

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

September 14, 2016

The 334th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Wednesday, September 14, 2016. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chairman Larry Wittig.

Attending:

James Agras
Carol Aichele
Jay Badams
James Barker
Nicole Carnicella
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

The minutes of the July 13, 2016 meeting of the State Board of Education were approved on a **Grandon/Hallett** motion.

COMMITTEE REPORT
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON DATA COLLECTION REDUCTION

Committee Chair Karen Farmer White reported that the State Board received a new assignment under Act 86, which was enacted by the General Assembly in July. She summarized the charge made to the Board by the legislation, which requires the Board to consult with an Advisory Committee to review data collection requirements for public school entities in the areas of finance, human resources, food services, transportation, child accounting, athletics, health and special education in order to determine whether the data has a valuable purpose to inform policymakers and the public about the operation of public schools. Ms. White said Act 86 directs the Board to make a report of its findings and recommendations in January 2017, and noted that any data collected by the Department of Education (PDE) that is identified in the report as being redundant, overly burdensome or no longer necessary would cease to be collected if the data is not required by statute or regulation.

Ms. White reported that the Board has appointed the 18-member Advisory Committee on Data Collection Reduction required by statute, and also formed an Ad Hoc Committee of Board members to work in consultation with the Advisory Committee in this effort. She said that the Ad Hoc Committee is comprised of herself, James Agras, James Barker and Pamela Gunter-Smith and noted that a listing of Advisory Committee members was provided to the Board.

Ms. White said the Ad Hoc Committee and the Advisory Committee held an organizational meeting on August 25. As result of that meeting, Mr. White said requests were

submitted to PDE and the Department of Health for background information on the data currently collected from public school entities. She noted that the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee and the Advisory Committee would take place later in the afternoon at 2:00 pm.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Secretary Pedro Rivera shared updates on the following topics:

Charter Schools

Secretary Rivera reported that, in August, Governor Wolf announced the creation of the Division of Charter Schools within PDE in an effort to improve quality and accountability of charter schools in Pennsylvania. The new division will include four civil service staff members including a Division Chief, two Basic Education Associates and an Administrative Assistant position.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

On August 30, the ESSA Workgroups convened by the Department approved a series of recommendations related to Pennsylvania's implementation of the new federal law. The Secretary said approval of the recommendations required agreement by two-thirds of the members of each workgroup. A report on the recommendations is forthcoming. The Secretary also noted that the final ESSA Stakeholders group will meet on October 18, after which PDE will embark on Phase 2 of stakeholder outreach on Pennsylvania's ESSA State Plan.

PSSAs

Secretary Rivera shared that, in August, PDE released aggregate statewide results of the 2016 PSSAs and Keystone exams. Secretary Rivera noted that the 2016 administration of the PSSA marked the second time students were assessed on the new, more rigorous PA Core Standards in English Language Arts and Math and that the PSSA Science assessments were unchanged.

Secretary Rivera said the results showed more Pennsylvania students scoring proficient or advanced on the PSSA in comparison to 2015. While the results show promise of improved student performance, the Secretary said they also demonstrate a need for a renewed commitment to provide all students with the supports necessary to close achievement gaps. Mr. Rivera then shared that 72 PSSA math answer booklets were misplaced while being shipped between Russell Elementary School in the Marple Newtown School District and Data Recognition Corp (DRC) in Minnesota. He said the missing box contained 68 fifth grade and 4 third grade math booklets. The Secretary called the missing booklets unacceptable and said PDE has worked tirelessly with DRC, UPS and the Department of General Services to investigate the situation. Secretary Rivera discussed the steps PDE plans to implement regarding delivery operations for state assessments and to ensure parties are held accountable for the misplaced box.

Chairman Wittig asked if all of the missing answer booklets were in one box or spread among boxes. Secretary Rivera replied that all the missing booklets were in one box. Jonathan Peri asked about the impact on the students whose completed tests were misplaced. The Secretary

stated that the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education is reviewing statutory provisions that address these circumstances to better determine PDE's obligations and opportunities, and said that PDE will report out on that impact after it work through this with the local community.

Craig Snider followed-up on the Secretary's comments regarding closing the achievement gap and noted that there are factors outside the school setting that affect academic outcomes. Mr. Snider said he believes that children in foster care are among the most disadvantaged. He asked about the possibility of creating a residential program for children in foster care through a public-private partnership to create greater stability for these students. Secretary Rivera replied that while PDE does not have a task force specific to investigating residential programs, the new ESSA law is providing the Department with a specific opportunity to look at the foster care population.

REPORT OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Chairman Wittig announced that a representative of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC) was unable to attend the meeting. The PSPC submitted a written report that was provided to Board members. In addition to its regular report, the PSPC also provided copies of its 2015 Annual Report and 2015 Educator Discipline Report.

Mr. Peri commented that the 2015 Educator Discipline Report reflects recent annual reports from the PSCP that show a growth in the number of individuals subject to discipline year after year.

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 1:33 p.m. on a **Williams/Agras** motion.



Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant