

# **State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC)/Stakeholder Meeting**

## **Virtual Meeting Conducted Utilizing Microsoft Teams**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Members (in attendance):** Dr. Paul Barbato, Elizabeth Alves, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Jocelyn Gottlieb, Cynthia Defina, Peggy McDonald, Scott Longazel, Dr. Carmen Henderson, Dr. Eniola Ajayi, Dr. Pamela Brillante, John Worthington

**Members (not in attendance):** Dr. Jennifer Vecchiarelli, Dr. Harold Abraham

**Resource Representatives (in attendance):** Eva Scott (CBVI), Donna Holzsuh (JJC), Toni Scott (DOL); Laurel Smith (DCF), Daniel Heitner (DOH), Tamira Chapman (McKinney-Vento), Luiz Pereira (OSSS), Peg Kinsell (SPAN)

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

**Proxy Representatives (in attendance):** Jennifer Kaufman, Rafeeza Shahabudeen

**Proxy Representatives (not in attendance):** *All proxy members were in attendance.*

**Guests from the NJ Department of Education (in attendance):** Dr. Damian Petino, Ilene Goy, Wendy Eufemia, Erice Reid, Dr. Chinwe Osondu, Dr. Amanda Philp, Alexandra Pensiero, Victoria Marcheski, JoAnn Johnson, Ashley Pichardo, Jean Kelly, Randy Flaum, Steven Pasternak, Jolie Battista, Jennifer Nicosia, Melissa Pearce, Susan Naples, Nanci Moore, Dona Florence-Mosely, Patricia Fair, Iris DeVaughn, Jill Trainor, Keisha Bolaji, Jaime Jackett, Renee Mincey, Christina Orozco, Adam Kendler, Tiffany Whitaker, Brett Bersano, Janina Zak-Krasucki, Iris DeVaughn, Kristen Gavinelli, Lisa Ruffner, Kelly Allen, Jeannie Weaver,

**Guests and Stakeholders from the Public (in attendance):** Michelle Newell, Jeannie Oneill, Mushana K Dunham Bey, Arielle Skoryk, Dhara Patel, Matt Lawrence-Evans, Dr. Teresa Herrero Taylor, Amy Marini, Michele Rizzo, Luke Babits, Beth Cosentino, Carinne Catalano, Mrs. Battaglia\*, undisclosed phone number\* (732-xxx-xxxx), Steve Kline, Eileen Cardona-Osieja

\*The following members of the public were identified based-on the name/number reflected upon accessing the meeting.

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Paul Barbato at 9:32 a.m.

## **Approvals – Minutes, Interim Assistant Chair**

The November minutes were reviewed and approved (1<sup>st</sup> – Jocelyn Gottlieb; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Scott Longazel; No Corrections).

## **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*

Special Education Spotlight Presentation: “The Waldwick Experience - The Power of Technical Assistance”

- Presenter(s): Dr. Chinwe Osondu, Assistant Director, Office of Special Education, and Erice Reid, Inclusion and State Transformation Specialist, Office of Special Education

### *Council Work Plan Presentation Request*

New Jersey Positive Behavior Supports in Schools (NJPBSIS)

- Presenter: Dr. Terri Erbacher, Certified School Psychologist and Licensed Psychologist, Professor at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, and Author of Suicide in Schools (2023) and Developing Comprehensive School Safety and Mental Health Programs (2021)

Whole Council Action Priority

Looking Ahead: 2024 Local Special Education Profiles

- Presenter(s): Alexandra Pensiero, Federal Reporting and Engagement Specialist, Office of Special Education, and Keisha Bolaji, IDEA Part B Data Manager, Office of Fiscal and Data Services

## **Council Recommendations and Work Plan**

None at this time

## **Council Discussion –**

### **Old Business**

No Old Business items were presented.

### **New Business**

A Bylaw Council Committee requested a motion to open bylaws for possible amendments (Approved: 1<sup>st</sup> – John Worthington; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Eniola Ajayi; No Objections)

## **Announcements**

Debbie Esposito's Memorial Service would be held on 2/26/2024. Information was provided via email to council members.

## **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.*

A parent wrote to [SpEdAdvisoryCouncil@doe.nj.gov](mailto:SpEdAdvisoryCouncil@doe.nj.gov). The public comment was summarized and read aloud to the members of the council. The concerns were in the importance of collecting parent feedback/input regularly beyond the annual parent survey, the barriers in due process and complaints, as well as the individual's concern regarding meeting the needs of gifted students with disabilities.

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](mailto:SpEdAdvisoryCouncil@doe.nj.gov).

## **Adjournment**

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 12:59 p.m.