

Summary of Wednesday, October 13, 2021 Stakeholders Meeting

The **Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA)** held its monthly Stakeholder Meeting on Wednesday, October 13, 2021, via videoconference with Commissioner of Education, Betty Rosa; Deputy Commissioner for P12 Instructional Support, Kim Wilkins; Senior Deputy Commissioner for Educational Policy, Jim Baldwin; Asst Commissioner for Special Education, Chris Suriano; Executive Director for the Office of Educator Quality and Professional Development, Alex Trikalinos; Deputy Commissioner for Higher Education, William Murphy; Asst Commissioner for Public Affairs, Emily DeSantis; and Education Programs Coordinator, Laura Glass.

ESSAA was represented at the meeting by ESSAA President, Carol Conklin-Spillane; ESSAA Executive Director, Mike Starvaggi; ESSAA Executive Vice President, Skip Voorneveld; ESSAA Vice President, Rick Kimble; ESSAA Vice President, Tony Baxter; ESSAA member, John Zampaglione; and Regents/NYSED Liaison, Paul Scampini.

Specific topics discussed during the meeting include:

Questar 3-8 Testing Contract

Deputy Commissioner Wilkins opened the meeting with an update on information related to current merger negotiations between the Educational Testing Service (ETS), Questar, and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) and the potential impact on 3-8 assessments. The Deputy Commissioner offered assurances that NYSED is working to make certain that all contractual expectations regarding the development and administration of the assessments are met.

NYSED State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report

Assistant Commissioner for Special Education, Chris Suriano, provided an update on the timeline for completion of the **NYSED State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR)**. The report evaluates child and family outcomes and compliance with 17 accountability indicators relating to students with disabilities. Federal IDEA guidelines require that the plan be updated every six years.

The assistant commissioner shared that stakeholder support is critical in developing an effective plan and is asking for our participation. Virtual meetings have been organized to individually address each of the 17 indicators and are scheduled to begin in November. Assistant Commissioner Suriano is asking for stakeholder assistance with completing online surveys and participating in virtual meetings. Pre-registration for virtual meetings is required and must be completed by October 24, 2021. The link to the SPP/APR Stakeholder Involvement Webpage, which includes a link to register for the meetings, can be found below.

<http://www.nysed.gov/special-education/ff-2020-2025-spp-apr>

2020-2021 3-8 Testing Data Update

Assistant Commissioner DeSantis provided an update on the reporting of 2020-2021 3-8 testing data which was released to schools in September. The Assistant Commissioner emphasized that, due to the small number of students who took the assessments, the data is being used only for informational purposes and will not be used for any accountability indicators.

With regards to 2021-2022 testing, Assistant Commissioner DeSantis noted the current plan is to return to the normal two-day administration format for 2021-2022 and field testing of potential assessment questions will resume again this year.

Update on Graduation Measures Initiative

Deputy Commissioner Wilkins updated our group on the progress of the Graduation Measures Initiative. NYSED is currently working with the educational consulting firm, WestEd, to compile feedback from the nineteen stakeholder meetings that have already been held. Eight additional virtual meetings are being organized for various regions across the state to complete the gathering of stakeholder feedback. The Deputy Commissioner anticipates that dates for the upcoming meetings will be announced at the December Board of Regents meeting.

After completion of the stakeholder input meetings, a report summarizing findings from the analysis of stakeholder input and the review of related literature and research will be presented to the Board of Regents in the Fall

of 2022. The announcement of the Blue Ribbon Commission will occur shortly thereafter.

Principal APPR

Executive Director for the Office of Educator Quality and Professional Development, Alex Trikalinos, outlined the steps NYSED has taken toward the implementation of revisions to the APPR principal evaluation model.

The executive director acknowledged that the current model of mirroring principal evaluations with the SLO model used in teacher evaluations has not been effective and needs to change. His staff is currently working on an “input model” which, in his opinion, offers a more flexible and creative tool to measure a principal’s effectiveness and evaluate professional growth. The primary focus of the input model is for both principals and/or evaluators to collect evidence of practices that are aligned with current leadership standards and improve student achievement. This evidence is used to determine a principal’s APPR score and rating. Executive Director Trikalinos feels this is preferable to the SLO model which is more dependent on student outcomes on state assessments. Several districts are currently testing the proposed input model as part of an “early adopter” program which the executive director feels will provide some very good feedback on the effectiveness of this type of evaluative tool.

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane emphasized the need to prioritize the incorporation of the recently adopted Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSELs) into the new evaluation format. She went on to state that the PSELs include a much clearer foundation of what effective principals do and will also assist those who evaluate principals with clear guidelines to focus on.

Administrator/Teacher Certification Status Questions

At the September Stakeholder Meeting, a concern was raised regarding the teacher certification status of administrators who are opting to return to the role of classroom teacher. Education Programs Coordinator, Laura Glass, responded that if an administrator has previously earned a Professional Teaching Certificate, the certification is permanent as long as they have continued to earn the required number of annual CTLE credits while they were serving as an administrator.

Administrative Tenure Questions

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane followed up on a concern she expressed at the September Stakeholder Meeting regarding the lack of clarity with certification and tenure status that many administrators are experiencing. Mr. Starvaggi stated that there is a need to clarify the guidelines related to these unique situations and create consistency across districts. Commissioner Rosa responded that she is aware that these situations are occurring. She will consult with the NYSED legal team, and get back to us at our next meeting.

DEI Support for Principals

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane emphasized the need for support and guidance as principals move forward with implementation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative (DEI). In most cases, school administrators are the first line of defense in addressing and deescalating the varieties of resistance that are occurring and Mrs. Conklin-Spillane stressed the importance of providing tools to assist principals in dealing with these situations.

Commissioner Rosa responded that conversations are ongoing about how best to support principals with these concerns and they will continue to provide guidance as it becomes available. Deputy Commissioner Baldwin mentioned that NYSED has entered into CoSer agreements with a few BOCES districts to assist schools with DEI implementation.

Below is the link to NYSED's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion website:

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

COVID Support

With regards to assisting administrators with managing ongoing COVID issues, Mr. Starvaggi asked the NYSED representatives for clarification regarding:

-The lack of guidance educators are receiving from both state and local Departments of Health.

-How to address and enforce regulations relating to vaccination status and HIPAA concerns.

-Inconsistencies with the guidelines and procedures districts are following with COVID testing protocols.

With regards to enforcing vaccination status directives and HIPAA requirements, Deputy Commissioner Baldwin emphasized that it is up to school districts to provide guidance to principals in this area and that they should comply with district policies. He went on to explain that the lack of communication from local and state Departments of Health is very purposeful which is leaving enforcement of policies up to individual districts. The deputy commissioner did say that in certain situations, they have received support and assistance from the Governor's Office when the Department of Health has not responded to NYSED concerns.

With regards to inconsistencies with COVID testing protocols, Deputy Commissioner Baldwin stated that NYSED is aware of the issue and should be making some recommendations in the near future to create more continuity across districts.

ESSAA 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. New topics will be submitted to our Stakeholder Committee for consideration.