MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

333 Market Street, Honors Suite, Harrisburg, PA
November 13, 2013

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Wittig at 1:05 pm.

Attending:

Carol Aichele	Karen Farmer-White *(via phone)*	Colleen Sheehan
James Barker *(via phone)*	James Grandon	Craig Snider
Kevin Bates	Kirk Hallett	A. Lee Williams
Wendy Beetlestone	Maureen Lally-Green *(via phone)*	Larry Wittig
Emily Clark	Jonathan Peri	

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Mr. Larry Wittig, Chairman of the State Board of Education, called to order the Committee of the Whole at 1:05 p.m. Mr. Wittig introduced and welcomed new members to the Board – the Honorable Carol Aichele, Council of Basic Education, and Craig Snide, Council of Higher Education. Mr. Wittig then announced that James Grandon was appointed by Gov. Corbett as the new Chairman of the Council of Higher Education. He thanked Dr. Francis Michelini for his service in leadership of the Council.

Mr. Wittig announced that Highmark has committed a $20,000 donation to sustain the Board's student leadership program. He thanked Highmark for its support, without which the program faced closure.

Finally, Mr. Wittig announced that the Board was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. He read an excerpt from then-Governor Scranton's remarks at the Board's inaugural meeting on October 22, 1963, and drew attention to a historic ceremonial banner on display to commemorate the anniversary.

Mr. Wittig then turned to Mr. Grandon who called to order the Council of Higher Education at 1:12 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 11, 2013 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Beetlestone/Peri** motion.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY
HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. L. Jill Hans, Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary/Higher Education provided the following report:

Update on Process for Transition to one Certificate for School Counselors

Background

- The PA School Counselor Guidelines Committee recommended merging the two school counselor certifications currently granted by the Commonwealth into one comprehensive PreK-12 certification for all school counselor candidates. The Department formalized and approved guidelines to undergo the transition to one certificate.

Update

- During the transition, the Department will take measure to ensure students who are currently enrolled in an expiring program have their needs met and students interested in matriculating in the new combined certificate program are able to do so.
- PDE is proposing a June 30, 2014, completion date for all students enrolled in either the Elementary K-6 or Secondary 7-12 certificate programs. Currently enrolled students will fall into one of two categories: those who are able to complete their studies by the expiration date and those who will need to transition into the new combined certificate program. Education preparation programs are responsible for identifying and advising affected students. The Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education (OPHE) will be proactive in reaching out to programs to ensure they have plans in place to address student needs.
- Based on follow-up conversations with the school counselor field, PDE will require preparation providers to implement the new program guidelines by June 30, 2014. Most providers, if not all, already are prepared to begin their training programs in the combined K-12 certification format. OPHE anticipates that all programs currently offering the individual certificates will make the transition to offer the combined certificate.
- OPHE is prepared to accept preparation program recommendations of candidates for the new certificate immediately if the student is able to demonstrate competency in the combined K-12 grade span and is able to pass the professional school counselor assessment.

GED Test Expiration

- The current GED test will be discontinued at the end of 2013. OPHE been anticipating and preparing for this change over the past eighteen months.
- Due to significant changes in the test structure as well as changes in the content of the assessment, GED Testing Services has determined that there will be no grandfathering of

partial scores. For this reason, OPHE has undertaken significant outreach to the adult education community in an effort to encourage students to complete all parts of the test prior to the end of the year.

- Decisions to change to exam and not to grandfather partial test scores were made by the GED testing company; PDE had no input into those matters.
- In addition to efforts to reach students who are at risk of being caught in the transition period, OPHE has been working with testing centers to assist them in the transition to become computer-based testing centers; currently, many testing centers are paper-based only. These efforts will benefit individuals seeking access to the new test after January 1, 2014.
- In addition to addressing student access needs centered around the expiring test, OPHE also has issued a request for information to gather data to assess the quality of alternative high school equivalency tests. These alternative tests recently have been developed and are now available for consideration, along with the new GED test. OPHE will begin reviewing those submissions shortly.
- Test questions on the new GED test are tied to the Common Core standards and have been field tested by field professionals.
- The Department chose to stay with the GED test because at the time the change was announced there were not many alternative tests, and also because of the GED's known track record. The state GED administrator has been working with GED program providers to get the testing centers transitioned and ready.

