

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

333 Market Street, Honors Suite, Harrisburg, PA
May 11, 2016

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

Attending:

James Agras (via phone)	Donald LeCompte
Carol Aichele	Jonathan Peri
Jay Badams	Colleen Sheehan
Nicole Carnicella	Craig Snider (via phone)
Sandra Dungee Glenn (via phone)	Lavinia Soliman
James Grandon	Joshita Varshney
Kirk Hallett	Karen Farmer White (via phone)
Pamela Gunter Smith	A. Lee Williams (via phone)
Maureen Lally-Green (via phone)	Larry Wittig
Teresa Lebo	

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 9, 2016 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Peri/Carnicella** motion.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Larry Wittig, Chairman of the State Board of Education, called to order the meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

The Chairman thanked student members Teresa Lebo and Donald LeCompte for their service to the Board and announced that their terms were ending. Mr. Wittig congratulated Mr. LeCompte on his recent election as Executive President of DECA International. Mr. Wittig announced that Shirlann Harmon, a student in the Seneca Valley School District, and Andrew Ahr, a student at The Pennsylvania State University, were selected as the Board's new junior student members and said they would begin two-year terms in July. He welcomed Ms. Harmon who joined the Board for today's meeting as an observer.

The Chairman also introduced and welcomed Thomas Howell, the Board's new legal counsel.

Mr. Wittig then recognized James Grandon, Chairman of the Council of Higher Education, to convene the meeting of the Council.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY **HIGHER EDUCATION**

Dr. Wil Del Pilar, Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education, provided an update on activity within the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education.

Dr. Del Pilar updated the Council on the status of assessments approved by the Department to earn a high school equivalency credential. He reported that 14,967 students took the GED in 2014-15 and, of that group, 8,025 completed the exam and 6,743 earned a passing score. Dr. Del Pilar said the pass rate of Pennsylvania students on the GED is 81%, higher than the national pass rate of 78%. He also noted that individuals who do not pass all four subtests of the GED can re-take only the individual subtest that they did not pass in order to complete the whole exam. Dr. Del Pilar reported that the HiSET, recently adopted by the Department, is currently being administered at seven sites and 16 additional sites are pending. To date, Dr. Del Pilar said 50 students had completed the HiSET. He said the Department will continue to monitor the difference between the HiSET and GED pass rates.

Dr. Del Pilar also provided an update on the Rural Regional College's Board of Trustees and said the Department continues to provide technical assistance to the board.

The Deputy Secretary concluded his report by presenting the Department's annual report on certifications. Dr. Del Pilar presented data that showed a 58 percent decrease in the number of teaching certificates awarded since 2010-11 and a 42 percent decrease in the number of emergency permits issued during that same timeframe. Dr. Del Pilar said these data points prompted the Department to look at the teacher pipeline as part of its ongoing exploration of issues related to certification.

The Deputy Secretary said that nationally there has been a dramatic decline in the number of students pursuing teaching. He shared data that showed a 55 percent decline in education majors from 1996 through 2014 and said the decline has impacted diversity in the teaching field. Dr. Del Pilar said the number of African American students enrolled in teacher preparation programs in Pennsylvania declined by 60.5 percent from 1996 through 2014. While the number of Hispanic education majors increased by 61.45 percent during that same period, Dr. Del Pilar said the number of Hispanic students enrolled is much lower, making the increase appear large. He reported that the number of Asian students enrolled in teacher education programs has remained fairly flat.

Dr. Del Pilar said it is important not just to look at enrollment in teacher preparation programs, but also at the number of students ultimately graduating from such programs. Since 2000-2001, Dr. Del Pilar reported that the number of teacher education graduates has decreased by 38.26 percent. He further reported that the diversity of teacher education graduates mirrors that of the programs' enrollment. From 2000 through 2014, the number of African American graduates from teacher education programs has decreased by 71.59 percent, the number of Hispanic/Latino graduates increased by 49.32 percent and the number of Asian graduates decreased by 12.45 percent. Looked at another way, in 2013-2014 there were 165 African American candidates that graduated from Pennsylvania teacher preparation programs, 138 Hispanic/Latino candidates and 59 Asian candidates. The Deputy Secretary said efforts to hire a

diverse teaching force face a small pool of potential candidates. However, he cautioned that such an analysis isn't complete with retirement and retention data to show where needs exist.

