



EMPIRE STATE SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

Supporting school leaders, every day.

Summary of August 2024 Stakeholders Meeting

The **Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA)** held their monthly Stakeholder Meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, via videoconference. Participants representing NYSED included Commissioner, Betty Rosa; Senior Deputy Commissioner for Education Policy, Jeffrey Matteson; Deputy Commissioner, P-12 Instructional Support, Angelique Johnson-Dingle; Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Educational Policy, David Frank; and Deputy Commissioner, P-12 Operational Supports, Jason Harmon.

ESSAA was represented at the meeting by ESSAA President, Carol Conklin-Spillane; Executive Director, Mike Starvaggi; Executive Vice President, Skip Voorneveld; Director of Professional Learning, Eva Jones; Vice President, Lisa O'Neill; ESSAA Member, Jennifer Martino; Vice President for Professional Development, Shelley Baldwin-Nye; Vice President, John Zampaglione; and Regents/NYSED Liaison, Paul Scampini.

Topics discussed during the meeting included:

- 1. Regionalization Guidelines**
- 2. Update on Proposal to Ban Student Cell Phone use in Schools**
- 3. Proposed Mixed Competition Guidelines Update**
- 4. Foundation Aid Formula Public Hearings Feedback**

Important Note:

The July/August Informational Summary provided by NYSED prior to the meeting is available at the end of this report. The summary includes updated background information, data, and links to additional guidance on additional current issues that were not discussed during the meeting that include:

- 1. Pre K Resources**
- 2. NYS 250th Commemoration of the American Revolution update.**
- 3. Substantial Equivalence Reporting Deadlines**

4. **School District Merger Aid Update**
5. **Alignment of Science Instruction to Learning Standards and State Assessments**
6. **Accountability Updates**
7. **IDEA District Level Determinations**
8. **Implementation of Title IX by School Districts**
9. **Residential Programs/Transitioning Students Updated Information**

Regionalization

Regionalization is a model for creating equitable educational opportunities for all students and is intended to assist districts with collaboratively identifying, exploring, and pursuing solutions to operational and academic challenges they are facing. Deputy Commissioner Matteson opened the meeting by reviewing a proposed amendment that will guide the 37 BOCES regions across the state through a 14 month Regionalization Process.

Each BOCES will coordinate an assessment of resource equity among districts, analyze appropriate comparative data, and facilitate the sharing of best practices. It is anticipated that the information gathered will establish a cycle of continuous improvement for participating districts and assist the Board of Regents with developing appropriate legislative and budget recommendations for the future. The proposed amendment should be finalized in the next few weeks.

Below you will find a link to a specific website that NYSED has set up to help districts with understanding the logistics of the Regionalization Process.

<https://www.nysed.gov/regionalization>

Proposed Ban on Cell Phone use in Schools

Commissioner Rosa expressed that she has participated in many discussions both within NYSED and with state legislators regarding the controversial topic of banning student cell phone use in schools. The Commissioner stated that she is **not** in favor of a cell phone ban and supports a multi-tiered approach that respects the concerns being expressed by various stakeholders, including students. She favors the adoption of a statewide plan that recognizes the many different parental concerns, the pros and cons of cell phone use as they relate to school safety, and their potential as an instructional tool but also as disruptor of teaching and learning.

ESSAA representative Eva Jones emphasized the need to educate students on the “power” that the misuse of student cell phones has to compromise school safety, disrupt the overall learning environment, and negatively impact student mental health. Commissioner Rosa agreed, and emphasized the need to closely examine the unintended consequences of any policies that are considered.

The Commissioner expects that conversations will be ongoing between NYSED, NYS legislators, and stakeholder groups in their continuing efforts to develop a proposal.

Proposed Guidelines Relating to Mixed Competition

Commissioner Rosa reviewed the updated Mixed Competition guidelines that were presented to the Board of Regents in May 2024. The Commissioner stated that NYSED received approximately 600 responses during the recent public comment period and anticipates the new proposal will be presented to the Board of Regents at their upcoming September meeting.

Below you will find a link to the information on the new Mixed Competition proposal that was presented at the May Board of Regents meeting.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/524p12d1.pdf>

Foundation Aid Formula Public Hearings

Commissioner Rosa expressed that she was disappointed with the lack of stakeholder participation in the recently held Foundation Aid Public Hearings. The Commissioner is hopeful that the feedback that was received will be useful in bringing about the necessary changes as work begins on the 2025 NYS Budget this Fall.

Ongoing Advocacy Efforts Relating to Increased Mentoring and Support for New Principals/Administrators and Expanded Flexibilities for Obtaining Administrator Certification

To conclude the meeting, ESSAA members expressed appreciation to the Commissioner and her staff for collaborative meetings that were recently held between NYSED staff and ESSAA representatives.

Mr. Starvaggi thanked Senior Deputy Commissioner Matteson for inviting several members of the ESSAA leadership team to a recent discussion he organized and facilitated on proposed expanded pathways for earning administrator certification.

Mrs. Conklin-Spillane expressed appreciation to Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Accountability, Theresa Billington, for participating in a recent discussion with herself and Mr. Scampini. The meeting focused on strategies to better support recruitment, mentoring and retention of school leaders which continues to be a critically important priority in ESSAA's advocacy efforts.

To request a copy of the **July/August NYSED Informational Summary Update**, that was provided prior to 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.