

**MINUTES  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**333 Market Street | 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126**

**September 12, 2013**

The 316<sup>th</sup> meeting of the State Board of Education was convened on Thursday, September 12, 2013. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986. The meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. by Larry Wittig, Chairman.

**Attending:**

James Agras	Sen. Andrew Dinniman	Justin Reynolds
James Barker <i>(via phone)</i>	Sandra Dungee Glenn	Rep. James Roebuck, Jr.
Kevin Bates	Kirk Hallett	Colleen Sheehan <i>(via phone)</i>
Wendy Beetlestone	Maureen Lally-Green	Edward Sheehan
Emily Clark	Francis Micheline	Karen Farmer White <i>(via phone)</i>
Rep. Paul Clymer	Jonathan Peri <i>(via phone)</i>	Larry Wittig
Connie Davis <i>(via phone)</i>	Mollie Phillips	

**OPENING COMMENTS**

Chairman Larry Wittig introduced and welcomed Dr. Carolyn Dumaresq as the new Acting Secretary of Education.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the July 10, 2013 meeting of the State Board of Education were approved unanimously on a Micheline/Agras motion.

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE PORTER TOWNSHIP INITIATIVE**

Wendy Beetlestone, Chair of the Special Committee, reported that the committee met on September 11 to make a recommendation on the application of the Porter Township Initiative for transfer from the East Stroudsburg Area School District to the Wallenpaupack Area School District. Ms. Beetlestone reviewed the process used by the committee to evaluate the application, which included a public hearing conducted at East Stroudsburg High School and a review of the public record on the application. Based on those records, the committee identified the following issue buckets: property taxes, community of Hemlock Farms, quality of education, school safety (both weather and campus safety), diversity, and curriculum. Ms. Beetlestone summarized the evidence presented related to each of those key issues, and noted that a full review of the evidence is provided in the committee's report.

After examining the documents filed with the State Board and hearing exhibits, and listening carefully to all the testimony, Ms. Beetlestone said the committee became thoroughly familiar with all of the relevant facts and issues involved in this matter. She said the committee also acknowledges the emotions involved in the transfer that is pending before the Board and the disagreements among the various groups interested in the matter. Further, she said the committee wanted to recognize the courage of Sabrina and Samantha Herman, who were the only current students from either side of the issue to provide public comment to the committee. She went on to express gratitude for the cooperation of all parties and counsel during the public hearing.

Ms. Beetlestone said both the Committee and the Board are committed to making its decision in this matter deliberatively and based upon all of the facts and evidence and the views of all of the citizens of East Stroudsburg Area School District (ESASD), Wallenpaupack Area School District (WASD), and the Porter Township Initiative (PTI). She reported that the committee had reached the following conclusions after careful consideration of the record:

1. The significant reduction in property taxes appears to be as much a motivating factor for the transfer as any of the educational factors.
2. The division of Hemlock Farms into separate school districts is not a unique phenomenon for communities in this area of the state, and the State Board should not overly concern itself with how school district boundary lines impact a community's social setting when making a decision on whether to approve or disapprove a transfer.
3. PTI failed to demonstrate that WASD provides a superior education compared to ESASD on multiple fronts, including: school performance, school safety, diversity/socialization, and curriculum. Further, ESASD successfully demonstrated it would be financially harmed if the transfer were to occur.

Ms. Beetlestone reported that the committee concluded unanimously that the creation of the PTI and its transfer from the ESASD to the WASD should be denied by the State Board, and that the committee's report and unanimous recommendation was transmitted to the State Board for its consideration this morning.

James Agras asked how many students would be impacted by the application. Ms. Beetlestone said about 45 students would be impacted.

Maureen Lally-Green asked Ms. Beetlestone to explain the standard of review explained on page 4 of the committee's report. Ms. Beetlestone discussed the Board's statutory authority related to such applications and standards identified in prior Board opinions on such applications, the limited role of the court in reviewing initial petitions and financial issues associated with a transfer, and the role of the Secretary of Education to determine educational merit for the transfer. Ms. Lally-Green surmised that the Board's role is that of fact finder.

Chairman Wittig stated that he sat in on the public hearings and reached a slightly different conclusion than the committee that he will elaborate on later.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Wittig called for public comment on the proposed final-form revisions to Chapter 4. The following individuals offered remarks to the Board:

- Michelle Jansen, resident of Franklin County, expressed concern with whether the PA Core Standards will be effective and developmentally appropriate for lower grades. Ms. Jansen further stated that the cost of implementing the program was a main concern, not so much cost of testing itself but the associated remediation and project-based assessments. Ms. Jansen said that data collection remains a huge concern and that we need to consider how data that is collected now is utilized in terms of Race to the Top and potentially allowing access to data by the federal government. She expressed that the Department needs to be clear on what exactly the Commonwealth is obligated to in current contract and what that might evolve to look like.
- Bill Bartle, Education Policy Director for Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, (PPC) stated that PPC strongly supports the final Chapter 4 regulations and urged the State Board to adopt them. Mr. Bartle said that in 2012 one-third of the Commonwealth's high school students received diplomas without demonstrating proficiency in math and reading via the 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA or 12<sup>th</sup> grade re-take, and that the problem is not isolated to a handful of urban or poor school districts. Further, Mr. Bartle said state-owned universities and community colleges reported that 1 in 3 students are unable to take a college-level math or English course for credit. The remediation required costs taxpayers roughly \$26 million a year, making the affordability of college further out of reach for young people. He said the changes to Chapter 4 address these concerns by adopting the PA Core Standards drafted by Pennsylvania teachers and include important safeguards for students and accommodations for special education students and English language learners. Further, he said the more rigorous standards do not determine how they should be taught in the classroom or undermine Pennsylvania's long-standing tradition of local control. Rather, curriculum, textbooks and student materials all remain decisions of the local school district. Mr. Bartle said Keystone Exams already have replaced the 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA and can be used as a course final exam, which means students are not necessarily taking more tests but are taking better tests. Mr. Bartle said Keystones also have a number of benefits over the traditional comprehensive exam administered in 11<sup>th</sup> grade by being administered closer to the point of instruction, by assessing more focused, in-depth knowledge, and by creating a means for students to take the exams more seriously by connecting them to graduation requirements.
- Carey Harris, of A+ Schools in Pittsburgh, expressed support for full implementation of the Pennsylvania Core Standards, not just as an advocate but as a parent of three Pittsburgh public school students. Ms. Harris spoke to the increased competition students will face from peers around the world once they graduate from high school. She acknowledged that mastering the concepts embodied in the PA Core Standards will not be easy, but said she believes that effort creates ability and that she wants her children to know the satisfaction that comes with hard work when they meet the expectations we set

for them. She asked if she should tell her children the state thought they wouldn't be up to the challenge of harder work this year. Further, Ms. Harris said we need higher standards for all students, including African American students, many of whom are stuck in a cycle of poverty that only a great education can break. She expressed dismay that the Pittsburgh Promise, a scholarship program for graduates of Pittsburgh Public Schools, is removing financial barriers to college, yet last year only 38% of African American students were able to access the Promise based on their GPAs and only 63% of African American students graduated. Ms. Harris said we cannot allow the soft bigotry of low expectations to perpetuate the gaps in African American achievement and graduation rates. She argued against slowing down implementation of standards or not raising the bar. Ms. Harris said we cannot wait for poverty to be ended, as we know there are schools across the Commonwealth that are successful in raising achievement for our most vulnerable students. Further, Ms. Harris said we cannot wait for the standards to be perfect as we are human and none will ever be. Ms. Harris said teachers and administrators in Pittsburgh already are working through implementation of the new standards. She asked the Board not to give in to pressure to ease up, slow down or abandon the standards or give in to the fears of adults, but rather to teacher our children to reach these expectations, teach them a lesson that difficult things are worth doing, and provide them with the knowledge that will be necessary for them to compete in a global economy.

- David Patti, President and CEO of the Pennsylvania Business Council (PBC), said PBC strongly supports the Chapter 4 regulatory package. Mr. Patti said the proposed academic standards were an outstanding improvement when they were first put forward in 2010, but are even better today given additional input from lawmakers, the public and other interested parties. He said rigorous academic standards with aligned assessments are essential for making sure the Commonwealth has a population prepared to grow Pennsylvania's workforce into a competitive economic powerhouse. PBC believes the PA Core Standards provide a firm, well-understood, internationally-benchmarked foundation upon which each school district can build a curriculum reflective of its local needs. Mr. Patti also stated that PBC has long-supported end-of-course exams with rapid remediation prior to students being pushed along to more advanced coursework, and that PBC supports the Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement to earn a Pennsylvania diploma.
- Tom Wilson, retired real admiral in the U.S. Navy and member of Mission Readiness, said he is honored to support Pennsylvania's Core Standards and the aligned assessments that are included in the revised Chapter 4 regulations. Mr. Wilson said the proposal will not only benefit our children's education, but also our future national security. He explained that recent data from the Department of Defense indicates that most young Americans ages 17-24 are unable to join the military, and that poor educational achievement is one of the main reasons why an estimated 75% of all young Americans are unfit for military service. Mr. Wilson said that, on average, 1 out of 5 students in PA will not graduate from high school. Of those who do graduate and want to join the

military, 22% do not possess sufficient skills to pass the military's entrance exam testing math, literacy and problem-solving. Ms. Wilson said this situation has clear implications on the country's international competitiveness and was a recent focus of the Council of Foreign Relations. He said that standards alone are not enough, and that aligned assessments are a necessary component of accountability so that we know how students are faring, understand the scope of potential problems and can make informed decisions about fixing them. Mr. Wilson also spoke to a key area of concern for military families – mobility. He noted that military children on average move 6 to 9 times during their primary education and often find themselves ahead or behind their peers due to a lack of consistency in state education standards. He expressed further support for PA's Core Standards in bringing greater consistency for military children. Mr. Wilson concluded by expressing support for full implementation of the Pennsylvania Core Standards and aligned assessments as an important part of our future national security.

- Dr. Joan Duvall-Flynn, retired teacher and President of the Media Area National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), said that she has no objection to rigorous curriculum, but that Keystone Exams need to be separated from the Core as graduation criteria. She stated that Massachusetts has a trauma-sensitive education system that includes resources to support teachers in dealing with students from adverse situations. She advocates for Pennsylvania to adopt a trauma-informed education system that she said will do much to end drop-outs, curtail suicides, and raise achievement scores. Dr. Duvall-Flynn asked if the Board had analyzed what it takes for students to successfully meet the proficiency cut scores, what materials must be in a school building, what technology a child must have, what background knowledge a student must have, what human resources and emotional supports must be in place, and what home environments are conducive to success on a rigorous, life-defining test. She asked how the Board can judge that this is a fair thing to do to young people if it hasn't looked at those factors. She asked the Board to picture the students they think about, and said some students are homeless, some are in foster care and struggling with grief and loss, some are in homes where there is physical abuse and molestation, some are in homes with alcohol or drug-addicted adults, some live with terminally ill loved ones for whom they give care, some have incarcerated parents, some have come to this country without academic-level English proficiency, some live in chaotic communities where they are afraid to walk to school, some are ill, some are debilitated, some have no vision or dental care, some are on strong medications, some suffer school phobia, math phobia, reading phobia, some come from war-torn zones and have flashback and night terrors. Dr. Duvall-Flynn said these are the students that do not do well on standardized tests and that the Board's vote today will be casting the ballot on their lives. She said these students need time to work their way out of their native circumstances, and can become highly productive citizens if they have access to their future. She said the Board can make it impossible for these people or can give them life, and asked the Board to reflect on that and have the moral stamina and courage to protect these people.

- Jonathan Cetel, Executive Director of PennCan, a non-profit advocacy organization working to accelerate the pace of education reform so all students have access to the quality of education they deserve, expressed PennCan's support for the Chapter 4 regulations. He said the standards reflect the input and collaboration of numerous parents, teachers, administrators and legislators at the state and local levels. The updates address concerns expressed by some stakeholders, but still contain the rigor and accountability achieved when Pennsylvania first adopted new standards in 2010. Mr. Cetel said making sure that the Commonwealth has strong standards and aligned assessments is a core function of the State Board of Education, and that we all share a profound responsibility to make sure that students are prepared for college and career success when they graduate from high school. He said the problem we are trying to solve is that everyone is unwilling to accept the status quo where so many of our high school graduates require remediation in college. He reiterated that school districts will always remain the entity responsible for designing curriculum and teachers always will have the greatest impact on student achievement, but said it is up to the state to set high expectations for student learning. With that, he urged the Board to support the regulation.
- Dr. George Steinhoff, Superintendent of the PennDelco School District, shared perspectives and concerns regarding the use of Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement. Dr. Steinhoff said the original goals related to Keystones had merit, but felt that along the way these goals morphed into a graduation policy that is unpopular, unproductive, unfunded and unnecessary. He stated no major professional organization that represents the experts and leaders in education support the use of Keystones Exams as an additional graduation requirement, parents view it as a solution in search of a problem, and students see it as a high-stakes hurdle that impedes their learning time and distracts from AP and SAT tests and individual class assignments. He said it will have the effect of narrowing the curriculum and administrators will struggle to find the time to provide necessary remediation. Dr. Steinhoff said districts will have to cut other programs to fund Keystone remediation, and that test will be an unnecessary intrusion for successful students during the spring testing season that also includes SAT and AP exams. He said students assigned to remedial classes will fear being stigmatized by peer and struggling students will view Keystones as another card stacked against them and risk dropping out if they are caught in an unending cycle of remediation. Dr. Steinhoff said without immediate funds his district may be forced to pull staff from the elementary level to staff high school remediation programs. In closing, he asked who would object if the Keystone Exams were decoupled from the graduation requirement.
- Janice Bowman, resident of Allentown, provided information from The World Socialist Website and said she does all her own research because she can no longer trust reporters. She conveyed the views of the World Socialist Website on the Common Core Standards and said it would result in tracking of students. Ms. Bowman said she looked up the function of the U.S. Department of Education and that it is not to be heavily involved in determining curriculum or education standards, with the recent exception of No Child Left Behind, and that determining quality education is left to the accreditation process.

Ms. Bowman also said the state needs to look at what money it took from the feds and how we are judged and pushed by the strings attached to it. She then referenced the National Sexuality Standards she about during her remarks to the Board yesterday and said some of the books in our schools are as bad as porn. Ms. Bowman said the local schools may pick the books, but since the Board sets the standards it is partly to blame. She said she does not know which schools are using the books, but she is trying to get a list. She said the Pa. Code Chapter 4, Health, Safety and Physical Education standards are requiring this porn in schools. She also provided information on a study she conducted for Allentown on its federal and state budgets. She said costs are going up and it's not helping us. Ms. Bowman said she also did a study of who lost their homes due to property taxes and said she would submit it to the Board as people who aren't here that the Board is not thinking about. Ms. Bowman then cited a letter from Alaska Governor Parnell stating his disapproval of Common Core. She said the letter criticizes a contribution from Exxon Mobile to Governor Corbett when Pennsylvania began implementation of Common Core, and she said Exxon Mobile is owned by Bill Gates and we should look at that. Finally, Ms. Bowman asked who gives a committee the power to vote on standards that are on hold because the governor wrote a letter putting a hold on the Common Core. She said she votes for legislators and the governor and asked how the Board has can overpower something the governor put on hold. She said Board member terms should be changed from 6 years to 1 year if the Board thinks it can override the governor and the whole congress.

- Ashley DeMauro, Pennsylvania State Director for Students First, stated that Article 3, Section 14 of our state constitution requires that the our provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient public education system. Ms. DeMauro said in order to ensure that our education system is preparing students to be college and career ready and to ensure that the investment we are making in our students is yielding results, Pennsylvania has a system of standards-based education that sets a bar for our students and measures whether they are meeting that bar. In 2010, this Board adopted standards based on the national Common Core in math and reading to replace our original standards that were adopted in the late '90s. Ms. DeMauro said this Board is now making the changes necessary after listening to the comments and concerns of many Pennsylvanians about the needs of our state. Ms. DeMauro said by the time students complete their high school coursework, they are at inequitably prepared due to the wide spectrum of learning standards across our nation. Further, she said even if students have completed all their homework and met graduation requirements, an alarming majority of students are not ready for college or the workforce or prepared to compete in the global economy. Ms. DeMauro said the revised standards are the result of a state-led plan to address and close the learning gaps among states and hold U.S. students to academically challenging standards on par with their international counterparts. Ms. DeMauro cited a Fordham Foundation study that compared every state's standards to Common Core and found that Pennsylvania's previous English standards were repetitive, lacked coherence between grades, and failed to include key concepts. The state's math standards fared even worse in the Fordham study by not prioritizing foundational knowledge in the lower grades and skimping on content in the secondary grades. Ms. DeMauro said implementation of the

updated, more rigorous Pennsylvania Core Standards is necessary to link foundational concepts so that students graduate college and career ready. She said a comprehensive system of education should include rigorous standards for students and aligned assessments that accurately assess whether students are meeting those standards. Ms. DeMauro said the Chapter 4 regulation before the Board will better prepare students by setting a higher bar and accurately assessing students to show where improvements are needed. She applauded the work of the Board and urged its support of the Chapter 4 regulation.

- Representative Will Tallman said he graduated high school in the 1960's when SAT scores were much higher than they are today on average with no state or national standards. Rep. Tallman said he had empirical evidence to present. He referenced the Program for International Science Assessment and said some that did higher than the U.S. had national standards, some that did lower than the U.S. had national standards and some that did better than the U.S. had no national standards. Next, he referenced the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, whose test he said showed the same mixed results. Rep. Tallman said standards have not achieved academic excellence and that the classroom is what does it. He asked the Secretary of Education to delay the implementation of the Common Core standards.
- Jesse McCree, of the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association, spoke on behalf of the association in support of the Board's proposed changes to Chapter 4. Mr. McCree said if Pennsylvania's workforce is going to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is critically important that students graduate from high school with strong academic foundations necessary either to continue in postsecondary education or enter the labor market as workforce-ready. The Core Standards and the Keystone Exams will benefit the Commonwealth's public education system in acting as a quality measurement tool, ensuring college and workforce readiness while retaining flexibility in schools curriculum. He said the standards are designed to ensure students are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in the global economy and to reduce the large proficiency disparity among high school graduates statewide. Mr. McCree said the regulations will adopt rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards in English and math and provide students a variety of assessment tools to demonstrate their proficiency. Mr. McCree further stated that the PA Core Standards are a step in the right direction in aligning education with college and workforce readiness initiatives. He said workforce development professionals deal with what is called a skills gap – a mismatch between what employers seek and what graduates have – and said the revised Chapter 4 regulations will help reduce that skills gap and give a Pennsylvania high school diploma more value in today's marketplace.
- Denise Nahoom, Founder and Executive Director of The Educational Enrichment Initiative (TEEI), stated that TEEI supports centers across Pennsylvania that provide supplemental education services to students. Ms. Nahoom brought attention to the

audience that supplemental education service providers in Pennsylvania are required to be licensed as private schools. She encouraged the Board to look at franchised supplemental service providers and compare New Jersey to Pennsylvania. She said Pennsylvania has only 25% of what New Jersey has in terms of private supplemental enrichment programming because of the Department's strict regulations requiring them to go through privately licensed regulations. Ms. Nahoom said that TEEI supports the Core standards and that their centers would welcome these specific skills that children need to thrive in today's market. However, she said that she cannot agree with using Keystone Exams as a partial graduation requirement unless there are adequate supplemental services in place. She said this comes down to cost and that people attending those private centers pay for such services out of pocket. She said she does not see money forthcoming to support those private providers and that students need that support for the policy to succeed.

### INFORMATION/DISSUSION

Acting Secretary Dumaresq stated that Governor Corbett requested that the Board delay the vote on the final-form Chapter 4 regulations on Chapter 4 until today to provide time to address concerns raised by the public. Dr. Dumaresq then addressed the specific concerns heard over the past few months and reviewed the proposed revisions to the regulations that respond to these concerns.

First, she said there were calls for assurances that the regulation would only affect public schools. Dr. Dumaresq noted that the State Board only has the authority to regulate public schools. She said in order to make sure this is very clear, that limited scope is defined in the proposed revisions to the regulation. Second, Dr. Dumaresq said we heard great concern on intrusion in local control over textbooks and curriculum materials. While the Board has always supported local decision-making on these matters, she said the proposed revisions to Chapter 4 reinforce that PDE shall not and the Board will not require school entities to utilize a statewide curriculum or reading lists. The Acting Secretary said there also was great concern about Pennsylvania using national assessments. She noted that there are two national consortium developing exams for other states. To make sure the Board's intention is clear, the proposed revisions to Chapter 4 state that Pennsylvania will not include national assessments as part of the state assessment system, unless, upon consultation with teachers, counselors and parents representing students with disabilities, the Board determines that the assessment is an appropriate means of assessing the academic progress of students identified under Chapter 14 or unless the General Assembly authorizes the use of a national assessment. Again related to students with disabilities, Dr. Dumaresq said Pennsylvania will continue to participate in a joint effort to explore whether there is a more sound alternative to the alternate assessment for special needs students. She again clarified that Pennsylvania is using state assessments, not national assessments.

Dr. Dumaresq also addressed concerns heard related to data mining and said this disturbing testimony is related to what other states may be doing or what other organizations may be recommending. To be clear about what Pennsylvania is doing, the proposed revisions to Chapter 4 preclude the Department from expanding the collection of student and personal family

data due to the implementation of the Pennsylvania Core Standards. She said concerns also were heard about student transcripts including information about how a student achieved proficiency in state standards. Upon further reflection, the Board is recommending that the regulation be revised to only denote a student's achievement level and not denote whether that was attained via a project-based assessment. Finally, Dr. Dumaresq said the final regulation includes an additional change to seat determinations related to graduation waivers with chief school administrators locally rather than with the Secretary of Education. She noted that the regulations maintain a key component related to waivers that require districts with a critical mass of students receiving a waiver to reflect on the reasons for those waivers and develop improvement plans. Dr. Dumaresq said support services will be available to these schools through the required federal improvement planning and associated Department supports that Acting Deputy Secretary Perez presented to the Board yesterday.

Dr. Dumaresq requested the Board's approval of the revised Chapter 4 regulation. She said saying yes to the regulations is saying yes to Pennsylvania's enhanced academic standards; not saying yes goes back to the 2010 Common Core that did not have the benefit of input from Pennsylvania educators. Further, saying yes to the regulation is saying yes to staying with Pennsylvania's assessments and saying no to national tests. Saying yes to the regulation is supporting local control of curriculum. Saying yes to the regulations also is limiting data collection to what is currently required. Saying yes to the regulation also limits the number of Keystone Exams the state would have to develop for graduation to 5, down from 10. Saying yes to the regulation is extending these regulations to the class of 2017; saying no makes it operational for the class of 2015, our current juniors. Dr. Dumaresq said the impact of saying no would affect their GPAs by requiring Keystones to count as one-third of their course grade, even though we have heard from many parents that while they want their child exposed to greater rigor, they do not want the exams to impact their child's grades. Further, saying yes alleviates successful school districts from onerous comprehensive planning mandates. Saying yes relieves schools from the mandate and expense of senior projects for all students. Saying yes clarifies the waiver process, but also engages school districts in improvement planning, with support from PDE, when waivers reach a critical mass. Finally, Dr. Dumaresq said saying yes eliminates the identification on student transcripts of how a student has achieved proficiency.

Senator Dinniman said that no one in his caucus opposes the Common Core curriculum. He said the real issue is a series of unanswered questions. Senator Dinniman said Philadelphia schools were opening with classrooms with no teachers, increased class sizes, one guidance counselor per 3,000 students, and librarians and nurses being shared among schools. The Senator said we are giving students a test for graduation, but the administration is not providing the resources for students to succeed on it. He said that Philadelphia is just the tip of the iceberg and school after school is on the verge on bankruptcy. The Senator said the regulations lack a fiscal note identifying the cost to districts as requested at a recent Senate hearing. The Senator further said the Department has not provided him with requested results from Keystone Exams, but districts have the information. He said such information is necessary to assess the remediation costs of the regulation. He further stated that he would drop that argument if Governor Corbett agreed to pay the full remediation cost for districts, but he has not seen an offer from the Governor for more money. The Senator then said he agreed with public commentators about the need for higher standards, but that he is questioning the coupling of increased standards with

required graduation exams. The Senator also said he feels the Department is talking out of both sides of its mouth by allowing 10% of students to be automatically exempted without the Department knowing, but at the same time we need higher standards for all students. He further stated that he wished Acting Secretary Dumaresq had shared testimony in opposition to Keystones from Delaware County superintendents. He reiterated that those superintendents do not oppose Common Core because most of those districts have standards that are already beyond Common Core, but they oppose one size fits all graduation tests. He said successful districts just want the state to leave them alone, and that the state is taking away their ability to educate students to the top of the curriculum. For students in poor districts, Senator Dinniman said the regulations will be a mark of failure. The Senator further said this would hurt economic development because people will not move into communities if they think the schools are not doing well.

Mollie Phillips responded that she respected Senator Dinniman's passion for education, but she recalled a prior State Board meeting when both Senate Dinniman and Senator Piccola voted yes for the Keystone Exams with a multi-million pricetag. The Senator stated that was correct. Ms. Phillips said she had not seen the Senator since then and he is now attending a meeting to make the Board out as the devil incarnate. Ms. Phillips said she would vote in support of the regulation because we are at a point where we need to stop being schizophrenic about what we're going to do with our kids, provide districts and teachers with a clear direction and stop flip-flopping. She further stated that we need to stop acting like it is the Governor's problem, and noted that there have been many changes to the regulation since the Senator previously raised concerns. Ms. Phillips said she has seen the Acting Secretary work with the public, with Board members, and people in the audience today to involve them in the process of revising the regulation. Finally, Ms. Phillips note that she had previously voted against the regulation in 2010.

Representative James Roebuck said he basically supports Common Core and the resolution to address concerns with the standards. However, he felt the need to address the condition his home district, Philadelphia, is in due to lack of state funding and the Governor sitting on funds that should be released to the district. He spoke about how the library in the state's best high school is shuttered due to staff cuts and that the chaos the district is experiencing due to this Governor and the Board is disgraceful. Mr. Wittig asked how the Board was responsible for funds the Governor had not yet released. Rep. Roebuck stated that the Board should be at the Governor's office this morning asking the Governor to release the funds appropriated to Philadelphia.

Mr. Wittig then spoke to the role he plays as a local school board president and said his home district will be able to handle the transition to revised standards and assessments. He stated that he requested that the district's business manager give him a dollar figure for implementation of the requirements over and above what it would normally spend for remediation, professional development and curriculum and the business manager cited a \$30,000 cost for the Tamaqua School District whose annual budget is \$27 million.

Representative Paul Clymer referenced a recent news article that demonstrated Philadelphia's budget problems date back to 1987 and, although identified, nothing had been

done. He said it was unfair to place the full weight of those challenges on the current Secretary of Education. Rep. Clymer also suggested that the Board read Michelle Rhee's book Radical for a demonstration of how it is possible to increase test scores in low-performing schools with the resources currently available. Rep. Clymer concluded that the hour is late, the status quo is unacceptable, we look for the PA Core Standards to be adopted, and our nation's welfare depends on it.

Sandra Dungee Glenn said she of a divided mind on this issue. Ms. Glenn said she fully supports, understands and believes that there is a serious need to adjust the expectations we have for our children to be aligned with 21<sup>st</sup> century needs. However, she noted that the standards are just a piece of the puzzle and it is important to look at what we do differently in schools to enable students to achieve them and how teachers are prepared and supported in doing this work. Ms. Glenn also stated that she does not oppose requiring students to have a series of proficiencies measured at the end of school so that a diploma has meaning. However, Ms. Glenn said she is concerned about whether the state is providing the necessary inputs to achieve the desired outcomes. Ms. Glenn acknowledged that the Philadelphia School Districts had long-standing issues that predate 1987 and that Rep. Clymer should consider that money does matter and how money is spent matters. Ms. Glenn said she could support the regulation if the standards were uncoupled from the implementation schedule for Keystones, but she does not see the resources available in Philadelphia to currently achieve those goals give recent program cutbacks. She said she could not speak to the circumstances facing the state's other 499 districts.

Mr. Wittig said there is one thing the legislature can do to help all districts financial circumstances and that is to fix the unsustainable pension contribution rate.

Rep. Roebuck also offered that the Philadelphia School District is currently under the governance of a School Reform Commission and that the Governor appoints the majority of members on the Commission. He stated that is where the responsibility goes back to the Governor.

Kirk Hallett said he has been divided on this issue himself and is fortunate through his work to be involved with students from a struggling district. He said he will be altruistic in his vote on the regulation with the understanding that current 9<sup>th</sup> graders will probably get a diploma under the old system that is no good. He said his concern is not with students not getting a diploma at all, but continuing to receive diplomas that do not hold value. Mr. Hallett said he personally know students who received diplomas from the Harrisburg School District who feel they really achieved something only to find out they don't have enough knowledge to take an entry level college course. He said personally he feels that is criminal. Mr. Hallett said he does not know the Acting Secretary personally, but he does not feel she is the wicked witch of the west that Senator Dinniman portrays her to be.

Senator Dinniman apologized and said he means no disrespect, but all the members around the table bring a great passion for education. The Senator asked whether the Board would entertain a resolution to separate the standards from the implementation of the Keystone Exams. Mr. Wittig said the Board must first entertain a motion on the amendments to Chapter 4 and the

Board may talk about the Senator's request later. Mr. Wittig then called for a motion on the final Chapter 4 regulation.

Judge Lally-Green thanked members of the audience for bringing their concerns and insights and allowing the Board to focus on the issues and explain what the issues are not. Ms. Lally-Green stated that assessments are not and never have been intended to be gatekeepers to success. She said the Board is trying to use its best efforts to prepare Pennsylvania students to enter 21<sup>st</sup> century work or studies well-equipped.

Judge Lally-Green then moved that the State Board of Education adopt as amended the final form regulation and authorize Board staff to revise the regulation as necessary to conform with regulatory requirements, and in doing so to rescind the action of the State Board of Education in 2010 that adopted what we are calling national Common Core Standards. The motion was seconded by Dr. Francis Michelini. Mr. Wittig stated that the motion was seconded and called for discussion on the motion. No members of the Board raised points of discussion. Chairman Wittig called for a roll call vote on the regulation.

### ACTION ITEMS

#### FINAL-FORM REGULATION: CHAPTER 4 (ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT)

A motion to approve Final-Form Regulation: Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessment) was made by Maureen Lally-Green and seconded by Francis Michelini.

VOTE: Roll Call vote: 13-YES, 4-NO, 0-Abstentions. (*Agras-YES, Barker-YES, Beetlestone-NO, Clymer-YES, Davis-YES, Dinniman-NO, Dungee Glenn-NO, Lally-Green-YES, Hallett-YES, Michelini-YES, Peri-YES, Phillips-YES, C. Sheehan-YES, E. Sheehan-YES, Roebuck-NO, Farmer White-YES, Wittig-YES*) (*Davis & Peri by Proxy*)

#### APPLICATION OF THE PORTER TOWNSHIP INITIATIVE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

A motion to deny the application of the Porter Township Initiative Independent School District was made by Wendy Beetlestone and seconded by Ed Sheehan.

VOTE: The motion was approved by voice vote with only Chairman Wittig dissenting.

#### AUTHORIZATION TO UTILIZE THE STATE SCHOOL FUND TO SUPPORT THE DATING VIOLENCE EDUCATION REPORT REQUIRED BY ACT 104

A motion to approve the authorization to utilize the State School Fund to support the Dating Violence Education report was made by Ed Sheehan and seconded by Mollie Phillips.

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Wittig announced that the proposed Chapter 18, which originally was scheduled for today's agenda, was withdrawn from the Governor's Policy Office, Budget Office and Office of General Counsel and would be rescheduled for a future meeting.

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m. on a Michelini/E. Sheehan motion.

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Stephanie Jones  
Administrative Assistant