

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

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

**November 9, 2016**

The meeting was called to order at 2:20 p.m. by Council Chairman James Barker.

**Attending:**

James Agras (*via phone*)  
Carol Aichele  
James Barker  
Nicole Carnicella  
Sandra Dungee Glenn  
(*via phone*)  
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 September 14, 2016, meeting of the Council of Basic Education were approved on a **Sheehan/Farmer White** motion.

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

Craig Snider, Committee Chair, reported on the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee that was held earlier in the day. Mr. Snider provided background on Act 70 of 2014, and reported that the Committee developed a draft survey to collect information on instruction in the Holocaust, genocide and human rights violations from school entities. Mr. Snider said he anticipates releasing the survey to school entities in January and that the results will be used to inform a report to the Board next year.

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

Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem provided a report the Board on the Department's efforts to develop a state plan in response to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the stakeholder engagement sessions convened by PDE, and a report produced by the American Institutes for Research to independently summarize the recommendations developed by stakeholder workgroups along with relevant state policy research. Deputy Secretary Stem also announced a public tour on ESSA that the Department plans to begin in December in order to provide updates

on its work related and to gather additional public feedback to inform the development of an ESSA state plan.

James Grandon asked whether the Department would establish benchmarks to measure the impact of ESSA. Mr. Stem discussed plans to establish targets across grade levels and across student subgroups and inclusion of staff from higher education and career and technical education in the planning process to ensure continuity across spectrums.

Craig Snider spoke to the need to focus on students as individuals and nurture their aptitudes. Mr. Stem discussed ways to support personalized learning.

Kirk Hallett shared anecdotes about the personal challenges experienced by students he works with in the afterschool program he runs through his professional life and said these students are being left behind. Larry Wittig spoke to the challenge of establishing public policy to govern the vast diversity of districts across the Commonwealth. Mr. Grandon commented that a common measurement tool is necessary to identify where we are experiencing success and build upon that. Colleen Sheehan commented that too many layers of bureaucracy are overcomplicating the process of educating students and suggested that the Board formulate a Committee to explore fundamental questions.

The Council engaged in discussion about whether there is value in establishing a committee on student solutions, the role of the Board versus the role of other elected officials in addressing education issues broadly, and whether there are best practices that can be shared by looking at the top-performing and bottom-performing districts statewide and the funding associated with those districts.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **ACTION ITEM**

There were no action items.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m. on a **Sheehan/Farmer White** motion.



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Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant