

**MINUTES  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

333 Market Street, Honors Suite, Harrisburg, PA  
January, 13 2016

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Wittig at 1:08 p.m.

**Attending:**

Carol Aichele  
Jay Badams  
James Barker  
Nicole Carnicella  
Sandra Dungee Glenn

James Grandon  
Kirk Hallett  
Maureen Lally-Green (via phone)  
Donald LeCompte

Mollie Phillips (via phone)  
Joshita Varshney  
Karen Farmer-White  
Larry Wittig

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Consideration of the minutes of the November 18, 2015 meeting of the Council of Higher Education was held over due to lack of quorum.

**REPORT OF THE ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY  
POSTSECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

Dr. Wil Del Pilar, Acting Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education, provided the following report:

**Pennsylvania College Application Campaign**

- Pennsylvania is in its second year of participation in the College Application Campaign. Currently 25 high schools and 1,682 students are participating (double the number of participating schools in 2014). Students participating in the Campaign submitted 2,135 applications to postsecondary institutions.

**State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements**

- The Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education (OPHE) continues to await passage of State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) legislation. In the interim, applications and draft regulations have been prepared for implementation once the legislation is passed.

### **Adult Education and Family Literacy Act**

- Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, grants will be awarded on a competitive basis beginning July 1, 2017. Grant funds support programs that integrate digital literacy and employability skills into basic skill instruction.

### **Consolidated PIMS Reporting**

- OPHE has collapsed the postsecondary PIMS collections from community colleges from three times per year to one time per year. The colleges will still submit the same number of data elements, but they will provide information on the entire academic year at one time.

### **Ensure that Every Classroom has a Highly Qualified Teacher**

- Teacher Certification Shortage Areas
  - Secretary Rivera issued a letter to the U.S. Department of Education seeking federal recognition of shortages in Math, Science, English Language Arts and Special Education. PDE also identified LEAs experiencing shortages. If approved, teachers working in identified shortage areas may qualify for loan forgiveness.
- Fee Waivers
  - PDE will offer substitute certification fee waivers (currently \$5.00 per permit) as a small measure of relief to districts who face interest and loan payments.
- Annual Certification Report
  - PDE delivered its Annual Certification Report to the Board through a presentation earlier in the day to the Board's Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness Committee. Dr. Del Pilar highlighted selections from that report for the Council.
  - He noted that the Commonwealth currently has 127 approved certification program providers and 1,450 approved certification programs.
  - The report showed a decline in the number of emergency permits issued by PDE from 2010-11 to 2012-13, with 15,092 emergency permits issued in 2010-11, 9,984 issued in 2011-12 and 8,747 issued in 2012-13. Dr. Del Pilar said the report also showed a significant decline in the number of instructional certificates issued during that same timeframe. PDE issued 57,027 certificates in 2010-11, 55,348 in 2011-12 and 23,971 in 2012-13. For administrative certificates, PDE issued 344 administrative certificates in 2010-11, 597 in 2011-12 and 352 in 2012-13.

### **High School Equivalency/Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma (CSSD)**

Dr. Del Pilar invited Amanda Harrison, Chief of the Division of Adult Education, to make a report on high school equivalency assessments. Ms. Harrison reviewed the two paths to earn a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma (CSSD) – either through passage of a high school

equivalency assessment or through successfully completing 30 semester hours or equivalent of postsecondary credit. She also reviewed student eligibility criteria for earning a CSSD.

As of 2016, Mr. Harrison said Pennsylvania will use two high school equivalency tests: 2014 GED® Test from GED Testing Service LLC (GEDTS) and the HiSET® from Educational Testing Service (ETS). A student must pass one or the other to earn a CSSD. Ms. Harrison said the tests were selected through an invitation for bid. She said both are nationally-recognized assessments that are aligned with Pennsylvania's academic standards and include a good percentage of questions with depth of knowledge level 2 and 3. She then reviewed available testing accommodations and said both tests are available in both English and Spanish.

Ms. Harrison said the 2014 GED® Test is computer-based only, except for certain accommodations, and must be taken at an official GED testing center. The exam is comprised of four subtests: Reasoning through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Science and Social Studies. The full battery of GED tests costs \$120 (\$80 for the exam plus \$40 reimbursement for the testing center). Mr. Harrison said subtest can also be purchase one at a time for \$30 each.

The HiSET® is offered in both paper-based and computer-based formats at official HiSET testing centers. It is comprised of five subtests: English Language Arts (ELA) Writing, ELA Reading, Science, Social Studies and Mathematics. Ms. Harrison said the HiSET® costs \$90 for the full battery (\$50 for the exam plus \$40 reimbursement for the testing center).

Ms. Harrison concluded by reviewing in detail the criteria for earning a CSSD through the 30 college credit option. Mollie Phillips asked how students earn college credit without already having a high school diploma. Ms. Harrison said such requests generally come from students enrolled in community colleges and are often sought by immigrants who enter a community college via testing and want an American high school credential.

Upon time for further discussion, members raised additional questions with Dr. Del Pilar. Kirk Hallett asked why the number of individuals pursuing teaching was dropping. Dr. Del Pilar responded that no hard data is available to explain the decline in certificates. However, anecdotal explanations may include recent discourse that has de-professionalized the field. Dr. Nicole Carnicella offered that she felt the decline may be an unintended consequence of well-intentioned regulations and state assessments imposed upon educators that have taken the joy out of teaching. As a result, Dr. Carnicella said current teachers do not counsel their students to become teachers. James Grandon said he does not believe enough funding is available for school counselors to help guide students in planning career paths.

Carol Aichele asked if the state had identified a target number of how many teachers are actually needed. Dr. Del Pilar said the Department would do a deeper dive to explore that question. Ms. Aichele said she has heard anecdotally that students are not pursuing teaching because there are

no jobs available to them upon graduation. Maureen Lally-Green offered that transition services provided at the college level should be broadened and not focus only on students with disabilities as she said is often the case.

Matthew Stem, Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, said school counselors should engage in conversation with students about their future before students reach high school. As a means to incentivize that, Mr. Stem said the Department is considering adding an indicator to the School Performance Profile for career path planning. Mr. Grandon suggested that schools tap into the cadre of retired CEOs and successful people to serve as volunteer career advisors. Mr. Stem said his staff currently is working to identify schools that have robust business partners to inform the Department's work.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Sally Winterton, President of the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (PAC-TE), responded to comments from the Council's discussion on the subject of teacher shortages. She agreed that educators have experienced bad press recently and said she hears about that from teacher candidates. She also said students are not pursuing the profession because of a lack of jobs or a perceived lack of jobs. She stated that the problem is a K-20 problem and that regulations related to testing and certification contribute to the problem. Ms. Winterton said a Delaware County Superintendent found that 120 out of 180 days per school year are being used for test preparation. Ms. Winterton also stated that higher education providers of teacher education are impacted by policies allowing non-higher education groups to provide certification as a work around to their programs. She said PAC-TE is ready and willing to work with the Board, with Deputy Secretary Del Pilar and Deputy Secretary Stem to address these issues.

### ACTION ITEMS


There were no action items.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements

### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

  
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Karen Molchanow  
Executive Director