

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

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

**January 13, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Council Chair Dr. Lee Williams.

**Attending:**

James Agras  
Carol Aichele  
Nathan Barrett  
Jamie Bracey-Green  
Sandra Dungee Glenn

Reva Gandhi  
Pamela Gunter-Smith  
Jeffrey Keeling  
Maureen Lally-Green  
Hon. Mark Longietti

Jonathan Peri  
Eva Rankin  
Karen Famer White  
Lee Williams  
Hon. Lindsey Williams

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the September 8, 2021, meeting of the Council of Basic Education were approved on an **Aichele/Lally-Green** motion.

**COMMITTEE REPORT**  
**COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS/CHAPTER 4**

Dr. Lee Williams, Chair of the Committee on Academic Standards/Chapter 4, reported that the Committee met the previous day and approved final-form amendments to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments), which update the state's academic standards for science and make other unrelated technical amendments. She said the final amendments approved by the Committee now are being presented to the Council of Basic Education for its consideration. Dr. Williams noted that draft final standards were posted to the Board's website for public review prior to the meeting.

Dr. Williams reviewed the extensive stakeholder engagement that was conducted over the past two years in developing three new sets of standards to replace the current academic standards for Science and Technology and Environment and Ecology. New standards adopted in Chapter 4 are organized as follows: *Pennsylvania Integrated Standards for Science, Environment, Ecology, Technology and Engineering (Grades K-5)*, *Pennsylvania Integrated Standards for Science, Environment and Ecology (Grades 6-12)*, and *Pennsylvania Technology and Engineering Standards (Grades 6-12)*.

In response to stakeholder concerns about the sufficiency of content related to the environment, ecology, and agriculture in the Board's proposed standards, Dr. Williams said the Committee adopted recommendations developed by the Science Standards Content and Steering

Committees to add a new fifth domain for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability across all grade levels in the final standards. Content reflected in that new domain is organized under three core ideas: 1) Agricultural and Environmental Systems and Resources, 2) Environmental Literacy Skills, and 3) Sustainability and Stewardship.

Dr. William noted that final amendments to Chapter 4 approved by the Committee also extend the timeframe for new science standards to take effect in order to maintain the Board's commitment to providing a three-year runway for implementation of new standards. The Committee pushed back the effective date for new science standards to be fully integrated into classroom instruction by one year from July 1, 2024 to July 1, 2025.

Finally, Dr. William also shared that technical amendments to Chapter 4 to align the regulation with statutory changes to high school graduation requirements, a change that lowered the compulsory school age to 6, and terminology updates that replace references to "vocational-technical education" with "Career and Technical Education" and references to "Area Vocational-Technical School" with "Area Career and Technical School" were maintained in the final amendments approved by the Committee.

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

Dr. Sherri Smith, Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, noted that the 2021-22 school year began with a priority on returning to in-person instruction. Dr. Smith acknowledged the challenges schools continue to face and identified specific COVID recovery tasks to support the successful return to in-person instruction. Among those, Dr. Smith identified a need to overcome continued attendance and truancy concerns in many schools, a need to assess for and accelerate learning for students whose instruction was interrupted, a need to rebuild trust and partnerships with families and communities, and a need to recruit and recover from a fractured educational workforce. Dr. Smith said priorities for COVID recovery also include recruiting COVID-related drop-outs to obtain a high school equivalency, expanding opportunities for educators to incorporate new skills gleaned from virtual learning, and increasing social and emotional supports for students, teachers, support staff, and administrators.

Dr. Smith also reviewed data from the Future Ready PA Index on attendance, graduation rate, the career standards benchmark, industry-based learning, rigorous courses of study, and growth and attainment for students who are English learners. She also provided an update about the status of state assessments for the 2020-21 school year. Dr. Smith concluded by discussing next steps for supporting schools in COVID recovery by providing assistance on the appropriate use of federal grants, deploying accelerated learning supports, and supporting the state's most vulnerable students.

Dr. Smith then introduced Carole Clancy, Director of the Bureau of Special Education, who provided an update on Special Education COVID Compensatory Services Grants for 2020-21.

**PRESENTATION**  
**SCHOOL INSTRUCTION IN PENNSYLVANIA**  
**DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Adam Schott, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Education, was joined by Mathematica researchers Steve Lipscomb and Forest Crigler to present a new research brief on “*School Instruction in Pennsylvania During the COVID-19 Pandemic.*” The brief described how school districts and charter schools in Pennsylvania responded to public health and other challenges during the 2020-21 school year. Data for the research brief was based on an online survey distributed to a representative sample of Pennsylvania school districts and charter schools that focused on modes of instruction, digital access and online learning, supports for students with disabilities, mental and physical health, and safety.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**ACTION ITEM**

**FINAL-FORM CHAPTER 4 (ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS)**

A motion to approve final-form amendments to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments), as recommended by the Academic Standards/Chapter 4 Committee, was made by Dr. Keeling and seconded by Hon. Lally-Green.

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m. on a **Keeling/Aichele** motion.

*Stephanie Jones*

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Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant