

State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC)/Stakeholder Meeting

Virtually on Microsoft Teams

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 20th, 2025

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Paul Barbato at 9:30 a.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

October minutes were reviewed and approved.

- 1st Motion: John Mulholland
- 2nd Motion: Jocelyn Gottlieb

Presentation(s)

Opening Remarks

Dr. Paul Barbato, Chairperson, welcomed members of the council, the New Jersey Department of Education, Stakeholders, and members of the public. Dr. Barbato reviewed NJ-SSEAC's bylaws as they pertain to council responsibilities, public meeting procedures, and engagement with the members of the public.

Presentation(s)

Standing Update: Office of Special Education Updates

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

Program Spotlight: Addressing Significant Disproportionality in New Jersey

- Presenter: Dr. Eddie Fergus, Executive Project Director, Rutgers University Disproportionality and Equity Lab, Professor of Urban Education and Policy

Priority Subcommittee Request: Evaluating Post-School Success in the Adult System: How Do We Know What We Are Doing Is Working?

- Toni Scott, Program Planning and Development Specialist, Program Unit- Youth Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Council Discussion –

Old Business

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

The NJ-SSEAC By-Law amendments were presented during the October meeting. Council members had 28 days to review the proposed amendments. At the meeting, the Chairperson moved for review and formal vote by council members. By-laws were unanimously approved with a 1st motion by Jocelyn Gottlieb and a 2nd motion by Irene LeVbre.

New Business

The Ad Hoc of the council informed the council members of upcoming meeting topics and agendas.

Priority subcommittees had the opportunity to provide updated information on their activities and discussions.

The Ad Hoc reminded the council of best practices for council priority committee explorations.

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.

A public comment was received via email. The Assistant Chairperson read the public comment aloud. A representative of the New Jersey Coalition for Learners (i.e., NJ Learners) reminded the Council of its advisory role and requested that SSEAC study incentive structures within New Jersey's special education dispute system. The commenter urged examination of (1) the insurance-based legal defense model and (2) the use of non-disclosure agreements in settlements, citing concerns about increased disputes, reduced transparency, and harm to families. The Coalition asked SSEAC to initiate a formal study, track measurable indicators, and issue advisory recommendations to NJDOE to align dispute resolution with educational, rather than liability-driven, objectives.

The chairperson invited all public participants to provide further correspondence via email if they had not already done so. Dr. Barbato informed all participants that upon written receipt, someone from the Office of Special Education would contact them. Public comments and questions can be submitted to SpEdAdvisoryCouncil@doe.nj.gov.

Adjournment

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

Minute Appendix: Links Shared During Meeting

<p>BOGGS Center (Person Centered Approach to Successful Transition (PCAST))</p>	<p>PCAST Statewide trainings are listed here: https://boggscenterregistration.rwjms.rutgers.edu/index.php/event/training</p>
<p>SPAN Parent Advocacy Network</p>	<p>Lunch and learn on 11/25, Family Engagement in Literacy: Policy Legislation Early Literacy in Schools. Registration is still open.</p> <p>Special Education Parent Leader Roundtable on 12/11 at 7:00 on Zoom with guest presenter the NJDOE discussing the role of the NJ-SSEAC. Registration is open.</p> <p>To view all of SPAN’s upcoming events, follow us on Eventbrite and subscribe to the Bridge Newsletter</p>
<p>NJDOE Office of Student Support Services</p>	<p>Save the Dates (see Flyer): An interactive webinar series to provide an overview of New Jersey’s Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS). Drs. Foster and Lekwa will outline the foundational components of NJTSS and demonstrate how they can be applied to meet I&RS requirements.</p> <p>Participants will explore Guiding Success: The New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS) and Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) in New Jersey Schools. Presenters will introduce an exciting opportunity for districts to participate in an upcoming Community of Practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part One: Connecting the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports and Intervention & Referral Services (December 4th, 2025) • Part Two: March 5th, 2026 • Part Three: April 29th, 2026
<p>New Jersey Department of Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACNJ and NJ Healthcare Quality Institute are conducting critical listening sessions on family access to mental health services for children 5 and under as part of the Mental Health Mapping Project. • Registration link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7LSBKJS • Please contact jdesimone@njhcqi.org
<p>New Jersey Association of Special Education Partner Schools</p>	<p>2025-2026 Parent Webinar Series: https://linktr.ee/NJASEPS</p>