



For Immediate Release
February 1, 2024

Contact: Mark J. Magyar
856-256-5868 (office)
908-246-8468 (cell)
magyarm@rowan.edu

Rowan University to Host School Regionalization Conference on February 7

Program highlights new law, grant program, first successful school regionalization since 2013; speakers include Community Affairs Commissioner, former NJ Education Commissioner

GLASSBORO – In the wake of the first successful school district merger in New Jersey under the revamped law, the Rowan School Regionalization Institute is hosting a half-day conference on “School Regionalization in New Jersey: Issues, Opportunities and Challenges” on February 7.

Speakers include Acting Community Affairs Commissioner Jacquelyn Suarez, whose agency administers the School Regionalization Efficiency Program grants; former Education Commissioner Lucille Davy, who oversaw the DOE’s original regionalization initiative; and Henry Hudson Regional Superintendent Tara Beams, who shepherded the state’s first regionalization in a decade through a successful September referendum and is heading up implementation of the formal merger June 30.

The conference, which is free of charge for both in-person and virtual attendees, is being held at Rowan University’s Business Hall conference room from 8:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on Wednesday, February 7; registration and breakfast start at 8 a.m. To register, [please click here](https://chss.rowan.edu/centers/sweeney_center/events.html) or go to https://chss.rowan.edu/centers/sweeney_center/events.html.

“The Henry Hudson merger was a great first step to transforming New Jersey’s disparate array of school districts into a system of Pre-K to 12 districts that can better serve the state’s students,” said Davy. “It is clear to see that voters recognized the advantages of a fully integrated school district and the opportunity to provide better educational experiences that meet the needs of students.”

The conference will lay out the major changes in New Jersey’s 2002 school regionalization statute, which was the first overhaul of the state’s regionalization law in a quarter-century and go over the requirements of the School Regionalization Efficiency Program (SREP) grant program.

In addition to Suarez, Davy and Beams, conference speakers include:

- Richard Richardella, Chief of DCA’s Local Assistance Bureau, which oversees the School Regionalization Efficiency Program;

- Mark Magyar, director of the Sweeney Center for Public Policy, who negotiated the bipartisan regionalization law with the NJEA, NJ School Boards Association and other stakeholders;
- Peter Vala, Director of Research, New Jersey Education Association;
- Gaetane Jean-Marie, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Education, Rowan University;
- David Lindenmuth, Ed.D., director of Rowan’s Institute for Educational Leadership;
- Michael Gorman, Ed.D., the Salem Community College President who coordinated Salem County’s regionalization study;
- G. Kennedy Greene, Ed.D., former president of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and former superintendent in Newton;
- Brian Falkowski, Ed.D., the head of SBO Management who conducted the fiscal analysis for the Henry Hudson Regional School District consolidation;
- Scott Oswald, Ed.D., education consultant and former shared superintendent for Collingswood and Oaklyn.

The conference will examine the development of New Jersey’s school regionalization policy and serve as a practical guide to the school regionalization process for superintendents, school business officials, school board members and community leaders currently involved in or considering undertaking school regionalization studies.

The Rowan School Regionalization Institute was formed as a partnership between Rowan University’s Sweeney Center for Public Policy and Rowan University’s College of Education Institute for Educational Leadership.
