



GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CITIZENS (GACEC)
Leadership Committee Meeting
5:30 PM, December 10, 2025
VIRTUAL MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Al Cavalier, Bill Doolittle, Tika Hartsock, Molly Merrill, Beth Mineo, Trenee Parker, Erika Powell, Jennifer Pulcinella and Stefanie Ramirez

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

GUESTS PRESENT: Maria Olivere

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ann Fisher, Jessica Heesh Mensack and Meedra Surratte

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS:

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 pm. Pam Weir confirmed there was a quorum. Bill Doolittle asked for approval of the agenda and minutes from November 6, 2025, meeting without objections. No objections. Minutes and agenda were unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment tonight.

LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MOTIONS:

Motion to draft and send a letter to (first) the Director of the ECR and (2nd) the Secretary of Education and legislative leadership, to communicate with the Leadership in each of the LEAs and Charters- SEC and Superintendents- to desist any future communication and rescind any communication sent- to families and care providers regarding PDNs, providing consents and requiring a signature to execute-this is not aligned with IDEA. (Rough draft of motion)

Moved by Al Cavalier

Members voting yes: Al Cavalier, Bill Doolittle, Tika Hartsock, Molly Merrill, Beth Mineo, Erika Powell, and Jennifer Pulcinella.

Abstentions: Trenee Parker and Stefanie Ramirez

The motion passed

DISCUSSION:

The group discussed urgent concerns related to recent actions by the Department of Education (DOE) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) regarding school nursing services, background check procedures, and communication with families of students with disabilities. Central to the discussion was a mandate from the Secretary of Education requiring LEAs to provide nursing services, which has led to the insertion of private duty nurse language into IEPs without parental knowledge, distribution of questionable consent forms, and fingerprinting requirements imposed on private duty nurses at their own expense. Members expressed significant concern about the lack of transparency, inconsistent implementation across districts, and potential legal implications for families and providers.

The group reviewed failures in standardized background check and fingerprinting procedures, noting that districts have not followed proper processes and have only recently issued mislabeled consent forms. There was broad agreement that DOE has not provided clear, consistent guidance, leaving families confused and potentially exposed to harm. The possibility of filing a state complaint against DOE was discussed as one option, with recognition that while such action could strain collaboration, Delaware families have historically seen more success through state complaints than due process. The group agreed to remain prepared to escalate quickly if DOE does not respond appropriately.

Additional discussion focused on the need for DOE to lead and standardize communication related to special education and medically complex students. Members emphasized that LEAs should be directed to pause current practices until a lawful and transparent process is established. Concerns were also raised about directors requiring parents to use personal resources for private nursing in public schools, prompting agreement to draft formal correspondence to DOE leadership and legislative leaders if issues are not resolved promptly.

The group identified ongoing challenges with FOIA requests, including rising costs and lengthy delays, which significantly hinder access to necessary information. Potential conflicts of interest related to the DAG legal representation of two different bodies were also noted. The meeting concluded with planning around upcoming letters addressing disability planning and district boundary changes, emphasizing the need to manage expectations, considering cost impacts on students with disabilities, and continuing building credibility with stakeholders while preparing for potential legislative and legal action.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was officially adjourned at 7:09 pm.

NEW ACTION ITEMS:

- Bill: Ask Dale on Friday meeting to send email to LEAs to cease and desist improper consent forms and nursing documentation
- Bill and Pamela: Draft and send letter to Dale by close of business Monday requesting LEAs stop requiring families and providers to sign improper forms related to private duty nursing
- Bill and Pamela: If no response from Dale by December 15th, send letter to Secretary of Education and legislative leadership
- Pamela: Clean up and finalize motion language regarding terminating LEA communications about private duty nurse requirements
- Bill and Pamela: Meet with DOE Chief of Staff to address information sharing and collaboration issues
- Pamela: Schedule meeting with Public Integrity Commission to discuss DAG conflict of interest issues
- Pamela: Finalize and send Redding letter to Matt by close of business Friday
- Bill: Get actual number of students with disabilities enrolled in Wilmington from IPA to replace 750 placeholder
- All Leadership Committee members: Review Redding letter draft and provide feedback before Friday
- Leadership Committee: Table discussion of state complaint option until next meeting