MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF BASIC EDUCATION

333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

January 14, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 11:11 a.m. by Chairman Larry Wittig.

Attending:

James Agras *(via phone)*
Carol Aichele
Jay Badams
James Barker *(via phone)*
James Grandon *(via phone)*
Kirk Hallett
Maureen Lally-Green *(via phone)*
Teresa Lebo
Donald LeCompte
Francis Michelini
Jonathan Peri *(via phone)*
Justin Reynolds
Colleen Sheehan *(via phone)*
Craig Snider *(via phone)*
Karen White *(via phone)*
A. Lee Williams
Larry Wittig

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 13, 2014, meeting of the Council of Basic Education were approved on a **Badams/Aichele** motion.

REPORT OF THE ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Standards Aligned Systems (SAS) Institute

Acting Deputy Secretary Rita Perez reported on the Department's annual SAS Institute that was held in December 2014. She acknowledged the efforts of Acting Deputy Secretary Terry Barnaby and her staff for encouraging more than 100 college and university staff to attend the Institute.

Advanced Placement (AP)

Stephen Zori, Senior Director of K-12 Services for the College Board, and John Williamson, the College Board's Executive Director of Advanced Placement Curriculum and Content Development, made a presentation on Advanced Placement programs (AP) and the benefits of AP in schools. They also provided the Board with PSAT/NMSQT results for Pennsylvania. Highlights from the presentation included:

College Board

- Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education.

- Non-for-profit membership organization comprised of over 6,000 of the world's leading colleges, schools and other educational organizations.

2014 AP Results in PA

- 16.7% of PA's public high school 11th/12th grade students took at least one AP exam
- Pennsylvania ranks 31st in the nation in participation of 11th/12th grade students taking AP exams
- Pennsylvania ranks 24th in the nation in performance of 11th/12th grade students taking AP exams

AP Course Curriculum & Exam Redesign

- In an ongoing effort to maintain alignment with best practices in college-level learning, the College Board is redesigning the 34 AP courses and exams
- Principles of the redesigned courses and exams:
  - Emphasize deep understanding rather than comprehensive coverage
  - Include a strong focus on inquiry and reasoning
  - Reflect current understanding of learning in the discipline
  - Reflect current research directions within the discipline
- Representatives of the College Board provided information on the AP courses and exams that were revised between 2011-2015 and the redesigns planned for 2015-2017.

Pennsylvania's Role in the Development of AP

The collaboration of college faculty and AP teachers lies at the core of AP, ensuring rigor, relevance, and fairness. These educators work together to develop, deliver and evaluate AP courses and exams. Representatives of the College Board presented data on Pennsylvania educators' participation in this process.

Board member Craig Snider expressed his concern regarding the new standards for the AP History exam. Mr. Snider relayed that he had heard the College Board was incorporating what might be considered controversial points of view that represent a departure from U.S. history. He expressed concerned that the vetting and development of the new test was not a broadly shared vision.

Mr. Williamson responded that the AP U.S. History course has gone through the same development process as all other courses and the learning standards that are in the courses are validated by higher education and required for credit placement. Mr. Williamson provided an overview of what had changed compared to the prior AP U.S. History course. he stated that the College Board does not interpret history for students, rather it provides questions and issues for classroom discussion with the goal of having students read primary and secondary sources from a variety of perspectives as they formulate their own interpretations about history based on evidence. Further, Mr. Williamson said the College Board provides a curriculum framework with a list of learning objectives, but how a teacher, state or local district chooses to exemplify those objectives is their decision.

Chairman Larry Wittig expressed that the courses in each individual school district will be measured on how well the students perform on the AP exam. He inquired about how the

College Board arrives at the same assessment score if local schools approach AP instruction from different angles. Mr. Williamson said that he would need to show the Board the learning objectives in order for members to fully understand how that works. He then offered to make a more detailed presentation on the AP U.S. History course at a future Board meeting if it was desirable to members.

Mr. Snider said he would be interested in seeing the differences from the old standards to the new ones. Mr. Snider further stated that he is very concerned about political modernization of our curriculum by a small group of people and that we need to understand the methodology behind the changes and the leadership behind the group that made the changes.

Chairman Wittig stated that he would like to invite the College Board to another Board meeting to further discuss the U.S. History standards.

Dr. Jay Badams stated that the discussion represented misconceptions about the differences between curriculum, curriculum framework, standards and so forth. He questioned whether delving into interpretation of historical events would put the Board in a position like some other states where State Boards actually vet and distribute lists of acceptable textbooks. Mr. Badams asked if it would be sufficient for the College Board to provide the actual framework and supporting documentation for the Board's review.

Mr. Williamson said that he would provide the Board with an old AP History exam, a released exam that was built by the test development committee for teachers to use for practice, and the curriculum framework. Mr. Snider also requested information about who was involved in the academic committee and their credentials. Mr. Williamson said agreed to provide this information to the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

AJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m. on a **Badams/Aichele** motion.

Stephanie L. Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant