

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

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

September 14, 2016

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Wittig at 11:03 a.m.

Attending:

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

Kirk Hallett
Shirlann Harmon
Pamela Gunter Smith
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 Higher Education were approved on a **Williams/Agras** motion.

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY
HIGHER EDUCATION**

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

Dr. Del Pilar reported that since January 2016, there have been 5,044 completers of the GED test and 25 completers of the HiSET exam. He reported that the GED pass rate was 79% compared with 76% for the HiSET, and said that his office will continue to monitor trends in students taking each test and their pass rates. Dr. Del Pilar reported that there are currently 26 HiSET testing centers in the Commonwealth with 19 addendum sites primarily located at correctional institutions.

Dr. Del Pilar also reported that the Department is in the process of awarding 2016-17 Adult Basic Education and Family Literacy Grants and said approximately 39 programs have applied.

The Deputy Secretary announced that effective September 21; the Department will have a new delivery process for GED/HiSET Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma earners to retrieve their credentials. The new automated system will be provided by DiplomaSender. The service will decrease the amount of wait time for diplomas and transcripts by allowing requestors

to submit requests from home and no longer requiring money orders to be sent to the Department.

Dr. Del Pilar reported that 134 applications have been processed under the Veterans Education Certification Preferential Processing, a 132% increase in the number of applications since July.

Dr. Del Pilar also announced that a new Principal Early Childhood Project, funded with Title II federal funds, would be announced shortly. He said the pilot project will focus on creating innovative models of preparing principals, focusing on grades prek-4.

The Deputy Secretary provided an update on educator shortage areas. He said the Department is in the process of preparing a letter to the U.S. Department of Education that will identify shortages both by geography and by type of certification.

Dr. Del Pilar announced guidance from the Department on substitute teaching permits for prospective educators. Recent changes to the School Code allow students enrolled in accredited teacher preparation programs in the Commonwealth to serve as substitute teachers if they have completed 60 credits. The pre-service education students are allowed to substitute for up to 10 days for a single teacher, but not more than 20 days for multiple employees per school year. Chairman Wittig asked whether this would help with student teaching. Dr. Del Pilar said that the School Code does not provide clear guidance on that question. He explained that the School Code requires student teaching to be supervised, and said the Department would like to engage in discussion with teacher preparation programs about this matter and formulate a recommendation for the Secretary about the applicability to student teaching. Maureen Lally-Green asked whether the students receive compensation. Dr. Del Pilar explained that student teaching is unpaid, but students serving in a substitute role would receive compensation.

Council Chairman James Grandon asked how many individuals taking the GED and HiSET were repeat testers. Dr. Del Pilar replied that he did not have that data on hand, but would provide it. Mr. Grandon asked what evidence repeat testers must show in order to take the exam again and if they take the exact same exam. The Deputy Secretary replied that GED requires examinees to show identification at the test site before starting the test, and that the test is broken into subject area subsections that can be taken individually. He explained that there are multiple versions of the exam and that students do not take the exact same exam when re-testing. Finally, Mr. Grandon asked if U.S. citizenship is required to take the GED. Dr. Del Pilar replied that it is not.

Craig Snider inquired whether there is state policy in place to address underperforming teachers. Dr. Del Pilar deferred to Deputy Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Matt Stem, who said that Act 82 governs teacher evaluations. Mr. Stem explained the components of the current evaluation system and discussed the resources available through PDE for teachers and administrators to aid struggling teachers. Mr. Snider asked whether the state maintains records on the number of teachers annually released from employment for incompetence. Mr. Stem said the Department does receive data on teachers that are determined to be ineffective through the evaluation process.

Dr. Del Pilar provided an update on Pennsylvania's status regarding its SARA-membership application and said the Commonwealth should learn in October whether its application has been accepted. He also noted that the Department's Office of Chief Counsel is in the process of promulgating regulations related to SARA. Dr. Del Pilar said he anticipates that the Department will be in a position to being accepting applications from institutions to participate in SARA in January 2017.

Dr. Del Pilar also provided an update regarding the closure of seven ITT Technical Institute locations in Pennsylvania that were accredited by ACICS. The Department is working with over 1,800 students affected by the closures to explore their educational options. Dr. Del Pilar said those options include loan forgiveness (with a loss of credits;) credit transfer to an institution that will accept the credits; or a teach-out at an institution that will complete the required courses and allow them to earn the ITT degree they had begun. The Deputy Secretary said the state's community colleges have been wonderful partners in the effort to create transfer and teach-out opportunities for displaced students, and said the Department also is working with PHEAA and PASSHE to create opportunities for affected students. He noted that the Department also is monitoring the larger situation surrounding whether ACICS will continue as an accrediting body, and said the U.S. Department of Education is expected to announce a decision on September 21 regarding ACICS.

Finally, Dr. Del Pilar reported on postsecondary planning to establish a statewide attainment goal to meet the workforce needs of Pennsylvania. He said the Department has been in discussion with the Lumina Foundation and HCM Strategists as potential providers of technical assistance in this effort, and that the work could help to inform a master plan for higher education. Dr. Del Pilar said another component of the work would include an economic impact study to define postsecondary education's impact on Pennsylvania. Jonathan Peri volunteered to assist with these efforts. Mr. Grandon asked about the drain of students attending college in Pennsylvania and leaving the state upon graduation. Dr. Del Pilar replied that such data is not widely available because of state-level prohibitions on collecting postsecondary data that is not federally mandated.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

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 11:32 a.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Jones". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant