

MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 20, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the State Board of Higher Education (Board) was convened in a hybrid format via MS Teams and in-person on Wednesday, May 20, 2026. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Act. The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Dr. Cynthia Shapira, Chair.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Lubna Mian, Chief of Staff, performed roll call. A quorum of members was present as follows:

Mr. Kenneth Long	Hon. Dr. Pedro A. Rivera
Dr. Cynthia D. Shapira	Hon. Paul Takac
Dr. Ann Bieber	Ms. Diane Acri (for Hon. Jesse Topper)
Dr. Michael Wade Smith	Ms. Gwenn Dando (for Hon. Wayne Langerholc)
Mr. Kevin Washo	Hon. Jay Costa
Dr. Brenda A. Allen	Hon. Dr. Carrie Rowe
Ms. Marylouise Esten	Mr. William Hatcher (for Hon. Nancy Walker)
Ms. Bobbie Jo Zapor	Ms. Andrea Shirk
Dr. Kara Laskowski	
Mr. Michael G. Warfel	

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

IV. CHAIR WELCOME

After welcoming the members to the meeting, Dr. Shapira informed the board that the meeting would focus on approving the data dashboards and preparing them for public release. The dashboards were developed over several months, with input from various stakeholder groups, Board, staff, the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), and key external partners.

Dr. Shapira described the value of the dashboards to the public, policymakers, legislators, higher education colleagues, students, and families. The dashboards will improve

accountability and transparency, support strategic plan work, and help individuals better understand the higher education landscape across sectors, regions, and instructional types.

She commended the Board and the data committee, led by Ken Long, for their hard work and leadership of this project.

V. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEM (MINUTES FROM APRIL 16, 2026, MEETING)

Dr. Shapira requested a motion to approve the consent agenda, which included approval of the minutes from the April 16, 2026, meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Michael Warfel and seconded by President Ken Long.

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

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

Dr. Kate Shaw provided the board with an update on the state of the field. She described how essential higher education is to the common good, through both economic and non-economic benefits. She underscored the value that the Board can and has already brought, specifically through the strategic plan and development of the data dashboards.

VII. VOTE TO APPROVE PUBLIC RELEASE OF DATA DASHBOARDS

Dr. Shapira, Board Chair, introduced the data dashboards, which were led by the Data Committee—chaired by President Ken Long—informed by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), composed of data specialists from various higher education sectors, and guided by the Board's direction.

President Ken Long, Dr. Greg Kienzl, and Dr. Kate Shaw provided a detailed overview of the content and development of the dashboards, as well as plans for continuing refinement and education as to uses. The data committee and Board will continue to make decisions about the dashboards based upon feedback received.

President Long, Chair of the Data Committee, emphasized the high quality, trustworthiness, and transparency reflected in the dashboards. These dashboards were created using publicly available data consolidated into a single location.

Dr. Kienzl lead the Board members and the public through the dashboards and filters, emphasizing uses and common questions individuals have about higher education.

Several board members offered positive feedback on the release of the dashboards and noted that the State Board of Higher Education should be prepared to respond to public feedback and questions. It was highlighted that tutorial videos, webinars, FAQs, and a contact form accompany the dashboards to support ongoing updates and the collection of user feedback.

Dr. Shapira requested a motion to approve the public release of the data dashboards.

A motion was made by Dr. Kara Laskowski and seconded by Mr. Michael Warfel .

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

VIII. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mr. Kevin Washo, Committee Chair, provided an overview of the committee and informed the board that it has met four times this year to discuss the culture and needs of the Board. Mr. Washo reviewed the results of a recently administered board survey aimed at assessing Board effectiveness.

Board members provided very favorable feedback on the Board's ability to deliver results through its quickly established and effective governance structure, strategic plan, and data dashboards. Board members commended the quality and diversity of viewpoints represented on the board and the quality and effectiveness of the staff. They provided feedback that Board meetings might be scaled back, with the staff and committees working more independently under the strategic direction of the Board.

IX. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mr. Michael Warfel, Committee Chair, provided an update on the Economic and Workforce Development Committee, which held its first kickoff meeting since the April board meeting. The committee has identified a need for visible, proactive engagement to continue advancing the Board's strategic priorities and to strengthen collaboration with higher education institutions, workforce partners, economic development leaders, and other key stakeholders.

The SBHE will begin conducting five regional meetings across Pennsylvania throughout June and July to bring together economic and workforce leaders and representatives from institutions of higher education.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Dr. Shapira adjourned the meeting at 2:06 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: June 15, 2026

