

State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC)/Stakeholder Meeting

Virtual Meeting Conducted Utilizing Microsoft Teams

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 13th, 2024

Members (in attendance): Dr. Paul Barbato, Elizabeth Alves, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Jocelyn Gottlieb, Dr. Cynthia DeFina, Dr. Peggy McDonald, Dr. Eniola Ajayi, Dr. Pamela Brillante, John Worthington, Dr. Harold Abraham, Dr. Jennifer Vecchiarelli

Members (not in attendance): Scott Longazel, Dr. Carmen Henderson

All appointed council members were in attendance

Resource Representatives (in attendance): Eva Scott (CBVI), Donna Holzschuh (JJC), Aaron Samuels (DOL); Kelley Michalowski (DCF), Daniel Heitner (DOH), Peg Kinsell (SPAN)

Resource Representatives (not in attendance): Tauheedah Hill (DOC), Tamira Chapman (McKinney-Vento), Luiz Periera (OSSS)

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

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

Guests from the NJ Department of Education (in attendance): Dr. Damian Petino, Wendy Eufemia, Dr. Chinwe Osondu, Dr. Amanda Philp, Alexandra Pensiero, Victoria Marcheski, Ashley Pichardo, Iris DeVaughn, Eileen Osieja, Tiffany Whitaker, Melissa Pearce, Nanci Moore, Alison Pankowski, Jaime Jackett, Adam Kendler, Jolie Battista, Elizabeth Guella, Christina Orozco, Melissa Jackson, Joseph DeCuneo, Aracely DiGirolamo, Carla Vicari, Kim Conti, Peter Pendell, Madaline Turula, Colin Deibler, Maria Sooy, Matthew Kane

Guests and Stakeholders from the Public (in attendance): Lauren Agoratus, Beth Cosentino, Luke Babits, Carolyn Hayer, Lisa Marshall, Irene LeFebvre, Janet Bamford, John Burns, Tom Parmalee

*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 9:36 a.m.

Approvals – Minutes

March and May minutes were reviewed and approved.

Presentation(s)

Office of Special Education Updates

- Presenter: Kimberly A. Murray, Director of the Office of Special Education, updated SSEAC members on several items pertaining to the Office of Special Education.

Program Spotlight Presentation

Program Spotlight: Learning Resource Center-South and the New Teacher Academy (NTA)

- Presenters: Jennifer Murphy, Director of Operations and Programming, Learning Resource Center – South; Taija Haller, Technical Assistance Specialist, Learning Resource Center – South

2nd Annual Special Education Celebration

Opening remarks were provided by Dr. Paul Barbato, Council Chairperson, and Kimberly Murray, Director, Office of Special Education.

New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) and ASAH's Innovation in Special Education Award

- Presenters: Irene LeFebvre, Immediate Past President, NJSBA; Lisa Marshall, Chairperson of the Special Education Committee, NJSBA; John Mulholland, Executive Director, ASAH; Janet Bamford, Chief Public Affairs Officer, NJSBA; John Burns, Senior Legislative Counsel, NJSBA; Tom Parmalee, Manager, Communications & Publications, NJSBA
- Awardees: Children's Adapted Physical Education/Creative Arts Support Program, Jersey City Public Schools Creating a Therapeutic Learning Environment, Lyndhurst Public Schools Unified Electives, Ridgewood Public Schools Bombers Beyond Café, Sayreville Public Schools

1st Annual Autism Acceptance Virtual Art Expo – “What’s in a Dream?”

- Presenter: Dr. Amanda Philp, Autism Specialist, Office of Special Education

“Dare to Dream” for Students with Disabilities

- Presenters: Bill Freeman, State Coordinator of Secondary Transition, Office of Special Education; Lisa Augliera, Youth Development Coordinator, NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome & Associated Disorders
- Students Spotlights: “The Power of Self-Advocacy” with Matthew Kane, Montgomery High School; Peter Pendell (Virtual), Madaline Turula (Virtual), Colin Deibler, and Maria Sooy

SPAN Parent Advocacy Network’s “Debbie Esposito: School and Family Partnership Award”

- Presenters: Jocelyn Gottlieb, Interim Assistance Chairperson; Carolyn Hayer, Executive Director, SPAN Parent Advocacy Network; Peg Kinsell, Policy Director, SPAN Parent Advocacy Network
- Awardees: Aracely DiGirolamo, Union Special Education Parent Advisory Group; Carla Vicari, Union Special Education Parent Advisory Group

- Acknowledgement: Kim Conti, Director of Special Services, Township of Union Board of Education

Closing remarks were made by Jocelyn Gottlieb, Council Interim Assistant Chairperson.

Director's Responses to Council Reports and Recommendations

- Kimberly A. Murray, Director of the Office of Special Education, responded to recommendations put forth and approved by the council.

Council Discussion –

Old Business

Council members were provided a link to the Dispute Resolution Findings. Members were notified that this will be a standing item on the agenda moving forward.

New Business

Council members were invited to the Summer Learning Institute hosted by the Office of Special Education during the month of July. This is a series of virtual and in-person training sessions covering a variety of topics relative to improving outcomes and opportunities for students with disabilities.

The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson reviewed the proposed amendments to the NJ-SSEAC By-Laws. Per *Article X. Amendments to By-Laws* "Amendments to...by-laws may be made by a majority vote at a regularly scheduled Advisory Council meeting, providing copies of the proposed amendments have been disseminated to all council members for review and comment at least fifteen (15) days prior to such a meeting." Council members had 28 days to review the proposed amendments. They were unanimously approved during the public meeting.

The Office of Special Education notified the council that a broadcast went out requesting applications to fill council vacancies. Members were urged to share this broadcast within their communication channels.

Members were invited to express interest in being considered for an executive membership role in alignment with the by-law requirements. There was a form provided where they could express interest.

Council members were provided with the anticipated calendar for the 2024-2025 council year.

The Council Ad Hoc reviewed the annual survey findings with the council. Recommendations were presented. The Ad Hoc expressed that findings would be brought forth to the engagement committee and reviewed for further action.

Stakeholders, council members, and members of the public were invited to complete the NJ-SSEAC meeting evaluation form following the formal portion of the meeting.

Announcements

There were no announcements at this time.

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.

No public comments were made via email or during the meeting.

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 1:49 p.m.