



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) 516 West Loockerman St., Dover, DE 19904
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October 30, 2019

Department of Education
Office of the Secretary
Attn: Regulation Review
401 Federal Street, Suite 2
Dover, DE 19901

RE: 23 DE Reg. 275/14 DE Admin. Code 930 [DOE Proposed Supportive Instruction (Homebound) Regulation (October 1, 2019)]

Dear Secretary Bunting:

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed the Department of Education (DOE) proposal to amend 14 DE Admin. Code 930. This amendment will change the definition of supportive instruction and the accompanying eligibility criteria. The current definition of "Supportive instruction" includes educational instruction provided to a student at home or in another alternative setting on account of a medical condition that prevents the student from participating in their regular academic setting for at least 10 days. The DDOE proposed regulation makes it explicit that supportive instruction is available for students experiencing a mental health condition by adding the terms "mental illness" and "mental health conditions." The GACEC **supports** the proposed amendment and would like to share the following suggestion.

To receive supportive instruction, the school must receive certification from the medical provider of the student. Council would like to recommend that a broader category of medical professionals have authority to certify that a child has a mental health condition that will prevent him/her from attending school for at least ten days. The Proposed Section 2.3 would allow certification to be provided by a "licensed clinical mental health provider (such as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, psychiatric nurse practitioner, psychologist, or psychiatrist)." It may be helpful to allow certification if it comes from a pediatrician or family medicine doctor, and their associated advanced practice nurses or physicians' assistants. Often these physicians and medical professionals are a child's sole provider. Furthermore, accessing specialized mental health services in a timely fashion can be difficult, given the shortage of mental health professionals in Delaware.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of the proposed amendment and our

suggestions with you. Please contact me or Wendy Strauss at the GACEC office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ann C Fisher

Ann C. Fisher
Chairperson

ACF: kpc

CC: Whitney Sweeney, State Board of Education
Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Department of Education
Emily Cunningham, Department of Education
Linnea Bradshaw, Professional Standards Board
Jenna Ahner, State Board of Education
Rae Mims, Esq.