

Summary of February 10 and 11 Board of Regents Meeting

- In commemoration of Black History Month, the February 2020 Board of Regents Meeting began with several Board members offering reflections on their experiences as African Americans. In their remarks, they emphasized the importance of celebrating Black Culture in our country and the significance of teaching the African American experience in our schools.

The reflective comments were followed by a presentation on a new exhibit opening at the NYS Museum in Albany. First Step to Freedom – The Preliminary Emancipation will be on display at the museum from February 11 through March 1. Dedicated to former Regent Judith Johnson who passed away in October. The exhibit showcases original documents and artwork relating to the history of the emancipation process in New York, including a draft Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation written in Lincoln’s own hand. The presentation is a tribute to Regent Johnson’s legacy as an advocate for educational equity throughout her career as an educator.

The link below includes a pictorial overview of the documents included in the exhibit.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/Full%20Board%20Monday%20-First%20Step%20to%20Freedom%20-%20The%20Preliminary%20Emancipation%20Proclamation.pdf>

- Deputy Commissioner Kim Wilkins provided an update on the regional meetings that are occurring as part of the Graduation Requirement Initiative. At this time, five meetings have been held while twenty-five more are scheduled for the coming months. Several Board members stated that they have been particularly impressed with the level of student participation in the meetings.
- Interim Commissioner Tahoe presented an overview of the graduation rate data for the Class of 2019 (2015 Cohort). As has been reported previously, there are some slight increases in the overall graduation rate (0.8%) with modest gains toward closing the achievement gap for Black and Hispanic subgroups.

The link below includes a disaggregated breakdown of the data included in the presentation. The first page summarizes key areas that were emphasized.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20-%20August%20Graduation%20Rates%20for%20the%202015%20Cohort.pdf>

- The finalized version of the Perkins V Federal Grant proposal was presented for Board approval. The priorities of the plan include:
 - Increasing access to high quality CTE programs
 - Supporting at-risk students in CTE programs
 - Improving career development for students
 - Expanding regional collaboration among secondary and postsecondary education along with business/industry

The proposal will now be submitted to the Governor's office for review before being sent to the US Department of Education in April for final approval.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20-%20Strengthening%20Career%20and%20Technical%20Education%20for%20the%2021st%20Century%20Act%20perkins.pdf>

- The Board was updated on the current status of the 2020-21 budget proposal. A chart comparing the amount the Regents requested in their proposed budget with the amount the Governor is currently proposing was presented along with summaries of:
 - Potential Foundation Aid changes relating to the proposed consolidation of expense-based reimbursements into the school aid formula
 - Regents funding priorities that are currently included in the Executive Budget
 - New appropriations that are included in the Executive Budget which were not proposed in the Board of Regents proposal
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<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/SA%20-%202020-2021%20Budget%20Update.pdf>

- Education Law 3204 requires that instruction given to a student elsewhere than at a public school shall be at least substantially equivalent to instruction provided to students at the public schools in the community where the student resides. In November 2018, NYSED released updated regulatory guidelines relating to substantial equivalency. Non-public school advocates presented a legal challenge to the regulations which were ultimately overturned by the Albany Supreme Court in April 2019.

In June 2019, NYSED presented a new set of proposed regulations which were released for public comment. During July and August, NYSED received over 140,000 comments which Department staff have been working to review.

At this month's Board of Regents meeting, a summary of the common concerns relating to the substantial equivalency regulations was presented and discussed. Due to the volume of stakeholder feedback that was received, it is being recommended that the Department continue to collect and review feedback on the proposed regulations before taking any further steps.

The link below includes an overview summary of many of the consistent themes and concerns that have been expressed in the feedback regarding substantial equivalency regulations.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20Preliminary%20Overview%20of%20Comments%20Received%20on%20the%20Proposed%20Regulation%20Regarding%20Substantial%20Equivalency%20of%20Instruction%20in%20Nonpublic%20Schools.pdf>

- As part of the meeting's consent agenda, the Board approved a previously discussed amendment providing provisions for students attending educational programs operated by juvenile and criminal justice agencies.

In residential facilities, students participate in PE but are taught by recreational specialists who may not be certified PE teachers. When students transfer back to high school, they find themselves severely under credited in PE which increases the challenges associated with achieving a

diploma. The Board approved an amendment that exempts these students from the two credit PE requirement as long as they are enrolled in PE classes for every semester they are registered in a New York high school.

Additionally, the amendment allows students who have earned the required number of credits in PE, but need additional semesters to graduate, be permitted to stop enrolling in PE during the additional semester(s) they are in school.

The amendment goes into effect on February 26,2020.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/220brca3.pdf>