MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

January 12, 2012

The 306th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Thursday, January 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 1:55 p.m. by Larry Wittig, Chairman.

Attending:

Erin Agnew
James Agras (via phone)
James Barker (via phone)
Wendy Beetlestone
Connie Davis (via phone)
Sandra Dungee Glenn
Kirk Hallett
Francis Michelini
Mollie Phillips (via phone)
Colleen Sheehan
Shannon Sullivan
Karen Farmer White (via phone)
A. Lee Williams
Larry Wittig

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the November 16, 2011 meeting of the State Board of Education were approved unanimously on a **Beetlestone/Michelini** motion.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Secretary Tomalis welcomed Colleen Sheehan to the State Board and personally acknowledged thanks to Dr. Ivory Nelson and Dan Fogarty who recently resigned from service to the Board. Mr. Tomalis also highlighted that Connie Kindler, former Camp Hill School District superintendent, will serve the Department temporarily as Executive Deputy Secretary during Amy Morton's leave of absence.

The Secretary provided remarks to the Board on the following items:

National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper (NBER)

Secretary Tomalis distributed the Executive Summary of a new NBER report on "The Long-Term Impacts of Teachers: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood." This Harvard and Columbia Universities study tracked more than 2.5 million students over 21 years and demonstrates the economic impact to students based on the quality of the teacher in the classroom. The study showed that simply helping a teacher who is at the lowest level of performance improve to demonstrate an average level of performance has the potential for a $1.4 million economic impact. The Secretary noted he would make the full report available to staff for distribution to Board members.

PSSA Forensic Analysis

The Secretary reported that school districts identified as having anomalies in PSSA data have received notices from the Department regarding the status of evidence submitted to PDE in response to the identified anomalies.

No Child Left Behind Implementation

Secretary Tomalis expressed his concern regarding the NCLB waiver proposal put forth by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). While meeting with USDE Secretary Arne Duncan in Washington recently, Secretary Tomalis opened discussion about amending the state's accountability workbook as an alternative to seeking an NCLB wavier. Pennsylvania proposes to freeze the AYP targets identified in the workbook until the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is reauthorized by Congress. Mr. Tomalis noted that this meeting was not a negotiation, but the beginning of a conversation about an alternative approach to NCLB flexibility.

Race to the Top

Pennsylvania was awarded a $41 million dollar federal grant for Race to The Top III. Pennsylvania joins 22 other states that have received Race to the Top grants. The grant will be allocated over the next four years by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

A strong component of Pennsylvania's application was use of the grant to support statewide implementation of a new teacher evaluation, which is currently being piloted in more than 100 school districts, charter schools, career and technical centers, and intermediate units. It will also provide the necessary means to develop a new principal evaluation, which is planned to be piloted during the 2012-13 school year. Once the new teacher and principal evaluations are developed, the evaluations will give parents, taxpayers and school leaders the ability to assess the quality of individuals tasked with educating students. Evaluations will also provide individual teachers and principals with meaningful feedback to help them to better serve students and increase achievement.

The Race to the Top grant also will be used to support the development of online course materials in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). The Department will work with the state's Intermediate Units to create a catalog of high-quality opportunity for online learning in STEM. In addition to Race to the Top, Secretary Tomalis noted that Pennsylvania was awarded $38 million in September as part of the Striving Readers Grant Comprehensive Literacy Program grant. In total, nearly $80 million in competitive federal grants was awarded to Pennsylvania in 2011 to improve educational opportunities for students.

During discussion following the Secretary's report, Erin Agnew asked how freezing AYP targets would affect the curriculum development work reported on earlier by Deputy Secretary Dumaresq. The Secretary stated that efforts to align curriculum with the Common Core standards would not be affected at all and that work related to the Common Core would move forward regardless of the outcome of the Department's request to amend its Accountability Workbook.

Sandra Dungee Glenn requested that the Secretary share a summary of the state's Race to the Top application. Ms. Glenn then asked the Secretary to explain the difference between pursuing a waiver of federal requirements related to No Child Left Behind and the approach being pursued by the Department to amend its Accountability Workbook. The Secretary replied that the waivers being offered by USDE require states to adopt a number of new reform principals that there is no foundation to require based on current federal law. The Secretary also noted that the proposal to freeze the state's AYP targets would not impact the state's assessment system and that PSSA and Keystone Exams would continue to be administered.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Chairman Wittig announced that a representative of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC) was unable to join the Board for today's meeting, but that the PSPC had submitted a written report which members could review at their leisure. Highlights of this report are as follows:

- At its most recent meeting on January 9, the Commission considered 10 cases related to: arrests/convictions for Corruption of Minors, Indecent Assault, Deviate Sexual Intercourse, Aggravated Indecent Assault, Endangering Welfare of Children, Dissemination of Explicit Sexual Material to a Minor, Sexual Abuse of Children and Possession of Pornography.

- PSPC considered whether comparable discipline should be imposed against the certification of three educators who hold Pennsylvania certification and were professionally disciplined in other states for misconduct under our reciprocity provision.

- PSPC will make available, by the end of January, an 8-module online ethics course that will be available on the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education's (PASSHE) website for all teacher preparation programs as well as local school entities. The eight modules include:
  - -the ethical teacher;
  - -private and professional lives;
  - -relationships with students;
  - -the connected teacher;
  - -teaching in a diverse society;
  - -improper or personal gain;
  - -the ethical colleague; and
  - -fostering an ethical climate.

- The Department's Office of Chief Counsel has a total of 281 active educator discipline cases, 103 of which are designated as "high priority" because they involve allegations of sexual abuse or physical abuse of children.

- In 2011, PSPC had 95 cases opened as compared to an average of 36 a year for the past 10 years. It is anticipated with expansions in the Commission's jurisdiction and mandatory reporting that the caseload will continue to exponentially increase.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

0112.1 RESOLUTION HONORING DAN FOGARTY

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Dan Fogarty's service to the Board was made by Francis Michelini and seconded by Connie Davis.

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

0112.2 RESOLUTION HONORING IVORY NELSON

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Ivory Nelson's service to the Board was made by Francis Michelini and seconded by Sandra Dungee Glenn.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Wittig announced that, in the State Board binder, all members have received a draft copy of the 2011 Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly. This report recaps the Board's activities during 2011 and provides an overview of the Board's membership and statutory responsibilities. The final report will be transmitted to the legislature and posted on the Board's website at the end of January.

Dr. Barker congratulated the Department of Education's staff for their efforts in securing the Race to The Top III grant.

Mr. Wittig also noted that the 2012 Board Committee Assignments list was available in the State Board binder, and that all Board members had been contacted by the Chairman regarding changes in Committee assignments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m. on a Michelini/Phillips motion.

Stephanie Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant