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Summary of April 2024 Board of Regents Meeting

P-12 related topics covered during the March meeting and summarized in this report include:

- Update on the Modernization of NYSED Information Technology and Their Strategies for Working with Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Presentation of Most Recent Graduation Data (2019 Cohort)
- Proposed Amendments Relating to School Safety Plans and Emergency Response Drills

The Board of Regents conducted their monthly meeting on Monday, April 15th.

Regent Patrick Mannion, who represents Central New York, opened the meeting by delivering some reflective thoughts on the recent shooting death of Syracuse police officer Michael Jensen, and Onondaga County Sheriff's Lieutenant Michael Hoosock.

Regent Mannion, himself a firefighter, EMT, and first responder, asked that we keep the families of both officers in our thoughts and prayers and take a moment to think about and appreciate the tremendous work done by members of the Law Enforcement community. His remarks were followed by a moment of silence.

- **Update on Modernization of NYSED Information Technology and the Strategies for Working with Artificial Intelligence (AI).**

The opening session included an update on current efforts to modernize and improve NYSED's Information Technology (IT) systems. Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Management Services, Sharon Cates Williams, reviewed the scope of services provided by the department and introduced three Information Technology staff members who talked about various aspects of the modernization efforts.

Chief Information Officer, Michael St. John, spoke about all that NYSED learned during the COVID pandemic, and how that knowledge has assisted them with their efforts to modernize the system. He added that current priorities for the initiative include minimizing security threats, improving interoperability between various agencies, and enhancing engagement with stakeholders.

Assistant Director of Technical Operations, John Allen, reviewed the technical services that support the Help Center and maintain the network infrastructure, software, and hardware both in Albany and in the 40 remote offices around the state.

Assistant Director of Information Technology, Michael Yudin, reviewed the IT Department's role in supporting NYSED departments and other state agencies.

The strategic approach NYSED is taking with **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** was also reviewed. It was emphasized that NYSED is using a secure and cautious approach with exploring the potential benefits and risks associated with AI. The Department is currently focused on broader internal issues such as information security, data privacy and confidentiality risks, and bias issues related to fairness. It was emphasized that they are not working on ways to support individual schools districts at this time.

A **NYSED Internal AI Task Force** is being formed to gain a greater awareness of AI, develop a set of foundational AI related policies, and identify both potential problems and opportunities. One of their key goals is to form a collaborative partnership between NYSED IT, NYS P-20 districts and universities, and AI technology vendors, in an effort to maximize benefits to all stakeholders.

The link below includes the slides that were used during the presentation.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/FB%20Morning%20-%20New%20York%20Education%20Department%20Information%20Technology%20Overview.pdf>

- **Presentation of Most Recent NYS Graduation Data (2019 Cohort)**

Deputy Commissioner, P-12 Operational Supports, Jason Harmon facilitated a review of graduation data for the high school graduating **Class of 2023**. It was emphasized that this group, who entered grade 9 in 2019, was deeply affected by the pandemic and received a significant portion of remote instruction during their high school experience.

Another key factor that needs to be stressed when interpreting the data is the number of Regents Exam exemptions that were available for this cohort of students during three of their four years in

high school. The majority of the cohort (87,855 students) used three or more Regents Exam exemptions during the past four years.

As the different pieces of the disaggregated data were reviewed, several areas of emphasis included:

1. The increased number of students completing multiple pathway diploma requirements in **STEM – Science, World Languages, CDOS, and Civic Readiness**.
2. Increases in the number of students achieving the **Seal of Biliteracy and the Seal of Civic Readiness**.
3. An overall ten-year trend that demonstrates achievement growth for all ethnicities.

The link below provides a comprehensive breakdown of disaggregated data for the 2019 Cohort along with achievement trends covering the past ten years.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/P-12%20-%20Four-Year%20Graduation%20Rates%20for%20the%202019%20Cohort.pdf>

- **Proposed Amendments for Requirements Relating to School Safety Plans and Emergency Response Plans.**

The Board discussed amendments proposed by the Safe Schools Task Force and the School Safety Improvement Team relating to **Building-level Emergency Response Plans** and **District-wide School Safety Plans**.

The first amendment proposes that **building-level emergency response drills** must be conducted in an age appropriate, trauma-informed manner. The amendment also requires that students and staff be informed when a drill is occurring, and prohibits the use of actors or props to simulate an emergency during the drill.

The second proposed amendment would increase the range of staff that are trained in emergency procedures, and clarify the use of specific terms to create common language used by schools, public safety agencies, parents and community members. As an example, it was noted that several instances have occurred where there has been confusion about the difference between a **lock-out** and a **lock down**.

The proposed amendment will be presented for permanent adoption at the September 2024 Board of Regents meeting after the expiration of the 60-Day public comment period. If adopted at the September 2024 meeting, the proposed amendment will become effective as a permanent rule on July 1, 2025.

The link below includes more specific information on the proposed amendment including the recommended changes in terminology on page 2.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/424p12d1.pdf>