

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

333 Market Street, Honors Suite, Harrisburg, PA
March 8, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Wittig at 1:05 p.m.

Attending:

James Agras <i>(via phone)</i>	Sandra Dungee Glenn	Jonathan Peri <i>(via phone)</i>
Andrew Ahr	James Grandon	Colleen Sheehan
Carol Aichele	Pamela Gunter-Smith	Craig Snider <i>(via phone)</i>
Jay Badams	Kirk Hallett	Lavinia Soliman
James Barker <i>(via phone)</i>	Shirlann Harmon	Joshita Varshney
Nathan Barrett	Maureen Lally-Green	Karen Farmer White
Nicole Carnicella	<i>(via phone)</i>	Larry Wittig

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Larry Wittig, Chairman of the State Board of Education, opened the meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Wittig congratulated Dr. Lee Williams on her retirement from Slippery Rock University. Mr. Wittig announced that, upon her retirement, Dr. Williams transitioned from the Council of Higher Education to the Council of Basic Education. Dr. Colleen Sheehan, a faculty member at Villanova University, also shifted Council assignments to fulfill a statutory requirement that the Council of Higher Education include an active faculty member.

Mr. Wittig congratulated Nathan Barrett on his new position as principal of John F. Kennedy Elementary School in the Scranton School District. Mr. Wittig also congratulated Jay Badams on his forthcoming career change to become superintendent of School Administrative Unit 70, a school district that spans Hanover, NH, and Norwich, VT.

Mr. Wittig notified the Board that, due to scheduling conflicts, Secretary Rivera would deliver his report to the Board this afternoon.

Mr. Wittig then opened discussion on the process for undertaking consideration of the application of the Washington Township Independent School District (WTISD) that was remanded back to the Board for further proceedings by Commonwealth Court. Mr. Wittig noted that the application was listed on the agenda for consideration on March 9. He said all members were provided with a copy of the court's opinion, as well as written public comments submitted by stakeholders in advance of the meeting. Mr. Wittig summarized the court's opinion and reviewed the standards identified in Section 291 of the School Code. Mr. Wittig also reported that the Board convened an Executive Session on February 6, at which time the Board's counsel

provided a summary of the court's opinion for members. However, Mr. Wittig said the Board lacked quorum for that session to make determinations about how to proceed.

In the interim, Mr. Wittig said he notified parties to the matter that he anticipated that the Board would provide an opportunity for them to offer arguments on the application and that he anticipated the Board would provide an opportunity to hear public comment. To best manage the Board's time, Mr. Wittig said he requested that individuals interested in providing public comment make the Board aware of their interest by March 3. Mr. Wittig said he also invited interested members of the public to submit written comments by March 3.

During the Board's meeting on March 9, Mr. Wittig said he planned to grant limited time to hear arguments on the application as follows: 15 minutes for WTISD, 15 minutes for the Northern York County School District, and 15 minutes collectively for the Dover Area School District, Dover Area Education Association, and Keep Us in Dover Schools. He also stated that he planned to grant time for public comment following the close of arguments and prior to the Board's deliberations on the application, and that public comment would be limited to three minutes per person and may be further restricted if the remarks became redundant. Time for arguments and public comment would be provided per discretion granted to the Chairman in the Board's by-laws to allow meeting visitors to engage as participants and to entertain public comment during the meeting. Mr. Wittig also noted that the Board may convene in Executive Session to discuss any legal questions related to the application. He invited members of the Board to offer comment on the process for undertaking consideration of the application. No members objected to or requested modifications to the process described by Chairman Wittig.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Pedro Rivera, Secretary of the Department of Education, addressed the Committee of the Whole with the following report.

Secretary Rivera provided an overview of the Governor's proposed 2017-18 budget for education. He also relayed that the Department planned to focus its efforts on Senate Bill 880 and creating multiple pathways to graduation; establishment of the Future Ready PA Index; an accountability plan; and postsecondary initiatives related to student counseling, the teacher pipeline, and re-engaging Pennsylvanians who have some credits to work toward degree completion.

Mr. Wittig asked whether the increase to Basic Education Funding could be used to cover pension costs, and Mr. Rivera clarified that it could. Mr. Wittig then asked whether Keystone would be maintained as a graduation requirement. Mr. Rivera responded that Keystone would be one pathway among other college and career readiness pathways.

James Grandon expressed concern about flat-funding for community colleges. Mr. Rivera replied that recommending flat funding was a difficult decision in a difficult budget season. He noted that the Department is looking at how it can support community colleges through different modes of engagement outside of the budget that might help mitigate some expenses.

Jay Badams stated that data used to establish poverty figures that is derived from U.S. Census phone surveys contains errors that are being reflected in Basic Education Funding calculations. He asked whether the Department is working to correct this. Mr. Rivera explained that the new basic education funding formula calls for the data in question to be applied based on a 5-year average, and said year to year volatility in the data is causing the shift to which Mr. Badams referred in the second year that the formula is being applied. Mr. Rivera said the Department is looking at ways to mitigate this volatility.

Colleen Sheehan asked whether non-preferred funding for the University of Pennsylvania's veterinary school should be reconsidered given the large endowment held by the university and might be better invested in vocational-technical education. Mr. Rivera noted that funding for the University of Pennsylvania was cut in the Governor's budget proposal.

Nicole Carnicella asked whether there was discussion on finding cost savings for school districts. She cited work she has conducted to find savings in healthcare costs for schools in Florida and offered to coordinate a conversation in this area with the appropriate parties.

Mr. Wittig then acknowledged James Grandon for the meeting of the Council of Higher Education.

REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN **COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Council Chairman Grandon called to order the meeting of the Council of Higher Education. Mr. Grandon provided an update on activity related to community colleges that has transpired following the 2015 release of the Council's White Paper on Community College issues. Mr. Grandon said the institutions relayed that there has been positive movement in addressing some of the concerns raised by the colleges, including action by the Department to modify some state-level reporting requirements and growing collaboration among the community colleges and other postsecondary institutions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 11, 2017 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Dungee Glenn/Carnicella** motion.

COMMITTEE REPORT **TEACHER AND SCHOOL LEADER EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE**

Sandra Dungee Glenn, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee met to follow-up on concerns about the alarming decline in the number of certifications issued in the Commonwealth that was brought to the Committee's attention when it received the Department's annual report on certifications at its last meeting. Ms. Dungee Glenn said the Committee determined to engage a partner to conduct a literature review of issues related to teacher retention, certification and preparation and that, following receipt of that literature review, the Committee would determine whether it should pursue an independent study of Pennsylvania-specific issues related to educator certification.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY
POSTSECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Dr. Del Pilar reminded the Board of the adopted statewide attainment goal that seeks to have 60% of state residents hold a credential or degree by 2025. He reviewed data on current attainment in Pennsylvania in the areas of certificate/associates, bachelor's degrees and masters or higher. Dr. Del Pilar then presented data on postsecondary enrollment and retention, enrollment in public vs. private institutions, enrollment and retention for 2-year vs. 4-year institutions, enrollment at in-state vs. out-of-state institutions, and graduation rates. Based on the data assembled, Dr. Del Pilar said that 87 out of 100 Pennsylvania students remain enrolled after their first year of postsecondary education, and that 62 out of 100 Pennsylvania students will earn some form of credential after 6 years.

Dr. Del Pilar then discussed the Department's plans related to access, affordability, and completion focused on creating increased opportunities for state residents in postsecondary education. Among the initiatives he discussed was an effort related to school counselors, PHEAA grants, the Bond-Hill Scholarship Program, increased support of publicly-funded institutions of higher education, dual enrollment, improved course articulation, and reverse transfer.

Ms. Dungee Glenn asked Dr. Del Pilar if he had the same statistical data he presented, divided by subgroups; he replied that he would provide the information.

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 2:30 p.m.



Karen Molchanow
Executive Director