



Dear ESSAA Member,

David Frank, the NYSED Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Education Policy, periodically shares important updates regarding New York State Education Laws, Commissioner's Regulations, and Federal Guidelines with our leadership team. This information is valuable for public school administrators as they carry out their daily responsibilities. Below is the latest update from NYSED, which includes essential "Must Know" information on various key state and federal policies and programs that impact our members across the state.

As information evolves, we'll keep you informed about developments affecting New York State school administrators. Note, the most critical time sensitive information is labeled 'MUST KNOW.'

Your ESSAA Team

NYSED Updates - 3/13/25

MUST KNOW

Option to Provide Virtual Instruction (attachment)

- The New York State Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages, Office of Standards and Instruction, Office of Special Education, and Office of Religious and Independent School Support have issued a memorandum (see attached) addressing the option of providing virtual instruction to provide uninterrupted learning opportunities to individual students who may be averse or unable to attend school. This includes English Language Learners, immigrant, and migrant students as well as others who may be affected and reluctant to attend school in person due to concerns about their safety and security.

- Schools must ensure that all students participating in virtual instruction have access to an appropriate device and sufficient internet service to engage in learning fully.
- Instruction must be delivered by an appropriately certified teacher, align with applicable New York State Learning Standards, be provided in accordance with students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and include mechanisms for documenting student mastery of learning outcomes.
- *Questions on the implementation of virtual learning can be directed to the Office of Educational Design and Technology at edtech@nysed.gov or (518) 474-5461.*
- *Questions on instruction for English Language Learners, immigrant, and newcomer students can be directed to the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages at (518) 474-8755 or OBEWL@nysed.gov.*
- *Questions on instruction for students with disabilities can be directed to the Office of Special Education at (518) 473-2878 or speced@nysed.gov.*
- *Questions on instruction for religious and independent schools can be directed to the Office of Religious and Independent School Support (ORISS) at oriss@nysed.gov or (518) 473-8202.*

MUST KNOW

Exemptions from Diploma Assessment Requirements for Major Life Events

- As leaders in education, the members of the New York State Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures were mindful of individual student circumstances and needs. As such, one of the Commission's recommendations was to provide exemptions from diploma assessment requirements for major life events (such as medical conditions, death of a family member, or other trauma).
- Based on this recommendation, the Board of Regents approved an [emergency action](#) to amend the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education to provide such discretion. The amendment allows the superintendent, principal, or head of school (as applicable to a registered nonpublic school or charter school) to make a local determination to grant an [exemption from the diploma assessment requirements for students who experienced a major life event](#) prior to the planned administration of a required diploma assessment (i.e., Regents Examination, NYSED-Approved Regents Examination Alternative, or an NYSED-Approved Pathway Assessment).
- Additional information related to this amendment may be referenced on the Office of Standards and Instruction's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about NYS Graduation Requirements webpage which includes a list of frequently asked questions related to exemptions for major life events.
- *Questions may be referred to the Office of Standards and Instruction via email to P12StandardsInstruction@nysed.gov or by calling (518) 474-5922.*

MUST KNOW

Superintendent's Determination of Graduation with Local Diploma

- The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has updated its [Superintendent's Determination of Graduation with Local Diploma](#) form (March 2025).

- This form was revised to assist Superintendents and other school personnel (principals or other heads of charter or nonpublic schools) in making the appropriate determination to grant the local diploma to students with disabilities who have met the eligibility criteria.
- This updated guidance will clarify how the Superintendent's Determination of Graduation with a Local Diploma form is to be completed/submitted, and that additional documentation is not required to complete this process.
- *If you have any questions or need assistance with this updated process, please email NYSED staff at speced@nysed.gov or call the Office of Special Education at (518) 473-2878.*

FYI

Attorney General James Issues Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Guidance for Schools

- In line with the ideals of the New York State Education Department, New York Attorney General Letitia James and a coalition of 14 other state attorneys general issued [guidance to K-12 schools, colleges, and universities](#) regarding the benefits, legality, and importance of implementing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) policies and practices in educational settings.
- The initiative responds to concerns arising from recent federal actions attempting to challenge DEIA efforts in schools.
- Attorney General James asserts that lawful DEIA initiatives remain protected and encourages educational institutions to continue fostering inclusive learning environments.
- For more detailed information, please refer to the Attorney General's official press release at [Attorney General James Issues Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Guidance for Schools](#).
- *Any questions can be directed to the Office of the New York State Attorney General at 1-800-771-7755.*

FYI

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report Indicator 8, Family Involvement, Stakeholder Engagement Resources and Online Input Form

- The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is engaging stakeholders in activities to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in New York State and is currently revising the Family Involvement Survey for State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicator 8.
- *An informational video, supporting resources, and a link to the stakeholder input form are available on the NYSED [SPP Indicator 8: Parent Involvement webpage](#).*
- Stakeholder input is very important to this process, and we strongly encourage you to view the resources and complete the online stakeholder input form. The input form must be submitted by **April 18, 2025**.
- *For additional information, please contact NYSPP@nysed.gov.*

FYI

NYSED and NYSTEACHS Announce Rounds Two and Three of the 2024-25 McKinney-Vento Training Initiative

- BOCES McKinney-Vento Liaisons and administrators, or related staff and McKinney-Vento Liaisons and administrators from component district LEAs are invited and encouraged to attend this training initiative.
- All district or BOCES staff who would benefit from this training opportunity are encouraged to register for their [specific regional meeting](#).
- NYSED, TEACHs, and the BOCES will support LEAs in their efforts to implement the McKinney-Vento statute and to support the academic achievement of students in temporary housing.
- Dates and registration links for the remaining Round 2 Regional Meetings:
 - [Hudson Region \(Yellow\)](#) – March 14, from 10:00 to 11:00 am
 - [Capitol Region \(Green\)](#) – March 21, from 10:00 to 11:00 am
 - Staff from the other regions that missed the Round 2 meetings can review the presentations for their region along with other important documents at: [BOCES McKinney-Vento Technical Assistance Sessions](#)
- Dates and registration links for all the Round 3 Regional Meetings:
 - [Western Region \(Purple\)](#) – April 4, from 10:00 to 11:00 am
 - [Central Region \(Orange\)](#) – April 25, from 10:00 to 11:00 am
 - [North Country Region \(Blue\)](#) – May 9, from 10:00 to 11:00 am
 - [Long Island Region \(Maroon\)](#) – May 16, from 10:00 to 11:00 am
 - [Hudson Region \(Yellow\)](#) – May 30, 2025, from 10:00 to 11:00 am
 - [Capital Region \(Green\)](#) – June 6, 2025, from 10:00 to 11:00 am
- *Questions related to these meetings or trainings, can be sent to NYS TEACHs at info@nysteachs.org or the McKinney-Vento State Coordinator at Jane.fronheiser@nysed.gov.*

FYI

Request for Information on Building Arts-Focused School Communities

- The New York State Education Department's (NYSED) Office of Standards and Instruction (OSI) is pleased to announce the release of a [Request for Information](#) to gather insights from qualified organizations, institutions, educators, and experts in arts education and community engagement.
- The information collected will inform the development of comprehensive guidance for establishing and sustaining arts-focused school communities.
- **RFI responses are due Thursday, May 15, 2025, by 5:00 pm. Submissions should be sent to ARTSRFI2025@nysed.gov.**
- *Questions should be submitted to ARTSRFI2025@nysed.gov by March 15, 2025. Responses will be published on the [Office of Standards and Instruction's website](#) by April 1, 2025.*

FYI

Celebrating Civic Learning Week March 10-14, 2025 (attachment)

- March 10-14, 2025, is Civic Learning Week, a nationwide event dedicated to strengthening civic education and engagement. This year's theme, "Civic Learning: Many Voices, One Nation," underscores the importance of diverse perspectives in sustaining our democracy.

- The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is committed to supporting schools and districts as they continue to provide high-quality civic education for all students in New York.
- NYSED has released a reformatted [Seal of Civic Readiness Manual](#), which includes updated organization, an online version of the manual, and a resource toolkit.
 - Please note there are no changes to program or student requirements, and no action is required from schools or BOCES approved to offer the Seal of Civic Readiness.
- *Schools interested in offering the Seal of Civic Readiness can visit the [Civic Readiness Initiative webpage](#) for application details and instructional resources.*
- *Questions regarding civic education and be referred to the [Office of Standards and Instruction](#) at p12standardsinstruction@nysed.gov or 518-474-5922.*

FYI

Spanish Edition of Earth and Space Sciences Reference Table

- Minor updates have been made to the Spanish edition of the [Earth and Space Sciences Reference Table](#) based on feedback from bilingual science educators.
- Schools should ensure that students are provided with this updated version, dated March 2025, for instruction and the Regents Examination.
- *Questions can be addressed to the Office of State Assessment at emscassessinfo@nysed.gov.*

FYI

Dignity for All Students Act Professional Development Session

- The [New York State Center for School Safety](#) is providing a professional development session on the Dignity for All Students Act: *Scenarios for Everyday Implementation*.
- The 2-hour session is designed to support school personnel in implementing the requirements of the Dignity Act including:
 - Introduction to the technical and adaptive challenges of implementing the Dignity Act;
 - Supporting students even when there is no evidence of a material incident;
 - Engaging and communicating with parents; and
 - Misconceptions around reporting.
- Registration is required. To sign up, click the date below to follow the link:
 - [March 27, 2025, at 1 pm](#)
- *Questions may be directed to nyscenterforschoolsafety@measinc.com or 1-844-897-9567.*

FYI

Free Training on Conducting Trauma-Informed Drills

- The [New York State Center for School Safety](#) will be conducting a webinar on Conducting Trauma-Informed Drills on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm.
- The 2-hour webinar addresses NYS drill requirements, including recent regulation amendments that require all drills be trauma-informed; actions that can be taken before, during, and after evacuation and lockdown drills; best practices for conducting drills in a trauma-informed manner; and resources available to support safety teams.

- Sign up for the webinar at: [Conducting Trauma-Informed Drills](#).
- Questions may be sent to nyscenterforschoolsafety@measinc.com, or the Office of Student Support Services at SafetyPlans@nysed.gov or 518-486-6090.

FYI

New York State Center for School Health (NYSCSH) Professional Development Day for School Nurses, Medical Directors, and Health Educators on April 26, 2025

- The [New York State Center for School Health](#) (NYSCSH) is a contracted technical assistance center (TAC) of NYSED that provides resources and professional development to school health professionals and school health educators.
- The NYSCSH is hosting a Professional Development Day for School Nurses, Medical Directors, and Health Educators on Saturday, April 26, 2025, at the Crown Plaza – The Desmond Hotel.
- Expert speakers will provide presentations on:
 - Incorporating Mental & Physical Health – Key Components for Student Success.
 - De-Escalation Strategies to Support Student Safety.
- See the [NYSCSH School Health Seminar Brochure](#) for details and how to register.
- For questions, please contact the NYSCSH by email at nyscsh@monroe2boces.org or call (585) 617-2380.

FYI

Proposed Amendments to Section 135.5 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to First Aid Requirements for Coaches

- The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has proposed amendments to section 135.5 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education relating to First Aid Requirements for Coaches. Please see the [Proposed Amendment of Section 135.5 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to First Aid Requirements for Coaches](#) for the full text of the proposed regulations.
- NYSED is accepting public comment on the proposed amendments through both written comment and public hearings.
- Written comments on the proposed amendments may be submitted to REGCOMMENTS@nysed.gov or via mail to Gemma Rinefierd, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Student Support Services, Room 218-M-EB, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234. Comments must be received by **May 27, 2025**.
- Following the public comment period, it is anticipated that the proposed amendments will be presented for permanent adoption at the July 2025 Board of Regents meeting, effective July 30, 2025.
- Any questions can be directed to the Office of Student Support Services at StudentSupportServices@nysed.gov or 518-486-6090.

FYI

Proposed Amendments to Section 19.5 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and Section 200.22 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to the Prohibition of Corporal Punishment, Aversive Interventions, Prone Restraint and Seclusion, and Standards for Behavioral Interventions

- The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has proposed amendments to section 19.5 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and section 200.22 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education relating to the prohibition of corporal punishment, aversive interventions, prone restraint, and seclusion; and standards for behavioral interventions. Please see the [Proposed Amendment of Section 19.5 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and Section 200.22 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to the Prohibition of Corporal Punishment, Aversive Interventions, Prone Restraint and Seclusion, and Standards for Behavioral Interventions](#) for the full text of the proposed regulations.
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FYI

Office of Early Learning Fostering Positive Behavior in PreK Webinar Recording Now Available

- The *Fostering Positive Behavior in PreK* webinar recording is now available.
- The recorded webinar can be accessed via the [OEL website](#).
- *Any questions can be directed to the Office of Early Learning at OEL@nysed.gov.*

FYI

Office of Early Learning (OEL) FS-10A Budget Amendment Reminder and Resources

- This is a reminder that all 2024-2025 Budget Amendments (FS-10A) are due to OEL by Friday, May 30th, 2025.
- For guidance on completing amendments, please see the [2024-2025 FS-10A Budget Amendments for PreK Webinar recording](#) and the [2024-2025 Fiscal Guidance Handbook](#).
- For additional reminders and important dates, please see the [2024-2025 UPK Important Dates Calendar](#).
- *Any questions can be directed to the Office of Early Learning at OEL@nysed.gov.*