

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

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

**January 10, 2018**

The meeting was called to order at 2:20 p.m. by Mr. Kirk Hallett.

**Attending:**

James Agras <i>(via phone)</i>	Caroline DeWitt	Shirlann Harmon
Andrew Ahr	Sandra Dungee Glenn	Maureen Lally-Green
James Barker <i>(via phone)</i>	James Grandon	Jonathan Peri
Nathan Barrett	Pamela Gunter-Smith	Colleen Sheehan <i>(via phone)</i>
Nicole Carnicella	<i>(via phone)</i>	Karen Farmer White
Donald Fey	Kirk Hallett	

**MINUTES**

Due to a lack of quorum, the minutes of the November 8, 2017, meeting were not approved.

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

Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem provided an update on activity related to Pennsylvania’s proposed Consolidated State Plan in response to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Mr. Stem said that ESSA provides Pennsylvania the opportunity to align state priorities and ESSA implementation with the Department of Education’s (PDE) guiding principles of transparency, equity, and innovation. He then identified the components of Pennsylvania’s ESSA Plan that align with these principals.

Mr. Stem reported that PDE received interim feedback on its plan from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) on December 21, 2017. He said that PDE submitted a revised plan responsive to the clarity and additional detail requested by USDE on January 8.

Next, Mr. Stem reviewed early ESSA wins for Pennsylvania students. He announced a 20 percent reduction in PSSA testing time to take effect with the current school year and announced that the state testing window would be pushed back in the forthcoming school year. Mr. Stem also reported that more weight will be given to growth in identifying schools that need improvement. He also said the Department will expand the use of valid non-academic measures of school success, including accountability indicators for career readiness and chronic absenteeism, and noted that all accountability indicators will be presented in a new dashboard format. Mr. Stem provided a status update on issuing guidance to the field for the new career

readiness indicator, launching the new Future Ready PA Index and ESSA Report Card, and providing support to the field in preparing local consolidated plans for ESSA funds.

Finally, Mr. Stem discussed next steps for work related to the state's ESSA plan. He noted that the State Board of Education has formed an oversight committee that will convene four times per year to monitor implementation of the ESSA state plan. He further noted that PDE will continue to engage stakeholders as implementation proceeds and that the Department will report regularly to the State House and State Senate Education committees, per Act 55. Mr. Stem closed by reminding the Council that the full extent of plan implementation depends on final federal appropriations.

James Grandon asked how parents and students would be engaged to address truancy issues in urban school districts such as Harrisburg and Philadelphia. Mr. Stem said that if a school is identified in the bottom 5 percent, the school will need to complete a needs assessment that addresses non-academic interventions, including truancy.

Colleen Sheehan asked whether the interim feedback on the ESSA plan received from the USDE in December would compel any particular changes to the plan. She also expressed a concern about the substance of instruction provided to individual students and ensuring students are learning what matters. She noted that discussion among the Board tends to be at the macro level and requested that the Board focus on the quality of education that is taking place in classrooms.

Mr. Stem responded that schools focus resources on what is measured and noted that PDE is working to revamp this to address a broader scope of schools' work. He further spoke to PDE's career readiness efforts that include identifying the talents and skills of individual students. He also referenced changes the Department has recommended to graduation requirements to address unintended consequences of students being pulled out of courses that are preparing them for success in order to complete remediation. Regarding USDE's feedback on ESSA, Mr. Stem said the comments will not require substantial policy shifts and that most comments were seeking tweaks in the language of the plan for clarity.

### **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math**

Deputy Secretary Stem reported on recent events he attended on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education. He highlighted Governor Wolf's announcement that he has joined the Governors for Computer Science initiative. He also reported on the Three Rivers Educational Technology Conference; work of the PA STEM Coalition; OCDEL's computer science position statement; CS4Philly, a cross-sector stakeholder campaign supporting computer sciences for every learner in Philadelphia; and a stakeholder session for computer science in rural schools.

On the horizon, Mr. Stem said the work of the PA STEM Coalition continues. Mr. Stem said PDE also is working on guidance for the field on Act 86, recent legislation that allows a computer science course to be substituted for math credit for graduation. Finally, Mr. Stem announced that PDE will convene a Computer Science for All Summit in June and said part of the summit will focus on how school counselors can be involved in STEM work.

**DISCUSSION ITEM**  
**MASTER PLAN FOR BASIC EDUCATION**

Mr. Hallett reported that the Capital Area Intermediate Unit continues to make progress in preparing a draft of an update to the Master Plan for Basic Education and said he anticipates that the Council will receive the draft in the spring. He reiterated that the Council is committed to providing an opportunity for interested stakeholders to have their thoughts heard on the draft plan before a final draft is presented to the full State Board for approval. Mr. Hallett requested input from members of the Council on how this stakeholder engagement should be structured.

**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 3:10 p.m. on a **Lally-Green/Barrett** motion.



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Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant