

Public Relations, Advocacy & Legislative Committee

Meeting Notes

Monday, 1/24/2022

1. New Business

- Changes to PRAL Meeting Schedule: **February 22, March 21, May 2 - 6pm**

2. Public Relations

- Updates on initiating an annual website audit
 - Conduct an audit at minimum every other year
 - Assess website ease of use, consistency, clarity of presentation
 - Check all functionality - e.g., broken links/media, mobile-friendliness
 - PRAL Committee members can do a sweep of the website
 - Department reps responsible for posting to the website can check their sections for issues and correct content/format errors
 - Committee members and dept reps can include any issues or errors they find in a master spreadsheet

3. Advocacy

- Governor Hochul Education Priorities
 - Streamlining teacher certification process - **Board of Regents is voting to remove the teacher certification exam known as the edTPA, and would instead require teacher prep programs to come up with a replacement. The exam, administered by Pearson, costs \$300, and critics worry it's a barrier to diversifying the teaching workforce and is exacerbating teacher shortages. We can reach out to our regional Board of Regents representative, Fran Wills, to ask more about it.**
 - State grants to provide mental health support, and a new state program (Recover from COVID School Program) matching federal funds that districts dedicate to mental health (e.g., more mental health staff/services) <https://on.ny.gov/34gb2w4> - **This should be top of our advocacy for NYSSBA lobby day (now virtual). The governor's executive budget includes \$100 million over 2 years for a new state matching fund, known as the Recover from COVID School Program (RECOVS), for school districts with the highest needs. Will address student well-being and learning loss, funds can create/expand summer learning, after-school, etc. Also supports hiring mental health professionals, expansion of school-based mental health services. BOE will put together a cohesive list of asks for a mental health framework to present to state legislators. Meredith and Flora will discuss the list in calls with Sue Serino and Jonathan Jacobson.**