

## **Summary of November, 2019 Stakeholder Meeting**

The **Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA)** held its monthly Stakeholder Meeting on Tuesday, November 19, 2019 with Acting Commissioner of Education, Shannon Tahoe; Assistant Commissioner, Emily DeSantis; Executive Director for the Office of Educational Quality, Alex Trikalinos; Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Student Support Services, Kathleen DeCataldo, and Allison Armour-Garb (via phone) from the Office of Higher Education.

ESSAA was represented at the meeting by ESSAA Executive Director, Mike Starvaggi and Regents/NYSED Liaison, Paul Scampini. Participating via phone were ESSAA President, Carol Conklin – Spillane; ESSAA Executive Vice President, Skip Voorneveld; ESSAA Vice President, Rick Kimball and ESSAA Vice President, Andrea Hamilton.

The meeting began with an NYSED staffing update from Acting Commissioner Tahoe. The Acting Commissioner outlined the scope of her current role and indicated that an interim commissioner should be appointed in the near future. NYSED is currently organizing a national search for a permanent commissioner with the hope of having the process completed toward the middle of 2020.

Acting Commissioner Tahoe also stated that NYSED is actively working to fill several other vacancies in the department to maintain as much stability as possible in the coming months.

### **Topics discussed at the meeting included:**

#### **Red Flag Update**

Mr. Starvaggi expressed appreciation to Assistant Commissioner DeCataldo for providing us with the field guidance memo related to the Red Flag Law we requested at the October meeting. She informed us that the Safe Schools Task Force will be meeting next week, and updated guidance on the law will be sent out to the field in the near future.

#### **Raise the Age Update**

Assistant Commissioner DeCataldo provided an update on her office's work with implementing the Raise the Age Law (RtA). The Assistant Commissioner stated she is continuing to work with state agencies and school districts to gain a better understanding of how best to serve students in residential placements. Assistant Commissioner DeCataldo also indicated she would greatly appreciate feedback from our members on their experiences with implementing the RtA law.

#### **Graduation Measures Initiative**

Assistant Commissioner Emily DeSantis provided us with an update of the Graduation Measures Initiative. Phase One is currently in progress and will involve a research review on the topic along with Regional Stakeholder Meetings across the state.

NYSED has contracted with the outside firm, ACHIEVE, to review current research and look at current practices in other states and countries.

Due to potential conflicts with the holiday season, Regional Meetings will not begin until mid-January and will run through mid-March. Assistant Commissioner DeSantis indicated that the schedule for meetings should be announced in December which will provide at least a month's notice for districts to prepare. Mrs. Conklin-Spillane expressed concern that in order for the dialogue to be productive, it is important for participants to have adequate time to ensure they come to the meeting prepared and informed.

With regards to meeting logistics, the Assistant Commissioner informed us that participants will be required to register in advance and that the following Five Guiding Questions will be used to inform the discussions.

The Five Guiding Questions include:

1. What do we want our children to know and be able to do before they graduate?
2. How do we want them to demonstrate such knowledge and skills?
3. To what degree does requiring passage of Regents exams improve student achievement, graduation rates and college readiness?
4. What other measures of achievement (e.g., capstone projects, alternative assessments or engagement in civic and community activities) could serve as indicators of high school completion?
5. How can measures of achievement accurately reflect the skills and knowledge of our special populations, such as students with disabilities and English Language Learners

It is anticipated that the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) will be appointed to begin Phase Two of the project in April. Mr. Scampini expressed concern that there is a perception in the field that there will be minimal opportunity for stakeholders to offer feedback after the work of the BRC begins. Acting Commissioner Tahoe assured us that the process will be very transparent and will be open to comments and feedback after the work of the BRC begins and over the entire duration of the project.

### **3-8 Testing Survey**

Assistant Commissioner DeSantis encouraged participation in the 3-8 Testing Survey that was recently sent out to principals and teachers. She stated that the survey will provide valuable feedback as work continues developing the new assessments which will align with the Next Generation Learning Standards. NYSED is especially interested in principal feedback on whether the tests should return to having a time limit for completion or if the untimed format continues.

### **Computer Based Testing**

Acting Commissioner Tahoe updated us on the implementation status of Computer Based Testing (CBT) for the 3-8 assessments.

For the current school year, schools that have used CBT in the past have the option of continuing their current level of testing. If they wish to increase their level of CBT, a review of their technology infrastructure would be required to ensure they have adequate capabilities to test more students.

To minimize potential CBT problems with this year's testing, schools that have not previously used CBT will not be eligible to participate this year.

### **Principal APPR Growth Scores**

Mr. Starvaggi asked for clarification on the current use of growth scores in the calculation of principal APPR scores and how they are used in the evaluation process. Mr. Trikalinos responded that during the current APPR transition period, school level scores are used in calculating school accountability formulas, but should not be included as part of a principal evaluation. He went on to say that this practice remains in place in each district until a new collective bargaining agreement is negotiated.

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane added that it is still very difficult for high school principals to understand how their APPR scores are calculated and suggested developing a process that is easier to understand.

### **Tenure Parity Bill**

Mr. Starvaggi reminded the meeting's attendees of the ESSAA-sponsored Tenure Parity Bill which was recently signed into law. He clarified ESSAA's interpretation of the law to mean that "it provides a shortened probationary period to any tenured administrator moving to another administrative position regardless of whether the new position is in the same district or not, and regardless of whether the new position is the same title or a different title from the one they held previously."

### **Principal Talent Management System**

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane asked for an update on the Principal Talent Management System which is being developed by the Office of Higher Education. Ms. Armour-Garb responded that they are beginning the initial testing of the system software and expect to have it fully operational at some point during 2020.

Ms. Armour-Garb shared that the system:

6. Will be used primarily by superintendents or designated HR personnel within a school district.
7. Contains potential candidate information that has been gathered from BEDS information or TEACH data and will not include any Personally Identifiable Information (PII).
8. Will send a canvassing email to potential job candidates who meet search criteria entered by the user.
9. Provides the option for administrators to opt out of receiving canvassing emails

Ms. Armour-Garb stated that a detailed informational memo will be sent out to the field before the system is formally activated.

### **95% Participation Rate**

Mr. Scampini asked for clarification on the 95% Participation Rate regulation associated with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Specifically, he requested information on the implications for schools that do not meet the 95% participation rate in standardized testing and also do not increase the participation rate in consecutive years.

Assistant Commissioner DeSantis responded that schools who initially do not meet the 95% participation rate, even if they are high achieving, are expected to increase participation in the succeeding years. If not, they will be expected to develop an improvement plan.

The Assistant Commissioner went on to say that she was unsure about the specifics of the requirements and agreed to review them and forward more clarification in the near future.

### ***ESSAA Members:***

***If you have any feedback on the foregoing issues or would like to suggest a topic to be addressed with the Commissioner at an upcoming meeting, please e-mail us at [info@essaa.org](mailto:info@essaa.org). New topics will be submitted to our Stakeholder Committee for consideration.***