

Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)



ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2025

Submitted by: Pam Weir, Executive Director and Ann Fisher, Chairperson



Samaa Alfalahi, of the Tarbiyah School, submitted the above artwork for GACEC's Annual Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest.

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Acronyms

To assist readers, below is a list of commonly used acronyms in the disability and exceptionality communities in Delaware. For an extensive list of commonly used acronyms, please visit:

[ACRONYM LIST \(delaware.gov\)](https://delaware.gov/acronym-list)

<p>ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act AGEC - Access to General Education Curriculum APR - Annual Performance Report ASQ - Ages and Stages Questionnaire BIC - Brain Injury Committee CAC - Community Advisory Council CASA - Court Appointed Special Advocates CDS - Center for Disabilities Studies CEC - Council for Exceptional Children CFR - Code of Federal Regulations DCADA - Delaware Coalition for the Americans with Disabilities Act DDC - Developmental Disabilities Council DDDS - Division of Developmental Disabilities Services DDOE - Delaware Department of Education DE AFN - Delaware Access and Functional Needs DECC - Delaware Early Childhood Center DeIDHub - Delaware Disability Hub DNREC - Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control DFS - Division of Family Services DHSS - Department of Health & Social Services DMMA - Division of Medicaid and Medicare Assistance DMS - Differentiated Monitoring and Support DMV - Department of Motor Vehicle DOL - Department of Labor DRD - Disability Rights Delaware DSAAPD - Division of Service to Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities DSCYF - Department of Service for Children, Youth, and their Families DVR - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation ECIC - Early Childhood Inclusion Committee EFMP - Exceptional Family Member Program EPIC - Endless Possibilities in the Community ESSA - Every Student Succeeds Act FY - Fiscal Year GACADP - Governor’s Advisory Council for Aging and Disabled Persons</p>	<p>GACEC - Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens GCBACS - Governor’s Commission on Building Access to Community-Based Services Hlade - Hearing Loss Association of Delaware ICC - Interagency Coordinating Council IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IEP - Individualized Education Plan IFSP - Individualized Family Service Plan LEA - Local Education Agency LIFE - Legislation, Independence, Family Support Services and Education LRE - Least Restrictive Environment MDE - Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation MTSS - Multi-tiered Systems of Support DPH - Delaware Public Health OEL - Office of Early Learning OCCL - Office of Childcare Licensing OSEP - Office of Special Education Programs PAIR - Protection & Advocacy of Individual Rights Part B - section under IDEA which authorizes assistance for the education of all children with disabilities or free appropriate public education (FAPE) Part C - section under IDEA which authorizes Early Intervention Programs for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities PBS - Positive Behavioral Supports PIC - Parent Information Center QIS - Quality Improvement System SAP - State Advisory Panel SCPD - State Council for Persons with Disabilities SEA - State Education Agency SEED - Student Excellence Equals Degree SESPAC - Special Education Strategic Planning Council SLP - Speech Language Pathology SSIP - State Systemic Improvement Plan</p>
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What is the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens?

Mission

The mission of the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) is to serve as the review board for policies, procedures and practices related to the delivery of services for all residents with exceptionalities or disabilities in Delaware from birth to death. The GACEC also serves as the state advisory panel for agencies providing educational services and programs to children (birth through age 26) in Delaware through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Statutory Responsibilities

The GACEC is authorized by dual mandates that include both State and Federal responsibilities. At the State level, the Council is mandated by the following:

[Delaware Code: Title 14, Chapter 31, § 3111](#)

The Governor shall appoint an advisory council to act in an advisory capacity to the Department of Education, the State Board of Education and other state agencies on the needs of exceptional citizens. The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance of the council. The council shall also serve in the capacity of the advisory panel as required by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

[Delaware Code: Title 14, Chapter 24, § 2408](#)

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC), in its advisory capacity as authorized by § 3111 of this title shall meet annually with Department of Education and Department of Correction designated representatives to discuss the operation of the joint agency prison education program. No more frequently than every other year, the GACEC may conduct a site visit, which may include interviews and access to public records pursuant to its advisory authority under § 3111 of this title. Prior to commencing the review, the GACEC, Department of Correction and Department of Education shall agree upon the scope and purpose of the review. Any site visit, interviews, and public record reviews shall be coordinated by a representative(s) of the joint agency prison education program and shall be conducted in a manner consistent with any common law privileges, applicable federal and state laws, and security procedures and considerations. The GACEC will include findings related to site visits and program review and assessment in its annual report.

At the federal level, the Council serves as the State Advisory Panel (SAP) in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 300.1- 300.818 for the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) and its amendments.

The [State Advisory Panel](#) § 300.167-169:

§ 300.167 - State advisory panel.

The State must establish and maintain an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1820-0030) (Authority: [20 U.S.C. 1412](#)(a)(21)(A))

§ 300.168 - Membership.

(a) *General.* The advisory panel must consist of members appointed by the Governor, or any other official authorized under State law to make such appointments, be representative of the State population and be composed of individuals involved in, or concerned with the education of children with disabilities, including:

- (1) Parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26).
- (2) Individuals with disabilities.
- (3) Teachers.
- (4) Representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel.
- (5) State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, ([42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.](#));
- (6) Administrators of programs for children with disabilities.
- (7) Representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities.
- (8) Representatives of private schools and public charter schools.
- (9) Not less than one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities.
- (10) A representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and
- (11) Representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

(b) *Special rule.* A majority of the members of the panel must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26).

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1820-0030) (Authority: [20 U.S.C. 1412](#)(a)(21)(B) and (C))

§ 300.169 - Duties.

The advisory panel must –

(a) Advise the SEA of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities;

(b) Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities.

(c) Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under section 618 of the Act.

(d) Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act; and

(e) Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1820-0030) (Authority: [20 U.S.C. 1412\(a\)\(21\)\(D\)](#))



A Message from the Executive Director

On behalf of the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC), I am pleased to share this Annual Report highlighting the Council's work, impact and continued commitment to improving the lives of Delawareans with disabilities.

Over the past year, the GACEC fulfilled its statutory role as an advisory body by reviewing and providing thoughtful, disability-focused analysis on proposed legislation, regulations and statewide initiatives. The Council examined eight bills and 23 regulations, ensuring that policies affecting individuals with disabilities were evaluated through an equity, safety and access lens. Among these efforts, the Council supported legislation strengthening transparency and accountability in public schools by expanding reporting related to restraint and seclusion—an important step toward protecting student safety and promoting responsible oversight.

Beyond our formal advisory responsibilities, the Council continued to expand its role as a convener and collaborator across Delaware's disability community. Council members and staff worked intentionally to break down silos, partnering with other councils, agencies and community organizations to elevate lived experiences and strengthen advocacy around critical issues such as Medicaid, IDEA services and federal policy changes. Through direct engagement with Delaware's congressional delegation, accessible public-facing briefs and coordinated messaging with partner councils, the GACEC ensured that policymakers heard directly from those most impacted by their decisions.

This year also marked continued growth in the Council's outreach and engagement efforts. GACEC members and staff served on more than 55 advisory boards, committees and task forces, ensuring disability perspectives were consistently represented in statewide planning. Through public meetings, conferences, workshops, and community events, the Council connected with more than 2,700 individuals statewide. Our ongoing partnership with the YMCA of Delaware to support Disability History and Awareness Month reflects our shared commitment to education, inclusion and access—while also reminding us that continued effort is needed to reach all Delawareans who rely on disability-related services and support.

Supporting successful transitions from school to adulthood remains a key priority of the Council's work. Delaware's DelDHub continues to serve as a trusted, centralized resource for students, families, educators and service providers. With significant increases in usage this year, the Council took deliberate steps to strengthen the accuracy, clarity and consistency of information through enhanced oversight, cross-agency alignment and future-focused planning to better support students during this pivotal life stage.

While we are proud of the progress reflected in this report, persistent challenges remain. Too often, individuals with disabilities are not meaningfully included early in policy development and decision-making processes. Sustainable, system-level change requires early engagement, transparent dialogue, and collaboration across agencies—especially in a complex and evolving federal landscape. The Council remains committed to advocating for these principles and ensuring that disability voices are included where decisions are made.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our Council members, whose dedication, expertise and lived experience guide this work and to our exceptional staff, whose professionalism and commitment

make it possible to carry out the Council’s mission with integrity and impact. It is an honor to serve alongside such a dedicated team.

Together, we remain steadfast in our commitment to building a more inclusive, equitable Delaware—where all individuals with disabilities are valued, heard and supported.

Respectfully,

Pamela Weir

Executive Director

Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens



A Message from the Chairperson

As I reflect on the passing of another year, it is one of mixed feelings. On one hand, there is the joy of celebrating the winners of the annual Disability History and Awareness Month poster contest and the forging of promising partnerships and collaborations with the new Governor, Lieutenant Governor and members of the 153rd General Assembly. I also applaud and acknowledge the awesome and unwavering dedication of members of the GACEC who champion each and every day for all of Delaware's students, no matter their needs.

On the other hand, there is the turmoil of what is happening at the Federal level and how it will impact our work at the State level. However, we are very fortunate to live in the State of Delaware where our legislators are available to engage in conversations with agencies, councils and the public to help prepare for and mitigate detrimental decisions made in Washington, D.C.

Finally, as my time as Chairperson comes to an end, I step down knowing that Bill Doolittle, the GACEC's new Chairperson, stands ready to guide the Council forward during these unconventional times.

As always, I am grateful for the support, understanding, and hard work of the GACEC staff, Pam Weir, Kathie Cherry, Lacie Spence and Theresa Moore, on behalf of both myself and the Council.

I wish you all well.

Yours in service,
Ann C. Fisher



Council Goals 2024-2025

GOAL 1: To improve the academic, social-emotional, and health outcomes of all students with exceptionalities.

a: To improve the delivery of special education, related services and other whole child services supported by evidence-based practices.

b: To increase the degree to which these services are delivered in the least restrictive and most natural environments.

GOAL 2: To improve the quality of life of all persons with exceptionalities.

a: To establish, promote and enhance sound policies and adequate funding that permits access to inclusive childcare, health, independence, community living, housing, transportation, employment and recreation by persons with exceptionalities.

b: To establish, promote and enhance programs that provide access to inclusive childcare, health, independence, community living, housing, transportation, employment and recreation by persons with exceptionalities.

c: To improve legislation and corresponding regulations for persons with exceptionalities.

d: To effectively communicate and collaborate with legislators, professional organizations and other agencies, councils, stakeholders and relevant entities.

GOAL 3: To increase and enhance the voice of all persons with disabilities in relevant decision making of state governmental agencies.

a: To establish mechanisms ensuring that the voices of students with exceptionalities and their families are included and meaningfully considered in decision making of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and the Delaware Department of Education.

b: To establish mechanisms ensuring that the voices of persons with exceptionalities are included and meaningfully considered in relevant decision making of other state governmental agencies.

GOAL 4: To mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all students, their parents, educators, and administrators.

a: To establish, promote, and enhance programs that assist in re-establishing the knowledge and competencies of students with exceptionalities that decreased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

b: To establish, promote, and enhance services that support the social-emotional well-being of students, their parents, educators, and administrators that diminished as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Committee Reports

Infant and Early Childhood (I&EC) Committee Report

Chair: Jennifer Pulcinella

Vice Chair: Molly Merrill

Committee Members: Ann Fisher, Kristina Horton

Guests: Cindy Brown (OEI Director), Jeri Turner (DE ECSE Coordinator), Hope Sanson, Sam Wooten (Birth to Three), Lillian McCuen

FY 24/25 Committee Goals and Progress

Goal 1: Foster Collaborative Partnerships with Birth to Three (B23) and Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)

Continue building strong partnerships with B23 and ICC to promote and implement evidence-based practices for early childhood development.

Progress: The committee invited B23 and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) staff to attend meetings held on November 19, 2024, January 21, 2025, February 18, 2025, March 18, 2025, April 15, 2025 and May 20, 2025. We coordinated with the ICC to review relevant data and actively participated in their meetings. These efforts have strengthened ongoing communication and collaboration.

Goal 2: Strengthen Relationship with the Office of Early Childhood Intervention (OEI)
Enhance collaboration with OEI to ensure alignment with developmentally appropriate practices for young children.

Progress: On January 21, 2025, the committee engaged with OEI to receive updates on IDEA Part C, Part B Section 619, and developmental screening processes. We reviewed Annual Performance Report (APR) data, noting 98% compliance for Indicator 12 (supporting transitions for 1,400 children) and improvements in Indicators 6 and 7. Discussions on April 15, 2025, covered the transition organization phase and salary considerations. This work has established a robust, ongoing partnership with OEI.

Goal 3: Advocate for Inclusive Practices in Educator Preparation
Promote inclusive practices in educator preparation, with a specific focus on addressing suspension and expulsion in childcare settings.

Progress: The committee reviewed the ECTA Center's Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion to guide our efforts. On February 18, 2025, we collaborated with the Delaware Early Childhood Council (DECC) and the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) Early Childhood Special

Education workgroup to refine definitions and collect data on suspension and expulsion. We began drafting a position letter on PreK suspension and expulsion, seeking input from Susan Venema on April 15, 2025. The committee aims to complete a Dear Colleague letter by June 30, 2025.

Goal 4: Collaborate with External Committees on Key Issues

Work with external committees to address critical issues affecting children from birth to age five, including the Special Needs Provider pay schedule.

Progress: On March 18, 2025, the committee discussed findings from the Preschool Education Funding Committee (PEFC) and their recommendation for universal PreK. We participated in the DHMIC Summit, focusing on infant mortality disparities and Black Maternal Health Awareness Week on April 15, 2025. The committee reviewed updates to Senate Bill 153 regarding the Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC) membership and functions, expressing interest in the bill's history and upcoming meetings on May 20, 2025. We've built strong connections with DECC, DDOE, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and Family SHADE, with ongoing discussions to advance our goals.

Goal 5: Support the IDEA Part C Lead Agency Transfer Process

Actively participate in the transfer process of the IDEA Part C Lead Agency to ensure a smooth transition.

Progress: The committee closely monitored the transfer process, discussing updates with OECl on January 21, 2025, and March 18, 2025, when a potential hold was noted due to the presidential Department of Education plan. On April 15, 2025, we reviewed organizational and staffing considerations. The committee plans to continue engaging with DDOE and ICC to support this process, which remains ongoing until July 1, 2028.

[Children and Youth \(C&Y\) Committee Report](#)

Chair: Tika Hartsock

Vice Chair: Cory Gildea

Committee Members: Al Cavalier, Bill Doolittle, Karen Eller, Maria Olivere, Trenee Parker

FY 24/25 Committee Goals and Progress

Goal 1: To review at least 30% of DOE due process decisions from the 2023-2024 school year for appropriate follow-up (communication with families, compensatory services, confirmation of corrective action, etc.) and provide written feedback with questions and/or recommendations to DOE by July 2025.

Progress: This year, the committee successfully revised and finalized a comprehensive rubric designed to evaluate due process decisions. Members reviewed specific cases, identifying critical areas for improvement, such as enhanced accountability by DOE and ensuring timely follow-up on compensatory services. The committee initiated dialogue with the Policy and Law Committee to ensure alignment in review practices and confirmed compliance with federal reporting requirements related to due process cases.

Next Steps:

- Continue reviewing due process outcomes and monitor follow-up actions.
- Provide ongoing advocacy for procedural enhancements based on evaluations and feedback.

Goal 2: Monitor the progress of the School Resource Officer (SRO) and Restraint and Seclusion Ad Hoc Committee of the GACEC and recommend appropriate adjustments to any draft bill to sponsors, the Secretary of Education and education committee chairs by the end of July 2025.

Progress: The committee actively supported the formation and work of the Ad Hoc Committee addressing concerns related to SROs, including adequate training and policies impacting students with disabilities. Significant attention was given to evaluating draft legislation, emphasizing the necessity of evidence-based practices, sufficient training requirements and exploring more effective alternatives for utilizing allocated funds, such as mental health services and increased support for educators.

Next Steps:

- Continue supporting the work of the Ad Hoc committee
- Continue monitoring legislative developments and their impact.

Goal 3: Study three state complaints and/or due process cases involving equity issues among students with disabilities within the last two years, recommending solutions to the Delaware Public Education Ombudsperson Program through the Education Equity Council by June 2025.

Progress: The committee began discussing and developing a rubric to evaluate state complaints and due process cases, focusing on identifying systemic equity issues. Collaboration with the Education Equity Council as it continues to be established and can provide foundational insight into equity-oriented policy and practice improvements.

Next Steps:

- Recommend solutions to the Education Equity Council to address equity issues for students with disabilities effectively.
- Collaborate with the Education Equity Council and advocacy groups to review and implement recommended changes.
- Continue advocating for policies and practices that promote equity and inclusivity in education for students with disabilities.

Adult and Transitions Services (ATS) Committee Report

Chair: Meedra Surratte

Vice Chair: Erika Powell

Committee Members: Nancy Cordrey, Thomas Keeton, Erik Warner

This year, the Adult and Transition Services Committee focused on strengthening supports for young adults with disabilities during and after the transition from school to adulthood. A primary area of work centered on the Class Action Settlement Agreement related to compensatory education for individuals ages 18–22, including identifying gaps in access and improving how families receive information and guidance.

The Committee also expanded its focus to young adults ages 22–30, emphasizing coordination of existing resources, cross-agency collaboration and use of tools such as the DelDHub to support successful transitions. Additional efforts included advancing discussions on adult and prison education, contributing to the formation of the Prison Education Ad Hoc Committee and engaging in learning opportunities such as a presentation on Alternatives to Guardianship.

As the year concluded, the Committee refined its goals to ensure they are focused, measurable and actionable, establishing a strong foundation for continued work in the coming year.

Policy and Law (P&L) Committee

Chair: Dr. Beth Mineo

Vice Chair: Dr. Jessica Heesh Mensack

Committee Members: Genesis Johnson, Brenné Shepperson, Stefanie Ramirez

In this year’s annual report, we extend our sincere appreciation to the members of the Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) Policy & Law Committee. Their diligence, expertise and thoughtful analysis have been vital in ensuring that the Council provides informed, timely and impactful recommendations on legislation and regulations affecting individuals with disabilities and exceptionalities. The Committees ongoing commitment to advocacy and collaboration has strengthened the Council’s role as a trusted voice in shaping policy across Delaware.

FY 24/25 Committee Goals and Progress

Goal 1: Provide timely review and feedback on proposed laws and regulations to education and special education in Delaware and submit formal comments to the Legislature, Department of Education, State Board of Education, Professional Standards Board and other relevant entities.

Goal 2: Review and provide feedback on proposed laws, regulations and practices to promote full accessibility, inclusivity and responsiveness across childcare, healthcare and wellness, community living, employment and recreational opportunities in Delaware. Submit comments to the Legislature, state agencies, professional organizations and other public and private entities as appropriate.

Goal 3: Strengthen collaboration across individual committees, with a focus on partnering with the Policy & Law Committee on issues of shared interest and impact.

Progress on Goals 1, 2 & 3:

The Policy & Law Committee is responsible for reviewing and analyzing proposed regulations and legislation that affect individuals with disabilities and exceptionalities. During this reporting year, committee members examined and discussed 23 regulations and eight bills. A complete list of these items, along with Council responses and resulting outcomes, is provided in the appendices of this annual report.

In addition to the formal review, the Committee and Council have strengthened their practice of direct engagement with legislators. The GACEC Chairperson and Executive Director connected with bill sponsors, through meetings and email correspondence, to share Council concerns and questions, often in lieu of submitting formal written letters. On several occasions, legislators invited Council to review and provide input on draft legislation before it was formally introduced.

Council is optimistic that these collaborative interactions will foster more timely and effective communication with policymakers. The following section highlights a small selection of bills on which the GACEC provided commentary.

Legislative Highlights and Council Impact

House Bill No. 79 Reporting Updates for Restraints and Seclusion – This bill expands reporting requirements related to the use of mechanical restraint and seclusion in public schools. While public school personnel are prohibited from using mechanical restraint or seclusion without a waiver, law enforcement officers remain permitted to do so. The bill directs the Department of Education to collect data on these practices in addition to existing reporting on restraints and to include this information in its annual report. The Council submitted a letter of strong support. House Bill No. 79 was signed into law by the Governor on July 30, 2025.

House Substitute 1 to House Bill No. 48 Accessible Parking Spaces – This bill amends 21 Del Code §4183 by formally defining “accessible parking space” and clarifying that access aisles are included in the prohibition against unauthorized parking. It increases fines to \$250 and \$500 and specifies that minor variations in signage or space features cannot be used as a defense against violations. The Council submitted a letter of support. The substituted bill passed both the House and Senate in June 2025 and awaits further action.

Senate Substitute 1 to Senate Bill 2 Absentee Voting – This Act, a substitute for Senate Bill No. 2, incorporates technical corrections made to the Delaware Constitution and represents the first leg of a constitutional amendment authorizing early, in-person voting. It requires that early voting be available for 10 calendar days prior to general, primary and special elections, including the weekend immediately before Election Day. Constitutional amendments in Delaware must be passed by two consecutive General Assemblies with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. The Council submitted a letter of support on this first leg of the proposal. The substituted legislation passed the Senate and will move forward for additional consideration during this legislative session.

Please see the legislative and regulatory tracking chart at the end for a complete list of examined regulations and bills, along with Council responses and resulting outcomes.

[Membership Committee](#)

Chair: Dr. Jessica Heesh Mensack

Vice Chair: Dr. Al Cavalier

Committee Members: Tika Hartsock, Jennifer Pulcinella

In this year’s annual report, we extend our sincere appreciation to the members of the Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) Membership Committee. Their dedication, expertise, and ongoing commitment have been instrumental in advancing Council’s efforts to strengthen, retain, and expand its membership.

During FY 24/25, we were delighted to have Jennifer Pulcinella renew her participation with the Membership Committee.

Resigned Members:

Matthew Denn- Resignation Date 2/20/2025

Erik Warner- Resignation Date 4/7/2025

Members on Leave of Absence:

Genesis Johnson- (Leave began 2/21/2024)

The GACEC Membership Committee goals and reporting are as follows for FY 24/25.

FY 24/25 Committee Goals and Progress

Goal 1: To revise and finalize a GACEC “Membership Process” that includes ongoing communications with Boards & Commissions, regular review of IDEA membership category compliance, review of new applications and support for the onboarding of new members, to ensure a consistent, compliant and transparent approach to Council membership.

Goal 2: To review draft GACEC policies related to membership and provide targeted recommendations to the Council Executive Director and Leadership Committee to support the effectiveness and alignment of Council operations and informed decision-making that aligns with the Council mission.

Goal 3: To provide targeted recommendations to the Council to support retention and growth of GACEC membership and help fulfill membership categories under IDEA.

Goal 4: To encourage GACEC members to join the Membership Committee.

Progress on Goals 1, 2 &3:

Throughout FY24/25, the GACEC Membership Committee made significant strides toward improving the structure, transparency and effectiveness of the Council Membership Process.

Goal 1: The Committee continued to refine the GACEC Membership Process, building on prior efforts and incorporating new tools and materials. This included:

- Finalization of a membership application packet with updated documents (Applicant Questionnaire, Appointment Process, GACEC Roster and GACEC IDEA Category Vacancy List).
- Creation of an infographic and proposed website language to clarify how individuals can apply and notify GACEC of their interest, promoting improved communication and access.
- Continued tracking of IDEA membership category roles to identify gaps in compliance.
- Continued tracking of known GACEC applicants.
- Continued tracking of meeting attendance of applicants and interested community members.
- Meeting with Boards & Commissions to discuss the GACEC IDEA Category vacancies, membership process and member category updates. Next meeting is scheduled for July 2025.

Goal 2: The Committee initiated review and revisions of membership-related internal policies such as:

- The Attendance Policy

- The Conflict-of-Interest Policy
- The Leave of Absence Policy

Recommendations were also made for improved internal follow-up mechanisms and applicant tracking, considering the challenges with information sharing from Boards and Commissions.

Policy and other recommendations were forwarded to the Council Executive Director for further review and are part of the Council's effort to enhance internal consistency and accountability and support the development of Council's internal policies and procedures manual.

Goal 3: The Committee continued to support membership retention and growth. This included:

- Maintaining regular outreach efforts to Boards & Commissions, including biweekly emails requesting updates on new applicants and status of vacancies.
- Conducting internal outreach to current GACEC members requesting recommendations for individuals qualified to serve in required IDEA categories that are currently vacant.
- Implementing direct engagement with Council to seek recommendations and feedback on challenges with Boards & Commissions.
- Strengthening internal documentation to ensure tracking of applicant engagement in Council meetings.

Despite the staffing changes within Boards & Commissions and evolving State priorities, the Committee has adapted its approach and remains committed to implementing a sustainable, accessible, and mission-aligned membership strategy in FY25-26 and beyond.

Progress on Goal 4:

The GACEC Membership Committee has encouraged new members to join this Committee this FY. The Committee maintains an open-door policy and welcomes participation from all Council members.

[Additional Committees, Councils, and Workgroup Reports:](#)

[Individuals with Complex Medical Conditions and Education \(ICMCE\) Ad Hoc](#)

Chair: Dr. Jessica Heesh Mensack

Vice Chair: Maria Olivero

Committee Participants: Dale Matusevich, Cassandra Codes- Benjamin, Ann Covey, Robert Sabolcik, Drew Fioravanti

Overview The GACEC's Individuals with Complex Medical Conditions and Education (ICMCE) Ad Hoc Committee was established in Spring 2023 to address the diverse and multifaceted needs of students with complex medical conditions within Delaware's public education system.

Recognizing the intersection of disability, exceptionalities, education and law, the Council is committed to ensuring that these students receive Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), 504 Plans and school-based services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), ensuring Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The committee advises and advocates for educational environments that both accommodate students' medical needs and support their academic, physical, social and emotional well-being.

Purpose and Charge in FY 24/25 The ICMCE Ad Hoc Committee worked to:

- Advise and advocate for improved care coordination and appropriate educational environments and services for students with complex medical needs.
- Promote interagency collaboration and policy alignment.
- Ensure that data systems and compliance monitoring support equitable and effective service delivery.

FY24/25 Ad Hoc Goals and Progress

Goal 1: Strengthen Data Systems Integration to Identify and Support Students with Complex Medical Needs

- ICMCE successfully advocated for a data checkbox and text box to be included in Delaware's electronic health record, Health Accounting, to identify and support students with complex medical conditions.
- Worked with partners to develop a tiered rollout approach for nurse and non-nurse staff to understand how to use the complex medical student button.
- Partnered with to provide training and resources for accurate data entry and access to school nurses

Goal 2: Promote Collaborative Partnerships with Delaware School Nurse Association (DSNA) and Nursing Stakeholders

- Continued collaboration with DSNA and the School Nurse Advisory Group to clarify roles and responsibilities for identification and communication of complex medical needs for students to healthcare and nonhealthcare LEA staff.
- Addressed concerns regarding nurse-only identification models through multi-tiered strategies.

Goal 3: Expand Medicaid Cost Recovery for School-Based Nursing Services

- Engaged DDOE partners through formal letters and meetings to seek understanding and thought partnering on bridging system gaps in care.
- Clarification was received that Medicaid may approve nursing services for more than 4 units (60 minutes) per day if medical necessity is determined
- Included Medicaid contacts in discussions and planning

Goal 4: Monitor and Advise for Infinite Campus System Updates and Migration Challenges

- Addressed medication data migration challenges from ESchool to Infinite Campus.

- A letter sent to DDOE and follow-up meeting in August 2024 emphasized critical issues including manual data re-entry, lack of standardization, and potential safety risks from absent Medication Administration Records (MAR).
- DDOE committed to internal reviews and encouraged earlier training for Wave 2 LEAs. School nurses were offered training, open office hours for support and reminders were issued for school nurses to access historical records as needed to support student care.
 - Note- This electronic health system for school nurses has changed statewide to Health Accounting. Nurses are no longer using Infinite Campus for daily operations.
 - Continue collaborative discussions with partners to address the two critical systems impacting students, Infinite Campus (the educational student information system) and Health Accounting (the nursing electronic health record) and the ongoing challenges related to the lack of integration between them.

Goal 5. Develop and Promote Statewide Student Health and Education Plans

- ICMCE continues to promote the development of individualized Student Health and Education Plans that reflect best practices and standards of care. These plans should be fully integrated into a student’s 504 plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students with complex medical needs and be accessible across all educational environments.
- Student Health and Education Plans should be developed collaboratively with school nurses, families, IEP/504 teams and the student’s healthcare providers and should address the students’ comprehensive medical needs to ensure FAPE.

Goal 6. Ensure IDEA/FAPE Compliance and Transparency

- Provided guidance to DDOE for Delaware’s Local Education Agency’s (LEAs) surrounding students with complex medical conditions.
- Discussions remain ongoing with GACEC leadership on ensuring oversight, transparency, and non-duplication of effort in IDEA/FAPE enforcement and monitoring.
- Continue to promote systemic solutions to ensure FAPE, appropriate accountability, strengthen LEA communication pathways, parent engagement and family-centered support with ICMCE partners.
- Additional meetings are planned to coordinate this ICMCE workstream. ICMCE will work in partnership with GACEC’s project management systems to manage this work.

Looking Ahead: ICMCE will continue prioritizing safe and equitable care for students with complex medical needs through data-informed advisement, advocacy, interagency collaboration, and systemic improvement. ICMCE will continue to review targeted, mutual goals with Dale Matusevich, Delaware’s Director of Exceptional Children Resources and other Delaware system partners, that detail comprehensive, whole student approaches, supports and resources to ensure compliance with IDEA and FAPE.

ICMCE goals will continue to promote individualized, inclusive, safe and appropriate educational environments for all students.

We appreciate the Council's continued support and look forward to updating you on our progress in the coming year.

Educational Equity Council

GACEC Appointee: Dr. Jessica Heesh Mensack

Current Appointer: Representative Kimberly Williams, 19th District.

This year marked the second year of service for the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens' (GACEC) appointed family member representative to the Educational Equity Council (EEC), a role filled through nomination by the Chair of Council. This continued participation strengthens GACEC's voice in statewide education equity efforts and reflects an ongoing commitment to ensuring the perspectives of families of students with disabilities are represented.

Dr. Jessica Heesh Mensack was nominated by the GACEC Chair for this position and appointed by State Representative Kimberly Williams, as Chair of the House of Education Committee pursuant to House Bill 188 with House Amendment 1.

The purpose of the Educational Equity Council is to provide input and oversight into the Education Equity Ombudsperson Program and to study and recommend solutions to ongoing or systemic equity problems.

The duties of the Educational Equity Council are as follows:

- To work with the Department of State to annually develop a request for proposal or renewal for the Education Equity Ombudsperson.
- To approve the awarding of the contract for the Education Equity Ombudsperson Program. The Council may appoint a subcommittee to review and consult with the Department of State on the award of the contract for the Education Equity Ombudsperson Program.
- To meet at least twice each year to review the operation and effectiveness of the Education Equity Ombudsperson Program.
- To provide recommendations to the Education Equity Ombudsperson Program to improve its effectiveness.
- To provide recommendations to the General Assembly and the Department of Education to improve equity in the public educational system.

Dr. Jessica Heesh Mensack has provided updates relating to the EEC and housed relevant public Council documents within GACEC’s Teams platform.

Highlights and Collaborations

Annual Retreat

The GACEC held its Annual Fall Planning Retreat on October 12, 2024, as part of the Council’s planning activities for the upcoming year. Retreat participants included Council members, as well as Dale Matusevich, Director of Exceptional Children Resources (ECR) and Cindy Brown, Director of the Office of Early Childhood Intervention (OECI).

Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest



In October, the GACEC held its annual Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest. This year’s theme, “Share Our Similarities, Celebrate Our Differences,” encouraged young artists across the state to submit creative works that highlighted the challenges faced by people with disabilities. The entries were judged by John McNeal and Ann Fisher from the State Council for Persons with Disabilities based on how well they addressed the contest theme.

The reception saw an enthusiastic turnout, with the top winners from each category celebrating their accomplishments alongside their families and school supporters. Special guests included Senator Dave Lawson, Senator Eric Buckson, Representative Lyndon Yearick, Representative Sophie Phillips and Representative Melanie Levin. Also present virtually was LeDerick Horne, a renowned artist, advocate and ambassador for meaningful change. Mr. Horne delivered a motivational speech and shared his poetry with the audience.

The contest judges, John McNeal and Ann Fisher from the State Council for Persons with Disabilities, were also in attendance. Pam Weir, Executive Director of the GACEC, presented certificates to the winning students and all participants received a certificate of participation from the GACEC.

GACEC/YMCA Resource Fair

The Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) collaborated with the Delaware YMCA to host a resource fair during Disability History and Awareness Month (DHAM) in October. The goal was for Delawareans to learn more about disability resources, recognize the contributions of people with disabilities to our communities and to actively participate in inclusion efforts throughout our state. Over 20 vendors took part in the event to bring more awareness about resources and services available to the disability community. Several Delaware State Representatives and Senators also attended the resource fair to learn more about resources and show their support for the disability community.



The GACEC participated in several events around the State to increase awareness of the Council and the Delaware Disability Hub (DeIDHub) Transition website. Most notably, those events included providing resources and information to over 600 middle school students at the Governor’s Central Delaware Career Expo and to 500+ early childhood stakeholders and parents at the Make a Difference Conference at Delaware Technical Community College Terry Campus in Dover.



Council continues to increase DeIDHub marketing efforts with the Delaware Department of Education Transition Cadre. Each month GACEC staff, with assistance from the DeIDHub contractor, present information on the DeIDHub to educators and transition service providers, such as the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation, Delaware Developmental Disabilities Services and the Parent Information Center of Delaware.

In addition to the increased presence at the Transition Cadre meetings, GACEC was also able to participate in transition fairs in all three counties, reaching over 400 parents, students and educators.

The City of Lewes hosted its annual Juneteenth Celebration at George H.P. Smith Park, drawing over 600 attendees. The GACEC was invited to participate as a vendor, providing an opportunity to share information about the Council and DeIDHub. Many attendees stopped by the GACEC table to ask questions and learn more about available resources.

GACEC's Collaborative Efforts with other Organizations and Agencies to Promote Education and Awareness

- The GACEC **wrote more than 600 letters** to the Governor, Legislators, the DDOE, and other agencies to advise and advocate on behalf of individuals with disabilities and their families.
- Office Manager Kathie Cherry is a member of the **SCPD Policy and Law Committee**. This committee reviewed and/or provided commentary on **more than 115** proposed or final regulations, state legislations, Federal bills, and many other policies, which impact persons with disabilities.
- **SCPD Brain Injury Committee (BIC)** – GACEC Administrative Coordinator, Lacie Spence, is a member of the SCPD Brain Injury Committee (BIC). Committee members work on activities designed to improve the lives of Delawareans with brain injury by providing the following: 1) a forum for the sharing and analysis of information; 2) a network to identify and facilitate acquisition of enhanced resources; 3) a technical assistance provider to educate public and private policymakers; and 4) an advocacy agency to promote a consumer oriented, effective injury and prevention service delivery system.
- **DOE Special Education Leadership Workgroup** - The workgroup is comprised of Special Education Directors and Coordinators and meets to discuss trends and issues in the field. GACEC staff attended the statewide meetings of this workgroup to monitor what is happening with special education in Delaware, as well as to provide input.
- **Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)** - The ICC focuses on early childhood issues. This year Pam Weir and other members of Council attended meetings to provide information and keep up to date on new information regarding early childhood issues. The GACEC and ICC will be working together, along with other stakeholders as the Part C program is transferred from the Division of Public Health to the DDOE.
- **Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) Community Advisory Council (CAC)** - The CDS is supported in its work through the contribution of its Community Advisory Council (CAC). The CAC is composed of individuals with developmental and related disabilities; family members of individuals with developmental disabilities; representatives from disability-related training, service, and advocacy organizations; representatives from state agencies; and other disability advocates. Meetings of the CAC are held four times a year. Executive Director, Pam Weir, is a CAC member.
- **Special Education Strategic Planning Council (SESPAC)** – Pam Weir is currently a member. Meetings are attended regularly to facilitate collaboration with this work group on issues relevant to students with disabilities. Council members Bill Doolittle, Tika

Hartsock, Jennifer Pulcinella and Erika Powell are also members of the Committee.

- **LIFE Conference Planning Committee-** The annual statewide LIFE Conference is dedicated to ensuring that individuals with disabilities in Delaware have full access to supportive legislation, independence, family support services, and education. GACEC Executive Director Pam Weir and Office Manager Kathie Cherry serve on the LIFE Conference Planning Committee. The planning team also includes representatives from the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD), Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Delaware Public Health (DPH), Easterseals, Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA), Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), and Delaware Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (DCADA). The 2025 LIFE Conference, held on January 29, 2025, welcomed over 400 in-person attendees.



- **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Advisory Panel** –The panel meets quarterly to discuss implementation of ESSA in Delaware. The panel is hosted by the DDOE and is attended by district personnel, DDOE staff, as well as Representative Kim Williams.
- **U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)-** Pam Weir is a member of the national OSEP-supported SAP/SICC workgroup designed to supports states' implementation of IDEA.

GACEC Member and Staff Involvement

GACEC members and staff are actively involved with several organizations and committees on an ongoing basis. These partnerships support the Council's efforts in fostering interagency collaboration and strengthening coalitions to better serve individuals with disabilities. The following are some of those organizations and committees:

- American Association of University Women
- American Counseling Association
- Art Therapy Express
- Autism Delaware
- Behavioral Health Collaborative
- Brain Injury Committee (BIC)

- Correctional Education Association
- CPAC- Child Protection Accountability Commission
- Delaware and National Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- Delaware State Teachers Association
- Delaware Association of School Administrators
- Delaware Counseling Association
- Delaware Early Childhood Council
- Delaware Families for Hands and Voices
- Delaware Family Support Coordinating Council
- Delaware Healthy Mothers & Infant Consortium (DHMIC)
- Delaware Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Delaware State Network of Educators
- Department of Education, Exceptional Resources Special Education Group
- Department of Education, Every Student Succeeds Act workgroup
- Department of Labor Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Committee
- Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC)
- DOE Transition Council
- Dover Air Force Base Exceptional Families Resources Program
- Division of Service to Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD)
- DVRC For Visually Impaired Council
- DVRTF (Delaware Victims' Rights Taskforce) Disability Committee
- Employment First Initiative Oversight Commission
- Endless Possibilities in the Community (EPIC)
- Early Childhood Inclusion Committee (ECIC)
- Family SHADE
- Governor's Advisory Council for Aging and Disabled Persons (GACADP)
- State Health Operations Center Functional Information and Support Center (SHOCFISC)
- Delaware Access and Functional Needs (DE AFN)
- Governor's Commission on Building Access to Community-Based Services (GCBACS)
- Governor's Commission on Employment of People w/Disabilities
- Health Care Commission Disability Health Equity Sub Committee
- Hearing Loss Association of Delaware (HLADE)
- Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) for Part C of IDEA
- Mobility in Motion
- National and Delaware Chapter of Hands and Voices
- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Parent Information Center of Delaware (PIC)
- Persons with Access, Functional and Medical Needs
- Protection & Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR)
- Respite Care Committee
- State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD)
- SCPD Policy and Law Committee

- Special Education Strategic Planning Committee
- State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)
- SSIP Early Childhood Part C Collaboration Implementation Team
- Sussex Early Childhood Council
- Sussex Inter-Agency Council
- Trauma Informed Care Interest Group
- University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) Community Advisory Council (CAC)

Thank you to our 2024-2025 Presenters and Speakers

Dale Matusевич, DDOE	Stacy Watkins, DDDS
Andrew Wilson, DMMA	Hope Vella, DRD
Lee Wentz, Law Offices of Lawrence Lee Wentz	Mike Tholstrup, DNREC

GACEC Staff

- Pam Weir, Executive Director
- Kathie Cherry, Office Manager
- Lacie Spence, Administrative Coordinator
- Theresa Moore, Operations Support Specialist



GACEC Membership List 2024-2025

Al Cavalier	Genesis Johnson
Nancy Cordrey	Molly Merrill
Matt Denn	Beth Mineo
Bill Doolittle	Maria Olivere
Karen Eller	Trenee Parker
Ann Fisher	Erika Powell
Cory Gilden	Jennifer Pulcinella
Tika Hartsock	Stefanie Ramirez
Jessica Heesh Mensack	Brenné Shepperson
Kristina Horton	Meedra Surratte
Thomas Keeton	Erik Warner



Legislative Tracking FY 2025

Bill Number	Summary and Council Action	Status
<p>Senate Bill 78 Discrimination Prohibition in Public Schools</p>	<p>Synopsis: Require the Delaware Department of Education to update its regulations to align the protected classes to include those created by SB 78. The definition of bullying in 14 Del. C. § 4161 would also be expanded to include targeting membership in any protected class or based on the target’s age.</p> <p>Council Action: Council requested opportunity to have discussion with the sponsors of this proposed legislation to determine if it would be possible to revise the bill or introduce a companion bill that would include a grievance procedure, compliance oversight and add language prohibiting retaliation.</p>	<p>Out of Education Committee 4/9/25</p>
<p>House Bill 79 Reporting Updates for Restraints and Seclusion</p>	<p>Synopsis: This bill requires additional reporting and disclosure related to the use of mechanical restraint and seclusion in public schools. Public school personnel cannot use mechanical restraint or seclusion on students in absence of a waiver, however, law-enforcement officers can. This Act requires the Department of Education to collect data from public schools about the use of mechanical restraint and seclusion, in addition to the physical restraint data that is already collected. The Department of Education will include the mechanical restraint and seclusion data in its annual report.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written to strongly support the proposed legislation.</p>	<p>Signed by the Governor 7/30/25</p>
<p>Senate Bill 93 Third Party Decision Making</p>	<p>Synopsis: This bill seeks to make a number of amendments to citations used to reference those who make financial or health-care decisions on behalf of a principal or individual, including when that principal or individual lacks capacity.</p> <p>Council Action: Council requested additional clarification about the type of problem this legislation is trying to solve by limiting the only mechanism for declaring someone incompetent to legal channels. The proposed legislation eliminates the mechanism for the attending physician of the individual to declare them incompetent. As written, Council fears the proposed amendment will limit the enforcement of rights, which conflicts with the purpose of the statute.</p>	<p>Signed by the Governor 7/21/25</p>

Bill Number	Summary and Council Action	Status
<p>House Bill 118 Exceptional Care for Children (ECC) Nursing Facility Quality Assessment Exemption</p>	<p>Synopsis: This bill would allow Exceptional Care for Children (ECC) to be paid the pediatric rate for adults it will serve through its new Bridge Unit (currently under construction). The Bridge Unit will allow ECC to help a small number of individuals, who turn 21 while in ECC care, with the transition from a pediatric setting to an adult setting.</p> <p>Council Action: Council sent a letter asking for clarification and shared other concerns that need to be addressed.</p>	<p>Signed by the Governor 8/25/25</p>
<p>House Substitute 1 for House Bill 48</p>	<p>Synopsis: This bill amends 21 Del Code §4183 to define an “accessible parking space”. It makes it illegal for any vehicle “other than a vehicle being used by a person with a disability” to park in an accessible parking space. It clarifies that it is illegal to park in access aisles and increases the maximum fines to \$250 and \$500. It states that minor variations in parking space features, including the lack of a sign, are not a defense to a charge of parking illegally in an accessible parking space.</p> <p>Council Action: A letter was sent in support of the proposed legislation.</p>	<p>HS 2 for HB 48 passed 6/30/25 Ready for Governor Action</p>
<p>Senate Bill 161 Oversight of Behavioral Health Providers</p>	<p>Synopsis: This Act authorizes the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to issue licenses and adopt and enforce comprehensive regulations for behavioral health provider organizations and treatment programs. It requires provider organizations to obtain licenses to operate behavioral health treatment programs, with exemptions for certain practitioners and programs. It creates civil and criminal penalties for the provision of treatment services or the operation of programs without proper licensing or in violation of law or regulation.</p> <p>Council Action: A letter was sent in support of the proposed legislation</p>	<p>Senate Health and Social Services 5/21/25 Awaiting consideration in Committee</p>
<p>Senate Bill 2 & 3 Absentee Voting</p>	<p>Synopsis: These Acts provide the following: 1) SB 2 provides early, in-person voting for the general election, a primary election and a special election filling a vacancy in the General Assembly and 2) SB 3 to eliminate the limitations on when an individual may vote absentee and provide an absolute right to vote by absentee ballot without an excuse.</p> <p>Council Action: A letter was sent in support of the proposed legislation.</p>	<p>Substituted on 4/09/25 Passed by Senate. Reported out of House Administrative Committee 5/21/25</p>

Bill Number	Summary and Council Action	Status
<p>House Bill 11 Special Education Records</p>	<p>Synopsis: This Act aligns state special education law with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and its implementing regulations, and clarifies that a parent’s representative may obtain copies of a student’s special education records.</p> <p>Council Action: Signed on to letter drafted by Disability Rights Delaware in support of the proposed legislation.</p>	<p>Signed by the Governor 4/14/25</p>
<p>House Bill 29 Public Education Profiles</p>	<p>Synopsis: This Act revises current law to correspond with and codify current DDOE practices regarding public education reports as follows: • Changes the term “Education Profile” to “education-related data” to reflect the broad range of data that the Department publishes, in addition to the annual reports required under existing State and federal law. The bill requires the following: that there is a link to these reports on the school choice website; these reports continue to include proficiency rates; a link to these reports is on the home page of the DDOE website and it includes a list of a career pathways offered at a high school in these reports.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter of support sent; requesting information on alternative placements be added to the reports.</p>	<p>Passed by the Senate and House. Awaiting action by the Governor as of 7/01/25</p>

Regulatory Tracking- FY 2025

Regulation	Summary and Council Action	Response/Update
<p>28 DE Reg. 11 DE Admin. Code 922 DDOE Proposed Children with Disabilities Subpart A, Purposes and Definitions regulation (July 1, 2024)</p>	<p>This Regulation includes the purposes and definitions for Delaware’s special education regulations (Delaware’s equivalent to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), in January of 2024. The DDOE re-published the proposed regulations in July of 2024.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written with Council recommendations and observations</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 727 Final April 1, 2025 Acknowledged receipt of comments but did not list source of comments. Did not make any recommended changes.</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 12 DE Admin. Code 923 DDOE Proposed Children with Disabilities Subpart B, General Duties and Eligibility of Agencies regulation (July 1, 2024)</p>	<p>This regulation is being amended to update Section 16.0 Placements so that it aligns with 14 DE Admin. Code 925 Children with Disabilities Subpart D, Evaluations, Eligibility Determination, Individualized Education Programs.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written strongly opposing the regulations re-published in July of 2024 and sharing observations</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 729 Final April 1, 2025 Acknowledged receipt of comments but did not list source of comments. Did not make any recommended changes.</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 14 DE Admin. Code 925 DDOE Proposed Children with Disabilities Subpart D, Evaluations, Eligibility Determination, Individualized Education Programs regulation (July 1, 2024)</p>	<p>This regulation is being amended to ensure alignment with current practice. The following sections have been revised: Additional Requirements for Evaluations and Re-Evaluations, Determination of Eligibility, Individualized Education Program (IEP), IEP Team, When IEPs Shall Be in Effect, Development, and Review of IEP, Educational Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment, and High School Graduation.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written to support the proposed amendments with recommendations</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 731 Final April 1, 2025 Acknowledged receipt of comments but did not list source of comments. Did not make any recommended changes.</p>

Regulation	Summary and Council Action	Response/Update
<p>28 DE Reg. 214 Delaware Division of Professional/Board of Examiners of Psychologists Regulation (September 1, 2024)</p>	<p>The proposed regulation amends the continuing education requirements for pro-rated licensure periods to include continuing education credits in cultural inclusion, equity and diversity.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written in support of the amendment and suggesting specifically adding ‘disability’ to the continuing education requirements as disability is not mentioned.</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 468 Final December 1, 2024 Did not acknowledge GACEC comments.</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 230 DHSS/DMMA/DDDS Renewal of 1915(i) Pathways State Plan Amendment Regulations (September 1, 2024)]</p>	<p>The proposed regulation amends the Medicaid State Plan in reference to the Pathways to Employment program. The amendment will extend the waiver of choice of provider, by restricting Pathways services to a designated number of contracted providers.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written to support the proposed amendment and share observations.</p>	<p>No response/No update</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 269/14 DE Admin. Code 1596 DDOE Charter School Leader regulation (October 1, 2024)</p>	<p>The proposed amendments include defining and adding the role of “Instructional Administrator in Sections 1.0 and 2.0; revising the definition of “Regionally Accredited” based on U.S. Department of Education changes in Section 2.0; adding reciprocity language in Section 3.0; revising requirements in Section 4.0; adding Section 5.0 regarding reciprocity; and revising the application requirements in Section 6.0.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written to support the proposed amendment. Requested adding a requirement for special education legal/regulatory training requirements for applicants seeking Charter School Leader Certification, especially individuals coming from non-academic backgrounds. Council also encouraged the DDOE to look to existing training for other certifications/licensures and how to augment training requirements for charter school leaders, in order to address charter school disparities for students with disabilities and ensure Delaware students receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE).</p>	<p>No response/No update</p>

Regulation	Summary and Council Action	Response/Update
<p>28 DE Reg. 276 DHSS/DPH Notice Regarding Inherited Metabolic Disorders Regulations (October 1, 2024)</p>	<p>The proposed regulation would repeal Regulation 4103 Inherited Metabolic Disorders.</p> <p>Council Actions: Letter written. Rather than repeal Regulation 4103, Council believes the regulation should remain in the Delaware Code. There are a number of reasons that can be advanced to maintain the regulation. First, is that assistance under the regulation is dependent upon funds being appropriated by the General Assembly. (6.3). By its own terms, the regulation is self-limiting. If no monies are appropriated, no assistance will be provided. There is no need to repeal the regulation because there are no funds. There is also the possibility that the General Assembly could act and provide appropriations this term or in the future. Further, the DPH could seek funding through the State budget process.</p>	<p>No response/No update</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 279 DHSS Delaware Medical Marijuana Code Regulations (October 1, 2024)</p>	<p>The proposed regulations revise the Delaware Medical Marijuana Code regulations to provide clearer guidelines on how individuals can request and use medical marijuana registration identification cards (MMRIC).</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written to request clearer information and accessibility of communication.</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 221 Final September 1, 2025 Did not acknowledge GACEC comments</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 358 DHSS/DMMA Proposed Cellular and Gene Therapy Regulations (November 1, 2024)</p>	<p>The proposed regulation to amend Title XIX Medicaid State Plan to change pricing logic for clotting factors and specialty medications to control costs related to genetic therapy for sickle cell disease.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written in support of the proposed amendment.</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 540 Final January 1, 2025 Acknowledged GACEC support.</p>

Regulation	Summary and Council Action	Response/Update
<p>28 DE Reg. 364 DHSS/DMMA Proposed Personal Needs Allowance State Plan Amendment Regulations (November 1, 2024)</p>	<p>The proposed regulations revise the Medicaid State Plan and DMMS Regulation 20620.1 concerning personal needs allowances. The proposed amendment will increase the personal needs allowance for residents of nursing homes and ICF/ID facilities from \$50 a month to \$75 a month for individuals and from \$100 a month to \$150 a month for married couples. It will not impact individuals living in the community receiving waiver services through the long-term care Medicaid program.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written to endorse the proposed increase. Council requested information on how DHSS decided on an increase to \$75.00 rather than a higher amount given the cost of living in Delaware and larger amounts being provided in other states</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 545 Final January 1, 2025 Acknowledged and thanked the GACEC for comments. No changes made</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 373 Department of Labor Proposed Healthy Delaware Families Act, Family and Medical Leave Program and Division of Paid Leave Regulations (November 1, 2024)</p>	<p>The proposed regulation establishes the Division of Paid Leave within the Department of Labor, the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program (PFML Insurance Program), and the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Appeal Board (Board).</p> <p>Council Action: Letter sent to request clarification. Council queried whether the decision of the Board on family and medical leave benefits can be appealed to Superior Court, or if the appeal to Superior Court applies only to hearings on whether an employer has violated the HDFFA or the PFML insurance program, which provides for an appeal to Superior Court of the decision of the Board.</p>	<p>29 DE Reg. 601 Final April 1, 2025 Acknowledged GACEC Comments. No changes made.</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 490/14 DE Admin. Code 1517 DDOE Paraeducator Permits regulation (January 1, 2025)</p>	<p>The proposed regulation amends 14 Del. Admin. C. §1517 with respect to paraeducator permits.</p> <p>Council Action: Council <u>supports</u> the proposed amendments, as they appear to encourage more paraeducators to serve in the educational system in Delaware.</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 734 Final April 1, 2025 Acknowledged GACEC supportive comments.</p>

Regulation	Summary and Council Action	Response/Update
<p>28 DE Reg. 497/14 DE Admin. Code 1572 DDOE Teacher of Students Who are Gifted or Talented regulation (January 1, 2025)</p>	<p>The proposed regulation amends 14 Del. Admin. C. § 1572 in reference to the requirements for a Teacher of Students Who Are Gifted or Talented Standard Certificate.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written stating that Council <u>does not support</u> the additional pathway to obtaining this certificate</p>	<p>28 DE Reg.737 Final April 1, 2025 Acknowledged GACEC supportive comments.</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 522 Department of State/Public Service Commission Proposed Regulation Governing Termination of Residential Electric or Natural Gas Service by Public Utilities for Non-Payment During Extreme Seasonal Temperature Conditions (January 1, 2025)</p>	<p>The proposed regulation is summarized by PSC as a proposal to lower the Heat Index metric used during the Cooling Season and eliminate the requirement that a utility attempt to make personal contact at a customer's premises prior to disconnection</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written stating that Council <u>opposes</u> this proposed change as it removes important safeguards that help to ensure people with disabilities are not put at risk during extreme weather.</p>	<p>No response/No update</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 632/14 DE Admin. Code 890 DDOE Non-Academic Training for School Employees regulation (March 1, 2025)</p>	<p>This regulation is intended to provide a schedule for non-academic training for school employees and to further the goals of Subchapter II of 14 Del. C., Ch. 41, for the development and review of required non-academic trainings. The training areas covered by this regulation focus on students' health and safety, including in areas related to child abuse and child safety awareness, bullying prevention, criminal youth gang detection, and suicide prevention. Additionally, administrators, school counselors, and school nurses receive training on adult sexual misconduct, and teen dating violence.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter sent stating that Council <u>supports</u> the need and supports the importance of the trainings addressed in the proposed regulations and sharing some observations.</p>	<p>29 DE Reg. 33 Final July 1, 2025 Acknowledged GACEC comments and responded in the Register. No changes made.</p>

Regulation	Summary and Council Action	Response/Update
<p>28 DE Reg. 644/ 14 DE Admin. Code 1571 DDOE PSB Special Education Teacher of Students with Disabilities regulation (March 1, 2025)</p>	<p>The regulation concerns the requirements for a Special Education Teacher of Students with Disabilities Standard Certificate in accordance with 14 Del. C. §1220. The proposed change includes adding subsection 4.1.2, added literacy coursework consistent with 14 Del. C. §1280 (c)(3), a revision of the definition of “Regionally Accredited”, and other technical edits</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written Council <u>supports</u> the proposed amendments and made inquiries.</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 810 Final May 1, 2025 Acknowledged GACEC comments. No response to requests for information.</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 650/ 14 DE Admin. Code 1573 DDOE PSB Teacher of Students with Autism or with Severe Intellectual Disabilities regulation (March 1, 2025)</p>	<p>The regulation details the requirements for a Teacher of Students with Autism or with Severe Intellectual Disabilities Standard Certificate. The proposed amendments to this regulation include adding subsection 4.1.2 which outlines added literacy coursework as required by 14 Del. C. §1280 (c)(3), changes the definition of "Regionally Accredited", removes some defined terms, adds a requirement for criminal history disclosure upon application, and other technical or procedural edits that do not require further discussion.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter written stating that Council <u>supports</u> the proposed amendments and sharing observations.</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 812 Final May 1, 2025 Acknowledged GACEC Comments. No response to requests for additional requirements.</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 651 DHSS/DMMA Proposed Juvenile Justice Initiative State Plan Amendment Regulations (March 1, 2025)</p>	<p>This Regulation proposes to revise Title XIX Medicaid State Plan to expand services provided to eligible juveniles incarcerated in public institutions to help improve care transitions and to bring Delaware into compliance with federal law. Services include Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Services (EPSDT) and Targeted Case Management (TCM) to be provided within 30 days of release following adjudication.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter sent stating that Council <u>supports</u> the proposed revisions and sharing additional recommendations and inquiries.</p>	<p>28 DE Reg. 880 Final June 1, 2025 Acknowledged GACEC comments and responded in Register. Source of comments noted at the end of regulation.</p>

Regulation	Summary and Council Action	Response/Update
<p>28 DE Reg. 720 Delaware Board of Speech/Language Pathologists, Audiologists and Hearing Aid Dispensers Proposed Regulations (April 1, 2025)</p>	<p>This proposed amendment clarifies licensure requirements. Changes include requiring hearing aid dispenser applicants to complete the International Hearing Society's "Distance Learning for Professionals in Hearing Health Sciences" curriculum, removing the limit on exam attempts for licensure, and adding a two-hour ethics requirement for continuing education. Sections related to audiology and speech/language pathology aides were removed since these roles are not licensed by the Board.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter sent stating that Council supports the proposed changes. Council also recommended that the Board specifically include provisions and safeguards related to accommodations for individuals with disabilities.</p>	<p>29 DE Reg. 226 Final September 1, 2025 Acknowledged GACEC comments. No changes made.</p>
<p>28 DE Reg. 716 DMMA Proposed Doula Services State Plan Amendment Regulations (April 1, 2025)</p>	<p>Proposal to revise the Medicaid State Plan to expand access (as authorized by House Bill No. 345) to include an additional five postpartum doula visits within 180 days of delivery if authorized by a licensed provider. This amendment also authorizes three postpartum doula visits after a pregnancy loss; however, there must have been at least one prenatal doula visit.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter sent endorsing the proposed amendment. However, Council questioned why doula coverage for miscarriage and pregnancy loss is restricted to those women who have already engaged with a doula in the pre-natal period. Council also inquired about the possibility of requiring additional training for doulas regarding support to women who have experienced pregnancy loss since it does not appear that this content is included in the current 16-hour training requirements.</p>	<p>No response/No update</p>

Regulation	Summary and Council Action	Response/Update
<p>28 DE Reg. 802 Delaware Board of Speech/Language Pathologists, Audiologists and Hearing Aid Dispensers Proposed Licensure of Speech Language Pathologist Assistants Regulations (May 1, 2025)</p>	<p>Regulations proposed to create a licensure category for speech/language pathologist assistants (SLPA) to implement Senate Bill 320, which was enacted to help address shortfalls in the supply of speech language pathologists (SLPs) by creating the designation of speech language pathologist assistant.</p> <p>Council Action: Letter sent <u>endorsing</u> the proposed regulations and sharing recommendations.</p>	<p>No response/No update</p>