

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

ESSAA/CAS held its monthly Stakeholder Meeting on Thursday, January 6th, 2022, via videoconference with Commissioner of Education, Betty Rosa; Asst. Commissioner for Public Affairs, Emily DeSantis; Asst. Commissioner for the Office of School Governance, Policy and Religious and Independent Schools, Christina Coughlin; Chief Financial Officer, Phyllis Morris; Director of the Office of Governmental Relations, Jennifer Trowbridge; and Director of Education Finance, Sean Giambattista.

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

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

#### *Review of the Proposed 2022-2023 Board of Regents State Aid Budget*

At the December Board of Regents meeting, the Board approved the 2022-2023 State Aid Budget Proposal which was submitted to the NYS legislature for review and approval. NYSED Chief Financial Officer, Phyllis Morris, presented an overview of the \$2.10 billion proposal which prioritizes:

1. Continued phase-in of remaining Foundation Aid allocations for school districts.
2. Increased funding for Expense-Based Aids such as transportation costs and building aid.
3. Expanded funding for BOCES and Special Services Aid.
4. Increased funding for Instructional Materials such as textbooks, software, and library materials.

A link to more detailed information on the 2022-2023 State Aid proposal can be found below.

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

*Review of the Non-State Aid Budget and Legislative Priorities*

Director of the Office of Government Relations, Jennifer Trowbridge, reviewed the Non-State Aid Budget priorities which focus primarily on implementation of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiative. The proposed budget also seeks to secure the funding needed to support the staffing needs associated with NYSED's goal to transition from a compliance-based organization to one with a more customer service-based focus.

Some of the specific priorities included in the Non-State Aid Budget include funding to support:

1. Creating and developing Culturally Responsive-Sustaining resources to bolster available K-12 curriculum materials in the area of racial and cultural inclusion.
2. Initiatives aimed at increasing workforce diversity in schools across the state.
3. Enhancing communication with multilingual parents, students, and professionals.
4. An Increase in NYSED staff to provide improved oversight and support of the growing number of PreK, Nursery Schools, and Kindergartens.
5. Ensuring compliance with Substantial Equivalency requirements for non-public schools.

A link to a more detailed summary of the 2022-2023 Non-State Aid proposal can be found below.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1221saa2.pdf>

Mr. Scampini asked how districts can best coordinate the use of state-aid with the federal pandemic relief money that is currently available to districts. Commissioner Rosa advised that, with regards to the use of pandemic relief funds, it is very important to focus on sustainability due to the September 30, 2024 spending

deadline. She cautioned that it appears unlikely that the federal government will extend the deadline for using the funds and recommends that districts be judicious about using pandemic relief funds to hire additional staff. The Commissioner recommended that federal pandemic relief funds be targeted for shorter term initiatives and state aid funding be used for initiatives that can be supported over the long term.

Assistant Commissioner Coughlin also mentioned that many districts are exploring the use of pandemic relief funds to improve building ventilation. The Assistant Commissioner cautioned that supply chain issues are causing significant delays in the completion of the work which may not be completed by the September 2024 spending deadline. She also recommended that districts be wary of aggressive vendors who are promoting certain air purification technologies that are unproven.

Below you will find a link to the NYSED Facilities Planning website which contains additional information and recommendations.

<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/>

***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.***