

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

May 8, 2019

The 350th meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Wednesday, May 8, 2019. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by Chair Karen Farmer White.

Attending:

James Agras *(via phone)*

Carol Aichele

James Barker *(via phone)*

Nathan Barrett

Jamie Bracey-Green *(via phone)*

Nicole Carnicella *(via phone)*

Carolyn DeWitt

Sandra Dungee Glenn *(via phone)*

Donald Fey

Kirk Hallett

Jeffrey Keeling

Jonathan Peri

Ashley Svec

Karen Farmer White

CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS

Chair Karen Farmer White introduced the new student member-elect of the Council of Basic Education, Anne Griffin. The Chair said that Ms. Griffin, a rising junior at Radnor High School, will begin her role as the Junior Student Member in July. Ms. Farmer White also announced that the Pennsylvania Association of Private Schools Administrators nominated a new postsecondary student member to represent its sector on the Board beginning in July. Jillian Sweigard, of Empire Beauty School, will serve as the Junior Student Member on the Council of Higher Education.

Ms. Farmer White acknowledged National Teacher Appreciation Week and the nearly 120,000 classroom teachers that nurture Pennsylvania’s students.

Finally, the Chair announced that Senator Wayne Langerholc was named as the new Majority Chairman of the Senate Education Committee and, by virtue of that position, will become the newest member of the State Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 14, 2019, meeting of the State Board of Education were approved on a **Peri/Agras** motion.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Secretary Pedro Rivera thanked departing Senior Student Members Donald Fey and Caroline DeWitt for their service to the Board and congratulated them on their future endeavors.

Advanced Placement Exams

Secretary Rivera announced a new initiative to boost the number of economically disadvantaged students taking Advanced Placement (AP) exams in high school by addressing the cost of the exams that can be a barrier for many disadvantaged students. Through a partnership between the College Board and the Department of Education to subsidize exam fees, qualifying students will pay a reduced fee of \$20 to take an AP exam. The Secretary said research by the College Board shows that the number of low-income students taking AP exams grew by almost 4 percent in states which paid for some or all of exam costs. Last year, more than 77,200 Pennsylvania high school students took AP exams.

Teacher in the Workplace Grants

Secretary Rivera discussed the administration's efforts to strengthen collaboration between local educators and businesses to better prepare students with the skills necessary for in-demand jobs through its Teacher in the Workplace grants. The grants enable teachers to visit local employers to learn about the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in today's workforce and to incorporate that experience as they develop lessons for their students.

Compulsory School Age

Secretary Rivera discussed the Governor's proposal to change the compulsory school age so that kids are in school by age six and stay until age 18. He said the current compulsory school law requires enrollment by age eight and allow students to sign themselves out of school at age 17. Secretary Rivera said that, each year, more than 13,800 Pennsylvania students leave school without graduating which has a adverse economic impact on both the individuals and the Commonwealth. The Secretary said raising the dropout age will better prepare students for good, middle class jobs and help to close the skills gap so businesses can hire enough educated and talented people to thrive and expand in Pennsylvania.

The Honorable Carol Aichele asked if students that complete the requirements for their education at an earlier age would be able to graduate if the compulsory attendance age increases. Secretary Rivera assured Ms. Aichele that those students would graduate and noted that the proposed change would not affect students who had completed requirements for graduation.

On a different topic, Kirk Hallett thanked the Secretary for the Department's efforts to hold the Harrisburg School District accountable for its actions.

Dr. Jonathan Peri expressed his appreciation for the Parent Pathways program.

REPORT OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Shane Crosby, Executive Director of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC), discussed the prevention of misconduct by teachers by promoting an intentional focus on professional ethics. Mr. Crosby said most teachers have never received training in ethical decision-making and, in his experience, most are not familiar with the laws

and regulations that govern their conduct. Mr. Crosby said teachers need thoughtful, purposeful training in the area of professional ethics that begins at the pre-service level and continues throughout their career. He said the PSPC will submit written comments on Chapter 49 that request that the Board consider establishing requirements for instruction in professional ethics for preservice teachers, standalone program framework guidelines for professional ethics, and training in professional ethics as part of induction and continuing professional education.

PRESENTATION ON EDUCATOR DISCIPLINE DATA

Sara DiRito, Assistant Chief Counsel with the Department of Education, provided an overview of the Department's Educator Discipline System and the flow in which cases are received, distributed, and resolved. Ms. DiRito reviewed the number of open cases, reasons the case numbers are so high, and how her office is addressing the number of cases before it.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LOWERING THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

A motion to approve a resolution in support of lowering the compulsory school age was made by Kirk Hallett and seconded by Carol Aichele.

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

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF RAISING THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

A motion to approve a resolution in support of raising the compulsory school age was made by Jeffrey Keeling and seconded by Jonathan Peri.

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

RESOLUTION HONORING CAROLINE DEWITT

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Caroline DeWitt was made by Jonathan Peri and seconded by Carol Aichele.

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

RESOLUTION HONORING DONALD FEY

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Donald Fey was made by Kirk Hallett and seconded by Carol Aichele.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Hallett, Chair of the Special Committee on Private School Accreditation, announced that the Board received an application from AdvancED in March seeking to renew its accrediting authority for another five years. Mr. Hallett said he has asked the Department of Education to partner with the Committee in reviewing the renewal application and to develop a recommendation on the application for the Committee's consideration. The review will be conducted consistent with the Board's Statement of Policy for accrediting organizations that is published in Chapter 52.

Mr. Hallett said his Committee will work to bring a recommendation on AdvancED's application for Board action no later than the Board's meeting in November. Copies of AdvancED's renewal application were made available to all Board members and a copy is on file for public inspection in the State Board office.

Finally, Mr. Hallett noted that all three approved private and non-public school accreditors have terms that will expire by the end of 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. on a **Peri/Keeling** motion.



Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant