**MINUTES**
**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**333 Market Street | 1st Floor**
**Harrisburg, PA 17126**

**January 14, 2015**

The 324th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Wednesday, January 14, 2015. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 1:46 p.m. by Chairman Larry Wittig.

**Attending:**

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

The minutes of the November 13, 2014 meeting of the State Board of Education were approved on a **Michelini/Badams** motion.

## REPORT OF THE ACTING SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Dr. Carolyn Dumaresq, Acting Secretary of Education, reported on the following:

### Classroom Diagnostic Tools

Acting Secretary Dumaresq introduced Rich Maraschiello to present an update on Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDTs). Mr. Maraschiello provided the following highlights:

- CDTs are integrated with the Standards Aligned System (SAS)
- CDTs are computer adaptive assessments designed to provide diagnostic information to guide instruction and provide support for students and teachers; available at no cost to districts
- Offered in grades 3 through high school; available for use in the classroom throughout the school year on a voluntary basis
- CDT content areas: Mathematics, Literacy & Science
- Developed by committees of Pennsylvania educators
- CDT usage: 2012-13 (786,193 test completed); 2013-14 (809,993 tests completed); as of January 2015 (728,203 tests completed)

### School Performance Profile

Dr. Dumaresq introduced Bob Shinskie for a report on the SchoolWATCH feature added to the School Performance Profile in January. This feature was created in response to a

legislative initiative by Rep. Jim Christiana. SchoolWATCH reports fiscal information on school district spending that is already provided to the Department on each LEAs profile. District data will be updated to the current year as soon as it's made available to PDE.

**Pennsylvania Academic Review**

Dr. Dumaresq provided an update on the Pennsylvania Academic Review website designed to promote understanding of and solicit feedback on Eligible Content aligned to Pennsylvania's academic standards. Dr. Dumaresq said the site would remain open for public feedback through January 15, 2015.

The Acting Secretary provided a broad overview of the more than 20,000 responses received on the site as of January 11, 2015. Dr. Dumaresq said that while respondents were asked to provide actionable feedback relating to the Eligible Content statements themselves, the majority of feedback centered on the content and quality of the sample test questions. She highlighted broad categories of the type of feedback received to date and discussed potential next steps for the feedback gathered through the site.

## REPORT OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Executive Director Carolyn Angelo announced that, as of March 24, 2015, Shane Crosby will assume the role of Executive Director/Legal Counsel to the Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC). Ms. Angelo will remain with the PSPC as a Special Projects Coordinator and as legal counsel.

Ms. Angelo reported that, in November 2014, the Commission met to consider 33 cases, 19 of which involved allegations of sexual misconduct. She said the Department's Office of Chief Counsel has 1,056 active educator discipline cases, 179 of which are designated as "high priority" because they involve allegations of sexual abuse of children. In 2014, the Department received 342 mandatory reports from chief school administrators.

At its next meeting, Ms. Angelo said the PSPC will host a presentation on its newly created educator ethics training and assessment tool. PSPC continues to work on developing mandatory e-Learning training for school entities in compliance with Act 126.

Pursuant to the suggestion of Board member Jonathan Peri, Ms. Angelo said the Commission is working with the Office of Non-public, Non-licensed Schools to incorporate educator misconduct reporting requirements within the standards for accrediting institutions approved by the State Board.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

The following individuals provided public comment on the application of the Washington Township Independent School District (WTISD) for transfer from the Dover Area School District (DASD) to the Northern York County School District (NYCSD):

Rachel Mailey, a resident of Washington Township with five children attending DASD, spoke on behalf of Keep us In Dover Schools (KIDS), a coalition formed in protest to the proposed transfer of Washington Township students to NYCSD. Ms. Mailey said she vehemently opposes the transfer and believes the education provided by DASD is outstanding and there is educational merit to staying in Dover. She said elementary students in Washington Township currently attend North Salem Elementary, which recently was selected by the state as a model school for academic growth. North Salem Elementary also was chosen recently to become a Title I Distinguished School for the 2014-15 school year. Ms. Mailey stated that much of the argument supporting the transfer has been about taxes, which are lower in NYCSD than in DASD. She said that although there are over 1,300 taxable parcels in Washington Township, 90% of the homes do not have school-age children.

Holly Feeser, a parent of three school-age children in DASD and a member of KIDS, expressed her sincere desire for her children to remain in Dover schools. Ms. Feeser said the Washington Township Education Coalition's (WTEC) petition is a thinly-veiled attempt to change school districts in order to gain a lower tax rate. Ms. Feeser expressed concern over the precedent that might be set if the State Board finds in favor of the WTEC. She asked the Board's Special Committee to quantify statistical significance and look at data showing that NYCSD and DASD scholastic scores are within 4 to 5 percentage points of each other. She further stated that DASD has an advantage of all-day kindergarten for working parents and full day Vo-Tech. Ms. Feeser said she realizes that the State Board takes very seriously the academic lives of Washington Township's 300 students and her children.

Donna Eliker, a resident of Washington Township and DASD parent, said the certificate programs offered by DASD far outweigh the opportunities at NYCSD. She stated that by transferring her child, the Board would effectively be taking away his chance to excel due to the difference in certificate programs. Additionally, Ms. Eliker stated that the WTEC claims the transfer is about education, but presents its petition for signatures on taxes. Ms. Eliker stated that she does not feel like the answer on tax issues and paying for her children's education should lie with the State Board or the individual residents of Washington Township; rather, it belongs somewhere else in the state.

## INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Chairman Wittig announced that on November 10, 2014, the Court of Common Pleas of York County issued a decree creating the Washington Township Independent School District as an independent school district for the sole purpose of its transfer from the Dover Area School District to the Northern York County School District. Mr. Witting said the ruling followed a determination issued in July of 2014 by Acting Secretary Dumaresq that the transfer has merit from an educational standpoint.

Mr. Wittig reviewed the Board's role in such matters per the School Code, and said the Board would appoint a Special Committee to conduct necessary proceedings. The Special Committee would be comprised of Jonathan Peri (Chairman), Kirk Hallett and Mollie Phillips. Following the conclusion of its proceedings, the Special Committee would make a recommendation to the full State Board on whether to approve or disapprove the transfer.

Mr. Wittig announced that the Board published a legal notice in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*, *York Daily Record* and *York Dispatch* inviting members of the public to submit petitions to intervene or to protest the transfer, and informing the public of the opportunity to request a public hearing on the matter. He reviewed the information submitted in response to the public notice, and said the Special Committee will determine the manner in which to proceed with its consideration of Washington Township's application and will assess the timeframe in which it is likely to make a recommendation to the full State Board.

## ACTION ITEMS

### RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

A motion to approve a resolution establishing a Special Committee on the Washington Township Independent School District was made by Lee Williams and seconded by James Barker.

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

### RESOLUTION HONORING WENDY BEETLESTONE

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Wendy Beetlestone was made by Jonathan Peri and seconded by Francis Michelini.

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

### RESOLUTION HONORING ACTING SECRETARY CAROLYN DUMARESQ

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Acting Secretary Carolyn Dumaresq was made by Francis Michelini and seconded by Lee Williams.

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m. on a **Badams/Peri** motion.

Stephanie Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant