

Council on Educational Services for Exceptional Children

December 18, 2024, Meeting Transcript

Council called to order at 9:35 a.m.

Summary of Actions for September 2024 meeting and agenda for the December 2024 meeting were approved unanimously.

Dr. Carol Ann Hudgens shared Agency updates with the Council.

Dr. Hudgens:

EC Weighted Funding Model is still in review.

The legislature has asked us to engage in a study about how we could look at the variables involved with providing a special ed program and consider whether or not awaiting, a weighted funding model would be possible. And so, just a little.

A little bit of history lesson on this. I'm the third director that has had the opportunity to work on this task and I am cautiously optimistic that we are arriving at a place where the variables are starting to make sense.

To folks that may not be as enmeshed in the work as our office is, but it also holds a reasonableness factor in in with regard to looking at the unique needs of students with regard to whether they're working on the standard course of study, occupational course of study, extended content standards, and how much time our students need special education during their school day. And then that's further away.

By, looking at the intensity of needs as measured or described by the number of service providers that are providing services to children. So e.g., some children may only require one session a week with a special education teacher, whereas other children may spend more of their day in special education receiving specially designed instruction from a special ed teacher and maybe have related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, a combination of services. And so the weights are

intended to arrive at a place that accurately describes or to the extent we can with so many variables and the fact that our programs are unique to children. But it is an effort to ensure that resources are following the unique needs of students per district.

And so if districts are serving complex students that funding follows those students accordingly. And so, we provided a model last March to the legislature. It had a lot of discussion, a lot of positive feedback from the legislature and the fiscal research team of the General assembly. And so we consider that super positive.

However, there were other issues during the session that did not, that took more precedence and a decision was not made on the EC funding model. However, that does not mean that the weighted funding model has gone away or the proposal has gone away. It's still on the agenda to be part of the long session that will start in January. And so, in the interim the short session when folks have been out of session and the fiscal research team has still been working, we have been periodically getting questions about this and I consider that very favorable that the interest has not gone away.

What we're working on right now is since the districts are working on their December child count which is our federal account of students with disabilities across the state. When that data settles in the next couple of weeks, what we want to do is update the model with those data so that we can, you know, continue to show how that model is dynamic and can adjust from year to year based on where children are, how their needs change and certainly puts us in a position to be able to have good information to propose to the legislature each biennium when there might need to be an increase to special ed funds across the state.

And so, just for clarity, this weighted funding model it strictly looks at the state's contributions or state dollars contributed to the education of students with disabilities. We still get our federal funds by our child count, and this is in addition to those federal funds.

So just wanted to clarify that. I'll also just pause here because I want to make sure that I've attended any to any questions that our new members might have and and and Peyton I'm not quite able to see the chat or hands

raised. So I'm gonna ask you to help me kind of navigate that if people have questions.

Peyton Davis:

I have one just one question and forgive me for my ignorance, but is there anything that the council can do to support you or provide, additional information or.

Dr. Hudgens:

So yeah so two things the council is the federally required body to make recommendations to the State Board of Education and at any time that the council believes a letter of support is warranted. I think that is super helpful. I think to piggyback on that, our State Board of Education is super supportive of this and so it's not actually the State Board of Education that is going to have the final decision in the weighted funding model. They certainly provide us guidance. And we attend to their feedback when proposing a model, but ultimately the funding model is a decision that is made by the General Assembly. And so to that extent, if council members believe that this is a good direction to head into contacting your local representative either collectively as a council or independently as a member of the council in your own district. Those are also activities that could be helpful and and letting folks know that this is of interest.

We would like the assembly to make a decision on this sooner than later. We know that this is only a start in tackling the appropriate allocations for students with disabilities, and it is kind of a scary thing when you go to a new model, but we do all recognize regardless of your status as a stakeholder that the current way of funding students with disabilities is not quite meeting the mark.

Ms. Davis:

Okay, so what I'm hearing you say is individually and then, you know, collectively as a council, but also you mentioned something earlier, the letter of of support, if the council feels like that's appropriate. Ok.

Dr. Hudgens:

Thank you so much. You're welcome. Any other questions from council members before I go to the next slide?

Aimee Combs:

Hi Caroline, it's Aimee Combs.. I I just had a question in the spaces that you've been in with these discussions, what is the, is there any pushback and what's their rationale for it?

Dr. Hudgens:

So I wouldn't say we have pushback. I I think that we have clarifying questions around just the numbers and do we believe that our child count numbers have a variance from year to year and of course they can. Then we have some clarifying questions around, maintenance of effort, that is a delicate balance of federal and state funds that we want to make sure that we are maintaining our effort as a state and not reducing our state dollars, but also increasing our investments from year to year and also not placing the public school units in a maintenance of effort situation if their funding has a variance from year to year. So we are receiving clarifying questions Amy, I would not say that we are having pushback. Yes. Good.

Ms. Combs:

I, I was just curious if, you know, any of the discussion was kind of like why, why do we wanna do this? But I think, anybody that is a parent of more than one child knows some kids cost more money than others, depending on their needs and I think that that, you know, carries on through the, through the school building as well. There are some students with disabilities that might require minimal supports and then there's other that require extensive supports and so the the funding model to me makes sense personally, and I was just wondering if, if anybody, any of the discussions were kind of like why? Let's just do it across the board. It's working, but I'm not I was just curious if that had come up at all.

Dr. Hudgens;

So the, so I'll kind of elaborate on your original question. We're not getting pushback from the legislature and I don't think that we're getting pushback from stakeholders. We are getting some clarifying questions from our districts, and, and rightfully so, if your funding is going to adjust from year to year. The things that our district has held us held us accountable for and asked for very clearly is, a level of base funding, if you will, and that is a super simplified term for the metrics that go behind it, but there is a margin of the model that we have built in that would hold districts at the same amount of funding that they would have gotten in 2022-2023 before the model goes into effect if it was selected to go in to effect. What I will say is

it's likely as we update this and the decision continues to be pushed out a little bit further, we'll be requesting in general that at least the funding does not change below the previous school year funded. So, you know, districts wouldn't get a significant dip, you know, right out of the shoot or have things calculate faster than they can start planning ahead for. And, and so again some very carefully considered metrics here.

Do we think that this model is gonna hundred percent fund everything we need right at the beginning. You know, if you consider that we're only getting a 13 % cap now, so that might be unlikely. However, we are asking, I mean, we went big, we asked for the model to be fully funded according to the metrics that we did. So what that means is there's a lot of room in the legislature to consider how much they will or will not fund this or what levels they'll fund, what percentages they'll fund etc. And so, the model has a lot of different ways they could be implemented, and so we feel like at this point we've been as transparent as we can be with with the factors that we can for lack of better words, standardized across the state for good metrics.

Ms. Combs:
Thanks, Carol Ann.

Diane Coffey
Carol Ann, this is Diane. Is there a current bill number attached to this or is it just still in conversation at this point?

Dr. Hudgens:
That's a great question, Diane. I don't think there is a particular bill number attached to it. It has originally it was included in the budget bill, which is the Appropriations Act, of 2023, and that's some probably said, you know, that we're continuing to study the model and until then we're having the 13% 13% increase cap on funding. And so to elaborate on that a little bit, the appropriations bill is what comes out every biennium that says how much the state will spend from everything from highways to community colleges to, you know, all the things. And so until this gets I don't know if it will continue to live in that fashion or if it will drop out and make a bill. So that kind of segues into the 2nd part of this slide is that on our website, you can sign up for the legislative updates.

What's really nice about these legislative updates is that while bill numbers are attached, our, our team at the department puts together all the bills

related to education and kind of calls all of that out for, for all of us and for stakeholders. And so if that's an interest or something that you wanna track out of our quarterly meetings, this is the information you can use to sign up for that.

And Diane, if you had a follow up, I'm not able to hear you.

Ms. Coffey:

No, that's good. I just sort of wanted to know if we were reaching out how and who to, you know, best way to do that. So if there was a bill number attached, then that would allow us to use that, but it sounds like we're just about to go the other route. Okay, that's all I need to know.

Dr. Hudgens:

I appreciate it. Yeah, I will say though Diane, the EC weighted funding model by name is recognized over at the General Assembly. So I now that I understand a little bit more about your question, I appreciate wanting to tag it to a bill number, but I think there has been enough conversation and activity on this on this item that you can actually call it by name.

Ms. Coffey:

Okay perfect.

Dr. Hudgens:

Thank you.

Alright, I have opened up the chat window and I don't see anything in particular there, and so I'm not sure that I see any hands raised either, so I'll move on to the next topic and pause again if another thought comes on this, on this particular topic.

The 2nd thing I wanted to talk about today, and I may have foreshadowed this previously, is that we have a report due in January called the Study for Students with Extraordinary Cost. And, this was also attached to the budget bill in terms of having us look at a couple of variables and report back. The 1st report was due last January and since the budget bill didn't pass and become law until October of 23, we didn't quite have enough time to fully complete this study and return it.

So to the extent that I could report on these variables, I provided a preliminary report to the General Assembly last January and we're getting ready to finish this up and submit it. As you may be accustomed, some of our state board actions or requirements are that if we have a legislative report or a study, we have to do a two month process with the State Board before it can be submitted to the General Assembly. And the 1st this process was, last or this month rather, is that this report was presented for discussion by the board. In January it will go up for action, which means they can approve it to be transmitted over to the General Assembly or take any other action that they deem appropriate. And so, on the slide here, the study requirements had several items of interest.

Some of these items included private placements and approved schools. And, and just to elaborate on approved schools, we have what's called an EC non public approval process. And so there could be private schools across the state who wish to have their EC programs if they have one monitored and approved to provide special education by the office of exceptional children. And what that means is that if public school units should have a need to contract with a private school for services, they have the information that says that we've already approved their program and we can validate that they are able to provide special education.

Now, this is a voluntary process for our private schools, they don't have to engage in this process and if a public school unit were to identify a private school that they needed to contract with to provide services that hadn't been approved by us, that doesn't necessarily mean that they cannot contract with that entity. It just means that the public school unit needs to do their due diligence to make sure that to the extent that they're seeking a contract, the private school can actually provide the services that they need to implement the IEP.

And so, one of the tasks was how do we improve the options for private placement? How do you determine if a private school or if an approved school is appropriate for placement? What are the extraordinary costs? What are the network, the method of priorities, et cetera. And so a lot of these variables such as the method of determining placement in an approved school, whether it's appropriate, well that of course is an IEP team decision, so that and monitoring the over identification of children with disabilities and some of the other study requirements here, we were able to affirm that through the EC processes of IEP team decision and monitoring

that we have to do through our general supervision requirements, there are methods that already exist and NO new methods had to be determined when it comes to the regulatory type of items. We also, as I mentioned, have, in place the process to approve private programs wishing to have their EC programs approved through our process.

Yes, and so the major things that I, I wanted to kind of incorporate or, highlight as being some underlying factors in this study is that, there are some challenges with having private placements available across the state. Some of the private placements that would be appropriate or could be appropriate to students with disabilities may not be located within the district or region in which that child lives. And so I, I think it's important to point out that even if districts were seeking some private placements for services for children, they're not necessarily readily available.

As I mentioned earlier, non-public schools aren't required to have their program approved for exceptional children programs. Neither are they required to admit students with disabilities requiring intensive services. And so, just kind of an analysis of funding streams is that currently our special grant applications that we administer cannot be combined for individual students, and so to elaborate on that just a little bit, if we have an out of district placement special grant and we have a high cost special grant. The PSU will have to decide which application it's gonna apply for on behalf of a student. It could not receive funding through both applications. And so that's, that's something that we looked at for potential opportunity to consider whether or not that should be a revision to how we consider grants.

The other piece is that our out-of-district placements, which is what most closely or might most frequently be used for districts who are seeking some additional financial support with placing students, is that currently our out of district placements are approved through our federal grant at 5 % of their reimbursement rate. However, there isn't a matching state funds identified for contributing to the balance of those costs. And so naturally you can probably predict that was an ask that we put into our report.

And then, the study sponsors who were looking at this extraordinary call study also had a query about students with disabilities who might be served homebound hospital or on modified day placements. And if their extraordinary cost was contributing to, the potential lack of other options for

them to have placements and that their needs didn't have another option beyond homebound hospital and ratified day placement. And so I have a little bit of data with that in the report as well. And so, as I mentioned earlier, we do have a method to determine placements, which is the IEP team. We do have the EC program approval process. And then some of the data that we included in this report, we looked at our out-of-district special grant funds and while we know that those only covered 50%, what we did is we went ahead and doubled that and we looked at some of our contracted out-of-district placements and how much those costs were per year for a group of students, and so between the out-of-district special grant and some of our contracted placement, those costs were estimated between \$88,988.00 and \$95,064.00 per student. Now that's still likely on the low end of the range but it was the data that we had available to us during this study. And, what makes these costs go up a little bit higher is that it doesn't include any costs for transportation. And so, this is really just the services extraordinary costs for special education and related services.

And so, then, we did look at some methods of how we could use the funds available to us for the placement of students. And we had to provide a reminder that we can't incentivize districts to place students in non-public schools because that would run in contradiction to the IDEA's mandate that students are placed in the least restrictive environment and so we needed to emphasize that protection that is in place that we have to look at other ways to make options available to folks that doesn't kind of slip into this incentivizing particular placements because that would be inconsistent with the IDEA.

So the report included four different recommendations about how those costs could be incorporated. e.g., one of those were, the, the study of sponsors wanted to know if we could incentivize more private schools to have their EC programs approved. And that's kind of challenging when private programs do not have to engage in this process nor do they have to accept students. And so it's a little bit difficult to incentivize non-public schools to become approved schools. One way we tried to indirectly work on this request of the study was to look at whether or not we could provide a higher rate of reimbursement if a school was selected from our directory of approved schools. And, that was an indirect way that we looked at it. But again, trying to balance the requirements of the IDEA and what we know about our private private schools and our non-public situations. And so, one

of the other things that we were, I really wanted to emphasize in here is that there are methods for allowing Medicaid reimbursement and that's essentially looking at the IEP and what is available. However, I did want to point out and remind the legislature that we provided a study on Medicaid reimbursement for transportation about two years ago and no action was taken on that. So, because transportation can be so costly, I offered the recommendation to go back and review that transportation study and consider whether or not the Medicaid policy needed to be reopened to address transportation. The other thing that I chose to point out is that our school based services submitted for reimbursement are reimbursed at a rate that is far lower than our reimbursement rates are the rates that are able to be billed from home health services. In fact, some services are school based services and are only reimbursed at about the 20% or 21% rate as compared to the same service that's provided in home health. And so, I thought that was a bit of an opportunity for us to highlight that while the methods for Medicaid reimbursement do exist, sometimes it is not at a rate that makes it conducive for smaller public school units to even get into the Medicaid reimbursement process.

So the cost benefit is not, is not there for our smaller PSUs and and actually some of our larger PSUs who do engage in the process it it may not be worthwhile. And so I see a, a question here from just say yes, I'm gonna just pause a minute.

Ms. Jesaya Hargrove:

And, so would you recommend parents fill out the Medicaid reimbursement for the school or to not give it to the school?

Dr. Hudgens:

Yeah, that that is a, a great question and I think that I'm I'm going to tend to answer that a little bit conservatively and I'll and I'll explain a little bit why. Certainly it is an option that parents can pursue, in terms of how they provide access to their Medicaid on behalf of the student. And so, on its face, we are required to provide services for students with disabilities regardless of any expectation of Medicaid billing. However, the option is there, as you mentioned, with parent consent that some of those services can be reimbursed. And so, to elaborate on that a little bit further, it also depends on what the student is going to need in the home setting and the parent just needs to consider, you know what it is that the student is needing both at school and home and if that's gonna be a right decision for

their family. So I think there might have been, oh, I see your clarifying question. So if you don't fill it out, would it mean, would it mean that the school gets more might be a better question?

Well, first of all, the school can't seek reimbursement for services on behalf of an individual child unless the parent provides their permission. I think if what we're going, if where you're kind of leading up to say and in terms of advocacy, I think the best advocacy that families can pursue is advocating that school based services are as important as home based services and therefore should be reimbursed at the same rates. So I'm gonna pause here and I'm not gonna assume that I got all of your question, Jesaya. So I'm gonna pause here and invite you to clarify if you'd like, and then I think Amy raised her hand.

Ms. Combs:

Carol Ann, I was gonna put on my PTI staff hat for a minute and having worked twelve years at a pediatric therapy clinic. I can tell you, as the PTI, we do get that question a lot from folks about the school billing Medicaid and at the end of the day, you know, we say, you know, it's it's it's a personal decision, but really want folks to kind of factor in all of the things that they might have to consider. For one thing, Medicaid's not gonna pay for duplicative services. That would be double dipping, and so what we would encourage folks to do is, is to say, you know, what, make sure that what the school OT is doing and what the private OT you're doing that they have different goals or maybe you're working on different things, which is not uncommon. A kid might be getting OT in school further handwriting and maybe you're getting into the clinic for some oral motor or some feeding kind of a thing because what could happen is that Medicaid might authorize one and then cancel the other. And so we just trying to tell folks to do their homework, but I always say, look, you, it you you are doing the district a favor as it does alleviate more paperwork for them, but it does help offset some of those costs, and so definitely comes down to to doing your homework. I think some folks will say absolutely not. There are some honestly providers out there that encourage families not to sign them, but I really encourage families to do their homework on that.

My, my question, Carol Ann was, can you tell us how many currently, how many non-public schools are currently approved through the EC program approval process?

Dr. Hudgens:

It's in our state? Yeah, I think the last time I looked it was four.

Ms. Combs:

Okay, that's more than I thought. And so right now if, if a public school unit were to agree to put a student in one of those programs, they pay half the costs and the Feds pay the other half, and right now none of those funds come from the state. Is that what I understood?

Dr. Hudgens:

So two parts I'm gonna I'm gonna answer, but having the, the private school on the directory just means that we've done some advanced work for the PSU. That does not mean that they are prohibited from contracting with a private school who isn't on the list.

So that's the first part. The second part with the reimbursement rate as part of our administrative and leadership budget at the office of exceptional Children for state level activities, we have set aside federal funds for this purpose, and we accept grants and reimburse at a 50 % rate for applications that are made on behalf of out-of-district placements, and we do that for as long as the money lasts for that, for our budget. But then yes, there are NO state dollars that match that.

So I'm gonna give you some bonus information. So when it comes to the weighted funding model, we're asking that our special grants such as out-of-district, which by the way, as part of this study we're asking that that as part of the weighted funding model, our special grants, which we do have some that are supported with state dollars, we're asking that that still remains apart and separate from the weighted model because you're always gonna have special circumstances that come up. So the state dollars that do fund when some of our special grants, that needs to remain protected and not become a factor into the weighted funding model.

Brad Stevenson:

Yeah, I had a question as well, if you don't mind.

Dr. Hudgens:

Sure. Hi, Brad.

Mr. Stevenson:

Hey, I couldn't remember, I was trying to take notes, but I couldn't remember if you mentioned that the IDEA provisions of least restrictive environment. Did that prevent, in your interpretation, incentivizing public schools to utilize a private school or did that prevent incentivizing private schools to become an approved school?

Dr. Hudgens:

I think that we, that is a slippery slope on the 1st element. We can't be incentivizing districts to place in private to the exclusion of other placements that might be more appropriate and least restricted.

Mr. Stevenson:

Absolutely. I didn't I that's what I was confused of and I know that that exists. I somewhere I thought you had said that it prevents you from incentivizing private schools to get approved by the, make sure that their programs are in line with IDEA and the approval process. And is that, was that is that the case or no?

Dr. Hudgens:

So, incentivized, that is also another side of that same slippery slope. So with our federal dollars, and I'll kind of leave it in that box with our federal dollars, we couldn't pay private schools to get their programs approved.

Mr. Stevenson:

Sure, ok. Okay, so you're thinking, you're saying like we can Can't give a private school a grant or something like that once you get approved.

Dr. Hudgens:

That's right.

Mr. Stevenson:

Okay, however, if they cause I know in other states they tie the funding to that approval, so it's like you don't have to get approved. However, if you want to serve a public, a student who's enrolled in public schools in order to be eligible for the funding, they need to be approved. And I think that goes to the LEA.

Dr. Hudgens:

Yes, so we we kind of did a little twist on that in the report in that one, I wanna say what holds constant is the money follows the student, so we're not talking about public or private. Currently we only have federal dollars investing at a rate of 50% for out of district placements. And so right now those grants are approved regardless if the private school or out-of-district placement has an approved program. So that, you know, that's kind of a steady there. One of the things that we are asking for in the report is that one, we definitely want matching state funds for the other 50% and one of the things that we could look at is that if the private school is actually on the approved list, is there a possibility that then the LEA could get all of that money available a hundred percent available between state and federal to fund that student versus the student, the private school isn't on the list and maybe only then we're able to award a portion of the federal and the state dollars.

Mr. Stevenson:

Okay, that makes a lot of sense. Thank you for clarifying that. I was as a school that goes through that I'm one of the I'm the director of one of the four schools and I think I find it to be very important that schools who would get public school funding for these students go through those processes because it makes sure that they are still holding onto all of their same federal and state entitlements, all the protections of things like that.

Dr, Hudgens:

That was a subtle nuance there, Brad. I'm sure you can appreciate about the fine line of incentivizing. The one of the things that we want to hold steady though is that our office is committed to the 50% reimbursement with federal dollars to the extent our budget can support those out-of-district requests.

Mr. Stevenson:

Yeah. I appreciate the clarification. That's helpful.

Dr. Hudgens:

Sure. And then I see that we have another hand up. Do you wanna go ahead?

Christy Grant:

Sure. I just wanted to say one thing and I I'm not sure, I think it was Amy that said this but about the school-based Medicaid and community Medicaid. My understanding from a learning collaborative I'm in right now with ROI and Sarah Broom is that North Carolina school-based Medicaid is carved out of Medicaid. So we shouldn't see that billing like the the billing that we do in the school system having an effect on any private services that are offered. And so I'm almost thinking and we have talked with them about we really need to get this message out and have clarification. So I'm not sure Caroline, if y'all are, if you're familiar with that or that or if we just need to get some further clarification as a Council because I just can't let a miscon, you know, a misconception continue to go when, when I've kind of been told something different.

Dr. Hudgens:

Yeah, and you're right Christy, that is a finer point that is confusing I think to our parents when they're trying to make a decision. And so I'm almost thinking, and I certainly opened it up further for the Council to provide input, but I almost think that there needs to be a tip sheet or a myth in fact about what it means to, provide consent to access your Medicaid in the state of North Carolina, and I, I don't know if it has, my sense is it has been some time that those resources might be buried among other things, but it could be a good time to, to refresh that.

Ms. Grant:

Absolutely, because it was very eye-opening to me to kind of hear that. We've not had issues with any billing with outside providers or anything in our district, and when we had that conversation within that learning collaborative it to know that the services are billed directly to Medicaid and CMS and not to the students. Medicaid, it gets very confused so I I do, I do think we have talked about trying to come up and develop a tip sheet or something for parents to truly understand and even school districts to understand that aspect because I had not heard it from that perspective prior to this learning collaborative.

Dr. Hudgens:

And I also think, I know Sarah works with a lot of different states and she's an independent person, and not someone that necessarily DPI has contracted with as a consultant on this topic. But I also think that there are nuances within that notion of carve out too, that could be service specific so

it's probably a good time to, to look at, where those services differ. And so we can add that to our list of of things to to to think about for parents and schools.

Ms. Grant:

Yes. Thank you Carol Ann.

Ms. Coffey:

Carol Ann, this is Diane. I'm wondering like if you did that rather than it going out just mask over so often is actually having it and handing it when you're handing to the parent, asking them to sign the form, have the tip sheet that's gives them a little more in depth what they are signed.

Dr. Hudgens:

I think that's an excellent idea and I would almost elaborate on that just a little bit. I would almost give that maybe a little bit earlier so the parents have time to review and do their due diligence before they're sitting in the meeting but the spirit of your comment is well received yes.

Ms. Grant:

I do think though I do wanna say though that I believe it was Laurie Ray or somebody developed that that sheet, that pamphlet for parents about school based Medicaid and we give that out every single time or whenever I talk with parents, we always refer back to that. So that's something we could just look at. Is there any update into that that we could do, but it is a phenomenal resource that really does dive deep into what exactly they.

Dr. Hudgens:

Yeah, I was thinking of that as well. It's just been some time since I've looked at it and I don't know if it touches with the depth that we need on this particular piece.

Alright, I'm not seeing any other hands raised and I'm not seeing any other comments and I don't wanna hijack the entire meeting time so I'm gonna have to fast forward here a bit. So I, I kind of want to get to you know where we landed with this study, is that we landed with option four, which is to look at that, the out-of-district program, oops, which is the 50% of the federal costs, we wanna, all the options options one through four, keep this variable steady because we are committed to that from our office, so we

don't wanna make any changes with how we support the out of district program with our federal funds.

The other thing that we looked at is looking at our allotments and our allotment policies and creating a provision that allows districts to also receive special state reserve special circumstances funds at 25% of the total cost, and then also be able to tap in the special state reserve for state appropriations for extraordinary transportation costs. Now we didn't factor that into this special education and related services, 100 % cost that the out-of-district program funds, we wanted that to be in addition to. And so the idea of tapping into our Program Reporting Code 89 (PRC 89), which is just the way that we distribute money to districts. This would allow a district to actually apply for three different funding streams on behalf of our students with these extraordinary costs to piece together different funding sources to be reimbursed at a hundred percent of the cost that it takes to educate and transport students to private placements, if that is appropriate for the student.

Then, without any shame, I incorporated the weighted funding model into this because one of the things that was of interest to the study sponsors is whether or not it would be possible that local funds could be used. Well, if we approve a weighted funding model, children that would fall into what we described as an extraordinary cause and out-of-district program are likely to fall on the level three component of our weighted funding model. And so students at that level could potentially be funded at \$25,000 per student, which would be reasonable for the local to use that in contribution to the cost. So if we're thinking around a hundred thousand dollars, \$2,500 you know, for what they are identified for, out of the weighted funding model would seem a reasonable contribution at that point. So this option incorporated, hey, this is how we can leverage our funding sources, if you'll go ahead and consider the weighted funding model.

So I'm gonna kind of stop there and see if anybody had any reaction or response to that. But it was an effort to also demonstrate how funding can be leveraged with a weighted funding model. Alright, and so, the reason why we chose that again is that it includes a metric to incentivize contracting with approved schools. So Brad, back to your point, when we look at the state appropriated dollars, we included, you know, the full 25% for those that are on the list and then maybe half of that if students, if the placement was not on the list. Not touching the 50% for but looking at the

state appropriations. So again, we incorporated that matrix because that was of interest to the study sponsor. And so, looking at the Maintenance of Effort piece, again, you know, back, just a real sample have here. Federal dollars are 50% essentially state dollars are 50%. So, you know, trying to look at just a bare bones Maintenance of Effort proposition here.

And then looking at multiple funding sources, et cetera. And then to the last part of this, the study sponsors were interested in how many students that this could potentially impact if a placement was not being pursued because of the funding, and so their interest was in the hospital/modified school day with children who had behavior as a relevant factor documented on their IEP. And so when we look at those numbers across the state, when we compiled these numbers in September we have 273 on homebound hospital and 1,250 on modified school day and we gathered these data by searching in ECATS for the number of students served in these placements with behavior as a relevant factor documented on their IEP.

And so again just to put it in context, this represents less than 1% of our child, of, of our total child count, not that this group of students is, you know, any less important, but I did want to point out that, how, how it figures into where other children are served. I also put these numbers in in the event that the legislature wanted to adjust its state appropriated dollars on behalf of option four, then this could be a number that they might want to pursue since their interest was in this group of students.

However, back to the underlying issues that I meant or that I shared ahead of time, even if the money is available, that doesn't necessarily mean the placement is available. So that continues to be a challenge regardless if the program is approved or not by our office, the location of private programs that could be appropriate is a challenge statewide. Alright, so this was a meaty topic. Any last thoughts on this before I go on with our other updates?

Ms. Combs:

Caroline, I had a, a question. The numbers here, for the homebound and the modified school day. These numbers are just representative of those that have behaviors. It's not including maybe those that are maybe in those types of placements just because of medical or immune compromise.

Dr. Hudgens:

So one of the things that is challenging, even with this number, is that they have the variable of behavior as a relevant factor, but that doesn't mean that they are on homebound hospital or modified day because of behavior. And that's and that is a limitation of the data set that we're able to, to get because we, we don't have an easy way of triangulating whether if in fact to slice this another level that they were on these placements because of medical issues.

Ms. Combs:

These kiddos that are on the modified school day, do they review that like every 30 days?

Dr. Hudgens:

So the modified school day is reviewed, but remember by policy and statute, the homebound hospital has to be reviewed every 30 days if it's related to discipline. So, we certainly encourage and it is my sense that districts do routinely review these placements because we certainly don't want students to stay in these placements longer than is appropriate. So I answered your question in 1st off with the rule and secondly with, you know, the belief that districts are monitoring these placements. Okay.

Ms. Lynch:

There is a comment in the chat, Carol Ann, from Jesaya.

Dr. Hudgens:

Yes, thank you. I'm reading through that to make sure I unpack it in the way that it was intended. So when these data were run to say it, we were just running these data to get the numbers. I will say that in monitoring when we are doing our monitoring samples, we do pull in modified and home bound placements so that we can monitor the services and supports that are being provided. We also provide technical assistance around, how to thoughtfully consider and offer the supports necessary if one of these placements are, are up for discussion by the IEP team. So I'm not quite sure if I touched on all that you were asking, so I welcome you to, to open up your mic and or ask anything clarifying or in addition to your thought here.

Ms. Combs:

Thanks, Carol Ann. I know I didn't, I didn't have any additional questions.

Dr. Hudgens:

Okay, and Jesaya, did you have any additional on what I responded to in the chat?

Ms. Hargrove:

Yes, I was just curious on the math because it said, you know, all the, the money that's going towards it, so I was curious if that money was ... So like if all of these are saying that it's a behavior-based problem or, you know, something like that, what is the money going towards? Because it's a pretty big chunk of money.

Dr. Hudgens:

Yeah, I see. So, the, the big chunk of money in the weighted funding model, doesn't prescribe the services because those are going to be so unique to the individual students. It makes available that chunk of money for what is appropriate for the student on an individual decision base. And again, that chunk of money is what one of the variables that we have proposed in the EC weighted funding model but hasn't been approved yet.

Alright, so I am happy to come back to that a little later.

So we had our fall stakeholder meeting and many of you participated in that fall meeting. We held it actually at the end of November or in November. And we talked about EC licensure, administrator license, dispute resolution grant application, and LEA determinations, and I, and I take that back. We had proposed to talk about our dispute resolution targets. We didn't put that on the agenda. We left the targets as they were. So that actually didn't make it for the agenda.

And to the extent that you all participated, we followed back up with how the recommendations landed for that discussion, and our next step will be to unpack that further, and determine what's needed, e.g., most all of the participants agreed at some level that we need to look at combining the general curriculum and adapted licenses with a healthy support plan from the college and universities, our office, and locally, if we're going to combine those options. So that was just an example and and if you participated on that stakeholder meeting, you've got the the notes back from, from that meeting.

You all had asked for some information about the fall conference. In purple here, you'll just see some of our highlights. We had more people attend Institutes this year than last year. We had a little bit fewer people attend, and I do kind of wanna footnote this for for a minute that there actually might have been more attendees than these numbers show. But these numbers show the attendees that attended enough sessions and participated in, the attendance process to be awarded CEUs. So there could be more participants than this, however may not have needed the CEUs, so didn't complete the process to get them. So this is a rough number of our participants as compared to last year. We did have the recruitment fair. We had 13 attend.

Certainly we would have hoped to have had more, and I think I shared with others that, the scary thought would be that there were only 13 across the state. We know that we have shortages in EC teachers statewide, and we know that there are low enrollments in teacher prep programs. However, we had 13 who attended. And I have to applaud our public school units because even though there were only 13 and we shared this ahead of time with our public school units, they came with all the things to recruit these 13 individuals and and to let them know about their school district and the opportunities that exist, should they come to work with them. And some of the advanced planning we did included surveying the soon to be graduates about what areas of our state they would like to work in. And so that little table there is Northwest, West, Piedmont Triad, etc., where they had interest. And, and these graduates are expected to graduate in May. And I know that their professor had spent a lot of time prepping them for questions to engage in with the public school units, questions about employment, professional development etc. And so the candidates were well prepared to learn more about the districts who participated in the recruitment fair and we're hoping to do a repeat of this at our March Institute this year. We are hopeful that the more that we do it, the more participants we will have. And we think it is a good investment of our time because the 13 EC educators are 13 EC educators and we need them and we want to encourage them, and we want to provide them the opportunity to see all the support that they get from the state, and locally, should they choose to come and work in public education in North Carolina.

We had a general education administrators institute. We had 99 registered. 72 completed the evaluation for the continuing education units. Again, just

because only 72 completed the evaluation doesn't mean that the 99 did not attend or the remainder did not attend.

So just in general, 66 of these individuals of the 72 said that they would recommend the session to someone else. And so some additional comments that they offered, great information, wanted more time to collaborate, and look at what other schools were doing, support for scheduling special education services, much needed administrators needed this review again scheduling, some complimentary information. Some folks had more experience and and felt like the content was for beginner administrators, but we take all of that as a positive. We're hoping to discuss these results with our directors in our January EC administrators meeting because we think that that is enough interest there and it is an area that is so critical to the provision of services across the state that we want to look at incorporating some summer offerings on this topic this summer in each region.

And we'll be interested to see if our EC administrators agree that this should go on the road, so to speak, this summer. We had our Special Education 101parent guide. Again, we had 16 registered, two completed the evaluation. Of the folks who completed the evaluation, they both indicated that the information is helpful and would recommend to others. So again, even though we just had a few, we believe that they are important and so we'll look to reflect on the session and how we can offer it or improve upon it for next year. I'm gonna stop there.

Any questions about the conference? Peyton, I think I see your hand up.

Ms. Davis:

Yes ma'am, I love conference. So I have two questions. One is ... Oh my god, I forgot it. Is there an option or conversation about offering some of the, of this wonderful information like six months later virtually to teachers or admins who are not able to go and participate for a whole day or for a session, especially if there's a shortage and they can't, you know, leave their classroom. In terms of other options, you know, six months down the road, right? So it doesn't impact conference and attendees that way but you know maybe for summer PD or if they need to get some units in somewhere else, you know, paying a certain amount of money or whatever to log in and get a portal.

Dr. Hudgens:

Absolutely. In fact, one of, you know, I'll kind of circle back to a little bit I shared about the January EC administrator meeting while we were at conference, we surveyed teachers about what they felt would be helpful, or content that they might need during the summer, and we've been working with our directors about what they feel like they may need and clearly we'll have space to talk about what general ed administrators need. And certainly to the extent that there was content provided at conference that the is well deserving about encore performance and could be presented this summer in a customized regional summer offering. We are more than willing to incorporate that in our plans and support districts. So the idea that in January is that we'll work with our EC directors to determine if a regional or what the topics would be for a regional summer institute. And it could be some of the sessions from conference, it could be on new topics, but we really kind of want to customize that support to the region question for this summer.

Ms. Peyton:

Okay, I was, my question was more like for a related service provider or whoever that wanted to, you know, look at the information from conference and be able to digest it on a, you know, online portal kind of situation where they didn't have to be, you know, go somewhere for the summer or you know, they could I I'm gonna make up a number that's not real, right? Like pay a \$99, you know. All access.

Dr. Hudgens:

Oh, you mean conference ...

Ms. Davis:

Where you can download if you wanted to learn like if you wanted to learn, you know, about Johanna's parent institute, we've got all that information available to you without having to go somewhere to do it. Just thinking about, you know, technology and how that's been a wonderful and terrible option, but.

Dr. Hudgens:

Yeah. I'll have to go back cause I, I can't remember, but typically we we definitely make available all of our session materials through the app for attendees. But to your appointment, I, if I'm not mistaken, I think we make those available on our website as well so any of the presentation materials

are there, but I think what you're kind of getting at is like our re-delivery of that same content in another format. And I don't know that we have necessarily thought about a re-delivery of the conference as much as customizing maybe some pieces from the conference into regional offerings this summer, in addition to new topics. But I think that's a great idea that we can take back and and think about a little bit more.

Ms. Davis:

Awesome. Thank you so much for that suggestion. It came from my son's OT. She was like, oh, I wanted to go, but you know, I have kids to serve. Right.

Dr. Hudgens:

Sure.

Ms. Davis:

Darn those kids, right? And then my other question was something else and I forgot what it was. It'll probably come to me. Oh I'm always gonna ask this question. Is there anything that the Council can do to support you for conference or anything that I know our overall goal, right, is to give recommendation to the the state board, but I'm always thinking, you know, how can this group help support your office.

Dr. Hudgens:

Well, I think two things, I think, one, this would be in keeping with the Council's purpose of identifying unmet needs. So, from that extent, I think that is helpful information that can contribute to the topic development for next year's conference, but then adjacent to that, what we offer our parents of students with disabilities. We definitely want to keep the parent institute going.

And so kind of paired up with the unmet needs. What are our potential unmet needs of our parents in the regions and that information would be really helpful too as we try to articulate the topics for those engagements.

Perfect. Thank you so much. Yep. All right, so moving on to Hurricane Helene support for districts and, I do want to pause here. Peyton and Johanna, I have NO idea where we are on the agenda or what my timeframe is. So I kind of need a nudge and I will wrap it up.

Ms. Davis:

Carol Ann, stay the course and let's get through the content. Carol Ann, you are really the only item on the agenda except for one other piece so you take as long as you need.

Dr. Hudgens:

Okay, well, thank you for that. I'll continue to motor on. Hurricane Helene support for students with disabilities. And so, our schools in the West have done a tremendous job about, first and foremost, making sure that through the hurricane event that students and families were located and they had their basic needs met, and then they hunker down to reopen schools in a safe manner. And so that probably all sounds familiar from what we had to do with the pandemic and reopening schools. And so, as our schools in the West have reopened they're considering all of their students and can they make up the days in their calendars so there's been some calendar flexibility to make up days. And then of course everyone's getting an assessment on, you know, present levels of performance for how this interruption has impacted all students. And so in particular for students with disabilities, things like the December Child Count, things that we can help the districts with at the state level, because of schools being closed for a prolonged amount of time we've been doing that.

We also for a period of time did office hours every Friday for districts in the West so that we could problem solve with them as they consider the unique needs of their students with disabilities and reopening activities. And so, also there have been some legislative activities that thankfully continued to pay for teachers during that time so that all of our teachers, even including teachers of students with disabilities, continue to earn their pay during that time so that you know of course for obvious reasons, we needed to retain our teachers and, and with the calendar having to be adjusted in some leave, you know, or spring breaks being cut short to make up the days. There have been some things done by the legislature to help ease some of that on behalf of schools as a whole. So really from the state level, it's customized support for the districts based on their unique circumstances. We had some that just missed one day of school while we had others that missed three weeks. And so our office is committed to problem-solving that on a case-by-case basis when these issues come, come to the surface.

Yes, so I'm not sure if that's what was intended by the ask on the agenda, but I'll pause there in case someone had a particular question for me.

Okay, the EC vacancy statewide, one of two of the things that we look to for data is a report that comes every March and it looks at the previous state of the TD teaching profession in North Carolina, so that is an annual report, so data for last year will be discussed in March. So I don't really have updated numbers for you right now, so the next meeting that we have after March will be a time that we can unpack that report. And then we are collecting our federal personnel survey.

That does not necessarily give us vacancies per se, but it lets us know what our workforce is across preschool and school-aged programs and we're starting that data collection in January. So, again, vacancies we know are out there, and we are are trying our best to help the districts recruit and and figure out different ways that we can fiscally support them and also support them in recruitments such as activities that we did at our conference.

And then lastly, dispute resolution data. I know that in September, we had some preliminary numbers for you guys with dispute resolution data. If you recall, you know, July one through 30 June is our year, but a state complaint can be filed on 30 June and so we actually have to wait until 60 days after that to close that data set, which happens generally around September. And so this meeting was budgeted as the best and final numbers and I will just share in full transparency, we're still settling on the numbers. Our section chief for dispute resolution, Leigh Mobley took a new opportunity at the end of November, so her remaining time with us was focusing on transition activities and these data are now settling a bit. I am happy to send those final reports out to the council separately and then unpack that as the council has questions at our next meeting. So Peyton, I'm sorry I don't quite have those finalized numbers for you.

Ms. Davis:

That's perfect. I've given people a chance to look through it and digest it is really important especially for me as I'm a verbal processor, which I'm sure you can't tell, but I think it's important for people to have a chance to digest it, think about it, and have some questions. I think that that's great. And Caroline, if you ever get a chance to think about themes or anything to that extent, I think that's also really helpful to you know move us forward with our unmet needs conversation.

Dr. Hudgens:

Yeah, and I'll just say in general Peyton, the number one issue in investigation, and I know that this is not gonna come as a surprise, is implementation of the IEP, and that can look a lot of different ways. That can be like the implementation of speech services. It could look at, you know, I didn't get the specialty designed instruction in reading or the accommodations weren't implemented. So that is a very broad topic for implementation of IEP. So it's not a surprise that that is the consistent top one. So.

And I don't know that we have any one theme under that particularly. You know, behavior intervention plans is always kind of tucked up under that. And so, without a doubt, the implementation of the IEP is a consistent one. I think of interest to us are the ones that start to pop up that aren't expected. Like if there was an uptake in a particular piece of like private school services plan, well that's a very niche small group of, of impacted students so if we were starting to see a rise in that as an issue, what we would take away from that is when is the last time we've done training in this area? Do we need to look at more technical assistance across the state? So the common ones are common. However, it's noteworthy when we're starting to see a little tiny spike in other issues. And that's, you know, that can change from year to year the novel pieces, yeah. But that's Yeah that's all I had for updates today it's all I had, but wow it took a while, so I apologize for hijacking the agenda.

Ms. Combs:

Thank you so much. Quick question. Any news or updates on the Rulemaking?

Dr. Hudgens:

It's almost the process that shall not be named and and so it's just it's we're slogging through that is the best I can say Aimee. What, what is good in our world is we have authority through our federal regulations so it's just kind of a State process to, you know, do the part that we're having to do as a state. So I'm not worried about any policy being at risk, so to speak, if that's, you know, kind of some of the concern, as much as it's just a process that we have to get through.

Ms. Davis:

The only, I wanted to mention is there's an item on the agenda about the Indicator 8 Survey, and so I was wondering, I know we last council or maybe the meeting before that we, I talked about shortening the questions. Johanna and Amy remind me if that's what we were thinking about for this line item. Or if it's something else?

Ms. Lynch:

So yes, that was, we really just wanted, I believe you guys were discussing what was the final on the questions.

Dr. Hudgens:

Thank you. Yep, and so we did look at those questions again. I think the council, did agree that maybe shortening, shortening them and pinpointing them was a, a good worthy activity because we want our parents to engage in that survey. What I did with staff after we got your recommendation and considered other things, I went back to the federal regulation questions in the measurement table for the SPP and APR as just kind of a litmus test of what is this indicator trying to measure? And so I'm made sure with staff that we looked at those questions that were clear and concise to what we were required to measure.

And so we did shorten the number and Johanna, I will not be able to call them off at the top of my head, so I apologize for that, but I will be happy to as a follow up to send that to the council of where it landed. What I can say is that we did post our December training opportunity with the districts, so they're getting ready to go forward. You know, we look forward to seeing if this makes a difference and how we are are hearing from parents.

Ms. Lynch:

Carol Ann, can I add one thing?

Dr. Hudgens:

Please do.

Ms. Lynch:

We are also translating the full survey into 14 additional languages and currently researching three others that have been requested by districts. So we're really hoping that this opens it up so that every parent has an

opportunity or as many parents as want to have an opportunity to participate.

Ms. Davis:
I love it.

Dr. Christy Hutchinson:

Before we go on to one more thing I just wanted to peek and I had the survey up in front of me because I was actually just at the training about a week ago and there are, I believe three questions for parents in addition to about five or six demographic kind of things like what school does your child attend? What developmental level are they at?

That's their area of exceptionality. So the in the directions it says it should take less than 2 min and we were able to submit like fake data and indeed that's about how long it took 2 min. So if you wanted to read the questions, I can pull it back up, but.

Ms. Davis:

That's it. I mean, would everybody like to do that? Just read them through, Christy, \one time just so people have a chance.

Dr. Hutchinson:

Yep, please sure can. So there's some information prior to that sets the stage. If you have any questions, the survey opens 6 January, and a phone number I have been asked. So here's the Likert scale. Very strongly agree, strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, very strongly disagree ...

[The questions are] I have been asked for my opinion about how well special education services are meeting my child's needs; teachers and administrators seek out parent input; and the school gives me the help I may need to play an active role in my child's education. And hold on, I need to put in some fake answers so I can get to the next screen. All right, and then ethnicity, race, area of exceptionality, grade level or developmental level, not grade level, and which child, what school did your child go to? And that's it. And opens 6 January.

Ms. Davis:

The window is gigantic. Awesome.

Ms. Lynch:

It closes June 30, and there'll be a newsletter going out the first week of January for parents.

Ms. Davis:

Awesome. I would love at some point if it's appropriate to have a discussion around, you know, how that survey is shared other than Johanna's amazing monthly newsletter that is on my wall. But I'm just curious, you know, how that is disseminated. Yeah. You know what I mean?

Dr. Hutchinson:

Yeah, in the training they went over, I don't know, eight or ten maybe different ideas of ways districts can facilitate parent feedback, parent newsletters that there was a healthy list of ways that districts can work on behalf of getting it out and not just putting the work only on Johanna's shoulders.

Ms. Lynch:

So I can speak to this some more, if the council would like for me to do that.

Ms. Davis:

It's just it's just me being ..

Ms. Lynch:

Oh, ok. Well, I mean if you have a question, I can answer it. So some of the suggestions were social media, use your social media early and often, have a computer available at school to reduce the technology barrier. The suggestion also is like at an annual review, you can share the information with the parent after their IEP meeting, and share paper copies for parents who were not able to access technology as well. And then there's flyers that we've created that can be posted around school, a letter that goes home to the parents with the QR code. So all the districts are getting all the same information about how they can get the word out to improve our response rate and learn about how parents are feeling they can participate.

Ms. Davis:

Awesome. Thank you so much for that you guys. Based on Carol Ann's presentation, is there anything that the council needs to discuss to vote on from that conversation?

And I don't know if this is a voting topic, but writing the letter of support, does that something we need to discuss to vote on or.

Dr. Hutchinson:

We could also put it in our annual report, and action items requested of legislation.

Ms. Davis:

Okay, great.

Dr. Hutchinson:

I don't know if timing wise that's too late. Carol Ann might have to speak to the timing of it. Our report I think it's due in July or August and then they.

Dr. Hudgens:

You reported out in September. So I think it's all about timeliness. To your point Christy, and I think where you're going, Peyton, I think what would be helpful is watching the legislative agenda for when this is going to be discussed and then a well-timed letter to the legislature around that time that we start seeing it on up for discussion is probably worth your consideration in terms of strategy and our office can certainly help communicate that out to the council when it's gonna come up for topic with the education.

Dr. Kelly Anne Mudd:

Miss the window.

Dr. Hudgens:

And, you know, do it too late. So. Yeah, I think that's what might be wise is to go ahead and prepare what you think you might wanna communicate and then when the time is right, then to the extent that council members want to rinse and repeat and send individually and or collectively, at least you have your thoughts already composed.

Ms. Davis:

Perfect. So is that again, is that something we need to vote on now? Can we vote on it later too? Would have to be a voting topic? I'm not sure that it's a ...

Dr. Hudgens:

Well, it could, well, let's do it diplomatically and, and just be sure that the whole council agrees. I think, I think what what might be the proper procedure is someone make a recommendation, then there's a 2nd perhaps and any objection, and it just depends on the action that you want to the council to consider. If the 1st action, Payton, that you want to tee up is to go ahead and craft a letter to be ready. I think that would be the 1st action maybe that the council ...

Ms. Davis:\

Perfect. Okay, that was, you said it much more eloquently than I did. So, I guess well shocker, right? So I guess let's do that. Is there a motion to write a letter of support for the EC funding model or weighted funding model rather?

Mr. Stevenson:

I motion or support it.

Dr. Hutchinson:

Thanks. And I'd be happy to 2nd that. It's Christy Hutchinson, and I think that we could probably use our time offline effectively if we had a draft and then sent it around to folks to just weigh in. And then maybe when, you know, when the time is right, then it's ready to roll with people's edits and suggestions already completed.

Dr. Hudgens:

Perfect. Yeah, and I think if I can offer a suggestion since the council has access to the shared drive with our materials, maybe a shared draft could be located there and I don't know if one of the committees want to take on the opportunity to, to draft and then notify the members that a draft is ready for commenting.

Ms. Lynch:

I know we have a, we have a motion and a 2nd. Our members in agreeance to draft a letter or is there a ...

Dr. Hudgens:

So why don't we do this just to be sure, if you guys can find the little raise your hand piece, if you agree, to the motion on the floor to develop a level of support for EC funding model, just raise your hand and we can take a quick glance that if you all are able to see what I can see. So it looks like a lot of hands are going up there. Johanna and Peyton, so I think, I think.

Ms. Lynch:

I think so too.

Ms. Davis:

13. Is that what I have as 13? Thank you so much for that facilitation.

Dr. Hudgens:

Yeah, no problem.

Mr. Stevenson:

Okay. Can I ask a question? Yes. On that, there was two funding considerations that dr. Hutchins presented. There was the weighted funding model and there was the funding for the extraordinary costs, are we ...

Dr. Hudgens:

Got it. Yeah, so I'll clarify the extraordinary cost is just a report with a recommendation that completes a study, so I'm not sure if ... Well, I don't want to preempt what you might offer, but there's not like a, there's not like an imminent action to be taken by the legislature. They just wanted the study on it. However, certainly the council can look at the entire report to determine if they. I wanted to comment on what that substance is.

Ms. Lynch:

So I do see a question, in the chat to say yeah and I don't know if a teacher could answer this question.

Dr.Hudgens:

And it's a great question. So, the developmental age, so.

Dr. Hutchinson:

Is that a question? That was probably the survey and I use the term developmental level or developmental age. It's really just sorry hold on. I've got noise in the background here. The, the selections are like preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, is and I was just referring to it as developmental age.

Dr. Stevenson:

Okay, so, so there's no imminent action by the way you're just talking about the report and your proposals that you're making back to the legislature?

Dr. Hudgens:

Yeah, yeah, so I'm not aware that there is any action that the legislature plans to take with the extraordinary cost study, you know, certainly it could have legs and they could enter in an action as a result of that report, then I think that might be a little bit more timely. We're, we're further down the road with the EC weighted funding model in that they are determining if they're gonna adopt that. I don't have that same communication about the extraordinary costs report. It was just exploratory about what extraordinary costs are, but I will just say the council can take whatever action it deems appropriate on commenting or offering a thought about any of that content. I guess I kind of just jumped in because I didn't want them to necessarily get linked together as an action before the legislature to take. But I don't know if that helps. Sure confused things more Brad?

Mr. Stevenson:

No, I think that was good because they were proposed right back and we're clarifying that the letter of support is for the weighted funding model. The extraordinary cost is something else. Yeah, and I'm kind of proposing, do we want to make a comment to the legislature or the State Board of Education about the potential need of this for extraordinary cost for students? Do we want to say something in support of like, of that? We're glad that the department looked into this. We see that this is a burden on districts at times if they have one of these really high needs individuals that comes in.

Ms. Combs:

I love that idea, Brad.

Dr. Hudgens:

Yeah, I mean it you can definitely incorporate it in the same letter or separate letters or however you choose to move forward. I just, I'm not sure if there is going to be an action on the extraordinary cost, but I'm anticipating an action on the EC funding model, so that strategy is entirely up to the council

Mr. Stevenson:
Yeah.

Ms. Davis:
Do we need more information, Caroline, or more time for the extraordinary cost conversation to play out before we make that decision or since there's interest from the council on commenting on all things with funding, which is certainly to our advantage,

Dr. Hudgens:
I think you draft the letter on whatever points that you think is important. And then as we know more for what comes up on the agenda, I'll be able to at least give you guys that and you can determine if you want to write your letter in any way. I think you make it whatever you want it to be right now in anticipation of any outcome when we know more if there's gonna be an action.

Ms. Davis:
Okay. So then do we want to do the same voting as we did previously on including the considerable cost, line item is the only word I could think of to that letter.

Mr. Stevenson:
I mean I think potentially would like, I would be happy to draft something because I know I've talked with plenty of families that this impacts, but it would be, I envision this like a 2nd letter, keep it because ... yeah. Okay. And then we could, I could draft it if folks are comfortable with that and again it could just, I could just share it could just sit until there's timely because I know with government and legislature windows can be short sometimes and so it never hurts to have something in your backlog.

Ms. Davis:

Thank you for volunteering your time Brad, I appreciate you. So I guess we'll do the same thing is, is there a motion to oh write a letter of support or same kind of letter, for ...

Dr. Hudgens:

I see Miss Gipson has her hand. I don't know if it's a question or emotion.

Ms. Rozelle Gipson:

Sorry, I should have put my hand back down. Let me work on that. Thank you.

Ms. Davis:

No, you're good. You're good. This is the safe space. Ok, so do we have a motion to move forward, just she has a motion. Is there a 2nd? Amy, is that your hand as a 2nd or just up? Amy seconds, ok? So all those in, I'm sorry, did I miss somebody? Okay, so all those in favor, raise your hand.

Awesome.

Dr. Mudd:.

Okay.

Ms. Davis:

Is that, I wanted to, ss that eleven Johanna?

Ms. Lynch:

Yes, I have eleven. Okay, so just to clarify, this is the letter of support for the exceptional cost conversation that Dr. Huddens talked about?

Ms. Davis:

Yeah. Tameeka says yes as well. I don't know if you got Tameeka. Okay. Does that pass Johanna or not?

Ms. Lynch:

Actually I'm not sure.

Dr. Hudgens:

On the nuance of.

Ms. Lynch:

That doesn't need to be a majority?

Dr. Hudgens:

So I think you guys have enough to go forward with the draft and just know that you have the opportunity again when it comes to finalizing and actually sending the draft. So, it looks like the will of the group is to work on the draft and you'll have another opportunity if needs to take action.

Ms. Davis:

Great. Thank you so much for that. Okay, anything else before we move on to our 2nd piece? Before I or Johanna, do we have any public comment?

Ms. Lynch

We do not, do not and I don't know if we do not do are we going to need Caroline for the next part of our meeting cause maybe we can release her to her day.

Ms. Davis:

Thank you Caroline.

Dr. Hudgens:

Thank you all. I appreciate it. And if there are any further questions, Johanna will get them to me and I'll send it back around. So you all have a good holiday and however you celebrate it and thanks again for your support of the Office of Exceptional Children and our students out in the field. So everyone take care. Thanks.

Ms. Davis:

Okay. Ok. Joanna, anything else that we need to wrap up before we move on? Anything I missed?

Ms. Lynch

No, I'm gonna make note of the recommendations and the actions in the agenda that we've already taken. And so the next steps are.

Ms. Davis

That's really just a council discussion. Okay, Kristen, I see your hand. Okay.

Ms. Kristen Hodges:

Sorry about that. That was left over from before voting.

Ms. Davis:

Oh, you're fine. Raise it up. Okay, so the only, so the piece that Amy and Johanna and I wanted to kind of bring to you all as part of the FCouncil's goal or, you know, need, is have any of you received information from a parent, from where you sit that's related to an unmet need of a student with a disability?

Ms. Lynch:

Just as gthe parent liaison I should have realized ... I needed to actually adapt that it could be a guardian, anybody who was representing a child or signing documentation for a child in a meeting. Sorry, that's my fault.

Ms. Davis:

I think you you said yes. Talk to us a little bit more about that.

Ms. Hargrove:

What specifically, like just in general or I didn't understand the question and I have lots of parents that have problems in general, so I wasn't sure if there's a specific question.

Ms. Davis:91

There's a specific question. Okay so ok so what I, what I heard you say is you have a lot of parents who have problems. Is that what I heard?

Ms. Hargrove:

Yeah.

Ms. Davis:

Okay, any things you want to share that's specific.

Ms. Hargrove:

Well, in general it's you know getting the help that they need in the school district. I do think our district specifically has gotten a little better but I lead the Pender County chapter for Autism Society, as like a parent volunteer. And so I get a lot of people asking for resources, support, help with where they would go to get, you know, an IEP advocate, and things like that. So in general, it's typically in relation to schools and them not meeting their child's needs.

That would go so far as to say one person pulled their child out of school because they had like 50 different IEP meetings and this child is twelve, non-speaking and would require a para to be in school all day and that middle school refused, and so even with threatening to get a lawyer and everything else, they just thought it wasn't worth it and they put her in a charter school and she's been thriving.

So it really is, in my opinion based off of, a lot of these kids are autistic. In general, I have like what there's six kids in my son's EC classroom. He only goes to like two and a half hours a day and then he goes to regular Ed for the rest, and I'm pretty sure other than one of them, all of them have Autism or are Autistics. So it's a very high need and they're not reaching the behavioral aspects, they're not reaching the communication aspects, and it's based off of the district being ignorant of how to help our children and calling them behaviors when it's communication and being unable to address why they had that behavior, and then they're accidentally reinforcing that behavior by reacting in either negative or a positive way. Like we only have two behaviorists for our entire county, which I want to say has like, what was it like 36 schools or something up there where we have a lot of schools cause I'm also on the Special Education Parent Advisory committee So there's just a high need and I haven't seen a lot of action. Like it's obviously slow cause it's, you know, government, but, in general there's a lot of needs in general too.

Ms. Davis:

And you're, you're in the southeast. That's correct?

Ms. Hargrove:

Yes, I'm specifically in Pender County.

Ms. Lynch:

Okay.

Mr. Stevenson:

So the question was have I, have I heard of anyone, any parent of a child with an IEP expressing concerns?

Ms. Lynch

Correct, specific to unmet needs.

Mr. Stevenson:

Correct. Yeah. So yeah, in my role I hear from hundreds of parents expressing concerns. Most of the time it's similar, because I run a school for students with neural developmental disabilities, it's usually specific to individuals with the neural developmental disability, often autism, but not exclusively. Those with higher needs.

A lot of them exhibiting challenging behaviors, and therefore were unable to access their education in the public schools; that includes charter schools. Students who are being excluded and just kept out of the classroom for long stretches, not making progress on IEP goals or having IEP goals watered down, having related services reduced, not because of lack of need, but because of lack of progress, and so they say, well, he's not making progress, so they're not benefiting from the service, so we'll take it down a little bit. And then informal removals being sent home, being put on a modified day, being put on homebound. I hear those stories a lot.

Ms. Combs:

Well, certainly in ECAC this is the bulk of our work is hearing from families and caregivers.

But it's, it's tricky because sometimes the call is for what is perceived to be an unmet need, but can also just be an unmet want because there's a lot of misinformation out there, and there's a lot of miscommunication out there. But certainly, yeah, there are unmet needs. Most of them, honestly in my opinion, come, you know, we're never gonna meet the needs, the unmet needs of students until we meet the unmet needs of the teachers. There's a lot of teachers out there doing a really good, really, really good work, but they have limited resources, limited support, and there are some students that require a lot and it's, it's more than one teacher or even a teacher with some TAs can handle. I do think that staff shortages contribute to some of the unmet needs as far as these kids not getting, maybe what was the services that were written into their IEP because there is a a staff shortage or a long term sub, but certainly behavior is you know one of the ones that we hear from families the most is kids that are exhibiting a lot of really challenging behaviors, and the solution often time is that these kids are getting put on a shortened day or just the informal removals, come pick them them up and so that, that certainly is a continuing unmet needs of families across the state. We serve all 100 counties, so we hear from, from

folks all over, but I still think that some of the families, what has been said or what they've been told and what actually was said or occurred, it was just it a lot of it comes down to a true miscommunication.

And so I think that's where some of these, these things stem from. I think if folks really worked on that piece and really if folks really got their hands on vetted information, some of these things could be resolved quicker and easier. But that's, you know, also easier said than done.

Mr. Stevenson:

Yeah, and I do wanna say I, I hear from the parents, as Amy said, the parents aren't always necessarily a hundred percent accurate of the situation. I've had cases where I've heard a story from the parents and that I've actually been called out to consult on the case and the student was included in doing fine and making progress. But I have also seen the opposite and so, and I and Amy is exactly right, a lot of it comes down to, I think, shortage of staffing, shortage of things, things like that. Everyone, all of the staff that I've talked to are always well-intentioned and wanting to do the best for the children but that can be, that can be hard when you have really high needs individuals and you don't have the supports needed to support them appropriately.

Ms. Pamela Day:

I just wanted to say, I agree with everything y'all are saying. I'm a teacher, so I'm right there with the shortage of staff and everything and, but you know I'm an advocate for my students and my parents and my school and everything. But one of the complaints that I have heard is our county, and I work for Robeson County school, has adopted a program that is based on communication. So a lot of our kids have limited access to it. So when we try to, you know, mainstream or involve them in the regular curriculum, they have a hard time with it because it's all based on communication. And so it limits their access and it's frustrating for them, it's for the parents, and part of the program, you know, advertises that it has a component for the, and it doesn't even say limited learners, but it's basically for, you know, students with disabilities, but it really isn't. And I told them that it's not. So even my students with just like learning disabilities have difficulty with it.

So my students that are served in the resource setting are struggling, and so my students have autism that really need to be in that setting cause they're, they can function in that setting are having challenges. So that's

one of the needs I see from some of my parents, you know, because the district chose a curriculum that maybe they can't be successful and doesn't mean that they shouldn't be in that setting. And so that's been a struggle in, in our area.

Ms. Davis:

Thank you so much. Kristen I think you had your hand up.

Ms. Kristen Hodges:

Hi, yes, there are a couple things that I thought I would be helpful just to mention. One, some complaints about students not qualifying for things being told to parents like, you know. We don't, kids don't qualify because of dyslexia, without sort of conversations of learning disabilities too. Kids not qualifying because they're making progress in MTSS. They may not have made enough, you know, not enough progress to get onto grade level, but saying well they are making some progress.

So I think clarification about that would be helpful. I've heard that at IEP meetings parent being told that "we don't do that here. We don't do that at this school." You know, e.g., like push-in services, we only, we only offer services outside, you know, being outside the classroom. And another complaint would be not having a certified teacher in the classroom.

Ms. Davis:

I think Johanna's hand might break off because she's like writing. The other thing ... I would thank you all so much for sharing and I know we'll get to a couple of other people who have their hands up. I always wanna, I think it's really important and the the purpose of the council, right, is to make recommendations. And so I don't wanna wait until we have these meetings to talk about these sort of unmet needs and and things that you guys were seeing from where you sit and so I definitely encourage you just like I do, to, you know, email myself, Joanna, Amy if there's something that you want to talk about, that you're seeing where you are. So don't wait until these four meetings a year.

To do that if you would like, I'll speak for Amy and Johanna, but we would love to, to help, you know, support you through that. So don't wait until these four meetings if I can be so full with this to say that out loud.

Ms. Lynch

I'm not actually a formal member, but I can report back as the parent liaison on issues that I'm seeing across the state. There is a lot of misunderstanding on parents' parts of what the law actually states, what schools can and are required to provide, and that one of the biggest challenges has been what's the difference between general education and exceptional children.

You know, our exceptional children's students are all general education students first and so, you know, school rules apply and parents struggle with that. They find it, they think it's a civil rights issue if the child you know has perhaps broken a school rule and has been, you know, there's been some kind of "punishment" attached to it perhaps time out of school or, and so there's a lot of conversations around that.

And then a lot of conversations around issues that, like I said, are not IEP team decisions and what is an IEP team decision. So I do a lot of educating when I'm talking with parents around those issues.

Ms. Davis:

Is there anything else anybody wants to share about this topic?

I want to make sure people have a space, the space to do that. And if you have questions or comments, like I said, please feel free to email me or Amy, and we can bring them to, to the group.

Okay. The only other thing that I really want to talk about that's, and we might do this via email, but, let me back up, sorry. So I have three things that I just wanted to talk about super quick. We'll be done by 11:45, I promise.

I wanted to get y'all thoughts on an internal council directory with people's faces and a little bit of a "about you" bio. This would obviously not be shared with anybody else just the council, but I realized that I don't know a lot of you, I don't sometimes I don't even see your your faces, and I want to know what makes Chrissy Hutchinson and tick, and so I'd love to know more, you know, about her and her life and why she has three diplomas on her wall. Yeah, so just I don't know, wanted to kind of open that up for discussion and hear what people think about that.

Dr. Christy Hutchinson:

I think it's really helpful to have the directory because I think it always calls to our mind not only the visual, like the physical diversity of covering the west, covering the east, but it's a resource to reach out to when you see it's a parent advocate or a parent or a district person or an IHE, you know, higher ed institution person, so I think having that is helpful. I know it's part of our directory now, the regions, but maybe a little bit more demographic data about folks might be helpful.

Ms. Davis

Does anyone have any, any other discussion topic around or discussion on that particular topic? Either for or against.

Dr. Christy Hutchinson

I think it would be relatively easy to collect through just like a Google Doc or whatever and with a few new people to the council right now that might be beneficial timing wise.

Ms. Christy Grant:

Yeah, this is Chrissy from Nash. I completely agree, I think it would be good because with all the new people, we used to kind of know and learn who was in what kind of role and what they did and I think now that would be very helpful to kind of see. And Johanna, I don't, I may remember this wrong, but did we have to provide a blurb to the state board when we send our information?

Ms. Lynch:

I think there wa. Since I've joined, the requirement has changed to like a resume and a letter, but even the letter has been dropped. I don't know that that's required, but if people want to write a blurb about themselves and. I can create a Google form for that, collect that data and then compile it. And so, yeah, that's a good idea. I don't have anything on anybody just because I've taken over after someone else. So, it'd be great to get a little information on everybody in a little headshot if you're comfortable with that we can include it.

Ms. Tameeka Williams-Burchette:

Johanna, I'm sorry. This is Tameeka. When would you want us to have that? Or it's just something you were trying to just talk about.

Ms. Lynch:

It's a discussion at the moment, I guess if everyone agrees I can send out an email to everybody with a link to the document and kind of a timeline.

Ms. Davis:

Okay, to make it, I'm thinking like a 2025 problem, you know what I mean? Like I'm not thinking to be like today or anything but I'm thinking before, you know, the next council meeting.

Ms. Williams-Burchette:

Okay. Cause we were getting ready to, well I'm a school counselor and, we were getting ready to go out. Our last day is what's today? What's it? Friday. So that's why I was wondering, we'll have a, I'll have some time to do it. You know what I mean?

Ms. Davis:

You're, you're, you're. OK. Perfect. So everybody's good with that. The only, I'll skip this for next time, but this topic is about some sort of formal onboarding for council members. I'll be fully transparent with you guys. I've been on the council for a year and some change and I never had a formal onboarding, and I think that's really important. I'm not gonna ask you if you had a formal onboarding or not. I'm just gonna say that I think it's something to just talk about if people would like it, if they think it's unnecessary, just open for discussion.

Ms. Kristen Hodges

Yeah, this is Kristen Hodges. I'm a parent rep. I think it's important. I think it just helps familiarize people with, you know, what to expect and how we can help.

Ms. Davis:

Perfect.

