

CURRENT NEWS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

WINTER 2018/19

Special Education Board

The Special Education Board will meet for its second meeting during the first weekend in February. Plans will be finalized for the Special Education Conference to be held March 22-23, 2019 at the Omni Bedford Springs, as well as information and discussion around special populations in the Commonwealth, current trends and the impacts of schools identified through ESSA's Future Ready Index, either CSI or TSI.

Professional Learning Exchange

The Education Services Department has expanded content offerings in a variety of ways to meet the professional learning needs of our members for the 2018-19 school year and beyond. On-line as well as in person trainings are available. Additionally, we have added a book series and webinars throughout the school year, and they will continue in the summer months. Specifically, YA literature, Growth Mindset and the novel *The Reason I Jump* will be featured June through August. Knowing members have a variety of summer plans, we have tried to offer each experience on two occasions to accommodate different schedules. Please check out the Center for Professional Learning for opportunities to earn Act 48 and Chapter 14 credit on the website in the member's portal.

ESSA Implementation

The ESSA workgroup continues to develop information for local leaders and members as schools begin to be identified for improvement. As a civil rights law, the Every Student Succeeds Act requires the identification of students that are underserved and in need of greater support. One method is through the identification of the bottom 5% of Title I schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) based on state standardized test proficiency, state standardized test growth, graduation rates, English learner progress toward proficiency, chronic absenteeism, and career readiness. This accountability system also identifies any school, not just Title I, where subgroups (with at least 20 students) are performing at the same level as the bottom 5% of Title I schools even though the rest of the school is performing above those levels. These schools are identified for Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TSI). One subgroup is students with disabilities. Out of 193 schools identified in Pennsylvania for A-TSI, 139 are identified because of this subgroup. Through the remainder of the school year, CSI and A-TSI schools will be developing a school improvement plan to address those deficiencies and will have three years to effect improvements. Stakeholder engagement is required in the development of the plans, so talk to your UniServ and your administration to find out how you can

be a part of that dialogue. To learn more, see PDE's [School Improvement and Accountability](#) webpage and PSEA's [ESSA](#) webpage.

Special Education Advisory Panel

The third meeting of the state Special Education Advisory Panel occurred January 17-18, 2019. Information was shared from various providers across the state. The Harrisburg PaTTAN office will now be heading all behavioral initiatives (formerly in Pittsburgh) with an emphasis on mental health and ties to the MTSS process. Data on the Dyslexia pilot project is now being compiled with a report to be released later in the spring. Educational programming in Residential Treatment is under scrutiny by the Education Law Center and Differentiated Cyclical Monitoring is coming. Additional training as well as focus on capturing "real time data" are two goals of the model. Stakeholder input meetings will occur in the coming months across the state. Attendance is encouraged.

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) presented information regarding upcoming initiatives for early intervention programming. Internal assessments have identified weaknesses in assessment and evaluation of social / emotional development. They are moving toward a statewide coaching model to improve outcomes for children with a focus on social/emotional learning. Grants for Positive Behavior Support and Inclusive practices have been obtained.

State Board of Education

The State Board met in early January. Committee updates for Vocation-Technical Education and School and University Safety took place. Of note, the Board approved a one-year extension for Schuylkill Technology Center to meet compliance standards. Chapter 49 proposed regulation changes were presented to the state board and public hearings will take place in March and April. The need to continue work with school counselors to accomplish the goals of Chapter 339 was discussed by the Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education. A presentation by the Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education generated strong discussion around the new and expanded graduation requirements under Act 1. Information was shared regarding the challenges and opportunities to schools who are identified with ESSA implementation. Minimal refinements to the state plan are expected in the early spring. Additionally, it was reported that participation was high, and comments were beneficial during the Chapter 16 re-authorization discussions. That process will move forward in the coming months.

Training

Education Services has had the opportunity to meet many EA and ESP members through trainings and advocacy throughout the state this fall and winter. As Education Services endeavors to meet the needs of all members, we encourage you to share ideas for professional development moving forward.

Looking Ahead

Registration will remain open through February 14th for the Special Education Conference, but space is limited and filling up quickly, so please make plans to join us!