

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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

January 11, 2024

The 378th meeting of the State Board of Education (Board) was convened on Thursday, January 11, 2024. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Karen Farmer White.

Attending:

Hon. Carol Aichele
Sen. David Argall
Nathan Barrett
Brenna Chernich
Claire Chi

Katherine Christiano
Aarushi Dedhiya
Sandra Dungee Glenn
Ernest Hadrick
Amanda Hetrick
Jeffrey Keeling

Robert Mitchell
Hon. Pedro Rivera
Monica Taylor
Karen Farmer White
Lee Williams
Benjamin Wilson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 8, 2023, meeting of the Board were approved on an **Aichele/Dungee Glenn** motion.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Mr. Pedro Rivera, Chairman of the Council of Higher Education, reported that the Council met earlier in the day to receive a report on activity related to postsecondary education from Dr. Kate Shaw, Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Postsecondary and Higher Education. Mr. Rivera also provided an update on the petition of the Springfield School District seeking to withdraw as a member of the local sponsor of Delaware County Community College. He noted that Carmen Rivera, a hearing examiner with the Department of State, had been assigned to the matter.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OF BASIC EDUCATION

Dr. Lee Williams, Chair of the Council of Basic Education, said the Council met earlier in the day to consider proposed amendments to 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4 as recommended by the Academic Standards/Chapter 4 Committee. She reported that the Council voted to approve the proposed amendments to Chapter 4 and she requested that Chair Farmer White place the proposed amendments on the agenda for the Board's consideration.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Dr. Khalid Mumin, Secretary of Education, announced that Ashlie Crosson, an educator at Mifflin County School District, was named the 2024 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year. The

Secretary also reported on legislation signed into law by Governor Shapiro in December, including a Fiscal Code bill and multiple bills that amend the Public School Code. Dr. Mumin noted that this legislation contained the enabling language necessary to fund Intermediate Units, community colleges, and libraries. He summarized the amendments to the School Code and discussed the work the Department of Education (Department) will undertake to implement the changes and to release guidance to schools over the coming weeks.

REPORT OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

Mr. Shane Crosby, Executive Director of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC), provided a report highlighting activity during the 2023 calendar year. Mr. Crosby noted that the Department's Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) received 576 educator misconduct complaints in 2023 and closed 815. He noted that OCC also received 310 mandatory reports in 2023 and that OCC currently has 908 open misconduct complaints, 243 of which are designated as high priority complaints. Mr. Crosby said the PSPC imposed approximately 148 public disciplinary sanctions, 8 private disciplinary sanctions, and grants 4 petitions for reinstatement in 2023.

Mr. Crosby said, in July, the PSPC formally adopted the Model Code of Ethics for Educators 2nd Edition as the Pennsylvania Model Code of Ethics for Educators. He noted that this document will serve as the guiding document for new educator training requirements in professional ethics. Finally, Mr. Crosby reported that, at its November 6, 2023, meeting, the PSPC hosted a survivor of sexual misconduct and an expert in childhood trauma and abuse for a roundtable discussion focused on boundary violations and grooming as part of an ongoing effort to better understand, respond to, and prevent sexual misconduct in schools.

DISCUSSION ITEM

2023 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Chair Farmer White introduced the Board's draft Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly for the 2023 calendar year and invited discussion on the document.

NEW BUSINESS

APPLICATIONS OF LUMEN ACCREDITATION AND THE ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL SEEKING RECOGNITION AS APPROVED PRIVATE ACADEMIC SCHOOL ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS

Chair Farmer White announced that the Board received two applications from new entities that are seeking approval to serve as private school accrediting bodies: the Association of Christian Schools International and Lumen Accreditation, which is affiliated with the Institute for the Transformation of Catholic Education at The Catholic University. She explained that under the Private Academic Schools Act private and non-public schools may operate without holding state licensure if they are accredited by an organization approved by the Board.

Ms. Farmer White referred the applications to the Board's Special Committee on Private School Accreditation to oversee the review of the applications and to formulate

recommendations on them for the Board’s consideration. Additionally, Chair Farmer White referred the applications to the Department of Education for its review. She noted that section 52.2 of the Board’s Statement of Policy on Accrediting Organizations directs the Department to make a recommendation to the Board on applications from private school accrediting bodies and further establishes that the final decision to approve or disapprove such applications rests solely with the Board. Chair Farmer White directed the Department to work with the Special Committee on Private School Accreditation as the Board’s liaison for this review.

Additionally, Ms. Farmer White noted that she anticipates additional activity related to private school accreditation over the coming months as the terms for the current three approved private school accrediting bodies will expire in the fall of 2024 and the fall of 2025. Ms. Farmer White said Cognia, whose term expires in November of 2024, has been notified of the need to submit an application for renewal of its accrediting authority and renewal applications are due 6 months prior to an entity’s date of expiration.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Sean McAleer, Director of Education for the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, thanked the Board for accepting the application from Lumen Accreditation on its agenda and said he looks forward to the approval process.

ACTION ITEMS

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 4 (ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS)

A motion to approve proposed amendments to 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments), as recommended by the Council of Basic Education, was made by Dr. Lee Williams and seconded by Hon. Carol Aichele.

VOTE: The motion to approve proposed amendments to 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) was approved by a roll call vote of 14-0. (YEA: Aichele, Argall (by proxy), Barrett, Christiano, Dungee Glenn, Hadrick, Hetrick, Keeling, Mitchell, Rivera, Taylor, Farmer White, L. Williams, and Wilson)

2023 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A motion to approve the 2023 Annual Report to the Governor and the General Assembly was made by Sandra Dungee Glenn and seconded by Katherine Christiano.

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

RESOLUTION HONORING JAMES AGRAS

A motion to approve a resolution honoring Mr. James Agras was made by Dr. Lee Williams and seconded by Sandra Dungee Glenn.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Board's high school student representatives, Claire Chi and Aarushi Dedhiya, congratulated the 2024 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year and all the finalists for that position and said they look forward to continuing their partnership with Pennsylvania Teachers of the Year to uplift student voice and encourage student interest in the educator workforce.

Additionally, Ms. Chi and Ms. Dedhiya applauded the development of the standards for Personal Finance. They said they plan to gather feedback on the updated academic standards through the Students for Education in Pennsylvania network meetings later this month. The students advised the Board of their contribution to public comments made to the Basic Education Funding Commission. They developed recommendations on how to make mental health resources more accessible to all students. Finally, the student members provided an update on the 2026 State Board Student Representative search and the updating application deadline for interested candidates.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m. on a **Taylor/Christiano** motion.

Stephanie Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant