

COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

September 2024

Summary of Actions

Welcome, Call to Order, Introductions, Review of Agenda, Review of Meeting Minutes – March 2024

Chairperson Diane Coffey virtually called the meeting to order. There was a quorum present, with 14 members present.

Summary of Actions March 2024 approved.

The Council heard updates on Rulemaking, Weighted Funding Model, 2022FY SPP/APR Indicators, and the agency from Dr. Carol Ann Hudgens, and an update on the 2023-24 Dispute Resolution data from Leigh Mobley.

Agency Updates – Dr. Carol Ann Hudgens ([June 2024 CESEC Directors update presentation](#))

Dr. Hudgens shared updates on Rulemaking, Funding, data for FY2022 SPP/APR Indicators, and the agency.

SPP / APR Indicators:

Reviewed data from FY 2021 and FY 2022:

- Data “slippage” exists when the data for the current year is worse than the previous year and the data indicates the target was not met. Did the data remain the same from the previous year or did the data “slip” from the previous year?
- Explained what each of the Indicators measure.
- Each of the Indicators carry the same importance as they are interrelated and affect all student’s abilities to fully access their education and work toward meaningful postsecondary outcomes.
- OEC is focusing on improvement with a holistic approach and keeps those Indicator interrelationships in mind when developing technical assistance and professional development.

- DPI uses data to determine if PSUs are meeting requirements, they need assistance or they need intervention. This year the focus is on compliance Indicators versus outcome Indicators.
- More districts are meeting requirements than not.
- Compliance Indicators include Child Find, Preschool Transition, and Postsecondary Transitions
- 12 districts in need of intervention
- Levels of intervention: Meets requirements, Needs assistance, Needs intervention, Needs substantial intervention
- There are no schools in need of substantial intervention, with only a few falling under “needs intervention”.
- Program Monitoring staff are supporting districts with some of the compliance Indicators
- DPI Accountability and Testing data dashboard shared with the Council: Data indicates that proficiency scores were dipping prior to COVID and the post-COVID data indicates proficiency for all students is on the rise again. There is a gap in performance for all students but the trajectory of decrease and increase in both general education and exceptional children the data mirrors each other.
- The 2024 EC Annual Conference sessions will be led by DPI staff to use the conference as a true training opportunity with DPI-led content so that training is aligned with the needs of the SPP / APR.
- New for Conference this year: DPI will host a teacher recruitment fair.
- Conference registration information will be made available to Council members.
- Adding two pre-conference full-day institutes: One for parents and one for general education administrators.
- The OEC Activities Guide will be implemented again this year, and available the second week of July. The Guide compiles all the administrative resources for the EC directors in one location.
- Looking to overhaul the DPI website in July. The site is not as intuitive as it was hoped it would be, and the timing aligns with new requirements issued by the Department of Justice to make all materials, including the website, accessible in accordance with the ADA.
- Rulemaking: currently working to get ready for public comment and for the Office of Administrative hearing. The work is moving forward but does not have a timeline.

- Changes to Indicator 8 data collection for 2024-25: Moving from a sampling method that allows each PSU to participate once every 5 years to a census method that expands the opportunity for every parent to contribute to the Indicator 8 data annually. Working with ECAC to get parent feedback on survey: Is it accessible? Are there different ways to make it available to parents?

Review 2023-24 Dispute Resolution data review – Leigh Mobley ([June 2024 CESEC State Complaint data presentation](#))

Ms. Mobley started by introducing the OEC new administrative assistant, Kristin Matthews.

Ms. Mobley reviewed Dispute Resolution complaints data for the 2023-24 SY.

Federal reporting period is July 1 to June 30.

- Data collected: number of complaints filed, number of insufficient complaints, number of complaints withdrawn, complaints that are set aside due to a Due Process petition being filed, the final number of reports that are issued, and if the 60-day timeline for report to be issued was met.
- Additional data: Number of final reports issued that were compliant, number of final reports issued that were non-compliant, number of final reports issued on an extended timeline.
- As a state, data collected includes what were the issues, what issues were compliant, what issues were non-compliant, was there a corrective action plan, the PSU names, whether they are a traditional or charter.
- Current data: 2023-24 as of June 7:
 - 218 complaints filed, 28 of those were determined to be insufficient, 19 were withdrawn.
 - More complaints have been filed since June 7; data will be finalized after June 30.

Most common issues:

- Implementation and development of IEPs
- Not having properly licensed EC teachers and/or related service providers, including any type of evaluator required for evaluations.
Lack of providers delaying completion of evaluations within the 90-day timeline. Development has been an ongoing issue.
- Behavior issues, mental health issues are more prevalent.
- In- and out-of-state IEP transfer process.

Additional information:

- There was a slight increase in complaints being filed on behavior of adult students, which is a challenge because the DR consultants cannot communicate with the person who has filed the complaint for the adult student unless DPI has consent from the adult student to speak with the third party.
- Staffing issues in districts continue to be an issue, but Winston Salem State University is offering a master's level special education degree at no cost so hopefully that will attract students.
- Some of the issues are related to comparable services for out-of-state transfer IEPs. With in-state transfers, the receiving LEA may implement the current IEP and not discuss it with the parent because they did not need to develop a comparable plan. We need to see improvements in communication and collaboration between the LEAs and parents.
- Parents are notified when a complaint is found to be insufficient, and what about the complaint was insufficient.
- Complaints found to be insufficient are closed because of the 60-day timeline, but a parent can file a new complaint with sufficient information for the same issue. If a new complaint is filed, a new 60-day timeline starts.
- Parents file complaints about non-EC issues often related to promotion, retention, or bullying and DPI has to respond to those. Information about local board policy is shared, where they can file a grievance with their local school board or if it's an Office of Civil Rights issue, DPI provides information on how to file a complaint. Consultants respond to all complaints submitted, even if they are not related to EC issues.
- National state complaint data indicates an increase in complaints since 2020-21. North Carolina data is aligned with data in states that are similarly sized.
- Compared to last year this time, there is a 3.5% decrease in complaints but that could change before July 1. There has been a 2% increase in the number of complaints withdrawn, which indicates the parties are resolving the issues through facilitation, mediation or as a team.
- Currently have 4 state complaint investigators and a consultant who coordinates facilitation, mediation, and Dispute Resolution processes. There is still a heavy caseload for each consultant.

Council Business

Not applicable.

Discussion Items

Is there an Indicator that is a bigger concern over the others?

Dr. Hudgens responded: Each of the Indicators carry the same importance as they are interrelated and affect all student's abilities to fully access their education and work toward meaningful postsecondary outcomes. The OEC is focusing on improvement with a holistic approach that keeps those Indicator interrelationships in mind when developing technical assistance and professional development.

What plans are being implemented to improve the Indicator data?

Dr. Hudgens and the Regional Coordinators will meet with directors for the PSUs who need intervention to partner with those districts and look at the priorities related to their district improvement plan and look for opportunities to strengthen the EC program, and to develop a plan for Professional Development and Technical Assistance coaching for next year. The 2024 EC Annual Conference sessions will be led by DPI staff to use the conference as a true training opportunity with DPI-led content so that training is aligned with the needs of the SPP / APR.

The Council requested an updated SY2023-24 Dispute Resolution (complaint) data for the September 2024 meeting.

Public Comment

No public comment submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.