in contemplation of transfer as evidenced by Order No. 1895-2009. An appeal was filed in Commonwealth Court by the East Stroudsburg Area School District. On April 30, 2012, the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania affirmed the Court of Common Pleas of Pike County's decision with respect to this matter. The courts' rulings followed a determination issued last year by Secretary Tomalis that the transfer has merit from an educational standpoint.

Under the School Code, the State Board of Education has final authority to approve or deny the creation of Porter Township and its transfer from East Stroudsburg to Wallenpaupack. I To enable the Board to consider the application for transfer in an orderly and deliberative manner, Chairman Wittig announced that the Board would consider an action item to appoint a Special Committee to conduct such proceedings as might be necessary and appropriate under state law and State Board policy and procedure. Chairman Wittig reported that he has asked Wendy Beetlestone to chair the Special Committee, and Mollie Phillips and Kirk Hallett have agreed to join her in this work.

Following the conclusion of its proceedings, the Committee will make a recommendation to the full State Board on whether to approve or disapprove the transfer of Porter Township.

Mr. Wittig also announced that the State Board will publish a legal notice in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*, the *Pocono Record* and *The Pike County Dispatch* inviting members of the public to submit in writing petitions to intervene or to protest the transfer, and informing the public of the opportunity to request a public hearing on the matter. After the deadline for receiving such petitions and protests, the Special Committee will determine the proper manner in which to proceed with its consideration of Porter Township's application and assess the timeframe in which it is likely to make its recommendation to the full State Board.

ACTION ITEMS

0712.1 MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION OF THE RIEGELSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR TRANSFER FROM THE EASTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT TO THE PALISADES SCHOOL DISTRICT

A motion to approve the application of the Riegelsville Independent School District for transfer was made by Wendy Beetlestone and seconded by Mollie Phillips.

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

0712.2 RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE PORTER TOWNSHIP INITIATIVE

A motion to approve a resolution establishing a Special Committee on the Porter Township Initiative was made by Jonathan Peri and seconded by Kirk Hallett.

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

0712.3 2013 MEETING CALENDAR

A motion to approve the 2013 Meeting Calendar was made by James Agras and seconded by Mollie Phillips.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m. on a **Michelini/Williams** motion.

Stephanie L. Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant