

State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC)/Stakeholder Meeting

Hybrid Meeting Conducted In-Person at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ and

Utilizing the Microsoft Surface Hub via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 20th, 2025

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

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

Resource Representatives (in attendance): Donna Holzschuh (JJC), Luiz Periera (OSSS), Carolyn Hayer (SPAN), Rakima Stokes-Little (DOC), Irene Lefebvre (NJSBA), Jessica Cubberley (CBVI), Amy Gallagher* (State McKinney-Vento), Melissa Shukis (DCF), Toni Scott (DOL)

Resource Representatives (not in attendance): Rachel LeddenAlbadine (DOH)

Guests from the NJ Department of Education (in attendance): Kimberly Murray, Dr. Damian Petino, Barbara Haake, Ilene Goy, Melissa Pearce, Alexandra Pensiero, Sarah Schiffelbein, Tracy Gillespie, Eileen Osieja, Jenifer Spear, Christina Orozco, Teresa Quigley, JoAnn Johnson, Melissa Jackson, Jean Kelly, Joseph Dalia, Jennifer Nicosia, Iris DeV Vaughn

Guests and Stakeholders from the Public (in attendance): 1973349XXXX**, Jeannie Oniell, JF**, Robyn B** Meghann Bierly, Dr. Julie Norflus-Good, JA**, Luke Babits, Lauren Agoratus, Amy Marini, Renay Zamloot, Machenzie DiMaria Kai Collins, Anjali Viswanath, 1347413XXXX**, 1941228XXXX**, pk**, 1802343XXXX**, Susan C. Toughill

*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 February minutes will be reviewed and approved at the following meeting.

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

FY22 Achievement of Students with Disabilities (Indicators 3 and 7)

- Presenters: Ilene Goy, Preschool Specialist, Office of Special Education; Jennifer Nicosia, State Early Childhood (619) Special Education Coordinator, Office of Special Education; and, Alexandra Pensiero, Federal Reporting and Engagement Specialist, Office of Special Education

Priority Subcommittee Requested Presentation

Utilizing NJ SCI to Foster Inclusion and Belonging for All

- Presenter: Kelly Allen, Manager, Office of Student Support Services

Council Discussion –

Old Business

Council members reflected on February’s presentations and alignment with council priorities.

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

New Business

Council members were reminded of their upcoming responsibilities to complete the membership survey, submit their intent to return for the 2025-2026 Council Year, and complete their annual subcommittee reports.

Council members were notified that there would be open vacancies depending on the number of members returning. Application process and announcements were forthcoming.

The Executive Committee proposed to open the NJ-SSEAC bylaws to specifically review the public meeting and public comment procedure section. The chairperson called a motion to approve. *John Worthington made the 1st motion. Peggy McDonald made the 2nd motion.*

Council Ad Hoc reviewed the upcoming meeting reminders and proposed topics as outlined on the agenda.

Jocelyn Gottlieb, assistant chairperson, reviewed the status and activities of the engagement committee, prioritizing parent and family voices.

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 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.

Meghan Bierly made a public comment reinforcing sentiments shared by council members following the presentations. The focus and nature of her public comments centered on the equity of access to multi-tiered systems of support, emphasizing a gap between theory and practice. She also discussed her concerns and experiences with adequate support and services. She further reiterated prior public comment statements about concerns regarding the dispute resolution process and the barriers that families face in the process.

Anjali Viswanath made a public comment to address the limited access that some students with disabilities have regarding access to specialists in their local education agencies.

The chairperson invited all public participants to provide further correspondence via email, if they had not already done so. Dr. Barbato concluded by informing all participants that, following receipt of the written submission, 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 1:02 p.m.