



GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CITIZENS (GACEC)
Leadership Committee Meeting
6:00 PM, August 5, 2025
VIRTUAL MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Al Cavalier, Bill Doolittle, Tika Hartsock, Jessica Heesh Mensack, Molly Merrill, Beth Mineo, Trenee Parker, and Jennifer Pulcinella

STAFF PRESENT: Pam Weir/Executive Director and Theresa Moore/Operation Support Specialist

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS: The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm. Jennifer Pulcinella made a motion to approve the agenda, and it was seconded by Jessica Heesh Mensack. The motion was approved with unanimous consent. Jennifer Pulcinella made a **motion** to approve the June 3rd and the June 26th meeting minutes. Al Cavalier seconded the motion. The motion was approved with the corrections made tonight. Beth Mineo abstained from the vote on the June 26th set of meeting minutes. Al Cavalier **motioned** that whenever one of the issues committee, ad hoc committee or work group is focusing on a topic that concerns a primary focus area of another Council committee that committee will (a) inform the other pertinent committees of their focus and explore with them the collaboration of their respective expertise; and (b) share their draft recommendations with the other pertinent committees and invite their input before making recommendations to Council on that topic. Molly Merrell seconded the motion. The motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment tonight.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Pam reminded the members to complete the poll for the Retreat. The first part of the Retreat will be in August and it is in person. The second part is virtual and will be held in September. Pam and Bill have met with Dale Matusevich from the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and plan to continue to have bi-weekly meetings. For future meetings Pam will have formal updates distributed to Leadership Committee members before the meeting to give them time to go over them and be prepared for the meeting.

CHAIR REPORT: It has been a busy month. Bill has met often with Pam and staff. He now has his Delaware.gov email address. Bill has met with tech support for the computer issues GACEC is having with K12 members and Delaware.gov members. The problem seems to be that Delaware has their system split into two separate domains, K12 and Delaware.gov. We have asked for solutions. The obvious solution would be for everyone to have a Delaware.gov email. We have discussed this, but it comes with significant support expenses.

Bill outlined expectations for how the Leadership Committee will operate moving forward to ensure meetings remain productive and efficient. Items brought to the Committee should be ready for decision. If a proposal or issue requires more than approximately five minutes of clarification or adjustment during the meeting, Bill may refer it back to the originator for further development. It should return to the Leadership Committee once it is complete and decision ready. Bill would like to avoid lengthy 30-minute discussions without results.

DISCUSSION: Jennifer Pulcinella discussed the slow transitions in education, including challenges with employee transfers and concerns about the Rodell report's lack of disability data. Tika Hartsock noted that the 929 regulations report showed improvements in incorporating stakeholder feedback but had some statutory weaknesses that may require legislative attention.

RESTRAINT & SECLUSION/ SRO AD HOC REPORT: The ad hoc Committee has drafted a letter to be sent to Joey Melvin. The letter is requesting a sample of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between school districts and local police enforcement agencies. The Committee is also requesting an accurate count of how many districts and schools actually have SROs and/or Constables in them. They would like to know the nature of the MOUs. An MOU is the pivotal document that provides the guardrails for what they've agreed to do and not do and their terms of interaction with students. The Ad hoc Committee also asked Pam to move forward with the outside invitations to the Restraint and Seclusion side of the Committee.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: The Membership Committee met with Boards and Commissions on July 18th to discuss the membership process. The next meeting is scheduled for August 11th. Bill Doolittle proposed to the Leadership Committee that if Boards and Commissions is not ready to move forward with the new membership process, that we ask them to return to the normal process for new members until we can get the new member vetting process in place. Bill Doolittle made a **motion** that, if Boards and Commissions doesn't appear to be ready to move forward with our plan for reviewing new membership, the Chair has the authority to tell Boards and Commissions to move forward through standard practice. "Standard practice" means that Boards and Commissions informs the Council that the Governor has appointed a new person to the Council (without prior review of that person's credentials by the Membership Committee). Molly Merrill seconded the motion. The motion passed with Trenee Parker abstaining.

REDDING REDISTRICTING ISSUES: The Committee discussed concerns about redistricting plans that could be highly disruptive to students with disabilities, as these plans propose combining districts without adequate consideration of disability needs and perspectives. Bill Doolittle proposed writing a letter to the chairs to express these concerns and advocate for disability representation in the decision-making process, emphasizing the need to ensure that districts' best practices are adopted rather than worst practices when combining districts. The discussion revealed that while some subcommittees have been meeting for several months, there is a new committee forming in September to analyze the three remaining redistricting plans and their fiscal impacts, with decisions needed by June 30th of next year. Jennifer Pulcinella made a **motion** to send the letter to the Chairs (Senator S Elizabeth Lockman and Matt Denn) of the Redding Consortium. The motion was seconded by Al Cavalier. The motion passed with Tika Hartsock and Trenee Parker abstaining.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RETREAT: The Leadership Committee discussed strategic planning at the upcoming retreat, with Bill emphasizing that strategic plans are different from project management systems. Jessica noted that while data would be helpful for strategic planning, the Council could still move forward with establishing Council and committee goals and developing a draft strategic plan. The group agreed to review companion councils' strategic plans and consider how to better coordinate external communications, with Bill and Pam establishing protocols for chair communications. Bill also outlined plans for two Leadership Committee meetings between the first and second retreats and mentioned the need to collect data on Council members' time investment to support future funding requests.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was officially adjourned at 7:46pm.

NEW ACTION ITEMS:

1. Pam to prepare and distribute formal updates ahead of future Leadership Committee meetings
2. Pam to move forward with sending outside invitations to the restraint and seclusion committee
3. Al to continue working on draft letter requesting MOUs between districts and police enforcement agencies
4. Leadership Committee to draft a letter to Matt and Tizzy regarding disability representation in redistricting considerations (Redding Consortium)
5. Leadership Committee to develop agenda for September strategic planning portion of retreat
6. Leadership Committee to review Jessica's July 2nd strategic planning framework document
7. Leadership Committee to review companion councils' strategic plans for potential alignment
8. Staff to compile existing committee/ad-hoc goals and work for strategic planning discussion
9. Bill to introduce himself as chair in upcoming meetings with new state officials
10. Council to collect and track data on volunteer hours invested by members
11. Bill to schedule two Leadership meetings between the first and second retreats