



GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CITIZENS (GACEC)
Leadership Committee Meeting
3:00 PM, August 29, 2024
VIRTUAL MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Al Cavalier, Bill Doolittle, Ann Fisher, Dr. Jessica Mensack, Molly Merrill, Trenee Parker, Jennifer Pulcinella, and Dr. Erik Warner.

GUESTS PRESENT: Dale Matusevich/Delaware Department of Education (DDOE)

STAFF PRESENT: Pam Weir/Executive Director, Lacie Spence/ Administrative Coordinator

MEETING NOTES: There was a quorum of the members present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order at 3:04 pm. Dr. Erik Warner made a motion to accept the agenda with flexibility to include the addition of a discussion on the 923, 925 and 927 regulation letters if there was time available. Motion was seconded by Molly Merrill. The motion passed. Jennifer Pulcinella made a motion to approve the August 1st minutes and was seconded by Molly Merrill. Motion passed with Trenee Parker abstaining.

Dale Matusevich discussed with the Leadership Committee the State's Determination Process, revealing a 75% score. This is a slight decrease from the previous year. He highlighted challenges with the State's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, especially with the 8th graders. Dale reported on local education agencies (LEAs) receiving all their data points for the first time in a long time. He discussed initiatives to improve performance, including an accountability system for determinations and collaborations with various centers to move students with complex needs to a less restrictive environment. Discussion included the efforts made to improve student proficiency rates in Seaford and Frederick Douglass Elementary, focusing on their unique testing environment and the positive impact of pairing students with teachers they like and get along well with.

Dale presented the state's performance indicators, highlighting some slippage in early childhood outcomes and the ongoing efforts to improve data collection and target setting. The team discussed the need for improved parent engagement surveys. DDOE is bringing the survey process back in-house and doing the surveys on a monthly basis using a more automated system. Currently the surveys are done twice a year. Dale agreed to present his determination information at the September full Council meeting, with a focus on tying in feedback received and discussing the framework of the determinations. There was also discussion about the additional workload caused by reporting on compliance indicators and the potential for

duplication of efforts, with concerns raised about the implementation and communication of the compliance side by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

The team discussed the lack of substantive feedback received on initial letters sent out for Council feedback regarding the 922, 923 and 925 regulations. Al suggested that the letters may not have made a strong argument and recommended either sending them as they are or giving people more time to shape them. Jessica agreed with Al's assessment and suggested revising the letters for clarity and brevity. The team agreed to review and finalize a revised letter by Tuesday, with plans to implement processes to address the issue moving forward. There were suggestions of scheduling monthly Leadership Committee meetings for the future. Pam voiced her concerns about the Leadership Committee's decision-making process, emphasizing the need for transparency and proper documentation. She also expressed her worries about proposed regulations and the lack of communication between the Department of Education (DOE) and the GACEC. Pam and Bill agreed on the necessity of a more strategic approach to the Council's work, including setting targeted goals and improving communication processes. They also highlighted the need for collaboration between the DOE and GACEC and the importance of substantive feedback from the Council.

ADJOURNMENT: Ann Fisher officially adjourned the meeting at 4:55pm.

NEW ACTION ITEMS:

1. Pam to share determination letter and package with full Council for review before the September meeting. Pam to send updated determination presentation to full Council.
2. Council members to review determination information and send questions to Pam ahead of September meeting.
3. Dale to discuss determination framework proposal at September meeting and to prepare for Q&A discussion on determinations instead of a slide show presentation.
4. Pam to work on developing more comprehensive Council processes and goals for upcoming retreat in October.
5. Staff to draft consolidated letter on regulations 922, 923, 925 incorporating previous language on process concerns. Jessica to assist staff in refining regulation comments. Staff to submit consolidated regulation comment letter by 4:30pm on September 3rd.

OLD ACTION ITEMS:

1. For those who have not done so, Pam would like to get everyone's current cell phone number for quick connections. This would be helpful if we need to make a last-minute change due to technical issues.
2. Pam is working to put a plan into place to work with the Secretary of Education and the State Board of Education. She is drafting a letter about how the SAP (State Advisory Panel) is being utilized improperly and how the lack of collaboration is inappropriate.
3. Bill suggested that we set up an opportunity for the Registrar of Regulations to come and present to the Leadership Committee. We would like to be clear on the statutory process.

4. The Leadership Committee would like to have a meeting with Dale from the Department of Education (DOE) Exceptional Children's Resources (ECR) workgroup to discuss the issues concerning the Christina School District.
5. Determine what training School Board members receive and what is required by the statutes. Stefanie will put together the specifics of School Board required training and send it out to the Leadership Committee.
6. Ann asked that members send an email to staff to include their interest in the Christina School District issues, so another meeting can be scheduled.