



News for Immediate Release

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Two Pennsylvania Students Take Seats on State Board of Education

Harrisburg – Secretary of Education Ron Tomalis today announced the induction of the State Board of Education’s newest student representatives, Emily Clark and Kevin Bates. The non-voting, student members took their place among the 21-member board today and will serve in an advisory capacity.

“On behalf of the board, I am pleased to welcome Emily and Kevin to the State Board of Education,” Tomalis said. “I know they will bring a unique perspective and first-hand insights into the issues faced by students across the state.”

In 2008, the board’s bylaws were amended to allow for student representation. The student members - two high school students and two college students - advise their fellow board members and speak on behalf of Pennsylvania students. Each year, one high school student and one college student is appointed to a two-year term on the board.

Clark, who will be a junior at Seneca Valley Intermediate High School in Butler County, will join Erin Agnew, the senior student member, on the Council for Basic Education as the junior student member.

“I am really looking forward to representing the students of Pennsylvania along with Erin, and am very grateful to have been chosen for such a wonderful opportunity,” Clark said. “I hope to connect and communicate with as many students as possible throughout the state, so I can provide an accurate perspective of their opinions to the board.”

The Pennsylvania Association of Student Councils selected Clark from a group of qualified candidates statewide. Clark’s impressive academic and extracurricular accomplishments, such as maintaining a course-load of all honors classes and serving as editor-in-chief of her school’s student newspaper, coupled with her extensive leadership experience, will make her an asset to the board.

Bates, who attends Gwynedd-Mercy College, will take his place on the Council of Higher Education as the junior student member, and will serve alongside Paul Ferrera, the senior student member. Bates, of Philadelphia County, spends his free time working to improve the lives of his fellow students at Gwynedd-Mercy College as a resident assistant and as a tutor.

"I consider myself lucky to be given the opportunity to make a real impact on the world of postsecondary education," Bates said. "A quality postsecondary education is necessary to give us the opportunity to develop ourselves into competent and responsible hard-workers in the 'real world'."

Bates was nominated by an advisory committee comprised of representatives from Pennsylvania's community colleges, state-owned universities, state-related universities, as well as private and for-profit institutions. The committee nominates a student each year from the various higher education sectors. This year, a candidate was chosen from Pennsylvania's private universities.

"The inclusion of these students on the State Board of Education is not just symbolic. Historically these students have provided extremely valuable insight for us to make decisions," said State Board of Education Chairman Larry Wittig. "I have no doubt that these new additions will do the same."

The State Board of Education was established in 1963 as a governing body that establishes standards for statewide educational programs. The board consists of 21 voting members, 17 members appointed by the governor and four members of the General Assembly. In addition, the Secretary of Education, the chairperson of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission and four student members serve in an advisory capacity.

Media contact: Tim Eller, 717-783-9802

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