



**TO:** P-12 Education Committee  
**FROM:** Ken Wagner   
**SUBJECT:** Creation of the Online Learning Advisory Council  
**DATE:** March 9, 2015  
**AUTHORIZATION(S):** 

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Issue for Discussion**

Chapter 513 of the Laws of 2014 requires the creation of a temporary online learning advisory council to develop recommendations relating to statewide online and blended learning.

#### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by state statute.

#### **Proposed Handling**

This issue will be presented for discussion at the March 2015 meeting.

#### **Background Information**

The Commissioner is required to establish an Online Learning Advisory Council in accordance with Chapter 513 of the Laws of 2014 (<http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/S5509C-2013>). The Council was created to make recommendations on establishing a statewide online and blended learning network. The advisory council is required to issue a final report on or before October 1, 2015, with recommendations on:

- (a) Guidance for use of a statewide online and blended learning network;
- (b) Best practices and model school district policies to inform implementation of an online and blended learning program, including broadband access;
- (c) Academic programming suited for online and blended learning;
- (d) Partnerships with institutions of higher education and other relevant stakeholders for workforce opportunities using online and blended learning; and
- (e) A review of teaching and professional development policies and practices.

The statute directs the Commissioner to appoint five (5) of the eleven members of the Advisory Council, including the chair. The governor, the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly would each appoint two members to the advisory council. The statute requires that the five members appointed by the Commissioner “shall be certified teachers, principals and superintendents from rural, urban and suburban school districts.” The members of the Council “shall represent the diversity of school environments throughout the state and have demonstrated experience with expertise in one or more of the following areas: development, programming and use of online technology and blended learning for education in public schools, delivery of online education in rural communities, regional educational services, and teaching with online and blended learning program.”

In order to comply with the membership requirements and ensure that the diversity of New York State school environments is represented, the five members appointed by the Commissioner will include:

- A representative from a rural district;
- A representative from a suburban district;
- A representative from a Big 5 district;
- A representative from a smaller urban district; and
- A second representative from one of the above categories.

It is expected that the advisory council will meet on a regular basis as determined by the Chair and the members of the council, including via phone and video conferencing. Consistent with the law, members of the council will receive no compensation, except for travel/expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. In accordance with the statute, the advisory council will disband after it issues its report on October 1, 2015.

### **Next Steps**

Once all council members have been appointed, including members appointed by the governor, senate and assembly, the Department will convene the advisory council and assign committees as deemed necessary to inform the development of the final report.