

State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC)/Stakeholder Meeting

Virtually on Microsoft Teams

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 16, 2026

Call to Order

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

Acceptance of Minutes

March minutes were reviewed and approved.

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.

Standing Update: Office of Special Education Updates

- Presenter: Dr. Alexandra Pensiero, Office of Special Education, provided standing updates to SSEAC members on items pertaining to the Office of Special Education.

Standing Updates and Program Spotlight: Local Education Agency (LEA) Special Education Monitoring Process, and Targeted Reviews: Indicators 4A/4B, 11, 12, and 13

- Presenters: Yasmin Burrell, Coordinator of Special Education Monitoring, Office of Special Education; Tricia Fair, Coordinator of Special Education Monitoring, Office of Special Education; Dr. Talesha Grubbs, Monitor, Office of Special Education; Ashley Pichardo, Monitor, Office of Special Education; Dr. Vickie Marcheski, Monitor and Indicator 4A/B Lead, Office of Special Education; Owen Buchanan, Monitor and Indicator 11 Lead, Office of Special Education; Iris DeVaughn, Monitor and Indicator 12 Lead, Office of Special Education; Katie Fallon, Monitor and Indicator 13 Lead, Office of Special Education.

Program Spotlight: Autism Acceptance and Updates from the Office of Special Education

- Presenters: Dr. Amanda Philp, Coordinator of New Jersey Special Education Autism Programs, Office of Special Education; Kaitlin Eberhardt, Autism Specialist, Office of Special Education.

Old Business

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

New Business

The Ad Hoc of the council informed council members of upcoming meeting topics, timelines, and agendas, including the following:

- Annual Membership Evaluation (Deadline: May 21, 2026)
- Application Period and Process for Upcoming Vacancies (Anticipated Release: April 29, 2026; Application Deadline: May 15, 2026)
- Subcommittee Draft Reports (Due via email to the Executive Board by April 24, 2026)
- Presentation Slides Draft due April 27, 2026 (from Ad Hoc); subcommittee edits due by May 1, 2026; council members to receive presentations by May 6, 2026 (15-day review); Formal Consideration and Approval on May 21, 2026

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

- Priority 1: Least Restrictive Environment
- Priority 2: Family Engagement
- Priority 3: Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior and Early Literacy
- Priority 4: Special Education Student Outcomes

Announcements

Several council members announced training and resource opportunities during the public meeting. Announcement and links can be found in the appendices.

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.

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 12:11 p.m.

Following the public meeting, council members were asked to remain on the meeting to continue subcommittee breakout discussions and annual report development.

Minute Appendix: Links Shared During Meeting

Several council members announced training and resource opportunities during the public meeting. The engagement committee captured these announcements and will distribute them via email following the meeting with corresponding links.

Organization	Resource / Event
BOGGS Center (NJPBSIS)	https://www.pbsisnj.org
Learning Resource Center – South (LRC-South)	https://go.rowan.edu/lrcsouthevents
New Teacher Academy	2026-2027 New Teacher Academy Professional Learning Communities
New Jersey Preschool Inclusion Education Project (NJPIEP)	Preschool Inclusion Leadership Conference – Eventbrite Registration
New Jersey Inclusion Project (All In)	All In Summer Inclusion Leadership Conference 2026
BOGGS Center (PCAST)	PCAST Statewide Trainings
TCNJ's Assistive Technology Project	https://atcenter.tcnj.edu/professional-development-opportunities/
TCNJ's DeafBlind TA Project	https://njcsd.tcnj.edu/programs/new-jersey-center-on-deafblindness/
Rutgers' Family Engagement Project (BRIDGE)	Family Engagement Events
NJ Center on Deafblindness / TCNJ State Summit	State Summit Registration
Parent Literacy Summit (NJIDA/FDU/Decoding Dyslexia)	Parent Literacy Summit – Eventbrite Registration
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network	SPAN Upcoming Events – Eventbrite
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DOL)	https://nj.gov/labor/career-services/special-services/individuals-with-disabilities/src.shtml
New Jersey Council for Exceptional Children (NJCEC)	https://njcec.org/conference
New Jersey Association of Special Education	Resilience of Caregivers

Organization	Resource / Event
Partner Schools (NJASEPS)	
NJ Department of Health	Transition from Early Intervention to Pre-School System

Recent Broadcasts Shared:

- [2026-2027 New Teacher Academy Professional Learning Communities](#)
- [K-3 Parent and Family Resources](#)
- [Third Annual Autism Acceptance Virtual Art Expo: Autism in Action](#)
- [Raising Mental Health Awareness by Lighting Up Green for May, Mental Health Month](#)
- [Guidance on the Requirement to Appoint a School Physician for the Provision of Health Services](#)
- [Kindergarten Professional Development Video Resources](#)
- [Update Regarding the Provision of Home Instruction](#)
- [Updated Requirements for Training School Staff in the Care of Students with Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders](#)
- [Call for Applications for Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition \(PCAST\) – Deadline: April 30, 2026](#)
- [All Voices, One Vision: Partnering with Students, Families, and Communities for School Mental Health – Deadline: April 28, 2026](#)
- [List of State-Imposed Special Education Rules, Regulations, or Policies](#)
- [Updates for the 2025-2026 NJSLEDS Course Roster Submission](#)
- [School District and School HIB Grades Required by the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act](#)
- [2025-2026 Application for Extraordinary Special Education Aid \(EXAID\)](#)
- [Lessons from the Field Webinar Series: Autism Program Quality Indicators-Revised \(APQI-R\)](#)