

COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES  
FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Via Webex  
December 9, 2020  
9:30 a.m.

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**TRANSCRIPT OF QUARTERLY MEETING**

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The quarterly meeting of the Council on Educational Services for Exceptional Children was held on the 9th day of December, 2020, via Webex, commencing at 9:30 a.m.

APPEARANCES

COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN  
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cynthia Daniels-Hall, Chairperson  
Christy Hutchinson, Vice Chairperson

Anthony Baker  
Sara Bigley  
Joanne Caratelli  
Diane Coffey  
Jennifer Degen  
Leanna George  
Christy Grant  
Jennifer Grady  
Kristen Hodges  
Terri Leyton  
Virginia Moorefield  
Lisa Phillips  
Kenya Pope  
Matthew Potter  
Representative Larry Strickland  
Marge Terhaar

STAFF:

Lauren Holahan  
Matt Hoskins  
Nancy Johnson  
Leigh Mobley  
Danyelle Sanders  
Alexis Utz

COURT REPORTER:

Rebecca P. Scott

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1 Thereupon, the following proceeding was held:

2 THE CHAIRPERSON: So welcome,  
3 everybody. This is the Council on Educational  
4 Services for Exceptional Children. This is our  
5 December meeting, and I'd like to welcome everyone  
6 to the meeting. Thank you so much for the time  
7 that you take to be involved in this and to work  
8 to be effective for our children.

9 So we're going to do roll call, and  
10 when Alexis calls your name, you can introduce  
11 yourself. Thank you.

12 MS. UTZ: All right. I have -- I  
13 kind of tried to fill this out ahead of time to  
14 save some time. So I have the members here. So,  
15 Cynthia, you're first.

16 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. I'm Cynthia  
17 Daniels-Hall. I'm a parent out of Wake County, so  
18 I'm in Area 3 of the State Board kind of  
19 districts, and I'm a parent of children with  
20 autism. Thank you.

21 MS. UTZ: All right. I do not see  
22 Shanna at this time, but maybe she'll -- in a few  
23 minutes, she'll log on. I do not see Joanne  
24 either. Diane, I believe you're still on?

25 MS. COFFEY: Yes, I'm still here.

1 This is Diane Coffey, and I am out of Watauga  
2 County, and I have two children with special  
3 needs.

4 MS. UTZ: All right. Leanna?

5 MS. GEORGE: Can you hear me? I  
6 hadn't tested my mic yet. Let me see.

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

8 MS. GEORGE: You can hear me. Good.  
9 I'm Leanna George from Johnston County. I have  
10 two children with exceptionalities.

11 MS. UTZ: All right. [Inaudible]  
12 see, but there's a couple of call-in numbers.  
13 Leslie, are you here?

14 **(No audible response.)**

15 MS. UTZ: Abby did let me know that  
16 she would not be able to make it today. She's  
17 having to deal with some stuff with her daughter.  
18 Jennifer F.?

19 **(No audible response.)**

20 MS. UTZ: All right. Kristen?  
21 Kristen, you're unmuted.

22 MS. HODGES: Can you hear me?

23 MS. UTZ: Yes.

24 MS. HODGES: Hi. Good morning. This  
25 is Kristen Hodges. I am a parent of three

1 children. Two have -- sorry -- one has a 504 plan  
2 and two have IEPs. I look forward to meeting in  
3 person someday.

4 MS. UTZ: I thought that was going to  
5 be this meeting, but I guess not. Lisa B.?

6 **(No audible response.)**

7 MS. UTZ: Lisa Black, okay, I don't  
8 see. Sherita? Sherita?

9 **(No audible response.)**

10 MS. UTZ: I don't see her on as well.  
11 Jennifer D., you should be able to speak.

12 MS. DEGEN: Hey. This is Jennifer  
13 Degen from East -- from Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
14 Schools. I'm a facilitator in the district for  
15 high schools.

16 MS. UTZ: All right. Christy Grant?

17 MS. GRANT: This is Christy Grant. I  
18 am the traditional PSU representative for  
19 exceptional children directors, and I'm with Nash  
20 County Public Schools.

21 MS. UTZ: All right. Anthony?

22 MR. BAKER: Good morning. I'm  
23 Anthony Baker. I'm an assistant principal at  
24 Western Middle School in the Alamance-Burlington  
25 School System.

1 MS. UTZ: All right. Marge?

2 MS. TERHAAR: I'm Marge Terhaar, and  
3 I'm the Program Coordinator for Graduate Programs  
4 in Special Education and professor at Meredith  
5 College as well as a parent of two adults -- adult  
6 sons with [inaudible].

7 MS. UTZ: Okay. Christy Hutchinson?

8 DR. HUTCHINSON: Hey, everyone.  
9 Christy Hutchinson. I am the representative for  
10 charter PSUs and currently at Lincoln Charter  
11 Schools and Special Ed Director there.

12 MS. UTZ: All right. Terri?

13 MS. LEYTON: Hey. I'm Terri Leyton,  
14 and I'm a Technical Assistance Coordinator with  
15 the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center, and  
16 we are the State's Parent Training and Information  
17 center funded by the Department of Education. And  
18 I live in Cabarrus County, and I have a daughter  
19 in high school, she has Down syndrome, and I have  
20 a son in elementary school, and he is on the other  
21 side of exceptional children in the AIG Program.

22 MS. UTZ: Okay. Welcome and welcome  
23 to your first meeting.

24 MS. LEYTON: Thank you. Thank you.  
25 Excited to be here.

1 MS. UTZ: All right. Jennifer G.?

2 MS. GRADY: Hi. I'm Jennifer Grady.

3 I am the parent of two high schoolers in public  
4 school here in Wake County. One has autism. And  
5 I think I also technically fill a business rep  
6 slot in the Council. I work for Blue Cross and  
7 Blue Shield of North Carolina.

8 MS. UTZ: All right. Welcome.  
9 Matthew, welcome to your first meeting as well.

10 MR. POTTER: Thank you. Matthew  
11 Potter, Forsyth County. Graduate of Wake Forest  
12 University class of 2009. [Inaudible] with a  
13 disability. One of the things I'm sure I'll get  
14 into, but really, I am an advocate for not only  
15 myself but all other individuals with disabilities  
16 pretty much everywhere.

17 So the Governor asked me to be on  
18 this committee, and I jumped at the chance, and  
19 it's good to meet everybody, admittedly with air  
20 quotes, but I'm still very happy to be here and  
21 happy to be a part of it. Thanks.

22 MS. UTZ: Thank you. All right.  
23 Selene, I don't see your name, but maybe you're a  
24 call-in?

25 **(No audible response.)**

1 MS. UTZ: All right. Representative  
2 Strickland?

3 REPRESENTATIVE STRICKLAND: Can you  
4 hear me?

5 MS. UTZ: Yes, we can.

6 REPRESENTATIVE STRICKLAND: I'm  
7 Representative Larry Strickland from Johnston  
8 County. Appointee of Speaker Moore in the North  
9 Carolina House. Before coming to Raleigh to serve  
10 as a legislator, I was on the Johnston County  
11 Board of Education for 18 years. And I appreciate  
12 the opportunity to be part of the Council.

13 MS. UTZ: Welcome. Ginny?

14 MS. MOOREFIELD: Can you guys hear  
15 me?

16 MS. UTZ: Yes.

17 MS. MOOREFIELD: Okay. I'm Ginny  
18 Moorefield. I have a child in middle school with  
19 traumatic brain injury here in Wake County, and  
20 also an interpreter for the deaf and also a  
21 regular ed teacher.

22 MS. UTZ: All right. I don't believe  
23 Sherry was being able to make it today. I know  
24 Matt will be on later today, so I think he's going  
25 to be taking her spot. Carla?

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(No audible response.)

MS. UTZ: All right. Kimaree? I'm sorry I don't remember how to say your name, but I don't see her on.

All right. Kenya, you are unmuted. You should be able to introduce yourself. I'm sorry about that.

MS. POPE: Can you hear me?

MS. UTZ: Yes.

MS. POPE: Hi. I'm Kenya Pope. I'm the EC Instructional and Compliance Specialist with Juvenile Justice. Glad to be here this morning.

MS. UTZ: All right. And Sara?

MS. BIGLEY: Good morning, folks. This is Sara Bigley. I'm the State Coordinator for Foster Care Education at DPI and UNCG SERVE Center. It's great to be here with all of you virtually.

MS. UTZ: All right. And Lisa?

MS. PHILLIPS: Good morning. This is Lisa Phillips, the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, a part of Federal Program Monitoring and Support at DPI. I work with Sara over at UNCG.

1 MS. UTZ: Welcome. And I just saw  
2 Joanne log in. So, Joanne, if you would like to  
3 say hello. And welcome to your first meeting.  
4 She literally just logged in so she might not be  
5 set up for audio yet.

6 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Alexis, you  
7 and Danyelle, if you could introduce yourselves.

8 MS. UTZ: Hold on. Joanne, did you  
9 want to say anything?

10 MS. CARATELLI: I did. I'm so sorry.  
11 I couldn't unmute for a minute there. Hi. So I'm  
12 Joanne Caratelli. I am a regular ed teacher. I'm  
13 the parent to a high school sophomore with Down  
14 syndrome. I serve on the board of directors for  
15 the Down Syndrome Network of Onslow and Carteret  
16 Counties, the Down Syndrome Advocacy Foundation,  
17 and -- yeah, that's it. There was something else,  
18 but I forgot it. So, yeah, I'm happy to be here.  
19 Thank you so much.

20 MS. UTZ: And I am Alexis. I am the  
21 Parent Liaison with the EC Division. I am trying  
22 to run behind the scenes, so if you need anything,  
23 you can message me privately, and hopefully, we  
24 can fix it. Danyelle, you're next?

25 MS. SANDERS: My name is Danyelle

1 Sanders. I'm the Administrative Specialist for  
2 the EC Division, PMA Section, Policy, Monitoring  
3 and Audit.

4 MS. UTZ: All right. Becky, I don't  
5 know if you want to say anything or not or stay  
6 quiet behind the scenes.

7 COURT REPORTER: Good morning. This  
8 is Becky Scott. I'm the court reporter here to  
9 make a record of your meeting today. Glad to be  
10 here.

11 MS. UTZ: All right. And I also see  
12 that Nancy is on. She will be presenting, but you  
13 can introduce yourself or you can wait. That's up  
14 to you.

15 DR. JOHNSON: Good morning, everyone.  
16 I'm Nancy Johnson. I'm the State Performance Plan  
17 and Annual Performance Review Coordinator, and  
18 I'm looking forward to speaking to you in just a  
19 little bit.

20 MS. UTZ: All right.

21 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Now we have  
22 a quorum, is that correct, Alexis?

23 MS. UTZ: Yeah, we do.

24 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. So we're  
25 going to review the agenda. Any additions to the

1 agenda or changes to the agenda?

2 DR. HUTCHINSON: Alexis, did you say  
3 that Matt was replacing Sherry for the updates?  
4 Do we need to move that around in the agenda just  
5 to accommodate his schedule?

6 MS. UTZ: As far as I know, no. He  
7 was given the time, so I believe that he'll be on  
8 a little later before his time. So he doesn't --  
9 he's not on until 11:30.

10 THE CHAIRPERSON: Do we have a motion  
11 to approve the agenda?

12 MS. GRANT: [Inaudible] approve the  
13 agenda.

14 DR. HUTCHINSON: And this is Christy  
15 Hutchinson, and I'll second that motion that  
16 Christy Grant made.

17 THE CHAIRPERSON: So we have the  
18 minutes from our September meeting.

19 MS. UTZ: I'll display and you guys  
20 should be able to click on the link and open it  
21 yourself if you want to view it.

22 **(Pause for Review of Summary of**  
23 **Actions.)**

24 THE CHAIRPERSON: So if everybody's  
25 had an opportunity to review the minutes from the

1 September meeting, could we get a motion to  
2 approve the minutes?

3 MR. BAKER: [Inaudible] to approve  
4 the minutes.

5 MS. UTZ: Second?

6 MS. GRANT: Christy Grant.

7 MS. UTZ: Thank you.

8 DR. HUTCHINSON: Do we need to do an  
9 individual roll call to approve the minutes?

10 MS. UTZ: We did last time.

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: So an individual  
12 roll call or just a call for the attendees to  
13 actually just vote?

14 MS. UTZ: Well, I think it might be  
15 easier if we do opposed, abstained, and then I  
16 will assume everyone else is all in favor.

17 THE CHAIRPERSON: So anyone opposed?

18 **(No audible response.)**

19 THE CHAIRPERSON: Anyone abstaining?

20 **(No audible response.)**

21 THE CHAIRPERSON: Those in favor,  
22 just record by saying "aye."

23 **(Multiple council members responded**  
24 **aye.)**

25 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. So are we

1 ready, even though it's a little bit early, to  
2 move to ECAC?

3 MS. LEYTON: I'm ready.

4 THE CHAIRPERSON: All righty. Okay.

5 MS. UTZ: All right. Give me one  
6 second and I'll have it pulled up here for you.  
7 All right. Take it away, Terri.

8 MS. LEYTON: Thank you. I'm so  
9 excited and happy to be here, and I appreciate  
10 your time today. And Alexis said that you-all  
11 were really interested in what ECAC is and who we  
12 are. So this is just our title slide.

13 If we can go to the next slide.  
14 There we go. As you can see, our mission  
15 statement here is that ECAC has always been  
16 committed to families of children with  
17 disabilities. We are a parent organization. All  
18 of our parent educators and most staff are parents  
19 of children or young adults with disabilities. So  
20 we get it.

21 We make a special connection with  
22 parents that allows us to guide them in unique  
23 ways. We know that all children benefit when kids  
24 with the most needs are fully included and all  
25 children are supported. You know, "A rising tide

1 lifts all boats." So, as I said, we are a parent  
2 organization. We can make that special  
3 connection, and all children benefit when those  
4 that have special needs are fully included.

5 Next slide. Like many great  
6 organizations, ECAC started an idea a couple of  
7 people shared over coffee at the kitchen table or  
8 maybe it was over drinks in a bar. Who knows.  
9 There are different versions of this story.

10 Connie Hawkins on the left and Frank  
11 Graziadei on the right, both parents of kids with  
12 disabilities, saw a need, and they decided they  
13 would meet that challenge. They realized that  
14 although special education law had been passed in  
15 1975, by the 1980s, parents, including themselves,  
16 were struggling to make their voices heard and to  
17 advocate for their children.

18 Connie led ECAC as Executive Director  
19 for 34 years. She had just retired when I started  
20 there in 2017. So I have met her and interacted  
21 with her because it was hard to keep her out of  
22 there for a while, but she is a legend in her own  
23 right, and I am very happy to have at least worked  
24 with her for a small portion of time. ECAC is  
25 considered a leader in the parent center movement

1 because we did have one of those founding mommas  
2 with Connie, and we are very proud of its history.

3 Next. So as a part of IDEA, the  
4 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, every  
5 state is required to have at least one Parent  
6 Training and Information Center. We have been  
7 North Carolina's federally-funded PTI since the  
8 mid '80s. We serve the entire state of North  
9 Carolina, and we are now one of the oldest PTIs in  
10 the nation.

11 Under federal statutes, we are  
12 required to serve the entire state and all  
13 families with disabilities birth to 26 years of  
14 age. So all of our parent educators serve all 100  
15 counties in North Carolina, but we do not have  
16 parent educators -- I'm sorry -- we have parent  
17 educators who focus on outreach in specific areas  
18 of the state.

19 So, you know, we've got an office in  
20 Raleigh so that office kind of focuses on those  
21 few counties, and the Asheville office focuses on  
22 the Western Carolinas. Then Wilmington, Currituck  
23 County, et cetera. But we all serve all of the  
24 counties, but we focus -- some of our staff focus  
25 in those special areas.

1                   Next slide. So as a PTI, we -- as I  
2 mentioned earlier, we are a parent-run  
3 organization. Through that federal funding, our  
4 board of education -- our board of directors is  
5 required to be at least 51 percent parents of  
6 children with disabilities from birth to 26. We  
7 also have self-advocates and professionals in  
8 related fields on our board.

9                   Next. The Parent Training and  
10 Information Center Grant is our biggest program.  
11 IDEA is our national special education law, as you  
12 all know, and Part D says that every state must  
13 fund a Parent Training and Information Center. So  
14 we bring this up so that everyone can understand  
15 where we fit into the world of special education  
16 in North Carolina.

17                   It is our honor to be our state's  
18 PTI, and we take the responsibility very  
19 seriously. All of our PTI work is related in some  
20 way to the key purposes of IDEA. The federal  
21 grants -- as you probably know, [inaudible] where  
22 they would like us to spend our time, and we work  
23 to maintain positive and collaborative  
24 relationships that are independent of state and  
25 local school districts.

1                   Next slide. So we here show a wide  
2 range of services that our staff provide, and  
3 anything that we provide directly to parents is  
4 done so at no cost. There may be small costs for  
5 services to educators or other professionals, but  
6 we try to make them minimal. And it's been  
7 interesting. Since we've to virtual since March,  
8 we have seen a really big uptick in service  
9 providers and professionals and educators  
10 participating in our online virtual programs.

11                   So I don't know -- we don't know  
12 exactly why that is. It may be because they're  
13 looking for more professional development. It may  
14 be because they have a little bit more  
15 flexibility, given the times that we're now  
16 offering, but we have noticed that this has been a  
17 shift. And these are some of the topics you can  
18 see here that we focus on when we give  
19 presentations.

20                   And next slide. So these are a wide  
21 range of--- I'm sorry. Are we on slide 7 -- I  
22 lost my place -- or is this 8?

23                   MS. UTZ: According to mine, it says  
24 slide 9.

25                   MS. LEYTON: Oh, okay.

1 MS. UTZ: Parent Education Workshops.

2 MS. LEYTON: Uh-huh. Okay. So if  
3 you -- I think you may receive a copy of this  
4 slide show later, and if you were to click on that  
5 "And more" at the bottom, it will take you to our  
6 website, which is nice because you'll see  
7 descriptions of all of these workshops that we  
8 offer and what they cover. And then we can also  
9 tailor them to -- to the needs of the audience.

10 So if you'll go to the next slide,  
11 please. All right. So there are two workshops  
12 coming up. I think we skipped ahead to one. The  
13 other one is in partnership with NC START, and  
14 it's being offered -- there we go -- this  
15 afternoon, identifying supports and -- basically  
16 how to support teens and their parents during  
17 virtual learning. So I imagine this is going to  
18 be a very popular workshop that families get  
19 involved in today and possibly even professionals  
20 because, obviously, they want to support our  
21 families as well.

22 And then the next slide is next week,  
23 this workshop, Identifying Specific Learning  
24 Disabilities. So these just give us an idea of  
25 how we can make our presentations relevant to what

1 is going on in our society, in our lives. The  
2 others that I showed a couple of slides ago that  
3 we have a list of on our website, they -- you  
4 know, they're standard. They are, for lack of a  
5 better term, canned. We have scripts that go with  
6 those.

7 And these are a little bit more  
8 tailored to what's going on right now and what is  
9 really relevant to our parents, not that the  
10 others aren't relevant, but this is just like,  
11 hey, this is coming across right now. This  
12 happened in July, and we're now seeing the changes  
13 and the effects of that. So that's how -- what  
14 we're doing for this particular workshop.

15 Okay. Next slide. Okay. So this is  
16 our website, and we would love for you to go to  
17 the website and check it out, see what we have  
18 available. There are a number of really cool  
19 forms and things that you can see.

20 So if you were to go to the next  
21 slide, these are resources that you would find on  
22 our website. We have a number of YouTube videos,  
23 and they have all been captioned. So if you had  
24 somebody that needed access to them in terms of  
25 language, it would be there.

1                   And then we also have an IEP  
2 Checklist, so that is very helpful for families  
3 when they're going into an IEP for the first time  
4 or maybe the last IEP was not so successful and  
5 they really want to have that to help them be  
6 effective advocates when they get into that  
7 meeting.

8                   And then the third one that you see  
9 here is a Return to School Planning Guide. So  
10 that is just like a back-to-school every year, and  
11 you would fill it out for your teachers and your  
12 therapists.

13                   So, again, more useful tools here.  
14 Yeah, you can stay on that other side. That's  
15 great. These are all downloadable handouts and  
16 resources. They can be -- some of them can be  
17 filled out.

18                   If you go to the next slide, this  
19 something as part of our, I believe, Painting the  
20 Big Picture document, and they're all downloadable  
21 PDFs that have been made so that you can just fill  
22 them out as long as you have a PDF reader. And so  
23 they're very useful for going into a meeting and  
24 saying this is an overview of my child and this is  
25 where they have strengths, this is where they have

1 weaknesses, this is how they learn best, and gives  
2 your teacher a really great example of a whole  
3 student and not the deficit model that sometimes  
4 we get into when we say this student needs support  
5 here, needs support here, needs support here, and  
6 gives the family a way to say this is where my  
7 child really shines.

8 Okay. So next slide. These are all  
9 of our other contracts and work. So we've been  
10 talking about the PTI and that federal funding.  
11 We also are part of the North Carolina Deaf Blind  
12 Project, which provides special services for  
13 families with children with hearing and vision  
14 loss; North Carolina Early Intervention, working  
15 with the Infant Toddler Program, supporting  
16 families from birth to three; North Carolina DPI  
17 Exceptional Children, you-all, collaboration and  
18 information and support families; NC SIP, which is  
19 family engagement and new teacher training.

20 We work with several institutions of  
21 higher education with special education majors and  
22 work with a cohort of families to present  
23 information on their experiences raising a child  
24 with a disability. That has been a really  
25 profound experience for a lot of the colleges.

1 We've had the professors tell us how much their  
2 students have learned from our parents coming into  
3 those programs and giving their -- telling their  
4 story.

5 The LENS-North Carolina Program is  
6 focused on the intersection of race, educational  
7 equality or equity, and learning differences.  
8 LENS-NC seeks to improve the lives of the one in  
9 five children who struggle with learning and  
10 attention issues and the less than favorable  
11 outcomes for the ones who are low income students  
12 and students of color who face even greater  
13 challenges in our educational system.

14 And last but not least, Family  
15 Engagement and Leadership is helping families  
16 become more engaged in their children's education  
17 and develop leadership skills to participate on  
18 boards and committees at the local and state  
19 level.

20 Next slide. So this -- you can just  
21 check us out, and we have the contact information.  
22 This is how you can reach us. Our main office is  
23 in Davidson, North Carolina, and we have a 1-800  
24 number. We also have a local number, our website,  
25 a general email, and then my contact information,

1 should you want to reach out to me personally.  
2 And you can look for us online in all, you know,  
3 different ways, of course.

4 There you go. And my final slide is  
5 if you have any questions. I think we're right  
6 10:00, so we would need to be brief.

7 MS. TERHAAR: I'd like to make a  
8 comment. I have found your organization  
9 [inaudible] so much for those of us who teach and  
10 prepare students to become special educators---

11 And I apologize. My Yorkipoo is in  
12 the background crying. Don't worry. He's fine.  
13 He's just being a Yorkipoo.

14 ---and that in particular all of the  
15 materials you have for parents being more active  
16 in the IEP process has been invaluable. In one of  
17 the classes I teach, the students actually  
18 roleplay an IEP conference and the preconference  
19 plan and use your materials extensively. So I  
20 cannot thank you enough for the good work that  
21 you've been doing in our state.

22 MS. LEYTON: That is wonderful to  
23 hear. Thank you, Marjorie. I really appreciate  
24 that. And I know that one of the reasons that  
25 Alexis asked me to present today was that some of

1 the folks on the Council -- maybe it was the  
2 Executive Committee -- really wanted to know more  
3 about our workshops and specifically the ones that  
4 we've been doing during the pandemic.

5 So if you have any specific questions  
6 about those, I will do my best to answer them. I  
7 am not a parent educator, but I'm familiar with a  
8 lot of what they are presenting, and if I didn't  
9 know the answer, I would certainly find it and  
10 follow up with you.

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: So, Terri, can we  
12 take a minute here? Nancy Johnson, are you still  
13 on the call? So we're going to take about five  
14 minutes to about 10:05 for participants to ask  
15 questions. Is that okay with you?

16 DR. JOHNSON: Yes, that's fine with  
17 me.

18 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Okay.  
19 Okay. Any questions?

20 **(No audible response.)**

21 THE CHAIRPERSON: Well, thank you,  
22 Terri. I think you answered some of the questions  
23 that we had in the Executive Committee about what  
24 ECAC was doing in particular to what's going on in  
25 terms of COVID, in terms of children in and out of

1 school, hybrid and remote learning. And I think  
2 you sharing your information so that anyone who  
3 has questions can contact you is very helpful.  
4 Thank you.

5 MS. LEYTON: Yeah, you're welcome.  
6 Parents -- I mean our phone lines have been quiet,  
7 but they have been reaching out through other  
8 online means, which has been helpful. We are all  
9 working from home right now, so that is really the  
10 best way to get ahold of us, is online. We --  
11 like I said, we have been doing these virtual  
12 workshops.

13 And I know, you know, the Department  
14 of Ed has come out with a number of guidance and  
15 policy issues and things to help families navigate  
16 and to help the schools navigate the virtual  
17 learning, and we've tried to distill some of that  
18 down and provide that, when we can, in a virtual  
19 format as well.

20 So those are the kinds of things that  
21 you'll see. We do have a calendar. So if you  
22 were to look at that "Training and Events" tab,  
23 there's a calendar there that shows you some of  
24 our upcoming stuff. So, yeah, you scroll down and  
25 you'll see. We are doing a lot with youth right

1 now, trying to interact with them individually and  
2 in group settings, and then you'll see this  
3 afternoon's webinar, and I think -- actually, I  
4 don't see the one for next week there, but it  
5 is -- it is, to my knowledge, still on the  
6 calendar. So, you know, each month you can go  
7 back and check it.

8 MS. UTZ: The learning disabilities  
9 one was just canceled last night and postponed  
10 until, I think, January.

11 MS. LEYTON: Oh, okay. Great. See,  
12 you knew more than I did.

13 MS. UTZ: I only got the email  
14 because I was registered for it.

15 MS. LEYTON: Oh, bummer. Okay.  
16 Sorry.

17 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Thank you so  
18 much.

19 MS. LEYTON: You're welcome.

20 THE CHAIRPERSON: So Nancy -- Nancy  
21 Johnson, you're up.

22 DR. JOHNSON: Good morning again.  
23 Very exciting to hear from ECAC. I was around  
24 when they first started and know Connie Hawkins  
25 very well. So it's exciting to see that legacy

1 and work continue.

2 I'm here to speak to you about our  
3 State Performance Plan and Annual Performance  
4 Report. For those of you who are new, I do this  
5 every year at our December meeting because the  
6 Council has been our main stakeholder group to  
7 give us input on things.

8 So, Alexis, if you'll go to the  
9 next slide. Briefly, what I'm going to do this  
10 morning is a little bit different than what we've  
11 done in the past. For those of you who are new,  
12 it won't seem different since you haven't heard my  
13 presentation, but for those who've been with the  
14 advisory council in past years and heard me  
15 present, you will see some changes.

16 I'm going to do a brief overview of  
17 the State Performance Plan and Annual Performance  
18 Report for everybody, and then I will then focus  
19 on the things this year we need to focus on, any  
20 indicators with changing baseline data, indicators  
21 with impact from COVID-19.

22 And then, briefly, at the end, I am  
23 going to just discuss future items that we're  
24 going to need to address for the new package that  
25 OSEP just released, and this new package is for

1 years 2020 through 2025. It's our new next  
2 six-year package that will due February 21st of  
3 2022, and I just want to share a few things  
4 because it's going to be a little bit different  
5 next year for us, a little more work.

6 Next slide. So I'm going to start  
7 with the overview of the State Performance Plan  
8 and Annual Performance Report. And get to the  
9 next slide, Alexis. You can see at the very top  
10 our overall general supervision responsibilities,  
11 and at the very top of this slide, it says, "The  
12 SPP/APR." It is one part of many parts of North  
13 Carolina's and all states' general supervision  
14 responsibilities under IDEA.

15 Okay. Next slide. Just so you know  
16 submission dates, we submit this to the US Office  
17 of Special Education Programs like all other  
18 states. Our first 16 indicators are due February  
19 1st of 2021, and it will be the fifteenth time we  
20 have submitted an Annual Performance Report. Our  
21 Indicator 17, our State Systemic Improvement Plan,  
22 is due this year April 1st, 2021, and it will be  
23 our sixth submission.

24 Next slide. Here is kind of an  
25 indicator card. It shows all 16 indicators, and I

1 won't go through all of these, but those listed in  
2 green are outcome indicators or results indicators  
3 based on student data, an example being graduation  
4 rate. We're looking at the results of students --  
5 how many students are graduating with a standard  
6 high school diploma.

7           The ones in the darker blue are  
8 compliance indicators, and things like our  
9 timelines for -- our 90-day timeline for Child  
10 Find from referral to placement. The reason these  
11 are important that we know difference between  
12 these, states set their targets for the outcome  
13 indicators. OSEP has preset targets for us at,  
14 for example, a hundred percent or zero percent,  
15 depending on the indicator for our compliance  
16 indicators.

17           Next slide. This morning I'm going  
18 to spend a few minutes talking about a couple of  
19 indicators where we're going to have some changing  
20 baseline data, and the reason I'm going to be  
21 sharing these with you for this year because this  
22 is the last and it's an extended year of our APR.  
23 Those of you who were at our advisory council  
24 meeting last December may remember that we did a  
25 lot of -- I sought a lot of feedback from you

1 about targets for FFY, federal fiscal year, '19,  
2 which this year is considered because we're  
3 reporting our 2018-19 -- or our 2019-20 data.  
4 Excuse me. And you helped us set those targets,  
5 and that all requires stakeholder involvement.

6 This year states were told it's the  
7 last year are targets were all set, so unless we  
8 had any changes related to baseline data or maybe  
9 some things related to COVID, we didn't need to  
10 get stakeholder input this year, but of course, we  
11 wanted to share with you what we have. And then  
12 we do have a couple of indicators that will have  
13 some changing baseline data, so I'm going to  
14 explain those to you now.

15 Indicator 1, which is our graduation  
16 rate, and Indicator 8, which is our parent  
17 involvement indicator, we are anticipating  
18 changing baseline data to these, and so I'm going  
19 to explain each one of these and why.

20 Indicator 1, our graduation rate.  
21 States have been authorized to use different  
22 adjusted cohort rates. In the past for Indicator  
23 1, states had to submit their four-year adjusted  
24 cohort rate. Due to ESSA, states have submitted  
25 different cohort rates, extended cohort rates, if

1 you will, like five years. Some states submit six  
2 years, some states submit seven years. Through  
3 our ESSA plan, we were authorized to use our  
4 five-year adjusted cohort rate. So that was  
5 offered to us through our APR as well for this  
6 year.

7 So if we're changing that, we will  
8 need to change the baseline to our five-year rate,  
9 and our five-year rate for that 2019 -- for kids  
10 who entered ninth grade in 2015-16 and graduated  
11 in 2019-2020 or earlier, our rate 73.1 percent,  
12 which is, of course, higher than our four-year  
13 rate. Our target is currently 80 percent. So you  
14 can see that our rate hasn't even reached our  
15 target yet.

16 So with saying all of this, we have  
17 had, over the years, not only from this group, the  
18 ECAC, but others stakeholder groups and districts  
19 and parents wanting us -- asking us why do we have  
20 to have our kids graduate in four years. They are  
21 allowed to stay in school longer under IDEA if  
22 they need more time. If they need more time and  
23 still get a standard high school diploma, they're  
24 not reflected in that four-year rate.

25 So we're recommending that we go

1 ahead for this year and use our five-year rate,  
2 based on the input we've gotten previously from  
3 all of our stakeholders, to include those students  
4 and show this higher rate. But that is something  
5 that we're going to need some feedback from you as  
6 well if you agree with this change, and if so,  
7 should we leave our target at 80 percent or should  
8 that be increased.

9 We do not have to increase it this  
10 year, and I will share with you that we have to  
11 make some changes to this indicator next year  
12 because of some changes the federal government is  
13 requiring, so we may not -- we may want to leave  
14 our target as it is and see what our data for next  
15 year is going to look like since it's at an  
16 acceptable percentage rate.

17 I will be available to answer  
18 questions too, but I am going to ask you, if you  
19 have questions, if you could just write them down  
20 for now, and then near the end, I will be  
21 providing enough time for me to respond to  
22 questions as well. So with that, those are our  
23 changes related to graduation rate that we are  
24 proposing.

25 Indicator 8, our parent involvement

1 one, we are changing our baseline. We have worked  
2 very closely with stakeholders for the last couple  
3 of years in changing our survey. For those of you  
4 who have responded to our survey in past years may  
5 have realized that our survey was 25 questions,  
6 and it was a lot for parents to respond to. With  
7 Alexis's help, we got a lot of feedback from what  
8 other states were doing, but also feedback from  
9 parents and school districts out in our  
10 communities about what questions on this survey  
11 they thought were the most important, and we were  
12 able this year to narrow our survey to 17 out of  
13 those 25 questions.

14 And with that, we changed the survey,  
15 and we also changed the rate calculation. The  
16 rate calculation from our vendor, which was a  
17 national TA center from years ago, which is no  
18 longer in existence, had a fairly complicated  
19 formula to understand, and we looked at what other  
20 rates -- or what other states were doing, and  
21 they're doing a much simpler rate calculation just  
22 based on where the majority of parents who are  
23 responding agree to the majority of questions. So  
24 we are recommending that rate calculation as well.

25 Our previous years' rates, just so you

1 know, have been falling anywhere between 42  
2 percent--- Oh, I need to let you know where these  
3 rates come from. We do a sampling for parent  
4 involvement. So we sample -- and our sampling  
5 plan is approved by OSEP, and we only sample in so  
6 many districts each year. So all except our  
7 largest five districts are only in the sample once  
8 every five years. Our largest districts are in  
9 the sample every year as required by the federal  
10 regulation for this.

11 In our previous years, our rates have  
12 fluctuated between 42 percent and 46 percent. The  
13 fluctuation doesn't surprise us because it's a  
14 sample. So we're not -- we don't have the same  
15 districts in the sample every year, but based on  
16 the way the sample is done, it is a random sample  
17 so it is representative of the state. And our  
18 target has been 50 percent. We have not quite  
19 reached that. Again, our highest year was that 46  
20 percent.

21 This year, just so you know, our  
22 survey, because we were making changes to hit and  
23 COVID hit -- typically, we would send the survey  
24 letters out to districts. They would mail them  
25 out or send them home in kids' backpacks sometime

1 during the month of March. As you all know, in  
2 March schools closed. Things were a little  
3 confusing and chaotic. We could not get things  
4 out at that time.

5 And from various stakeholder  
6 groups -- parents, in particular, kept asking us  
7 if we could do the survey electronically, if we  
8 send it to them via email or text or somehow. So  
9 this year, we did send it out in the fall instead  
10 of in the spring to our sample of LEAs, and they  
11 sent it to parents. It is an electronic survey,  
12 and they sent it to parents via email.

13 Our evaluators, who are analyzing our  
14 data and making sure everything's all in line, at  
15 UNC Charlotte are working with that data now. But  
16 because we did it in the fall, I don't have the  
17 data back yet to know what our rate is, but I do  
18 know that we got twice as many responses this year  
19 than we have had in the past two to three to four  
20 years, and we attribute that to the fact that we  
21 did send it electronically via email, as parents  
22 have requested, and we shortened the survey a  
23 little bit so it wasn't as long for them to  
24 answer, and they were able to focus on those  
25 questions.

1           Once we get that data back, we will  
2 know whether our target is -- or whether our rate  
3 is at 50 percent or higher. If it is at 50  
4 percent or higher, we will need to increase our  
5 target for this year only, and then if it's less  
6 than 50 percent, we will not need to increase that  
7 target.

8           And, again, I wish I had the data to  
9 share with you now, but our evaluators need time  
10 to analyze the data, and the survey was open until  
11 November 18th. Some of you may have had the  
12 opportunity to respond to the survey if you were  
13 in an LEA where they were sampling, and we  
14 appreciate all of that input.

15           So those are the two indicators where  
16 we're anticipating baseline data changes that we  
17 need to discuss and get input from you, and I will  
18 talk about in a little bit how we're going to get  
19 that input.

20           Next slide, Alexis. Then we had some  
21 indicators with impact from COVID-19. This year  
22 in the APR with COVID-19, we have to address in  
23 our introduction just general -- the overall  
24 impact on the SPP/APR, which is our first bullet,  
25 and then we have to address the specific impact on

1 specific indicators and their data and any  
2 strategies that we used in the state, including  
3 LEA strategies, to mitigate the impact. And I'm  
4 going to talk about those things in just a minute  
5 indicator by indicator.

6 But in general and overall, I wanted  
7 to just mention our COVID-19 focus groups. Right  
8 now we're conducting -- and we've conducted a  
9 couple of them already -- COVID-19 focus impact  
10 groups and -- or COVID-19 impact focus groups, and  
11 we have groups -- focus groups that we're  
12 conducting virtually. We're talking with people  
13 from rural and small districts, people from urban  
14 and large districts, charter schools.

15 We have two parent groups that we're  
16 going to be conducting -- I believe there are two  
17 parent groups we're conducting. I know we are  
18 conducting parent groups, but I believe there are  
19 two of them and there might even be three. And  
20 then we are gathering information from students  
21 via survey.

22 So we're getting a lot of information  
23 from these focus groups. They're responding to  
24 some specific questions, and then, again, our UNC  
25 Charlotte evaluators will be evaluating and

1 pulling together our data for us, comparing the  
2 responses from each of these focus groups to give  
3 us some information to include in our report.

4 But I will tell you I have been on at  
5 least two of the three focus groups that we have  
6 done so far, and we are receiving extremely  
7 valuable information. People are being very  
8 candid about what's going on. Sometimes it's  
9 brought us to tears listening to some of the  
10 painful stories we've heard about people's stress  
11 levels from -- parents' stress over whether  
12 they're going to be able to use their phone  
13 minutes for their kids' education versus other  
14 types of things, to teachers being stressed trying  
15 to manage their virtual online learning that  
16 they're teaching as well as their three kids at  
17 home and their own [inaudible].

18 But we've had some really positive  
19 kinds of things as well where things started out  
20 back from March to June, and it was chaotic and  
21 confusing and things kept changing, and people  
22 kept trying to figure out how to set up all the  
23 virtual kind of things they needed to do when  
24 schools closed to [inaudible] change, where some  
25 students are gaining more because they're thriving

1 in the virtual environment and, of course,  
2 concerns about students who are not logging in  
3 like they need to and that they are getting behind  
4 and having to look at what that's going to mean  
5 when students are truly back in school in person  
6 full-time.

7 But we are getting valuable  
8 information from that -- those focus groups, and  
9 it's information that we'll not only use this year  
10 in the APR related to Indicators 1 through 17, but  
11 it's also information that's going to help guide  
12 us into the future because it's just information  
13 that folks are sharing with us about, as they look  
14 at their data -- as districts look at their and  
15 student learning that districts are starting to  
16 put in place plans that are going to take them a  
17 year to two to three years to make changes in  
18 order to deal with all the changes as a result of  
19 COVID-19 and being out of school back in March.

20 All right. Alexis, the next slide,  
21 please. So examples of COVID-19 impact on some  
22 indicators, and I just picked a few that I know  
23 for sure we have impact on. We may end up with  
24 some impact after we get all of our focus groups  
25 completed that I'm not aware of, but these four,

1 I'm sure we will have -- or that we know we have  
2 impact. Indicators 3b and c, which are our  
3 participation and proficiency rate on state  
4 assessments; Indicator 11, which is our Child Find  
5 or our 90-day timeline for placement; Indicator  
6 12, which is our effective transition for IEPs  
7 being developed for children transitioning from  
8 Part C to Part B by age three; and Indicator 13,  
9 which is our effective transition at the secondary  
10 level.

11 So I am going to go into each of  
12 these indicators separately. This Indicator 3b  
13 and c, which is participation and proficiency rate  
14 on state assessments, the impact is, we're not  
15 reporting any data because all states received  
16 waivers back in the spring when COVID hit and no  
17 states did any statewide testing for their  
18 students -- all students, children without  
19 disabilities and children with disabilities. So  
20 states -- we are not required to report any data  
21 for these indicators this year, which we know,  
22 then, because we didn't have that data, it will  
23 have an impact in the next few years as well.

24 We do have to report next year.  
25 States did not receive a waiver for this year. So

1 states are having to conduct assessments for this  
2 year, and some states or some districts, I have  
3 already heard, are anticipating maybe a drop in  
4 their rates because children -- they're concerned  
5 about children losing some of their skills when  
6 they're just doing virtual learning and not  
7 in-person learning.

8           Next slide, Alexis. This one is  
9 Indicators 11 and 12. We added to -- we collect  
10 these data through our new ECATS system, and we  
11 added into -- we have delay reasons the federal  
12 government has us use for Indicators 11 and 12  
13 when, for example, referrals are delayed and  
14 aren't done in the 90-day timeline or when a  
15 child's IEP isn't developed by their third  
16 birthday when they in transition to Part C. And  
17 we did add a COVID-19 delay reason to our data  
18 collection in order to capture how many of the  
19 delays were due to COVID so that we could report  
20 this in our APR.

21           I will share with you that our  
22 slippage for both of these is -- for both  
23 indicators is significant, and I want to share  
24 with you something that's a little bit different  
25 for our state than maybe other states. For

1 example, in Indicator 11, we -- our 90-day  
2 timeline -- the indicator federally is about 60  
3 days to get your evaluation conducted or a state's  
4 own timeline, and OSEP has accepted our 90-day  
5 timeline from referral to placement because it  
6 includes that 60 days allowed for evaluations to  
7 be completed.

8 States have a choice in their own  
9 regulations of whether they use calendar days,  
10 business days, which would exclude weekends and  
11 holidays, or school days, which would exclude  
12 weekends, holidays, when schools are closed for  
13 school spring break, when schools are closed in  
14 the summer, and all those kinds of things.

15 Several states use business days or  
16 school days. North Carolina in our state  
17 regulations uses calendar days, and that has  
18 really impacted this data because when schools  
19 closed in March and children were not allowed to  
20 be in school buildings, staff were not allowed to  
21 be in school buildings, and districts were used to  
22 conducting evaluations and meetings in person,  
23 they were unable to do that. However, the  
24 calendar continued to click on, so our timeline  
25 continued to click on.

1                   And in talking with other states, one  
2 state was telling me, when they closed school in  
3 March, they didn't reopen for in-person schooling  
4 until September 2nd, and that -- they're based on  
5 school days -- that stop their timeline until they  
6 restarted school September 2nd. So they're not  
7 having -- they're not showing the significant  
8 slippage we're showing.

9                   And I'm saying it's significant  
10 because if you look at Indicator 11 and 12 here,  
11 70 percent of our reported delays were due to  
12 COVID-19. First of all, we did have about 5000  
13 fewer referrals, but we had thousands of referrals  
14 that came in, in the spring and were delayed due  
15 to COVID because they couldn't get kids in school  
16 in person. Schools had not been able to set up  
17 yet how to do virtual evaluations and make sure  
18 that all their privacy permissions were in place  
19 in order to do virtual evaluations, if they could,  
20 in that time frame.

21                   So 70 percent of our Indicator 11  
22 delays were due to COVID-19, and 80 percent --  
23 approximately 80 percent -- we're still analyzing  
24 this data and we want to make sure that we get the  
25 actual numbers right, but approximately 80 percent

1 of our delays in Indicator 12 were also due to  
2 COVID-19, which we know then impacts this coming  
3 year's data because districts are having to catch  
4 up on these number of referrals that were delayed  
5 as well as keep up with new referrals coming in.

6 And we have also heard that through  
7 virtual learning, in some instances, some  
8 districts are reporting to us that they're  
9 receiving more parent referrals than ever because  
10 parents are seeing their children in a different  
11 light when they're actually working with them at  
12 home and seeing that they're getting behind now  
13 because of all of this, and so there has been an  
14 increase this year. Where last spring there was a  
15 decrease in the number of referrals districts were  
16 receiving because of COVID-19, they're starting  
17 this fall to see an increase in referrals.

18 One other thing related to these two  
19 indicators specifically is that we -- our data  
20 folks, our data manager, and our Policy,  
21 Monitoring folks, and myself have been doing joint  
22 weekly office hour calls on Wednesdays. I am  
23 missing the one this morning because I'm here for  
24 this meeting, but we're conducted them weekly, one  
25 in the morning and one in the afternoon, to assist

1 with reporting on Indicators 11, 12, and a couple  
2 of other indicators, Indicator 7, which is also  
3 collected through ECATS, our accountability  
4 system -- our new accountability system, and our  
5 Child Count, which is due this month as well, our  
6 federal Child Count.

7           So those weekly office hours, as we  
8 have been assisting districts with our new data  
9 management system and answering questions, we have  
10 also gleaned a lot of information about the delays  
11 related to COVID. And I'll just give you one  
12 example. We knew that districts weren't able to  
13 get kids in Indicator 11 to come in for  
14 evaluations because schools were closed, but  
15 because of our process from referral to placement,  
16 they also have to get parent signatures on --  
17 before conducting the evaluations and parent  
18 signatures for placement of students once services  
19 are -- once the IEP is written and services are  
20 determined -- when the child is eligible.

21           Normally, for the most part, not  
22 always, but for the most part, districts do that  
23 in in-person meetings, and parents often sign  
24 while they're in person at those meetings. What  
25 districts were finding, even once they started

1 doing the meetings virtually, they had to start  
2 using the mail to send home the forms for parents  
3 to sign, and then parents had to send them back in  
4 the mail, and sometimes that took a week to two  
5 weeks extra, and that was all adding to the  
6 timeline that districts hadn't built in.

7 So that was something -- we didn't  
8 think about that very reason related to having to  
9 send things out by mail versus other things, but  
10 that was something that came up in our weekly  
11 office hours from several districts mentioning  
12 that. So that's an example of some of the  
13 information related to what we're gaining from our  
14 weekly office hours that are specific to  
15 indicators.

16 Alexis, if you'll move to the next  
17 one. This one's Indicator 13, and I have to  
18 apologize. It has been a busy couple of weeks,  
19 and when I put in my information into the slides  
20 for Indicator 13, I must not have saved it  
21 correctly because this is the information from the  
22 previous slide. So I'm going to talk about  
23 Indicator 13 and why we're seeing an impact there,  
24 and then I will correct this slide before this  
25 gets sent back out to you. In fact, I'll -- as

1 soon as I'm finished today with this meeting, I  
2 will correct the slide and get it to Alexis.

3 Indicator 13 is our secondary  
4 transition, and it is all -- it is a compliance  
5 indicator, and it is all based on whether or not  
6 the transition components in the IEP are  
7 compliant, and we do our data collection through  
8 monitoring. Our monitoring visits are every year.  
9 They do an extra pull related to Indicator 13 and  
10 review those records. We have had a delay in some  
11 of our data collection because when COVID hit,  
12 that stopped our monitoring visits.

13 Our monitoring -- monitoring  
14 consultants and teams could not go back out to the  
15 LEAs and do monitoring from March to June, and we  
16 had a number of those scheduled. And so our data  
17 for this indicator was quite low in comparison --  
18 when I say "quite low," the number of IEPs  
19 reviewed was quite low because a number of our  
20 monitoring visits had not been conducted.

21 So it is delaying our data  
22 collection, and the new schedule for monitoring is  
23 intended to catch up with those that were missed  
24 last spring, to start sometime after the first of  
25 the year. Our Policy, Monitoring and Audit unit

1 is setting those up. In the meantime, to see if  
2 we can glean enough information for Indicator 13  
3 to report, those districts that were due to be  
4 monitored, our monitoring consultants are  
5 reviewing IEPs virtually in our new ECATS system  
6 for the transition component.

7 And they are doing that currently,  
8 but I won't -- I will not get the additional  
9 information to make a decision about whether we'll  
10 have enough information to report in this one or  
11 if we will have to report that our data collection  
12 wasn't a big enough group to be -- to meet the  
13 requirement. And they won't have that to me till  
14 the end of this month. So those are the kinds of  
15 bullet points I'll be including in this slide  
16 which are not showing up right now, and I  
17 apologize for that.

18 With that, you can go to the next  
19 slide. I want to just focus for just a couple of  
20 minutes on future items to address the new federal  
21 requirements. The new federal package just came  
22 out last month or two months ago for our next  
23 six-year go-round, and this work will occur in  
24 2021 because we have to be ready to submit the new  
25 requirements in our February 1st, 2022 SPP/APR.

1 So that's -- while that is more than a year away,  
2 there is a lot of work that we will have to do  
3 over the next year to get ready for that  
4 submission, and that's why I want to share it with  
5 you now.

6 Normally, I'm able to come and  
7 present in December and get feedback from you in  
8 December and January before we submit in February,  
9 but for next year, there are new requirements, and  
10 it is going to take our state, as well as other  
11 states opportunities, with our main stakeholder  
12 groups as well as other stakeholders to get input  
13 and to address the items that I've noted here,  
14 some of the changes.

15 So I just want to briefly mention  
16 them. And when I say "next year," this work will  
17 likely not begin until after we do our February 1,  
18 2021 submission. It might not even start till  
19 March, but we will be starting sometime in late  
20 winter, early spring with this work over the  
21 course of the rest of the year for our 2022  
22 submission.

23 There are -- the first item on there  
24 is additional stakeholder involvement. There are  
25 new requirements related to stakeholder

1 involvement, and it will not be enough for our  
2 state to only use our advisory council members as  
3 our stakeholder group. With those new  
4 requirements, we have to talk more intensively  
5 about -- intentionally about strategies of  
6 involvement and broader ranges of stakeholder  
7 groups. So we will be working on that, and of  
8 course, still including our advisory council as a  
9 major stakeholder group, but we will be adding  
10 other groups as well to seek input.

11 We will be setting targets which  
12 requires stakeholder input, and those of you who  
13 were on the advisory council last year, you saw  
14 how we did input for just one year's worth of  
15 targets. We will be doing -- feedback on targets  
16 for six years. We will have to set targets for  
17 each of the next six years, and again, our  
18 compliance indicators are already set by OSEP, but  
19 on all of our results indicators, we will have to  
20 set new targets for the next six years.

21 The data is changing and our data  
22 sources are changing for Indicators 1 and 2.  
23 Indicators 1 and 2 are our graduation rates, and  
24 Indicator 2 are our dropout rates. And OSEP is  
25 trying to make that data more comparable so they

1 can look at it across states. So they will be  
2 using our exit data, and what that means, it's  
3 changing from our cohort rate which looks at --  
4 our cohort rate looks at when students enter ninth  
5 grade and when they graduate in five years, now is  
6 what we're looking at -- within five years.

7 Our exit data is more like an event  
8 rate. It looks at all the students who exited by  
9 receiving a diploma. So it includes kids who  
10 exited whether they did it in three years, four  
11 years, five years, six years, seven years. If for  
12 this year of exit data they received a standard  
13 high school diploma, they will be included in the  
14 numerator. So any kids -- so that concern, again,  
15 that we have kids who are able to stay in school  
16 longer under IDEA but weren't included in our  
17 four-year cohort rate, if they graduated in the  
18 year that we're looking at for our exit, they  
19 would be counted in the numerator.

20 And we're using that same source of  
21 data for dropout. In the past, our dropout  
22 rate -- we were allowed to use the same dropout  
23 rate that the State used for all kids, the dropout  
24 formula, which looked at kids who exited, yes, by  
25 dropping out, but if they came back to school by

1 the 20th day of the next year, they were in a  
2 formula that did not count as a dropout.

3 And in this instance, our dropout  
4 rate -- we'll be using our -- and I kind of  
5 hesitate to even refer to it as a rate. It is a  
6 rate, but it's -- it's taking our exit data and  
7 the number of students who dropped out and then  
8 looking at it in comparison to some of the other  
9 students who have exited for the school year. But  
10 what's different in these two indicators compared  
11 to the cohort rate and the dropout rate is the  
12 denominator.

13 For example, in Indicator 2's dropout  
14 rate, when we did the state dropout rate, the  
15 denominator included all students with IEPs ages  
16 16 and above who could have dropped out of school  
17 and either dropped out or didn't dropout, but it  
18 included all 16-year-olds and above with IEPs. In  
19 this calculation, it will not include all  
20 16-year-olds because in the regulations OSEP has  
21 directed in our directions which of those students  
22 with IEPs -- well, OSEP says 14 and above. North  
23 Carolina doesn't allow students to drop out before  
24 age 16. So students with -- 16 and above will be  
25 included in that denominator.

1                   So we will see an increase in our  
2 dropout rate because it is not including all  
3 16-year-olds with IEPs in the denominator. So  
4 there will be a difference there for Indicator 2.  
5 Our Indicator 1, as I look at the data, it is more  
6 similar to our five-year cohort rate.

7                   We will be seeing new -- the fourth  
8 thing -- new components for Indicators 3 and 6.  
9 As you recall, Indicators 3 are about our  
10 statewide assessment. We still will be collecting  
11 data on participation rates, as we have in the  
12 past. We will still be collecting data on  
13 proficiency rates, but we have, in the past, had  
14 to report on all grade levels, three, four, five,  
15 six, seven, and eight, and high school, whether  
16 it's grade 10 or 11, whatever grade your state  
17 uses, high school grades.

18                   In coming years, we will only be  
19 reporting our data, even though all this data gets  
20 reported to the federal government, in this  
21 report, we'll be reporting -- continuing to report  
22 on reading and math for grades 4, 8, and high  
23 school. So we're not reporting as many grades,  
24 but when we report those grades, we will be --  
25 instead of including them all together, as we've

1 done in the past, we will be differentiating  
2 between kids who are on regular assessments with  
3 and without accommodations and on alternate  
4 assessments. So it will be very clear in the  
5 report how many of those kids are on alternate  
6 assessments versus regular assessments and how  
7 they are doing proficiency-wise.

8 And then there is a new component  
9 added that we now will need to report in future  
10 years on the gap between our students with  
11 disabilities and their proficiency rates and their  
12 counterparts, all other students in the state, so  
13 that we will be able to see what that gap is.  
14 And, again, all of these things that I'm talking  
15 about, we will be setting targets and seeking  
16 input from folks in the field, all of you, our  
17 stakeholders, as we share data with you and look  
18 at where we are, what our baseline is, and what  
19 our targets should be.

20 The fifth thing is that there will be  
21 a change in the due date for Indicator 17, our  
22 State Systemic Improvement Plan. It will, in the  
23 future, required to be submitted February 1st with  
24 the other 16 indicators. For those of you who are  
25 familiar with that report, it is more of a

1 results-based report, and it is around -- right  
2 now it is around our five-year cohort graduation  
3 rate, but we also look at a lot of other data that  
4 relates to getting to graduation including  
5 academic data, behavioral data, transition data,  
6 and all kinds of things in that report. And  
7 instead of April 1st, it will be due in February  
8 1st. So that will be a change that we have to get  
9 that ready at the same time, which is quite a  
10 substantial [inaudible].

11           There are some other minor changes  
12 and clarifications that -- and any other changes  
13 that a state might make if they choose to change  
14 something in an indicator that's not really  
15 changed, if they decide to change a calculation.  
16 I'm not anticipating any of those. Other minor  
17 changes would be technical -- some technical  
18 language that states have to -- based on how  
19 states have to report.

20           But, anyway, I wanted to share that  
21 part with you to let you know it will be a very  
22 busy year from seeking input from our  
23 stakeholders, including our advisory council, for  
24 all of these things. So with that, I have one  
25 other thing to share, and then I will be answering

1 questions, and it looks like I still have ten, 12  
2 minutes to answer questions.

3 After this I know that, typically, in  
4 the afternoon, you have -- your subcommittees and  
5 I think your Data Subcommittee usually works on  
6 input for this, and I'm not sure that you have  
7 people assigned to that committee or not. If you  
8 need me to, I can be on during that time, or one  
9 other thing, I will be doing, following this  
10 meeting, I will be, through Alexis and Danyelle,  
11 getting an email out to all of you and will resend  
12 the PowerPoint with the corrected slide, and  
13 asking you for input, particularly on the two  
14 indicators where we're looking at baseline  
15 changes, Indicator 1, graduation rate, and  
16 Indicator 8, parent involvement, and asking you  
17 some specific questions about targets for those  
18 where we need some specific input from you. So  
19 that will be -- and then you will have my email  
20 and can email any responses you have to that  
21 requested information between now and mid January.

22 With that, I'm going to stop -- I've  
23 talked for a long time -- and see if we have any  
24 questions.

25 MS. DEGEN: This is Jennifer from

1 CMS. How are you doing?

2 DR. JOHNSON: Hi, Jennifer. I'm  
3 good. Thank you. How are you?

4 MS. DEGEN: Good. I -- I actually  
5 had to step away for a quick second and talk to my  
6 principal, and so you might have covered this. I  
7 actually have two questions. One is based on  
8 Indicator 1 as far as the graduation rate. You  
9 know, we are affected with our self-contained  
10 extensions program where we take a hits.

11 Has that been -- so this is my first  
12 question -- has that been addressed as far as how  
13 that's going to, you know, not take a hit on those  
14 kids because they are allowed to stay till they're  
15 22 or 21?

16 DR. JOHNSON: Not for this year other  
17 than--- And are you saying kids who received a  
18 standard diploma later or don't receive a diploma  
19 at all?

20 MS. DEGEN: As far as the EP  
21 students, the kids on the extensions programs and  
22 the self-contained because they hit our graduation  
23 cohort for that first year, so it looks like  
24 your graduation -- like last year I had nine that  
25 were -- that were seniors that should have

1 graduated as a self-contained student, but because  
2 they can stay till they're 21 in a self-contained  
3 setting, you know, we took a hit on those nine.  
4 And granted that doesn't seem like a lot, but nine  
5 is a large amount, especially because it's extra  
6 for a students with a disability. So those factor  
7 in -- those kids that stay for the 12 plus years.

8 MS. JOHNSON: For this year, the only  
9 difference will be, we're looking at a five-year  
10 cohort rate rather than a four-year cohort rate  
11 because that's what OSEP is allowing us to change.  
12 So if -- that's extending it so we do have more  
13 students because some kids do graduate within five  
14 years as opposed to four years.

15 The change that you're referring to  
16 would only be impacted in the new requirements in  
17 the new package moving ahead from February 1,  
18 2022, and on, where we're looking at our exit  
19 data, so kids who exit special education in a  
20 given year with a standard high school diploma  
21 will be included in the numerator as compared to  
22 some of the other kids in that exit data who will  
23 be in the denominator.

24 So if they exit with a standard high  
25 school diploma in a given year, even if it's when

1 they're 20 as opposed to 18 years of age, they  
2 would be included in that numerator. If that exit  
3 with a certificate and they've aged out, they  
4 would be in the denominator, but not in the  
5 numerator because the numerator is about  
6 graduating with a standard high school diploma.

7 MS. DEGEN: Okay. Thank you for that  
8 clarity. I appreciate it. And my second question  
9 was, with the COVID-19 and the 90-day timelines as  
10 well my Child Count that just happened, is the  
11 State looking -- you know, how is it looking with  
12 staffing? Because numbers for Child Count  
13 affect -- you know, sometimes you look at as the  
14 number on a piece of paper that we hit 96 days,  
15 but knowing that if we didn't hit that 90 days,  
16 that gets reported.

17 So what is the State looking at as  
18 far as allotments and staffing based on headcount  
19 or Child Count or Child Find? Just because if  
20 numbers have decreased because we couldn't get  
21 them on for headcount, is the State going to do  
22 anything, you know, or are LEAs going to be  
23 looking at losing staff?

24 DR. JOHNSON: I am aware that Sherry  
25 Thomas, our Director, and Matt Hoskins, our

1 Assistant Director, are aware of concerns of the  
2 possibility of lower Child Counts this year and  
3 are looking at any ways that they might be able to  
4 mitigate that, but I'm not exactly sure what  
5 they're doing. I don't know if Matt's on the call  
6 yet. He will be on the call later today, if he's  
7 not on yet, but if he is, he might want to respond  
8 to this question.

9 MS. DEGEN: Thank you.

10 DR. JOHNSON: I do see Matt.

11 MR. HOSKINS: Are you-all able to  
12 hear me?

13 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

14 MR. HOSKINS: Good morning, everyone.  
15 So we have been -- we're acutely aware of that  
16 concern related to Child Count, and one of the --  
17 where we see that we have a little bit of  
18 leeway -- and this information has gone out -- is  
19 around ensuring that there is an active IEP, so  
20 not necessarily that there's a reevaluation that's  
21 still in process, but if there's an active IEP,  
22 that those can be counted. And we're doing that  
23 work with PPG and ECATS right now to make sure  
24 that will come out in the headcount.

25 Other than that, we haven't gotten

1 any additional leniency in terms of what we can do  
2 with headcount for initial evaluations from OSEP,  
3 and so we've done everything that we can to  
4 address those concerns and realize that they  
5 exist.

6 MS. DEGEN: Thank you.

7 DR. HUTCHINSON: Hey, Nancy. This is  
8 Christy Hutchinson. How are you doing?

9 DR. JOHNSON: Hello, Dr. Hutchinson,  
10 I should say.

11 DR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

12 DR. JOHNSON: For those of you who  
13 don't know, Christy just successfully defended her  
14 dissertation on Friday. So congratulations.

15 DR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you. I have  
16 three quick things that I wanted to -- the first  
17 is supporting what Jennifer just mentioned, and I  
18 just want to be super clear that my comments are  
19 not necessarily in advocating for special ed  
20 programs or public school programs. Where I'm  
21 coming -- the lense I'm using is what's right for  
22 students with disabilities. So it's as much an  
23 advocate for parents, but number one, mostly  
24 importantly, for students.

25 I have a grave concern with the

1 four-year graduation rate as opposed to the  
2 five-year graduation rate because I think there's  
3 a claim to be made that we are in some way  
4 restricting FAPE from students by encouraging them  
5 to graduate within four years. So it's like our  
6 assessment does not match our instruction in some  
7 ways because if we look at the instruction piece  
8 and we look at what IDEA provides to students up  
9 to the age of 21, but yet we're assessing them on  
10 a four-year graduation rate, we're not matching  
11 there.

12 So I would completely support the  
13 move to a five-year graduation rate in our new --  
14 in our opportunity to provide you feedback. Those  
15 students are entitled to that, and I feel like as  
16 professionals we have to support that opportunity.  
17 The research says that students that get that full  
18 access are more successful in postsecondary, more  
19 successful in employment opportunities, especially  
20 our kids that are on OCS, and those kinds of  
21 things that Jennifer spoke about. So just to  
22 support what Jennifer said about considering that  
23 five-year graduation rate for the future.

24 The second thing I wanted to talk  
25 about is changing that 80 percent when you spoke

1 about changing the targets. I just don't think  
2 the 80 percent -- that it is the time right now to  
3 change that target. Because of what has happened  
4 with COVID, our graduation rate is going to  
5 inherently fall. We've lost students to  
6 employment, we've lost students to failing grades,  
7 and all school systems in the state are working  
8 feverishly to access students, to give them FAPE,  
9 but we can't discredit the fact that there are  
10 barriers beyond our control that are preventing  
11 students from accessing their special ed services,  
12 and so changing the target this year of that 80  
13 percent, I think, is the wrong time to do it for  
14 our graduation rates.

15           And then the last point, I just  
16 wanted to support what Jennifer said about our  
17 lower Child Count, and I know Matt is going to  
18 address this. But it's not just about the Child  
19 Find stuff we were not able to complete within 90  
20 days; it's also about our DD kids that are  
21 transitioning from the age of eight over. So some  
22 of those were not adequately able to be completed  
23 before their eighth birthday, and so that will  
24 affect those Child Counts as well. And then I'm  
25 done. Thank you.

1 DR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Christy, for  
2 your input. We will certainly consider that as  
3 we're making changes to the APR. The Child Count,  
4 of course, is a different issue, but we will -- we  
5 are accepting any information that we can to  
6 support districts in any way we can.

7 DR. HUTCHINSON: I think that speaks  
8 to the calendar in that 90-day timeline because we  
9 have to support our folks at the coast and our  
10 folks at the mountains that continuously --  
11 regardless of COVID, continuously fight the battle  
12 of not being in session because of weather and  
13 some times hurricanes really impact.

14 And so I think it levels the playing  
15 field if we consider the 90-day timeline of days  
16 we're actually in session, and those are built  
17 into our Power School. So I conceivably could see  
18 that it could be calculated fairly easily, but  
19 then we have the same level playing field. It's  
20 not appropriate for someone who lives in the  
21 Piedmont and might not have the effects of being  
22 out for a month because of a horrible hurricane.  
23 So just a consideration.

24 DR. JOHNSON: Okay. And as that  
25 consideration, I just will share with you that

1 that would require a policy change because our  
2 state policy -- because it doesn't indicate how  
3 many days, it implies that it is calendar days,  
4 that's how OSEP has told us we have to handle  
5 that. And so I will take that information to our  
6 Policy, Monitoring and Audit unit as far as a  
7 consideration possibly for the future when changes  
8 are made to our state policy.

9 MS. DEGEN: This is Jennifer again.  
10 Just to support what was just said, I think that  
11 the calendar would be -- as far as like I just had  
12 two weeks ago a parent request for testing. I was  
13 out for Thanksgiving, we're out for exams, and  
14 then we have Christmas holidays, and those all  
15 count in, and it's running concurrent with the  
16 MTSS. In looking at SLD now with interventions,  
17 running a 45-day -- you know, 45 days of, you  
18 know, valid, you know, interventions is difficult  
19 when we're in this time frame.

20 So that support of calendar days  
21 versus in-school days, I think that that's a  
22 support for that when you're looking at no longer  
23 having the discrepancy model in the SLD because  
24 you have to have, you know, those interventions,  
25 and that's important to have those run and run

1 them with fidelity.

2 So, you know, looking at that, but  
3 you know, sometimes we are crunched in that 90  
4 days, so with exams, Thanksgiving, and Christmas,  
5 that right there at 20 of those days. I might not  
6 have run those interventions with fidelity, and  
7 I'm just trying to get a kid in or out with that  
8 90 days. So I think that that could be something  
9 to support, you know, looking at in-school days  
10 versus the calendar.

11 DR. JOHNSON: And I am making notes  
12 of all of this so that I can share with our  
13 Policy, Monitoring and Audit unit about that. I  
14 know we are aware of that because this was  
15 something we were looking at that other states  
16 were doing, wondering how they were doing so much  
17 better on rates sometimes, and it's often because  
18 they've either chosen business days or school days  
19 as opposed to calendar days.

20 So I will, again, share this  
21 information and we'll go from there as far as --  
22 because it would require a policy change, not just  
23 a change to Indicator 11. Thank you very much for  
24 that input and support for that.

25 MS. GEORGE: Okay. This is Leanna

1 here in Johnston County, and I had a couple of  
2 questions I had for you. First of all, do we have  
3 any data about the total number of kids  
4 [inaudible] to graduate with a diploma [inaudible]  
5 graduate in six or seven years because of maturity  
6 or they just -- you know, because of a disability?  
7 [Inaudible] a much lower rate. I think that they  
8 should be recognized for work [inaudible] achieve  
9 their goals.

10 DR. JOHNSON: I am sorry. I was  
11 hearing a lot of static or something. You were  
12 asking your question, and I could not hear that  
13 question.

14 MS. GEORGE: Okay. Let me try again.  
15 Can you hear me better now? I'm on a ear bud mic  
16 thing so I don't know how well it works.

17 DR. JOHNSON: Yes, I can hear you  
18 better now.

19 MS. GEORGE: Okay. [Inaudible] had  
20 that problem in school myself. Okay. Do we have  
21 any data about the total number of students who  
22 [inaudible] graduate with a diploma outside of the  
23 usual four- and five-year cohorts?

24 DR. JOHNSON: Yes. Through our  
25 exiting data per year, but it is not that graduate

1 with a standard high school diploma, we could get  
2 that data for you. It is not based on when they  
3 entered, but it's not -- it's not the same group  
4 of kids so you can't compare the two, but it is  
5 our exit data, which will be used for future APRs,  
6 not for this one. We could see year by year how  
7 many kids actually graduated with a standard high  
8 school diploma.

9 MS. GEORGE: And that would be great,  
10 I think, if we can see that. And I also wanted to  
11 verify based on Christy's questions. Students who  
12 have pulled out to homeschool or transfer, they're  
13 not including in that dropout rate, correct?

14 DR. JOHNSON: It depends. Kids who  
15 are -- it depends on when they transfer in and out  
16 or drop out.

17 MS. GEORGE: So if I took my son out  
18 today [inaudible] and started homeschooling, he'd  
19 be counted as a dropout possibly? [Inaudible] see  
20 how our numbers [inaudible] has skyrocketing this  
21 year in response to COVID [inaudible]. I'm  
22 homeschooling, so---

23 DR. JOHNSON: And, again, I couldn't  
24 hear all of your comments because of the static I  
25 was hearing.

1 MS. GEORGE: Okay. And do we even  
2 have a percentage of how many IEP deadlines are  
3 not being met and what is the average over  
4 [inaudible] how many days overdue are they? I  
5 mean if most of them are done within ten to 15  
6 days after -- you know, at 105 days, I think  
7 that's reasonable considering what's going on.  
8 But we don't have any that [inaudible], do we?

9 DR. JOHNSON: When we finalize  
10 our data for the APR -- and I will be sending that  
11 to you as soon as we get our data finalized -- we  
12 will have that, but we were delayed this year even  
13 getting our data. Normally, we get our Indicator  
14 11 data in October, and we didn't get it till late  
15 November, and we're still working with that. And  
16 we will be able to show how many student referrals  
17 were delayed and by the number of days because  
18 that has to be reported in the APR.

19 So once we get all that together --  
20 all of our data -- we didn't share data for our  
21 indicators this year like we normally do because  
22 of the delays in getting all of our data in.  
23 Until we're final -- or close enough to being  
24 final that this is our data and this is our rates,  
25 we didn't want to share that, but I will be

1 sending that information to you before our APR  
2 report goes out.

3 MS. GEORGE: Thank you very much and  
4 thank you for your presentation today.

5 DR. JOHNSON: You're welcome.

6 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, Nancy,  
7 and thank you for your willingness to stay around  
8 for our Data and Reports Committee.

9 Do we have Lauren?

10 DR. JOHNSON: Do you need me to do  
11 that, Cynthia?

12 THE CHAIRPERSON: Alexis, we don't  
13 have a chair for that committee?

14 MS. UTZ: Data and Reports, correct,  
15 we do not have a chair.

16 THE CHAIRPERSON: Anyone from the  
17 Data and Reports Committee think that Nancy would  
18 be valuable in her staying around for the  
19 committee work?

20 MS. UTZ: Right now the only -- right  
21 now Lisa Phillips is the only one on the call that  
22 is in that subcommittee.

23 THE CHAIRPERSON: Lisa?

24 MS. PHILLIPS: Can you hear me?

25 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

1 MS. PHILLIPS: Yeah, I think we're  
2 fine for now. Thank you.

3 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Nancy---

4 DR. JOHNSON: Just look for  
5 follow-ups from me in the next couple of weeks.  
6 Thank you.

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you so much.  
8 So, Alexis, if we can move on to Lauren.

9 MS. UTZ: Yep, she's here.

10 MS. HOLAHAN: Good morning.

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: Hi.

12 MS. HOLAHAN: Thanks for having me  
13 and greetings to all of the council members. I am  
14 aware of the time, and so I'm just going to jump  
15 right in. The request, as far as I understand it,  
16 is to give you an overview of our State Systemic  
17 Improvement Plan, which is Indicator 17, as part  
18 of our Annual Performance Report, which you just  
19 heard an amazing update from Nancy on.

20 So I'm just going to give you a very  
21 like quick overview of the history and then really  
22 get into the data that we have that we're  
23 compiling for this year's report and what we're  
24 hearing from LEAs.

25 So next slide. Our State Systemic

1 Improvement Plan works from the theory that local  
2 districts will look at the root cause or root  
3 causes of why students with disabilities are  
4 graduating disproportionately -- the rate of  
5 graduation -- five-year graduation cohort rate  
6 for students with disabilities is  
7 disproportionately lower than that for nondisabled  
8 students. We really want to investigate locally  
9 what are the root causes for that graduation rate  
10 gap.

11 And then based on whatever those root  
12 causes are, the local district or charter school  
13 would select evidence-based practices to address  
14 that root cause or causes and then provide  
15 professional development and also request help  
16 from DPI for any professional development or  
17 technical assistance and just also to engage in a  
18 continuous improvement cycle, continuing to look  
19 at data for students with disabilities over time  
20 to ensure that we really are making progress on  
21 closing that gap.

22 So we can move to the next slide. In  
23 response to that, DPI will allocate resources  
24 through our regional support structure to make  
25 sure that districts and charter schools have the

1 support they need to implement those evidence-  
2 based practices, things like the Reading Research  
3 to Classroom Practice and the Foundations of Math,  
4 which are made available through our NC SIP  
5 project, PBIS and the MTSS behavior and  
6 social/emotional learning supports as well as the  
7 SEFEL supports, which are the preschool level  
8 evidence-based practices for supporting  
9 social/emotional learning and behavior as well as  
10 transition.

11 And so we have organized the staff in  
12 the Exceptional Children Division to be able to  
13 provide that professional development and  
14 technical assistance kind of across the continuum,  
15 right, from everywhere from universal levels of  
16 support that we make available to all LEAs out to  
17 very customized support that an LEA or charter  
18 school may ask us to design based on their very  
19 unique needs.

20 And so, Alexis, are you driving? And  
21 so you can just click on -- I'll go through this  
22 one pretty quickly. I want to get to the next  
23 slide which is really about kind of our work in  
24 the last year.

25 But just to give you an overview of

1 the first six years of the project, we started  
2 with our baseline data for the five-year  
3 graduation cohort rate that we took a baseline in  
4 2013, and along the way, have -- you can see  
5 really -- this is a history of the reporting that  
6 we've done to OSEP, the Office of Special  
7 Education Programs, where we're required to  
8 provide an annual report on both our  
9 implementation and the impact on outcomes for  
10 students with disabilities, and again,  
11 specifically, are we closing the gap and meeting  
12 our targets for that five-year graduation cohort  
13 rate.

14 And this is different than our  
15 Indicator 1, which is the four-year rate right  
16 now. We were able to use the five-year rate for  
17 the SSIP, and since that was an option when we  
18 began really in 2014 with our data analysis, we  
19 chose to use the five-year rate.

20 So let's move on to the next slide,  
21 and I just want to give you a sense of -- I came  
22 into this role as the coordinator for the SSIP,  
23 the State Systemic Improvement Plan, in the summer  
24 of 2019. And so about a year ago, we were able to  
25 bring together two groups of stakeholders and an

1 internal and an external group, and we analyzed  
2 last fall our LEA self-assessment data and  
3 recognized we had some dissonance between our data  
4 showing that students with disabilities were  
5 meeting their IEP goals.

6 By and large, that was a strength for  
7 districts, but students were not reading  
8 proficiency standards, right, so their academic  
9 achievement wasn't matching what we were seeing in  
10 terms of their IEP goal attainment, and that  
11 troubled us. And I'm not saying us as at DPI, but  
12 really us as the community of practice that is  
13 special education in North Carolina top to bottom.

14 And so we embarked on a statewide  
15 effort to really improve our capacity to design  
16 standards-aligned IEPs and deliver specially  
17 designed instruction and related services that  
18 were connected to the standards. And then in  
19 March, actually, we were considering some  
20 flexibility in how LEAs were going to complete  
21 their LEA self-assessment, even before COVID  
22 started, allowing them to use their improvement  
23 plan -- their overall district improvement plan  
24 instead of an EC program-specific improvement  
25 plan, and then COVID hit.

1 We submitted our report on time to  
2 OSEP, and we later had -- it's not included here,  
3 but I think it was in November we had our  
4 follow-up call with OSEP, and they were -- didn't  
5 really have anything but just -- it was a fairly  
6 supportive response to our 2020 submission. They  
7 did encourage us to think about potentially a  
8 smaller metric.

9 Graduation rate is a very large, kind  
10 of many -- many -- multifaceted data point to  
11 move, and so they just -- we will have an  
12 opportunity to consider what our sort of focus is,  
13 our state-indicated measurable result, as we move  
14 into the next -- kind of the next segment of the  
15 SSIP. We're closing out the sixth year with the  
16 2021 report.

17 So when COVID happened, we looked at  
18 the LEA self-assessment and really tried to make  
19 sure that what we were asking LEAs to evaluate  
20 about their own program made sense in light of  
21 their context, dealing with remote instruction,  
22 and just really making sure it was streamlined and  
23 it was going to be a valuable process for them.

24 We also -- our data teams -- we have  
25 a regional team for -- a data team for each region

1 that really supports special education directors  
2 in each region, and they had an opportunity to  
3 look at a variety of different data this year  
4 before they did the reviews. So we conducted  
5 those through the summer and fall, and then we  
6 began the -- the reviews started in October.

7 And we can keep clicking. We  
8 provided quite a few resources for -- you can go  
9 back -- quite a few resources to submit the LEA  
10 self-assessment. We conducted our reviews in  
11 November and December, and now we have some  
12 preliminary data we're starting to kind of look  
13 at, and that's what I'm going to show you right  
14 now.

15 So we can move on. Just to give you  
16 a sense of our five-year graduation cohort rate,  
17 so what we reported at the -- we are a year behind  
18 in that reporting. So for the 2020 submission, we  
19 reported the '18-19 school year, which was 72.5,  
20 and that was a drop from the previous year. And  
21 we hypothesized that that had some to do with some  
22 change in business rules and how that five-year  
23 graduation cohort rate is calculated, and that's  
24 really not anything that the EC Division has  
25 control over.

1                   The good news is, if you click,  
2 Alexis, we'll see that we -- if you'd go back --  
3 what we will be able to report to OSEP for the  
4 '19-20 school year -- yes, the '18-19 school  
5 year is we had a pretty significant jump in our  
6 five-year graduation rate. So that will be what  
7 we report in the 2021 report, and I will say that  
8 that increase for 72.5 to 73.1, of all the  
9 subgroups we look at, at DPI, students with  
10 disabilities made the -- made the second largest  
11 increase only behind students -- Native American  
12 students, American Indians. They had the largest  
13 increase, and then students with disabilities was  
14 the next largest subgroup increase. So we're very  
15 excited about the recovery on that.

16                   You can go to the next slide. So we  
17 have received -- and this can already be updated.  
18 We've had submissions -- even this morning, I was  
19 uploading some of them. So I think we're much  
20 closer to 310 or twelve have been submitted.  
21 There are just less than ten, I think, that are  
22 still outlying at this point, and we have almost  
23 all of the 650 reviews done by now. This was --  
24 this was put together last week, and these data  
25 are changing as -- daily really as it comes in.

1 I will say that our staff spent  
2 about -- almost an hour with each review, and each  
3 LEA and charter school has two reviewers. So it's  
4 an extremely thorough process. We take our time  
5 looking at what the LEAs are telling us. We have  
6 a systematic way that we conduct the reviews, and  
7 you'll see some of that data in just a minute.

8 So we can move to the next slide. So  
9 this is kind of how it unfolds across the regions.  
10 You can see, of course, the North Central and  
11 Southwest Regions are our biggest regions.

12 Next slide. So before I get into the  
13 actual data on each of these kind of items on the  
14 LEA self-assessment, I do just want to pause here  
15 to see if there are any questions or reflections  
16 before we get into some of the more specific data.

17 MS. LEYTON: This is Terri. I just  
18 have a question about the graduation rates. In  
19 2017, it was 74.1 percent and then there was a  
20 pretty significant drop off in 2018. So  
21 definitely glad to see about the recovery in 2019,  
22 but I'm wondering if there was a difference in the  
23 way that data were calculated or what the reason  
24 was for that drop.

25 MS. HOLAHAN: Yeah, we have a couple

1 of different hypotheses, and certainly at the  
2 local level, it would be hard for us to, you know,  
3 guess. But we do know that there was a change in  
4 the way the five-year graduation cohort rate was  
5 calculated, a difference between the 2017-18  
6 school year and the 2018-19 school year. And that  
7 was that students -- if they started in the cohort  
8 in ninth grade and then were exited from special  
9 education during that time---

10 And, Nancy, you can make sure that I  
11 am saying this right.

12 ---historically they were -- they  
13 continued to be included in our count. From 2017  
14 to 2018, they were no longer included in the  
15 count, and our hypothesis is that once those  
16 special education supports were withdrawn because  
17 the student was exited, we are thinking that those  
18 students may have -- that they either didn't  
19 graduate or maybe dropped out at a higher rate  
20 once they exited special ed.

21 But I will -- Nancy, if you want to  
22 clean up what I just said, please.

23 DR. JOHNSON: I think you may have  
24 said it backwards. The students when they exited  
25 were not counted in our count, but then students

1 who exited and returned to regular ed and had been  
2 identified as being disabled at any time during  
3 the count were now included in our count, if that  
4 makes sense.

5 MS. HOLAHAN: Yes. Yes.

6 MS. LEYTON: [Inaudible] the change,  
7 and that was really the thing that I was hoping to  
8 hear---

9 MS. HOLAHAN: Yes.

10 MS. LEYTON: ---and not that there  
11 was some sort of systemic issue otherwise. Okay.  
12 So thank you.

13 MS. HOLAHAN: Yeah. And to that  
14 point -- actually, I'm glad you came back to it --  
15 when we had our call with OSEP about our 2020 SSIP  
16 report, they told us that we could have reset our  
17 baseline based on that business rule change, and  
18 given how far we are into it -- we just one more  
19 year of reporting, which you see we will report  
20 the 73.1 for the 2021 report -- we opted not to  
21 change the baseline.

22 And, you know, when we think about a  
23 new State Identified Measurable Result and setting  
24 new targets, then we will set the new baselines.  
25 So that will be part of our 2021 work.

1           So let's jump into -- this is going  
2 to give you a sense both of what kind of things we  
3 ask school districts to consider about their  
4 program and then sort of how -- these are  
5 statewide data. We have also disaggregated these  
6 for each region, and our data teams actually  
7 looked at them yesterday, but I'm just going to  
8 walk you through the state data.

9           So LEAs rate themselves a zero, one,  
10 or two, two being the best on each item. So as  
11 you're looking at these means for each of these  
12 different items, the closer that mean is to two,  
13 it means statewide we can say that this area of  
14 activity was a relative strength. The closer you  
15 get to zero on the mean, that means we've  
16 identified -- we are kind of statewide saying that  
17 this is an area that we really need to focus on  
18 for improvement. And so this first one is really  
19 how well are we doing as a program locally to look  
20 at data and problem solve improvement for any  
21 student who's not meeting IEP goals.

22           We can move on to 4.2. So 4.2 is, as  
23 a program, does the LEA collect and analyze  
24 disaggregate data, and that's, you know, are they  
25 looking at their data for students with disability

1 based on categories of eligibility, grade level,  
2 placement, race, gender. And you can see that  
3 disaggregation -- that was a relative strength. I  
4 will say I do wonder -- and we have yet to look  
5 back at our -- comparing these data with last  
6 year's, but there's a pretty significant effort by  
7 SSIP team to provide data to LEAs ahead of time  
8 before they did their LEA self-assessments.

9 We provided them a really  
10 comprehensive data profile both in March, and then  
11 we packaged the APR, the Annual Performance  
12 Report, data as a three-year display rather than  
13 just one year so that they could look at some of  
14 those trends. So I'm just wondering if some of  
15 the supports that they received from DPI in terms  
16 of actually like having data profiles kind of they  
17 were able to do a little bit more with them.

18 So we can move to 4.3. This is  
19 aggregated data, and then 4.4 is -- not only are  
20 they looking at data, but they're using it to  
21 identify priorities for improvement for  
22 decision-making. Core Element 4 is really about  
23 problem solving for improvement.

24 Core Element 5, then, is about, once  
25 we've identified our areas for improvements, how

1 are we making decisions about what research-based  
2 instruction and practices we're going to choose.  
3 This really is our implementation section. So  
4 does the LEA have a clear way that they're  
5 choosing evidence-based initiatives.

6           You can move forward. Once we choose  
7 a research-based intervention, do we have a plan  
8 for how we're going to implement it; do we have  
9 that plan written down; and does it have all the  
10 required parts like the selection criteria for  
11 who -- what staff will deliver it, selection  
12 criteria for what students will receive it; how  
13 we're going to do fidelity checks; how we're going  
14 to see if it's actually working and it's having an  
15 impact on student outcomes.

16           5.3 is that we're carrying out those  
17 implementation plans and we're really monitoring  
18 our progress, that we have record of doing those  
19 fidelity checks, that we're checking in with  
20 stakeholders, that we're making adjustments to our  
21 plan based on data.

22           You can move forward. And then 6 --  
23 Core Element -- oh, 5.4, yes. Then we really look  
24 at -- we are looking at the impact of the  
25 implementation plan, is it working, is it

1 sustainable, how do we make sure that we have  
2 staff that continue to be equipped to implement  
3 the research-based interventions that the LEA has  
4 selected.

5 And Core Element 6 is really the  
6 stakeholder engagement, communication and  
7 collaboration, and so this is -- and you'll see,  
8 of the three that we're looking at today, this  
9 area has historically been an area that LEAs have  
10 identified as a relative strength compared to the  
11 other core elements. And so do we have vertical  
12 and horizontal communication processes in place,  
13 so rated very high. You can see we're getting  
14 those means up close to two. The LEA facilitates  
15 meaningful parent involvement.

16 6.3 is that the LEA works with  
17 community partners like community mental health  
18 providers or preschool providers to enhance  
19 service delivery. And, finally, 6.4 is, does the  
20 LEA collaborate with DPI on getting support and  
21 information in order to engage in continuous  
22 improvement.

23 So I'll pause there before we move  
24 onto what we saw in some of the improvement plans  
25 that were submitted. Any thoughts or questions

1 about any of those data? And so just as a  
2 reminder, everything you just saw was our 326, 25  
3 charter schools, traditional LEAs, lab schools,  
4 and other state-run programs that have special  
5 education as part of their program. It was them  
6 reporting on their own work. So I'll just pause  
7 for any questions.

8 Okay. So let me---

9 MR. HOSKINS: Lauren, let me jump in.  
10 I just wanted to let folks know that I did check  
11 in on the policy related to the business rule for  
12 the change in the graduation---

13 MS. HOLAHAN: Thank you, Matt.

14 MR. HOSKINS: ---and it was that if a  
15 student had been classified as a student with a  
16 disability at any time while they were in that  
17 cohort and then exited, they were -- they were  
18 included as a student with a disability.

19 MS. HOLAHAN: Okay. And so I  
20 mentioned we allowed some flexibility in what kind  
21 of improvement plan the district or charter school  
22 submitted with their LEA self-assessment. Most  
23 chose -- an overwhelming majority chose to use the  
24 template that we provided, which was special  
25 education program-specific.

1           You can see academics -- and this has  
2           been historical -- that academics is the main area  
3           of focus for improvement and that most LEAs said  
4           what we really need is universal support, not many  
5           saying that they needed tailored or customized  
6           support. Most of the submissions had just one  
7           goal, and then you can see there were a few that  
8           had multiple goals.

9           You can move on. And so as we began  
10          our reviews, we could look a little bit more  
11          specific. Rather than just those three kind of  
12          big areas of academics, behavior, and transition,  
13          our reviewers were looking for like what was the  
14          improvement plan about even inside of those three  
15          big areas.

16          And so you can see reading and math  
17          performance were way out front in terms of what  
18          districts are focusing on for students with  
19          disabilities, problem solving and data analysis,  
20          this green one, and then this gray one that's kind  
21          out here in front is the implementation of  
22          research-based practices. So those were really  
23          very popular in terms of what was contained in the  
24          improvement plans.

25          You can move forward. And we were

1 really excited to see this, which was did we see  
2 alignment between the improvement plan and the  
3 precise problem statement that the district  
4 identified, sort of their root cause, and we saw  
5 good alignment in the annual goal, in the  
6 strategies they were going to use to meet that  
7 goal, the timeline for completion, who's  
8 responsible, what kind of fidelity measures. So I  
9 think what we're seeing is overtime an improvement  
10 in the ability to design good improvement plans,  
11 which is exciting.

12 Next slide. And this, again, is just  
13 to show some correlation between the data analyses  
14 that our consultants did prior to doing the  
15 reviews and then what they saw in the improvement  
16 plans, and we do see some good correlation. And  
17 then you can see here how the goals that the LEAs  
18 developed which -- where they were connecting most  
19 in terms of the core elements, and so problem  
20 solving for improvement and those research-based  
21 instructional practices were, again, way out in  
22 front of the other areas.

23 And I think that brings us to, I  
24 think, the last slide. It's really just -- I'm  
25 not going to talk about the COVID impact groups

1 because Nancy did a terrific job of giving you an  
2 overview of those. We have four parent groups,  
3 one that is a Spanish-speaking and then three  
4 others. We're starting those today actually, and  
5 then the Youth with Disabilities surveys, we have  
6 almost 200 responses on that. So we've had  
7 really, really strong interest and engagement in  
8 those opportunities to tell us what has special  
9 education been like in the context of this  
10 pandemic, and I think we're going to have some --  
11 as Nancy said, some really powerful things to  
12 share with OSEP and all of our stakeholders.

13 And so that brings us to any  
14 questions.

15 THE CHAIRPERSON: Any comments for  
16 Lauren?

17 MS. HOLAHAN: Comments or  
18 reflections?

19 MS. LEYTON: So this is Terri again.  
20 Sorry. I'm the newbie and I have lots of  
21 questions. When LEAs create their improvement  
22 plans, are they also submitting data that align  
23 with -- that they have outcomes that are aligning  
24 with those improvement plans?

25 MS. HOLAHAN: That was -- that's

1 certainly the request. Our encouragement is that  
2 as they write their goals, those goals have data  
3 kind of based targets, that they're -- that they  
4 know where they're starting, they know what their  
5 baseline data is for whatever area of improvement  
6 they've selected, and that they know where they're  
7 going. Whether that be in one year's time or it's  
8 a three-year plan, that is certainly the way we  
9 coach and encourage them to design those plans.

10 MS. LEYTON: Okay. Thank you.

11 MS. HOLAHAN: Uh-huh. I should have  
12 said at the beginning, for those of you who are  
13 being oriented to the LEA self-assessment process  
14 for the first time today, it is not an evaluative  
15 process in terms of like DPI's role in it. We  
16 really are facilitating local improvement and  
17 making ourselves available to support in any way  
18 we can and reflecting with them through the review  
19 process on possible next steps or -- you know, we  
20 are also then responding to how can we help based  
21 on that data we see in the LEA self-assessment.

22 And I'll just -- Matt or Nancy, if  
23 you have any additional, you know, comments you  
24 want to make about our State Systemic Improvement  
25 Plan, please.

1 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, Lauren.  
2 Thank you very much for your presentation and all  
3 the information you shared with the Council.

4 Matt Hoskins is up next to give us  
5 the Division Updates. Matt?

6 MR. HOSKINS: I'm just confirming  
7 you-all are able to hear me now.

8 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

9 MR. HOSKINS: Great. And you're also  
10 able to see my screen?

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, we can.

12 MR. HOSKINS: First, I just want to  
13 say thanks to all of you for being here today. We  
14 know that this is an incredibly hectic time, a lot  
15 of things going on, and so your willingness to  
16 take the time out of your schedules and provide  
17 incredibly valuable feedback to us is -- we're  
18 very grateful for that. And also, I just want to  
19 thank Nancy and Lauren and everybody else  
20 presenting today and sharing information.

21 There are some major -- I kind of  
22 wanted to provide a broad view of updates that  
23 have happened, major activities that have happened  
24 since the last council meeting. And so the main  
25 topics that I want to [inaudible] is, we are

1 currently working on, for the EC Division, a new  
2 strategic plan. The development of the strategic  
3 plan and the timing of this is aligned to the  
4 State Board of Education, who had also recently  
5 adopted a new strategic plan. And so we want to  
6 ensure that we have alignment of our work with  
7 what's happening through the agency, and with  
8 that, ensure that we can continue to get the  
9 resources and provide the capacity to meet the  
10 goals and objectives of those plans.

11 I also wanted to share some of the  
12 ways that we have had to be nimble and adaptive  
13 for professional learning, not only the way that  
14 we provide that professional learning, which prior  
15 to now has -- a lot of it has been face-to-face,  
16 but then also the content of that professional  
17 learning, where the needs of LEAs or Public School  
18 Units right now are very different than they have  
19 been previously, particularly as we think about  
20 what does it mean to -- for the provision of  
21 special education services when we're in remote  
22 learning situations.

23 I want to give an update on the  
24 school mental health policy that has been  
25 literally years in the making and that we're very,

1 very excited about, and particularly with the  
2 timing that's associated with it and what we know  
3 will meet mental health needs of all students  
4 including students with disabilities and ways we  
5 can support our schools in supporting those needs  
6 as kids -- right now and as kids start coming back  
7 into schools.

8 I want talk just a little bit about  
9 some of the funding that we've been able to  
10 advocate for and allot over the course of the last  
11 few months specifically in terms of how some of  
12 the federal CARES Act, which then came out in  
13 North Carolina through the COVID-19 Relief Funding  
14 Act, how we've been able to support districts with  
15 that.

16 And then I also wanted to provide a  
17 brief update -- I know that this was of interest  
18 to the Council -- on some of the state complaints  
19 that we've been receiving. I believe Leigh, after  
20 me, is also going to be providing just an overview  
21 of these, but I want to talk specifically to some  
22 of the state complaints around literacy.

23 So where I'm going to start is with  
24 our strategic plan, and I'm hopeful that you-all  
25 have all received a copy of this as well as a link

1 to a survey that allows you to provide feedback to  
2 this. I want to give you just a little bit of  
3 context in terms of how this plan was developed  
4 and what each of these columns is intended to  
5 represent and how we would just appreciate your  
6 responses and effective feedback. That would be  
7 most beneficial for us as we continue to work on  
8 this draft copy and make edits to it and continue  
9 to evolve it over time.

10 The first thing that we started with  
11 were the goals, and you can see in the strategic  
12 plan that there are -- the first goal is related  
13 to eliminating opportunity gaps by 2026. So I do  
14 just want to share that this is a five-year --  
15 this plan is the strategic plan for five years  
16 beginning in 2021 and culminating in 2026.

17 The second is improving school and  
18 district performance by that period of time. The  
19 third is related to ensuring that educators are  
20 prepared to meet the needs of students, which is  
21 clearly aligned with the first two. And then Goal  
22 4 is related to continuing to optimize  
23 collaboration and engagement with stakeholders,  
24 which would include this Council.

25 Those goals are derived directly from

1 the State Board of Education goals. So where we  
2 have differences from the State Board of Education  
3 goals are within the objectives, the actions, and  
4 then the indicators of success. And so the way  
5 that these are conceptualized is an objective is a  
6 large-scale goal of the Exceptional Children  
7 Division that is related to the State Board of  
8 Education goal.

9 So you can see the first objective  
10 for the first goal relating to eliminating  
11 opportunity gaps is decreasing the proportion of  
12 low performing Public School Units that are  
13 identified because of an EC Program subpopulation.  
14 So we have different formulas that are determined  
15 by ESSA that determine whether schools are low  
16 performing or not, looking across different  
17 subgroups of students, one of those being students  
18 with disabilities, and this specific objective is  
19 to decrease the proportion of that.

20 The actions then describes what our  
21 agency is intending to do the meet that objective  
22 over the course of the next five years, and then  
23 the indicators and evidence of success are -- we  
24 don't want to wait till 2026 to see if we're  
25 making progress towards that objective. These are

1 what we would see as short-term or mid-term  
2 indicators that we're beginning to make progress  
3 towards that particular objective.

4 So that is the way that the strategic  
5 plan is laid out and the intent of each of these  
6 particular columns, and so I want to give  
7 everybody an opportunity to be able to read  
8 through this on their own and make their  
9 interpretations of it, but I do want to talk  
10 briefly around the survey that we have also  
11 provided for you-all to give feedback on the  
12 strategic plan.

13 And you all should have access to  
14 this link, and we can make sure -- we can send it  
15 out if you don't have access to it right now.  
16 This has gone out to -- and it should have come  
17 directly to the Council. It's also gone out to  
18 all parent Listservs to make sure we have  
19 representation. I just checked today, and we  
20 have -- I think we've had about 20 responses so  
21 far, two of which were from parents, so knowing  
22 that it is starting to get into parent hands.

23 And so, basically, what this just  
24 asks you is what stakeholder role best describes  
25 you, and you can see that the EC Council is

1 included here, and then what goal is your comment  
2 or question related to. And so all you need to do  
3 is just click on the particular goal that you  
4 would like to comment on, and then we're asking  
5 whether what you're making is a comment or a  
6 question. This will just help us in our analysis  
7 of the data to see if we are trying to respond to  
8 something or if we're trying to make an edit to  
9 the particular document. And then once you put  
10 that, it allows you to make your comment there.

11 The one thing that I want to make  
12 really clear is that this is intended to be  
13 completed like multiple times, and so the  
14 questions that are in this are really for an --  
15 making sure that we're able to organize the  
16 results that we get. So once you submit that, you  
17 can actually do the survey as many times as you  
18 would like to, to respond to as many of the goals,  
19 as many of the objectives, actions, or indicators  
20 of success that you would like to. So I just  
21 wanted to make sure that you-all were aware that  
22 that can be completed multiple times.

23 With that, I think I'm going to pause  
24 for a moment and just see if there are specific  
25 questions about the strategic plan as well as

1 [inaudible] that you-all have to respond to that  
2 or if there are questions as well. And I just  
3 want to confirm that you-all have received that  
4 link and the document.

5 THE CHAIRPERSON: Alexis? Alexis?

6 MS. UTZ: Yes.

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: Was that link  
8 included in our agenda?

9 MS. UTZ: It was not included in the  
10 agenda. This was something sent out separately  
11 through the [inaudible].

12 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay.

13 MR. HOSKINS: Do we have an  
14 interactive agenda? If so, I'm happy to add it to  
15 that, Alexis.

16 MS. UTZ: It's in a Google folder  
17 that the council members can access, but it's not  
18 a Google doc.

19 MR. HOSKINS: Okay. Well, how about  
20 I send you that link and you can add it to the  
21 agenda as well just so they have -- just so it's  
22 available in a couple of places.

23 MS. UTZ: Okay. That's fine.

24 MR. HOSKINS: Great. Okay. Well,  
25 once again, on the feedback, we'd ask that just

1 because of the timelines that we're on -- we are  
2 wanting to present this to the State Board early  
3 in the new year, so our timeline for completion of  
4 that is December 15th. And, again, if you-all  
5 have an opportunity, we would be very grateful for  
6 looking through that, your reflection all that,  
7 from your perspective of any of those objective  
8 activities as well as ensuring that we are looking  
9 at the right outcomes to focus on.

10 Some of the way that this plan was  
11 developed was really having some in-depth  
12 discussion of well, what is it -- what are the  
13 outcomes that we're seeing right now that we would  
14 like to change and then working backwards from  
15 that of well, what are the things that we need to  
16 do to change those outcomes and how can that feed  
17 into a larger objective.

18 So just would be very appreciative of  
19 your close review and feedback related to that,  
20 and just know that it will all be reviewed and  
21 that this current document is very much a draft  
22 document that will go through multiple iterations  
23 of change over the course of the next month or two  
24 months.

25 I wanted to share a couple of pieces

1 of information on the professional learning that  
2 we're providing as a division right now.  
3 Previously, as I said before, a lot of our PD has  
4 been provided face-to-face, which this is a  
5 challenging time to be able to do that now.

6           Unfortunately, we had to cancel  
7 our -- our annual conference that happens  
8 typically in November in Greensboro, and a lot  
9 of -- we typically have very high attendance for  
10 that. A lot of folks depend upon that conference  
11 for professional learning and CEUS towards  
12 licensure.

13           So we polled our EC directors to get  
14 some idea of what we could do in place of that and  
15 have developed what we're calling, basically, a  
16 virtual conference where we're going to be  
17 providing sessions in December, January, February,  
18 and then doing an analysis to see if more sessions  
19 are still wanted by directors. We're doing those  
20 in the afternoons.

21           We did a poll to see when people  
22 would be most able -- when staff members and  
23 family members would be most willing or able to  
24 access those, and so we're holding those at 4:00  
25 in the afternoon on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the

1 second week of those months. And we have right  
2 now about 30 sessions that we're working on.

3 All of those are to be done virtually  
4 through a variety of different platforms, but  
5 we're also going to be recording those and putting  
6 those on our web page so that they are publicly  
7 accessible, so everybody will have access to  
8 those.

9 Some of the professional learning  
10 that we've provided previously in just face-to-  
11 face formats, we are working really hard to get  
12 that converted over to virtual environments so  
13 that, again, staff can access those. We're  
14 fortunate at DPI where we have access to CANVAS,  
15 which is a learning management platform that a lot  
16 of us in the Division have been trained upon and  
17 are able to convert some of that content over to  
18 that. So we're working to move a lot of our PD  
19 into that virtual environment that can be accessed  
20 remotely.

21 Lauren talked previously. We always  
22 did have our SDI course available, our Specially  
23 Designed Instruction course available on CANVAS,  
24 but we've recently even opened that up more widely  
25 so that everybody across the state will have

1 access to that, and that will be one of the  
2 courses that we're working to support in those  
3 learning environments. And with that as well,  
4 also starting to think about what content do we  
5 need to add at the current time that really  
6 supplements the content that's currently there, to  
7 think about provision of services within remote  
8 learning environments.

9 And with that in mind, the agency put  
10 together a website specifically around remote  
11 learning, and we piggybacked off that a little bit  
12 and developed our own site, from the larger  
13 website, that's specifically around students with  
14 disabilities. So it has been available since, I  
15 think, about April, but it is continuously being  
16 updated. It's accessible to anybody across the  
17 state. It specifically talks about remote  
18 learning resources for students with disabilities.

19 In getting feedback from the field,  
20 we asked -- really kind of sought what are the  
21 biggest areas of support that you-all need, which  
22 is what brought us to these particular areas  
23 around considerations for instructional supports.  
24 So, you know, what are the things that we need to  
25 do to collaborate with general education as we're

1 providing remote learning, how do we ensure that  
2 parents are informed, how do we build a remote  
3 instruction plan, and then how do we deliver and  
4 document the instruction that we are providing.

5 And then we're also taking vetted  
6 resources that give them tools that they can  
7 potentially use related to any of these particular  
8 areas. So a tip sheet around developing virtual  
9 learning plans, an example of a service log  
10 template to document services that students are  
11 receiving, tip sheets for virtual IEPs, and just  
12 various other resources.

13 Also, I'm really excited about some  
14 work that we are doing right now that is based on  
15 the work of CEC and their work around and high  
16 leverage practices. And high leverage practices  
17 are evidence-based instructional practices that  
18 cross over academic domains and yield positive  
19 outcomes for students. So there are some of those  
20 things that in terms of professional learning, you  
21 get the most return on investment when you provide  
22 some intense efforts of professional development  
23 on those things.

24 And what we have started to evolve  
25 from this is what do these high leverage practices

1 look like in remote learning environments, and so  
2 we've begun focusing on some of these high  
3 leverage practices. We're attempting to take them  
4 one piece at a time to get that information out,  
5 share that with directors. So far we've gotten  
6 some good feedback from that, and we're continuing  
7 to get more granular in how we do that so that  
8 these can be resources that really provide some  
9 good instruction on how to implement a particular  
10 high leverage practice within a virtual learning  
11 environment.

12 Any questions around what the  
13 agency's been doing around supporting districts  
14 during school closures and COVID? I specifically  
15 talked about professional learning. There's also  
16 been a lot of different communication pathways  
17 that we've been using. We've been holding much  
18 more frequent webinars with staff. We've been  
19 having a regular Wednesday communication that goes  
20 out, and that's the way -- we have multiple things  
21 that need to be communicated at least on a weekly  
22 basis, and we've found that sending those things  
23 out in one document on a weekly basis is just  
24 easier than bombarding everybody's email, which is  
25 probably already overflowing.

1           We've put together a Padlet that has  
2 all the resources that we have archived since the  
3 beginning of COVID, and then also, even with the  
4 communication in the different FAQ documents that  
5 we have had from webinars, we've sorted those by  
6 different topic areas so that those can be  
7 searched and information can be found, hopefully,  
8 as quickly as humanly possible.

9           There's just been -- from March until  
10 now, the amount of information that has had to go  
11 out through our division and the amount that that  
12 information has changed over time based on new  
13 things that are occurring, we've really worked  
14 hard to make sure that those are being  
15 communicated.

16           But at this point, I just want to  
17 pause briefly to see if there's any questions  
18 around any professional learning or communication  
19 from the agency.

20           Okay. I just want to confirm that  
21 people can still hear me?

22           MS. UTZ: Yes, we can still hear you.

23           MS. GRANT: We still hear you.

24           MR. HOSKINS: Okay. Great. I do  
25 want to talk briefly -- I don't want to go over my

1 time too much, but I do want to talk briefly,  
2 though, around our school mental health policy.  
3 In -- I believe it was November -- we were able  
4 to -- the school mental health policy passed.  
5 This policy was actually required based on a  
6 senate bill that happened, Senate Bill 476, and  
7 ended up being ratified as Session Law 2020-7.

8 This has been something that has been  
9 in the works since around 2014-15 where we at DPI  
10 gathered together a group that is now referred to  
11 as the North Carolina School Mental Health  
12 Initiative -- of stakeholders around mental  
13 health, not only in schools but across state  
14 agencies, across private providers, insurance --  
15 folks who represent insurance, advocacy folks,  
16 lawyers, parents. And that group has been meeting  
17 regularly since that time and is really the group  
18 that put together this policy that ended up  
19 happening in November.

20 We have been able to bring together a  
21 lot of different divisions at DPI to support the  
22 implementation of this policy. We'll continue to  
23 have a lot more information coming out in the near  
24 future related to how DPI can support LEAs in the  
25 requirements or Public School Units in the

1 requirements that are contained within this  
2 policy.

3 But some of the things that are  
4 included with it and then why I think the timing  
5 for this is just so important, we're starting to  
6 get some early data in right now. I've read a  
7 couple of articles already. One, the *Journal of*  
8 *the American Medical Association* that's looking at  
9 rates of mental health issues, specifically  
10 depression and anxiety, as a result of the trauma  
11 folks are experiencing due to COVID-19. And we  
12 are seeing up to threefold increases in mental  
13 health issues, and this is going to have to be  
14 something that we are prepared for right now to be  
15 able to respond to, but also, as we get kids  
16 coming back into schools and can provide them  
17 direct services.

18 We know that schools are a primary  
19 place to meet mental health needs quite simply  
20 because it's where kids are, and some of the data  
21 that we've collected previously, and particularly  
22 that we've gotten from parents, it was close to 25  
23 percent of parents indicated that one of the major  
24 challenges or barriers to receiving mental health  
25 services was transportation.

1                   We know that when there is a  
2 school -- when there is a school health facility  
3 that kids are 21 more times more likely to reach  
4 out for mental health support, so we do know that  
5 the school needs to play a major role in  
6 supporting mental health.

7                   And so this particular policy has  
8 several major components to it, the first of which  
9 is really looking at a full continuum of supports  
10 that ensures that the provision of  
11 social/emotional learning is provided and that  
12 that's happening in core instruction; that when  
13 there are students who are demonstrating need that  
14 can be met by folks at the school, that that is  
15 being met with evidence-based practices, and that  
16 there are ways to identify who those students are,  
17 document the fidelity of interventions, and  
18 document the effectiveness of those interventions.

19                   But then also we know that there are  
20 going to be times when the needs of a student  
21 exceeds what the school can provide, and so what  
22 are the referral, treatment, and reentry  
23 procedures that the school district has with local  
24 providers, LMEs, MCOs. So that requires things  
25 like developing memorandums of understanding. The

1 policy also requires that there is a suicide risk  
2 referral protocol that's developed. It addresses  
3 some other things that are little bit more deeper  
4 into the weeds around where liability is and how  
5 we're going to report and the timelines associated  
6 with that.

7 But then, again, it also describes  
8 the target audience in terms of who in the  
9 district is going to require training which is,  
10 for the most part, anybody that's going to come  
11 into contact with students, and then just the  
12 different ways that that training can be provided  
13 and supports that DPI is going to do with that.

14 We are fortunate that we've had  
15 support from the State Board of Education. When  
16 they were looking at their expansion, they asked  
17 us to provide them some information in terms of  
18 what funding would be required to implement this  
19 policy well, and so we extrapolated this data from  
20 what we have from a grant that we have right now  
21 through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
22 Services agency that looked at -- basically, what  
23 we did was looked at the amount of money that  
24 we've been able to spend up to this point to do  
25 some initial infrastructure type of development,

1 and then based on the funding that we're providing  
2 these grant sites who we've learned so much from  
3 in the last couple of years, what would that  
4 additional per student cost be, what would be the  
5 reasonable ways to break that down and provide  
6 those funds in terms of line items and purchases  
7 for that. And so this is what was included in the  
8 State Board's expansion budget request.

9 So just to be clear, though, that in  
10 no way means that this is what will be funded or  
11 that this will be funded at all. But I did want  
12 to say that this is something that we've had the  
13 opportunity to advocate for, along with this  
14 policy, and we've been very clear that this policy  
15 is going to need -- would benefit from having some  
16 funding behind it.

17 Any questions related to that?

18 **(No audible response.)**

19 MR. HOSKINS: I will move on to the  
20 COVID-19 relief funding. To date, we've been able  
21 to allot close to \$37 million for what is  
22 described in the COVID-19 Relief Funding Act as  
23 extraordinary costs associated with serving  
24 students with disabilities during the pandemic,  
25 and the three major service areas that are

1 included with that are related to any potential  
2 extended school year services, compensatory  
3 education services as well as what was very  
4 broadly described as future services.

5           The way that those funds can be  
6 spent -- the primary kind of threshold for being  
7 able to spend those funds is that whatever is  
8 being -- whatever those funds are being incurred  
9 for, that it's a direct result of COVID-19. And  
10 with that, the chart of accounts or the things  
11 that are allowable expenses have essentially been  
12 the same as those that state funds have typically  
13 been able to be spent on.

14           We have been able to advocate for a  
15 little bit of flexibility on a couple of those  
16 areas and add a couple of additional items related  
17 to those line items on the charter accounts and  
18 have been putting out that information this week.  
19 The thing that we're dealing with right now with  
20 those funds is that the period of availability for  
21 those ends on December 30th. So we're working  
22 very closely with Public School Units right now to  
23 make sure that we can draw down those funds in  
24 allowable ways and get those expenses incurred by  
25 the end of the year.

1 I also wanted to talk briefly -- I  
2 know that it's a topic of interest -- related to  
3 state complaints, and I'm going to talk  
4 specifically to those that are related to literacy  
5 and more specifically identification of students  
6 with specific learning disabilities in the area of  
7 reading.

8 We have received, as I think many of  
9 you are familiar with, an ongoing number of  
10 complaints that are specific to this topic and  
11 have focused on issues both at the LEA level as  
12 well as systemic SEA issues, and right now we are  
13 in the investigation process, investigating these  
14 within the timelines that we have to do so, and  
15 we're working very hard and very diligently right  
16 now in developing findings and, if necessary, any  
17 corrective actions associated with those.

18 The theme that we are seeing most  
19 frequently within these have to do with Child Find  
20 issues. So we're thoroughly investigating right  
21 now to ensure that our work with the Multi-Tiered  
22 System of Support across the state -- that  
23 we're -- what we're see in terms of any guidance,  
24 technical assistance, documents that are being  
25 created, ways that folks are being supported, and

1 then the actual practices that are happening in  
2 schools, that there's not anything occurring that  
3 is within MTSS being used to specifically delay or  
4 deny an evaluation when there is a suspicion of a  
5 disability, ensuring that parents have the  
6 information they need throughout the instructional  
7 process to know that that's the threshold for --  
8 once a disability is suspected, that a  
9 comprehensive evaluation needs to be completed.

10 So I can say right now that what  
11 we're doing as part of that, we're really doing a  
12 deep dive into our policy into guidance and  
13 training materials, technical assistance materials  
14 that are available at the state level, but not  
15 only that, but also things that are being created  
16 at the local level as part of our general  
17 supervision ensuring that those -- none of those  
18 would delay an evaluation based on local processes  
19 developed for their Multi-Tiered System of  
20 Support.

21 I can say that in the near future,  
22 we'll be able to provide additional information in  
23 terms of what findings are and what any actions  
24 are, but given that that's currently under  
25 investigation, I just wanted to make sure that I

1 just shared the themes and what our current  
2 actions were related to that.

3 And with that, I think I've hit all  
4 of the big topics that I wanted to touch on over  
5 the course of today, but more than happy to  
6 welcome any questions related to this or anything  
7 else.

8 Christy, sorry. It just dawned on me  
9 that I didn't answer your other question that you  
10 asked earlier. You are correct in terms of---  
11 Sorry. This is going back to the Child Count and  
12 allotments as a result of that. We have done a  
13 lot of digging in trying to find anything that we  
14 could to support ensuring that allotments are made  
15 as fairly as possible with the December 1  
16 headcount.

17 Given the circumstances that we're in  
18 right now where there are clearly delays for  
19 evaluations, that is one of those big things that  
20 is likely preventing or reducing potential child  
21 counts or headcounts at the PSU level that was  
22 accurate around developmentally delayed  
23 classification, and that is the one area where  
24 there's -- if there's a pending reevaluation and  
25 that student has not been found eligible in

1 another disability category, that they would not  
2 be included in the headcount.

3 But we've work closely with the  
4 National Association of State Directors of Special  
5 Education to advocate for everything that we can  
6 related to ensuring that you-all are held as  
7 harmless as possible with the headcounts, and  
8 we're working within everything that we're able  
9 to -- in the guidelines that we are -- to make  
10 sure that the headcount numbers match what OSEP is  
11 requiring them to match.

12 Unfortunately -- we have a little  
13 more flexibility with our April headcount, which  
14 is what influences the state allotments. Last  
15 year even, we were able to -- instead of actually  
16 using the actual headcount, we were able to do  
17 some extrapolation based on prior year trend data  
18 as well as holding districts harmless to ensure  
19 that their numbers didn't go down because we knew  
20 of the issue associated with that. Unfortunately,  
21 we just don't have that same flexibility with our  
22 federal December 1 headcount.

23 DR. HUTCHINSON: So I was just going  
24 to say I appreciate you responding to that, and I  
25 know you're working on our behalf, and I know it's

1 not always possible to adjust that because of the  
2 federal guidelines, but just appreciate you guys  
3 trying.

4 MR. HOSKINS: Absolutely. And just  
5 to say again, too, that when those things come up,  
6 let us know what your barriers are so that we can  
7 continue to advocate for them because sometimes  
8 they're not as apparent -- readily or immediately  
9 as apparent to us as they are to you-all. So  
10 sends those along.

11 DR. HUTCHINSON: I think one of the  
12 unique things about those eight-year-olds flipping  
13 over is that we're always looking at a different  
14 area of exceptionality, and so that reevaluation  
15 process is sometimes a tad bit more comprehensive  
16 than a reevaluation when the team is considering  
17 the same area of exceptionality, which forces our  
18 teams to think very broad and includes more  
19 evaluations that would require on-site, person-to-  
20 person contact.

21 MR. HOSKINS:

22 DR. HUTCHINSON: And we just always  
23 want to be sure we're doing it the right way  
24 because when a student is moving from DD to a  
25 different area of exceptionality, that's a big

1 decision. That's real, and you want to make sure  
2 that you've got it right.

3 MR. HOSKINS: Right. I completely  
4 understand that.

5 THE CHAIRPERSON: Matt, when Nancy  
6 Johnson spoke today, she talked about the fact  
7 that some districts are not using electronic  
8 signatures for those documents -- for those IEP  
9 documents in terms of parents signing for the  
10 reevaluation process or parents signing for their  
11 children to actually be -- receive services in the  
12 special education. I'm wondering why not.

13 MR. HOSKINS: You know, that's a good  
14 question. There are funds available through some  
15 of the allotments that we've put out. That could  
16 be an allowable expense to have that. That has  
17 been a local decision about whether they want to  
18 use some sort of electronic signature for that.

19 DR. HUTCHINSON: I can speak to two  
20 parts of that from a parent perspectives. Some of  
21 our parents don't have the full electronic access  
22 that they might to use a DocuSign or the  
23 technological skills, and we don't want that to be  
24 a barrier.

25 The second thing, sometimes signing

1 onto those systems require staff training, and so  
2 that turnaround time just might not be within the  
3 window that we've been able to accomplish it just  
4 yet, and also vetting out the systems that are  
5 going to work for your -- for your districts can  
6 just sometimes take a little bit longer.

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

8 MR. HOSKINS: I really appreciate the  
9 opportunity to provide these updates. Don't ever  
10 hesitate to reach out if I can help with  
11 anything -- with me or anybody else here at DPI.  
12 Again, we really appreciate your feedback and the  
13 role of this Council. So thanks so much for your  
14 dedication and being here today.

15 THE CHAIRPERSON: Leigh Mobley?

16 MS. MOBLEY: Can you guys hear me?

17 THE CHAIRPERSON: Hi. Yes.

18 MS. MOBLEY: I hope everybody's doing  
19 well. My name is Leigh Mobley, even though I show  
20 up as speaking as Michelle. That is my first  
21 name. I've never used it.

22 So I am a Dispute Resolution  
23 Consultant with the Policy, Monitoring, and Audit  
24 section. Part of my role is to investigate formal  
25 state complaints. I've been with the Division

1 almost seven years now so I have a little history,  
2 and I tried to include some information just to  
3 give you guys a perspective of where we are in our  
4 state complaint process.

5 So up on the screen, you can see that  
6 currently we have -- actually, now we have 78  
7 complaints. Out of those 78, 11 were determined  
8 insufficient. Some of -- I believe there's been a  
9 few that have been withdrawn by parents. I don't  
10 have that number, but -- so we're kind of on  
11 target to probably have close to 160 complaints,  
12 if we're going at this rate, by the of the fiscal  
13 year. As you can see at the bottom, in 2019-2020,  
14 we only had 119 and 87 reports were issued. So  
15 we're -- we definitely have more this year than we  
16 have in the past.

17 The top five issues we've seen -- and  
18 these are not necessarily in order -- COVID-  
19 related issues is implementation of the IEP and  
20 development, review, and revisions of the IEP.  
21 Another one is Child Find. I think Matt talked  
22 about that a little bit with the systemic ones.  
23 We've seen some placement decision issues and  
24 prior written notice. There is a lot more issues  
25 that are investigated, but those are repeated

1 through the past 78 that we have.

2 That's kind of an overview of  
3 everything. Does anybody have specific questions  
4 about the formal state complaints that have been  
5 filed so far? Nothing?

6 THE CHAIRPERSON: So are most of the  
7 Child Find complaints with children in terms of  
8 the dyslexia or the reading issues?

9 MS. MOBLEY: Well, some are, some are  
10 not. You know, there are some that have to do  
11 with the reading issues, but there are others that  
12 are related to, you know, other disability areas  
13 such as other health impairment.

14 Anybody else have questions?

15 **(No audible response.)**

16 MS. MOBLEY: Well, you guys are an  
17 easy group. I appreciate you allowing me to share  
18 that information. At the end of the year, we do  
19 end-of-the-year reports on our facilitation,  
20 mediation, state complaints, and due processes,  
21 and they are posted on our website once we get  
22 through.

23 We have to submit that information to  
24 the federal government as well. They're on our  
25 website. We also have past reports on our

1 website, if you interested in looking at those.

2 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

3 MS. MOBLEY: All right. Thanks for  
4 your time, and you guys have a great rest of your  
5 day.

6 DR. HUTCHINSON: Cynthia, this is---

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: So we're doing  
8 lunch, is that right?

9 DR. HUTCHINSON: I just wanted to---  
10 This is Christy, Cynthia.

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yeah.

12 DR. HUTCHINSON: One comment. I  
13 noticed that in our procedures, we have to have  
14 folks signed in by 12:30 to make a public comment.  
15 I think we're pretty close to that right now.

16 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes. But we did  
17 receive---

18 DR. HUTCHINSON: Go ahead.

19 THE CHAIRPERSON: We did receive one  
20 mail-in -- one written comment.

21 DR. HUTCHINSON: Yes, that was going  
22 to be my comment. Because we're taking a brief  
23 for lunch break, if there's anybody listening in  
24 and just to be cognizant about other folks' time,  
25 I would just propose that we move that up right

1 now, and I'd be happy to share it because when we  
2 look at that comment, it really reflects Nancy and  
3 Matt's comments very well.

4 The parent really conceptualizes the  
5 idea of us being closed down for COVID and  
6 providing FAPE to students and timely response,  
7 all things and trends that have come up all  
8 morning long. So I just wondered if it would be  
9 appropriate to summarize that right now.

10 THE CHAIRPERSON: I absolutely am  
11 okay with that. Anyone not okay with the idea  
12 that we go ahead and summarize that now?

13 **(No audible response.)**

14 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. I think you  
15 can go for it, Christy.

16 DR. HUTCHINSON: So this is -- Diane  
17 forwarded it. She received it from -- since it's  
18 a public comment, I believe that we're required to  
19 state the name. It was a K.W. She is a parent of  
20 a student with a disability in Union County Public  
21 Schools, and the topic is "Failure to provide FAPE  
22 to eligible students by dragging out the  
23 identification process."