ANNUAL ACT 101 PROGRAM REPORT

Ms. Christine Zuzack, Vice President of State Grants and Special Programs, Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, provided an update on the Higher Education for the Disadvantaged Program, commonly referred to as Act 101. Ms. Zuzack reminded the Board that governance of such programs previously fell under the State Board of Education until the legislature recently moved program administration and oversight from PDE to PHEAA. Ms. Zuzack said the agency welcomed the opportunity to continue providing the Board with an annual update on Act 101 programs. She provided the following information in her report:

- Operating budget for 2012-13 is $2.2 million to support 38 programs, which represents a significant reduction from $9.3 million to support programs at 75 institutions in 2007.
- Individual institutional awards range from $30,000 to $180,000, with an average of about $59,810 per program. Allocations are based on a per capita distribution of funds based on the number of students served, and institutions must contribute 15%-25% toward the total program operating budget. A minimum of 50 Act 101 students are required for an institution to participate.
- Eligible students must be Pennsylvania residents who are educationally or economically disadvantaged. Academically at-risk students are usually those with a predicted grade

point average of 2.0 or less on a 4.0 scale. Economically disadvantaged students must be within 200% of the federal poverty guidelines; the federal poverty guideline was $23,000 for a family of 4 in 2012. Thus, $46,000 is the income level for a family of 4 for Act 101 eligibility.

- Students are required to apply for all financial aid available to them to help meet educational costs.
- Eligible institutions are those that offer a developmental program and agree to abide by the Act 101 program guidelines. Participating institutions must provide services to students for at least two years in a 4-year program and at least one year in a 2-year program.
- Preliminary data from institutions for 2012-13 indicates that 3,939 students participated in Act 101, including 32 veterans (71% at 4-year institutions; 29% at 2-year institutions). The average grade point average for participants is a C+/B-.
- PHEAA requested a 5% funding increase for FY 2013-14 due to program providers' concerns about sustaining services with diminished funding.
- Temple University, Cheyney University and Misericordia University each stopped participating in Act 101 in 2013-14 due to funding.
- The services institutions provide may vary, but in general there are core services offered at all of them, which include counseling, tutoring, student orientation, and academic guidance to the participants. Many of the schools use their allocations for programs that help support a lending library for textbooks, help with technology and computers, and also recognition for students, for travel and other experiences that can help them better benefit from higher education. Some institutions offer peer mentor programs; also many institutions offer summer bridge programs where students come for one to five weeks to have an experience that helps prepare them better for college and understand what is required of them upon entering the institution.
- Each Act 101 program is also required to have an advisory board that includes members of the community.
- PHEAA is beginning to get finalized outcome data from 2012-13:
    - 3,900 students participated, including 32 veterans
    - 71% attended 4-year institutions and 29% attended 2-year instructions
    - The average GPA for participants is C+/B-, very encouraging for students anticipated to have failing grades
    - The financial aid received for these 3,900 students was $76 million, of which 58% was grant or scholarship funds
- Statistics for student retention and graduation are still being analyzed and will be available at a later time.
- PHEAA has also been helping state program coordinators to better assess where and how they can maintain the programs in light of diminishing funding. For 2013-14, three additional programs have been lost from Act 101 participation.

- For the 2014-15 fiscal year, the PHEAA Board of Directors has requested a 5% increase in Act 101 funding for the 2014-15 academic year.
- Act 101 program funds strictly pay for services; it is prohibited from being used for student financial aid.
- Actual per capita cost is approximately $640 per student.
- Some institutions have elected not to participate in Act 101 due to the administrative costs, preference to focus on college-ready students, inability to maintain the required 50-student minimum, and/or the inability to have a dedicated program director.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Karen Molchanow

Karen Molchanow
Executive Director