

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

**333 Market Street | 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126**

**January 11, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Ms. Karen Farmer White.

**Attending:**

James Agras *(via phone)*  
Andrew Ahr  
Carol Aichele  
Jay Badams *(via phone)*  
James Barker *(via phone)*  
Nathan Barrett  
Nicole Carnicella

Sandra Dungee-Glenn  
Sen. John Eichelberger  
Kirk Hallett  
Shirlann Harmon  
Maureen Lally-Green  
*(via phone)*  
Jonathan Peri *(via phone)*

Colleen Sheehan *(via phone)*  
Craig Snider *(via phone)*  
Lavinia Soliman  
Joshita Varshney  
Karen Farmer White  
Larry Wittig

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the November 9, 2016, meeting of the Council of Basic Education were approved on a **Lally-Green/Aichele** motion.

**COMMITTEE REPORT**  
**COMMITTEE ON CHAPTER 11 (IMMUNIZATIONS)**

Dr. Nicole Carnicella, Chair of the Committee on Chapter 11, reported that the Committee met earlier in the day and approved final revisions to Chapter 11 pertaining to immunization requirements for student attendance. Dr. Carnicella said final amendments to the Department of Health's (DOH) immunization regulations were approved by the Independent Regulatory Review Commission in October. She said the amendments to Chapter 11 are necessary to bring alignment and consistency with the changes approved to DOH regulations to related provisions of the Board's regulations.

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

Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem provided a report on the following topics:

**Standards Align Systems (SAS) Institute**

Mr. Stem shared that the Department's 6<sup>th</sup> annual SAS Institute was attended by more than 600 educators. The theme of the December professional development event was personalizing learning for students.

### **Resources and Supports**

Mr. Stem reported that the Department conducted a survey of 662 school buildings on usage of PDE's Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDTs). The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback on the investments that the Department has made in this tool. Mr. Stem said the results anticipate a slight growth in usage of CDTs in the 2017-18 school year. He said the survey also solicited information about obstacles to greater adoption of the CDTs and why some schools discontinue use of the tool, and noted that the Department will use this feedback to guide its next steps in planning supports and allocating resources.

Mr. Stem said the Department conducted a series of Comprehensive Planning training sessions to assist school districts in creating focused plans.

Mr. Stem noted that Pennsylvania is among national and world leaders in the systems, services and training it provides for individuals with autism. He stated that the Department has made a significant investment in its Autism Initiative at the state level and said that, as of November 2016, PDE staff completed 500 rigorous site reviews for those participating in the autism support program and engaged in more than 1,500 consultations with participants. He noted that Pennsylvania's initiative continues to garner interest from other states, including the participation of delegates from other states in trainings offered by the Department.

The Deputy Secretary provided an update on the Multi-Tiered System of Support and PDE's on-site technical assistance sessions. He then provided an update on the Bureau of Special Education's State System Improvement Plan and efforts to translate related resources into Spanish to increase community-based and family engagement.

Finally, Mr. Stem discussed the Pennsylvania Bias and Discrimination Prevention Planning Guidance that was developed by multiple state-level partners to support schools in response to an uptick in reported incidents.

### **Teacher of the Year**

Mr. Stem announced that Michael Soskil, an elementary teacher in the Wallenpaupack Area School District, was named the 2017 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year.

### **Assessment and Accountability**

Mr. Stem reported that 419 schools participated in the Winter Wave I administration of the Keystone Exams and that PDE provided unannounced monitoring in 33 of those schools.

He then discussed an effort by the Department to examine the length of the PSSA assessments in response to concerns from varied stakeholders. Mr. Stem said an internal team is working with external technical assistance centers to develop preliminary drafts of reliable ways to shorten the

assessments. Mr. Stem noted that if a decision is made to pursue shortening the PSSA, the revised assessments would need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for peer review.

Finally, Mr. Stem provided an update on development of the state's plan in response to the Every Student Succeeds Act and a statewide tour conducted by the Department to solicit public feedback. Mr. Stem also discussed the Department's proposed PA Future Ready Index.

The Deputy Secretary announced that the Department will host hand scoring training sessions for 200 educators on how to write their own assessment items and ensure that those items are asking students to demonstrate the same standards and skills that are measured on states assessments.

### **Act 70**

Mr. Stem reported that PDE has conducted 40 training sessions related to Act 70 and that approximately 1,500 educators attended those trainings. He said more regional trainings are planned for the 2016-17 school year.

### **Science Education**

Mr. Stem shared that PDE joined with the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association in November to host a Leadership Day that was focused on creating a common vision for science education in Pennsylvania.

### **Special Education Grants**

Mr. Stem announced the 10 districts that received special education grants to support the establishment of school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports.

### **Migrant Education**

Mr. Stem reported on outreach efforts conducted by PDE's migrant education staff at the Farm Show.

### **Transition for School to Community-Based Competitive Employment Grants**

The Deputy Secretary announced the recipients of grants that are targeted to establishing or expanding school-based career development programming for transition from school to community-based competitive employment for students with disabilities.

Following the conclusion of the Deputy Secretary's report, Sandra Dungee Glenn referenced the Department's efforts related to bias and discrimination and asked what data is collected, how the data is collected and how is it categorized. Mr. Stem responded that the Office of Safe Schools logs incidents and reports on internal spreadsheet, along with PDE's response. Incidents also may be reported to PDE through its bullying hotline and, in some circumstances, the Department has followed-up on incidents reported in the media.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Robert B. Sklaroff, M.D., said he wanted to address the Board to discuss immunizations, the SPLC, what happened at Penn State a few years ago, Holocaust education, and problems with communications that are inaccurate from the perspective of the public information office. Chairman Wittig responded that many of the topics referenced are not relevant to the purpose of the Board and asked Dr. Sklaroff to focus his remarks on items that are relevant to the Board's purpose. Dr. Sklaroff then highlighted bullet points of his areas of concern.

Dr. Sklaroff noted his medical background and stated that there is a science behind why you do not need a 100% rate for immunizations. He then stated that the SPLC is a hate-filled anti-hate entity and said the Board should have oversight into what the SPLC calls hate groups. Dr. Sklaroff then shared that he attended Kutztown University's graduation a few years ago and that he was unhappy with the commencement address by Dr. Anke Walz. He said the address was anti-church and that he twice contacted university administrators with documentation of errors in the address, but that he did not receive a response to his communications. Dr. Sklaroff noted that his focus is on Holocaust education and expressed frustration with the lack of education on the Holocaust and the lack of such education for educators. He disputed the claim made by PDE earlier in the meeting that 1,500 educators have received Holocaust instruction training and said he has requested sign-in sheets for trainings from PDE and was provided with only about 350 names. Dr. Sklaroff cited problems with requesting information that he is told does not exist and having no avenue of recourse with the public information office. He suggested that Board should have oversight on this. Finally, Dr. Sklaroff said the Board's Act 70 survey needs to ask explicit questions about human right and genocide so that all three topics referenced in the Act are broken down in the survey. He noted that he would share a written memo that he had prepared for the meeting.

Bernie Miller, of the Pennsylvania State Education Association, complimented the Department and the Bureau of Special Education for the progress with the HUNE program. Mr. Miller shared that this program was generated by parents and educators with requests of quick, single-page handouts to engage families in transitional issues for students with disabilities to have a greater chance of success once they graduate high school.

## **ACTION ITEM**

### **FINAL-FORM CHAPTER 11**

A motion to approve final-form amendments to Chapter 11, as recommended by the Committee on Chapter 11, and to transmit the final amendments to the State Board of Education was made by the Honorable Carol Aichele and seconded by Kirk Hallett.

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Karen Farmer White stated that the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Data Collection Reduction scheduled for earlier in the day was delayed due to a lack of quorum. She said public notice was made that the meeting would be delayed until quorum could be achieved. Ms. White reported that a quorum of members now was available to convene and announced that the Committee would convene in the Honors Suite immediately following the adjournment of the meeting of the Council of Basic Education.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m. on an **Aichele/Hallett** motion.



---

Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant