

November Board of Regents Information

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For the complete Commissioner's November report to the Board, go to
<http://oms32.nysed.gov/comm/2008/1108commrep.htm>

Commissioner Mills' monthly report for November highlights several points. He briefly touched on English Language Learners, Foundation Aid, CTE programs, Technology and auditor training.

Subcommittee on Financial Aid:

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/2008Meetings/November2008/1108monthaid.html>

Discussion was held regarding a conceptual proposal on state aid to school districts for school year 2009-10. Regent Tallon, who heads the committee, denoted that while there is a draft proposal document, he wants to further discuss and not submit a formal proposal to the whole board until the base has been established by the Governor. There are possible mid-year cuts which are very disruptive. Two years ago the legislature adopted a phase-in foundation formula. This formula looks at what level of funding is considered "adequate". The phase-in formula was to occur over a 4 year period. This may now have to be stretched out to 6 years due to the financial crisis. It's not just about saving money, but when and where it can be saved. The issue of reserves came up. Question came up about opening discussion on the whole foundation formula. Though there was much discussion, no conclusion was made.

EMSC (Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education):

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/2008Meetings/November2008/1108monthem.html>

- 1. Excelsior Scholar's Program:** brief discussion was held on amending section 100.14 of the Regulations of the Commissioner, relating to the Excelsior Scholars Program, to clarify procedures for the nomination of eligible students by superintendents. Amend by adding: provided that in school districts that have fewer than 10 eligible students, the superintendent may nominate one such student. Effective 12/10/08
- 2. CTE (Career & Technical Education) programs:** There was a lot of discussion on the possible expansion of CTE programs and how to better utilize/expand the programs/services to districts. Questions were asked on what the difficulties were in expanding CTE programs. Responses included finances (payments from State Ed are lagged by 1 year); the issue of what programs to have – what is attractive to students vs. the economic development/businesses in the area; traditional programs seem to be what students are drawn to; locating the right staff; the ongoing struggle of differentiating instruction to effectively meet all student needs. Other barriers: cost of BOCES programs to school districts – guidance counselors are the "gatekeepers"; linking the technology to the field; misperceptions of what BOCES is.
- 3. ELL (English Language Learners):** This discussion was brought up short when data was questioned. Dismal performance has been indicated. Is there any "best way" for instruction of these students? Which approach rises to the top? With all of this data collection, what is actually working? Are teachers really getting the training that they need to work with ELL students? * The Regents basically stopped the presentation and asked for more specific information with regards to the data.

VESID (Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities):

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/2008Meetings/November2008/1108monthve.html>

1. **Transition Planning and Services for Students with Disabilities:** Transition planning has been required of school districts since 1990. Only recently though has data been being collected on this. Approx. 116 school districts are required to report on transition planning for students ages 15-21 years. For the 06-07 school year, 33% of districts were in compliance; 07-08 46% were compliant. While this is an increase, there is still much growth that needs to occur in this area. Post school outcomes are also assessed. The following recommendations are made: In the upcoming year, the Regents will discuss and make decisions on important policy issues that will have a significant impact on courses of study, transition planning and post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. These include, but are not limited to:
 - The IEP diploma
 - Extension of the graduation Safety Net for students with disabilities
 - Career and Technical Education Programs and access to such programs by students with disabilities
 - Career and Diploma Standards and Objectives (CDOS)
 - Supporting a five year graduation rate for NCLB accountability
2. **VESID State Rehabilitation Council(SRC) Report:** The 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act require VESID to convene and administer the SRC. The Council serves as an important vehicle for communication between VESID management and key constituencies committed to improving employment outcomes for New Yorkers with disabilities. The committee discussed an overview of the report. VESID is in the process of developing a web-based employer “Selectory,” identifying employers across the State that have had experience in hiring New Yorkers with disabilities.
3. **Impact of Hiring Freeze and Budget Reductions on VESID capacity:** VESID (Section 110 federal funds authorized through the Rehabilitation Act) employs more than 700 staff members, at 15 regional offices, who provide direct vocational rehabilitation services to more than 50,000 New Yorkers with disabilities each year. Approximately 13,000 of these individuals are placed in jobs each year, with a combined annualized earning of more than \$200 million resulting in an estimated \$15 million savings in public assistance costs.

These opportunities are critical because the employment rate for people with disabilities in New York State is less than half the rate for people without disabilities. The 2006 American Community Survey (ACS) indicates that only 33.5 percent of working-age New Yorkers with disabilities are employed as compared to 77.9 percent of people without disabilities.

Based on a review of available data, under an Order of Selection, approximately 40 percent or 20,000 individuals currently served by VESID may not be able to fully participate in the program. A portion of VESID is supported by State case service and supported employment allocations.

The impact of the recent \$2.7 million reduction in State case service dollars and the inability to restore \$.9 million in supported employment funding will potentially result in the following:

- An inability to meet Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements. As per the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, failure to maintain State effort results in a dollar for dollar federal penalty.
- Approximately 13,000 individuals with disabilities are placed in jobs each year, with a combined annualized earning of more than \$200 million resulting in an estimated \$15 million savings in public assistance costs. These outcomes may not be able to be sustained.
- For every dollar expended on individuals with disabilities and employment services, it is estimated that the State receives a \$7 return*. The reduction in case service dollars, which

- are utilized to purchase employment services, will reduce the number of individuals with disabilities employed, thus reducing State revenue and increasing reliance on public assistance.
- A reduction in the broad range vocational services provided by VESID to youth, veterans, injured workers, and individuals with physical, mental and developmental disabilities. Services essential to enhancing health, safety, and economic security of individuals with disabilities would be jeopardized.

Higher Education:

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/2008Meetings/November2008/1108monthhe.html>

- 1. Discussion regarding professional development for school leaders:** The proposal before the Regents for discussion this month would update the school district professional development planning process to include professional development for school leaders as well as teachers.
- 2. 2008 Progress Report on the Regents Statewide Plan for Higher Education, 2004-2012:** Section 237 requires the Board to report to the Governor and the Legislature on progress in carrying out the Plan at its half-way mark. You can view a draft of the Progress Report (approx 15 pages). It addresses each of the 13 priorities in the Plan and the Indicators of Progress for each priority. Under each priority, it identifies actions by the Department and each sector and makes reference, as appropriate, to the Regents P-16 Action Plan and to the final report of the Commission on Higher Education.