

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

**Hybrid Meeting – Held at 200 Riverview Complex at the Learning Resource Center in Trenton, NJ and Virtually on Microsoft Teams**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Paul Barbato at 9:34 a.m.

### **Acceptance of Minutes**

May minutes were reviewed and approved.

### **Presentation(s)**

#### *Opening Remarks*

Dr. Paul Barbato, Chairperson, welcomed members of the council, the New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Board Association, Awardees, Stakeholders, and members of the public. Dr. Barbato reviewed NJ-SSEAC's bylaws as they pertain to public meetings and public comments.

### **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.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> 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: Barry Walker, NJSBA Vice President for County Meetings; Irene LeFebvre, Co-Chairperson, NJSBA Special Education Committee; Lisa Miller, Co-Chairperson, NJSBA Special Education Committee; Brian Detlefsen, Board of Trustees President, ASAH; John Mulholland, Executive Director, ASAH; Lori Perlow, Interim Chief Public Affairs Officer, NJSBA
- Awardees: Center for Education (The Center for Agriculture); Lebanon Township School District (Caught Being Kind); South Bergen Jointure Commission (Yoga and Mindfulness)

#### *2<sup>nd</sup> Autism Acceptance Virtual Art Expo – "Spotlight the Spectrum"*

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

### *“Dare to Dream” for Students with Disabilities Spotlights*

- Presenters: Bill Freeman, State Coordinator of Secondary Transition, Office of Special Education; JoAnn Johnson, Transition Specialist, Office of Special Education; Sarah Spitzmiller, Transition Specialist, Office of Special Education
- Students Spotlighted: Ryder Pollack, Marlene Brockington, Birgitta Pottle, and Timothy Frazier

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

- Presenters: Stefanie Babits, SPAN Parent Advocacy Network; Beth Constantino, SPAN Parent Advocacy Network (on behalf of Carolyn Hayer, Executive Director, SPAN Parent Advocacy Network; Peg Kinsell, Policy Director, SPAN Parent Advocacy Network)
- Awardees: Jacquelyn Rochacewicz, Parent (SEPAG) Co-Chair, Washington Township Schools; Sarah Cipolletti, Parent (SEPAG) Co-Chair, Washington Township Schools
- Acknowledgement: Antonella Lind, Superintendent, Washington Township Board of Education; Denise Scairpon, Director of Special Education, Washington Township Board of Education

### *New Jersey Pathways for Post-Secondary Success Logo Contest*

- Presenters: Dr. Damian Petino, Project Director, Office of Special Education; JoAnn Johnson, Transition Specialist, Office of Special Education
- Awardee: Pinelands Regional School District (Student)

Jocelyn Gottlieb, Council Assistant Chairperson, made closing remarks.

### **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.

#### **New Business**

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.

Council members were provided with the anticipated calendar for the 2025-2026 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.

The Engagement Committee reviewed their discussions and recommendations for the 2024-2025 council year. Recommendations were not required for formal approval by the council, but for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Chairperson reminded council members that communication on behalf of the council is done so through the Executive Committee.

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 that 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.*

An individual, as part of her engagement with the Learning Disabilities Association of New Jersey (LDANJ), made a public comment regarding exposure to neurotoxins and the impact it has on learning, attention, and developmental effects. The public comment highlighted the need for both advocacy and advisory measures while simultaneously preventing chemical exposure.

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 12:43 p.m.