



GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CITIZENS (GACEC)
Leadership Committee Meeting
5:30 PM, June 27, 2023
VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Al Cavalier, Ann Fisher, Tika Hartsock, Beth Mineo, Trenee Parker, Jennifer Pulcinella and Erik Warner

STAFF PRESENT: Pam Weir/Executive Director

MEMBERS ABSENT:

- I. **Call to order:** This meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm by Vice Chair, Erik Warner. A quorum of the Leadership Committee was present, which represented more than 50 percent of persons with a disability or parents of children with disabilities.

- II. **Administrative Actions:** There was a vote to approve the June Leadership Committee meeting agenda, which was unanimously approved. There was a vote to approve the April Leadership Committee meeting minutes with additional edits. The vote passed unanimously. There was a vote to approve the May Leadership Committee meeting minutes. The vote passed with Trenee Parker and Tika Hartsock abstaining.

- III. **Old Business:**
 - GACEC Policies including Public Comment Policy and Attendance Policy- The Leadership Committee discussed the ongoing development of the attendance policy and the public comment policy. Al Cavalier noted that Pennsylvania's State Advisory Panel (SAP) has some very useful tips around their public comment policy including requesting the commentor complete paperwork and register prior to the meeting. If the GACEC were to implement a similar system, it would allow Leadership Committee members to review and triage them to the appropriate committee if applicable. Pam will review Pennsylvania's SAP public comment policy for additional language, incorporate the suggested edits to both draft policies, and send out the updated versions to the Leadership Committee for review.

 - Leadership Committee Meeting Dates/Times- Pam would like to convene a *Leadership Committee Meet & Greet* in July to welcome newly elected members.

Agenda topics would include a.) the role of the Leadership Committee as stated in the By-laws, b.) the makeup of the Leadership Committee as stated in the By-laws, c.) a recent history of the issues the Leadership Committee has been discussing, d.) the staggered terms of the Leadership Committee members as stated in the By-laws, e.) future dates and times for Leadership Committee meetings and, f.) time for questions and answers. The Leadership Committee agreed this may be a good idea but may not all be able to attend as it is almost July. Pam will send a Doodle Poll to Leadership Committee members, including newly elected members, to see if a date can be identified to meet.

- Inclusion Paper- No follow-up has been received regarding the status of the Inclusion Paper. Pam will contact Caitlyn Gleason for a status. Leadership Committee would also like more information on the intent of sharing the Inclusion paper with the GACEC; a letter of endorsement, feedback, etc.
- Sharing Information from Outside Committees- Pam explained that one of the GACEC's performance measurements is outreach and collaboration throughout the State. Pam would like to get a better idea of which councils, committees, meetings, etc. GACEC members attend. Pam stated that we have a list that is included in the Annual Report each year. Pam would like to review that list and see if there are additions or deletions to be made and identify if there are meetings that we would like someone from the GACEC to be a part of to help inform the GACEC of statewide initiatives. Pam clarified that GACEC members representing the GACEC on outside committees, council, etc. need to be approved by the Chair and/or Director.

IV. New Business: Pam reminded the Committee that the newly elected members will join the Leadership Committee beginning July 1, 2023. This includes Meedra Surratte, Molly Merrill, Bill Doolittle and Jessica Mensack.

The staff has begun the process of adding the “Meet our Members and Staff” page to the GACEC website. We are continuing to work out the kinks and add members as they submit their biographical sketches.

Tika Hartsock volunteered to join the Membership Committee as of today.

Jennifer Pulcinella announced that the transition of the Birth to Three program has been pushed back to 2028. Pam added that she sent the Leadership Committee the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) materials that the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) shared. Pam's concern is that a small handful of stakeholders are informing leaders at a high level and they are bypassing the subject matter experts who are appointed to councils by the Governor. Tika Hartsock's opinion is that we should not be discussing the matter because we did not request the information through FOIA and we are only hearing one side. Ann Fisher added that this is public information and the topic does concern the work of the GACEC. Pam clarified that the ICC did not reach out and ask us to comment, rather shared the information. Al

Cavalier added that if the information concerns the health and wellbeing of residents with exceptionalities in the State, it does not matter how the Council has learned of it or whether we were invited to be involved. We can deliberate on the issues and decide if our advice and advocacy could benefit the constituents with exceptionalities. Tika asked for clarity on what is expected of the Leadership Committee to do with this information. Pam replied that she wants to ensure that Governor appointed councils are consulted with regarding issues concerning special education and persons with disabilities and exceptionalities. Tika thinks the GACEC should remain independent and should not insert ourselves into a matter when we do not have information from all sides. Al added that his takeaway is to review the information and decide as a committee if there is an issue that should be of concern to the Council. Ann pointed out that we cannot request additional information and are unaware of what to request, because we were not at the table as we should have been. Ann stated that the goal is to ensure that federally mandated stakeholders are part of discussions when decisions are being made, and that is not currently happening regarding the transition of the Part C Program.

- V. **Adjournment:** Jennifer Pulcinella made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Al Cavalier seconding the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

New Action Items:

- Share updated version of the attendance policy and public comment policy- Pam Weir
- Schedule meeting with newly elected Leadership Committee Members- GACEC Staff
- Follow up with Caitlin Gleason regarding the inclusion status paper and what she would like from the GACEC- Pam Weir
- Send list of current councils, committees, etc. that GACEC members currently attend and ask for updates- GACEC staff
- Review the ICC's FOIA information and be prepared to discuss at next Leadership Committee meeting- Leadership Committee

Action Items Carried Forward from Previous Board Meetings:

- Narrow the focus and provide specific details as to what we need DDOE to present on at future meetings- Leadership Committee & GACEC staff
- Improve plan for supporting newly appointed members- GACEC Leadership Committee/GACEC Staff
- Find ways to increase communication regarding updates from each Issues Committees- GACEC Leadership Committee/GACEC staff

- Work on the prison education piece of our mandate- Pam Weir and ATS Committee
- Disseminate membership survey once finalized- further discuss what format the survey will be sent in- Membership Committee