

Meeting of the Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence

Wednesday March 6, 2024, 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Keystone Building Meeting Center – The Forest Room Large Conference Area

Next Meeting: Wednesday June 12, 2024

1. Welcome and Opening Comments from PDE – Secretary Dr. Khalid Mumin
 - a. Testified at House and Senate budget hearings and proposing:
 - b. Basic education funding is largest increase in PA history- \$1.1 million
 - c. First year advocacy investment
 - d. Safe secure and supportive environments
 - e. Environmental repair projects for school buildings
 - f. Access to pre-K and early education programs
 - g. Increase funding for Head Start and Pre-K counts programs
 - h. Educator talent recruitment account
 - i. Student teacher stipends
 - j. CTE and dual enrollment is another focus area
 - k. 188 programs in PA, 4 new ag ed programs
 - l. 4 TA visits to schools, 4 FFA, support for Farm Show and FFA Midwinter Convention
 - m. Projects on the horizon
 - i. CTE listening sessions
 - ii. Hiring an additional CTE advisor for ag
 - iii. PDE staff helped launch a butchering apprenticeship
 - iv. Aligning program assessments through pathways
2. Roll Call of Members – Stephon Fitzpatrick
3. Approval of Minutes from 12.6.23 Meeting – Secretary Mumin
 - Motion: Robert Hess
 - Second: Gary Swan
4. Report from the Ag Ed Excellence Executive Director – Stephon Fitzpatrick
 - 2024 commission meeting dates
 - June 12: Pending at FFA state convention
 - September 11: PDA Conference Room 202
 - December 18: Tentative, recommendation is to hold the 4th quarterly meeting annually during the week of PSU Ag Ed senior presentations so that stakeholders can attend
 - Overview of the commission and its functions
 - Commission vacancies updates
 - We have the finalized lists of new appointments and reappointments pending, PDA and PDE policy and legislative offices have reviewed and approved

- Speakers office has sent appointment letters, currently waiting for President pro Tempe approval
- Hoping to have confirmations by next meeting since voting will need to occur
- Budget update- need support for the following items proposed
 - K-8 Agriculture Education Opportunities
 - Madison Plunket (PSU master's student) conducted a survey on K-8 principals' perceptions of/perceived barriers to ag literacy in Centre County and surrounding counties
 - Community College Ag Ed initiative
 - Working with community colleges to identify creative ways to support these areas and where courses align with ag ed standards
 - STE/A/M for Sustainability Initiative
 - Looking to host experiential learning opportunity for rising seniors to engage in agriculture at universities
 - Bloomsburg is interested in hosting for pilot
 - Possible collaboration with Governor's School at PSU
 - CTE Awareness Month
 - Set to happen in 2025 with planning throughout 2024
 - Spring PAAE Regional Meetings
 - Will be at all meetings except for one
 - DEIA
 - Creating a plan to engage students and community members who have historically not been engaged in ag and farm show
 - Would also like to integrate mental health
- Annual Report
 - Waiting for governor's office approval
- Commission logo
 - Governor's office is currently not approving any new logos
- HB 1540
 - Still pending
 - This will change due date to December 1 rather than May 1 as data needed for annual report is not ready until spring
- Would like to extend commission meeting time by 30 minutes to allow for discussion on how to tackle ag ed issues.
- Innovative programs to enhance ag ed
 - Annual funding allocation for PSU AEE to attend NAAE
 - Pennsylvania Generation Now Ag Program
 - National MANNRS Region 1 Cluster- fall 2024
 - Ag Education reception at farm show
 - Increase Ag Ed-STEM Professional Development Workshops
 - PA Ag Youth Council
 - Piloted in Massachusetts

- Would bring together students from the ag youth organizations to meet on a regular basis
 - Would like to have an ag education fellow that is also engaged in ag ed policy

