



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
/ ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: The Honorable Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: Betty A. Rosa

SUBJECT: Appointment of Christopher Suriano to the position of Associate Commissioner

DATE: May 7, 2024

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents approve the appointment of Christopher Suriano to the position of Associate Commissioner, Office of Special Education within the Office of Education Policy at the New York State Education Department?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Christopher Suriano has served as the Assistant Commissioner of the New York State Education Department's Office of Special Education since 2016. His remarkable achievements and leadership in that role underscore his suitability for the role of Associate Commissioner. Throughout his tenure of more than fifteen years at the Department, Mr. Suriano has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advancing the rights and opportunities of students with disabilities, spearheading initiatives that have significantly improved the landscape of special education in New York State.

One of Mr. Suriano's key accomplishments has been his adept management of the IDEA 611/619 budget, ensuring the allocation of funds to support priority special education initiatives and projects. By skillfully balancing financial resources, Mr. Suriano has enabled the implementation of crucial programs aimed at enhancing educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

Mr. Suriano's efforts to foster cross-office collaboration have been instrumental in ensuring that the needs of all students are effectively integrated across the P-20 continuum. He has also enhanced engagement between the Office of Special Education and key stakeholder groups across New York State, resulting in more informed decision-making processes that prioritize the needs and perspectives of diverse stakeholders. By establishing robust partnerships, such as the

Multi-Tiered System of Supports–Integrated or MTSS-I Center, and the Educational Partnership network, he has facilitated a cohesive approach to addressing the multifaceted needs of students with disabilities, thereby promoting inclusivity and equity.

Christopher Suriano's redesign of the Department's Special Education Accountability System has ensured greater alignment with federal mandates and improved monitoring and support for school districts and approved programs serving students with disabilities. Through extensive stakeholder engagement, he developed a new IDEA State Performance Plan, laying the groundwork for strategic improvement strategies.

Additional contributions include working in collaboration with the Office of Counsel to make significant changes to the due process system. His involvement in advisory boards related to autism spectrum disorders and services for individuals who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing further underscores his comprehensive understanding of the diverse needs within the special education community.

Above all, Christopher Suriano's exceptional track record of accomplishments and dedication to advancing the rights and opportunities of students with disabilities, makes him a highly qualified candidate for the position of Associate Commissioner, Office of Special Education in the Office of Education Policy. His visionary leadership and demonstrated ability to effect positive change make him an invaluable asset to the Department.

Proposed Handling

It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve the appointment of Christopher Suriano to the position of Associate Commissioner, Office of Special Education within the Office of Education Policy at the New York State Education Department.

Procedural History

Not applicable.

Background Information

Not applicable.

Related Regents Items

Not applicable

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents take the following action:

VOTED: It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve the appointment of Christopher Suriano to the position of Associate Commissioner, Office of Special Education

Timetable for Implementation

If the Board of Regents approves the recommendation, the appointment will be effective May 6, 2024.