



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony
Senate Education Committee
Informational Meeting on the PA Core Standards
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Acting Secretary
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Good afternoon. Thank you Chairman Folmer, Chairman Dinniman and members of the Senate Education Committee for the opportunity to speak today on current regulatory amendments to Chapter 4 of Title 22 (Education) that will improve Pennsylvania's academic standards and assessment system.

My name is Carolyn Dumaesq and I am the Acting Secretary of the PA Department of Education (PDE). With me today is Karen Molchanow who serves as the Executive Director of the PA State Board of Education (State Board) and Larry Wittig, the Chairperson of the State Board of Education.

The primary issues imbedded in the Chapter 4 regulations – academic standards and assessments – are topics important to all students no matter their future educational and/or career paths. Whether a student plans to attend an institution of higher education, pursue career and technical training, join the military, or enter employment directly from high school, the academic standards set for each student to achieve optimal learning capacities and the assessment system used to measure student progress are critically important toward their success.

Today's hearing is a review of the final draft regulations amending Chapter 4. This is a culmination of several years of work with the State Board, PDE, Pennsylvania educators, members of the General Assembly and the general public. It has been a transparent, collaborative and thorough process to get to this point. This is the fourth time I have spoken in front of either legislative committee this year to discuss these topics, along with many other conversations PDE and the State Board have had with members of this committee and other stakeholders over the last few years. One of those meetings occurred back in May of 2010 when the State Board was asked to testify before your committee on the original adoption of the Common Core standards. The feedback received along the way has been very beneficial in the development and finalization of the regulations and standards.

As you know, although these regulations have been in development for several years, public dialogue on them increased significantly several months ago when some concerns were expressed over the model 'Common Core' standards developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. When PDE and the State Board began reviewing the concerns expressed, many of the issues appeared to stem from misinformation spread by third parties and/or from actions that other states may have been taking that were different from what Pennsylvania is doing regarding standards and related issues.

That said, Governor Corbett and the Commonwealth wanted to assure its citizenry what Pennsylvania was doing and to clarify what we are not doing. As a result, the House of Representatives subsequently passed HR 338 in June. This resolution recognized the need for "thoroughly rigorous and effective standards" and called upon PDE and the State Board to make several considerations and further improvements to the regulations assuring protections against some of the concerns PDE, the State Board and the General Assembly heard from the public.

Since passage of HR 338, PDE and the State Board spent time reviewing the resolution and considering improvements of the regulations to address the concerns of the public and to reflect the will of the House of Representatives as outlined in HR 338. To further inform these

deliberations, the State Board provided an additional opportunity for public engagement on the concerns expressed in HR 338. Attached to this testimony is a side-by-side crosswalk highlighting the issues presented in HR 338 and the actions to address each concern. The rest of this testimony will be focused on the crosswalk and the new draft regulations that will be considered by the Board.

In closing, PDE and the State Board desire the rigorous career and college-ready standards. We believe the Chapter 4 regulations and standards discussed today meet this bar. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today on this issue. We look forward to answering your questions.