MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

July 9, 2014

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Wittig at 1:04 pm.

Attending:

Carol Aichele	James Grandon	Jonathan Peri
Jay Badams	Kirk Hallett	Justin Reynolds
James Barker	Maureen Lally-Green	Colleen Sheehan (via phone)
Wendy Beetlestone	Teresa Lebo	A. Lee Williams
Sandra Dungee Glenn	Donald LeCompte	Larry Wittig

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 14, 2014 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Peri/Dungee Glenn** motion.

The minutes of the March 12, 2014 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Williams/Peri** motion.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Mr. Larry Wittig, Chairman of the State Board of Education, opened the meeting of the Committee of the Whole with the following remarks:

- Introduction and welcome of new junior student member of the Council of Higher Education Ms. Teresa Lebo
- Introduction and welcome of new junior student member of the Council of Basic Education Mr. Donald LeCompte
- Announcement of Senate confirmation of board member Dr. James Barker to another term on the State Board of Education

Mr. Wittig then recognized Mr. James Grandon, Chairman of the Council of Higher Education, and Mr. Grandon called the Council to order.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY
HIGHER EDUCATION

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

High School Equivalency Assessment

- Mr. Hans provided an update to her previous reports that GED Testing Service planned to retire the 2002 version of its high school equivalency assessment and implement a new 2014 version.
- In spite of communications with adult education service providers over the 18 months prior to expiration of the old GED test in December 2013, many individuals did not successfully complete all five subsections of the assessment.
- The Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education (OPHE) had particular concerns for these individuals because GED Testing Service notified states that there would be no grandfathering of passing scores from one test version to another test version. The impact of this policy was that individuals who did not successfully complete all five subsections of the 2002 test version would forfeit any passing subsections of that version and begin new in the 2014 test version.
- At the request of members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, as of May 14, the Office of Postsecondary implemented a process of grandfathering eligible 2002 scores to combine with passing scores from the 2014 assessment.
- While GED Testing Service did not support this decision, they have recognized Pennsylvania's authority over issuance of the Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma and have provided technical assistance to OPHE in support of this grandfathering process.
- The grandfathering process applies to individuals who may have eligible scores on one or more subsections of the 2002 assessment. Eligible passing scores from the 2002 assessment are combined with passing scores from the 2014 assessment to qualify for a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma.
- While there were scoring challenges to overcome, OPHE believes it has addressed them in such a way as to maintain the integrity of the test for all students.
- As of July 7, OPHE received approximately 1,600 inquiries from individuals looking to determine eligibility of their 2002 test scores. Of the 1,600 inquiries, approximately 900 individuals were notified that they had eligible scores. Since January 1, 2014, approximately 10 individuals were awarded a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma through the grandfathering process.
- OPHE also has increased the number of testing sites from approximately 130 paper-based sites to a projected estimate of 200 computer-based sites by the end of 2014.

- During the transition time last year, several vendors created an alternative high school equivalency assessment. OPHE issued a Request For Information to gather details about these alternative assessments and is now planning to issue a Request For Proposals to determine if any of these meet our requirements.

WIA Incentive Fund Award

- The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) requires states to maintain a comprehensive performance accountability system to assess the effectiveness of service providing agencies in achieving continuous improvement in their adult education and literacy activities.
- The U.S. Departments of Labor and Education announced in April that Pennsylvania was one of eight states who qualified to receive a $1.4 million dollar incentive award established under the Workforce Investment Act for meeting performance levels during the 2012 program year. Performance measures are related to gaining employment after training and related services, as well as retention in employment and improvements in literacy levels.
- OPHE will use the incentive funds: 1) to purchase technology for integration into basic skills instruction focused on preparing adults to earn a high school equivalency credential and transitioning to employment as well as successfully enrolling in postsecondary education or training and 2) to purchase vouchers for the GED Ready practice test.
- Technology funds will be made available to providers on a competitive basis, and there will be some basic criteria necessary to qualify for GED Ready practice test vouchers. OPHE plans to have the necessary guidelines and processes in place by September 2014.

POTENTIAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Council Chairman Grandon invited discussion regarding a list of potential community college survey questions that had been distributed in May for the Board's review. Mr. Grandon stated that the survey questions are designed to gather information from the state's 14 community colleges about their current challenges, measures the institutions are taking to operate more efficiently, and the status of dual enrollment of other programs. Information gathered from the survey would be compiled in a White Paper released by the Council to highlight issues surrounding community colleges in the Commonwealth as well as to share information and ideas among the institutions.

Mr. Wittig asked whether the survey should include a question on competitiveness of other regional postsecondary opportunities and how this competition might cause challenges for community colleges. Ms. Hans replied that a survey comprehensive of more institutions would be required to address whether there is a duplication of services. Mr. Grandon suggested circulating the survey as drafted to the community colleges to see if the responses received raise issues of competition as a concern.

Mr. Peri asked whether including certain questions on the survey created implications for actions that should be taken by the institutions. He suggested that a cover letter might be accompany the survey to relay the intended outcomes of the effort.

Dr. Williams expressed concern for the need to be respectful of people's time and effort to complete the survey. She asked who would be responsible for compiling, categorizing and analyzing the data when it comes in and determining its meaning. Karen Molchanow, Executive Director of the Board, responded that Board would request each community college to identify a point person to compile the requested information from the various offices among the institution that would have the data and then submit it through an electronic survey tool. Determining the meaning of the information would be the purview of the Council and the full State Board of Education.

Mr. Grandon reiterated the need for the community colleges to engage in self-reflection to identify mechanisms to better run their institutions and to identify common issues that they can unify in trying to solve. Dr. Barker agreed that the survey would draw positive attention to the work of our community colleges that often feel in the shadow of larger institutions.

Hon. Lally-Green said questions related to challenges faced by the institutions were focused on specific topics and requested that a more open-ended question be added regarding the challenges generally faced in fulfilling the colleges' missions. Dr. Williams supported Hon. Lally-Green's request.

Ms. Dungee-Glenn suggested adding a question regarding industry-based partnerships. Ms. Molchanow responded that she would consult with the Department to determine if such information already is collected by the agency.

PUBLIC COMMENT

While there were no comments from members of the public, Mr. Hallett expressed his gratitude to Ms. Hans for her efforts regarding GED grandfathering.

ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Grandon called for a motion to endorse the community college survey and for Board staff to move forward with distributing the survey to the Commonwealth's 14 community colleges on behalf of the Council of Higher Education. The community college survey was approved on a Williams/Dungee-Glenn motion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Karen Molchanow/sf

Karen Molchanow
Executive Director