

Summary of September 2021 Board of Regents Meeting

The Board of Regents conducted their monthly meeting on Monday, September 13th and Tuesday September 14th, 2021. Chancellor Young and Commissioner Rosa began the meeting by sharing reflective thoughts commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy. The Chancellor also expressed thanks to the educators and parents across the state, along with NYSED staff, for their efforts in continuing to support the safe reopening of schools.

Commissioner Rosa presented the two Guiding Principles the BOR will be operating under for the 2021-2022 school year. They include:

1. A Foundation of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
2. Ensuring a service-oriented approach through technical assistance and release of guidance documents.

The Chancellor also shared the Board of Regents Welcome Back Goals for 2021-2022, which include:

1. Responsiveness to student needs through the implementation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative
2. Ensuring health and safety of students and Staff
3. Maximizing in-person teaching and learning

Deputy Commissioner Kim Wilkins updated the board on work done in recent months to gather stakeholder input as NYSED developed back-to-school guidelines, which included a discussion with ESSAA representatives. The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed:

1. The key areas included in the 2021-2022 NYSED Health and Safety Guide which was released on August 12th.

2. Updated guidance with regards to the emphasis on in-person instruction along with provisions for remote instruction when it is deemed necessary.
3. Federal COVID response funding (\$14 billion) allocations and the priority areas where monies are being directed.

More specific information relating to the information presented can be found in the link below.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/Full%20Board%20-%20Monday%20-%20Back%20to%20School-ARP%20Plan.pdf>

The Board approved an amendment relating to 2020-2021 school accountability measures. The amendment states data collected from the 2020-2021 school year will not be used to make any new school accountability determinations. The current accountability status of all schools, as it relates to federal regulations associated with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), will remain intact through the 2021-2022 school year.

With regards to the future, Jason Harmon, Assistant Commissioner for the Office of School Accountability, shared that NYSED is exploring various data analysis models that could potentially be used to reinstate a revised accountability model which would capture results for 2021-2022.

More detailed information on the provisions of the amendment can be found by accessing the link below.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/921p12a3.pdf>

The Board approved a resolution which prohibits lawsuits against parents or guardians of students for unpaid meal fees.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/921p12a1.pdf>

The Board was updated on the rollout of the New York State Standards for the Arts which were adopted in 2017. Included in the presentation was a review of the work being done to implement an Individual Arts Assessment Pathway (IAAP) as an additional 4 +1 graduation option. Current efforts are focused on developing the criteria which will be used for authentic measures of assessment. Schools are being selected to participate in a pilot for the 2022-2023 school year and it is anticipated that the 4 + 1 option will be open to all schools in 2023-2024.

A more detailed summary of the presentation can be found in the link below.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20-%20Arts%20Update.pdf>

NYSED Chief Financial Officer Phyllis Morris, and Director for the Office of Government Relations, Jen Trowbridge, presented preliminary timelines for the development of the Regents Non-State Aid Budget and the Regents State Aid Budget proposals for the 2022-2023 school year. The Board of Regents has identified Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Customer Service Improvements, and Core Mission Activities as preliminary funding priorities for the Non-State Aid proposal.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/State%20Aid%20-%202022-2023%20Non-State%20Aid%20Budget%20and%20Legislative%20Initiatives.pdf>

Monday's session concluded with a meeting of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Workgroup. Comprised of both Board of Regents members and NYSED staff, the group is being co-chaired by Vice Chancellor Josephine Finn and NYSED Executive Deputy Commissioner Sharon Cates Williams.

The meeting consisted of an informal dialogue with committee members exchanging ideas regarding personal experiences, potential resources, and

possible strategies for moving forward. Some of the ideas/thoughts/ presentations shared during the meeting included:

- **Vice Chancellor Finn** – “A new generation can benefit tremendously from this initiative, and we must remember the many generations that have come before them that have been failed by the system.”
- **Vice Chancellor Finn** asked the group to listen to the song, “At This Table” sung by Ida Menzel which she feels is symbolic of the goals of the project.
- **Chancellor Young** – “This is not just a conversation about students of color. DEI is good for everyone.”
- Several committee members commented that the overall reception to DEI in districts thus far has been positive despite pockets of resistance. **Chancellor Young** commented that “people don’t resist change; they resist being changed.”
- **Commissioner Rosa** shared that she feels one of the major challenges will be how NYSED can best support educators across the state with developing policies and assisting with implementation. Committee members discussed the importance of being mindful that districts are all at different places in terms of where they need to begin.
- Several committee members stressed the need to increase the diversity of New York’s teacher and administrator workforce as part of the initiative.
- Erick Sweet, NYSED Supervisor of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, is directing the strategy team focusing on Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education. He talked about his group’s work in recent months and cited some of the resources that have been developed which are now available on NYSED’s DEI website.

<http://www.nysed.gov/diversity-equity-inclusion>

- The **21 Day Equity Challenge** is a program that has been offered to groups across the country to increase awareness of how racial and social injustice negatively impacts communities. Several committee members expressed having had a positive experience with the program, and thought it could be a potential resource.
- The committee viewed a 10-minute video featuring Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, a Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin. Professor Ladson-Billings is one of the first academics to apply critical race theory to her education policy research and presents some very interesting perspectives. A link to the video can be found below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufKusK6dQI8>