

COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

March 2021

Summary of Actions

Welcome, Call to Order, Introductions, Review of Agenda, Review of Meeting Minutes – December 2020

Chairperson Cynthia Daniels-Hall called the virtual meeting to order. Council members provided self-introductions and reviewed the day's agenda.

The September Summary of Actions was reviewed. The Council approved the September Summary of Actions with no comments or edits. Alexis Utz provided instructions for the Public Comment procedures.

What is ECAC- Terri Leyton- [Available Training Topics - Exceptional Children's Assistance Center \(ECAC\) \(ecac-parentcenter.org\)](http://ecac-parentcenter.org)

ECAC is committed to families of children with disabilities. They are a parent organization. All of the parents are educators and most staff are parents of children or young adults with disabilities. ECAC is considered a leader in the parent center movement. Every state is required to have at least one Parent Training and Information Center (PTI). ECAC has been North Carolina's federally-funded PTI since the Mid 1980s. All of their PTI work is related to the key purpose of IDEA.

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report- Nancy Johnson

SPP/APR is one part of the general supervision responsibility of the state. APR report is submitted on February 1, 2021. SSP report is submitted on April 2, 2021. 17 indicators are reported.

Indicators 1 (graduation) and 8 (parent involvement) will be changing. Graduation: The State is now using a 5-year adjusted cohort rate, baseline will be 2015/16 entering 9th graders who graduated in 2019/20 or earlier, rate=73.1%, target=80%. Parent Involvement: changed survey (reduced from 25 questions to 17 questions), changed rate calculation, previous years' rates= 42-46%, target=50%, current target=TBD.

There have been indicators impacted by COVID: overall impact, on specific indicators (3b-c, 11, 12, 13), strategies to mitigate the impact, COVID focus groups (rural/small, urban/large, charter, parents, & students). 3b-c (state assessments): no data, state received a waiver; 11 (child find/90-day timeline): delay reason added, slippage significant, 70% delays due to COVID; 12 (transition age 3) 80% delay due to COVID, slippage significant; 13 (transition secondary): delay in monitoring due to COVID (data collection), monitors reviewing IEPs virtually. EC Division has added weekly office hours to help troubleshoot with directors.

Future items (2020-2025): work will occur throughout 2021 for the submission on Feb. 1, 2022. Input from stakeholder groups, set targets, changes to data/source for indicators 1 (graduation) & 2 (drop-out), new components for indicator 3 (state assessments)—reporting data on reading & math in grades 4, 8, high school; new components for indicator 6 () -- reporting, change to the due date for indicator 17 (SSIP), other minor changes/clarifications.

LEA Self -Assessment Statewide Summary-Lauren Holahan

The State Systemic Improvement Plan works from the theory that local districts will look at the root cause of why students with disabilities are graduating disproportionately. It is lower than that of non-disabled students.

Based on what the root causes are, the LEA or Charter School selects evidence-based practices to address those causes and then provide professional development and request help from DPI for technical assistance. DPI will allocate

resources through the regional support structure to make sure that LEAs and Charter Schools have the support they need to implement evidence-based practices. Lauren reviewed the statewide data to date. (An electronic copy of this presentation is available)

Agency Updates

Exceptional Children Division Assistant Director, Matt Hoskins addressed the Council.

Update on the school mental health policy that has been years in the making. The policy passed in November (Senate Bill 476/Session Law 2020-7) The components of the policy include Universal prevention through core instruction, early intervention for mental & social-emotional health, referral/treatment, and re-entry information.

As far as an update concerning OSEP, the Division has not received the final report from their visit.

We are currently working on a new strategic plan. Council members should have received a draft of the plan to give feedback (via survey). Each goal has action steps and evidence of success to determine the progress and success of each goal. The first goal is related to eliminating opportunity gaps by 2026. This is a 5-year plan. The second goal is improving school and district performance in that time. The third goal is related to ensuring that educators are prepared to meet the needs of the students. The fourth goal is related to continuing to optimize collaboration and engagement with stakeholders, which would include the Council.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel the Annual EC Conference. A lot of people depend on this conference for professional learning and CEUs towards licensure. EC Directors were polled to get an idea of what could be done in place of the conference. A virtual conference option was developed. Sessions will be provided in December, January, and February. An analysis will be done to determine if more sessions are needed. DPI has access to CANVAS, which is a learning management platform that we have been trained to use. It has been opened statewide for more people to have access.

Covid-19 relief funding. To date, we've been able to allot close to \$37 million for extraordinary costs associated with serving students with disabilities during the pandemic. The funds are available until December 30th, so we're working closely with LEAs to make sure we can use those funds by the end of the year.

State Complaints Update- Leigh Mobley

There are currently 78 open complaints. 11 have been insufficient, some have been withdrawn. On target for 160 complaints by the end of the fiscal year compared to 119 from last year. Top 5 issues: COVID related: implementation of IEP and development, review, revision of IEPS; child find, placement decisions, and prior written notice.

End of year report gets posted on the ECD website.

Public Comments

There was an emailed comment regarding the failure to provide FAPE to eligible students by dragging out the IEP process for almost a year. The parent provided a written request, and the process should have been completed by March 2020 (before the pandemic), but the process is still incomplete.

Committee Work

The goals and functions of each committee were discussed before breaking into committee work.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.