

Summary of March 2020 Board of Regents Meeting

The March 2020 Board of Regents Meeting began with a review of federal requirements associated with earning a high school diploma and a discussion of the areas where individual states have flexibility in establishing graduation policies. During recent discussions at Regional Meetings associated with the Graduation Requirement Initiative, questions have been raised regarding the latitude the Board of Regents will have with implementing potential changes to the diploma requirements.

Ira Schwartz and Jason Harmon from the NYSED Office of School Accountability shared that the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is primarily focused on accountability policies for reporting assessment scores and graduation rates for all students, along with monitoring the allocation of federal funding for certain subgroups. With regard to setting graduation requirements, ESSA mandates only that all high school students be assessed at least once during high school in the areas of ELA, math, and science on statewide assessments. ESSA does not regulate the setting of passing scores or establish any specific credit requirements for earning a diploma. Thus, states have broad latitude in setting high school academic standards and establishing the requirements for earning a diploma.

The Board was also updated on the progress of the Regional Meetings. To date, 1,375 attendees have participated in the twelve sessions that have been held, including two sessions dedicated to students only. Eighteen additional meetings will take place during March. Interim Commissioner Tahoe is encouraged with the fact that over 500 feedback surveys have been submitted online through the NYSED Graduation Initiative website.

The link below provides more detailed information regarding the information that was presented during the review of ESSA requirements and the Regional Meetings update.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/FB%20Monday%20-%20The%20Every%20Student%20Succeeds%20Act%20ESSA%20and%20Graduation%20Standards%20and%20Requirements.pdf>

The Board unanimously approved adoption of the newly proposed Physical Education Learning Standards. Developed over the past two years by educators from across the state, the new standards focus not only on physical activity, but also on guidance for maintaining personal wellness and social emotional health.

Full implementation of the new standards is scheduled for the 2023-24 school year.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20-%20Physical%20Education%20Learning%20Standards%20Update%20and%20Approval%20.pdf>

The implementation of the Next Generation ELA Learning Standards has necessitated the need to update the Bilingual Progressions used to support English Language Learners (ELL). The Board was updated on work being done in the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages to align the linguistic demands associated with the new standards. Sample lessons were presented to demonstrate how the academic components associated with ELA can be integrated with the necessary language acquisition skill development of ELL students.

The updated framework will now be sent out for public comment with the goal of a final presentation to the Board of Regents in the Summer/Fall 2020.

The link below provides a detailed summary of the work being completed along with some samples of the instructional framework being proposed.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P12-Developing%20Next%20Generation%20Learning%20Standards-Aligned%20Linguistic%20Demands%20for%20English%20Language%20Learners.pdf>

The Board was updated on the progress of the Workforce Focus Group subcommittee which is a part of the Early Childhood Blue Ribbon Committee. The group is proposing a set of recommendations focused on improving the recruitment, preparation and professional development of high quality early childhood education teachers and leaders. Their proposal includes:

- Expanding Early Childhood Education certification to include Grade 3 which would align with Board of Regents policy.
- Offering credit for early childhood experience and demonstrated expertise to potential teaching candidates.
- Strengthening the current higher education coursework and field experiences that lead to certification for early childhood educators to align with current research and best practices.
- Considering the revision of continuing education and professional development requirements for teachers and school building leaders.

If adequate funding is approved in the upcoming state budget, preparatory work would begin on implementation of these goals in the near future.

A specific breakdown of the recommendations can be found in the link below.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20-%20Strengthening%20Early%20Childhood%20Birth%20to%20Grade%203%20Teachers%20and%20Birth%20to%20Grade%203%20Leaders.pdf>

The Board discussed amending regulations to address the shortage of special education Impartial Hearing Officers, especially in New York City. Options for expanding the pool of potential applicants were discussed including the use of videoconferencing. The proposed amendment will now go out for the 60-day public comment period and will be presented for adoption at the July 2020 meeting.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20-%20IHO%20Proposed%20Amendments%20to%20Sections%20200.1%20and%20200.5%20of%20the%20Regulations%20of%20the%20Commissioner%20of%20Education.pdf>