The **Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA)** participated in a Stakeholder Meeting with NYSED staff on Thursday, October 29, 2026 via videoconference. Participants representing NYSED included Commissioner of Education, Betty Rosa; Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Educational Policy, David Frank; and Senior Deputy Commissioner for Education Policy/Ny Inspires Project Director, Ceylane Meyers-Ruff.

ESSAA was represented at the meeting by President, Carol Conklin-Spillane; Executive Director, Mike Starvaggi; Executive Vice President, Skip Voorneveld; Director for Professional Learning, Dr. Eva Jones; Vice President, John Rickert; Vice President for Professional Development, Shelley Baldwin-Nye; Regents/NYSED Liaison, Paul Scampini; and ESSAA Delegates, David Cronk, Angela Green, Jennifer Martino, and Luke Sotherden.

NY Inspires/Portrait of a Graduate Update

This month's discussion focused on the next steps for implementing the NY Inspires initiative. Deputy Commissioner Meyers-Ruff opened the meeting with a review of the actions taken by the Board of Regents at their September meeting which decouple Regents Exams from graduation requirements and establish a single diploma for all students. The Deputy Commissioner shared that NYSED staff is currently working to develop more specific regulations and guidance relating to NY Inspires to be presented at the February 2027 Board of Regents meeting. She emphasized that Regents Exams will continue to be offered in the future and provide options for students to earn endorsement credits. They will also be used as an evaluative tool to meet certain federal requirements associated with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), in the same manner that current 3-8 testing results are utilized.

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane emphasized that principals carry the responsibility of being the accountability gatekeepers of their buildings. She stressed that they currently have many questions and are anxiously awaiting guidance on how they will be expected to evaluate whether students are meeting appropriate standards for graduation. Deputy Commissioner Meyers-Ruff responded that the recent changes have sparked conversations, both within NYSED and among educators across the state, about the role local assessments will play in evaluating whether students are meeting acceptable standards. Commissioner Rosa shared that NYSED is also engaged in discussions with stakeholder groups with regards to what a NY Inspires transcript will look like. She noted that NYSED has begun collecting and cataloging examples of exemplary evidence-based local assessments and will be posting them on their NY Inspires website as they are received, reviewed and endorsed. (See website link below)

With regards to what a transcript will look like, Commissioner Rosa stated that NYSED is planning a pilot of fifteen districts to try out an initial transcript format. After reviewing the feedback received, they will conduct additional pilots that would include an increasing number

of schools/districts to work toward a finalized version. The Commissioner also expressed that she is optimistic that answers to some of our questions will be addressed when initial information on standards, evaluative rubrics, transcripts, and portfolio ideas are presented at the February Board of Regents meeting.

Luke Sothereden, principal of Port Chester High School, expressed that statewide Regents Exams currently allow colleges to assess applicants on a level playing field of data. Mr. Sotherden, whose school recently participated in the Performance Learning and Assessment Network (PLAN) Pilot, questioned how colleges and universities will be able to accurately assess and compare the validity of high school transcripts coming from so many different schools.

Commissioner Rosa responded that NYSED is actively working with representatives from higher education to address these concerns. The Commissioner stressed that while students will still have the option of taking Regents Exams for endorsements, the new transcript format will also allow schools to highlight many other positive aspects of a student's high school experience. She also noted that colleges already have admission protocols in place to evaluate candidates from different states that have a wide range of graduation requirements.

NYSED Inspires – Evidence-Based Assessments Website
https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/evidence-based-assessment-strategies

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.