

The **Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA)** held its monthly Stakeholder Meeting on Tuesday, May 10th, 2022, via videoconference with Commissioner of Education, Betty Rosa; Senior Deputy Commissioner of Education Policy, James Baldwin; Asst. Commissioner for Public Affairs, Emily DeSantis; Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Instructional Support, Angelique Johnson-Dingle; Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Operational Support, Jason Harmon; Executive Director of Education Innovation and Strategic Initiatives, David Frank; and Asst. Commissioner for the Office of Student Support Services, Kathleen DeCataldo.

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, Tony Baxter; ESSAA Vice President, John Rickert; ESSAA Vice President, Dr. Shireen Fasciglione; ESSAA Director of Information Resources, Celia Strino; and Regents/NYSED Liaison, Paul Scampini.

Specific topics discussed during the meeting include:

Introduction of Newly Appointed NYSED Staff Members

Deputy Commissioner Baldwin began the meeting by introducing two NYSED staff members who were recently appointed to new positions.

Angelique Johnson-Dingle was recently named to serve as the Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Instructional Support. The new Deputy Commissioner most recently served as the District Superintendent of the Western Suffolk BOCES and will oversee areas of Curriculum and Instruction, English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, Early Childhood Education, School Safety, Career and Technical Education, and Expanded Learning Opportunities.

Jason Harmon, who served as the NYSED Assistant Commissioner for School Accountability over the past seven years, has been appointed to the role of Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Operational Support. In his new role, Deputy Commissioner Harmon will oversee the areas of Information and Reporting Services, Student Support Services, School Accountability, School Business Supports, and Assessment.

Agenda Items for May 2022 Board of Regents Meeting

Deputy Commissioner Baldwin presented an overview of amendments scheduled to be presented for adoption at the May 2022 Board of Regents Meeting scheduled for May 16th and 17th.

The proposed amendments include:

- Clarification of the regulations which relate to counting days used for school testing/ exams towards the minimum annual number of days required for instruction.

- Implementing an appeal process to provide a safety net for students who earn a passing grade in a Regents course but do not achieve a passing grade on a Regents Exam.

The proposed amendment would allow school staff members or parents to file an appeal with their district superintendent to award credit for an overall passing grade to students who have scored a 50 or above on the Regents Exam as long as the student has successfully completed the requirements of the course with a passing grade.

- Amended provisions to the Sudden Cardiac Prevention Act
- Amended provisions to Homebound Instruction regulations which propose increasing the minimum required hours for students receiving homebound instruction and more clearly defining the process for obtaining these services.
- Extending the flexibility measures that are currently in place relating to the hiring of substitute teachers.
- Establishing an All Grades Special Education Certificate to replace the current Grade 1 – Grade 6 and Grade 5 - Grade 12 Certifications. The current Birth – Grade 2 certificate will remain in effect.

Deputy Commissioner Baldwin emphasized that these proposed amendments have not yet been formally adopted but anticipates they will be approved at the Board of Regents meeting.

More specifics details relating to each of the amendments will be included in the Board of Regents Meeting summary that will be sent to ESSAA members next week.

Status of \$100 Million Funding to support Student Mental Health

Mr. Scampini asked for an update on the status of the funding to support student mental health which was allocated in the most recent legislative budget.

Asst. Commissioner DeCataldo responded that NYSED is just beginning to work on outlining the logistics and scope of how the grant monies will be awarded. She did emphasize that they are looking at proposals that support a sustainable over all mental health infrastructure within school buildings, support greater community and interagency connections, and implement better staff training and family-based supports. No timeline was given for when grant applications would begin to be accepted.

Mr. Baxter, an Assistant Principal at Sleepy Hollow High School, shared that the Sleepy Hollow School District has been discussing the need for schools to be viewed not just as instructional

sites but as comprehensive facilities which support the mental and physical health of students and their families.

Graduation Measures Initiative – Selection of Blue Ribbon Committee Members

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane asked about the process that will be followed for the selection of the Blue Ribbon Committee, which will be charged with reviewing data and making recommendations associated with the Graduation Measures Initiative. Assistant Commissioner DeSantis responded that the process for nominating and selecting committee members of the Blue Ribbon Committee members is currently being developed and will be released after approval by the Board of Regent in the near future. Mrs. Conklin-Spillane expressed that ESSAA would like to have representation on the committee.

The group is expected is expected to begin their work this fall.

3-8 Testing Feedback

At our April stakeholder meeting, Dr. Shireen Fasciglione, an elementary school principal in the Niskayuna Central Schools, shared some perspective on her student's experiences with the 3-8 ELA tests. Dr. Fasciglione had expressed that Part 2 of this year's exam had been particularly challenging for students in her building. She observed that approximately 1/3 of her third graders needed significantly more than two hours to complete this section, and many experienced emotional distress while attempting to finish.

Shortly after the meeting, NYSED sent a memo out to the field acknowledging the issue and offering guidance to teachers. Dr. Fasciglione expressed appreciation for the guidance memo and recommended that this type of information be put out to schools ahead of the testing next year to avoid the problems that occurred this year.

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.