5. Guest Speaker: Charlene Espenshade – PA Friends of Agriculture Foundation

- Charitable organization affiliated with Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
- Mobile ag ed science labs that go to schools and provide teachers and supplies for ag science lessons
 - Schools must pay for the ag lab to come and they request specific lessons
 - Some schools can receive grants or assistance to bring in the mobile ag lab
 - Great alternative to field trips
 - In the process of building another trailer
 - Donations to Friends of Ag helps to lower costs for schools
 - 80,000-100,000 students visited annually
 - Working to rebuild the Ag on the Go program for urban areas where it is more difficult to bring in the trailers
- Educators Ag Institute
 - 5-day experience in State College over the summer for non-ag teachers to learn about agriculture and how it can be incorporated in their classrooms
 - Up to 60 educators
 - Offer Act 48 credit hours
- Immersion lab
 - Can be used for 1-day events unlike mobile ag labs which require at least 3 days
 - Self-guided experience for students with interactive, high-tech activities
- Ag literacy week
 - March 18-21 with a launch event in York
 - K-12 event where anyone in the ag industry can go to classrooms to read an ag book and conduct an ag activity
 - This year's book is *Anywhere Farm* and the activity is sprouting beans
 - 1,900 classrooms participating this year
 - \$10 per classroom kit, donors help keep it affordable
- Farm Fact Friday
 - Social media effort to spread awareness
- Online store
 - Low-cost resources on ag ed for people to utilize
- Teacher of the year award
 - Always an ag institute alumnus
- AFP Philanthropy Awards
- Involved in many partnerships and collaboratives

6. Updates from Workforce Development – Sara Gligora

- Continue to work closely with state workforce development board
 - Agriculture workforce committee has created working groups
 - H2A working group is identifying barriers

- Supporting language accessibility
- Center for Dairy Excellence registered a new dairy apprenticeship
 - Credits also offered through Delaware Valley for pre-apprenticeships
- Apprenticeship and training office are looking to explore ag apprenticeships and occupations, one staff member dedicated to agriculture
 - Looking to make it easier to register apprenticeships
- Labor and Industry has released grants for organizations looking to establish and support organic apprenticeships
- Listening sessions on ag workforce
 - First was held at Farm Show on apprenticeships, career pathways, recruitment and retention, and H2A/H2B
 - Held another on farm labor at Mid Atlantic
- Events this spring:
 - On farm training in Hershey with Rob Hess during annual workforce conference
 - Two regional Farm City events at Farm Show Complex and Fox Chase Farms
 - Farm City Day ties in with Remake Learning Day, which will now include agriculture for the first time ever
 - Working with stakeholders to hold more agriculture days for Remake Learning

8. Specialized Career and Technical Education Advisor for Agriculture Education Report (PDE) – Christopher Davis

- 4 new programs, some are brand new programs and others are registering after functioning independently
- Taking on 25 programs to build up CTE for ag consistency across the state
- Looking to simplify ag ed programs
 - Bring students into SIP code specific programs
 - Provide resources to students so that they not only complete, but also are successful after leaving a program
- Butchering program- working on specifics and partnering with Hunters Sharing the Harvest

9. Guest Speaker: Christine Girtain – New Jersey Teacher of the Year

- Learned about agriculture through a group called Nourish the Future which is a national education initiative developed by science teachers for science teachers and creates a network of educators
- Spoke at AFBF convention in Puerto Rico and has participated in other events
- Partnering with the American Exchange Project

10. Reports from Stakeholder Organizations

a. Pennsylvania FFA Association – Mike Brammer

- Written report provided

- FFA state officers have 14 weeks left in their tenure
- State officers have visited 104 chapters so far
- Leadership conference was held over 4 weekends with over 2,000 students and teachers in attendance
- State legislative leadership conference starts in the end of March, no other states do this
- Mid-Winter Convention had 10,000 people in attendance, 504 state degrees awarded, alumni organization provided 970 FFA jackets to new members
- Next event is state convention on June 11-13 in State College

b. Pennsylvania FFA Foundation – Sarah Sparks

- Raising funds through National FFA Week/Day
- Completed business and industry visits
- Learning by Doing grant program for students or teachers to receive funds to support projects has been spent out for this year, will share success stories at state FFA convention

c. Pennsylvania Association of Agriculture Educators (PAAE) – Sherisa Nailor

- Written report provided
- PA is hosting National Association of Ag Educators meeting soon
- Summer conference will be in Somerset County July 8-11
- Offering scholarships to pre-service teachers

11. Open Forum

- Rep. Gleim – Can we create a dual enrollment for just agriculture? There are not enough CTE openings for students
- Gary Swan – the commission would benefit from 30 extra minutes in the meetings for discussion with specific topics or questions identified in advanced