

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

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Wittig at 1:03 p.m.

**Attending:**

James Agras (via phone)	Shirlann Harmon
Andrew Ahr	Pamela Gunter-Smith
Carol Aichele	Maureen Lally-Green
Jay Badams	Jonathan Peri
James Barker (via phone)	Colleen Sheehan (via phone)
Nicole Carnicella (via phone)	Lavinia Soliman
Sandra Dungee Glenn	Karen Farmer White
James Grandon	A. Lee Williams
Kirk Hallett	Larry Wittig

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the May 11, 2016 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Williams/Peri** motion.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Larry Wittig, Chairman of the State Board of Education, welcomed the new junior student member of the Council of Higher Education, Andrew Ahr, a student at The Pennsylvania State University. The Chairman also welcomed the new junior student member of the Council of Basic Education, Shirlann Harmon, a student in the Seneca Valley School District.

Mr. Wittig next recognized accomplishments of the Board's two senior student members. Joshita Varshney, senior high school student member, was selected to participate in the U.S. State Department's National Security Language Initiative for Youth program through which she will spend the summer studying in China. Mr. Wittig congratulated Lavinia Soliman, senior postsecondary student member, on her graduation from Montgomery County Community College and acceptance to Bryn Mawr College, as well as her receipt of a scholarship from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

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

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

Dr. Del Pilar reported that the HiSET, an alternative to the GED exam, is now available at 15 testing centers with 14 addendum sites and that two new testing sites are planned. Dr. Del Pilar said more than 26 students have passed the HiSET, and the Department will continue to monitor the exam's implementation and passage rates.

Dr. Del Pilar also provided an update on two efforts related to teacher certification and staffing. First, Dr. Del Pilar reported that preferential processing of certification applications for members of the military serving in active duty, their spouse/surviving spouse, veterans and their spouse/surviving spouse was implemented one month ago. Eligible candidates receive an expedited review and a reduced application fee. Since its implementation, Dr. Del Pilar said the program has received 55 applications. Next, Dr. Del Pilar reported that his office is working in collaboration with the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning to develop a proposal for a Principal Early Childhood Project that would be funded under Title II.

Dr. Del Pilar then discussed implementation of Act 35 of 2016, which granted Pennsylvania authority to participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA). The Deputy Secretary said Pennsylvania has joined the Southern Regional Education Board to fulfill the requirement that a state be a member of a higher education compact in order to join SARA. He said he expects the Commonwealth to submit its application to join SARA by September and that he anticipates Pennsylvania to be fully operating as a SARA state in January 2017. The Deputy Secretary also reported that 47 states currently are members of SARA and that New York has indicated it will not participate.

Finally, Dr. Del Pilar reported that his office is closely monitoring national conversation regarding whether the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) will continue to be authorized as an accreditor. The Deputy Secretary said 45 for-profit schools in Pennsylvania that enroll more than 15,000 students currently are accredited by ACICS. If ACICS is no longer recognized as an accreditor, Dr. Del Pilar said those Pennsylvania institutions would have 18 months to seek and receive new accreditation from another accreditor. Without accreditation, the institutions would not be authorized to award Title IV funds and consideration would need to be given to articulation, transfer of credits, recognition of diplomas and what happens to the students as they move forward.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Bernie Miller, staff with the Pennsylvania State Education Association, asked whether Pennsylvania public school employees would receive Act 48 credit for online courses taken at participating SARA institutions located outside of Pennsylvania. Dr. Del Pilar replied that there are a number of areas that work differently for SARA, including teacher certification, continuing education credit, and nursing. In areas that require state-level licensure, Dr. Del Pilar said SARA does not automatically guarantee approval of credits for Act 48.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

There were no action items.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Council Chairman James Grandon announced that Lumina Foundation's Strategy Lab is supporting grants, research, and technical assistance to state and system leaders to advance state policy to increase higher education attainment. Mr. Grandon suggested such research could provide a foundation for updating the Council's Master Plan for Higher Education. He asked the Council to review the foundation's list of 20 evidence-based policies and practices and to provide input at a future meeting on whether an application for research specific to Pennsylvania should be pursued.

Chairman asked about the cost for services provided by Lumina. Dr. Del Pilar replied that there is no cost. Sandra Dungee Glenn asked the Deputy Secretary to provide the Council with a list of the areas he would prioritize for research to best meet the needs of the Commonwealth.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Jones".

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Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant