

**MINUTES  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COUNCIL OF BASIC EDUCATION**

**333 Market Street | 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126**

**September 14, 2016**

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 a.m. by Chairman Larry Wittig.

**Attending:**

James Agras  
Carol Aichele  
Jay Badams  
James Barker  
Nicole Carnicella  
James Grandon

Pamela Gunter-Smith  
Kirk Hallett  
Shirlann Harmon  
Maureen Lally-Green  
Jonathan Peri  
Colleen Sheehan (*via phone*)

Craig Snider  
Joshita Varshney  
Karen Farmer White  
A. Lee Williams  
Larry Wittig

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the July 13, 2016, meeting of the Council of Basic Education were approved on a **Lally-Green/Hallett** motion.

**COMMITTEE REPORT**  
**AD HOC COMMITTEE ON HOLOCAUST, GENOCIDE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**VIOLATIONS INSTRUCTION**

Craig Snider, Committee Chair, reported on the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee that was held earlier in the day and noted that Carol Aichele and Sandra Dungee Glenn were joining him on the Committee. Mr. Snider said the Committee was formed in response to Act 70 of 2014, which charged the State Board of Education with conducting a study of the manner in which instruction in the Holocaust, genocide and human rights violations is currently offered by school entities in Pennsylvania. Mr. Snider reviewed the information about such instruction that Act 70 requires the Board to address in its report and said the Committee will survey school entities to obtain needed information. Mr. Snider further noted that if the Board finds that less than 90 percent of school entities are offering instruction in the Holocaust, genocide and human rights violations consistent with what are voluntarily permitted by Act 70, the Board is directed to promulgate regulations that require school entities to offer such instruction.

Mr. Snider reported that Sally Flaherty, the Department of Education's Social Studies Advisor, made a presentation to the Committee on the work of the Department related to Act 70. Mr. Snider said he also asked Ms. Flaherty to serve as a resource expert for the Committee as it proceeds with its work. Mr. Snider also reported that Deb Rodrigues and Ashley McCann, staff with the Department's Center for Data Quality, provided input to the Committee on the technical

avenues available for gathering the data. Mr. Snider said the Committee discussed the need to provide context to the term human rights violations used in Act 70 for purposes of the survey, and said the Committee planned to finalize the survey instruction at its next meeting in November with the goal of transmitting the survey to school entities in January.

### **REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem provided an update to the Board on the work of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education related to comprehensive planning; migrant education; STEM education; trauma-informed approaches in school; safe schools targeted initiative grants; refugee school impact grants; technical assistance in middle school mathematics; a study on Text Dependent Analysis; literacy initiatives; the Standards Aligned System Assessment Builder; the Special Education Summer Leadership Academy; and the National Autism Conference.

Upon time for discussion, Mr. Snider expressed concerns regarding children in foster care and the availability of programs to address their unique needs. Mr. Snider asked about current initiatives of the Department to help foster children. Deputy Secretary Stem responded that he is working in collaboration with the Department of Human Services on cross-agency resources regarding support for foster students. Additionally, Mr. Stem reported that PDE recently brought in a foster lead that will serve as an additional statewide resource for the education of foster students.

Jonathan Peri asked Mr. Stem to share the link for the webinar on foster students.

Maureen Lally-Green noted that judges are a very important voice in the foster care arena and suggested outreach to that community in cross-sector work related to foster students.

### **PRESENTATION** **SUMMARY REPORT ON GIFTED EDUCATION COMPLAINTS AND MONITORING** **FOR THE 2015-16 SCHOOL YEAR**

Pat Hozella, the Department of Education's Director Special Education, provided a summary of the annual gifted education report required by Chapter 16 on the number and disposition of complaints filed and the schedule and results of monitoring activities. Ms. Hozella shared that there were nine complaints filed with eight school districts. She reported that three complaints were resolved, and the remaining six are in investigative status.

During the 2015-16 school year, Ms. Hozella reported that the Department conducted gifted education compliance monitoring in 10 randomly selected school districts. The following school districts were monitored: Quaker Valley, Port Allegany, East Lycoming, Western Wayne, Schuylkill Haven, Catasauqua, South Side, Mount Union, Pleasant Valley and Brookville. Of the 10 districts monitored, Ms. Hozella said all required some form of corrective action and that PDE continues to follow-up and work with the districts until the corrective action is completed and verified. Ms. Hozella also shared the names of 10 districts selected for compliance monitoring during the 2016-17 school year.

Finally, Ms. Hozella shared that there were 11 due process requests made to the Department related to gifted education. Of those, Ms. Hozella said four are in active status, four reached a settlement and three decisions were issued.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**ACTION ITEM**

There were no action items.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Dr. Barker referenced pending litigation regarding the funding of education in Pennsylvania and commented that the Board has had a historical relationship in reviewing access to equity and opportunity for all students to receive a high-quality education. He sought the Board's support in requesting an update from the Department on the status of the litigation and requesting data on the top-performing districts and bottom-performing districts, the amount each of those districts spends per pupil, and their demographics. Dr. Barker said the information will help the Board pursue its common interest in providing equity in opportunity for all children and that, while he recognizes the Board does not have a formal role related to funding, he believes the Board has a responsibility to provide what input, assistance and support it can to ensure all students are college and career-ready at graduation. Dr. Barker said the state's current education funding model creates a grand canyon that needs to be bridged, and that the Board needs to do what it can to support the legislature on this issue without hurting small businesses.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m. on a **Badams/Farmer White** motion.



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Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant