

The **Empire State Supervisors and Administrators (ESSAA)** had its monthly Stakeholder Meeting with Commissioner of Education, Mary Ellen Elia, and Senior Deputy Commissioner, Jhone Ebert, on Tuesday, February 28, 2017.

Present at the meeting representing ESSAA were: ESSAA President, Carol Conklin-Spillane, Matt Kravitz, Monroe Woodbury Central Schools, Shireen Fasciglione, Niskayuna Central Schools, Brian Dunn, Troy City Schools, Paul Scampini, ESSAA Regents Liaison and Ryan Schoenfeld (via phone).

The topics discussed included:

1. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Commissioner Elia was asked for an update on NYSED's progress with the ESSA application. She emphasized that, despite the changes in Washington, the September 2017 submission deadline remains in place. The Commissioner encourages us to attend one of the 84 Regional Stakeholder Meetings scheduled across the state in March to gather feedback before the plan is finalized. A survey is also available as a means to provide input. See the links below for the survey information and meeting dates.

The Commissioner was also asked about the status of the 95% participation regulation included in the ESSA legislation. She stated that there has been no change to the law and that NYSED continues to have discussions about how it will be implemented in the state.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ESSA_Winter_Regional_Meeting_Participant_Survey

<http://p12.nysed.gov/accountability/ESSAWinterRegionalMeetingsDatesLocationandTimebyBOCESorBig502272017.xlsx>

2. New VADIR/DASA Reporting Procedures Professional Development

At the December Board of Regents Meeting, changes were approved to the current VADIR/DASA reporting system. The new system, which goes into effect for September 2017, reduces the number of VADIR incident categories from twenty to nine. It also combines and aligns the reporting mechanisms for VADIR and DASA into one reporting system.

Commissioner Elia was asked about how the professional development will occur to familiarize administrators with the new process. She said that the department is currently working through some of the necessary technology changes that are needed to implement the new reporting system and has not yet finalized the plan. Deputy Commissioner Ebert did indicate that there would be multiple training options available this summer, including BOCES Workshops, webinars, and NYSED-facilitated training. We were encouraged to consider including the training as a part of any summer conferences or workshops and to let them know as soon as we have any potential dates and times finalized.

3. TEACHNY Roundtable – Teacher Leaders

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane asked about the future role of teacher Leaders as the work begins to implement ESSA requirements, new content standards, and new assessments. Commissioner Elia feels that the role of the teacher leader will be very important to districts considering the amount of work that needs to be done. She stressed that the model districts choose is crucial and that both principals and teachers need to be involved in the leadership training associated with implementing the new standards. Commissioner Elia shared that the New York State ESSA plan will probably have funds set aside to further support training of teachers and administrators.

4. Transgender Policy Guidance/Character Ed/Social Awareness

Mr. Kravitz commended the Commissioner for her recent guidance letter to the field clarifying NYSED's position on transgender issues in response to recent developments at the federal level.

Concerns were also expressed as administrators continue to encounter more and more sensitive and potentially highly charged situations regarding religious and racial prejudice that mirror what is seen and heard in the media. Even though expectations may be clearly outlined in codes of conduct, these situations are becoming more challenging as student behavior is often reflective of behavior they observe from political leaders in Washington and in social media. The Commissioner discussed the need for taking a proactive approach to reshaping civics/character education standards to reflect current societal changes and include components such as social media awareness and information literacy.

5. 3-8 Assessment Toolkit Info

The Commissioner was asked when updated information would be available to share with parents about the value and importance of student participation in the 3-8 testing. Deputy Commissioner Ebert responded that the Assessment Toolkit on the NYSED website should be updated within the next week to reflect the 2017 tests. The link is listed below.

<http://www.nysed.gov/assessments-toolkit>

6. Developing School Leaders/Principal Project Advisory Group

Mrs. Fasciglione shared with the group that the Principal Project Advisory Group is continuing to make steady progress towards their future recommendations for redefining the essential skills for effective school leadership.

7. New Standards Rollout

Commissioner Elia is anticipating that the newly revised ELA and math standards will be formally approved by the Board of Regents at their upcoming April or May meeting.

The first step for districts will be to carry out “crosswalks” to realign any shifts, adjustments, additions or deletions that need to be made at each grade level. She also indicated that while NYSED will be providing some guidance, the responsibility to use data to recognize where gaps exist in student achievement and how to best develop future professional development plans lies primarily with individual districts.

With regards to the newly adopted science standards, Commissioner Elia mentioned that the new standards present an excellent opportunity to expand the use of performance tasks in future assessments as a means to better evaluate student learning.