MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

March 11, 2015

The 325th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Wednesday, March 11, 2015. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 1:25 p.m. by Chairman Larry Wittig.

Attending:

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

The minutes of the January 14, 2015 meeting of the State Board of Education were approved on a **Badams/Grandon** motion.

REPORT OF THE ACTING SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Mr. Pedro Rivera, Acting Secretary of Education, expressed thanks to the Board for its hard work during the past year in tackling difficult issues and engaging in rich dialogue which resulted in productive debate on issues impacting education in Pennsylvania. Acting Secretary Rivera also thanked Dr. Francis Michelini for his service to the Board and said he is looking forward to working with members of the Board.

The Educational Enrichment Initiative

David Volkman, currently serving as Acting Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, provided an update on the application of The Educational Enrichment Initiative (TEEI) seeking to renew its accrediting authority and TEEI's progress in meeting the conditions set forth by the Board in its July 2013 grant of provisional approval. The Board required TEEI to provide the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) with progress reports every eight months during the provisional approval period, and PDE received TEEI's most recent progress report on November 25, 2014.

Mr. Volkman stated that, of the five conditions imposed by the Board, TEEI satisfied only the condition requiring it to address any outstanding issues with background checks. In terms of the other four conditions, Mr. Volkman reported that there were generally unsatisfactory responses. Mr. Volkman summarized the following concerns identified by the Department:

Condition 1 – TEEI has not implemented changes to its accreditation protocols to improve oversight of the process by which students are linked with curriculum, instruction, materials and resources to enable them to achieve proficiency in core disciplines relative to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards, nor has it made any substantial improvements to its oversight of student assessment or assessment of tutor proficiency.

Condition 2 – TEEI has not made any further progress in lengthening its accreditation periods to a span of five years or its periods of initial candidacy to a span of three years. TEEI continues to refuse to develop at least two collegial peer site visitation teams, each consisting of at least four multidisciplinary team members qualified to evaluate specific areas of tutoring center operations.

Condition 3 – TEEI has not taken sufficient steps to assure independence of, and between, the key decision-making steps in its accreditation processes.

Condition 4 – TEEI's latest progress report did not address steps being taken to increase the independence, quality and rigor of oversight by its Board of Directors. The progress report contained no information about the appointment of new members to the Board of Directors and TEEI did not provide PDE with the names of any new Board members.

Mr. Volkman further stated that, in correspondence dated October 15, 2014, the Department requested that TEEI notify each of its accredited centers of its provisional approval status in writing. Mr. Volkman said TEEI refused to comply with the request on the grounds that providing such notification was not directed by the State Board, and that doing so would be detrimental to its business relationship with the tutoring centers it accredits.

Mr. Volkman reported the following additional concerns identified by the Department:

- Consultation fee charged to Kumon North American, Inc., the central franchising organization of the majority of TEEI's accredited tutoring centers, which has the potential to jeopardize the independence of its accreditation processes and decision-making
- Inaccurate statements made to its accredited tutoring centers about PDE's licensing fees

Mr. Volkman expressed concern about TEEI's failure to make progress, and reaffirmed the Department's recommendation that TEEI's status as an approved accreditor be revoked for failure to make progress on four out of the five conditions imposed by the Board.

Chairman Wittig asked what would happen to students who attend centers accredited by TEEI if it was no longer eligible to grant accreditation. Mr. Wittig asked whether the centers could be accredited by another entity. Mr. Volkman identified that as an issue that needs to be addressed and said the Department would seek to explore options to continue services for students. Chairman Wittig then asked what requires such tutoring centers to be accredited. Karen Molchanow, Executive Director of the Board, stated that PDE has determined that the centers meet the definition of schools that are subject to the Private Academic Schools Act and, thus, either must be accredited or licensed by the state. Chairman Wittig stated that, in his opinion, the Department or the Legislature should be able to do something if students would be

adversely affected so that students can access tutoring services without hurdles, and he continued to hold a concern about unintended consequences for students who may be left in a lurch.

Dr. James Barker expressed concern that TEEI has not met the minimal standards imposed by the Board. Dr. Barker stated that offering a low quality to sometimes the most needy students is counterproductive to the Board's efforts to enhance performance of all students. He said he felt that the Board has bent over backwards to accommodate, facilitate and encourage TEEI with very heartfelt dialogues, and that TEEI committed to the Board that it would follow through on the conditions. Dr. Barker said, in his perspective, that has not happened.

Mr. Volkman said that PDE's Division of Student Services has discussed sharing best practices models from its 21st Century federally-supported tutoring programs with the tutoring centers accredited by TEEI.

James Grandon shared his concern over how students would be notified if their centers lost accreditation and what other avenues would be available to students.

Kirk Hallett said this has been a difficult situation due to the lack of alternatives and that the underlying requirement for centers to be accredited is established by the School Code. He said he was heartened that the Department is exploring alternatives in light of a difficult situation, including what alternatives could be considered beyond licensure. Mr. Hallet noted that licensure could have a fiscal impact related to staffing and expressed his opinion that he did not think the quality of tutoring is impacted by employing tutors who are not certified.

REPORT OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Chairman Witting introduced Shane Crosby, the new Executive Director of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC). Mr. Crosby shared that Carolyn Angelo regretted not being able to attend the Board meeting. Ms. Angelo recently transitioned out of the role of Executive Director of the PSPC and will continue to serve the Commission as a Special Projects Coordinator.

Mr. Crosby said that the Commission will consider 39 educator misconduct cases and 2 reinstatement cases at its next meeting on March 16, 2015. He reported that the Department's Office of Chief Counsel currently has a total of 1,100 active educator discipline cases, of which 189 are designated as high priority because they involve allegations of sexual or physical abuse of children. In 2014, the Department received 776 complaints, an increase from 482 the year prior.

Mr. Crosby said the PSPC continues to work on developing e-learning training for school entities that will partially satisfy the mandatory training requirements set forth in Act 126. He noted that the Department received 342 mandatory reports from chief school administrators in 2014.

Mr. Crosby said the Commission's Annual Report for 2014 is in the preliminary draft stage, and that its records reflect that, in 2014, approximately 205 educators received public

disciplinary sanctions, including 19 immediate suspensions, 23 public reprimands, 56 revocations, 83 surrenders and 24 suspensions.

Mr. Crosby concluded by expressing thanks to Dr. Francis Michelini on behalf of the PSPC for his many years of service as the Board's representative to the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sally Winterton, President of the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Techer Educators (PAC-TE), congratulated Mr. Rivera on his nomination as Secretary of Education. She said PAC-TE looks forward to working with Mr. Rivera to continue Pennsylvania's tradition of excellence in teacher preparation. Ms. Winterton then followed-up on an issue raised at the Board's November 2014 meeting related to student teacher assessment. Since that time, PAC-TE has formalized its position opposing the use of third-party assessments and shared a document outlining its opposition with members of the Board. Ms. Winterton said PAC-TE is developing an assessment that mirrors the new Pennsylvania teacher effectiveness assessment that is used in schools today, and that it will present its student teacher assessment to PDE and its members for consideration at its meeting in April.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Jonathan Peri publicly shared his support for three different endeavors of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania related to House Bill 762, pertaining to the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement; Act 168, related to the Basic Skills Assessment and an issue potentially pushing out when educators can complete their degree; and Act 153.

ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION HONORING CAROLYN ANGELO

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

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

RESOLUTION HONORING DR. FRANCIS MICHELINI

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Dr. Francis Michelini was made by Mollie Phillips and seconded by James Grandon.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Wittig announced that the Special Committee on Washington Township Independent School District would convene immediately following conclusion of the Board meeting.

Kirk Hallett announced that the Board received an application from Middle States seeking renewal of its authority as an accreditor for private and non-public schools. The application is under review by the Department, and a Mr. Hallett said he expects to receive he Department's recommendation on the application in September. Mr. Hallett also indicated that the Board anticipates receiving a second application for renewal of an accrediting authority from the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools.

Mr. Peri stated that he would like to work with Kirk Hallett on the renewal applications, and Chairman Wittig agreed to appoint Mr. Peri as a new member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Private School Accreditation.

Dr. Barker thanked Governor Wolf for selecting such a distinguished educator as the next Secretary of Education with the nomination of Mr. Rivera.

Acting Secretary Rivera said we cannot allow the future of our children to be left to chance, and that with the team at PDE and the State Board, he plans to be more strategic, much more deliberate and more focused on serving children and ensuring they receive the best education possible.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m. on a **Lally-Green/Peri** motion.

Stephanie L. Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant