

## **Summary of ESSAA Stakeholders December 2021 Meeting**

The **Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA)** held its monthly Stakeholder Meeting on Wednesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, via videoconference with Commissioner of Education, Betty Rosa; Deputy Commissioner for P12 Instructional Support, Kim Wilkins; Asst Commissioner for Public Affairs, Emily DeSantis; and Education Programs Coordinator, Laura Glass; Asst. Commissioner for the Office of Student Support Services, Kathleen DeCataldo; NYSED Asst. Counsel, Julia Patane; Asst. Commissioner for the Office of School Governance, Policy and Religious and Independent Schools, Christina Coughlin; and Executive Director of Educational Innovation and Strategic initiatives, David Frank.

ESSAA was represented at the meeting by ESSAA President, Carol Conklin-Spillane; ESSAA Executive Director, Mike Starvaggi; ESSAA Executive Vice President, Skip Voorneveld; Director of Information Resources, Celia Strino; ESSAA Vice President, Tony Baxter; ESSAA member, John Zampaglione; ESSAA Member, Ashley Hunt; ESSAA member Roseanne Dibella; and Regents/NYSED Liaison, Paul Scampini.

### **Specific topics discussed during the meeting included:**

#### **Improved Relationship between NYSED, DOH and the Executive Branch**

Commissioner Rosa opened the meeting stating that she has had several encouraging conversations with the newly appointed NYS Commissioner of Health, Mary Bassett. The Commissioner noted that Commissioner Bassett is aware of the dissonance that existed previously with the Department of Health, is very supportive of the work being done in schools, and looks forward to working more closely with NYSED to support the health and safety of students and educators.

Commissioner Rosa also mentioned that the overall communication with other state agencies, including the Executive Branch has been much more productive, responsive, and collaborative in recent weeks.

#### **Substantial Equivalency Update**

Assistant Commissioner Christina Coughlin shared an update on the continued revision of regulations relating to Nonpublic School Substantial

Equivalency. After proposing new regulations in June of 2019, NYSED received more than 140,000 stakeholder comments on the proposed requirements. Follow-up discussions to address stakeholder concerns were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but meetings with nonpublic school leaders have now resumed. It is anticipated that the revised regulations will be released sometime in 2022.

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane asked about the specific responsibilities of a principal when a parent opts to remove a child from a public school and indicates the student(s) will be transferring to a private school which may not be accredited. Commissioner Rosa recommended that the principal follow-up with the new school to ensure that the child has been enrolled. The Commissioner added that more specific guidance is available on the NYSED website.

## **2022 Testing Update**

Deputy Commissioner Wilkins indicated that, at this time, the planning for administration of all 2022 3-8 assessments and Regents Exams is continuing according to the original schedule.

## **Update on Efforts to Ease Processes for Seeking Certification**

Education Programs Coordinator, Laura Glass, reviewed the proposed amendments to the teacher certification process that were presented at the Board of Regents Meeting earlier this week. It is felt that these changes will help to address the growing teacher shortage by easing some of the challenges associated with pursuing certification.

Below is a summary of each of the three proposed amendments along with a link to more specific information that was presented at the Board of Regents meeting.

### **1. Eliminating the Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) requirement.**

Board members discussed an amendment which would eliminate successful completion of the edTPA for teacher certification. The edTPA assessment would be replaced with a performance assessment which will be integrated into the candidate's student teaching, practicum, or similar clinical experience.

In anticipation of the potential concerns and questions associated with this amendment, Assistant Commissioner for Higher Education, Bill Murphy, stated that an FAQ document is being developed which will be available on the NYSED website in the near future.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/HE%20-%20Proposed%20Teacher%20Performance%20Assessment%20Requirement%20Changes.pdf>

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane and Mr. Voorneveld both expressed their thanks to Commissioner Rosa for the proposed amendment.

## **2. Changing requirements relating to the reissuance of an Initial Teaching Certificate**

A proposed amendment was discussed which would ease the requirement for classroom teachers and school building leaders who have met initial certification requirements, but have not completed the criteria for Professional Certification within the five-year time frame, to obtain a reissuance of their initial certificate.

The proposal would eliminate the need for candidates to complete the currently required 50 clock hours of CTLE or professional learning credits. Applicants will still need to pass a content knowledge test within one year before or after the reissuance of the certificate. In addition to classroom teachers and school leaders, the proposed amendment would also include school counselors seeking to have their certification reissued.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1221hed1.pdf>

## **3. Changing the Liberal Arts Core Requirement for Teacher Preparation Programs.**

A third proposed amendment would remove the general liberal arts and sciences core requirement for NYS undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs and the individual evaluation pathway to certification. This would allow teacher preparation programs greater flexibility with offering coursework in the core content areas pedagogy.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1221hed2.pdf>

## **Placing Student Teachers**

Ms. Glass also asked for our assistance with securing placements for student teachers. She stated that teacher education programs are finding it very difficult to find placements which is reducing the number of qualified candidates to fill teaching vacancies. Mrs. Conklin-Spillane referenced several situations she is aware of where teaching candidates are enrolled in an out of state college but are completing their course work from home. Students have not been able to complete a student teaching experience due to the fact that the out of state college is not able to provide an approved supervisor for the internship.

The Commissioner stated that she feels this is an excellent opportunity to explore a different model for local supervision and mentoring of student teachers, even if a student is attending an out-of-state school.

### **TRLE Grant**

The Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Environments (TRLE) Grant is a federally funded project focused on building the capacity of teachers and educational leaders to effectively implement remote/hybrid learning and close the digital divide. Mr. Scampini asked about the scope and status of the work done thus far and what principals can expect in terms of available training opportunities and resources in the future.

Executive Director of Educational Innovation and Strategic Initiatives, David Frank, responded that phase one of the project has been completed in collaboration with BOCES agencies across the state. Phase two will involve an agreement with the consulting group, Measurement Inc, to create instructional modules and additional resources for educators.

Mr. Frank reemphasized that NYSED and the Board of Regents are committed to in person learning as the most effective platform for teaching and learning. He went on to say that the TRLE grant is focused on supporting educators with the tools they need to better facilitate remote learning only when it is necessary.

### **Budgetary Consideration for Recruiting and Supporting School Leaders**

Through observations with her ongoing work with new administrators, Mrs. Conklin-Spillane expressed concerns with the lack of support so many new principals are receiving and how much they are struggling. She noted that it is especially prevalent in smaller schools and districts that do not have any formal mentoring program. Citing the important role mentors played throughout her career as an educator, Mrs. Conklin-Spillane stressed the need for a more structured and comprehensive mentoring process to support new administrators when they begin their roles.

Commissioner Rosa agreed with the important role mentors play, and shared that she still benefits from the input of mentors she has worked with going back to early in her career. She referenced the Principals Academy as a model that could be replicated and agreed to continue the conversation with us to explore potential possibilities for the future.

### **DEI update**

Mr. Starvaggi asked for an update on the Diversity, Equity and inclusion Initiative (DEI). The Commissioner referenced a DEI presentation made by several BOCES District Superintendents and school district superintendents from across the state at the most recent Board of Regents meeting where they shared stories relating to their initial experiences with implementing DEI.

Some of the areas talked about during the discussion included:

1. Anticipated development of an online repository of DEI resources for educators and community members which will be available in Spring 2022.
2. Work being done with Human Resource offices on establishing more equitable hiring practices and promoting the recruitment of diverse candidates.
3. Conducting district equity audits.
4. Implementing more culturally responsive communication practices.
5. Development of culturally relevant curriculum across grade levels.
6. Working with school boards to ensure DEI is considered in governance and policy decisions.
7. Organizing professional development opportunities for both professional and support staff.
8. Engaging community partners with DEI efforts.

9. Addressing the challenges of moving from discussion to action within districts.
10. Navigating resistance being encountered due to the current political environment.
11. Sharing personal stories of negative and positive experiences with implementation.

The link below provides an outline of the topics that were covered in the presentation and discussion.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/FB%20-%20Diversity%2C%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion%20in%20the%20BOCES%20and%20School%20Districts%20of%20New%20York%20State.pdf>

### **Recording of Attendance for Students who are Quarantined**

Mr. Baxter asked for some clarification for recording the attendance of students who are placed in quarantine. Commissioner Rosa responded that in instances where a student is quarantined, if the student participates in the mode of instruction that is made available, then he/she should be marked as being present for attendance purposes. If instruction is available and there is no attempt by the student to participate, he/she should be marked absent.

#### ***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](mailto:info@essaa.org). New topics will be submitted to our Stakeholder Committee for consideration.***