



EMPIRE STATE SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

Supporting school leaders, every day.

Summary of September 2023 Stakeholders Meeting

The **Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA)** held its first monthly Stakeholder Meeting of the 2023-2024 school year on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, via videoconference. Participants representing NYSED included Commissioner of Education, Betty Rosa; Deputy Commissioner, P12 Instructional Support, Angelique Johnson-Dingle; Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Education Policy, David Frank; and Deputy Commissioner, P-12 Operational Supports, Jason Harmon.

ESSAA was represented at the meeting by President, Carol Conklin-Spillane; Executive Director, Mike Starvaggi; Executive Vice President, Skip Voorneveld; Director of Professional Learning, Eva Jones; Director of Information Resources, Celia Strino; Vice President, Shelley Baldwin-Nye; Vice President, John Rickert; Vice President, John Zampaglione; ESSAA member, Jennifer Martino; ESSAA member, Vince DiGrandi; ESSAA member, Bernadette Smith, ESSAA member, Lisa O'Neill; and Regents/NYSED Liaison, Paul Scampini.

Important Note: Recently, in an effort to make Stakeholder Meetings more productive, NYSED has begun providing ESSAA representatives with a written summary of topics they will be addressing, prior to the meeting. The summary includes updated background information, data, and links to additional guidance and resources on each of the areas being discussed. The summary is presented in a bulleted format, is easy to read, and includes useful talking points relating to the many initiatives that are being worked on at NYSED which can be shared with colleagues and staff members.

Specific Topics discussed during the meeting included:

Dual Enrollment/Early College Support

Asst. Commissioner, David Frank, opened the meeting with a statement emphasizing NYSED's commitment to supporting high school **College Credit Programs** such as **Early College High Schools**, **P-Tech Programs**, and **Dual Enrollment** partnerships between high schools, colleges and universities.

The Asst. Commissioner stressed that NYSED is continuing to explore ways to expand opportunities for students to participate in Dual Enrollment courses and is advocating for increased funding opportunities to support further reduction of associated tuition costs.

Virtual Implementation of Teaching and Learning (VITAL) Educator Program

Deputy Commissioner, P-12 Instructional Supports, Angelique Dingle-Johnson, announced that NYSED is launching a year-long professional learning opportunity for teachers and administrators. The **Vital Education Program** will train participants in designing virtual lessons and integrating technology into instruction. The 125 participants selected from across the state will also receive train-the-trainer instruction toward the goal of expanding the practices that are developed. Upon completion of the program, VITAL educators will receive a \$14,500 stipend.

It was specifically noted that **principals and district level administrators** are eligible to participate in the program. Applications are due **October 13**.

Below you will find the link to the VITAL Program website which includes more detailed information and the application.

<https://www.nysed.gov/edtech/vital-educator-program>

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Resource Repository

Deputy Commissioner Dingle-Johnson provided an update on the various resources that are now available in the **DEI Repository**. The Deputy Commissioner stressed that NYSED continues to seek examples of DEI best practices to add to the repository and encouraged principals to consider submitting to the site.

The link to the DEI Repository can be found below.

<https://www.boces.org/dei/about/>

Accountability Restart Update

Deputy Commissioner Jason Harmon provided an update on the **Accountability System Restart** which is required by the federal **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**. For the past two years, several performance indicators have been included in NYSED accountability reports, but were presented only for informational purposes.

For the 2024-2025 school year the Restart will shift to the **Reimagine Phase** where more accountability indicators will be phased into the calculation of the school accountability formula. The Deputy Commissioner informed us that NYSED is currently assessing performance indicators for inclusion in the 2024-2025 accountability framework. He cited previously used examples that could be included such as Measures of Interim Progress, Growth Scores and Career and Civic Readiness. The Deputy Commissioner

also noted that new performance indicators will be added based on the recommendations of the **Graduation Measures Blue Ribbon Panel**. It is anticipated that the new indicators will be available to districts prior to the start of the 2024-2025 school year to assist schools with planning and improvement efforts.

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane expressed that, in her professional development work with districts, she often observes a disconnect between the overall vision and purpose of the performance indicators and the larger scope of teaching and learning. She stressed the need for focusing improvement efforts on the alignment of curriculum and instruction to improve learning, with the performance indicators serving as a tool, rather than the end goal.

Deputy Commissioner Harmon agreed and noted that NYSED has money set aside to assist districts in these efforts and is currently seeking additional funding opportunities for future work.

Restriction of Suspensions – Status of Solutions Not Suspensions Bill

ESSAA members have continued to express concern regarding the proposed **Solutions Not Suspensions Bill** that was introduced in the legislature last year. The bill, which was not acted on during last Spring's legislative session, would mandate significant limitations on a principal's ability to suspend students. While ESSAA continues to support efforts to reduce suspensions, mandating the restrictions included in the bill could significantly compromise a principal's ability to ensure school safety and maintain a positive learning environment.

As an example of the increased safety concerns principals are experiencing, ESSAA member Vince DiGrandi expressed that, in his role as a middle school principal, he has already dealt with several school threat assessments during the opening weeks of the school year.

Asst. Commissioner Frank responded that NYSED does not have a formal position on the bill at this time and expects that the bill will be reintroduced in this year's legislative session. Commissioner Rosa added that while the bill has received support from a small group of legislators, she feels that the majority of representatives understand our concerns with the potential implications.

Deputy Commissioner Frank shared a link to the **New York State Center for School Safety** as a potential resource.

<https://www.nyscfss.org/>

Support for the Recruitment of Future School Leaders

ESSAA continues to advocate for increased support dedicated to the recruitment and mentoring of future educational leaders. Asst. Commissioner Frank responded that NYSED is aware of the need, and is currently working with a consortium of colleges and universities toward the goal of improving recruitment

and retention of school leaders. The Asst. Commissioner added that NYSED is also exploring various reforms to school administrator certification requirements which could assist with addressing our concerns.

Mr. Scampini suggested that, as the Board of Regents and NYSED develop their 2024-2025 budget proposal, funding support for the recruitment and retention of school leaders be seriously considered as a formal budget item.

NYSED Stakeholder Meeting Summary Notes

To request a copy of ESSAA's Stakeholder Summary Annotated Agenda (informational summary NYSED provided on each of the topics discussed during the meeting), please email bberry@essaa.org.

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.