

## Summary of October, 2019 Stakeholder Meeting

The Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA) held its monthly Stakeholder Meeting on Tuesday, October 22, 2019 with Interim Commissioner of Education, Beth Berlin; Deputy Commissioner of P-12 Instructional Support, Kim Wilkins via phone; Director for Curriculum and Instruction, Marybeth Casey; Associate in Instructional Services, Erik Sweet; Assistant Commissioner, Emily Desantis; Commissioner for Performance Improvement and Management Services, Sharon Cates-Williams; Allison Armour – Garb representing the Office of Higher Education; and Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Student Support Services, Kathleen DeCataldo.

ESSAA was represented at the meeting by ESSAA Vice President, John Rickert and Regents/NYSED Liaison, Paul Scampini. Participating via phone were ESSAA President, Carol Conklin – Spillane; Executive Director, Mike Starvaggi; ESSAA Executive Vice President, Skip Voorneveld; ESSAA Vice President, Greg Avellino; ESSAA Vice President, Rick Kimble; and ESSAA member, Michael Moran.

During the meeting, Mrs. Conklin Spillane expressed gratitude to Interim Commissioner Berlin for her efforts to formally recognize October as National Principal Recognition Month.

Topics discussed at the meeting included:

### APPR Update

At the October Board of Regents meeting, the new APPR regulations for teachers and principals were formally presented for adoption. Mr. Scampini asked Interim Commissioner Berlin if there are any changes in the new guidelines of which principals should be aware. The Deputy Commissioner responded that everything in the new requirements is consistent with what has been talked about previously and reminded us that the new guidelines do not go into effect until a district's current collective bargaining agreement expires. The Interim Commissioner also mentioned that the portal is currently being aligned with the new guidelines and should be up and running in the near future.

### Guidance and Support Regarding Cyber Attacks

Sharon Cates – Williams, the Deputy Commissioner for Performance Improvement and Management Services updated our group on the recent cyber attacks on school district databases. Deputy Commissioner Williams shared that, to date, fourteen cyber attacks have occurred in districts across the state. Ten of the attacks have been resolved or recovered while four are still in the recovery process.

The Deputy Commissioner mentioned that guidance materials related to cyber attack prevention are currently available through Regional Information Centers (RICS) and local BOCES. She agreed to forward an electronic version which we will send out to ESSAA members when it is received.

Deputy Commissioner Williams also strongly emphasized the need for districts to have an off-site data backup system that is tested regularly to ensure that it is functioning properly.

## Next Generation Learning Standards

At the most recent Board of Regents meeting, Board members were updated on the timeline for implementing the Next Generation Learning Standards for ELA and Math. Strong emphasis was placed on the fact that the standards should be implemented to guide classroom instruction during the current school year. Interim Commissioner Berlin asked what we are hearing from our member districts about how the implementation is going.

Mrs. Conklin –Spillane responded that while there is heightened awareness of the need for instruction to be aligned with the new standards, implementation is uneven across the state and schools would benefit from reinforcing these expectations and sharing of resources.

Below you will find two links that were used during the Board of Regents presentation. The first link includes a comprehensive timeline for the rollout of the new standards including the schedule for initial administration of all related assessments. The second link provides a summary of information and resources that have been developed to assist educators with implementing the standards. Included is material on how to access curriculum roadmaps, guidance for supporting special education and ELL students, parent documents, professional development resources, and early learning resources.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1019p12d2.pdf>

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20-%20Building%20Capacity%20-%20NYS%20Next%20Generation%20English%20Language%20Arts%20and%20Mathematics%20Learning%20Standards.pdf>

## Update on Graduation Measures Initiative

Assistant Commissioner Emily Desantis updated our group on the implementation of the Graduation Measures Initiative. The Assistant Commissioner informed us that a schedule of regional meetings, which will be held in each Board of Regents member's judicial district, should be released in early November. The meetings across the state will have a consistent format designed to solicit stakeholder feedback regarding current graduation requirements. The sessions will include a general overview discussion of the project goals followed by smaller breakout sessions to address five Guiding Questions that have been developed. The stakeholder input gathered at these meetings will be used by the Blue Ribbon Panel to guide their work in developing a final proposal. Assistant Commissioner Desantis added that an outside contractor will be hired in the near future to conduct a literature review and examine the current graduation requirements used by other states.

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane asked the Assistant Commissioner about the makeup of the Blue Ribbon Committee and when the members of the committee would be formally announced. The Assistant Commissioner responded that the goal is to have the committee members appointed by February. She went on to say that the Blue Ribbon group will include a broad representation

of stakeholders and will be supported by an internal NYSED team and smaller stakeholder workgroups.

### Principal Preparation Project Update

Allison Armour-Gard, from the Office of Higher Education, updated our group on the work being done through the Principal Preparation Project. She informed us that Patrick Darfier-Sweeney has been appointed as the Project Director.

Below is a description of the three initiatives currently in progress:

1. 114 prospective principal candidates from six high need districts are currently piloting a competency-based training model based on the new Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL).
2. CUNY Hunter and the University of Buffalo are coordinating a pilot to assist individuals who are already certified as building leaders to further develop skills specifically associated with effectively leading turnaround schools.
3. NYSED staff are working on an IT Principal Talent Management System. The software would allow superintendents to access a NYSED database for potential candidates who possess the specific experience/skills for administrative vacancies they are seeking to fill in their district. The accessible data would be based on information contained in the TEACH database and demographic data from schools the potential candidate has worked in. Superintendents would have the ability to email potential candidates whose skills/experience match the job prerequisites.

### Red Flag Bill Clarification

In August, New York State's Red Flag Bill went into effect. The law is intended to prevent student suicides and violence and take away a troubled person's access to firearms. The law allows school principals or their designees to petition local courts for an "extreme risk protection order" for a troubled student which would require the safe storage of any weapons the youth may have access to. Mr. Voorneveld asked about a guidance document that was recently sent out from NYSED regarding the new law and expressed concern that he has heard from many of our members that they have not seen the letter.

Assistant Commissioner Decataldo indicated that she would send us the letter to pass on to our membership. She added that the Safe Schools Task Force will be putting out more detailed guidance in the near future. Finally, the Assistant Commissioner emphasized the need for school districts to notify the public that school principals should be the primary contact for anyone who has concerns about an individual who might be referred.

Mr. Starvaggi expressed concern that the responsibility for making the decision to refer an individual to the courts rests primarily with the school principal. He feels that there should be

clear language within the regulations that confirms that any school administrator who takes action under the new law in good faith will be entitled to defense and indemnity from the district.

#### Funding to Support Vaping Prevention

Mr. Voorneveld asked if there are plans to include funding to support vaping prevention in schools as part of the upcoming Board of Regents budget proposal. Assistant Commissioner Decataldo responded that no funding allocations have been proposed at this time, but guidance documents have been sent out and curriculum is being developed to support efforts to prevent vaping.

#### Tenure Parity Bill

Mrs. Conklin – Spillane asked the Interim Commissioner for her thoughts about the recently passed Administrative Tenure Parity Law. The bill, which was written and supported by ESSAA staff, states that tenured administrators who move to a new position will serve a shortened probationary period on the same basis currently afforded to teachers. Mrs. Conklin – Spillane stated that the legislation will improve the ability of districts to recruit quality administrators in the future.

Interim Commissioner Berlin stated that she was not aware of the bill but indicated she would check with her legal staff and continue the discussion at our next meeting.

#### Proposed legislation which would require school libraries be staffed by certified librarians

At our last stakeholder meeting we asked the Interim Commissioner to comment on the proposed legislative bill which would require schools to staff their libraries with certified librarians. The Interim Commissioner stated that NYSED is aware of the proposed bill and will continue to monitor its status. She went on to express that the bill could present an unfunded mandate for schools if appropriate funding is not included. Mr. Starvaggi stated that ESSAA supports the position that schools be afforded flexibility with regards to staffing their libraries, especially in districts where the position is difficult to fill with a certified librarian.

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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.