Chairman Wittig said the data presented to the Board show the most significant decline in certification occurring in recent years and asked what conclusions can be drawn from that. Dr. Del Pilar responded that an effective analysis of that question would need to layer changes in statewide policy over the data to determine what effect those changes had on the number of graduates. He said he did not prepare such an analysis for his current presentation, but offered to do so at a future meeting. The Deputy Secretary said PDE is working to identify strategies to address certification issues and is taking a hard look at the Basic Skills Assessment.

Mr. Grandon asked how Pennsylvania compares nationally on certification matters. The Deputy Secretary shared that declining certifications are a national issue and said Pennsylvania has a bigger footprint in this area because it has more teacher preparation programs than most states.

Lavinia Soliman asked if the Department is looking at correlative data on the cause of the decline. Dr. Del Pilar said the Department does not have hard data, but it is trying to be proactive in identifying potential causes and in identifying solutions such as recruitment strategies, use of the federal TEACH grant, and loan forgiveness programs. However, he said the Commonwealth cannot wait for students to graduate from high school and college in order to fill certification gaps and said PDE also must look at alternative certification, Teach for America and other paths to address present needs.

Jay Badams commented that Erie is experiencing certification gaps across the Board, but said that a lack of substitute teachers is impacting districts throughout the region.

Matthew Stem, Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, offered that career readiness is an indicator proposed for the School Performance Profile and said encouraging students to enter the field of education should be part of that work.

Dr. Del Pilar concluded by stating that there are similar shortages in the pre-K arena that need to be addressed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Clayton, director of the student program for the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), addressed a series of questions regarding teacher certification data to Dr. Del Pilar. Mr. Clayton inquired about whether the Department has data on the number of certificates issued, whether there are correlations between entry into teacher education programs and certifications issued, whether the Department has assessed on average the number of new teachers needed in the workforce, and what programs are available to address the gap in African American male educators. Dr. Del Pilar said the Department has certification data and plans to look at the pipeline compared to certificates issued. The Deputy Secretary also responded that the Department's work in this area began as an effort to conduct a needs assessment of the teaching profession to identify where the gaps will be. He also offered that the Department works with the Black Male Educator Consortium out of Philadelphia. Chairman Wittig interceded and

informed Mr. Clayton that his line of questioning was inappropriate to the purpose of public comments and directed him to address his questions to the deputy secretary outside of the meeting. Mr. Clayton offered that thought needs to be given to changing the narrative around teaching and said he is considering an effort to partner with student PSEA chapters on campuses to recruit students to become education majors. Dr. Del Pilar said there has been national conversation around the narrative related to teaching and that way current teachers talk to their students about the profession has an impact, but the Department's current strategy does not include designing a branding effort about teaching.

Bernie Miller, a parent and second-generation educator, stated that he persuaded his college-age daughter not to go into education. He said the Board would be surprised at how many educators no longer find passion, dedication or excitement for their work. Mr. Miller said pre-service teachers must take a number of high-stakes assessments in order to enter the field and that this is a barrier for students who have taken such assessments throughout their academic life and hate standardized testing and being subject to perform at one's best on a single given day. Mr. Miller said budgets pose another barrier to entry into the teaching profession, comparing as an example prospective salary increases between the teaching profession and the nursing profession. He further stated that the need to double major in special education is a disincentive to pursue that path. Mr. Miller thanked the Council for its work and for looking into what can be done to resolve these issues.

Harris Sokoloff, of the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education and the Regional Education Lab of the Mid-Atlantic States, offered additional data points the Council should consider in the future. Mr. Sokoloff suggested that the Council look into whether Pennsylvania is still a huge exporter of teachers, whether the Commonwealth imports first-year teachers from other states, and what can be done to increase the number of teachers educated in Pennsylvania who remain in the state and to draw new teachers from other states.

ACTION ITEMS

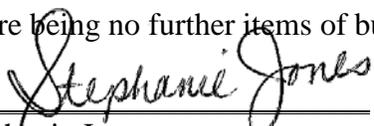
There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:38 p.m.



Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant