

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

333 Market Street, Honors Suite, Harrisburg, PA
March 9, 2016

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Wittig at 1:02 p.m.

Attending:

James Agras (via phone)
Carol Aichele
Jay Badams
James Barker (via phone)
Nicole Carnicella
Sandra Dungee Glenn

James Grandon
Pamela Gunter-Smith
Maureen Lally-Green (via phone)
Donald LeCompte
Jonathan Peri (via phone)

Coleen Sheehan (via phone)
Craig Snider (via phone)
Lavinia Soliman
Joshita Varshney
A. Lee Williams
Larry Wittig

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 17, 2015 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Dungee Glenn/Williams** motion.

The minutes of the January 13, 2016 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Dungee Glenn/Williams** motion.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Larry Wittig, Chairman of the State Board of Education, welcomed Dr. Pamela Gunter-Smith, a new member of the Council of Higher Education. Mr. Wittig then recognized James Grandon, Chairman of the Council of Higher Education, to commence the Council meeting.

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

Dr. Wil Del Pilar, Acting Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education, congratulated Jonathan Peri on his appointment as president of Manor College and said he recently had the pleasure of visiting the institution.

Dr. Del Pilar then provided the following report:

Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma

- Effective in 2016, Pennsylvania residents can choose between either the GED or the HiSET to earn a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma (CSSD), the high school equivalency credential issued by the Commonwealth.

- In January 2016, GED Testing Service announced the lowering of the passing score on the GED from 150 to 145. PDE expects to complete a comprehensive review of all GED test takers in the next few days, and anticipates awarding a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma (CSSD) to more than 1,000 Pennsylvania residents as a result of the new score policy.
- Three locations currently are offering the HiSET (Warren Forest Higher Education Council, Tri-County OIC in Harrisburg, and CSIU #16) and ETS is continuing to work to establish additional HiSET testing sites. PDE will monitor the number of students taking the HiSET compared to the GED.

Rural Regional College

The 15-member board of trustees appointed to establish the Rural Regional College authorized by Act 126 of 2014 is continuing work on the college plan. PDE is providing technical assistance to the board through assistance in hiring a project executive to help develop the plan; extending the REL-MA contract to assist the Board with the research and evaluation required for the plan; and facilitating a contract with Penn State's Center for Survey Research to assist with conducting a needs survey for the region. Dr. Del Pilar said he anticipates receiving an application from the Rural Regional College in December of 2016.

It's On Us PA

- Governor Wolf launched the "It's On Us PA" campaign in January, making Pennsylvania the first state to undertake a state-level campaign that builds off the national "It's On Us" movement launched in 2014 by President Obama and Vice President Biden. The campaign seeks to increase bystander intervention in an effort to end campus sexual assault.
- "It's On Us PA" brings together college and university presidents, superintendents, administrators, teachers, students, families, and communities to reframe the conversation around campus sexual violence.
- The campaign's three major goals are to:
 - Improve awareness, prevention, reporting, and response systems in schools, colleges and universities.
 - Remove/reduce barriers that prevent survivors from reporting and/or accessing vital resources.
 - Demonstrate significant, proactive, and sustainable leadership to change campus culture by challenging Pennsylvania's education leaders.

Relay Graduate School of Education

A hearing on the Relay Graduate School of Education was held on February 29, 2016 with an opportunity for parties to present on the issue of Relay offering masters degrees in education in Philadelphia. Post-hearing statements are due by April 8, 2016. Once received, a recommendation will be made to the Secretary.

Bond-Hill Scholarship Program

OPHE works with PHEAA on the Bond-Hill Scholarship Program, a program designed to encourage eligible graduates from Cheyney and Lincoln Universities to attend Temple, Penn State or the University of Pittsburgh in an approved professional or graduate degree program. The program is legislated through an annual state appropriation to PHEAA, but is administered by PDE. Governor Wolf has requested \$1.25 million to support the program in FY 2016-17. In FY 2015-16, the program supported 12 students. Dr. Del Pilar said PDE will convene the scholarship committee to review the program guidelines in an effort to expand access and maximize award funds. Potential revisions include expanding the approved programs and institutions available to scholarship recipients.

Act 101 Program

Dr. Del Pilar provided an overview of the establishment of Act 101 programs put in place to create greater access to higher education for undergraduate students with economic and educational disadvantages. He reviewed in detail student eligibility requirements, services provided through Act 101, the number of participating Act 101 institutions, and the level of state funding available to support these programs. Dr. Del Pilar said program data on Act 101 participants, who are considered significantly disadvantaged, show positive outcomes in a first-year retention rate that exceeds the national average and a higher cumulative GPA in remedial courses compared to the general undergraduate population. Dr. Del Pilar noted that PHEAA continues to convene Act 101 program staff at participating institutions to discuss best practices and how to best serve students. He also noted that the number of participating institutions has declined in recent years due to decreases in state funding and increases in program requirements.

Mr. Grandon requested that Dr. Del Pilar provide more information on the Rural Regional College (RRC) and how trustees are nominated for its governing board. Mr. Peri reminded the Council that the composition of the RRC's board of trustees began under former Secretary Dumaresq's tenure and that Dr. Dumaresq had apprised the Board as decisions related to the institution were being made. Mr. Peri thanked Dr. Del Pilar for his updates regarding the high school equivalency credential and the Relay Graduate School of Education and also thanked him for his visit to Manor College.

Sandra Dungee Glenn asked how many students could take advantage of the Bond Hill Scholarship. Dr. Del Pilar said it depends what approach is taken with funding. He explained that students currently receive a full ride through the scholarship and said while the program has been flat-funded for a number of years, not all funds have been expended due to strict internal guidelines. Dr. Del Pilar said he would like to expand the scholarship's offerings in an effort to maximize allocated funds. Ms. Dungee Glenn asked that Dr. Del Pilar provide future updates on the revised goals of the scholarship program.

Regarding Act 101, Ms. Dungee Glenn asked why institutions are leaving the program. Dr. Del Pilar said as funds decreased and reporting requirements increased, some institutions felt it was no longer viable to offer the program. Additionally, a representative of PHEAA commented that a requirement to enroll at least 50 students in Act 101 is a benchmark some schools have not been able to meet. Ms. Dungee Glenn said that raises broader concerns related to higher education access if institutions are unable to support at least 50 students who qualify for Act 101.

Finally, Ms. Dungee Glenn asked whether PDE might convene stakeholders around college access issues similar to work the Department recently conducted on career readiness. Dr. Del Pilar responded that he has been invited to participate in a college access network that currently exists in Philadelphia and that he is aware of a similar effort in Pittsburgh. He said the administration values bringing together external stakeholders to inform its work.

Chairman Wittig asked whether there are any redundancies between the It's On Us PA campaign and federal requirements related to assaults on campus. Dr. Del Pilar said the state-level initiative does not include reporting requirements, but is an initiative focused on public engagement and education.

Carol Aichele asked whether the change in the GED passing score has impacted the percentage of individuals earning a high school equivalency credential. Dr. Del Pilar said the number of individuals passing the exam is increasing, but the total pool of individuals pursuing the exam is down.

Lavinia Soliman asked whether the It's On Us campaign's intention to provide education on affirmative consent at the K-12 level is in conflict with current sex education curriculum that may focus only on abstinence. Dr. Del Pilar said that is part of the conversation with superintendents and said PDE is discussing what guidance to provide to the K-12 community. Jay Badams said that issue likely will vary among districts depending what curriculum they have adopted. Matthew Stem, Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, said his office recently has worked with the Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control to provide support to school districts in this area. Mr. Wittig expressed concern with including exposure to sex education during pre-pubescent years. Ms. Soliman agreed with Mr. Wittig regarding the inclusion of sex education in the early grades, but suggested that including the concept of consent in the curriculum is appropriate because the nature of consent is gradient and can extend to matters such as respecting personal space.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Grandon announced that he will be meeting with the Chancellor of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education and asked members of the Council who have questions they would like him to discuss with the Chancellor to submit those queries to Board staff.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Molchanow". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Karen Molchanow
Executive Director