

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 19, 2012

TO: The Honorable Mark Murphy
Secretary of Education

FROM: Terri A. Hancharick, Chairperson
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)

SUBJECT: Legislative Recommendations from DOE to 147th General Assembly of Delaware

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) would like to thank you for the opportunity to suggest items for consideration by the Department of Education as you prepare your recommendations for the First Session of the 147th General Assembly. We appreciate the opportunity to share the areas of concern we feel our legislators should be aware of with you and your staff. The recommendations of the Council are as follows:

- Continue to improve funding to encourage timely and aggressive recruitment and retention of qualified speech language pathologists, social workers/home school interventionists, physical and occupational therapists, mental health professionals, paraprofessionals and qualified educational interpreters in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Provide legislation and regulations which will remove barriers to certification.
- Continue to address the impact of the needs based funding system and issues surrounding its implementation to ensure adequate and appropriate services for all students with disabilities. Ensure needs-based funding changes do not adversely affect funding for all disabilities and monitor reporting efforts to ensure that funding supports the students generating the funding.
- Increase funding, resources and the distribution of resources for professional development in the identification and instruction of all students with intensive and complex services needs within inclusive settings.
- Advocate for the continuation of educational services for young adults with disabilities as they transition into adult services so that they do not experience a significant period of inactivity while waiting for adult services to begin. Address current funding system to allow the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) to begin services for transitioning youth before September.
- Support the findings and recommendations of the State Transition Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs implemented by Senate Concurrent Resolution 34.
- Support legislation which will identify best practices and develop standards for Delaware public schools on the use of restraints and seclusion.

- Recommend that the needs of students with disabilities are represented on any legislative task force developed to recommend changes to the state assessment system and performance appraisal system, including representation by members of the GACEC.

Please feel free to contact me or Wendy Strauss at the GACEC office, if you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance.

CC: Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Department of Education
Susan Haberstroh, Department of Education