MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

January 10, 2013

The 312th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Thursday, January 10, 2013. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Larry Wittig, Chairman.

Attending:

Erin Agnew	Connie Davis (via phone)	Jonathan Peri (via phone)
James Agras (via phone)	Sandra Dungee Glenn	Mollie Phillips
James Barker (via phone)	James Grandon, Jr.	Colleen Sheehan (via phone)
Kevin Bates	Kirk Hallett	Karen Farmer White (via phone)
Wendy Beetlestone	Maureen Lally-Green (via phone)	Lee Williams
Emily Clark	Francis Michelini	Larry Wittig

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the November 15, 2012 meeting of the State Board of Education were approved unanimously on a **Dungee Glenn/Hallett** motion.

COMMITTEE REPORT

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE PORTER TOWNSHIP INITIATIVE INDEPENENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Wendy Beetlestone, Committee Chair, reported that the Special Committee created by the State Board in July 2012 held its first meeting earlier that morning. The Committee was created to consider the application of the Porter Township Initiative Independent School District for transfer from the East Stroudsburg Area School District to the Wallenpaupack Area School District. Upon receipt of the application, the Committee made public notice of the opportunity to intervene, protest or request a public hearing on the application. No communications were received from members of the public, but the East Stroudsburg Area School District notified the Committee of its intent to intervene.

At its morning meeting, the Special Committee set dates for an evidentiary hearing on the application in response to East Stroudsburg's request to intervene. A hearing will be scheduled over two days – May 16-17, 2013 – at the library of East Stroudsburg Area High School North. Ms. Beetlestone stated that the timeline to present a report to the Board making a final recommendation on the application is September 2013, which would allow ample time for students to transfer schools for the 2014-2015 school year should the application be approved.

Ms. Beetlestone reported that the Special Committee also took action to approve the documents comprising the pre-hearing record relating to the application. The adopted pre-hearing record included the determination issued by Secretary Tomalis, the administrative record compiled by the Secretary, and the stipulated court record as agreed to by counsel for the parties involved in the matter.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Secretary Ronald Tomalis acknowledged the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut and expressed his sympathy for the parents, families, professional educators and staff that were directly impacted. The Secretary also welcomed Senator Folmer, the new Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, in his new role as a member of the State Board of Education.

Federal Funding

Secretary Tomalis explained that the impact of potential sequestration on schools in Pennsylvania would not be felt until the 2013-14 school year because education is essentially forward funded at the federal level. One exception to this would be Impact Aid, which does receive funding in the same year that it is appropriated.

ESEA Flexibility Waivers

Pennsylvania currently has a team in Washington D.C. to discuss the parameters of the waivers for instituting changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Secretary said the U.S. Department of Education is looking closely at how student data will be utilized in educator evaluation, and noted that California recently was denied for a waiver because its plan lacked a connection to student data in its evaluation system.

Teacher Education

The Secretary discussed a new report on improving teacher education programs that was endorsed by the Council of Chief State School Officers. He said the report will serve as a guide for change and promised to share the document with members of the Board.

Financial Recovery (Chapter 18)

The Secretary reported that there are currently four school districts in financial recovery status and Chief Recovery Officers (CRO) are in place in three of the four districts. The CROs are working to develop a strategic plan to move the districts forward and put them on a strong financial footing. Secretary Tomalis further reported that the school board of the Chester-Upland School District, the first district placed in financial recovery status, rejected the plan that was developed by its CRO and the local Court of Common Pleas subsequently appointed Joe Watkins as receiver for the district.

Kirk Hallett asked the Secretary to highlights contents of the recovery plan developed for Chester-Upland and to discuss why the place was rejected by the local school board. The Secretary stated that the school board voted 5-4 against the plan which would have consolidated students in building that were under capacity, relocated the school's administration into the high school, adjusted programming to reflect the loss of students to charter schools, and sought to bring in other operators if improvement is not seen within 3-4 years.

PSSA

Secretary Tomalis reported that 140 complaints have been issued to educators in 15 school districts and two charter schools for investigations into inappropriate behavior surrounding the PSSAs.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

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

- At its upcoming January meeting, the Commission will consider 50 discipline cases.
- The PSPC is still in the process of pursuing consideration for amendments to the Professional Educator Discipline Act, which is currently with the House and Senate Appropriations Committee. Representative Bernie O'Neill has agreed to sponsor the amendments at the House Education Committee meeting on January 22, 2013. Senator Lloyd Smucker has agreed to continue his sponsorship of these amendments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

FINAL-OMITTED REGULATION: CHAPTER 31 (GENERAL PROVISIONS)

A motion to approve the Final-Omitted Regulation on Chapter 31 was made by James Agras and seconded by Francis Michelini.

VOTE: Roll Call vote: 14-**YES**, 0-**NO**, 0-Abstentions. (*Agras, Barker, Beetlestone, Davis, Dungee-Glenn, Grandon, Lally-Green, Hallett, Michelini, Phillips, C. Sheehan, Farmer White, Williams and Wittig)*

PROPOSED REGULATION: CHAPTER 18 (FINANCIAL RECOVERY)

A motion to approve the Proposed Regulation on Chapter 18 and to authorize Board staff to make any revisions necessary to conform with regulatory requirements was made by Maureen Lally-Green and seconded by Mollie Phillips.

VOTE: Roll Call vote: 15-**YES**, 0-**NO**, 0-Abstentions. (*Agras, Barker, Beetlestone, Davis, Dungee-Glenn, Grandon, Lally-Green, Hallett, Michelini, Peri, Phillips, C. Sheehan, Farmer White, Williams and Wittig)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Wittig announced that the Board has received an application from The Educational Enrichment Initiative (TEEI) seeking re-approval of its accrediting authority. TEEI's authority is limited to reviewing private tutoring centers and educational testing and remedial centers. Both the Private Academic Schools Act and Chapter 52 place responsibility on the State Board for approving organizations authorized to accredit private and non-public schools programs in the Commonwealth. Approval to serve as an accrediting body is granted for a five-year period, after which organizations must re-apply if they wish to continue serving this role. TEEI's submission has been shared with appropriate Department of Education staff who will evaluate it and make a recommendation on the application. Kirk Hallett has agreed to serve as the Board's liaison to the Department in reviewing TEEI's application. It is anticipated that Kirk will bring a recommendation on the application for the Board's consideration in May. A copy of TEEI's application is available for inspection in the State Board office for members of the public who have an interest in this matter.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Stephanie L. Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant