

Summary of November 2021 Board of Regents Meeting

The Board of Regents conducted their monthly meeting on Monday, November 15th and Tuesday, November 16th, 2021. Chancellor Lester Young opened the meeting with a moment of silence in remembrance of veterans who have so courageously served our country.

The chancellor also expressed thanks to the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) for a recent joint statement publicly supporting NYSED's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative. A link to the statement can be found below.

https://www.nyssba.org/index.php?src=news&srctype=detail&category=Press%20Releases&refno=4647&srctype=news_detail_2019

During the opening session of the meeting, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Sharon Cates-Williams, and Deputy Commissioner for Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES – VR), Ceylane Meyers Ruff, facilitated a discussion outlining the importance of including students with disabilities in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) discussions. They both referenced a recent Students With Disabilities Advisory Council meeting which focused on how best to achieve “true inclusion” of students with disabilities. The meeting was also attended by Zebadiah Hall, the Director of Student Disability Services at Cornell University.

Deputy Commissioner Cates-Williams and Deputy Commissioner Meyers Ruff shared that the group is focusing on how best to break down access barriers, move beyond compliance, and dismantle environmental barriers for students with disabilities. Their discussion at the recent meeting was guided by three reflective questions:

1. How has my culture, race, ethnicity, gender and religion shaped how I view myself and others?
2. How does power and privilege impact how society views students with disabilities?
3. How can I become an ally for students with disabilities?

A link to the presentation can be found in the link below.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/FB%20Monday%20-%20Disability%20Inclusion.pdf>

The Board was updated on the status of the 2022-2023 Regents State Aid Proposal. Regent Beverly Ouderkirk and Regent Nan Meade reviewed the process that was followed in recent months to gather stakeholder feedback as they developed the proposal. Regent Meade stated that common concerns frequently expressed during stakeholder discussions included the crisis with bus transportation services and the ongoing struggle to maintain adequate food service resources in schools.

An updated conceptual framework for the 2022-2023 Regent State Aid proposal was reviewed which included an outline of the phase-in schedule for Foundation Aid over the next two years. With regards to funding priorities, the proposed budget seeks to expand access and opportunity through increased funding for:

1. Expense Based Aids such as capital construction and transportation.
2. BOCES Aid to support CTE education, DEI support services, and virtual instruction for students with health-related issues.
3. Increased funding to enhance digital equity and for instructional materials such as textbooks, library materials and, technology hardware and software.

A link to a summary of the presentation can be found below.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/SA%20-%20Conceptual%20Framework%20for%20the%202022-2023%20Regents%20State%20Aid%20Proposal.pdf>

The proposed 2022 -2023 budget will be presented for final Board of Regents approval at their December meeting.

A summary of the proposed budget which can be found in the link below.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1121p12d3.pdf>

Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Instructional Support, Kim Wilkins, and Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs, Emily DeSantis, updated the Board on the schedule for eight upcoming regional meetings relating to the Graduation Requirements Initiative. Dates, times and regions can be found in the link below.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20-%20Graduation%20Measures%20initiative%20update.pdf>

The Board was provided with an overview of the 2021 3-8 NYS Assessment results. With only 40% of eligible students taking the tests, it was emphasized that the data will not be used for accountability or comparison purposes.

The link below presents a summary of the information that was presented and includes disaggregation of data for subgroups in both achievement and participation.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20-%20New%20York%20State%202020-2021%20Grades%203-8%20Assessments.pdf>

Commissioner Rosa recently posted a Commissioners Message to Families which may be helpful to principals with addressing parent concerns about last year's testing. The document includes an explanation of how 2020-2021 assessment data is being used and offers answers to frequently asked questions NYSED has been receiving. Below you will find a link to the document.

https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Family-Newsletter--Message-from-Commissioner-Betty-A--Rosa.html?soid=1110847617454&aid=TDdW_CZ9FYA

The Board was updated on the work being done toward developing new regulations which relate to Nonpublic School Substantial Equivalency. In

April of 2018, the NYS Legislature amended Education Law relating to substantial equivalence determinations for nonpublic schools. After proposing new regulations in June of 2019, NYSED has received more than 140,000 stakeholder comments on the proposed regulations. NYSED had planned an extend the stakeholder engagement process in Spring 2020, but was delayed due the COVID-19 pandemic.

Department staff recently resumed meeting with small groups of nonpublic school leaders and conducted a series of regional stakeholder sessions. NYSED is currently reviewing and analyzing stakeholder feedback gathered at the meetings and it is anticipated that updated regulations will be released sometime in 2022.

Below is a link to a summary of the information that was presented.

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

Deputy Commissioner for Higher Education, Bill Murphy, provided the Board with an overview of the steps his office has taken to improve the educator certification process.

The Deputy Commissioner outlined work that has been done to address challenges related to:

1. The various types of certificates and areas of certification.
2. The growing number of pathways applicants can pursue to obtain certification.
3. The growing shortage of qualified teachers in many areas.
4. The measures his office has taken to create flexibility for candidates during the pandemic.
5. Plans for upgrading the TEACH system software with more efficient electronic portals and digital document transfer capacity.

Deputy Commissioner Murphy also talked about a plan for the Office of Higher Ed to conduct a comprehensive review of the current certification policies and procedures to create a more supportive, responsive, and efficient certification process.

Below is a link to an outline of the information included in the presentation.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/HE%20-%20Educator%20Certification%20Reform.pdf>

The Board discussed a possible revision to the definition of a “year of experience” as it relates to professional certification requirements. The proposed revision would create more flexibility for candidates who complete several part-time experiences to count them as equivalent to the full year requirement.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1121hed1.pdf>