MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

May 15, 2014

The 320th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Thursday, May 15, 2014. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 8:55 a.m. by Larry Wittig, Chairman.

Attending:

James Agras
Carol Aichele
Jay Badams
James Barker
Kevin Bates
Emily Clark
Sandra Dungee Glenn *(via phone)*
James Grandon
Kirk Hallett
Francis Michelini
Jonathan Peri *(via phone)*
Mollie Phillips
Justin Reynolds
Colleen Sheehan *(via phone)*
A. Lee Williams
Larry Wittig

The minutes of the March 13, 2014 meeting of the State Board of Education were approved on a **Michelini/Hallett** motion. The minutes of the January 9, 2014 meeting of the State Board for Vocational Education were approved on an **Agras/Hallett** motion.

REPORT OF THE ACTING SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Dr. Carolyn Dumaresq provided a status report on the following subjects:

2014-15 Education Budget

The Acting Secretary noted that although the Commonwealth has been experiencing difficulty with revenues, the Governor has indicated that education remains a priority for him. Dr. Dumaresq also said work continues related to pension issues.

School Performance Profile

Dr. Dumaresq reported that the School Performance Profile (SPP) launched in September 2013 has logged over 300,000 visits since that time. Parents are the primary users of the site at 33% of its web traffic, followed by teachers at 22% and school administrators at 19%. The SPP site will be refreshed in the fall of 2014.

Data Collection Consolidation

The Acting Secretary introduced a new project the Department is undertaking related to data collection consolidation. Dr. Dumaresq has heard concerns from superintendents about the

burden of data collection for PDE and repetition of requests for the same data. In response, PDE has formed a group to focus on data collection in the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) in an effort to streamline the number of times the Department conducts data collection and to reduce the number of data points that PDE collects to focus on those items that have a regulatory or statutory base. Dr. Dumaresq said she hopes the new system will be in place this coming fall. Further, Dr. Dumaresq said she is aware that there is other data collection that occurs outside of PIMS and said the Department will turn its attention to reviewing those shortly.

Standards Aligned Systems (SAS)

English Language Learner (ELL) overlays have been added to the SAS website for math and reading. These overlays take the state academic standards and provide instructional strategies for students who are not proficient in the English language. The overlays were developed by Pennsylvania educators who teach ELL students.

Priority Schools

PDE is rolling out a new program called FIRST that will allow principals and teachers to take a hard look at their curriculum and material alignment to make sure that students are being taught the content of the state's academic standards in a valid way and allow them to trace student learning progressions. This resource will be available to schools at no charge.

PRESENTATION

Dr. Angela Kirby-Wehr, Director of PaTTAN – Harrisburg, and David Volkman, Executive Deputy Secretary at PDE, gave a presentation on the Department's forthcoming regulations that will establish new rating tools for principals and non-teaching professional employees (NTPEs). Mr. Volkman discussed the statutory basis for the new rating tools, and said he believes the new tools will be added to Chapter 19 by mid-June and, thus, complete the two-phase assignment made to PDE by Act 82. Chapter 19 was established in 2013 and currently includes a new rating system for classroom teachers, which was phase one of the Act 82 assignment.

Mr. Volkman and Dr. Kirby-Wehr discussed what employees are subject to the forthcoming regulations. Individuals who must be evaluation using the new tool for school leaders include building principal, an assistant principal, a vice principal or a director of vocational education. Staff that must be evaluated using the new rating tool for NTPEs, are educational specialists or professional employees who provide services other than classroom instruction, including employees with instructional certification who are not categorized as "classroom teachers" by an LEA.

Mr. Volkman and Dr. Kirby-Wehr then discussed the framework for the new evaluations and the summative process for completing the reviews that are included in the new regulations, including the domains assessed, instructions for the rating tools, and the student performance measures that account for 50% of the principal evaluation and 20% of the NPTE evaluation.

Jay Badams thanked Dr. Dumaresq and the Department for guiding school administrators through this process, and said what could have been upheaval in the field instead was a great collaborative process both between his district and the Department and internally for his district in providing a professional development opportunity for educators through a multi-faceted system of accountability

Mr. Volkman added that there were over 261 pilot programs for the new principal evaluation this year for which feedback was extremely positive. He further noted that Mathematica conducted a validation for the new rating tool, and said that taking three years to launch an evaluation system of this magnitude speaks volumes to the product that has been developed by Pennsylvania.

Dr. Kirby-Wehr took a moment to honor the educational specialists who volunteered to develop the specialist rubrics and whose LEA's gave them release time to participate in this effort. She said the release time from their professional duties was not enough, and thanked these unpaid volunteers for the personal evening and weekend hours devoted to crafting the new evaluation rubrics.

Chairman Wittig stated that he has spoken with teachers whose reactions to the new rating tools differ depending on how the new system was presented by their school administrator. Mr. Wittig says he views the new rating tools as a means to recognize exemplary employees rather than as a punitive measure. He has encountered staff who relayed that the new system was not presented to them in that fashion and said he hopes the completion of the second phase of this work will bring a new to administrators.

Dr. Lee Williams echoed Chairman Wittig's concern and said she also is aware of teachers that have a misunderstanding of the new evaluation system based on her perception of the wonderful work done to connect the new rating tools to a framework that makes a lot of sense. Dr. Williams said it is important that school administrators are on board in helping teachers understand that this is about rewarding excellence and providing targeted professional development, and said the Department and Intermediate Units need to rally around this so the new rating system is not undermined by misperceptions.

Dr. James Barker praised the Department's work in developing the new evaluations and noted that this is a dramatic change for many districts. He felt it would be most beneficial to have voices from the field talk to their colleagues about how they have implemented the new system and the benefits they have seen, rather than having more messages come from Harrisburg. He asked Mr. Volkman to discuss how the new regulations represent a shift in evaluation practice and how that creates a new level of accountability, which Dr. Barker said was a good thing. Mr. Volkman explained that the new system was not designed as a gotcha, but is intended to improve professional practice and, ultimately, improvement student achievement through a system that was designed by Pennsylvania education professionals. Dr. Kirby-Wehr said the frameworks developed through this process not only are used for evaluation, but define what good instructional practice looks like and allow us for the first time as a state to say we have a common language for what constitutes good instruction. She said teachers need to know what

the expectations are in order to be fairly assessed, and this new system creates that radical difference from the prior system.

Carol Aichele said teacher quality was the top issue during her tenure as a school board member and her district implemented an evaluation system in the 1990s that was a pioneer for the system now being implemented by the state. She said she was a non-believer in the system at first and did not think it would change how instruction was delivered, but that she saw profound differences in staff improvement.

Mollie Phillips said that when passion is displayed for what you're doing, you're on the right track, and said she has seen that passion from Mr. Volkman and Dr. Kirby-Wehr.

Dr. Francis Michelini commented that our culture has developed an expectation of instant gratification, and that we need to recognize change of the nature being sought by the new rating tools does not happen instantaneously. He said current criticisms need to be taken with a thick skin and the Department needs to maintain a consistency of effort for its objectives to be met.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Cormany, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of Pupil Services Administrators, thanked Dr. Kirby-Wehr and PDE staff, for their work and the process used to develop a new evaluation system for non-teaching professionals.

ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION HONORING EMILY CLARK

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Emily Clark, graduating high school student member, was made by Mollie Phillips and seconded by James Grandon.

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

RESOLUTION HONORING KEVIN BATES

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Kevin Bates, graduating postsecondary student member, was made by Mollie Phillips and seconded by Francis Michelini.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Wittig announced that the Special and Gifted Education Committee will hold two additional public roundtable discussions on Chapter 16 (gifted education) on May 22 in Pittsburgh and on June 5 in Philadelphia.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m. on a **Phillips/Agras** motion.

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Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant