

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

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

**September 13, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Mr. Kirk Hallett.

**Attending:**

James Agras  
Andrew Ahr  
Carol Aichele  
Nicole Carnicella  
Ellie DeWitt  
Sandra Dungee Glenn

John Eichelberger  
Alex Fey  
Pamela Gunter-Smith  
Kirk Hallett  
Shirlann Harmon

Maureen Lally-Green  
*(via phone)*  
Jonathan Peri  
Colleen Sheehan *(via phone)*  
A. Lee Williams  
Larry Wittig

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the July 12, 2017, meeting of the Council of Basic Education were approved on an **Aichele/Williams** motion.

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

Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem reported on the following topics:

**Pennsylvania Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) Initiative**

Deputy Secretary Stem briefed the Board on Pennsylvania's STEM initiatives. He said there will be 300,000 STEM-related jobs in the Commonwealth by 2018, including 17,000 unfilled computer science vacancies, and that by 2024 high-priority STEM job are expected to grow by 15.6%. The Deputy Secretary said Pennsylvania has a significant gap between its supply and demand of STEM workers. He then went on the discuss the Department of Education's (PDE) top five areas of STEM focus.

First, he addressed the Pennsylvania STEM Coalition, a statewide cross-section network representing 140 members with a focus on equitable access to STEM learning experiences. Next, he discussed the Computer Science for All effort designed to diversify and increase the number of learners and educators engaging in computer science. He then reviewed activity related to STEM Ecosystems and noted that Pennsylvania has five nationally-recognized and three locally-recognized STEM ecosystems. Mr. Stem then spoke to ongoing professional development opportunities for Pennsylvania educators, including participation in the Carnegie STEM Excellence Pathway and training in Computer Science Fundamentals by Code.org. Finally, Mr.

Stem reported on a grant collaborative supporting multi-year partnerships focused on ensuring coherence across educational systems, providing equitable access to STEM educational experiences for every learner P-20, and building the capacity of educators to provide STEM experiences in formal and informal settings.

Hon. Carol Aichele inquired about the status of the PSSA mathematics results. Mr. Stem shared that PSSA scores will be released to the Board the last week in September and said there has been improvement in Math on these more rigorous PSSAs over the last 3 years after years of decline. Hon. Aichele replied that she is particularly concerned about grade 8 math results.

George Drake, ex-officio member of the Board, asked if there will be a STEM certification for elementary grades. Mr. Stem responded that STEM conversations are included in dialog between the Higher and Basic education divisions of PDE.

### **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

Deputy Secretary Stem made a presentation on the status of the state's ESSA plan. He reported that Pennsylvania posted its draft ESSA Consolidated State Plan for public comment on August 2, 2017. Comments were accepted through August 31 via an online survey and a dedicated PDE email account. Mr. Stem said the final ESSA State Plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) on September 18, 2017. Upon submission, Mr. Stem said USDE has 120 days to issue a written determination on the plan.

Mr. Stem reviewed the long-term goals established in the plan and highlighted specific components of the plan related to academic assessments; accountability, support and improvement; supporting excellent educators; and supporting all students.

Jonathan Peri asked if Mr. Stem had demographic information about who provided public comment and asked if any weighting was applied to the comments received. Mr. Stem said there was no weighting of the number of comments received and that all comments were granted equal consideration.

Hon. Aichele shared that people in her community are troubled that the plan did not address the issue of student performance and teacher evaluation in a more meaningful way. Further, she said people in her community would like to know if the Keystone Exams will be requirements for graduation and if a PSAT, SAT or ACT score can be substituted for a Keystone Exam. Mr. Stem said he would get clarification to Hon. Aichele on those concerns.

Sen. John Eichelberger stated that the House and Senate Majority Chairs on the Education Committees jointly provide a lengthy review on the ESSA plan that expressed grave concerns.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jeff Remington, National STEM Teacher Ambassador from Palmyra Middle School and faculty member at Lebanon Valley College, thanked PDE, the Board and the stakeholder workgroups for their work on the ESSA State Plan. Mr. Remington noted that the

Commonwealth is making great strides in its work with STEM ecosystems, which he said raise awareness about STEM education for all stakeholders. For the ecosystems to truly have an impact, Mr. Remington said they must be combined with quality STEM teaching standards and associated accountability measures that will allow all students to build STEM experiences and create equity in schools. Mr. Remington said Pennsylvania does not have STEM standards to support the work of ecosystems. He said the PSSA for Science is tied to 2002 Science Standards. Mr. Remington said that new standards must be created based on a comprehensive STEM education plan that will meet the demands of the growing STEM economy. He said every state surrounding Pennsylvania has adopted the next generation science standards, and noted that regional states have begun expanding their STEM ecosystems.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

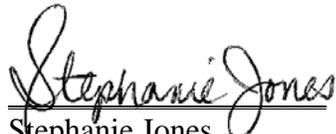
There were no action items.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m. on a **Williams/Aichele** motion.

  
Stephanie Jones  
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Administrative Assistant