



GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CITIZENS (GACEC)
Leadership Committee Meeting
6:00 PM, January 6, 2026
VIRTUAL MEETING

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

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

GUESTS PRESENT: Maria Olivere

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ann Fisher, Stefanie Ramirez, and Meedra Surratte

PUBLIC ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATIONS:

Meetings of the Council are open to the public. Information regarding accessibility accommodation is posted on the public meeting calendar. Requests must be submitted at least ten (10) days in advance to allow adequate time for arrangements. The Council maintains funding for accessibility services and schedules interpreters based on advance requests to ensure effective use of public funds.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Pam Weir confirmed there was a quorum. Bill Doolittle asked for approval of the agenda and minutes from the December 10, 2025, meeting without objections. Concerns were raised regarding the clarity and specificity of the meeting agenda, particularly as it relates to public understanding of discussion topics. It was agreed that future agendas should be more descriptive, acknowledging the challenges posed by last-minute changes. The agenda was amended to include an "Old Business" section and was approved with these changes. Molly Merrill moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Al Cavalier. The motion carried with unanimous approval.

The Council reviewed prior meeting minutes, including those related to leadership committee motions and communications with Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Clarification was provided that while concerns had been communicated internally, no formal letters had been sent to LEAs as previously proposed. An introductory letter to LEA and charter school special education coordinators was sent; however, it was not yet distributed to the full Council. Further revisions to the minutes were discussed to ensure accuracy and transparency. Al Cavalier moved

to accept the minutes as amended. Trenee Parker seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment tonight.

DISCUSSION:

The Council discussed ongoing concerns related to private duty nursing (PDN) communications. It was noted that additional language specific to LEAs is needed and will be developed by the appropriate committee. No new actions were taken at this time.

The Leadership Committee discussed public meeting transparency requirements, including exceptions related to personnel matters under state human resources rules. It was agreed that meeting minutes should reflect general discussion without attributing statements to specific individuals. Additional clarification regarding the appropriate use of executive sessions was discussed.

The Council reviewed current performance metrics reported annually, noting concerns that existing measures do not adequately reflect the scope or impact of Council work. There was consensus that a more comprehensive and meaningful set of metrics is needed. It was suggested that the Evaluation and Improvement (E&I) Committee lead a review and revision of these metrics, recognizing that metrics for the current fiscal year are already established.

The E&I Workgroup presented an overview of its comprehensive evaluation of Council operations and impact. Plans include member feedback sessions and an anonymous feedback mechanism. A proposed motion regarding the Leadership Committee's response to the evaluation report and recommendations was discussed, with differing perspectives on the appropriate review process.

The Leadership Committee discussed the process for approving motions, clarifying that motions empowering committees must be approved by the full Council to be valid. The need for written documentation and clearer guidance on procedural rules was identified.

The Council reviewed the process for issuing letters on behalf of committees and the Council. It was clarified that committee-authored letters are approved by the committee, acknowledged by

the Chair, and signed by the Chair to provide official authorization. The importance of keeping the full Council informed of all such communications was emphasized.

Updates were provided regarding PDN-related concerns and legislative activity. It was noted that while discussions and notices have occurred, there has been limited recent progress. Draft legislation related to burden of proof was discussed, though no draft was available for Council review at this time. Potential actions, including filing a state complaint, were mentioned but no decisions were made.

The Council discussed limitations in its authority to affect system-level change. It was proposed that Leadership develop a set of potential mechanisms and options for Council consideration. A tracking document of letters sent, and responses received in 2025 was referenced as a potential resource. The need for clearly articulated alternatives and accountability expectations was emphasized.

Concerns were raised regarding the approval of a private duty nursing consent form despite identified deficiencies. Plans were made to continue discussions with relevant parties to address contradictory information and broader communication concerns. Possible escalation to the Secretary of Education was discussed. It was agreed that an informational tracking document related to correspondence would be shared with the Leadership Committee.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was officially adjourned at 7:31 pm.

NEW ACTION ITEMS:

- Staff: Send out the LEA letter (generic introduction letter) to all council members.
- Staff: Send out the tracking document of 2025 letters and responses to leadership committee and E&I committee.
- Pamela: Reach out to the Chief of Staff at the Department of Education to schedule a discussion about critical issues before the next council meeting.
- ICMCE (committee): Prepare and send draft letter to LEAs regarding private duty nursing/consent form concerns for review by chair and potential distribution.

- Bill: Ask Dale directly at the upcoming Friday meeting about his involvement with and approval of the consent form, and about his knowledge of the Secretary of Education's guidance.
- E & I workgroup: Revise the motion regarding the Evaluation and Improvement Workgroup recommendations process to refer to full council (not just leadership committee) and bring to full council for approval.
- Pamela: Ensure all future letters/communications going out from chair, council, or committees are shared with full council when sent.
- ICMCE: Discuss internally and decide on next steps regarding communication/letter to LEAs in light of recent information about Dale's involvement.