

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

**Virtual Meeting**

**July 14, 2021**

The meeting of the Committee of the Whole was called to order by Karen Farmer White, Chair of the State Board of Education, at 1:00 p.m. The meeting of the Council of Higher Education was called to order by Council Chair Dr. Jonathan Peri at 1:17 p.m.

Due to public health measures being implemented across the Commonwealth to address the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Board and members of the public participated in the meeting virtually via webinar and teleconference. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986.

**Attending:**

James Agras	Pamela Gunter Smith	Karen Farmer White
Hon. Carol Aichele	Sarah Jordan	Lee Williams
Nathan Barrett	Jeffrey Keeling	Hon. Lindsey Williams
Jamie Bracey-Green	Hon. Mark Longietti	
Sandra Dungee Glenn	Jonathan Peri	
Reva Gandhi	Taiba Sultana	

**REMARKS OF THE CHAIR**

Chair Karen Farmer White called to order the Committee of the Whole. Ms. Farmer White introduced the two new students who will serve two-year terms as non-voting, advisory members of the Board. Sarah Jordan, a student at The Pennsylvania State University, will serve as the Junior Student Member on the Council of Higher Education. Reva Ghandi, a student at Parkland High School, will serve as the Junior Student Member on the Council of Basic Education. Ms. Farmer White also congratulated Board member Nathan Barrett on his completion of the Pennsylvania Superintendent's Academy.

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**

Ms. Farmer White announced that Secretary Ortega recently was confirmed by the Pennsylvania Senate to his role as Cabinet Secretary and he is no longer serving in an Acting capacity. Ms. Farmer White congratulated Mr. Ortega on his confirmation and welcomed his remarks before the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Ortega highlighted schools' efforts to address food insecurity by continuing to serve nutritious meals to students throughout the summer and noted that the program was made possible through a commitment of the U.S. Department of Education. Mr. Ortega then shared that this is National Summer Learning Week and highlighted additional efforts by schools to provide academic supports to students over the summer months.

Mr. Ortega provided an update on the recently adopted state budget and noted that the budget continues to build upon investments in areas where resources are needed the most. He acknowledged additional federal investments in education through the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund (ARP ESSER) award and noted that Dr. Sherri Smith would provide a more detailed report on those funds later in the meeting. Mr. Ortega said the Department of Education also is watching the federal debate over infrastructure investments to determine whether it may impact educational opportunities, such as how broadband components may impact remote student learning.

The Secretary noted that ARP ESSER requires school districts to develop health and safety plans for reopening and stated that recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) continues to recognize the benefits of in-person instruction and increasing vaccinations as a strategy for mitigation of COVID-19 transmission. Mr. Ortega noted that many pandemic-related orders have begun to be relaxed. Mr. Ortega stated that the state will continue to look to the CDC for guidance on COVID-19 mitigation.

Mr. Ortega announced that the General Assembly recently adopted Act 66, which permits students to repeat a grade level in the forthcoming school year even if the student met promotion requirements. Mr. Ortega said that under the Act gives parents can decide whether a student will repeat a grade.

Finally, the Secretary announced that for the first time ever a Career and Technical Education student in Pennsylvania was the recipient of the U.S. Presidential Scholar Award. Mr. Ortega congratulated Raymond Slifer, a student at Upper Buck County Technical School, on earning the prestigious recognition.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Dr. Peri called to order the Council of Higher Education following the Secretary's report to the Committee of the Whole. The minutes of the May 5, 2021, meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on an **Agras/Bracey-Green** motion.

### **REPORT OF THE ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY AND COMMISSIONER FOR POSTSECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

Dr. Tanya I. Garcia announced that the Lumina Foundation has made a financial commitment to support work on updating the Master Plan for Higher Education. She noted that the Master Plan Advisory Committee held its first meeting earlier in the day and said she is hopeful that the Master Plan can become a road map for Pennsylvania to reach its postsecondary attainment goal.

Dr. Garcia stated that state government, colleges, and schools of education must work more closely to strengthen the educator pipeline and to improve educator retention in Pennsylvania. She highlighted public comments received during the ARP ESSER application process that showed that communication between local education agencies (LEAs) and colleges of education is imperative for success in training new educators. Dr. Garcia said LEAs also have a role to play in the recruitment and hiring of educators of color and in mentoring students of color to consider education as a profession, as well as creating mentoring programs between seasoned and new educators.

Dr. Garcia provided an update on two grants referenced in her last report. She shared that the School District of Philadelphia did not receive the Wallace Foundation Equity-Centered Pipeline Initiative Grant. She shared that the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board also did not receive the Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant it was seeking from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Sandra Dungee Glenn requested time to meet with Dr. Garcia to discuss supports for the field in implementing competencies related to culturally relevant and sustaining education and competencies as proposed in revisions to Chapter 49.

### **DISCUSSION ITEM** **MASTER PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Dr. Jonathan Peri provided an update on the development of a new Master Plan for Higher Education. Dr. Peri said the Council of Higher Education convened an introductory meeting of the Master Plan Advisory Committee at a working session of the Council earlier in the day. The purpose of the meeting was to provide members with a clear understanding of the role of the Advisory Committee and the Council relative to the Master Plan, to establish a calendar for next steps in this effort, and to review the statutory requirements and the framework for the Plan as agreed to by the Council earlier in the year.

Dr. Peri said additional discussion centered on the State Board's authority to require the submission of long-range plans from public and private institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth and a statutory provision that directs the Council to review such long-range plans in the development of a new Master Plan for the state. The Council consulted with the Advisory Committee on whether and how to request such information, and agreed to send a letter to all higher education institutions in Pennsylvania requesting their voluntary submission of long-range plans either in hard copy or via a web link. Dr. Peri said OPHE staff will assist in reviewing the plans submitted to the Council. After the data has been reviewed, further discussions will be held with the Council of Higher Education, Master Plan Advisory Committee, OPHE, and the State Board. Dr. Peri said the Master Plan Advisory Committee also will continue to address the eight areas prescribed by the School Code within the context of the framework outlined by Dr. Garcia during the working session.

The Honorable Mark Longietti inquired about data collection related to the state's postsecondary attainment goal. Dr. Peri stated that the Department is tracking this information as discussed when the attainment goal was adopted. Karen Molchanow, Executive Director of the State Board of Education, said the Board has tasked the Department with making periodic updates to the Council on progress toward meeting the attainment goal and offered to share reports on these metrics with Representative Longietti. Dr. Peri stated that it would be timely to request another update from OPHE on metrics measuring progress toward the attainment goal.

Hon. Longietti then inquired about the five strategic priorities identified in the Master Plan revision process and if they will be addressed in the submittal of the Master Plan. Dr. Peri said those strategic priorities will be addressed in a coordinated manner that also reflects requirements set forth in the School Code. Mr. Longietti asked about the submission of long-

range plans from institutions of higher education and whether the Department has sufficient staff to review the requested documentation. Dr. Peri stated that this was discussed in the morning session and that OPHE would assist the Board with this review.

Dr. Jamie Bracey Green said some institutions do not have long-range plans but have capability statements which are more succinct and suggested that it may be helpful to secure those in place of, or in addition to, the long-range plans. Dr. Peri noted that was discussed as part of the working session with the Advisory Committee and said the Council will welcome the submission of the requested information in whatever format the institution makes it available.

Dr. Dungee Glenn asked whether the scope of the effort to develop a new Master Plan would be limited to the strategic priorities discussed during the Advisory Committee meeting. She referenced prior discussion among the Council about connecting this effort to the Commonwealth's workforce development needs and suggested engaging in discussion on the scope of the effort at a future meeting. Dr. Peri noted that the Council did include additional workforce development representation on the Advisory Committee in response to prior Council discussion. Regarding the scope of the effort, he noted that the framework presented by Dr. Garcia is the overarching pathway for moving forward and that it is within the Council's discretion to include additional items.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Susan Edgar-Smith, Dean of the College of Education at Eastern University, spoke on behalf of the Pennsylvania Psychological Association and the Pennsylvania Association of School Psychologists. Dr. Edgar-Smith addressed proposed amendments to Chapter 49 and a request from the associations with which she is affiliated to allow individuals to use five years of experience as school psychologists to satisfy the experience requirement for supervisor of special education certification. Dr. Edgar-Smith said the association provided the Board with a cross-walk of how school psychologists meet and exceed the competencies required for special education teachers. She stated that individuals currently eligible for supervisor of special education certification are only those individuals who serve as instructors in special education. Dr. Edgar-Smith noted the request to allow school psychologists to be considered to earn such supervisory certificates was added into the Board's draft amendments to Chapter 49. She further noted that school psychologists are eligible for other leadership certifications as principals, pupil services directors, and curriculum directors. Dr. Edgar-Smith said she is concerned that public comments on the Board's proposal expressed reservations on this change.

Gina Gallo, with the Pennsylvania State Education Association, asked if there is anywhere on the website to review progress on the Master Plan.

### **ACTION ITEM**

There were no action items.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements

### **ADJOURNMENT**

