

State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC)/Stakeholder Meeting

Virtual Meeting Conducted Utilizing Microsoft Teams

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 21st, 2024

Members (in attendance): Dr. Paul Barbato, Elizabeth Alves, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Jocelyn Gottlieb, Dr. Cynthia DeFina, Scott Longazel, Dr. Pamela Brillante, John Worthington, Dr. Harold Abraham, Dr. Jennifer Vecchiarelli, Diane Perez, Gladasia Trotman*, Amanda Villamar, Sonya Bertini, Dr. Peggy McDonald

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

Resource Representatives (in attendance): Donna Holzschuh (JJC), Toni Scott (DOL); Kelley Michalowski (DCF)*, Rachel LeddenAlbadine (DOH), Lu Periera (OSSS)*, Carolyn Hayer (SPAN), Rakima Stokes-Little (DOC)

Resource Representatives (not in attendance): Eva Scott (CBVI), Irene Lefebvre (NJSBA)

Guests from the NJ Department of Education (in attendance): Kimberly A. Murray, Dr. Damian Petino, Alexandra Pensiero, JoAnn Johnson, Tracy Gillespie, Melissa Pearce, Essence Maradiago, Barbara Haake, Adam Kendler, Randy Flaum, Sarah Schiffelbein, Janina Zak-Krasucki, Eileen Osieja, Christina Orozco, Joseph Dalia, Erice Reid, Iris DeVaughn, Jolie Battista, Sandra A. Gogerty, Talesha Grubbs, Ashley Pichardo, Jean Kelly, Teresa Quigley, Jennifer Nicosia

Guests and Stakeholders from the Public (in attendance): Rafeeza Shahabudeen, Ines S**, Lisa Gaul, JSF**, Jo**, Meghann Bierly, Beth Cosentino, Amy Marini, Jeannie Oneill, Mushana K Dunham Bey, Dr. Julie Norflus-Good, Lianna Narcise, Felicia McCloskey

*Partial attendance is defined as less than 75% of the meeting, as reflected in that SSEAC ByLaws (Article VI(7)). Partial attendance does not count as being present.

**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 9:34 a.m.

Approvals – Minutes

The October 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.

Office of Special Education Presentation

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report: Meeting Brayden

- Presenter: Alexandra Pensiero, Federal Reporting and Engagement Specialist, Office of Special Education

FY22 Equity and Compliance Indicators (4a, 4b, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13) and Stakeholder Input (4a and 4b)

- Presenter: Talesha Grubbs, Special Education Monitor, Office of Special Education; Ashley Pichardo, Special Education Monitor, Office of Special Education; Damian Petino, Assistant Director, Office of Special Education; Alexandra Pensiero, Federal Reporting and Engagement Specialist, Office of Special Education
- Formal Vote:
 - When reviewing indicators 4a and 4b, the council was presented with a series of scenarios to propose lowering the N-Size, cell size, and risk ratio. The formal vote, using mentimeter, was as follows:
 - 79% of the council voted to change the N-size to 20, the cell size to 3, and the risk ratio to 2.5x the state rate.
 - 11% requested not to change the current N-size, cell size, and risk ratio.
 - 11% abstained from voting.
 - When discussing the targets for 4a and 4b, it was proposed to either wait until the OSE establishes baseline to set targets for FY24 and FY25, or the set targets for FY23, without baseline data. The formal vote, using mentimeter, was as follows:
 - 88% proposed to wait to set targets and keep the current targets “as is”.
 - 6% to set targets for FY23, FY24 and FY25 without baseline data.
 - 6% abstained from voting.

Council Discussion –

Old Business

Council members were reminded that there is no December meeting and that the January meeting is hybrid (in-person/virtual).

Council members were provided a link to the Dispute Resolution Findings.

The Director from the Office of Special Education and the Office of Student Support Services responded to the recommendations brought forth by the Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Well-Being for Students with Disabilities Priority Subcommittee. The results of the recommendations were:

- One (1) recommendation was accepted.
- Two (2) recommendations were accepted with edits
- Two (2) recommendations were returned for deeper study.

New Business

Council members were reminded that there is no December meeting and that the January meeting will be hybrid (in-person/virtual).

Jocelyn Gottlieb, assistant chairperson, requested that parent members consider joining the engagement committee to discuss ways to bring the parent voice forward as part of the council meetings and discussions.

Priority subcommittee leads gave their committee updates and reports.

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

Several council members announced training and resource opportunities during the public meeting. The engagement committee captured these announcements and sent them out in an email following the meeting with corresponding links.

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.

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 12:59 p.m.

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