

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, May 23, 2017.

Present at the meeting representing ESSAA were: ESSAA President, Carol Conklin-Spillane, ESSAA Vice President, Mike McDermott, Scarsdale School District, ESSAA Vice President, Rick Kimble, Corning-Painted Post School District, Shireen Fasiglione, Niskayuna Central Schools, Paul Scampini, ESSAA Regents Liaison and Executive Vice President, Albert Skip Voorneveld via phone.

The topics discussed included:

Data Privacy Council

We informed Commissioner Elia that several ESSAA members have expressed interest in serving on the Department's newly-formed Data Privacy Council. To assist us with the selection process, she shared that they are looking for individuals who have a background in technology and with the various issues related to data privacy.

Deputy Commissioner Ebert informed us that the group will meet approximately four times per year with the first meeting scheduled to take place in September 2017. The current plan is to provide committee members the opportunity to participate remotely in meetings as much as possible.

Middle Level CTE Changes

Mr. McDermott commended the Commissioner for the recent Middle Level CTE changes which were adopted at the last Board of Regents meeting, and expressed our support as an organization for the change.

He also asked Commissioner Elia to clarify the purpose of the change in order to clear up any confusion or misperceptions that currently exist in the field. The Commissioner stressed that the newly adopted policy presents no change in requirements, but provides flexibility to districts in how the requirements are met. She feels the increased flexibility will enable schools to excite students with expanded and engaging CTE-related course opportunities that also connect the middle level CTE curriculum with CTE programs offered at the high school level.

She also indicated that a memo will be going out to the field in the near future summarizing the purpose and guidelines of the new policy.

School Calendar Guidance Memos

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane asked the Commissioner for clarification on recent guidance memos that have resulted in a great deal of confusion. Commissioner Elia responded that in the past few months, they have received several calls alleging that schools were not meeting the mandated number of instructional days. She went on to say that, after investigating the complaints, several were determined to be founded. The memos were sent to assist districts in ensuring that mandated school calendar requirements are being met.

The Commissioner also stated that NYSED is putting together a committee that will look closely at the relevant Regulations and develop clarification documents that will make the guidelines easier to understand. Their goal is to have these documents completed and sent out to the field by January 2018.

ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act)

The Commissioner informed us that the ESSA draft plan public hearings occurring across the state have been going well. She recommends that administrators begin to get their staffs familiar with the requirements of the plan and start planning for implementation.

The link to both the full draft plan and the summary is provided below.

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/essa.html>

Mr. Voorneveld asked about the potential use of School Climate Surveys as an accountability indicator and expressed concern about potential unintended negative consequences that could result. The Commissioner responded that the use of School Climate Surveys is under consideration for use in the future but is not included in the current ESSA draft as an accountability measure. Currently they are being piloted in eight districts across the state to evaluate their potential effectiveness as an indicator of school quality.

Principal Preparation Project

Ms. Fasiglione, who is representing ESSAA as a member of the Principal Preparation Project Advisory Team, asked Commissioner Elia about the results of the survey which was recently sent out to administrators across the state. The Commissioner indicated that the returned surveys are still being reviewed and that a summary of the results should be available in the near future.

With regard to a timeline for the approval and implementation of the advisory team's recommendations, the Commissioner said that the Board of Regents will be updated again

on the work of the team at their June meeting. Ms. Fasciglione also shared that the advisory team had received a list of questions from the Board of Regents based on the information that was presented at the May meeting. Her committee will be responding to these questions in the near future.

Commissioner Elia did indicate that she feels very strongly that the new Professional Standards for Educational Leaders need to be adopted and implemented in school districts and higher education principal preparation programs across the state.

Tenure Bill

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane expressed to the Commissioner her strong support for a Tenure Bill which was drafted by ESSAA's legislative advocates and is being sponsored by Senator Martin Golden. The bill would enable tenured administrators who change districts to earn tenure in a three year period instead of four. This would align the policy with the rights currently afforded to teachers.

Pending Bill Relating to Suspension

Mr. Kimble asked for an update on Bill S6090 which relates to limiting principal discretion in the decision to suspend students. The Commissioner expressed that she does not have much background knowledge of the bill, but is much more in favor of addressing specific schools or districts where intervention may be necessary versus a comprehensive piece of legislation.

State Assessments

Commissioner Elia indicated that data is not yet available to accurately evaluate the number of students who opted out of this year's assessments.

The Commissioner stated that future assessments which correspond to the new learning standards are tentatively scheduled to be initially administered during the 2019/20 school year. A panel of practitioners will be formed in the near future to provide input on areas of focus, assessment formats, and the framework for test administration.

Smart Schools Bond

Our ongoing frustration with the delay in release of Smart Schools Bond funding was again discussed. Commissioner Elia indicated that she too is frustrated, but repeated that the decision to release the funds rests with the Division of Budget. She shared that NYSED has approved more than a billion dollars worth of plans and districts can go online to check the

approval status of their proposals. To express your concerns and advocate for the release of the funds you may contact **Jamie Frank in the Governor's Office (518-474-0801)** and **Ed Durivage in the Division of Budget (518-473-4013)**.