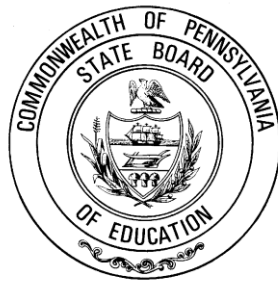


PENNSYLVANIA  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

January 2021

Dear Governor Wolf and Members of the General Assembly:

On behalf of the State Board of Education, it is my pleasure to present you with our Annual Report that summarizes the Board's work and actions during the 2020 calendar year. I would like to thank Governor Wolf for entrusting me with the responsibility to serve in this statewide leadership role and for the opportunity to work collaboratively to advance access to high-quality, equitable education for students across the Commonwealth.

This year presented unforeseen challenges on a global scale. Our education system leaders faced challenges that required immediacy in decision-making under rapidly changing, uncertain circumstances. Our educators demonstrated resourcefulness in developing new plans for instruction and embarking on different constructs for learning. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Pennsylvania's educators in continuing to support their students throughout these unprecedented circumstances – your dedication to your profession is valued and your commitment to your students is admirable.

The Board looks forward to working with the Wolf Administration and with the General Assembly to meet the challenges that lie ahead to ensure that the schools of this Commonwealth meet the needs of all of our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Farmer White".

Karen Farmer White, Chair

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The State Board of Education consists of 21 members, ten of whom serve on the Board's Council of Basic Education and ten of whom serve on the Board's Council of Higher Education. Seventeen members are appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for overlapping terms of six years, or until their successors are appointed and confirmed. Four members of the Board are members of the General Assembly who serve as long as they hold the position of majority and minority chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees. The Chairperson of the Board and its Councils are designated by the Governor and serve at his pleasure. The 21 members of the board also serve as the State Board for Vocational Education.

The Board meets at least six times per year. Additional Council or Board meetings are held at the call of the chairpersons or at the request of a majority of members. The chairperson of the Board and any of the members are entitled to attend the meetings of the Councils. Board committees are appointed by the chairperson of the Board to formulate policy proposals in those areas which fall within the purview of the Board. Council committees are appointed by the chairperson of each respective Council to formulate policy proposals in those areas which fall within the purview of either Council.

The Secretary of Education is the head of the Department of Education and chief executive officer of the State Board of Education. He is a member of the executive department of the Commonwealth and is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Secretary of Education, or his designated representative, is entitled to attend all meetings of the Board and Councils and has the right to speak on all matters before the Board and the Councils, but not to vote.

The chairperson of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC), or a PSPC member designated by the chairperson, serves as an ex officio, non-voting member of the Board. Likewise, a member of the State Board serves in the same capacity on the PSPC.

Four student representatives serve as non-voting, advisory members of the Board – two high school students who sit on the Council of Basic Education and two postsecondary students who sit on the Council of Higher Education. Annually, two new students are selected to serve a two-year term on each respective Council. High school students are selected through an application process managed by the Pennsylvania Association of Student Councils. Postsecondary students are selected to represent the various sectors of higher education in the Commonwealth on a rotating basis. Student members were added by the Board in 2008, and their participation is supported through private grant funds.

The following are listings of the State Board of Education's membership, reflecting transitions throughout the 2020 calendar year.

# State Board of Education

January 2020

**Ms. Karen Farmer White** (Pittsburgh)  
Chair, State Board of Education

**Mr. Pedro Rivera**  
Secretary of Education & Chief  
Executive Officer of the Board

## Council of Basic Education

**Dr. James E. Barker** (Erie)  
Chairman, Council of Basic Education

Hon. Carol Aichele (Malvern)

Mr. Nathan Barrett (Scranton)

Ms. Anne Griffin  
Junior Student Member

Dr. Jeffrey Keeling (Hadley)

Hon. Maureen Lally-Green (Mars)

Senator Wayne Langerholc, Jr.  
Chair, Senate Education Committee

Representative James R. Roebuck  
Minority Chair, House Education Committee

Ms. Ashley Svec  
Senior Student Member

Dr. A. Lee Williams (Slippery Rock)

## Council of Higher Education

**Dr. Jonathan Peri** (Glen Mills)  
Chairman, Council of Higher Education

Mr. James R. Agras (Pittsburgh)

Dr. Jamie Bracey-Green (Philadelphia)

Dr. Nicole Carnicella (Bellefonte)

Senator Andrew Dinniman  
Minority Chair, Senate Education Committee

Ms. Sandra Dungee Glenn (Philadelphia)

Dr. Pamela Gunter-Smith (York)

Ms. Arynn Pratt  
Senior Student Member

Representative Curtis Sonney  
Chair, House Education Committee

Ms. Jillian Sweigard  
Junior Student Member

Dr. Nicole Hill  
PSPC Ex-officio Member

Ms. Karen Molchanow  
Executive Director

Ms. Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant

# State Board of Education

July 2020

**Ms. Karen Farmer White** (Pittsburgh)  
Chair, State Board of Education

**Mr. Pedro Rivera**  
Secretary of Education & Chief  
Executive Officer of the Board

## Council of Basic Education

**Dr. James E. Barker** (Erie)  
Chairman, Council of Basic Education

Hon. Carol Aichele (Malvern)

Mr. Nathan Barrett (Scranton)

Ms. Anne Griffin  
Senior Student Member

Dr. Jeffrey Keeling (Hadley)

Hon. Maureen Lally-Green (Mars)

Senator Wayne Langerholc, Jr.  
Chair, Senate Education Committee

Ms. Eva Rankin  
Junior Student Member

Representative James R. Roebuck  
Minority Chair, House Education Committee

Dr. A. Lee Williams (Slippery Rock)

## Council of Higher Education

**Dr. Jonathan Peri** (Glen Mills)  
Chairman, Council of Higher Education

Mr. James R. Agras (Pittsburgh)

Dr. Jamie Bracey-Green (Philadelphia)

Dr. Nicole Carnicella (Bellefonte)

Senator Andrew Dinniman  
Minority Chair, Senate Education Committee

Ms. Sandra Dungee Glenn (Philadelphia)

Dr. Pamela Gunter-Smith (York)

Representative Curtis Sonney  
Chair, House Education Committee

Ms. Taiba Sultana  
Junior Student Member

Ms. Jillian Sweigard  
Senior Student Member

Dr. Nicole Hill  
PSPC Ex-officio Member

Ms. Karen Molchanow  
Executive Director

Ms. Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant

# State Board of Education

October 2020

**Ms. Karen Farmer White** (Pittsburgh)  
Chair, State Board of Education

**Mr. Noe Ortega**  
Acting Secretary of Education & Chief  
Executive Officer of the Board

## Council of Basic Education

**Dr. James E. Barker** (Erie)  
Chairman, Council of Basic Education

Hon. Carol Aichele (Malvern)

Mr. Nathan Barrett (Scranton)

Ms. Anne Griffin  
Senior Student Member

Dr. Jeffrey Keeling (Hadley)

Hon. Maureen Lally-Green (Mars)

Senator Wayne Langerholc, Jr.  
Chair, Senate Education Committee

Ms. Eva Rankin  
Junior Student Member

Representative James R. Roebuck  
Minority Chair, House Education Committee

Dr. A. Lee Williams (Slippery Rock)

## Council of Higher Education

**Dr. Jonathan Peri** (Glen Mills)  
Chairman, Council of Higher Education

Mr. James R. Agras (Pittsburgh)

Dr. Jamie Bracey-Green (Philadelphia)

Dr. Nicole Carnicella (Bellefonte)

Senator Andrew Dinniman  
Minority Chair, Senate Education Committee

Ms. Sandra Dungee Glenn (Philadelphia)

Dr. Pamela Gunter-Smith (York)

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Chair, House Education Committee

Ms. Taiba Sultana  
Junior Student Member

Ms. Jillian Sweigard  
Senior Student Member

Dr. Nicole Hill  
PSPC Ex-officio Member

Ms. Karen Molchanow  
Executive Director

Ms. Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant

*\*There currently are four vacancies on the State Board of Education*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education was created by the General Assembly in 1963 and reestablished in 1988. It is the principal administrative regulatory body for both elementary and secondary education and higher education in the Commonwealth. It has the power and duty to review and adopt regulations that govern educational policies and principles and establish standards governing the educational programs of the Commonwealth, upon recommendation of its Councils. The Board also has the authority and duty to approve or disapprove an application for the creation of a new school district, or change in the boundaries of an existing school district; establish committees of professional and technical advisors to assist the councils in performing research studies undertaken by them; manage and have custody of the State School Fund; apply for, receive and administer Federal grants, appropriations, allocations and programs within its purview; adopt policies with regard to institutions of higher education; and, adopt master plans for basic and higher education.

The State Board of Education engages in constant review and appraisal of education in the Commonwealth. The Board's evaluation takes into account such matters as educational objectives, alternative organizational patterns, alternative programs of study, and the operating efficiency of the education system. The chairperson of the State Board refers all studies and investigations to one of its Councils, and receives and places on the agenda the findings and recommendations of the Council for appropriate action by the Board.

For purposes of studying issues and developing policy proposals, the Board is divided into two councils – the Council of Basic Education and the Council of Higher Education. The Council of Basic Education has the power and duty to develop a master plan for basic education in the Commonwealth for adoption by the Board; investigate programs, conduct research studies and formulate policy programs in all educational areas not within the purview of higher education; encourage and promote such agricultural, industrial, vocational and technical education programs as the needs of this Commonwealth may require; and investigate and make recommendations pertaining to the work of any schools of design, schools of industrial arts or industrial schools to which the General Assembly may make an appropriation.

The Council of Higher Education has the power and duty to develop a master plan for higher education in the Commonwealth for adoption by the Board; develop standards for the approval of colleges and universities for granting of certification and degrees; develop standards for all higher education building projects involving the use of state funds or the funds of any Commonwealth instrumentality; and, investigate programs, conduct research studies and formulate policy proposals in all areas pertaining to higher education in the Commonwealth, including a system of community colleges and technical institutions as provide by law.

The Board also serves as the State Board of Career and Technical Education and, in this capacity, sets policy and promulgates regulations regarding career and technical education in Pennsylvania at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. The Board met for the first time as the State Board of Career and Technical Education in January 2020 following the passage of Act 76 of 2019 that updated terminology throughout the Public School Code of 1949 by replacing references to “vocational-technical education” with “career and technical education”. Prior to January 2020, the Board was referred to as the State Board for Vocational-Technical Education.

Much of the Board’s work occurs in meetings of its standing committees, including the Committees on Academic Standards/Chapter 4; Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness; and Career and Technical Education. Ad Hoc and Special Committees also are established from time to time to oversee special projects.

Board committees are the bodies that conduct public meetings to solicit comments, concerns and questions from members of the general public, as well as those involved in the education enterprise on a particular education regulation or issue. When the Board decides to review a current regulation or develop a new one, it typically begins the process with roundtable discussions or public hearings conducted in several locations throughout the state. The committee takes the information it learns during this exercise and develops recommendations that can take the form of a report or revised regulations.

Proposed regulations are published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. Additional public comments on a proposed regulation, as well as comments received from the House and Senate Education Committees and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission, are considered and, based on this stakeholder input, the Board may make further refinements to the regulation that it deems necessary in crafting a final regulation.



## **State Board of Education Activity: 2020**

Pursuant to Section 2603-B of the Public School Code of 1949, 24 P.S. § 26-2603-B, the State Board of Education is pleased to provide a report on its activities for the year 2020.

### **Pennsylvania Public Postsecondary Vocational Education Accreditation**

Per approval granted by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), the State Board of Career and Technical Education (SBCTE) holds the authority to accredit public postsecondary vocational education programs. The SBCTE's scope of authority is limited to accrediting career and technical centers that offer non-degree granting career and technical programs for adults approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) that are 300 hours or longer in duration. The SBCTE evaluates institutions that seek voluntary accreditation under this authority through a partnership with the Bureau of Career and Technical Education (BCTE) within PDE. The SBCTE, through the Pennsylvania Secretary of Education, authorizes BCTE to manage the state's accreditation program.

In 2019, the Board reviewed an application for accreditation of postsecondary programs offered by Schuylkill Technology Centers (STC) and granted STC one-year of probationary accreditation. During the probationary period, STC was directed to take action to address areas of non-compliance with the state's accreditation guidelines. At that same time, the BCTE was directed by the SBCTE to conduct monthly check-ins with STC and to provide a mid-year report to the Board on STC's progress toward compliance with accreditation guidelines.

Upon receiving progress reports from both the BCTE and STC administration, the SBCTE determined that STC had taken the necessary actions to satisfy deficiencies identified in its initial accreditation review in the area of leadership related to the administration's process for discussing and reviewing adult education goals and reviewing adult education performance. In January 2020, the SBCTE granted STC full accreditation for a four-year period.

### **Formation of Adams Technical Institute**

In January 2020, the SBCTE reviewed a petition from five school districts in Adams County seeking to form a new Career and Technical Center (CTC). The governing boards of the districts seeking to form a new CTC – Bermudian Springs, Conewago Valley, Fairfield Area, Gettysburg Area, and Littlestown Area – approved Articles of Agreement that would govern the new CTC and submitted those Articles of Agreement for the Board's review. The five districts already were part of a Board-approved attendance area for career and technical education, and had been engaged in joint efforts to make CTE opportunities available to their students through programming delivered by the Gettysburg Area School District. The districts ascertained that

forming a CTC would allow them to maintain current CTE opportunities for their students and, in the future, expand CTE offering to meet the county’s workforce needs under the governance of a Joint Operating Committee. The SBCTE approved the petition in January 2020 to establish the Adams Technical Institute at the state’s newest CTC.

### **High School Graduation Requirements**

Act 158 of 2018 established multiple pathways through which students may demonstrate readiness for high school graduation. The Act permits the use of the following assessments for making graduation determinations: Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, SAT, PSAT, ACT, and the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Exams. The General Assembly directed the Secretary of Education to recommend an established score on each permitted assessment that would serve as the score necessary on each exam to demonstrate readiness for graduation through the various pathways established in the Act. Established scores were required to be approved by the State Board of Education.

In March 2020, the Board approved established scores for the assessments that may serve as measures of readiness for graduation. Established scores were approved relative to whether the exam’s score is being considered as part of the alternative assessment pathway or the evidence-based pathway – two distinct pathways to graduation that were established in Act 158. The approved established score are published on the Board’s website.

### **Chapter 2 (School District Organization)**

Standards for School District Organization, that were deposited by the Board with the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) on August 17, 1970, recently were located by a research archivist. In May 2020, the Board acted to direct the LRB to publish a corrective amendment, pursuant to 45 Pa.C.S. § 901, to ensure that the Standards for School District Organization are published in the appropriate title of the Pennsylvania Code. The LRB acted on the Board’s request and the Standards for School District Organization now are published at 22 Pa. Code Chapter 2.

### **Erie County Community College**

In July 2020, the Board adopted a final order approving a Plan to establish the Erie County Community College, which authorized Erie County to form the state’s 15<sup>th</sup> community college. Per the Plan, the county will serve as the institution’s local sponsor. Section 1902-A of the Public School Code of 1949 tasks the Board with the responsibility to determine whether to approve or disapprove applications to establish new community colleges in the Commonwealth.

The Plan submitted by Erie County in June 2017 was assessed using the standard of review established in this section of the School Code.

The review of the Erie County’s Plan prior to 2020 included the appointment of a Special Committee of the Board that conducted a public hearing in Erie County, consultation with the Governor on the number of community colleges that could be approved in the ensuing fiscal period, and receipt of a report of findings on the Plan prepared by the Department of Education. The review culminated in an evidentiary hearing on the Plan that was conducted by the Board in a virtual public format in June 2020. Earlier in the calendar year, the Board considered and acted on petitions to intervene in the hearing and appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to organize the hearing. The following parties participated in the evidentiary hearing: Erie County, Empower Erie, the Northern Pennsylvania Regional College, and Sen. Joseph Scarnati, III.

The Board considered evidence presented at the hearing relative to the standards for establishing a new community college set forth in Section 1902-A of the Public School Code of 1949. These standards required the Board to determine whether the local sponsor (Erie County) has sufficient population to sustain a minimum enrollment, whether Erie County has sufficient wealth to financially support the college, and whether the county was not adequately served by established institutions of higher learning. Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the Board determined that Erie County’s Plan satisfied the standards set forth in the Public School Code. The Board’s Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in this matter can be reviewed in the Final Order, adopted July 8, 2020, that is posted on the Board’s publicly-accessible website.

#### **Chapter 49 (Certification of Professional Personnel)**

Throughout 2020, the Board continued deliberations surrounding its major review of 22 Pa. Code Chapter 49 (Certification of Professional Personnel). The Board initiated a required major review of the Chapter by accepting a set of draft recommended amendments from Secretary Rivera on its agenda for consideration. In 2019, the Board’s Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness Committee conducted four public hearings on the Secretary’s recommendations in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Lock Haven, and Allegheny County. The Board reviewed and considered testimony delivered at these hearings, along with additional comments submitted in writing. Feedback on the Secretary’s recommendations was received from faculty at schools of education, teachers, school administrators, school directors, parents, and other diverse stakeholders.

After considering the Secretary’s recommendations and reviewing related stakeholder feedback, the Board presented refinements to the Secretary’s proposal and deliberated on these draft proposed amendments at a public meeting. The Board adopted proposed amendments to Chapter 49 in July 2020. The majority of amendments in the proposed rulemaking reflect

amendments to align the regulation to statutory changes, clarify ambiguous language, and update language for relevancy. Among the substantive provisions included in the proposed rulemaking, the Board is seeking to ensure that all educators are prepared and provided a foundation in a number of new competencies. The proposal would require individuals preparing to enter the education profession to receive preservice instruction in professional ethics, mental wellness, trauma-informed instruction, and culturally relevant instruction. Training in these same competencies would be required for current classroom educators by requiring PDE to update its induction plan guidelines to include these competencies and by requiring school entities to update their professional education plans to address these competencies. To ensure that reading instruction is grounded in the most current research on the science of reading to meet the developmental needs of all students, the Board also is proposed to add instruction and training in structured literacy as a part of educator preparation programs and as part of ongoing professional education for current educators at the elementary level.

Proposed amendments to Chapter 49 were published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* for public comment on December 19, 2020. The Board will continue its work related to the major review of this Chapter into 2021 as it receives additional stakeholder feedback to inform its consideration of a final regulation.

#### **Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessment)**

In September 2020, the Board adopted proposed amendments to 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessment). The proposed rulemaking makes both substantive and technical revisions to Chapter 4. Substantively, the rulemaking would replace the Commonwealth's current *Academic Standards for Science and Technology* (2002) and *Academic Standards for Environment and Ecology* (2002) with the *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)*. The proposed academic standards would take effect on July 1, 2024. Proposed amendments to Chapter 4 also make technical revisions to conform certain provisions of the regulation with statutory changes enacted by the General Assembly to high school graduation requirements, compulsory school age, and terminology replacing references to "vocational-technical education" with "Career and Technical Education."

Adoption of the proposed rulemaking marked continued progress on a discussion the Board initiated in the fall of 2019 surrounding the need to update the state's academic standards for science to align our standards with current research and best practices in science education. The Board also recognized that, since Pennsylvania's current science standards were adopted in 2002, 44 states and the District of Columbia have updated their science standards to align with seminal documents on current research and best practices in science instruction. Since that time,

20 states and the District of Columbia adopted the Next Generation Science Standards and another 24 states adopted standards based on the same framework. In undertaking an effort to update our standards, the Board recognized that Pennsylvania could benefit by learning from the journeys of other states.

In determining that an update to the state’s science standards was necessary, the Board further reviewed national and regional data that suggested Pennsylvania’s needs to have a STEM-ready workforce to compete in the global economy. According to the Pennsylvania Workforce Needs Assessment 2016-2026, there will be nearly 600,000 new and replacement jobs in Pennsylvania through 2026, with STEM jobs growing at approximately 9 percent, and there are more than 20,000 unfilled computer science and software development jobs. This jobs outlook demonstrates the sense of urgency Pennsylvania must foster to create pathways for equitable access to STEM experiences and to ensure that all students are learning the knowledge and skills necessary for future employment. Thus, the Board determined that an effort to update our science standards was necessary to position the Commonwealth to retain current businesses in the STEM fields and to compete to attract new STEM-related industries by preparing our future workforce with the skills and competencies necessary to support growth in these industries.

Given that context, in the fall of 2019 the Board directed PDE to initiate an effort to prepare draft updates to our science standards and to develop recommendations on updated standards for the Board’s consideration. The Department provided periodic updates to the Board on the extensive stakeholder outreach it conducted throughout this process.

Development of draft recommended updates to Pennsylvania’s science standards was informed, in part, by 14 face-to-face and virtual stakeholder engagement meetings across 12 counties over the course of four weeks from late February to mid-March 2020. A total of 951 stakeholders attended the engagement meetings and feedback was collected from 934 stakeholders (17 stakeholder requested to be ‘silent observers’ during the sessions). Teachers, including special education and English Learner educators, higher education faculty, pre-service teachers, students, librarians, business leaders, community members, school and district leaders, Intermediate Unit staff, and environmental and agricultural organization representatives were among the wide range of stakeholders who provided feedback in these engagement sessions.

Following this stakeholder outreach effort, the Department initiated a second phase of stakeholder engagement by soliciting applications from interested members of the public to serve on committees to review and revise the standards. Applicants were nominated to serve on these committees through a multi-reviewer process on the basis of their depth and breadth of experience in: curriculum and standards development, understanding of the existing science standards and current research, equity and access in education and meeting the needs of diverse

learners, and overall education experience. Nominations for individuals to serve on the Steering Committee and the Content Committee tasked with drafting recommended updates to the standards were presented and approved by the Board at a public meeting in May 2020.

Recommended standards updates were presented for discussion at a public meeting of the Board in July 2020, at which time they were adopted as a proposed rulemaking. The proposed standards now will begin the regulatory review process, including multiple opportunities for review and public comment by interested stakeholders, the General Assembly, and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission.

### **Private School Accreditation**

Under the Private Academic Schools Act, private and non-public schools may operate in Pennsylvania without state licensure if they are accredited by an organization approved by the State Board of Education. The Board's process for evaluating organizations to serve as approved accreditors is set forth in the Statement of Policy on Accrediting Organizations published at 22 Pa. Code Chapter 52. That policy statement sets forth that the Board will grant approvals to accrediting organizations for five-year intervals and that existing accreditors may apply to renew their authority.

Two current approved private school accreditors – the Pennsylvania Association for Independent Schools (PAIS) and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools – submitted applications seeking to renew their status as approved accreditors. The Board's Special Committee on Private School Accreditation led a review of the application submitted by each organization. As part of the review process, the Committee requested that a team from the Department of Education conduct a concurrent review of the applications and formulate recommendations on them for the Board's consideration. Both the Department and the Board determined that PAIS and Middle States submitted applications that were of "good quality" or "very good quality" on all aspects of the evaluation rubric. The associations were reviewed relative to their self study process, protocols for conducting peer reviewed site visits at candidates schools, standards for accreditation, monitoring, process for investigating and resolving complaints, and ensuring compliance with employee background check requirements.

In September 2020, the Board approved the applications for renewal of both PAIS and Middle States, and each organization was granted authority to continue serving as an approved accrediting body for another five years. The scope of authority granted to PAIS covers pre-K, kindergarten, elementary, and secondary private academic schools. The scope of authority granted to Middle States covers pre-K, kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and special education private academic schools, tutoring centers, educational testing and remedial centers.

## **Chapter 10: Model Memorandum of Understanding**

In November 2020, the Board conducted a required biennial review of the Model Memorandum of Understanding (Model MOU) that is published as part of its Safe Schools regulations at 22 Pa. Code Chapter 10. The Model MOU is a voluntary document that school districts may use to meet their responsibility in executing an agreement that sets forth their working relationship with local law enforcement in the reporting and resolution of incidents. The Model MOU, along with the balance of other provisions in Chapter 10, was developed through an inclusive process that involved representatives of school districts, law enforcement, district attorneys, juvenile court judges, juvenile probation officers, and advocates for students with disabilities.

The Model MOU addresses legal parameters for the disclosure of student records, procedures used by law enforcement in handling an incident, and cooperation in verifying data reporting in annual school safety reports. The document also addresses incidents that require immediate notification to law enforcement and incidents over which school administrators have discretion in reporting to law enforcement consistent with how reporting of different incidents is defined in the Public School Code of 1949. It also addresses factors school administrators should consider when determining whether to notify law enforcement of an incident over which administrators have discretion in reporting.

To help assess whether any changes were necessary to the model MOU, the Board's School and University Safety Committee received a report from Scott Kuren, Director of PDE's Safe Schools Office, on how the current Model MOU is being used in the field. Data provided by the Safe Schools Office showed that 99.9% of schools in the Commonwealth had timely MOUs on file with the agency as required. Mr. Kuren shared that the Model MOU is widely used in the field and noted that his office did not find any MOUs on file that substantively diverged from the Model.

Opportunities for public comment on the Model MOU were provided at both the public meeting of the School and University Safety Committee where Mr. Kuren presented data on behalf of PDE and at the public meeting of the Board where the Model MOU was called up as a discussion item. No comments were presented requesting a change to the document. Upon considering the current Model MOU and the Department's report on its use in the field, the Board determined that changes to the Model MOU were not necessary at this time.

## **College Textbook Policies Advisory Committee**

In January 2011, the Board formed the College Textbook Policies Advisory Committee, a Standing Committee of the Board established by Act 104 of 2010. The Advisory Committee was

tasked with issuing a report to the Governor and the General Assembly with recommendations to improve college textbook affordability and accessibility. Per statute, the Committee is to update its report every three years. With the support of the Department of Education, the Board continued to convene the Advisory Committee quarterly throughout 2020.

### **Master Plan for Higher Education**

Looking forward, in 2021 the Board intends to initiate conversation surrounding updating the Master Plan for Higher Education. The Council of Higher Education plans to hold a working session in January 2021 to review the requirements set forth in statute for the Plan and to discuss next steps in developing an update to the document providing guidance on postsecondary issues for the Commonwealth. An update to the Master Plan for Basic Education was completed by the Board in 2018.