24 And it's a tad bit lengthy, but I  
25 think that I could probably do it justice by

1 summarizing it. But she is writing today as a  
2 devastated and heartbroken mother of wrongdoings  
3 of this particular county. And know our objective  
4 as a council is not necessarily to do compliance  
5 findings but see if there are trends, and I heard  
6 a lot of trends in her email that we also heard  
7 from the Division today. So I feel it's  
8 appropriate to point out some of the details.

9 She describes the federal law of  
10 Public Law 94-142 or IDEA now that we know in  
11 requiring triannual reevaluations and also  
12 addressing Child Find. She wrote this back in  
13 October, and at the time, they were ten and a half  
14 months or so out from identifying her son. She  
15 feels that he was not provided FAPE because there  
16 was a delay in evaluation. Her and her family  
17 have been patient. And then added COVID to the  
18 mix which delayed their ability to get an adequate  
19 evaluation.

20 She speaks about the child's  
21 disability, and considering I stated her name, I  
22 feel it's probably not appropriate to mention her  
23 son's disability specifically because I believe  
24 that probably could be identifiable, just to be  
25 cognizant of the child's privacy.

1                   But she states that conducting the  
2 meeting set for November 2nd was delayed due to  
3 their personal move to a different county. But  
4 the trends in her email speak to the things that  
5 Nancy and Matt spoke about, and that is, the  
6 district's ability to do a timely evaluation and  
7 placement, speaking to Child Find, due to school  
8 closures, and scheduling meetings and quality  
9 parent involvement.

10                   She says that both her and her child  
11 have been put through emotional, physical, and  
12 financial strain over the last nine years, 11  
13 schools, private tutoring, occupational therapy,  
14 speech therapy, mental health services, outpatient  
15 treatment, inpatient residential treatment,  
16 psychiatric care, all while working full-time  
17 jobs, and I'm sure we can all empathize with the  
18 plight all those things bring.

19                   Her last paragraph says, "I ask that,  
20 receiving this message, please create the  
21 awareness in changing how our state ed department,  
22 national and state legislatures, and in this  
23 particular situation, the Union County Public  
24 Schools and Board of Education. Why is it  
25 acceptable to perform heinous acts towards our

1 families who live within the community, pay taxes,  
2 and support our schools and drive economic outlook  
3 in both the state and the county levels. I do  
4 this for my son, the number of other children  
5 suffering, and those who are yet to attend their  
6 first day of school."

7 But her point about delaying Child  
8 Find is one we've all spoken about this morning,  
9 so I thought that was very appropriate. That  
10 trend, if COVID continues and school shutdowns  
11 continue and our numbers don't look like we're  
12 helping out that effort to bring kids all back to  
13 school, we just have to come up with some  
14 solutions to be able to meet Child Find because we  
15 have students with disabilities that are sitting  
16 out there and struggling even more than they ever  
17 have before.

18 So that is it. I'll turn it over to  
19 you, Cynthia.

20 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I'm  
21 here. I think Matt touched on some of the things  
22 [inaudible] already looking at, and I also think  
23 if we encourage our families, our stakeholders  
24 that we're engaged with to fill out the survey, to  
25 make a comment so that the Division gets a clear

1 picture from parents, from the actual  
2 stakeholders, from the actual people who are  
3 actually doing this work, who are living through  
4 this, that we can make changes in our state, I  
5 think so.

6 DR. HUTCHINSON: The only thing that  
7 I would just like to point out is that we have a  
8 lot of talented folks on this committee, and we  
9 cannot be the only state suffering from the same  
10 exact challenges. And so as all of our members  
11 engage with their professional organizations and  
12 personal organizations, I just hope that we'd stay  
13 open-minded about what are other options and what  
14 are other states doing to solve this problem  
15 because we've never lived through a pandemic  
16 before while providing FAPE to students. So I'm  
17 super open-minded to what other states are doing  
18 and researching that.

19 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Would that  
20 be---

21 MS. LEYTON: I just wanted to comment  
22 to that point about what other states are doing.  
23 This is Terri. As part of my job, I support other  
24 Parent Training and Information Centers across the  
25 Southeast United States, and I mean we're hearing

1 the same thing in every state. The school  
2 districts are either failing or struggling to  
3 provide FAPE and to offer all of the same things  
4 that we're talking about today with regard to  
5 Child Find and getting the process done in a  
6 timely manner and all of that.

7 And it's across the board. Everybody  
8 is having difficulty doing the same thing because  
9 for so long, everything has been in-person and now  
10 it's not and students aren't in school, and  
11 there's a backlog of evaluations and assessments  
12 that need to be completed now that some school  
13 districts are providing some in-person.

14 So I mean I applaud you for wanting  
15 to reach out to other states, and I think that's  
16 absolutely necessary. I think you're going to  
17 find the answer is we're struggling too. So  
18 you're all in the same boat, I guess is what I'm  
19 saying. Don't beat yourself up too much.

20 THE CHAIRPERSON: So any other  
21 comments or thoughts?

22 MS. UTZ: No. And I don't see any  
23 parents or guests logged into -- logged in either.

24 THE CHAIRPERSON: Actually, we've had  
25 no -- we've had no parents or public comments

1 registered.

2 MS. UTZ: And it looks like Matt has  
3 his hand raised.

4 MR. HOSKINS: Yeah, I just wanted to  
5 respond to the -- we definitely are keeping in  
6 close contact with what other states are doing  
7 through a variety of the parent centers through --  
8 OSEP has a series of Technical Assistance Centers  
9 that we are in direct contact with weekly as well  
10 as NASDSE.

11 So we are keeping a close ear and are  
12 always willing to see if we can be innovative and  
13 meet the new challenges that we're facing every  
14 day. So I appreciate that comment, and we are  
15 certainly doing that.

16 MS. UTZ: So, Cynthia, since you guys  
17 read the only comment that we have and there was  
18 no guest signed in by 12:30, it doesn't look like  
19 we will have a public comment section at 1:00. So  
20 I don't know if before lunch you guys want to talk  
21 about subcommittees and then take a lunch because  
22 we can adjourn the meeting before lunch, and then  
23 everyone else can decide exactly what time they  
24 want to meet for their subcommittees.

25 THE CHAIRPERSON: So I think we could

1 talk about the subcommittees now. Is that okay,  
2 Christy?

3 DR. HUTCHINSON: That's a great idea.

4 THE CHAIRPERSON: So we have our  
5 subcommittees, and to get into those subcommittees  
6 and see, Alexis is putting up the list for us. We  
7 need a chair for the Reports and Data committee  
8 and we need some additional people -- what  
9 committee was that?

10 MS. UTZ: Reports and Data, yeah,  
11 they only have two.

12 THE CHAIRPERSON: Certainly need some  
13 more. And I think it was Policies and Procedures  
14 [inaudible].

15 MS. UTZ: Huh-uh. They have one,  
16 two, three, four, five, six---

17 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Okay.  
18 They're good.

19 MS. UTZ: So Policies and Procedures  
20 has a fair amount, Unmet Needs has four or  
21 five -- four, and then Reports and Data only has  
22 two.

23 THE CHAIRPERSON: So every council  
24 member is encouraged, sort of required to choose a  
25 committee.

1 MS. UTZ: You-all speak up and tell  
2 me where to put you.

3 MS. CARATELLI: Okay. This is Joanne  
4 Caratelli, you can put me on Unmet Needs, please.  
5 Thank you, ma'am.

6 Can I ask you another question while  
7 I have you?

8 MS. UTZ: Yes.

9 MS. CARATELLI: I had a little bit of  
10 trouble just downloading the app and getting  
11 started this morning. So I might have missed---  
12 Did I need to sign in any particular place? Is  
13 there a separate form or are we all good when you  
14 took attendance and we introduced ourselves?

15 MS. UTZ: Nope, I take attendance, so  
16 you're all good.

17 MS. CARATELLI: Okay. Perfect.  
18 Thank you.

19 MR. POTTER: This is Matt Potter.  
20 Ideally, I would also end up on Unmet Needs.  
21 However, I also don't want to overpopulate that  
22 committee and I don't want to leave any committees  
23 orphaned either. So I'm kind of -- I feel stuck  
24 between a rock and a hard place because I feel  
25 like Unmet Needs is really where my skills would

1 probably best be served.

2 But, you know, like I said, I want to  
3 make sure we have an even spread across  
4 committees. So if it wouldn't unbalance things  
5 too much, then I think that would probably be the  
6 best place for me to be, given the fact that I am  
7 actually an individual with a disability who came  
8 through a school system, admittedly not a North  
9 Carolina one, and so I have a lot of life  
10 experience there.

11 But anyway I just wanted to throw  
12 that out there while we were talking about it.

13 THE CHAIRPERSON: So Matt your voice  
14 would be welcome on the Unmet Needs Committee.

15 MR. POTTER: All right. Then, I will  
16 do that. Like I said, I just -- I hesitate to see  
17 any committee that only has, you know, two or  
18 three people on it while a bunch of others have,  
19 you know, more than twice that. I guess I've been  
20 on a lot of boards, so it's my instinct to try to  
21 balance things, but if you guys are good with  
22 that, then so am I. All right. Thanks.

23 MS. GEORGE: This is Leanna.  
24 Welcome, Matt. Glad you're here. I forgot which  
25 committee I'm on. Can you-all look real quick and

1 verify which one I'm on?

2 MS. UTZ: You said this was Leanna?

3 MS. GEORGE: This is Leanna, yes.

4 MS. UTZ: You are on Policies and  
5 Procedures.

6 MS. GEORGE: Okay. Do we have too  
7 many on that? Should I switch over to Reports and  
8 Data?

9 MS. UTZ: It you would like to.

10 MS. GEORGE: Sure. Why not.

11 MS. UTZ: Okay.

12 THE CHAIRPERSON: Anyone else not on  
13 a committee?

14 MS. POPE: Yes, hello. This is Kenya  
15 Pope. I don't know a lot about the Reports and  
16 Data, but I would be willing to learn, and I would  
17 like to be on that subcommittee.

18 MS. UTZ: Thank you.

19 MS. LEYTON: And I am a little bit of  
20 a data geek, so I would really like to be on the  
21 Reports and Data as well.

22 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very  
23 much. Anyone else not serving on a committee that  
24 think they'd like to? You know, it's a part of  
25 our role as members of this particular council.

1 MS. UTZ: So I think that covers  
2 about everyone that's logged in today. Is there  
3 anyone on the Reports and Data that would like to  
4 be the chair? And, basically, that just means  
5 that you're my point of contact and like I share  
6 documents with you to be able to share out, and  
7 you record the session information. That's it.  
8 Not really too demanding.

9 THE CHAIRPERSON: Alexis, is this  
10 form available in our Google---

11 MS. UTZ: Yes.

12 THE CHAIRPERSON: ---documents you  
13 sent out to Council? Okay. Great.

14 MS. UTZ: Well, it's available to --  
15 to the chairs. Hopefully, if I did it correctly,  
16 you should have a subcommittee form. I'm hoping  
17 it shared correctly.

18 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay.

19 MS. CARATELLI: This is Joanne  
20 Caratelli again. And I'm sorry. This is my first  
21 meeting. So how do I -- after lunch, how do I  
22 meet up with---

23 MS. UTZ: So it's the same link that  
24 you are on now, but all I do is, I hit a button  
25 that sends you to your subcommittee room, and then

1 you guys meet, and when you're done, you just hang  
2 up and it's over.

3 MS. CARATELLI: Perfect. All right.  
4 Thank you.

5 MS. UTZ: Sorry, Lisa. I think I had  
6 you muted by mistake. I see your comments. You  
7 should be able to speak now.

8 MS. PHILLIPS: Oh, I was going to ask  
9 if Leanna would be willing to be the chair of the  
10 Data Committee. I think she brings a lot of  
11 expertise from her former role on the Council, and  
12 I'd like to ask her to consider that.

13 MS. UTZ: She might have lost  
14 connection. I think she was on the phone.

15 MS. GEORGE: No, I'm here. I was  
16 like great. Honestly, I don't mind stepping up,  
17 but I'm like back in school now myself. I'm  
18 pursuing a degree in paralegal technology at my  
19 community college. So I mean I really don't have  
20 the time to be able to invest in being a chair of  
21 a subcommittee right now, but [inaudible].

22 MS. PHILLIPS: Fair enough. Thank  
23 you.

24 MS. UTZ: So I guess we can kind of  
25 leave it at that for now. I know you guys want to

1 get to lunch. Do you want to go ahead and adjourn  
2 the meeting so that Becky doesn't have to come  
3 back on afterwards?

4 THE CHAIRPERSON: We can do that.  
5 And what time do the subcommittees need to come  
6 back to meet?

7 MS. UTZ: That will be up to you to  
8 decide.

9 MS. GRANT: I have a question.

10 MS. UTZ: Yes.

11 MS. GRANT: I'm sorry. Do we have  
12 work -- do we have work in our subcommittees that  
13 we need to be doing?

14 THE CHAIRPERSON: Could you put that  
15 document back up again, Alexis? So if you look  
16 there, each subcommittee has kind of its goals or  
17 marching orders. The Unmet Needs Committee -- so  
18 the Unmet Needs Committee, they determine topics  
19 for council action relative to unmet needs of  
20 students with disabilities. So within that  
21 particular group, that's what they do. Diane  
22 Coffey is the chair there.

23 MS. UTZ: I have no idea what's going  
24 on there. There we go. Sorry.

25 THE CHAIRPERSON: So with the

1 Policies and Procedures Committee, you comment  
2 publicly on rules or regulations proposed by the  
3 State Education Agency regarding the education of  
4 students with disabilities. You advise the State  
5 Education Agency in developing and implementing  
6 policies relating to the coordination of services  
7 for students with disabilities. So that's kind of  
8 the marching orders or the goals for that  
9 particular committee.

10 So that committee has worked on  
11 things like our policy for public comments and  
12 things of that nature, and I think they're working  
13 on something to do with our bylaws, is that  
14 correct?

15 MS. GRANT: Abby's not here so---

16 THE CHAIRPERSON: Oh. We might need  
17 to -- Abby is having a lot of medical issues in  
18 her family right now, so somebody might need to  
19 step into -- think about stepping into the chair  
20 of that committee.

21 MS. UTZ: Well, and I just pulled up  
22 the document from last meeting where Policies and  
23 Procedures met. So they do have stuff that they  
24 started, and I can share this -- I will share this  
25 with everyone that is in committee so anyone can

1 access it.

2 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Yes.

3 MS. UTZ: But I mean it's there. So  
4 I do know that Policies and Procedures did have  
5 some things that they were working on with some  
6 action steps. Unmet Needs has one in there as  
7 well, but I didn't review it, so I don't know if  
8 they have next steps done that they're working on.

9 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. If you could  
10 send that out to all the committee members in  
11 those particular committees, that would be  
12 excellent.

13 MS. GRANT: Thank you. I don't mind  
14 co-chairing Policies and Procedures with Abby. I  
15 would just hate to take it away from her  
16 completely, but I mean, if you-all are okay, we  
17 could be co-chairs.

18 MS. UTZ: Yeah, she might need some  
19 help right now. I also put the Drive folder link  
20 in there just for easy access. If you want to  
21 click on it now so you have it, but I will email  
22 it out to everyone and make sure everyone has  
23 access to it.

24 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Thank you.  
25 So we're at -- what time are we at now?

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MS. UTZ: 12:46.

THE CHAIRPERSON: 12:46. So do you want to be back in your subcommittees about 1:00, 1:15? Is that good?

DR. HUTCHINSON: Sounds good to me.

MR. POTTER: Just as a -- just as a quick matter of procedure, remind me real quick. So we click the same link that we got here by this morning, is that correct?

MS. UTZ: Yes.

MR. POTTER: Okay. Okay. Good to know.

MS. UTZ: When I see everyone's back, I will start your rooms for your subcommittee.

MR. POTTER: Got it.

MS. UTZ: So when you join, in theory, if it's working correctly, you should automatically be sent to your room to work.

MR. POTTER: Got it. Okay. Just wanted to make sure I knew how to -- you know, how everything operates. All right. Thank you.

MS. UTZ: Yep.

THE CHAIRPERSON: At 1:00, we're back for the subcommittee work. And we're going to need a motion to adjourn this meeting because we

1 will adjourn this meeting.

2 DR. HUTCHINSON: Cynthia, did you  
3 just say---

4 THE CHAIRPERSON: Excuse me?

5 DR. HUTCHINSON: Did you say 1:00 or  
6 1:15?

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: I thought 1:15  
8 would be good, but then I thought 1:00. So is  
9 1:15 better?

10 MS. TERHAAR: 1:15, please.

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Excellent.  
12 1:15 back in our subcommittees.

13 MR. POTTER: 1:15, it is. I will  
14 motion to adjourn.

15 THE CHAIRPERSON: Can we get a  
16 second?

17 MS. GRANT: I can second it.

18 THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. And would  
19 everybody vote by saying aye for those who agree.

20 **(Multiple council members responded**  
21 **aye.)**

22 THE CHAIRPERSON: We're adjourned.  
23 Thank you so much and happy holidays.

24 **(At 12:52 p.m., the quarterly meeting**  
25 **adjourned.)**

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, REBECCA P. SCOTT, State-Certified Verbatim Reporter, do hereby certify:

That said proceeding was reported by me and the foregoing pages, numbered 4 through 141, are a true record of the proceeding to the best of my knowledge and belief;

That I am neither related to nor employed by any of the parties or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor interested directly or indirectly in the matter in controversy, and am not financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

Certified this 6th day of January, 2021.



Rebecca P. Scott