

Summary of July 2020 Board of Regents Meeting

The Board of Regents conducted an abbreviated monthly meeting on Monday, July 13th via video conference. The meeting focused primarily on presenting the recommendations that were developed by the 1,654 education stakeholders who participated in five Regional Task Force Meetings and a Student Forum dedicated to the safe reopening of New York's schools.

Chancellor Rosa first expressed her thanks to everyone who participated in the task force meetings. Deputy Commissioner for P12 Instructional Support, Kim Wilkins, then reviewed the process that was followed by the Task Force and facilitated a presentation of the scope of work done in each of the focus areas. Several NYSED senior staff members reviewed the guidance recommendations and regulations associated with their respective departments.

The Board discussion following the presentation included commentary relating to:

1. The need for increased funding in order for schools to implement the recommendations and regulations. While NYSED continues to advocate for increased funds at both the state and federal level, no additional monies have been made available at this time. Districts are concerned they will not have the required funds to purchase COVID related supplies that will be needed to maintain student and staff safety. Also mentioned were the financial challenges faced by districts who must address digital access issues and secure additional technology resources to ensure all students can actively engage in remote instruction.
2. The need for qualified school nurses in all buildings when schools reopen to assist with the medical monitoring and support that will be necessary. Currently, schools are not required to have a nurse. While NYSED will provide guidance to assist nurses, nothing is currently being proposed that would require schools to have a nurse on staff or increase the numbers of nurses currently assigned to buildings.
3. How best to increase the emphasis on ensuring that daily teacher/student interaction and engagement occurs, and how it can be monitored.

4. The need for districts to explore more creative ways to engage students in the areas of Physical Education, Art and Music through remote instruction.

Below you will find the link to Dr. Wilkin's presentation. Also included is a link to the NYSED press release that was sent out to ESSAA members on Monday morning which provides a narrative summary of the recommended guidelines and regulations. NYSED is expecting to send out more detailed guidance documents to districts later this week.

District Reopening Plans are due to be submitted to NYSED by July 31st. Governor Cuomo expects to announce his decision on the reopening of schools during the first week in August.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/2.%20Recovering%2C%20Rebuilding%2C%20and%20Renewing%20the%20Spirit%20of%20Our%20Schools%20School%20Reopening%20Guidance.pdf>

[NYSED Presentation](#)

The Board of Regents approved several new amendments to provide schools additional flexibility with certain regulations. The link below provides a summary of both previously approved amendments that will continue through the 2020-21 school year, and a description of newly-approved amendments which include:

1. Redefining minimum weekly instructional time requirements
2. Meeting CDOS Diploma Requirements
3. Fulfillment of Science Laboratory Requirements
4. Timelines for conducting diagnostic screenings
5. Academic Intervention Services Process
6. Adjustment of required staff ratios for Early Learning classrooms
7. Waiving of required hearing, vision and scoliosis screenings
8. Modifying School Bus Drill requirements
9. Providing more flexibility for allowing teachers to instruct out of their certification area
10. Increased flexibility for hiring substitute teachers.
11. Amended regulations pertaining to psychological evaluations and student observations
12. More flexible guidelines relating to the identification and support of ELL Students

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/4.%20Regulatory%20Flexibility%20for%20the%20Reopening%20of%20Schools.pdf>

A point of emphasis in the Higher Ed Reopening Task Force presentation was the commitment of the NYSED Office of Higher Education to support the opportunity for student teachers complete the internship experiences during the 2020-21 school year, even if school buildings remain closed. Slides 12 and 13 in the link below provide information on the rationale for the decision.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/3.%20BoR%20and%20NYSEDs%20Reopening%20Institutions%20of%20Higher%20Education%20Recovering%20C%20Rebuilding%20and%20Renewing%20the%20Spirit%20of%20Our%20Colleges%20and%20Universities.pdf>

The Board discussed two possible future amendments that could be approved in the near future.

The first relates to establishing a Transitional J certificate option for spouses of individuals that are on full-time duty with the Armed Forces who relocate to New York. The new certificate would provide flexibility with the requirements for obtaining teaching certification. It is anticipated that the proposed amendment will be presented for adoption at the October 2020 Board of Regents meeting.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/720brd2.pdf>

The second discussion focused on a proposed amendment related to establishing a safety-net for candidates seeking School Building Leader certificates.

NYSED's Office of Higher Ed (OHE) is currently overseeing the transition from the Inter-state School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards to the recently adopted Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). As part of this process, OHE is redeveloping the School Building Leader Assessment to reflect the PSELs.

Because administrative candidates could currently be enrolled in programs that are based on ISLLC standards, the safety-net will allow candidates the option of taking either the assessment based on the ISLLC standards or the newer assessment based on the PSELs. The safety-net would be in effect for two years after the new PSEL based assessment becomes operational.

It is anticipated that the proposed amendment will be presented for adoption at the October 2020 Board of Regents meeting.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/720brd1.pdf>