



MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Regular Meeting
October 23, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the State Board of Higher Education (Board) was convened in-person at 607 South Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17120, and virtually via MS Teams on Thursday, October 23, 2025. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Act. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 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:

Ms. Diane Acri (Designee for Hon. Jesse Topper)
Dr. Brenda Allen
Dr. Ann Bieber
Ms. Hayley Butler
Hon. Jay Costa
Ms. Gwenn Dando (Designee for Hon. Wayne Langerholc)
Ms. Marylouise Esten
Ms. Angela Fitterer (Designee for Hon. Dr. Carrie Rowe)

Dr. Christa Heyward
Dr. Kara Laskowski
Mr. Kenneth Long
Dr. Cheryl McConnell
Hon. Dr. Pedro Rivera
Dr. Cynthia Shapira
Ms. Andrea Shirk
Dr. Michael Wade Smith
Hon. Nancy Walker
Mr. Michael G. Warfel
Mr. Kevin Washo

Absent: Ms. Bobbie Jo Zapor

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2025, meeting was made by Mr. Warfel and Dr. Wade Smith.

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

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

V. WELCOME REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

Dr. Shapira began the meeting by thanking the Board members for their dedication as work of the committees and staff continued throughout the summer, especially in workforce and economic development, which she identified as the focus of this meeting.

She then welcomed the Board's new student members, Ms. Hayley Butler (Carlow University) and Dr. Christa Heyward (Delaware County Community College).

VI. RESOLUTION HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF REP. PETER SCHWEYER

Dr. Shapira announced the departure of Hon. Peter Schweyer from the Board and welcomed Hon. Paul Takac, who represents the 82nd Legislative District in Centre County. She then introduced a resolution to honor Representative Schweyer for his service and significant contributions as a founding member of the Board.

The resolution was unanimously approved by voice acclamation.

Representative Schweyer thanked Dr. Shapira and Dr. Shaw for their leadership and commended Representative Takac to the Board, noting his current work on the PA House Education Committee.

VII. WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE BY COMMITTEE CHAIR AND STAFF

Mr. Warfel, who is chair of the newly constituted Workforce and Economic Development Committee, reported that the committee has met twice since the May 22, 2025, Board meeting and will develop a regular meeting schedule for 2026.

Next, Ms. Carrie Amann, Director of Economic and Workforce Development, reported on a broad range of staff activities. Ms. Amann also provided an overview of the Pennsylvania labor force, including population decline in the face of projected growth industries, highlighting the role that higher education can play in meeting industry and employer needs.

VIII. WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROUNDTABLE

Ms. Amann then introduced the following roundtable speakers, who provided sequential presentations and engaged with Board member questions and discussion. The three speakers were:

- Ms. Abby Smith, President & CEO, Team PA, presented “Lasting Economic Growth: A Roadmap for Bold, Coordinated Action.”
- Ms. Katie Zeffuss, Commissioner, Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission, presented “Industry Perspective: Powering Progress – the Utility & Energy Workforce.”
- Dr. Rob Shipp, Vice President, Workforce and Clinical Affairs, Hospital Association of Pennsylvania, presented “Industry Perspective: Pennsylvania’s health Safety Net – Navigating Workforce Development & Education Solutions.”

IX. SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLANNING REGIONAL HEARINGS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Dr. Kate Shaw provided a summary of the Board members and staff activities regarding the drafting of the Strategic Plan, beginning with five regional public hearings. In addition, Board members and staff facilitated numerous small group discussions.

In all, the hearings and small group meetings drew over 1,200 participants from more than a dozen sectors, including state and local government, advocacy organizations, and business and industry, as well as parents, students, faculty, and labor leaders.

The feedback was incorporated into the draft Strategic Plan, which will be released to the Board shortly for its approval. Once approved, the plan will be posted for 30-day public comment, and a final public hearing will be held in Harrisburg for additional feedback. The Strategic Planning Committee and staff will then revise the plan as necessary and present it to the Board for final approval and adoption.

X. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

Dr. Shaw’s update focused on the Strategic Plan review and approval timeline.

XI. UPDATES ON NEW MEMBERS AND COMMITTEES

Dr. Shapira invited the Board’s new members, Dr. Christa Heyward, Ms. Hayley Butler, and Representative Paul Takac, to briefly introduce themselves to the Board.

She then reviewed the Board committees and their membership. A new committee, the Governance and Leadership Committee, chaired by Kevin Washo, was announced, as was the conversion of the Economic and Workforce Development Committee to a standing committee.

Dr. Shapira also related the formation of an Advisory Council for Community Colleges, to be led by Dr. Ann Bieber, who will be meeting with community college presidents to gather input on how the Council will function in relationship to the Board.

XII. UPDATES BY TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY AND DATA COMMITTEES

Postsecondary Data

Chair: Mr. Kenneth Long

Mr. Kenneth Long reported that the committee has met twice since the May Board meeting and will move forward with collecting data aligned to the Strategic Plan after its passage.

Transfer of Authority

Chair: Dr. Ann Bieber

Dr. Ann Bieber reported that the committee has met twice since the May Board meeting and is focusing on existing authority granted via legislation and learning more about the origins and nature of the authority. She added that next steps include examining areas of authority under the PA Department of Education that might be the subject of another set of recommendations to the legislature.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Dr. Shapira adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: December 18, 2025.