

State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC)/Stakeholder Meeting

Virtual Meeting Conducted Utilizing Microsoft Teams

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 18th, 2023

Members (in attendance): Dr. Paul Barbato, Elizabeth Alves, John Worthington, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Jocelyn Gottlieb, Cynthia Defina, Peggy McDonald, Debbie Esposito, Scott Longazel, Dr. Carmen Henderson, Dr. Eniola Ajayi, Dr. Lottie Watson, Dr. Pamela Brillante, Dr. Jennifer Vecchiarelli, Dr. Harold Abraham

Members (not in attendance): *All members were in attendance.*

Resource Representatives (in attendance): Eva Scott (CBVI), Daniel Heitner (DOH), Toni Scott (DOL), Donna Holzschuh (JJC), Tamira Chapman (McKinney-Vento), Pheobie Thomas (McKinney-Vento)

Resource Representatives (not in attendance): Tauheedah Hill (DOC)

Proxy Representatives (in attendance): Lori Alter, Jennifer Kaufman

Proxy Representatives (not in attendance): Rafeeza Shahabudeen

Guests from the NJ Department of Education (in attendance): Kimberly Murray, Diana Pasculli, Dr. Damian Petino, Ilene Goy, Wendy Eufemia, Erice Reid, Dr. Chinwe Osondu, Alexandra Pensiero

Stakeholders and Members of the Public (in attendance): Nicholas Pecht, Anjali Viswanath, Lisa Ford, Luke Babits, Michael Pearson Jr., Aviva, Lauren Agoratus

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Paul Barbato at 9:30 a.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

April minutes were reviewed and were approved unanimously with one attendance correction.

Presentation(s)

Office of Special Education Updates

Dr. Damian Petino, Assistant Director for the Office of Special Education, updated SSEAC members on several items pertaining to the Office of Special Education.

Office of Special Education Presentation

“The NEW Local Special Education Profiles” followed by a Q&A

- Presenter: Alexandra Pensiero, Federal Reporting and Engagement Specialist

Council Priority in Focus: Mental Health and Students with Disabilities

Presentation - “Children’s System of Care – An Overview” followed by a Q&A

- Presenter: Nicholas Pecht, Children’s System of Care, NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Council Discussion –

Old Business

Dr. Paul Barbato reminded NJ-SSEAC members about their attendance as reflected under the most recent approved by-laws.

New Business

Dr. Paul Barbato read aloud the first new business item from the agenda. He reported that the June NJ-SSEAC meeting will be held as a hybrid event at the LRC Central in Trenton, New Jersey. The event space holds up to 55 people. Council members will have first right to attendance. *Access to the location and virtual links will be posted on the NJ-SSEAC webpage.*

Alexandra Pensiero, Council Ad Hoc, addressed the council by reminding them of the responsibility to present on June 8th at the final NJ-SSEAC meeting on an overview of their council activities for the year and any recommendations for the following council year, including the expansion of the priorities or recommended action plans.

Announcements

A review of the stakeholder event announcements were read allowed by Dr. Paul Barbato, Council Chairperson, from the agenda.

Public Comment

The chairperson, Dr. Paul Barbato, verbally recited excerpts from the NJ-SSEAC bylaws regarding public comment procedures. He identified the council would not comment during the public portion of the meeting. However, he reported that comments, concerns and recommendations were to inform current and future work of the council.

Sonya Bertini had provided an email to SpEdAdvisoryCouncil@doe.nj.gov. She was not present at the meeting. Dr. Barbato read her email aloud. Her public comment was in regard to multilingual learners and concerns regarding their services and accommodations on testing and exit from ELL testing.

The chairperson invited all public participants to provide further correspondence via email, if they had not done so already. Dr. Barbato concluded to all participants that following written receipt, someone from the Office of Special Education would be in contact with them. Public comments and questions can be submitted to SpEdAdvisoryCouncil@doe.nj.gov.

Adjournment

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 12:32 p.m.