Ms. Lisa Phillips:

I've been on the council since I took over the role of the State Director for homeless education with the department, so 17 years and during that time we have had orientation. It used to be done at the beginning of a school year and it was a face-to-face meeting. I don't know what happened to those meetings.

However, I know that there are materials already put together that provide more details about the council. At one point it had information in it on who was on the council, kind of like the spreadsheet I described in the chat pane. That's where I, I was thinking we used to do that. Why don't we do it anymore? So I like the idea of having a spreadsheet, but anyway, that used to be part of the orientation, and then there were some other details about different folks at the state level and state and local programs.

Ms. Lisa Phillips:

So I don't know where those materials are, but I would think that maybe Carol Ann could provide them to the council and I would say that's something that definitely needs to be revised and updated, but NO sense in recreating the wheel. We've got something , ust where is it?

I can dig the next time I'm in my office, which is gonna be in January. I could dig through my old records to see if I could find something, but I have a feeling I don't have those materials anymore because I only got them when I 1st started and I didn't go to those orientations year after year because I wasn't required to. So anyway, some's out there. I've just gotta figure out where it's at.

Ms. Grant:

Yeah, Lisa I think I have those actually. I remember because I did that when I first came on board. We actually even had and you or Chrissy or some of anybody who's been on here for a while may I remember, we had somebody a man come down and talk about the council. I don't remember who he was though.

Ms. Lynch:

So in my files I have seen that there has been in-person training before when the council met in September. Unfortunately this past September we canceled the in-person because we had only three individuals who were able to attend in-person and it didn't seem like the best use of state funding.

And so, you know, having, we do also, there's a lot of members who don't attend on a regular basis, and so it would be helpful if we could, you know, get that training ready for everybody. And I think the council discussing this with Carol Ann is a great idea.

Ms. Phillips:

Right, and the gentleman she was referencing is Bill. He used to be in Carol Ann's position before he retired and that's been a couple of terms ago but yeah I definitely think we need to strengthen the committee having a training is a priority for making that happen. I do think we need more members and I think we need to hold people accountable for their attendance on this committee and it does not seem strong, so I think that has to be weaved into all of this as well. What can we do to have people present?

Ms. Davis:

And participating in the meetings.

Ms. Combs:

Lisa, do you love what Lisa said. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to talk over you. I love that piece about the, not only just the attendance but the participation has been weak and I would love to see that not only become required, but see more of it.

Ms. Grant:

Yeah and the person I was talking about I know Bill, but this was somebody from outside. I felt like he was from like the federal level or something. I have a notebook somewhere and I think I have his stuff in it because when he came was when I truly understood the role of the council from the IDEA federal level, which was very interesting.

Dr. Hutchinson:

That was pre COVID Christy, and he came from ...

Ms. Phillips:

That is definitely pre COVID for sure. And I think I do have that gentleman's information, so I will look for it.

Ms. Grant:

Yeah ok and and isn't there an attendance requirement in the, was it bylaws or some or laws or something that we looked at? Like if you missed this many times then and we were, you were replaced?

Ms. Lynch

Yes. So there is an attendance requirement and so there was a bit of a, the changeover from Alexis to me, there was a gap there for six months and one of our consultants who does investigating for dispute resolutions took over the council, so there's; the gap kind of caused an issue and I am now like just now starting to, this is why I'm asking for people to sign in on the attendance sheet when they join the meeting. So that'll be something I'm gonna try to do every, I want to do every meeting so that when you sign into the meeting, please go to the attendance sheet and sign in, click your name so I know you've attended.

It can be a juggle to manage the meeting and keep track of who's here. So that would help me. And also there is, there are letters that I need to send out. One of the biggest issues are, some of the state employees and legislators. So I, that is something I have to discuss with Carol Ann to address and both, you know, Amy and Peyton obviously because the legislators have not attended in quite a while.

Ms. Davis:

So the only other thing before we adjourn is I want you, I would love for you guys to be thinking about and Lisa I swear you're in my head. My list for today was member engagement during meetings, so Lisa, you must know.

So I would love y'all to be thinking about ways of engaging during the meetings. I kind of love this like member discussion during the meeting where Carol Ann is not present, only because I feel like it gives us a chance to really talk through some things. It doesn't feel as formal to me, so if maybe that's the form we do it in, I don't really know yet, but would love you guys to be thinking about some different ways that you have seen that's worked for boards or councils that you're on that are virtual. But we don't have to talk about that now, but just to be thinking about that if you can for me, because I don't have all the answers and neither does Amy and neither does Johanna. So, would love, you know, y'all's input. Before we close, is there anything else that you guys want to talk about? Or anything that's important? That we need to discuss today.

Ms. Phillips:

This is Lisa again. I know you talked about doing some letters and we do have a change in offices occurring in January at all levels, and I think that we can get some letters provided just as those changes are occurring, that would be a great time to let people know this is the expectation from their

offices to be present at our meetings so I think that would be a great start. I know that may put a little bit of pressure on someone, but I'm happy to support you in writing those letters. I have to be careful because I'm still with the department. So you know, reviewing them, providing input, that kind of thing I'm happy to support that.

Ms. Davis.

Everyone's gonna hate me.

Ms. Grant:

No. You have to show up for stuff.

I think the one other thing that I would like to say is when I first started this, we had really strong legislative support with legislators or either somebody from their office attending, and then I can remember there was one of the members who would then take up a summary of kind of what happened at the meeting and walk over to the legislation and give it to certain, to certain people. I feel like that piece has kind of gotten lost in the shuffle as well, so maybe with the turnover and everything of where we are right now, it might be a good time to try to see how we can work with that because, you know, it's gonna happen with the state too, but it's also gonna happen in legislation with some of the pieces of the bills that need to be really addressed and they need to know, they need to hear our voice as well.

Ms. Lynch:

As well. Each of the legislators has the representative who is supposed to sit in for them if they do not attend and they have not attended either. So no representation. I think that that's important.

Ms. Grant:

Yeah. And we used to. They used to come. I mean at least we had somebody, you know, from their office, No matter who it was that we felt like they were, there was somebody there listening, but we also had that piece of, and I don't know Christie or at least if y'all remember, like, I don't know who she took it to when she went over.

Ms. Hutchinson:

I honestly think she was just kind of bold and would knock on the door of anybody that was willing to listen. And I'm trying to remember she was an

OT from Greensboro and retired, I think about a year before COVID, but yep. I'm open to politics.

Ms. Hargrove:

I was gonna ask a question. I'm not trying to get into politics or any of the like just a yes or no would be good. So with, with the changes in January, do we expect drastic changes in this group?

Ms. Phillips:

Okay. Can you repeat that? I could hear.

Ms. Hargrove:

With, with the changes of getting a new president in January and the things that are, that's why I said I'm not trying to be political, but I just wanted to know like, do we expect there to be changes quickly or not to the public education system in our state?

Ms. Grant:

I think I would like to go one step further than that and also say with the pro ... I don't think it's proposed, I think the new superintendent has thrown out his reorganization of DPI, like what impact would that have? I mean I know we're kind of the Council from my understanding is, is driven. Like we have to have one. So I would, I would like to go a little bit further and ask how is a reorganization that the new superintendent has in place going to affect any of the workings.

Ms. Davis:

It's a great question.

Dr. Hutchinson:

Yeah, I'm the chief academic officer, meeting with like last week one day. She put out the new reorganization, and there are certain individuals that have already kind of already been made aware that they're position is going away or consolidated, but I don't know that we are as directly impacted by federal level as we're definitely gonna be impacted by the state level and doesn't mean a negative negative impact, but obviously it's just more closely related to what we do.

Ms. Phillips:

Yeah, let's extend an invitation to Mr. Mo Green and Dr. Pitre-Martin to attend one of our sessions. I will share with you that Dr. Yatisha Bliff and I, our directors actually, Dr. Pitre-Martin and she's been with the department for many many years, but I think that we should extend the invitation for them to participate and meet our our council. I think them seeing us, they won't forget.

Ms. Grant:

I think that's a great idea, Lisa. Wonderful. I remember with Dr., oh gosh, I always say the name wrong. Pitre-Martin, is that right? I think that's right. But she, I had a lot of conversations with her previously. Like she was really open and wanted to listen to what was going on and stuff. So I have a good feeling about her being where she is and coming back. Of course, you know, things change over time, but I think having them or sending that invitation to the two of them, I, I would be very surprised if they don't jump on this and, and want to come and meet and see, you know how things are going.

Ms. Phillips:

How things are going. I agree, Mary. I think we'll have their full support. We just need to have them present and that's gonna make the difference.

Ms. Lynch:

So, is this a motion? Does this need to be, is this an item that needs to be motioned and voted on?

Dr. Hutchinson:

It's, we're not taking any action. I think that the idea is just inviting. Yeah, so I don't know that and I think it would just be a part of the agenda. Right. I'm sorry about that. Yeah, I don't think it's an action item I just think it's a part of the agenda, and so when we approve the agenda.

Ms. Davis:

But is there anybody that doesn't want to invite them, I guess? Can't imagine, but I I fully support that. That's something that I've talked to Amy and Johanna about as well as broadening the membership anyway and inviting people to our council meetings, so I fully support that. I think that, that's fantastic. Ok. Anything else for the good of the order or I say the words I'm supposed to say. Brad, I know, ok? And I know I'm funny. Okay.

Johanna, anything else from you? Okay, is there a motion to adjourn the meeting?

Ms. Grant motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Phillips seconded the motion.

Ms. Davis:

Awesome. Anybody opposed? Just kidding. Thank you guys so much for staying on with us today and happy holidays however you celebrate as Carol Ann says, and please reach out if you get any questions or you wanna chat. I appreciate all of you.

Ms. Grant:

Thanks.

Ms. Phillips:

Thank you.

Mr. Stevenson:

Bye bye so much. Thank you.

Ms. Hodges:

Happy holidays. Thank you. Yes.