



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 22, 2016

TO: The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

FROM: Robert D. Overmiller, Chairperson
GACEC

RE: House Bill No. 240 (After-school Programs)

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed **House Bill No. 240**, which will authorize grants to Title I (low-income) schools to operate after-school programs. There are 147 Title I school with an aggregate enrollment of 78,950 students in Delaware. The programs would have to operate four to five days/week during the school year, have at least one certified teacher for every 10 participating students and offer at least one hour of homework assistance and one hour of enrichment daily. Provision of an after-school meal is also encouraged (lines 8 and 49). The list of authorized services (lines 11-16) is quite varied and includes tutoring, counseling, physical fitness, financial literacy and apprenticeship programs. An assessment of the benefits of the program is required on an annual basis (lines 65-76) and an advisory council is established (lines 21-42). The program is expected to enhance student achievement, attendance, wellness and nutrition. Council would like to share the following observations.

First, there is an unnecessary word in line 23, i.e. the "of" between "designee" and "appointed" should be deleted.

Second, the after-school program would be "available to students in kindergarten through tenth grade" (line 53). It is unclear to Council why 11th and 12th graders would be categorically ineligible to participate. For example, the bill contemplates participation in "internship and apprenticeship" initiatives which are generally correlated with older students. Likewise, the attached article touts the goal of crime diversion - "kids who are in school in the afternoon aren't on the streets where they might run afoul of the law". Academic classes, including math and science, are more challenging in 11th and 12 grade making "tutorial services" (lines 9-10) particularly valuable. Finally, "financial literacy instruction" (line 13) would be of enhanced value to 11th and 12th graders close to completing school and entering adulthood. For these reasons, Council suggests the sponsors reconsider the categorical exclusion of 11th and 12th graders from program eligibility.

Third, the Statewide Afterschool Initiative Learning Council omits representation of special education interests. Council membership would be enhanced by the inclusion of a representative from the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (14 Del.C. §3111).

Fourth, the legislation could be improved by clarifying expectation that the after-school program must be physically and programmatically accessible to students with disabilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our observations. Please feel free to contact me or Wendy Strauss should you have any questions.

CC: The Honorable Matthew L. Denn, Attorney General

Enclosures