

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

**333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126**

March 9, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 1:45 p.m. by Chairman Larry Wittig.

Attending:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| James Agras <i>(via phone)</i> | James Grandon | Colleen Sheehan <i>(via phone)</i> |
| Carol Aichele | Pamela Gunter-Smith | Craig Snider <i>(via phone)</i> |
| Jay Badams | Maureen Lally-Green <i>(via phone)</i> | Lavinia Soliman |
| James Barker <i>(via phone)</i> | Donald LeCompte | Joshita Varshney |
| Nicole Carnicella | Jonathan Peri <i>(via phone)</i> | A. Lee Williams |
| Sandra Dungee Glenn | Mollie Phillips <i>(via phone)</i> | Larry Wittig |

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 13, 2016, meeting of the Council of Basic Education were approved on a **Badams/Aichele** motion.

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

Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem presented a report framed around how the work of his office is meeting the Department of Education's (PDE) broad goals and fits into PDE's mission. Mr. Stem said his report would contain updates on PDE's activities to provide supports to schools in an effort to hold the Department accountable for assisting schools in meeting the expectations set forth for them.

Goal 1

Provide quality resources and supports that assist schools in preparing students to be College and Career Ready.

Mr. Stem provided an update on PDE's Comprehensive Planning tool. He said comprehensive plans are living documents that are now using student performance data to inform the development of action plans around college and career readiness. Mr. Stem highlighted PDE's trainings for administrators related to the plans.

The Deputy Secretary also announced the development of parent training materials for LEAs as part of the Secondary Transition Initiative focused on helping parents of children with disabilities to provide career pathways for their children. Mr. Stem further reported that the pilot

of the Planning for the Future Checklist app for mobile devices was completed and received positive feedback. He said he anticipates rolling out this resource for transition-age youth with disabilities over the summer.

Related to PDE's Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) Initiative, Mr. Stem shared that PDE is populating online live binders for educators that include a continuum of technically adequate assessment measures and standards-aligned instructional interventions for K-12 in the areas of math, writing, and early literacy. Mr. Stem said the initiative blends regular and special education to provide school districts with interventions and resources that can be used directly in classrooms.

Mr. Stem also provided an update on PDE's Reading Initiative, which is seeking to bring a dyslexia pilot program to scale. Mr. Stem said this research-based approach has broader applicability to literacy instruction beyond students identified with dyslexia.

Deputy Secretary Stem distributed posters on the Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Hotline. He said the Department recently held a kick-off event to promote awareness of the consultation line.

Goal 2

Ensuring that assessment and accountability systems are aligned to College and Career Ready student outcomes, incentivize effective practices at the school level and provide meaningful indicators of success.

Deputy Secretary Stem shared that PDE has opportunities for school-level teams to participate in trainings related to the use of MTSS in writing, reading and mathematics. Mr. Stem also discussed the Early Warning System (EWS), a research-based dropout prevention initiative being implemented in 12 school districts across the Commonwealth. The EWS contains a dashboard that allows districts to view patterns of attendance, discipline and academics that signal a child is at-risk of dropping out. Mr. Stem said PDE hopes to make a correlation between the use of the tool and dropout reduction. Finally, Mr. Stem noted that these supports are inter-related in that if a student is identified as at-risk of dropping out it should initiate a conversation around what dropout interventions are in place and how they fit within a district's MTSS model. Recognizing that, Mr. Stem said PDE is acting strategically in deploying these supports.

Goal 3

Creating systems that foster the ongoing growth and development of all Pennsylvania educators.

Deputy Secretary Stem reported on usage of the Standard Aligned Systems (SAS) portal. Between December 2015 and January 2016, PDE saw SAS page views increase from 486,267 to 633,814. The number of free online course participants also increased from 341 to 540 and the number of free online course enrollments increased from 539 to 822 during that same period. Additionally, the number of Act 48 hours earned through SAS-provided courses increased from 4,454 to 6,269.

Mr. Stem highlighted PDE's annual Making a Difference conference, recently attended by over 1,400 educators. The professional development gathering provided specific instructional strategies and interventions in the area of special education, with an emphasis on best practices

that crossover into regular education. Mr. Stem then discussed PDE's efforts in developing principals and said PDE received high ratings from the U.S. Department of Education for this work being carried out under its State Professional Development Grant.

Goal 4

Increase the collaboration between families, schools, postsecondary education and training and business/industry partners to align instruction with workforce needs and emphasize the value of vocational/technical skills.

Mr. Stem addressed PDE's efforts related to migrant education and noted that Pennsylvania is the lead state nationally in the Migrant Education Program Preschool Initiative. He also noted that the Bureau of Special Education is collaborating with the ARC of Philadelphia in preparing transition-age youth for employment. Mr. Stem highlighted an initiative of SAP, a software company from Germany, to hire students with disabilities. SAP and the ARC will work to recruit other area business partners to make a similar hiring commitment.

Mr. Stem also highlighted an Autism Initiative that will focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) activities at a conference to be held in August 2016 in conjunction with Penn State University's Outreach Department. This camp for students with autism who are likely to attend college also will provide training to high school science teachers to help them address the needs of students with disabilities in learning within a STEM context.

Upon time for discussion, Chairman Wittig shared his knowledge of a program called Starfish that is used by colleges and universities as an early warning system for dropouts based on postsecondary indicators. Mr. Stem thanked the Chairman for making him aware of this resource and said PDE continues to evaluate other EWS programs.

James Grandon asked what programs PDE provides to parents to learn the warning signs for bullying as well as for dropouts. Mr. Stem replied that much of that specific work occurs at the local level and said PDE provides tools to equip administrators in engaging parents in those conversations. Further, Mr. Stem noted that the Office of Federal Programs supports parent advisory councils. Mr. Grandon asked Mr. Stem to provide follow-up reports on the success of efforts to engage parents in this regard.

Lavinia Soliman asked if PDE intends to expand its bullying prevention consultation line to mobile applications to make it more accessible to students. Mr. Stem said there were no present plans for mobile apps, but said it was a great suggestion that he would bring back to his team.

Jay Badams offered that the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) has been a partner in conducting public outreach and outreach with parents regarding bullying prevention.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bernie Miller, PSEA, complimented the Bureau of Special Education, PDE and PaTTAN on Secondary Transition and other initiatives mentioned during the Deputy Secretary's report that he felt will do good things for students and parents. Mr. Miller said he appreciates that materials were vetted by parents during their development to make them more user-friendly and

that they will be translated into Spanish. He further complimented the Futures Checklist app for its regional format. Mr. Miller stated that data from the Dyslexia Project looks very promising. Finally, Mr. Miller expanded on the SAP hiring initiative discussed by the Deputy Secretary, described the creative interview process developed for students with disabilities, and said the effort will lead to high-paying, high-skill jobs for students with disabilities who hold college degrees.

Christopher Clayton, PSEA, shared that an upcoming conference for pre-professional educators will include a session fully dedicated to bullying prevention efforts. Mr. Clayton noted that many teachers communicate directly with parents and students regarding bullying and positive behavior management through social media and other mobile apps.

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 2:17 p.m. on an **Aichele/Badams** motion.



Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant