

MINUTES STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

VIRTUAL MEETING

November 13, 2025

On Thursday, November 13, 2025, the 388th meeting of the State Board of Education (Board) was convened and called to order at 1:06 p.m. by Dr. Pedro Rivera. Public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the Sunshine Meeting Act of 1986.

Attending:

Hon. Carol Aichele
Julia Antunes
Nathan Barrett
Naina Bhatia
Katherine Christiano

Rep. Bryan Cutler
Sandra Dungee Glenn
Ernest Hadrack
Amanda Hetrick
Hon. Maureen Lally-Green

Robert Mitchell
Hon. Pedro Rivera
Monica Taylor
Lee Williams
Sen. Lindsey Williams
Benjamin Wilson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 11, 2025, meeting of the Board were approved on a **Hetrick/Mitchell** motion.

COMMITTEE REPORT **SPECIAL AND GIFTED EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The Hon. Maureen Lally-Green, Chair of the Special and Gifted Education Committee (Committee), reported that the Committee met earlier in the day to continue its ongoing review of Chapter 16, the regulations governing gifted education. The Committee received a presentation from a committee of school psychologists regarding the criteria that are used to evaluate students for giftedness. The school psychologists advisory committee was formed at the direction of the Committee to provide input on potential measures for gifted identification that were suggested by other stakeholders during roundtable conversations previously convened by the Committee.

The Hon. Lally-Green said the school psychologists advisory committee did not identify a need to amend the Board's regulations relative to screening and evaluation processes. However, it did identify a need to improve consistency in practice related to implementation. The Hon. Lally-Green noted that the Board's existing regulations make clear that gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone – the regulations provide for students to be identified as gifted based on an IQ score of 130 or higher or based on multiple criteria that are set forth in Chapter 16. She said the advisory committee recommended the creation of a resource guide to define these multiple criteria to improve consistency in how the criteria are used by gifted multi-disciplinary teams in districts across the state. Among other recommendations, the Hon. Lally-Green said the advisory committee also endorsed the creation of an annotated version of the

Gifted Written Report as a means to support clarity and consistency in use of this tool for initial evaluations and reevaluations by embedding clear directions within the content of each section of the document. A copy of the advisory committee's complete recommendations was provided to all Board members for review.

The Hon. Lally-Green said the Committee will take time to reflect on the advisory committee's feedback and will reconvene early next year to determine whether the Committee will adopt its own recommendations related to gifted identification measures.

REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

Dr. Carrie Rowe, Acting Secretary of Education, announced that the 2025-2026 state budget was signed into law yesterday by Governor Shapiro. Dr. Rowe noted that the budget builds on historic investments in education and highlighted funding increases supporting public libraries, basic education, special education, and the student teacher stipend. Dr. Rowe then highlighted key provisions in an omnibus School Code bill that also was signed into law by the Governor yesterday, including provisions that will require school districts to adopt a curriculum grounded in the Science of Reading, provisions that will require students in grades K-3 to be screened for reading competency, an amendment that permanently removes the basic skills assessment as a requirement for teacher certification, and changes to the grade spans in which teacher certifications are issued.

Dr. Rowe announced that Aarushi Dedhiya, the Board's former high school student member, and Theodore Engleman from Episcopal Academy were named 2025 U.S. Presidential Scholars. The program recognizes students for their academic success, artistic and technical excellence, community service, and leadership.

Dr. Rowe shared that the Pennsylvania Department of Education has established a new Pennsylvania Blue Ribbon Schools Program that will take the place of the National Blue Ribbon Schools initiative that the federal government recently decided it would no longer support. Dr. Rowe congratulated 13 schools in the Commonwealth that were selected as the inaugural Pennsylvania Blue Ribbon Schools. Schools were recognized for either exemplary performance in closing the achievement gap or for high academic performance.

Dr. Lynette Kuhn, Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Postsecondary and Higher Education, provided updates on activity related to postsecondary and higher education. Dr. Kuhn shared that the Department is working on Workforce Pell implementation, discussed the rebranding of PA MASLOW as PA EmpowerU, and shared that the PA College Transfer website was redesigned to be more user-friendly for students, parents, and school counselors. Dr. Kuhn also share that the Department has been unable to track FAFSA completion data due to the federal government shutdown, but noted that preliminary data from before the shutdown showed completion rates were on track to be higher than last year.

Ms. Amy Lena, Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, shared that the Department's SAS Conference will take place from December 7-10, 2025, and announced that sessions will be offered in a new hybrid format. Ms. Lena also discussed the statewide series of student symposiums the Department is convening that are intended to elevate student voice in

efforts to improve school climate and help shape mental health supports in schools across the Commonwealth.

Ms. Lena also was joined by Brian Campbell, Director of the Bureau of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Mr. Campbell presented state assessment data for the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment and for Keystone Exams for the 2024-2025 school year.

Finally, Dr. Carissa Pokorny-Golden, Director of the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality, presented the Department's annual report on the status of educator certifications.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m. on a **Christiano/Barrett** motion.

Stephanie Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant