GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CITIZENS (GACEC)
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
7:00PM February 18, 2025
VIRTUAL MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Al Cavalier, Nancy Cordrey, Bill Doolittle, Karen Eller, Ann Fisher, Tika Hartsock, Kristina Horton, Thomas Keeton, Jessica Mensack, Molly Merrill, Beth Mineo, Trenee Parker, Erika Powell, Jennifer Pulcinella, and Stefanie Ramirez.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mary Andrews/Parent Information Center of Delaware (PIC), Cindy Brown, Harley Doolittle, Mindi Failing, Dale Matusevich/Department of Education (DOE), Theresa Muschiatti (ALS interpreter), Peg Stewart (ALS interpreter), Jeri Turner (DOE), Maureen Whalen and Samantha Wooten.

STAFF PRESENT: Pam Weir/Executive Director, Kathie Cherry/Office Manager, Lacie Spence/Administrative Coordinator and Theresa Moore/Administrative Support Specialist.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Matt Denn, Cory Gilden, Maria Olivere, Brenné Shepperson, Meedra Surratte and Erik Warner.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS: Ann Fisher called the meeting to order at 7:02pm. There was a quorum of members present. The motion to approve the February agenda was made by Trenee Parker and Thomas Keeton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Bill Doolittle made a motion to change the format of the meeting minutes. The Policy and Law Memo will be made an appendix and instead of councils it will be changed to GACEC within the memo recommendations. Then the letters sent out by Council will be attached to the end of the minutes. Al Cavalier seconded the motion. The motion to amend the minutes passed. Thomas Keeton made a motion to approve the January minutes as amended and Jen Pulcinella seconded the motion. The motion passed with Trenee Parker abstaining. Molly Merrill made a motion to accept the January Financial report. The motion was seconded by Thomas Keeton. The motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments tonight.

TRIBUTE TO CINDY BROWN: Cindy Brown retired at the end of January from her position as the Director of the Office of Early Childhood Intervention. The GACEC presented her with a plaque at the meeting. The inscription of the plaque was as follows: "The GACEC recognizes

Cindy Brown for her years of service to Delaware, particularly her work with our Infant/Early Childhood Committee. Her dedication to young children and individuals with disabilities has made a significant impact. This tribute expresses gratitude for her contributions and best wishes for her future." We wish you all the best in the next chapter of your life. Thank you for everything. You will be missed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

POLICY AND LAW COMMITTEE: There was no legal memo for this meeting.

INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMITTEE: The Committee discussed the specifics of Indicators 4a and 4b and talked about the issues around early childhood suspensions and expulsions. Indicator 4 covers all grades (K-12) making specific information difficult to acquire. Professional development dealing with trauma and trust building would be an appropriate place to begin. The acts of soft suspensions and in school suspensions need to be understood and the data collected, as well as expulsions data collected.

The Committee discussed producing a Dear Colleague letter with recommendations on how to better define suspension and expulsion in early care and education settings; perhaps how to streamline that definition or at least align the definition with school age and K to 12 settings. With a definition they can better pinpoint data points and track them. The Committee is unsure at this time who the Dear Colleague letter is directed to, whether it will be policy makers, childcare providers directly or someone else. Tonight was the initial conversation, so the Committee will update as progress is made.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH COMMITTEE: The Committee made a motion to revisit the prior data request related to classroom configuration. They would like to review the letter and resend the request. The motion passed unanimously.

ADULT AND TRANSITION SERVICES COMMITTEE: Discussion took place to determine the Committee goals. Their first goal is to focus on the Class Action Settlement Agreement for 18 to 22-year-olds and how to support families. Their second goal will be to focus on 22 to 30-year-olds for transition and connecting all of the resources and groups we currently work with including the DelDHub.

Maureen Whalen provided information on Adult Education. The Committee also discussed the formation of the Prison Education Ad Hoc Committee.

DDOE REPORT:

- Dale Matusevich informed Council that the 929 Regulations are up next on the docket for revisions. The first half of these Regulations deal with Autism and the second half refers to Interagency Community (ITC) placements for unique alternative placements. Mary Whitfield will be forming a stakeholder group for the Autism piece and Rachel Rudinoff will be forming a stakeholder group for the ITC piece. Dale will work with Pam and Ann

to get members of the GACEC on those stakeholder groups. Bill Doolittle informed Dale that he wants to be on the ITC stakeholder group.

- Dale Matusevich informed Council that the Annual Performance Report (APR) was submitted on time on February 3rd. The clarification period opens around April and will close on April 24th. Last meeting, Dale mentioned a new State Personnel Development Grant RFP (request for proposal), he hopes to get that submitted soon. This grant will focus on person centered planning within the Individualized Education Program (IEP) development. They are taking a deeper dive into the Delaware IEP work that currently is provided by the State Personnel Development Grant. They plan to add transition into that work as well. They will look at improving post school outcomes for our students who are exiting out all under the umbrella of our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework. Dale will provide more information as they hopefully get a successful bid. They should know more by the end of April.
- Dale and Pam have been discussing ways to align some of the work DOE has been doing with some of the GACEC committees. They would like to determine which indicators apply to the work of each of the GACEC committees and work directly with each committee on those indicators.

CHAIR REPORT: Ann gave an update from the public comment last month from Stephanie Stranick. Her daughter did get her appeal with Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) and won the appeal. Ann announced the visitors and those Council members who were absent tonight.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Pam shared an update about some of the things she has been working on. She has been meeting regularly with the State Council for Persons with Disabilities, the Delaware Developmental Disability Council, and with other stakeholder agencies just through regular meetings that she attends and has compiled information to create one pagers on all of the executive orders and initiatives impacting persons with disabilities and exceptionalities. Pam will forward all this information to Council members via email.
- At the last Leadership Committee meeting they discussed the transition of the new Delaware leadership and how to ensure that the GACEC is being utilized to advise the Governor, Lt Governor and the Secretary of Education. The Leadership Committee sent focus points to Pam to advise the new leadership. Since then, Governor Meyer has released his Transition Report. The information from Leadership Committee feedback was compiled and sent out to full Council. Tonight, Council went over the information that highlighted some of the gaps in the Transition Report, made changes and added information to the discussion notes to share with Lt Governor Gay.

AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

RESTRAINTS/SECLUSION & SRO: Bill Doolittle announced that the new Restraints/Seclusion and SRO ad hoc committee is in the process of formation. Last week they

all met and established some operating procedures and rules of operation. They discussed who they would want to invite as stakeholders on this committee. They are meeting again this week to finish the establishment of this ad hoc committee.

ADJOURNMENT: Bill Doolittle made a motion that was seconded by Jen Pulcinella to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and Ann adjourned the meeting at 8:08 pm.