

## **Summary of Stakeholders Meeting March 26, 2019**

The Empire State Supervisors and Administrators (ESSAA) held its monthly Stakeholder Meeting on Tuesday, March 26th, 2019 with Commissioner of Education – Mary Ellen Elia, Senior Deputy Commissioner – Beth Berlin and Senior Deputy Commissioner – Jhone Ebert.

The general stakeholder meeting was attended by ESSA President – Carol Conklin-Spillane and Regents/NYSED Liaison – Paul Scampini, while Executive Vice President – Skip Voorneveld participated via video conference.

Following the general meeting, Commissioner Elia and Deputy Commissioner Ebert met with several ESSAA members to discuss concerns that have been shared by members. Carol Conklin-Spillane and Paul Scampini were present at the meeting, while Skip Voorneveld, Executive Director – Mike Starvaggi, ESSAA Vice President – Dr. Andrea Hamilton, and ESSAA Vice President – Rick Kimble participated by phone.

Topics discussed at the general meeting included:

### 1. Upcoming Renewal of Perkins Grant

The Perkins Grant provides federal funding to districts for supporting technical and employability skills of secondary and postsecondary education students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs (CTE). The recently enacted Perkins V Grant includes many revised goals and expectations toward improving the quality of CTE programs.

Commissioner Elia began the meeting by updating the group on the framework for development of the new federal Perkins V Grant proposal and the timeline for submission. NYSED's Perkins Transition Plan, which provides a general framework for the goals of the four-year grant, is due to the Department of Education at the end of May. The finalized grant proposal is due to be submitted in the spring of 2020.

Key components of the new grant proposal will require:

- Alignment with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act (WIOA).
- Increasing the number of approved CTE programs.
- Strategies to improve equity and access within CTE programs especially for learners of color, low-income learners, females, and students with disabilities.
- Increased accountability measures.

Commissioner Elia emphasized that stakeholder input will be crucial for the development of the grant proposal. NYSED is currently developing a Stakeholder Engagement Plan to gather ideas from educators, parents, community members, and representatives from business and industry.

### 2. Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) School Visits

Commissioner Elia updated the group on the status of site visits for schools that did not meet the accountability requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Deputy Commissioner Ebert shared that the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) is the primary instrument being used to guide the evaluations. The Deputy Commissioner also stressed that the NYSED representatives conducting the visits are looking to collaboratively partner with each school/district during the process so that school and district staff are driving the school improvement process.

### 3. Students with Disabilities

The Commissioner reviewed information that was released at the March Board of Regents meeting concerning New York's federal designation as a State in Need of Improvement with regards to educating and supporting students with disabilities.

Commissioner Elia reviewed the specific target areas the department will be addressing in response to the designation which include:

- Disproportionate Representation of Racial and Ethnic Groups in Special Education
- Low Performance Outcomes
- Least Restrictive Environment Practices
- Transition and Planning Services

The Commissioner also stated that NYSED is in the process of restructuring the Office of Special Education to align staffing with the priority areas listed above.

### 4. FAFSA Dashboard Preview

It is estimated that 139.3 million dollars in available financial aid through Pell Grants went unclaimed by New York students in 2017 due to the fact that a significant number of students fail to apply for financial aid. NYSED has been working with the Higher Education Services Corp (HESC) to promote an increase in the number of FAFSA applications filed annually by students. As part of this initiative, a State FAFSA Dashboard will launch next month that enables districts/schools to monitor the number of FAFSA applications that have been submitted by students.

Commissioner Elia shared a preview of several dashboard screens associated with the software which enables users to both monitor and disaggregate FAFSA submission data for their school/district. The program also has the capability for users to compare their submission data with the number of applications filed by other districts. The Commissioner feels this presents an opportunity for some "friendly competition" between districts as an incentive to encourage an increase in the number of FAFSA applications submitted.

The following topics were addressed during the Commissioner's meeting with ESSAA representatives:

#### 1. Mentoring for Principals

Mr. Starvaggi asked Commissioner Elia about the status of the mentoring requirement for newly appointed school administrators that was included as an amendment at the September 2019 Board of Regents meeting. The Commissioner responded that schools/districts designated as TSI and CSI would receive funding that could be used for principal mentoring. She went on to add

that at this time, there is not a mandate which requires formal mentoring of new administrators.

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane asked about the status of the Principal Preparation Project. The Commissioner indicated that the work, now being funded by the Wallace Foundation, is still in progress and a date for a final report has not yet been finalized.

#### 2. Special Education

Mr. Scampini asked about any changes that have occurred regarding special education accountability with the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Commissioner Elia responded that the only change is that low performance outcomes by SPED students can contribute to a school/district being designated a TSI or CSI school/district.

#### 3. Marijuana and E-Cigarettes

Mr. Voorneveld asked about the status of support for schools in dealing with marijuana and E-cigarettes. Commissioner Elia responded that guidance documents have recently been sent out and that NYSED will continue to monitor the situation. The Commissioner also stated she is encouraged that the Governor seems to be backing away from his support of marijuana legalization as part of the current proposed budget.

#### 4. Data Privacy

Mr. Starvaggi inquired about the status of the new Data Privacy Regulations that were introduced at a recent Board of Regents meeting. Commissioner Elia responded that the new regulations are currently out for public comment which could guide potential revisions. She emphasized that the proposed changes are significant and that districts need to ensure that every classroom teacher is aware of the policy revisions. The target date for implementation is September 2019.

#### 5. Parent Dashboard Samples

Mr. Voorneveld asked the Commissioner about the response they have been receiving with regards to the Parent Dashboard samples that are currently available for review. Commissioner Elia stated they have been receiving a great deal of feedback that will significantly influence the final dashboard design. She added that the finalized version will have to be compatible with student information portals used by districts.

#### 6. Computer Based Testing

Mrs. Conklin Spillane expressed concern that while progress is being made with computer based testing (CBT), it remains very time consuming, and often frustrating for schools to utilize, especially when it is initially implemented. Commissioner Elia responded that she continues to encourage schools to transition to CBT. She feels that the implementation process has become much smoother and that NYSED teams are constantly out in the field providing support, especially for districts who are implementing CBT for the first time.

[ESSAA's position – Proposal to Legalize Marijuana in NYS](#)

## ESSAA Supports Proposed Legislation to Curb Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products