

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

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

January 9, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 1:38 p.m. by Mr. Kirk Hallett.

Attending:

Carol Aichele
James Barker *(via phone)*
Nathan Barrett
Jamie Bracey-Green
Nicole Carnicella
Caroline DeWitt

Sandra Dungee Glenn
Donald Fey
Pamela Gunter-Smith
(via phone)
Kirk Hallett
Jeffrey Keeling

Maureen Lally-Green
(via phone)
Jonathan Peri
Arynn Pratt
Ashley Svec
Karen Farmer White
A Lee Williams *(via phone)*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 14, 2018, meeting of the Council of Basic Education were approved on an **Aichele/Lally-Green** motion.

COMMITTEE REPORT
SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Dr. Jonathan Peri, Chair of the School and University Safety Committee, reminded the Board that, in September the Committee initiated a required bi-annual review of the model Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Chapter 10. Dr. Peri said the Committee met earlier that day to respond to written comments on the model MOU that were submitted by the Education Law Center and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and to receive follow-up from the Safe Schools Office on questions previously raised by the Department of Education (PDE).

Dr. Peri said Carol Kuntz, Director of the Safe Schools Office, shared that PDE intends to place all local education agencies on to the same timeline for submitting MOUs by the end of the 2019 school year. Ms. Kuntz further shared with the Committee that this action will be taken in conjunction with PDE posting a version of the model MOU on its website in a fillable format. Finally, Mr. Peri said that Ms. Kuntz clarified a previous question that had been presented about appropriate signatories on an MOU. She said it is necessary for local police to continue to sign an MOU even in cases where a school district may have other officers serving directly in its schools because there may be cases where local law enforcement has some interaction with students in the schools.

Carol Aichele asked whether the MOUs encourage or require any coordination with county detectives.

COMMITTEE REPORT
SPECIAL AND GIFTED EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Honorable Maureen Lally-Green, Chair of the Special and Gifted Education Committee, shared a summary report of gifted education issues identified by interested stakeholders as part of a periodic review of Chapter 16 that the Committee commenced in the fall. The issues were brought to the Committee's attention during public roundtables held across the state that were attended by more than 90 gifted teachers, gifted coordinators, school psychologists, parents of gifted students, and Intermediate Unit staff. Hon. Lally-Green said additional perspectives were shared with the Committee through comments submitted in writing.

Various issues were brought to the Committee's attention concerning qualifications of gifted educators, compliance monitoring conducted by the state, the screening and evaluation process used to identify gifted students, and elements required to be addressed on a student's gifted individualized education plan. Hon. Lally-Green said the Committee also heard concerns related to the use of acceleration for delivering gifted services, caseload assignments for educators, a lack of dedicated state funding for gifted education, and more. She said the Committee will work with PDE to review the policy issues that were identified and to formulate recommendations for the Board's consideration to address the concerns that were heard.

Karen Molchanow, Executive Director of the State Board of Education, shared that Shirley Moyer recently came on board as PDE's new gifted education advisor.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ESSA IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT

Karen Farmer White, Chair of the Special Committee on ESSA Implementation Oversight, said the Committee met earlier in the day to receive updates from PDE on forthcoming amendments to the ESSA State Plan that the Department will submit to the U.S. Department of Education by March. Adam Schott, Rosemary Hughes, and Sherri Smith, of PDE, also presented updates on implementation of the new school improvement system. They reported on the number of schools that PDE recently identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TSI) and discussed the principles that served as the foundation for making those designations. They then discussed the timeline of school improvement planning efforts that CSI and A-TSI schools would carry out over the next few months to create improvements plan with a goal of implementing those plans by July 1, 2019.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Deputy Secretary Matthew Stem thanked Dr. Peri for his leadership of the School and University Safety Committee in reviewing and soliciting feedback on the model MOU and the impact of that work in forging relationships between school districts and local law enforcement.

Mr. Stem also thanked Hon. Lally-Green for her leadership of the Special and Gifted Education Committee in reviewing Chapter 16.

Deputy Secretary Stem and Brian Campbell, Director of the Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction, presented a summary of the changes to state graduation requirements enacted in Act 158 and highlighted the role the Board will play in implementing those changes. The provided a timeline of forthcoming actions to implement Act 158 and noted that the Secretary will present a satisfactory composite score for the Keystone Exams for review and approval by the Board no later than July 30, 2019.

Kirk Hallett engaged in follow-up discussion with Deputy Secretary Stem regarding the new pathways for students to demonstrate college and career readiness and meet graduation requirements. Mr. Hallett expressed concern with the pathway that would allow students to graduate based on course grades and acceptance to an accredited four-year college or university. He said that pathway reflects how things work currently and that there are too many students entering college unprepared. Deputy Secretary Stem replied that all criteria for graduation in Act 158 are externally validated and noted that existing regulations utilized project-based assessments (PBAs) as an alternative pathway to graduation and that those PBAs were not at a level of rigor to be used for the intended purpose. The Deputy Secretary further explained that Act 158 requires school districts to annually report the options being utilized for graduation and said that data will demonstrate whether districts are overutilizing one graduation option over others.

Caroline DeWitt asked if diplomas would include a designation that indicates the pathway through which a student graduated. Deputy Secretary Stem shared that student diplomas would not include such designations.

Dr. Jamie Bracey-Green said the Keystone Exams outed that even students we thought were doing well aren't where they need to be. She asked whether the changes in Act 158 mean we are stratifying how diplomas will be issued.

Dr. Nicole Carnicella stated that she understands the approach to graduation requirements for Career and Technical Education students, but commented that students who are college bound should be able to pass a simple biology exam before going to college.

Dr. Peri stated that Act 158 creates a third party system of checks and balances and was well-intentioned in making improvements.

Sandra Dungee Glenn said the Keystone Exams showed there is a need to address equity in the financial resources provided to support student success and that Act 158 softens the blow of where the exams shed light.

Jeffery Keeling commented that students who come from varying backgrounds should not be judged by taking the same test at the same point in time. He expressed concern that the options in Act 158 do not create an incentive for students to perform well on the Keystone Exams and asked how this will affect high schools on the Future Ready PA Index.

Donald Fey commented that, as a student, he felt the Keystone Exams are easier than Advanced Placement and SAT exams. He said that incentivizing pathways like AP and SAT can increase rigor.

Ms. Dungee Glenn stated that some schools do not have certified Biology teachers. She suggested that the Department report data on the how many classrooms were not staffed with a certified teacher for a full year in addition to reporting annual data on graduation pathways.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brad Hull, of the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), expressed support for the legislation creating multiple options to meet graduation requirements that he believes allows for sundry learning styles. Mr. Hull also said that the legislation expands the concept of college readiness to include college, career, and citizenship readiness. He said that PSEA believes that education research is clear that state standardized test scores have no predictive validity of future success and only verify past learning experiences.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sandra Dungee Glenn requested that concerns presented to the Special and Gifted Education Committee pertaining to educator qualifications and professional development be shared with the Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness Committee so that the Committee can incorporate those issues into its review of Chapter 49.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:58 p.m. on an **Aichele/Barrett** motion.



Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant