

State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC)/Stakeholder Meeting

Virtual Meeting Conducted Utilizing Microsoft Teams

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 17th, 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

Members (not in attendance): Dr. Peggy McDonald

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

Resource Representatives (not in attendance): *All resource members were in attendance or partial attendance.*

Guests from the NJ Department of Education (in attendance): Kimberly A. Murray, Dr. Damian Petino, Wendy Eufemia, Dr. Amanda Philp, Alexandra Pensiero, Ashley Pichardo, Talesha Grubbs, Iris DeV Vaughn, Dr. Eileen Osieja, Jolie Battista, Elizabeth Guella, Essence Maradiaga, Kristen Gavinelli, Barbara Haake, Jennifer Nicosia, Sandra Gogerty, Jolie Battista, Kelly Jean, Tracy Gillespie, Christina Orozco, Adam Kendler, Jaime Jackett, Tania Mongioi

Guests and Stakeholders from the Public (in attendance): Corinne Catalano, Luke Babits, Jessica Shedaker, Shawn Rebman, 609-815-XXXX(**), JM**, JG**, Mushana K Dunham Bey, Jeannie Oneill, Jennifer Goodell, John**, Amy Marini, Meghann Bierly

*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 9:30 a.m.

Approvals – Minutes

The June 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

619 Coordinator Update – Guidance, Resources and Projects

- Presenter: Jennifer Nicosia, 619 Coordinator, Office of Special Education

About the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report

- Presenter: Damian Petino, Assistant Director, Office of Special Education; Alexandra Pensiero, Federal Reporting and Engagement Specialist, Office of Special Education

Council Discussion –

Old Business

Council members were reminded to upload their headshots into the google drive for use on the website and annual report.

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

The Social and Emotional Well-Being for Students with Disabilities Priority Subcommittee brought forth formal recommendations amended from 2023-2024. The recommendations were presented to the council and unanimously approved. Recommendations will be responded to by the Director for the Office of Special Education during the November meeting.

New Business

The Chairperson nominated Interim Assistant Chairperson, Jocelyn Gottlieb, to become Assistant Chairperson. Paul motioned for approved, two appointed members provided a first and second to the motion. Jocelyn Gottlieb is now the Assistant Chairperson.

Stakeholders, council members, and members are 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.

Two public comments were made:

- A group of individuals who facilitate their district Special Education Parent Advisory Groups (SEPAGs) identified, in an email, there is a lack of partnership and effective use of SEPAGs at the local level. This email was read aloud by the Chairperson.

- An individual spoke publicly regarding her perceptions of special education, including the lack of facilitation of their district SEPAG group and the inequities they experienced in their local education agency.

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 12:58 p.m.

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