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Advisory Committee for Federally Funded Programs

Friday, March 22, 2024

ACFFP Members in Attendance

Lorraine Aklonis; Maurita Bivans, Caria Block-Ropiecki, Bridgette Burt, Gerry Crisonino; Tatsiana DaGrosa, Diahann DeRuggiero. Linda DiGiacomo, Vicki Duff, Barbara Evans, Amy Fratz, Rosie Grant, James Knipper, Wanda Knox, Charles Kolinofsky, Janina Kusielewicz, Jeannine Lanphear, Phillis Lewis, Heather Mills-Pevonis, Michale Patron, Brenda Patterson -Toppin, Regina Postogna, Tom Puryear, Michelle Redd, Bickram Singh, Liane Stone-Ingalls, Mercedes Tellez-Gil, Pheobie Thomas; Ana Washington

NJDOE Staff in Attendance

Cierra Belin, Cary Booker, Eileen Burch, Antoinette Caldwell-Wong, Keshia Golding-Cooper, Tamira Chapman, Christopher Cox, Jill Dobrowansky, Aida Epifanio, Leslie Franks-McRae, Barbara, Haake, John Iko, Jessica Merville, Susan Naple, Dianna Pasculli, Haydee Prez, Barbara Pugh, Lori Ramella, Maria Romero, Daniel Sackner, Lisa Sansome, Crystal Siniari, Saba Suleman, Azan Waddell, Constance Webster, Anthony Wright

Guest/Proxies

Dan Goldman (NJEA),

The meeting was conducted remotely via Microsoft TEAMS

Call to Order and Greeting

Dr. A. Charles Wright, Executive Director/Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Division of Educational Services

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 am, by Dr. Wright, welcomed everyone present to the March meeting. He then offered the following quote.

“By passing this bill, we bridge the gap between helplessness and hope for more than five million educationally deprived children.

We put into the hands of our youth more than thirty million new books, and into many of our schools their first libraries.

We reduce the terrible time lag in bringing new teaching techniques into the Nation's classrooms.

We strengthen State and local agencies which bear the burden and the challenge of better education.

And we rekindle the revolution--the revolution of the spirit against the tyranny of ignorance.”

Lyndon B. Johnson, Remarks After Signing Bill Providing Funds for Programs Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Review of January 26, 2024, ACFFP Meeting Highlights

Dr. A. Charles Wright, Executive Director/Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Division of Educational Services

The January 26, 2024, meeting notes were sent out in advance electronically for members to review. Dr. Wright, asked the assembled body if there were any questions, comments, or concerns. Seeing no comments in the Chat Box, Dr. Wright, requested the meeting notes be entered into the records as accepted by the body. Once again, we would like to acknowledge advanced feedback received from Ms. Wanda Knox.

Federal Update

Ms. Aida Epifanio, Federal Liaison
Office of Strategic Operations

Ms. Epifanio began by informing the assembled body that there were no major updates to report. On Thursday, February 27, 2024, Congress reached a short-term deal to provide ongoing funding for government operations until March 8th, for the Department of Education and other agencies until March 22nd.

On February 25th the United State Department of Education (USDE) released guidance for the use of Title I funds for State, districts, and schools on how to use funds to expand access to high quality preschool for three- and four-year olds in a range of settings to include schools, head start and community-based organizations. Ms. Epifanio pointed out “the above is in addition to what New Jersey is already doing.” The State of New Jersey has been a leader in expanding access to high quality preschools.” Governor Murphy’s fiscal year 2025 budget proposed an additional \$124 million for preschool education, including \$20 million to expand high quality full day preschool programs.

See slides 5 through 19 of the ACFFP slide deck sent out on Tuesday, March 26, 2024. In addition, Ms. Epifanio provided links to documents of interest in the Chat Box which were added to the ACFFP Q&A sent out to all members Tuesday, March 26, 2024.

US Department of Labor Apprenticeship & Training Program Overview

Ms. Nicole Field, Apprenticeship & Training Representative
Mr. Kwame Floyd, Executive Director for Teacher Apprenticeship

Ms. Fields began by informing those assembled, due to the current shortages of qualified, certified teachers, one of the big initiatives coming out of DC right now is apprenticeships in education. She went on to explain the Teacher Apprenticeship program and how it can help school districts find and mentor the teachers of tomorrow, by providing a greater educator, pathway, and stronger student outcomes.

Currently there is a need for committed employers to get involved at the school district level. The purpose of this apprenticeship program is for candidates to earn while they learn. So, they come out with no additional debt. At the end of the program the successful candidate will be credentialed by the state, they will receive a national portable credential from USDL as well.

Mr. Floyd began by reiterating the purpose of the DOL apprenticeship program is to serve as an intermediary between the Department of Education, Department of Labor, and the school districts. He went on to say, we are here to support the school districts to think about ways to leverage all of the various apprenticeship models to meet the need you have. Districts can see this program as the arms, eyes and ears to connect the dots for you between the initiatives that the Department of Labor has as well as the requirements on the NJDOE side. (See sides 12 through 23).

ESSA Implementation

Office of Supplemental Educational Programs

Ms. Leslie Franke-McRae, Director, Office of Educational Programs
Ms. Franks-McRae

Ms. Franks-McRae introduced the group to New Jersey's 2024 National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators, Distinguished School. Requested volunteers to review minor changes made to the relevant sections of the ESEA State Plan that houses the implementation of students experiencing homelessness, migrant education, and Title III. Presented information on the upcoming Title II, Part A United States Department of Education's Use of Funds Survey going out to select districts over the next few weeks. Informed the group of the launching of the McKinney-Vento: New Jersey's College Initiative for Students Experiencing Homelessness with ARP-HCY funding. (See slides 25 through 30)

Office of Performance Management

Ms. Jessica Merville, Director

The NJDOE is planning to officially release the 2022-2023 School Performance Report's on April 3rd, after they are presented to the State Board of Education. Ms. Merville reminded the group of the current embargoed preview period which started March 13th and will continue through March 28th. She added, the public release will include detailed and summary reports for schools and districts, statewide details report, databases containing all the data in the reports, supporting resource documents, and translated Spanish versions of the reports. (See slides 31 through 33)

Office of Grants Management

Ms. Jill Dobrowansky, Grants Specialist

Ms. Dobrowansky reminded the group of the Amend-Spend Campaign focusing on fiscal accountability, and proper spend down of the ARP ESSER funds. In addition, she reminded those present of the upcoming TAs designed to offer best practices from districts across the state as well as, an upcoming Broadcast with final expenditure report information.

Important dates to remember:

- Project period ends June 30, 2024
- Final Expenditure Reports will be released in August.

- Final Expenditure Report information will be forthcoming via Broadcast Memos. (See slides 34 through 39).

Office of Fiscal and Data Services

Ms. Haydee Perez-Livingston, Educational Specialist

The FY 2024 Collaborative Federal Desk Monitoring has begun. Ms. Perez provided the list of twenty districts targeted that were notified in October 2023 of their selection for a desk monitoring based on the 23-24 Risk Assessment Tool with the fourteen risk indicators used for identification. Monitoring will be conducted between December 2023 and April 2024. Monitoring reports will be sent via email in the Spring of 2024 with instructions on reporting evidence to resolve any findings they may have with a 45-day corrective action response time (See slides 40 through 47).

Office of Inter-District Choice and Nonpublic Schools

Dr. Constance Webster, Nonpublic Ombudsman

Dr. Webster reminded the assembled that Nonpublic Consultation should be on-going throughout the grant program period. In addition, planning for the FY2024-2025 grant cycle should start now. The department has provided a Nonpublic Consultation Toolkit to assist the districts with the consultation process. (See slides 28 through 50)

Meeting ended at 11:51 am

Next Meeting, Friday, May 17, 2024

**MEETING WILL BE HYBRID-REMOTE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS AND
IN-PERSON AT THE LRC CENTRAL, 200 RIVERVIEW PLAZA, TRENTON, NJ**