MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

333 Market Street, Honors Suite, Harrisburg, PA
May 14, 2014

The meeting was called to order by Chairman James Grandon at 1:00 pm.

Attending:

Carol Aichele
Jay Badams
James Barker
Kevin Bates
Emily Clark
James Grandon
Kirk Hallett
Maureen Lally-Green (via phone)
Jonathan Peri (via phone)
Mollie Phillips
Justin Reynolds
Colleen Sheehan (via phone)
A. Lee Williams
Larry Wittig

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

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

- Introduction and welcome of new member of the State Board of Education and Council of Basic Education, Dr. Jay Badams, Superintendent of the Erie School District.
- Introduction and welcome of new high school student member of the Board, Mr. Donald LeCompte, who will serve a two-year term on the Council of Basic Education beginning in July.
- Expressed thanks to Mr. Kirk Hallett for his assistance in representing the Board in the high school student member selection process.
- Announcement of new postsecondary student member of the Board, Ms. Theresa Lebo, who will begin a two-year term on the Council of Higher Education in July.

Mr. James Grandon, Chairman of the Council of Higher Education, announced that the Council lacked the quorum necessary to consider action items and, due to lack of quorum, the minutes of the March 12, 2014 Council meeting would be held over for consideration at the Council's next meeting in July.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. Theresa Barnaby, Director of the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality, on behalf of Ms. L. Jill Hans, Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary/Higher Education, provided the following report:

Expiring Tests

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) announced it would eliminate five Praxis II certification assessments in June 2014. Ms. Barnaby discussed the Department's plans to address the exams that are being eliminated and their associated certifications as follows:

- The Communications exam has been replaced by ETS in standard manner and does not require any additional measures.
- Instructional and Vocational Cooperative Education *Assessment* (Cooperative Education *Certificate)*: ETS agreed to extend the test's availability until 2016 to permit program completion by the 70 students who are midway through a program. A preliminary discussion with the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) occurred in April 2014, and NOCTI may develop a replacement assessment. PDE is considering recognizing other certificates for this area.
- Instructional Environmental Education PreK-12 *Assessment* (Environmental Education *Certificate)*: ETS agreed to extend the test's availability until 2016 to permit program completion by the 10 students who are midway through a program. Minimal impact is anticipated if the certificate is no longer issued after 2016. Agriculture and all other science certificates – Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Earth and Space, plus General Science – may teach environmental science.
- Instructional Safety/Driver Education 7-12 *Assessment* (Safety/Driver Education *Certificate)*: ETS agreed to transfer ownership and rights of the existing test to PDE in July 2014. PDE will update the existing private driver training instructor test administered by the Department. Candidates for Driver Education will be required to have a valid instructional certificate in any content area and the private driver training instructor license.
- Social Science Content *Assessment* (Social Science 7-12 *Certificate)*: There are no students currently enrolled in this program and no replacement test is available. PDE will allow the certificate to become inactive. The more comprehensive *Social Studies* certificate already certifies a teacher to teach the *Social Sciences 7-12.*

Student Teaching Assessment

- The Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality (BSLTQ) is exploring a new student teaching assessment because the current evaluation form is not consistent with the state's new method of educator evaluation now being used in public schools. BSLTQ feels it is in the best interest of students to provide them exposure to how their professional evaluations will be conducted and, at the same time, utilize an assessment that provides reflective feedback.
- BSLTQ issued a Request for Information (RFI) inviting vendors to submit information regarding their student teacher assessment tools. The Bureau received four responses to the RFI, two of which did not constitute assessments. The Department is reviewing and will submit additional questions on two relevant submissions – ETS's Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT) and Pearson's edTPA – and Ms. Barnaby discussed the differences between the two assessment systems.
- Ms. Barnaby said the Department has not yet made a decision about whether it will utilize an assessment developed by a third party or whether PDE might develop its own.

She said prior to making a decision, PDE will convene both higher education and basic education faculty to review the available options, and that the Department also plans to conduct a pilot evaluation with higher education and school districts before making a change. She emphasized that the Department will not be rushing into implementing a new system across the Commonwealth.

Basic Skills Assessment

BSLTQ would like to add the ETS Core assessment to the options available for students to meet the requirements of a "basic skills" assessment under 22 PA Code 49.18 (Assessment). The ETS Core is a nationally administered assessment produced by a reputable testing company with an established testing network within Pennsylvania. There will be no additional cost to taxpayers to offer this option. Further, adding the ETS Core may streamline the certification process for candidates who already hold a certification from another state since the assessment is utilized by other states.

Certification by Adding-On

- To maintain high standards for content and pedagogy while providing school districts with more flexibility for assignment, PDE will permit teachers with valid instructional certificates to add the PreK-4 and 4-8 certificates by passing the required certification assessment, effective August 1, 2014. The Department is making this change in response to superintendents' concerns about staffing flexibility under the revised PreK-4 and 4-8 certificates.
- Most other certificates, including all secondary subjects, can be added to a valid instructional certificate by passing the test.
- Chapter 49 specifically excludes special education, health and physical education and Cooperative education from adding-on through testing.

PreK-4 Certificate Content Assessment

BSLTQ is taking steps to explore why scores on the new PreK-4 certification assessment have decreased since the new assessment began in April 2012. Decreased scores may be due to program misalignment, quality of the assessment and/or increased rigor and standards. Because of possible multiple factors, PDE is taking the following steps:

- BSLTQ has contracted with content experts to create eligible content and anchors. These anchors will be used to determine if preparation programs have aligned their new PreK-4 curriculum with the new competencies in the PDE-approved program guidelines. The new anchors and eligible content also will help to determine if the new assessments are fully aligned to the preparation program guidelines. Finally, PDE will use the anchors and eligible content to identify available remedial material.
- BSLTQ has requested that Pearson – the test developer – provide a comparison of pass rates of five surrounding states in order to determine whether other states also are having a struggle with testing and the new standards, and to attempt to determine if the problem is with the test itself.

- In the interim period, BSLTQ is recommending lowering the cut score on the PreK-4 certification assessment by one (-1.0) standard error of measure. This will provide temporary relief to programs and students until the Bureau has more definitive information, and the change would be retroactive to apply to students who previously have taken the exam.
- At the end of its review, the Department may recommend one or a combination of actions: re-align programs to standards and competencies; adoption of an additional assessment; elimination of an assessment; recalculation of cut score permanently.

Major Review

The PRS System for Major Review, an online program, is not working. A temporary hold has been placed on the schools that have entered program data into the system. As it determines next steps, PDE is using the problem as an opportunity to determine if it is asking the right questions related only to the requirements of Chapter 354 and Chapter 49 and whether outcomes-based questions are being asked.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Grandon called for public comment. The following individuals offered remarks to the Board.

- Mr. Bernie Miller, PSEA, inquired about the 70 students currently enrolled in programs to earn a Cooperative Education Certificate. He asked how many of those students were full-time and what would happen if part-time students do not complete their programs by 2016 when the current certification test expires.

  Ms. Barnaby responded that PDE pushed ETS as far as it could to continue offering the current Instructional and Vocational Cooperative Education Assessment through 2016. She said she met with the three programs in which the students are enrolled to make them aware of the situation, and it was through them the Department got an interest in potentially having NOCTI develop a new test. If NOCTI creates a new certification test, candidates who do not take the current test by 2016 will take the new test. However, Ms. Barnaby said the programs believe they can prepare the students sufficiently to take the current test by 2016 even if they have not completed all of their coursework.

- Mr. Jay Hertzog, President of the Pennsylvania Association Colleges and Teacher Educators (PAC-TE), thanked those members of the Board who attended PAC-TE's spring conference. He also introduced Dr. Sally Winterton, Interim Associate Dean for the College of Education at West Chester University, who will succeed him as president of PAC-TE effective June 30, 2014.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Grandon reported that the work of the Board's College Textbook Policies Advisory Committee continues, and said the Committee held its spring quarterly meeting on April 29, 2014. Mr. Grandon also said the Committee is a year out from issuing its next required report to the General Assembly, and would like to include case studies of innovative measures being taken on campuses in Pennsylvania to reduce the cost of textbooks and materials to students. He invited members of the Council to share case studies to be highlighted in the report.

Mr. Grandon then directed the Council's attention to a survey he requested the Council consider distributing to community colleges. He said the survey is designed to gather information from the 14 community colleges across the commonwealth regarding their current challenges, measures the institutions are taking to operate more efficiently and the status of their dual enrollment programs. Information gathered from the survey would be compiled into a White Paper issued by the Council. Mr. Grandon requested that his colleagues review the draft questions and come to the Council's July meeting prepared to provide feedback on the survey and whether they would support the Council moving forward with the initiative.

Mr. Grandon invited Keith Baily, Director of Research at the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges, to address the Council. Mr. Bailey spoke in support of the draft survey distributed by Mr. Grandon and said that while community colleges welcome a spotlight, they recognize that higher education in general shares some of the same challenges related to enrollment, funding, accountability, scrutiny, and so forth. He noted that community colleges are somewhat unique in their open-admissions policy, which leads to a need to provide a larger volume of developmental education than other higher education sectors. To that end, Mr. Bailey said it is important to recognize that degrees are not the only reason community colleges exist. Mr. Bailey stated that most community college students do not attend to receive a degree. He noted that, in recent years, approximately 16,000 community college students annually received awards of various levels – degrees, certificates and diplomas – and more than twice that number transferred to other institutions of higher education. He said many accountability measures are focused on outcomes that assume students attend for just one or two purposes, while community colleges serve a variety of student needs.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Karen Molchanow
Executive Director