



**Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)**  
516 West Loockerman St., Dover, DE 19904  
302-739-4553 (voice) 302-739-6126 (fax) <http://www.gacec.delaware.gov>

### **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** June 4, 2021

**TO:** The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

**FROM:** Ann C. Fisher, Chairperson  
GACEC

**RE:** **Senate Bill No. 136 Transfer of Part C Services to DDOE**

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed **Senate Bill No. 136**, which transfers responsibility for early intervention services for children ages birth to three from the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) to the Delaware Department of Education. Council **supports** the proposed legislation; however, our comments should not be considered conclusive as we were not able to facilitate an in depth review of the legislation.

Council understands that this legislation will revise Delaware Code to be consistent with federal law. It is being proposed in order to improve the coordination of early childhood services provided and coordination between advisory bodies. It will also require early intervention service providers to receive the same training on child abuse and the same background checks as school employees, which will be beneficial to children and their families.

Council has held several discussions on the merit of transferring Part C to the Department of Education and looks forward to working with stakeholders to ensure a smooth transfer that will improve services for children. We anticipate working with the DDOE to gather input from everyone involved, especially parents, to ensure transparency and a smooth transition. We also look forward to working with the DDOE to draft regulations that will improve communication and coordination between systems. In discussions with representatives of the early childhood community, Council was made aware of issues and concerns about having separate data systems in DHSS and Part C. There were no data systems that go from birth through early education. There was concern about having a birth to three data system that would be compatible with the

DOE data system and the lack of integration between systems. Our hope is that this will no longer be an issue once the transfer is completely implemented.

As mentioned in the synopsis of the legislation, the GACEC is one of two Delaware agencies tasked with advising the Department of Education on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for children from birth through age 26 and we take our responsibilities seriously. We will continue our review as additional information is provided and request that Council be represented on any workgroups or taskforces that may be developed to assist with the transfer.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of our endorsement and observations. Please feel free to contact me or Pam Weir at the GACEC office should you have any questions.