

**MINUTES  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

**January 13, 2021**

The 360<sup>th</sup> meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on January 13, 2021. Due to public health measures being implemented across the Commonwealth to address COVID-19, 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. The meeting was called to order at 1:35 p.m. by Chair Karen Farmer White.

**Attending:**

James Agras	Sandra Dungee Glenn	Jonathan Peri
Carol Aichele	Anne Griffin	Eva Rankin
James Barker	Pamela Gunter-Smith	Hon. Curt Sonney
Nathan Barrett	Jeffrey Keeling	Taiba Sultana
Jamie Bracey-Green	Hon. Maureen Lally-Green	Karen Farmer White
Nicole Carnicella	Hon. Mark Longietti	Lee Williams

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the November 18, 2020, meeting of the Board were approved on a **Williams/Barrett** motion.

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**

Acting Secretary Noe Ortega shared that Departments of Health and Education recently released joint guidance for school administrators and local school boards with updated recommendations on instructional models based on the changing levels of community transmission of COVID-19 in their counties. Mr. Ortega said the updated recommendations are intended to help schools begin the process of safely returning as many students as possible to in-person instruction during the 2020-21 school year.

Acting Secretary Ortega also shared that the Department is engaged in efforts to determine the impacts of learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Ortega also addressed the matter of state assessments and noted that, while the Department received a federal waiver for assessments in the prior school year, no such waiver has been made available by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) at this time. Mr. Ortega then provided an update on the second phase of federal stimulus funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) announced by USDE.

Dr. Jonathan Peri thanked Mr. Ortega, Secretary Levine, and Dr. Garcia for the guidance provided to postsecondary institutions throughout the pandemic. Honorable Maureen Lally-

Green echoed Dr. Peri's comments and emphasized the stability that Acting Secretary Ortega has provided to those in education.

**DISCUSSION ITEM**  
**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Chair Farmer White introduced the Board's draft Annual Report to the Governor and the General Assembly for 2020 that summarizes the Board's actions during the calendar year. She invited discussion among members on the draft report.

**DISCUSSION ITEM**  
**PETITION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

Chair Farmer White introduced a petition filed by the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS) seeking to amend timeframes in the association's existing approved application for accrediting authority. PAIS serves as an approved accreditor of private and non-public schools through authority granted by the Board. To address pandemic-related disruptions to its accreditation process, Ms. Farmer White explained that PAIS is petitioning the Board to amend the accreditation cycle in its existing approved application by extending the review cycle for its member schools in good standing for one year from 2021-2022 forward.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Lukie Wells, Director of Accreditation for PAIS, thanked the Board for its consideration of the association's petition and for its partnership and collaboration in assisting independent schools through the current pandemic and unprecedented climate.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

A motion to approve the Annual Report to the Governor and the General Assembly for 2020 was made by James Agras and seconded by Hon. Maureen Lally-Green.

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

**PETITION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

A motion to approve the petition of the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools was made by Jonathan Peri and seconded by Nathan Barrett.

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Karen Molchanow, the Board's Executive Director, shared updates on the status of regulations. Ms. Molchanow reported that proposed amendments to Chapter 49 were delivered to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission and were published in the *Pennsylvania*

*Bulletin* for a 30-day public comment period that closed on January 18. Ms. Molchanow said the proposed amendments to Chapter 49 will be delivered to the House Education Committee and the Senate Education Committee after the Committees are officially designated for the 2021-22 legislative session. Ms. Molchanow also reported that proposed amendments to Chapter 4 were delivered to the Governor's Policy Office, Governor's Budget Office, and Governor's Office of General Counsel for review.

Chair Farmer White announced her intention to call an Executive Session of the Board following adjournment of the regular business meeting for the purpose of consulting with counsel about litigation.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:56 p.m. on a **Williams/Agras** motion.

*Stephanie Jones*

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Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant