The quarterly meeting of the Council on Educational Services for Exceptional Children was held on the 10th day of March, 2021, via Webex, commencing at 9:30 a.m.
COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cynthia Daniels-Hall, Chairperson
Christy Hutchinson, Vice Chairperson

Anthony Baker
Sara Bigley
Diane Coffey
Jennifer Degen
Christy Grant
Jennifer Grady
Kristen Hodges
Selene Johnson
Terri Leyton
Virginia Moorefield
Lisa Phillips
Kenya Pope
Matthew Potter
Kimaree Sanders
Marge Terhaar

STAFF:

Kelley Blas
Kim Evans
Matt Hoskins
Nancy Johnson
Danyelle Sanders
Sherry Thomas
Alexis Utz

COURT REPORTER:

Rebecca P. Scott
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Thereupon, the following proceeding was held:

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. So good morning and welcome, everyone. Thank you for sharing your time for children across North Carolina and especially thank you for participating in this very beautiful day.

So we're going to do introductions, and Alexis, if you could help me with that.

MS. UTZ: Sure. So you should see on your screen a list of council members. I have tried to keep up with them, but we'll go in this order. So, Cynthia, we'll start with you.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. I'm Cynthia Daniels-Hall. I'm a parent and I'm from Cary, North Carolina. I have children on the autism spectrum.

MS. UTZ: All right. It does not look like Shanna or Joanne are on the call right now. So I'll go to you, Diane.

MS. COFFEY: Hello. I'm Diane Coffey and I'm from Watauga County, and I have two children with special needs.

MS. UTZ: All right. I don't see Leanna right now. I don't see Abby or Kristen. So let's go to Jennifer D.
MS. DEGEN: Hey there. I'm Jennifer Degen. I represent the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. I've been teaching in special education for 20 years, and thanks for having me.

MS. UTZ: All right. Christy G.?

She's here and I saw her unmute, but---

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. She might be having some technical difficulty.

MS. UTZ: Yes.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay.

MS. UTZ: We'll come back to her and see if we can get that to work in a little bit.

Next we'll go to Anthony.

MR. BAKER: Hello. I'm Anthony Baker. I'm an assistant principal for the Alamance-Burlington School System in Elon. I'm also a former EC teacher and EC chair.

MS. UTZ: All right. How about Marge?

MS. TERHAAR: Hello. This is Marge. Good morning, everyone. I am the representative for the IHE, professor at Meredith, coordinator of the graduate programs, and a parent of two young men with disabilities.

MS. UTZ: All right. Christy H.?
DR. HUTCHINSON: Hi. Christy Hutchinson. EC Director for Lincoln Charter Schools. On this committee, I represent Charter Schools, and I believe I've been in special education about 22 years. So happy to serve and look forward to a good meeting.

MS. UTZ: All right. Terri?

MS. LEYTON: Hi. This is Terri Leyton, and I represent the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center in North Carolina. And I am also a parent to a daughter with Down syndrome, and a little boy not on any spectrum. I didn't want to leave him out, but I didn't know how to introduce him.

MS. UTZ: All right. Next, we have Matthew.

MR. POTTER: Hi, everybody. This is Matthew Potter. Sometimes I go by Matt so that's what I'm going to use here today. It doesn't matter. They're both good. I am an individual with lived experience with disabilities. Specifically, I have cerebral palsy.

There's no need to change the name, by the way. I was just commenting on that just so people didn't look at that and be like confused by
what was in the participant list.

MS. UTZ: You're good.

MR. POTTER: Anyway, so it is me. It is not another Matt or Matthew because that is an extremely common name, which is really why mentioned it. Anyway, like I said, I am an individual with lived experience. I have cerebral palsy, to be specific, and I am here to help bring the perspective of someone who directly lives a lot of the things that we talk about, albeit more from a physical perspective than some of the other types of disabilities that we discuss. But still, hopefully, it is helpful and insightful and valuable for everybody. And as always, it's good to be here.

MS. UTZ: Thank you. All right. We'll go to Ginny.

MS. MOORE: Hi. I'm Ginny Moorefield here in Wake County. I have a son with traumatic brain injury, and I'm also an interpreter for the deaf and a regular ed teacher.

MS. UTZ: All right. It looks like next will be Kenya.

MS. POPE: Good morning. Can everyone here me?
MS. UTZ: Yes.

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

MS. UTZ: Welcome. All right. I always pronounce your name wrong. I think it's Sara.

MS. BIGLEY: It's all good. It's Sara.

MS. UTZ: Sara.

MS. BIGLEY: Yes, I know. "Sar" like car. It looks like Sara, but thank you.

MS. UTZ: And I know it's not Sara, and that's why I always end up saying it wrong.

MS. BIGLEY: I appreciate it. Thank you. My name is Sara Bigley, and I'm the State Education Agency Foster Care Point of Contact. This is under ESSA for [inaudible] for students in foster care. Thank you so much. I'm always excited to be with this group. It's a great group.

MS. UTZ: Thank you. All right. And Lisa?

MS. PHILLIPS: Good morning. I hope
you can hear me. My name is Lisa Phillips. I'm the State Coordinator for the North Carolina Homeless Education Program, and I am under Federal Program Monitoring and Support, and I'm located at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with Sara [inaudible] technical assistance center.

MS. UTZ: Thank you. All right. It looks like Jennifer G. has joined us, if you want to say hello.

MS. GRADY: Hi. Yes, this is Jennifer Grady. I am a parent of a child with autism, and I think I'm also listed in the Council as a business rep. I work for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina.

MS. UTZ: All right. Thank you. And, Christy G., I unmuted you. See if you can talk now.

(No audible response.)

MS. UTZ: All right. Well, Christy Grant is here with us. We'll see if her volume or her audio works later, but hopefully, you can hear us. You can send me a message in the chat, if you need to.

But, Cynthia, it looks like we do have 14 present. So we can go ahead and do
motions and all that good stuff.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Great.

MS. GRADY: Can you hear me now?

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

MS. UTZ: Yep, barely hear you.

MS. GRANT: There's evidently something wrong with my microphone. I'll continue to try to work on that. But I'm Christy Grant. I'm the Executive Director for Student Services and Special Education in Nash County Public Schools and the traditional LEA EC director representative.

MS. UTZ: Cynthia, before you go on, I should mention that we also -- I am Alexis. I'm the Parent Liaison with the EC Division. We also have Danyelle present. So, Danyelle, if you want to say hello.

MS. SANDERS: Hello, everyone. I'm Danyelle Sanders, the Administrator for Policy, Monitoring and Audit.

MS. UTZ: All right. We also have Becky.

MS. SCOTT: Good morning, everybody. Glad to be here.

MS. UTZ: All right. And joining us
today, we have two, I guess, presenters/visitors. We have Kelley Blas.

MS. BLAS: Good morning, everyone.

I'm sorry. I was trying to unmute. This is Kelley Blas, and I'm the IDEA Part B Data Manager for the Exceptional Children Division.

MS. UTZ: All right. And then we also have Kim Evans joining us today. She will be our first presenter in a few minutes.

MS. EVANS: Hi. This is Kim Evans, and I work at DPI in the Department of Educator Preparation.

MS. UTZ: All right. And it does not look like anyone else has joined us. So, Cynthia, it's all yours.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So thank you. Welcome. We're going to do a quick review of this current agenda and see if we have any questions, any additions, or anything of that nature. Take about a minute or two to review the agenda.

MS. UTZ: I should ask, as you're doing that, does anyone need the link for the agenda? Everyone should have it, but just in case.

MS. GRANT: Can you hear me better
now?

MS. UTZ: Yes, we can.

MS. GRANT: Okay. Thanks. I joined by phone. Thank you.

(Council members reviewed the agenda.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Any questions, any suggestions of changes or anything on the agenda? And if not, can I get a motion to approve the agenda?

DR. HUTCHINSON: This is Christy Hutchinson. I motion that we approve the agenda.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Can we get a second?

MS. COFFEY: This is Diane Coffey. I second to approve the agenda.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So can we take a vote? Those who are -- who approve the agenda?

(Multiple council members responded aye.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Any opposed?

(No audible response.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Any abstentions?

(No audible response.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. I think the
agenda is approved.

Do they have the December agenda -- the minutes from December? Sorry.

MS. UTZ: If they have the agenda pulled up, they should be able to click on the link, but I will put that in the chat box.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. So if you could take another minute or two to look at the December meeting note minutes, and any changes or corrections or additions to those minutes, please let us know.

(Council members reviewed the December 2020 Summary of Actions.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Can I get a motion to approve the December 2020 meeting minutes?

MS. UTZ: Lisa motioned to approve.

MS. GRANT: I'll second.

MS. UTZ: And that was Christy G.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So all those who approve?

(Multiple council members responded aye.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Any opposed?

(No audible response.)
THE CHAIRPERSON: Any abstentions?

(No audible response.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: So it looks like that has passed as well. So we're going to move on to our first presenter, Kim Evans.

MS. UTZ: All right. And let me just give her presentation mode really quick -- presenter. All right. Kim, you should be able to share your desktop and take it away.

MS. EVANS: Sorry. I'm not seeing where I--- Oh. It's right here. I'm sorry about that.

MS. UTZ: No, you're fine.

MS. EVANS: Good morning, everyone. Can everyone see my PowerPoint?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes.

MS. EVANS: Okay. Great. Great. I'm Kim Evans and I'm a Program Coordinator, and I work in the Division of Educator Recruitment and Support and in the Department of Educator Preparation, and I help oversee PEPSC, which is the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission. So they provide policy and rule recommendations to the State Board around licensure and teacher/educator standards.
And I just wanted to come today and talk to you a little bit about what's going on with licensure update-wise that pertains to, in particular, EC-GC, or the exceptional children general license, and then also what's going on with diversifying the teacher pipeline because even though that doesn't necessarily say EC in name, it will affect EC.

So I'm going to go through a slew of information this morning, so if you have questions, if you can type them in the chat box, I will be happy to answer questions at the end, and even if you think of questions after I'm gone, if you can just relay those to your point of contact here, then I would be happy to answer those through email as well.

And, first, I'm going to tackle licensure exam updates, and there was a request to go into pass rates, in particular, for EC exams, and then also Foundations of Reading, that test is part of the licensure exam for EC-GC, that license, and elementary education. And so that test is being updated by the State of Massachusetts as one of their requests through the vendor. So I'm going to go into that as well.
And also a copy of this presentation and then also some other supplemental -- like a report and some other things will be sent to you [inaudible].

So I just want to just review really quickly what the licensure exam requirements are for EC-GC. There is a Reading Subtest, and that's the one that has been updated that I'll get to a little bit later. There's a Math Subtest, and then there's a EC-specific test, which is the Core Knowledge Praxis II Test, and I put a link in here that will go directly to Licensure 003, which is a state board policy that will list that for you, if you do want to review that.

And the reason I focused on EC-GC is because that is one of the most popular licensure areas for exceptional children, and so I wanted to get the pass rate data to you as an example of what you would see for these types of licensure exams. However, EC-GC and in this case elementary education, they are more of the exception because they have the Reading Subtest and the Math Subtest in addition -- well, in this case, this one has the EC Core Test.

So I want you to notice that there are two different colored bars here, and the blue
bar is the first attempts bar. So that's letting me know that from January 1st, 2018, to December 31st, 2020, that this data looked at the first attempts for that time period. This is not cohort data but a certain time period. And then also the best attempts, which is the white or the grayish colored bar.

And you'll notice that the Reading Subtest and the Math Subtest for the first attempts versus the EC Core Test, the pass rate is quite a bit lower as well as also the best attempts, and then overall the first attempts is lower than the best attempts. So you will see that the EC Core licensure exam has a much higher pass rate than the Reading Subtest and the Math Subtest.

I also -- I had also looked at EC-AC, the adapted curriculum, because you can take the -- one of the EC-specific tests there too, and that was also in the nineties. So, in particular, the licensure exams where they're struggling to pass those are the Reading Subtest and the Math Subtest in contrast to the EC Core Test.

And then I wanted to let you know how many test takers there were. There were 1056 for
each of these tests, and then you can see how many
passers there were for the first attempt pass rate
and then also what the percentage is here. This
is just a different way of showing that
to you so that you can see the numbers of test
takers and passers. And then also for the best
attempt, this also spreads it out the same way,
and you'll see that EC Core comes out ahead both
times.

So I'm going to go right into
Foundations of Reading Test, and that test is
being updated for these five different reasons,
and I'm going to provide you with supplemental --
a crosswalk with the dyslexia standards and then
also a comparison between the current Foundations
of Reading Test and the updated Foundations of
Reading Test.

There's a chart that Pearson is
providing -- they have provided to DPI so that we
can look at this test. So PEPSC has a group of
experts in the field looking at this test and
comparing the current test with the updated test
as far as these two charts, and I'm going to give
these to you as far as the supplemental data
for -- that goes with my presentation. And
they're looking at -- these experts are looking at whether this test should remain as the Reading Subtest and is still meeting the needs of North Carolina as far as licensing elementary educators and EC-GC educators.

So these are the five areas that the update is around, and you'll notice this in the chart that contrasts the current test and the updated test -- I'll let you go through that when I hand that over to you after the presentation, but I wanted to make you aware that these were the five areas and, in particular, because the State Board has expressed interest on making sure that things are aligned with the Science of Reading, that this new test update does align with the Science of Reading.

This next part is about diversifying the teacher pipeline in North Carolina, and I'm going to look at these five areas. The first four are four different groups that have focused on diversifying the teacher pipeline, and I'll go through each one and where exactly they are focusing on that diversification.

So the first one is the DRIVE Task Force, and I happen to be a member of the DRIVE
Task Force, and they're a group of educators and educator representatives from across the state in different areas and facets of education. And we were charged with -- by the Governor's Office to research and think about how diversification is happening in the state, what else needs to happen, and where we need to really focus how we're diversifying the teacher workforce.

And so I'm going to give you the final report from the DRIVE Task Force. I'm going to give you a little more information about it in just a few minutes. And in the back in the appendices, you will see the licensure exam data, and that is actually cohort data, and you'll be able to see -- even though it's not just special education or special children data, you will see from -- I think it's 2017 to 2020 the licensure exam pass rates. So that is towards the back in one of the appendices. So I just wanted to bring that out and talk to you a little bit about that during the presentation and -- or highlight that.

And then the State Board gave particular goals, and I'll highlight the one that has to do diversification of the workforce. And then Stride Working Group -- so the beauty of
these four organizations or groups is that they have been working together. So you will see a lot of overlap between members of DRIVE and the members of the State Board or the members of Stride Working Group and DRIVE. So there's been a lot of overlap on what the ideas have been because there's a lot of collaboration across all four groups.

And so the Stride Working Group met regularly, and they came up with recommendations, and actually, a lot of their recommendations overlap with the DRIVE Task Force recommendations, and some of the DRIVE Task Force recommendations also focused on what PEPSC has been doing with their own subcommittee work around diversification of the teacher pipeline.

So I'll start with the DRIVE Task Force, and I talked a little bit about how they came to be. It was through an Executive Order, and I'm not going to read the slide to you, but we were charged with really looking at how diverse the educator pool was versus the percentage of students and different -- with different racial backgrounds and what we needed to do to really diversify that educator pool, not just in the
larger districts but across the state. And so we really had to hone in on different programs, and we even had people from other states come and visit and give presentations, and we had a partnership with DPI focusing on data and really seeing what holes there were around that diversification.

And this all started -- before the Executive Order for the DRIVE Task Force, there was the DRIVE Summit, and so the Executive Order was presented at the DRIVE Summit to then create the DRIVE Task Force. So the summit brought together educators with different backgrounds, and they were able to talk about how they worked with diversifying the field, especially through educator preparation and training of teachers from diverse backgrounds, and the need for that as well.

Then our meetings happened starting in May and ended in December because the final report was due to Governor Cooper January -- in January 2021, and so we were able to submit that to the Governor in December 2020. So it was a lot of hard work and on a regular basis, but we were able to get that done through three different
subgroups: recruitment and then preparation and then also retention.

So we focused on each of those areas, and as you look through that report, you'll be able to see what of the three areas those recommendations -- what they have to do with those three aspects. So some of them might have to do with recruitment and preparation or they might only have to do with recruitment, but it shows you where it belongs in the teacher pipeline and then also who would be responsible to help make this happen.

And then the Stride Working Group, I had mentioned them a little bit earlier. Best NC, which is a nonprofit that brings businesses together to support education, they hosted the NC Stride Working Group, and they called it Stride because it means Strategic Teacher Recruitment with Intentionality, Diversity, and Excellence Working Group.

And so they had regular meetings to engage in teacher recruitment that would be strategic and also at the same time being able to diversify the teacher workforce, and Best NC has been helping with the recruitment platform for the
State, which is TeachNC, and so that ties right in with their expertise around helping with recruitment. And so in the end, they came up with a slew of recommendations, and as I said earlier, a lot of them overlap with what the DRIVE Task Force had been doing.

And then State Board of Education has really been focusing in on increasing the number of educators of color in schools across North Carolina, and so that's one of their goals that they will be able to do that as part of "Eliminate opportunity gaps by 2025." I'm sorry. It's Objective 6 to go with that to help them be able to eliminate those opportunity gaps. And so there were state board members that were a part of the DRIVE Task Force and then also part of Stride Working Group as well so that they had State Board voices in there.

And then PEPSC, which is the commission that I help oversee, we started talking about diversifying the workforce through educator preparation because the legislature had let us know that we needed to -- through statute that we needed to come up with an EPP, or Educator Preparation Program, weighted accountability model...
because they wanted to see what PEPSC would come up with and then would the State Board -- but the State Board then in the end also approved it because the accountability model that they have right now is very -- is very straightforward. It's not as nuanced and this is much more nuanced and weighted. And so they had -- because we have EPP representation on PEPSC, then we were able to put together a weighted model, and one of the pieces that the State Board wanted and that PEPSC plugged into the model was diversity and showing the percentage of students of color around teacher candidates and making that part of the accountability for EPP.

And then on top of it, PEPSC subcommittees have also been working on the Preprofessional Skills Test Committee examining the Praxis Core Academic Skills Test, and this is an entry test into an EPP. And one of the recommendations from Stride as well as the DRIVE Task Force was to eliminate that test because this test -- it blocks students of color especially from getting into Educator Preparation Programs.

And this test focuses on reading, writing, and math, and it's something that is
legislatively mandated. However, we don't -- we don't know if it has any positive effect on getting through and successfully competing an EPP or not because that type of data has not actually been put forward. So the purpose the test itself, other than it being a barrier to get into the EPP, is not quite clear. So that's what the subcommittee was working on, on the Praxis Core. And I got a little ahead of myself. So it's required by Senate Bill 599 to enter the EPP, and I said that it focuses on reading, writing, and math. And it's a traditional pathway for teachers, so teachers that go through two years of a four-year institution and they start their two years and they get into their EPP program and go through student teaching for 16 weeks. That's what -- they would have to take the test before they could get into the EPP program itself.

And then there's alternative ways to fulfill the requirements. You can enter ACT scores, enter SAT scores as well as already have a bachelor's degree, if you were going to do, say, an MAT program, a master of art in teaching. And like I said earlier, nationally,
which this includes North Carolina, Hispanic and black candidates, they fall behind their white counterparts for pass rates around the Praxis Core, and you will see that in the DRIVE Task Force final report, and I also mentioned that it restricts entry into EPPs.

And also the purpose and the predictability of the exam is unknown, and it does not -- it does not predict educator quality in the end as far as we have seen, and we have also seen that licensure exams are also a poor predictor for educator quality in the end. So that's why this test is being looked at to be eliminated as an entry requirement.

So I know that you were looking for some recommendations around helping with pass rates, and other than -- I have four different things here, but I think that -- I wanted to let you know that some of the recommendations will be to really look at what's going on with PEPSC and the State Board because there is a new licensure pathway that is being explored right now, and the State Board has charged PEPSC with developing that.

And so that will -- that is an area
that PEPSC will really look at and, through the subcommittee work, be able to really think about what's working and what's not working with the licensure system now and how to develop that. So that's something that I wanted to bring to the table. And then also beginning teacher support, especially if a teacher has not completed their licensure exam before they are licensed for traditional students.

And then, of course, residency students, they would have to be going through beginning teacher support through the residency program experience for that license for [inaudible], but really figuring out what the LEA is doing to help with beginning teacher support and then also how -- for the residency folks, how they're partnering with the EPPs around beginning teacher support. So not just the program within the LEAs, but for residency, how EPPs are supporting residency license holders because that is -- that is part of that type of support.

And then also using the free resources, the Praxis guidebooks. So I have a -- I have a link right here to some of the Praxis guidebooks for North Carolina, and those are free
resources. And for each test, they have that. It breaks down what the test is. They have some sample questions. The areas -- they have an outline of the areas that each test is about.

And then also when I say "Timing the test" here, I'm talking about individuals taking the test as soon as they finish that content work or before they even start their -- or during their EPP program so that it's fresher in their minds because the longer that an individual waits, the less likely they're going to pass their licensure exam and then there's a lower pass rate.

So these are some recommendations. In particular, I really wanted to stress the updates from PEPSC and the State Board, and I just want to thank you guys for letting me come and present today. And I'll make sure that you have all the materials that I just presented and talked about, and please let me know if you have any questions.

MS. TERHAAR: I have a question.

MS. EVANS: Sure.

MS. TERHAAR: Since the licensure tests are a poor predictor, what measures are being taken to address that issue in finding
alternatives to those very licensure tests rather than just to continue keeping the licensure tests in place with such high failure rates?

MS. EVANS: So at this point right now, that is a legislatively-mandated requirement to hold a license in North Carolina as a teacher, that you have to pass one of the subject area, and then EC-GC, you have to have the Reading and Math Subtests along with the EC Core. So that would have to be a legislative change.

But we are working on the alternative -- these licensure pathways through the PEPSC work that we'll be talking about -- actually, has been talked about for the past month at the State Board and PEPSC, but then also it will be talked about again tomorrow during PEPSC.

So that is where we will be working on what requirements we think are working and what requirements we think aren't working. Also, if we do have licensure exams, what else can we have as an additional -- or not an additional requirement, but additional options to give people choices.

MS. TERHAAR: One thing that I would suggest in that discussion is, since the licensure tests are a poor predictor, in our state, we do
have the Reading Research to Classroom Practice
training and the Foundations of Math training
which have actually shown positive outcomes for
students with disabilities in reading and in math.
In fact, that's something that is pretty
well-known across our country. So we have this in
our backyard, so to say.

But the other concern here, of
course, is if we present alternatives which are
actual training that show positive outcomes for
students, we will have to be able to address this
diversity issue because there seems to be a
conflict between having licensure standardized
tests and what kind of cultural biases might be
implicit in those tests.

And to what extent has that issue
been investigated by these different groups? Is
there evidence to support that there's a lack of
cultural biases in those licensure tests
themselves? Because it seems like -- since our
goal is to increase diversity, to what extent are
we shooting ourselves in the foot with bias
checks, and has that been looked at either in our
state or in other states?

MS. EVANS: I think it's actually
been looked at nationally, and so in the DRIVE final report, you'll read that -- I believe licensure exams are also included with the Praxis Core around cultural bias. The one test I wanted to say that is not included in this that is included as a requirement is edTPA, which is the pedagogy assessment.

And so we have less data around that. That might be a better predictor around teacher quality in classrooms, but we don't actually know that fully yet because it has been -- it hasn't been around as long, and also, North Carolina hasn't been using it as long as either. It's a more recent implementation.

MS. TERHAAR: And since we -- our charge is to advocate for students with disabilities, it's very interesting how the EC test has the higher success rate in the nineties, whereas the reading and the math do not. And is there any exploration of that and, in fact, eliminating the reading and math and keeping it as [inaudible]?

MS. EVANS: So I can see the reasoning behind that. That is also a legislative mandate to have the reading and math, and in fact,
we added -- was it a year ago? I think it's about
a year ago or a little more -- it might have been
a year and a half ago that we added a second math
subtest choice.

So we went through experts in the
field to really investigate CKT, and I think the
pass rates for that is better than the Pearson
one. That math -- math in general has been a
struggle [inaudible] elementary education and
EC-GC has been more of a struggle.

MS. TERHAAR: I mean that's a
national, and so that's all the more reason to
look at the Foundations of Math training, which
again has produced positive outcomes when teachers
who have been trained in it, and that's again
something I would like to be forefront in the
dialogue when you're talking about alternatives to
biased testing for licensure, which has yet to
establish any -- any educational benefit for the
students [inaudible] those people.

MS. EVANS: Right. We are very aware
of those courses, and I'm make sure that's --
because that's something that will be thought
about, and I'll make sure to mention that to our
subcommittee because there's a professional
learning piece around this new licensure pathway, and so that could be part of what might be a requirement for particular licenses or license areas -- licensure areas. That hasn't been developed yet, but that is a good point.

MS. TERHAAR: And then I have one final question.

MS. EVANS: Sure.

MS. TERHAAR: The Science of Reading that I noticed was one of the items that the Foundations of Reading Test is going to consider. Can you tell us what that's about?

MS. EVANS: So I'm not an expert around the Science of Reading, but I have been reading a little bit about it, and it is -- reading, I believe, had become more whole language and abandoned phonics more, and it needs to have a really strong phonemic background for the kids to be able to really hone in on how to read and sounds that letters make in order to sound out words. And so the phonics part has to really be strong around that, and I think they're really trying to focus on that around the Foundations of Reading.

I will say that the Foundation of
Reading Test is a better predictor of teacher quality in classrooms. It is the one subtest or -- sorry -- licensure exam that does predict that. And EPIC through UNC Chapel Hill and Dr. Kevin Bastian -- he provided that data at one of the State Board meetings.

MS. TERHAAR: It's interesting because that test has a very -- has been crosswalked with the Reading Research to Classroom Practice, and there is a strong correlation there. What I'm concerned about is the Science of Reading is also being used now as part of that $12-million funding for Science of Reading, which is a program that a corporation is behind. I would suggest it be called evidence-based reading.

MS. EVANS: I see what you mean.

MS. TERHAAR: See what I'm saying? Because when I [inaudible], oh, is this a done deal already? This is interesting. So they may want to reconsider and called it evidence-based practices.

MS. EVANS: I've noticed that across the nation that it is being called Science of Reading, and obviously, the State Board is not talking about the company or the corporation.
But, yes, I could -- I could see that confusion there.

MS. TERHAAR: Thank you very much. You did a great job. I really appreciate---

MS. EVANS: Oh, thank you. MS. TERHAAR: ---the work that you're doing here.

MS. EVANS: Thank you. And I'll make sure to send the report and the crosswalk.

MS. TERHAAR: I appreciate that.

MS. EVANS: Any other questions? MS. LEYTON: I have a question. This is Terri Leyton. When you were talking about the State Board of Education goals and one of them being to increase the numbers of diverse teachers, do you know by how many or a percentage or what's their benchmark?

MS. EVANS: I'm not sure that they have one set yet. I'm not sure. I would have to talk to my contacts at the State Board.

MS. LEYTON: Okay. Well, if they don't, I would suggest them setting one because, otherwise, how will they know when they've been successful?

MS. EVANS: That is a very good
point. A very good point. I know that they were working on particular details around the goals because they had released the goals and presented them, and then they were saying that they were still working on particulars around those goals. So that might be one that they were focusing on.

MS. LEYTON: And then regarding the licensure, I know we just talked about it quite a bit, but if licensure is eliminated, how would that impact meeting the requirements of IDEA for teachers who -- special education teachers who are supposed to be like, you know, certified to---

MS. EVANS: So I want to be clear that licensure would not be eliminated.

MS. LEYTON: Okay.

MS. EVANS: PEPSC is just working on a recommendation that would go to the legislature eventually, but it would have to go through the State Board first, to develop a different licensure pathway. So there would still be licenses; it would just go through -- possibly be called something different.

There would be more facets for the licenses. There's more tiers or steps to the licensure process as far as what licenses you can
get and more entryways. So there's licensure. I didn't want to confuse -- I hope I didn't confuse---

MS. LEYTON: Okay. Sorry. That might have been my misunderstanding. Thank you.

MS. EVANS: That's okay. Sure.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So thank you all and thank you so much---

DR. HUTCHINSON: Cynthia, can I ask one more super quick question? I know we're over time on our allotment.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Sure.

DR. HUTCHINSON: But I appreciate your time, and I think probably if this whole entire presentation was wrapped up into two sentences, the fact that there's no good correlation between people passing that test and producing high-quality instruction and educational gains for our students is like the pivotal of everything, and there's no correlation that's been able to be drawn between the percentage -- the folks that do pass and those staying in the field more than three years and changing into a permanent license.

I understand your goal of increasing
the diversity in teaching and in the pipeline for teaching. Has there been any breakdown -- I saw the breakdown in those that passed the math and the reading the first time and then consequential times. Has there been any breakdown in that looking at race specifically or even gender? Because if your goal is to increase the pipeline of those coming into the field, I think that---

   Anyways, go ahead. I'll let you answer that.

MS. EVANS: So that was done in the DRIVE Task Force from the dashboard that was done through DPI. So in the appendices [inaudible] licensure pass rates, and it's not just EC-GC but it's pass rates overall, and it will break it down by race, by year as well, and it's a cohort base so the exact same people each year, whereas this one was a period of time for any test taken -- for any of the tests taken.

   So let me know if you have any questions after you look at any of the reports or supplemental materials.

   DR. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

   THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you so much, Kim. We're going to---
MS. EVANS: You're welcome.

THE CHAIRPERSON: We're going to move on to State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Reports and Nancy Johnson or Kelley Blas.

DR. JOHNSON: Yes. Good morning.

This is Nancy Johnson. How is everyone this morning?

THE CHAIRPERSON: Good morning, Nancy.

DR. JOHNSON: As you may recall, I spoke with the Council at our December meeting regarding the FFY, Federal Fiscal Year, 2019 State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report that we submitted February 1st of this year, 2021. You can see there's almost a two-year difference in the timeline. And briefly about the new package for the next six years, Federal Fiscal Year 2020 and 2025.

This morning I'm just going to give you along -- well, Kelley is going to have to leave, but I want to introduce her in just a minute -- to give you some updates around what we're -- some things I wasn't able to share with you about what we submitted February 1st of 2021,
and then how we're moving forward to do the work for the next six-year plan. So I'll be spending more time with that. And I know my time is probably a little short here, so I'm going to share which slides I think are most important.

Alexis, or whoever's moving the slides for me, you can move to the next slide.

So, again, I just shared this -- our update. I did want to share on the one that we just submitted some information about Indicators 8 and 13 because I didn't have that data in December and talk to you about the next steps that go along with that. So you'll see that even though we've submitted, there are still things to be done.

And then for the new package that we will be submitting February 1st of 2022, which seems like a little ways off, but there is a lot to be done. I'm going to go over some of the general requirements, the changes to some of the indicators, and the next steps, which we are anticipating and hoping that each of you as council members will be very involved in giving us input into that.

Next slide. Indicator 8, we were still working with the parent survey, but I had
mentioned to you that we had a revised survey from a lot of work we had done with stakeholders about revising the survey, and we changed it from 25 questions to the 17 most important questions that parents and others felt like we should include in the survey.

It increased our response rate greatly. We had over 3000 responses this time, and because we changed the survey and the calculation a little bit with the survey because of how we changed the survey, this data that we submitted for the 2019-20 school year is considered a new baseline and will be our starting point for setting targets in the next six-year plan.

Our rate, which I didn't have the information for you at the time, was 49.36 percent, which meant that 49 percent -- and we do our survey by a sample, but it meant that 49 -- a little over 49 percent of the parents who responded to the survey about parent involvement in those questions answered the majority of their questions with "strongly agree" or "very strongly agree," and that's a calculation rate that was similar to what we used in the past, similar
standards.

And this is a similar rate that we've gotten in the last several years. We've always been in the forty-some percent range, and our target was 50 percent. So we were very close. This is a little bit higher than what it was the previous year by about five percentage points, but we have been as high as 48 percent in past years.

Next slide. Our indicator that is the most challenging was our Indicator 13, which is our transition component on the IEP, and this is a compliance indicator. We dropped by 24.42 percentage points. We were up at about 80 percent, and this is -- this rate of 56.42 percent, I'm going to talk briefly about why we think this happened and what this is about.

It's really looking at, through our monitoring process, IEPs of students who have transition components in their IEPs and making sure that all the parts of the transition part of the IEPs are in compliance. So our monitoring, it's not a sample per se, but it's all the monitoring visits we do for a given year, all the districts that are monitored and transition plans that they look at.
One of the reason for our slippage is that monitoring was suspended in mid March. We all know that we had a big impact from COVID-19, and so 22 of our LEAs -- and most of those were our traditional LEAs. We had already done a lot of our charter schools, which are smaller and have fewer IEPs to review. But 22 of our LEAs were not monitored. That had to be postponed because of the Governor's stay-at-home order and schools closing.

So we had a decrease of about 35 percent of the number of IEPs we normally review for transition. So that impacted our data, and we had to make a statement in the APR because it was related to COVID. And so any indicator that was impacted by COVID, we had to make a special statement in the APR. But we also had a change in the IEP form in our new Every Child Accountability and Tracking System, ECATS, which you've probably heard much about the ECATS system that collects our IEP data and all of our data for our special ed students.

And that change in the form -- because of the change in the form and probably related to COVID, because we weren't able to do as
much training in person and some of the training
became virtual -- but related to that, districts
did not always include the required component
related to transition assessment, and there's a
component related to the fact that your goals need
to be based on transition assessments.

And because of the change in the way
we did the form, some of the districts missed that
requirement, and therefore, they were out of
compliance, and that impacted our rate greatly as
well. So they are putting some things in place
related to Canvas opportunities for training and
some other things about other -- following up with
districts to ensure that they are addressing that
required component in the future.

Next slide. And then the next steps
in this process for the submission of this APR,
the clarification period. A clarification period
is something that OSEP, US Office of Special Ed
Programs, allows us to do. After they've had a
chance to review our APR that we've submitted,
they respond in the platform with comments,
questions they have, anything they need us to
clarify, or if we have a need to clarify any of
our data, we can do that as well.
This clarification period will open on April 15th and be open for two weeks, and we will be required to respond to anything OSEP has asked questions about. We will also have an opportunity to have a phone call with them to make sure we're clear about what their questions are. You're only allowed to participate in this clarification if we submitted our APR by the due date, which was February 1st. We did. We submitted it on time, so we will be allowed to participate in the clarification period.

Once that happens, we will be posting our LEA public reports, which is a report of each LEA and how they did related to the targets in the APR, along with our full report. That's required 120 days from the date of submission, so if you're calculating in your head from February 1st, that is always by June 1st each year. That will be posted on our ECATS website.

And then, lastly, related to this, the US Office of Special Education Programs does a determination for states about meeting expectations, meeting requirements, needing assistance, et cetera. Much of their determination is based on the APR, but there are
also other components to it. And they have indicated this time that the determinations will be issued to states by June 24th, and when they say "by June 24th," it will probably be issued that evening of June 24th, 2021.

I will share with you, these dates that I shared for the clarification period and the determination period is the first year -- in the 15 years we've been doing these APRs, this is the first year we've ever been informed ahead of time of what those dates are. It's always been sometime in April for the clarification period and sometime in June or July for the determination. So we're glad to know what those dates are so we [inaudible].

I am ready for the next slide. We are going to allow for some questions near the end. So if you'll just jot your questions down.

This slide -- I did share with you at the last meeting that the work -- we have a lot of work -- you can see several steps -- we have a lot of work throughout this next year -- this current year of 2021 for our submission of our new package February 1st, 2022, and I'm going to go over some of these things more specifically.
But at this point, I do want to share that Kelley Blas, our Part B Data Manager -- and she was on the call with us but had to leave for another meeting -- our Part B Data Manager will be helping lead this effort along with Lauren Holahan, who is our coordinator for our Indicator 17, the State Systemic Improvement Plan, and I've been working with them, but they're working very hard and coordinating all of this effort. So some of these things I'll be sharing with you, they will be following up with you in future months.

You can go ahead and move on to the next slide. We're very fortunate to have both of them. Some of the general requirements -- and this is very important and very important to all of you because you are part of our stakeholder involvement. It has been expanded for this next six-year package to include broader parent involvement, and it's going to be required to have descriptions in our APR about our activities and timelines, how we're target setting, how we're receiving input from stakeholders on target setting, analyzing data, improvement strategies, evaluating progress, and how we're going to share all of that information with the public. So I'm
going to go into that a little bit later in this presentation.

We also have to set new targets for each of the indicators through fiscal year 2025. So we will be setting -- through this process and input from our stakeholders, we will be setting targets for six years -- for each of the six years -- setting those targets during this year to submit in the next plan, even though it's a one-year submission, there will be targets for six years, and those targets must show improvement over baseline data with some exceptions.

For example, participating in statewide assessments, our state historically has been over the 95 percent rate of participation for students with disabilities in statewide assessments, and 95 percent has always been our ESSA target and the required -- and what the US Department of Education requires you to be at. And so they've allowed us to keep it at that. Even though our rate has gone over that, they're not going to make us set a rate of 99 or 100 percent.

But most of our targets will have to be over wherever our baseline is. So you noticed
I indicated that Indicator 8, our parent involvement, from this past year will become our new baseline at 49 percent -- 49.36 percent, I believe. So our ending target over the six years, we can move incrementally or we can maintain that target, but our ending target will -- at the end of the six years will have to be more than 49.36 percent for that indicator. And, of course, then we'll have to include in the APR the description of any stakeholder input that we had.

And then Indicator 17, I mentioned, the State Systemic Improvement Plan, has always been due -- in the six years that we've been doing it, it's always been due on April 1st. So it's never due at the same time as the February 1st date, but it is going to be tough. So we have less than a year for it because this year it is due April 1st, and then we have to turn around and do that indicator and make sure it's ready to go by February 1st of 2022 like the other indicators.

I'm ready to move to the next slide. I am not going to go over this chart completely, but it is a chart that you can revisit at your will with each of the indicators and where there are changes and what type of a change it is. The
first two columns, "No changes," "Minor Changes/Clarifications," there really aren't any so you don't really have to pay attention to those.

I'm going to go over a few of the indicators today that have some of the other changes like a change to the age or grade group or the other columns where there's a change to the data or data source or where it has a new component. I'm just going to briefly touch on some of those.

So Indicators 1 and 2 -- and, again, I'm going through this pretty quickly because I want to get to my last slide -- there is a new data source. We won't be using -- calculating graduation rates and dropout rates the same -- not that we can't calculate that way, but using them the way we've used in the past, we have to change in the new package.

We will be using our exit count data for both of those rates. I'm not going to go into what all that means right now because when you're participating in the sessions that will go over these indicators specifically, you will get all that information, but it does mean that these two
indicators will have new baseline data starting next year.

Next slide. Indicator 3a through d is going to be a big [inaudible] for us because for the past several years, we've only been reporting for participation rates and our proficiency rates for each grade level based on all of our assessments combined, regular assessments with and without accommodations and assessments on alternate academic achievement standards, so our alternate assessments.

There have been significant changes to Indicator 3a through d. We now have four areas where we're going to have to provide targets, and they are changing to -- we're going to be reporting not on each grade level, but grade 4, 8, and our high school data. And then we're also going to be reporting our data separately by those students who are taking -- in each of those grade levels, math and reading will be reported separately and reported separately for those students taking the regular assessment and then those students separately who are taking the alternate assessment, if you will. And I'm [inaudible] about all of the language, but the
regular assessment separately and the alternate 
assessment so that we can really see a little bit 
better about how students are doing.

And then this last bullet talks about 
reporting -- it will be Indicator 3d. This is a 
brand-new indicator that we'll have to report on, 
and it will be looking at the proficiency rate 
gaps individually for math and then individually 
for reading by each of those grade levels -- 4, 8, 
and high school -- and it will be the rate of 
children with IEPs and how they scored above -- at 
or above proficiency on the regular assessments 
subtracted from the rate from all students, 
including those without disabilities, and how they 
scored to look at what that gap is between those 
proficiency rates. So that is a new indicator for 
us, and again, when you participate in the 
upcoming meetings during the year about Indicator 
3, you'll hear more about this and see the actual 
data.

I'm ready to move on. Indicators 5 
and 6 are about least restrictive environment for 
school-age and preschool children. This change, 
we have been preparing for because OSEP now has us 
report this year, for the first time, five-
year-old who are in kindergarten get reported with school-age children. In previous years, they've been included with preschool children. So now preschool -- the preschool indicator will only include five-year-olds who are actually in preschool and not include those five-year-olds who [inaudible]. So it will -- it will change our data.

Indicators 8 and 14, which are our sampling plans, there are no changes to how we're calculating the data, but there will be changes to what we have to report related to response rates and representativeness. In other words, for Indicator 8, the parents who are responding, are they representative of the demographics of our state; and for Indicator 14, are the students representative of the demographics of our state -- or of our population of those students who exited.

The newest thing for us is the first bullet. We'll have to compare our response rate from this current year to the previous year. We've never had to do that before. We do have those rates because we report those each year, but we've never had to compare them to see if we're making improvements in how many people are
responding.

The other strategies to increase response rates, how we analyze the extent of the representativeness by -- it does indicate by 2023, which we have to submit in this next plan in 2022 how we'll be doing this by 2023 -- about the demographics must include race and ethnicity and at least one other demographic like type of disability the student has, gender, one or the other.

For all of those last three bullets, we have always reported in our APR. I've learned that other states weren't always reporting those things, but we have reported by race and ethnicity, by disability category, and by gender, and in Indicator 14, by type of exit, if the student exited by dropping out or if they exited by graduation. We've always reported by those things, so we don't have a lot of additional work in that area to do other than comparing the response rate from one year to the next.

You can move on. Indicators 9 and 10 is our disproportionate representation for how students are identified for special education and then for six of our specific disability...
categories. Because of the change of five-year-olds being counted with kindergarten children, they will now be included in these two indicators. In the past, those two indicators only looked at students the age of six through 21, and they will now include only the five-year-olds in kindergarten.

Indicator 17 is our State Systemic Improvement Plan, and again, the timeline for submission has moved to February 1st for the next submission. So because we're submitting this year's by April 1st, it gives us, for this year, less than a year to work on the new requirements and related [inaudible].

One other thing that OSEP's documents that they had provided -- directions they provided to states indicates is that Indicator 17 was kind of phase-in where the first year, six years ago, we had to do phase 1, which was an analysis of our data and all of our infrastructure, and then phase 2 and what our plan was basically, and then phase 3 is the implantation and evaluation plan. Then after that, each year, we had to include phase 3 and then any slight changes -- if we were making any slight changes to anything else.
They have made it clear, if we're making any changes or any revisions to our state-identified measurable results -- for us in North Carolina right now, for the last six years, that has been our five-year cohort graduation rate. If we just continue as is and move on and continue making progress and don't want to make any changes to that, we will only have to include phase 3, in essence, which means if we want to make any changes or revisions to that -- as an example, if we wanted to stay with graduation rate but we wanted to use our exit data because that's now what we're going to have to use for Indicator 1 and we didn't want to use our five-year cohort rate any longer, we would then have to go back in and look at our infrastructure and all of our data again or if we wanted to change [inaudible].

But that's something that would be decided as we move through this whole year process, as we look at all our data, if we have to tweak our state-identified measurable results, but it is a new requirement that we would have to look at as part of this package.

On to the next slide. The opportunities for stakeholder engagement and
feedback. This is where I wanted to share with
you -- because this is where you're going to be
very involved. We have to share each of these
indicators with a breakdown of the data and
looking at trend data and looking at where our
targets were and where we might want our targets
to be over the next six years.

So it's going to take quite a number of
meetings throughout the year to do this. So our
folks are setting up meetings and working behind
the scenes to structure opportunities for feedback
not only from the advisory council but from other
stakeholders. We have to broaden our stakeholder
engagement to ensure that we have diversity in our
stakeholder groups and to allow parents who might
not be part of groups to be able to give input and
participate, and we have to document all this.

So we are planning two meetings
starting in April, and the two meetings would be
repeat sessions to ensure that -- for example, we
might have one meeting in the morning and another
meeting in the late afternoon or early evening to
make sure that parents and other stakeholders have
opportunities to participate, so they would be
repeat sessions. So each month, you would only
need to participate in one of the meetings.

And we'll be looking at our Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats -- what we call a SWOT threats or challenges -- analysis about our infrastructure, then our data analysis, our target setting, our improvement strategies, and our measures of progress, and all the things -- those are those things we have to get input from, from stakeholders.

We will be chunking our indicators into groups so that you can see here, it's got a plan to at least start. In our April meeting, we're going to look at our SWOT analysis and Indicators 1 and 2 because we have that data already for Indicator 1 and 2 for the coming year since it's based on our exit data.

In May, you're going to really focus on Indicator 3 because that is a big one, and then in June, they'll start with -- they'll look at Indicator 5 and 6. So you can see each month, we're going to be taking a different indicator or some indicators to review.

On to the next slide. This will give you time -- by doing it that way, time to really digest each indicator as needed. We're going to
allow opportunities for stakeholder engagement by providing an online feedback tool called Qualtrics, and it will allow you to access the data analysis/charts and graphs that are being shared at these meetings, but it will also be in this Qualtrics instrument for you to access.

So you can look at them either after a meeting, or if you weren't able to participate in the meeting that month but still want to respond, you'll be able to respond through the feedback tool without participating in the meeting. Our preference is that you participate in the meeting so you can hear the nuances and the questions that are asked, but you will still have access to all the same information.

And you will be providing through this tool feedback on the four areas of stakeholder engagement: the target setting, improvement strategies, the data -- target setting, data analysis, the improvements strategies, and evaluating the progress. And with those, there will be -- within this tool, you will be provided some choices of things that are in there and then also opportunities to make comments if you would like to see something different than
what might be proposed.

OSEP has also asked us to pay particular attention to the diversity of our engagement, and so in the survey, there are demographic questions about race and ethnicity and gender and whether or not you're a parent of a student with a disability and what type of disability your child may have. However, there is nothing in the survey that will track a survey to you so that these surveys are done anonymously. We'll be then looking for representativeness, if you will, from all of the input we receive as to how it compares to our students with disabilities population. Is it representative, in other words, of female to male students, as an example.

With that, I'm just going to do a summary of the next steps. The EC Division with the lead of Kelley Blas and Lauren Holahan are finalizing a plan that includes the activities, rules, and timelines for us to submit the six-year plan February 1st of 2022. They are preparing the schedule for meetings with stakeholder groups, and while I don't have the specific dates to give you, know that a meeting is coming up in April, and they're going to be first looking at the SWOT and
Indicators 1 and 2.

And at that time, they will also be sharing the Qualtrics tool that folks will have an opportunity to give their feedback on, and each tool -- they will do the tool each month because the tool will be specific to the indicators in that month.

They are looking at the timelines for presenting the indicator data. They have some of that fleshed out for the first few months, and they will be working through the remaining months, receiving the feedback that we need to receive on these four areas. So you as council members will be receiving an invitation to the initial stakeholder meeting opportunity to be held in April and then all of the future meetings that will be held each month, and we truly value your input and hope that you will be able to participate in those meetings.

All meetings right now, as you know, are being held virtual, so that meeting will be virtual. And we do hope you're able to participate in one of the two meetings, because they will be repeat sessions each month, but if you're not, then, you will get access to the
Qualtrics tool so you can read the data. And I know Lauren and Kelley will both be happy to take any of your questions. We have a lot of staff who are supporting them and working with them.

And I am -- I will close -- I think I've tried to scoot through this quickly. I will close and allow questions, but I am sharing this with you this way by saying they will be leading this, they will be doing this as if I'm removed from it because I am. I do want to say that before we open this up for questions -- I didn't think I was going to get emotional -- it's been an honor to work with all of you. I am -- my final day is March 31st. I am retiring as of April 1st.

So you are in great hands with Kelley and Lauren, and I want to thank each of you for being wonderful to work with over all these years. I have really enjoyed my work with the advisory council each year. I apologize for getting emotional. I did not mean to. But the work will continue and you're in great hands. So now I'm going to stop there, and I think I might have a few minutes for questions if there are any.

MR. POTTER: First of all---

DR. JOHNSON: I have to say -- I did
get emotional. I have to say that this is the first actual meeting that I've actually announced that I am retiring -- I mean our staff knows, but where I've actually had to indicate that I am retiring, and I think that's why I got so emotional. Thank you.

MR. POTTER: First of all, never apologize for being emotional in situations like that. This is -- this is extremely rewarding work, but it's also extremely hard work. And, you know, I turned 34 in January, but I've been at this, on some level, since I was about 16 years old. So, you know, even though I'm, quote, unquote, "only" 34, if you really think about it, I've been at this job, on some level, for the better part of 20 years, and so, you know, sometimes I feel like a grizzled veteran as it were.

And there are days that I wish that I could retire early, but I know I can't. I know that when that day comes, whenever it is, I'll most certainly be more emotionally gripped than you were in that moment, so don't apologize for that.

But my question is -- now you have to
forgive me because a lot of the data, I'll be the first person to admit -- I'm relatively new to this appointment and everything, so a lot of the data kind of went over my head a little bit or a lot a bit, depending on, you know, what the data was. And it's not down to your explanation; it's just down to the fact that the number of acronyms and numbers that I've learned has melted my brain pretty much, and so hearing more of those is very confusing.

But a very general question, given the fact that you're getting ready to sort of pass the torch of sorts, I would like -- if you'd be willing to share, I would like some general insights from you as far as one thing that you think is on a very, very good trajectory and one thing that you would really like to see improve on a specific front for you as a personal individual since you're getting ready to retire.

And I feel like you've had to speak as a representative for something, so I want to give you an opportunity to speak as yourself in answering this question if you'd be willing and/or interested and/or willing to do so. Thanks.

DR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much.
Yes. And, again, I would encourage you, first of all, to -- as many of the monthly meetings that are coming up related to your APR -- to participate in those meetings if you can because the data for at least each of our indicators will be shared and shared pretty in depth, and you will have a better understanding of that whole [inaudible] and what each one of those indicators looks at and how the data is calculated for how we set targets, that kind of thing.

And I would say -- and I have worked for many years -- since the time I was in high school, I started working with students with disabilities and had a child myself who had a disability who is deceased. From all of my work -- and I guess I'm a little bit emotional because I love my work. I love what we do. I love the collaboration with everyone. I love not only the interaction, I just love the passion and the caring and the quality.

I have worked in two states, North Carolina for almost 30 years, but I was the State Director of Special Ed in West Virginia and did my teaching experience and things like that in West Virginia. But I will say, from working in my
years in North Carolina, which is where I'm retiring from, the level of compassion and passion and work and expectations for students with disabilities and parent involvement and stakeholder involvement has been phenomenal from my perspective. And we get recognized for that a lot nationally, and people may not always realize that, but when we're in meetings.

And just the caliber and expertise of staff that we have not only in our Division and our Department, but out in the field in our local special ed directors and teachers and parents -- parents who are passionate and give us input and help us understand what their children's needs are. So all of that collaboration and work, and I know we have high expectations.

I would say this year has been -- certainly, as we all know, a very challenging year related to COVID, but we've also learned some things that we can use to move forward in terms of partnerships with parents and that kind of thing. My biggest concern, if I just say it based on looking at our data, is the alignment of our academic proficiency for students with disabilities. Our data, in some instance, is
still very low in that area, and I know that our
students can -- we can have and should have high
expectations for what they can learn and how they
can move forward, and our APR does address that.

We are doing a lot of state -- things in our state related to high-leverage practices
and our LEA self-assessment, where districts are
digging down into their data to tell us what their challenges are and where they need to focus their efforts to improve, to ensure that when students are graduating from high school, they are graduating with the knowledge and experience and skills that they need to go on and be productive in society.

So I guess I would -- from my perspective, I would like to see us really focus -- and you'll see when you attend the meetings -- particularly when they look at Indicator 3, you'll be able to see some of the data that I'm referring to where our students don't always perform as well on academic assessments.

And maybe part of that is that we need to think about -- we can't for the APR, but we might be able to in other things that we do --
look more at growth of students in their academic performance. So that's just something that I would -- I would like to focus more on, if it were me. I'm not sure I answered your question exactly, but---

MR. POTTER: You did. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. And thank you. Thank you for your service.

DR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So any other questions for Nancy?

MS. UTZ: Nancy, just to say, I don't know if you saw the chat box, but you did get some congratulations and well deserved and enjoy your retirement and the next chapter.

DR. JOHNSON: Thank you-all very much. Again, it is bittersweet because I've enjoyed all the work that I have done, and I've always enjoyed coming and being with the advisory council members. And so sorry that we can't do it in person. I was used to meeting with you-all in person over the years. But please continue all the great work that you're doing. My heart will be with you. I'm excited about retirement, but I'm also a little bit sorry about having to leave,
but it is time. So thank you very much.

And continue -- you're in great hands

with Lauren and Kelley. They've been working --

we've all been working together for several years

with this data and with this report and those

kinds of things. Kelley Blas will be the go-to

person for a lot of the things that I've done with

the APR and significant disproportionality, and

she's been our data manager for 13 or 14 years.

So she's worked with all of this data a lot and is

very knowledgeable.

Again, my best to all of you. Thank

you.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you so much,

Nancy. On behalf of the entire Council, we'd like

to thank you and say we so appreciated over the

years all the extra work that you've done on

behalf of our students and our children with

disabilities. Thank you.

DR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Cynthia.

MS. UTZ: All right. And, Cynthia,

it looks like the next part is Matt and Sherry,

and they're not on yet. So I propose that we take

a break so we can get drinks and a potty break and

then wait for them to log in.
THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Thank you. So we're on break. How long are we on break for, Alexis?

MS. UTZ: They should be here by 11:15, so at least the next five minutes, but I mean we can [inaudible].

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay.

MS. UTZ: All right. We'll see you then.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

(A brief recess was taken from 11:09 a.m. to 11:18 a.m.)

MS. UTZ: All right, Matt. So nothing like throwing you right into it, but we are ready to go whenever you are, Matt.

MR. HOSKINS: I am ready. Is it possible that I can share my screen, Alexis?

MS. UTZ: Yes. I will make you a presenter.

MR. HOSKINS: And good morning, everyone. I'm super excited to have the opportunity to talk through the school mental health initiative work this morning. Also excited because just this week -- or it was actually late last week -- Healthy Schools has put up a new
website specifically devoted to the school mental
health policy and components of it and the
supports that we have for schools and
stakeholders. So I'm excited to be able to share
that with you-all this afternoon.

So give me just a second and I will
begin sharing my screen. Alexis, in this kind of
webinar format, where is the share screen button?

MS. UTZ: Good question. For me, it
was always front and center. Do you have the menu
bar at the top where it says "Share"?

MR. HOSKINS: I don't. The other
option is I can also just put the link in the
chat.

MS. UTZ: I mean either one. It
doesn't matter. You do have presenter rights. I
don't know what your screen looks like.

MR. HOSKINS: Here we go. Are you
able to see my screen now?

MS. UTZ: Yes.

MR. HOSKINS: Sorry for that delay.
I wanted to talk through the school mental health
policy. As many of you-all probably know, this
has been longstanding work really beginning in
about 2014 with a group of stakeholders that were
not only at DPI but across state agencies, parent advocacy groups, attorneys, local mental health providers, IHE members, really a wide faction of individuals who were concerned about -- access was -- the biggest kind of cause that the group was working on was access to high-quality mental health resources.

And what we saw from the research was really that in terms of accessibility that school was one of the best places for kids to be able to access services, and that came not only from what we saw in the national research, but also around that time, we also did what we refer to as an environmental scan, where we had about a little over 3000 respondents describing their experiences with mental health systems across the state, and those respondents varied from school staff to community providers as well as parents.

And what we saw was there was a lot of barriers and gaps in the course of mental health services across the state in terms of either making it to appointments within the community, having people in the community that can provide those services, and then also integration with other school services that were going on.
So that was really the intent, at that point in time, was to create what this group referred to as a continuum of mental health services which really included, at the core universal level, social-emotional learning, resiliency strategies, coping strategies, knowing that prevention is possible for mental health outcomes, and focusing that they're ensuring that all kids have at least a universal access to that.

As well as when you see that there are concerns that can be addressed within the realm of the school with our -- especially our instruction support personnel -- so school psychologists, school nurses, school counselors, school social workers -- that we ensured that we could identify who those students were and quickly be able to get them the services that were needed.

And then just as importantly, making sure that we had more [inaudible] systems between the school and community providers through formalized memorandums of understanding. So if a student was exhibiting a need that exceeded the capacity of the school to meet a mental health need, they were able to make a quick referral, and not only that, have stronger communication with
that community provider, ensuring that the needs of the student would be met both at home and within the school as well.

So if you go to our North Carolina Department of Public Instruction -- our website and just type in "North Carolina Healthy Schools," they have their own web page and it will be the first thing that comes up. And there, we also have a link to all the school-based mental health policy components.

So this was actually borne out of some session law that happened in June of 2020 that required the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to develop a school-based mental health policy. That policy was then developed or adopted by the State Board in November of 2020, and I'm just going to speak briefly to the summary of the major components of that. You can read on in the policy in terms of more of the details about it.

But, basically, what this plan requires is that we must address, as I said previously, a continuum of mental health and social-emotional supports, which includes universal promotion of mental and social-emotional
wellness and prevention through core instruction, curriculum, and environment, and that also includes a mental health training program that all -- what is defined in the statute as staff who work directly with children -- must have access to.

So I'll talk in just a little bit about what trainings we have made available for folks across the state. It also includes early intervention as part of that intervention system, and that referral, treatment, and reentry is required, that those connections are made with local providers.

In addition to that, it also requires that each LEA has a formalized suicide risk referral protocol that's in place and that there is training involved with that, that there are guidelines for students who may be at risk of suicide, and once a risk is established, that there are procedures and referral sources in place to address that.

The rest of the policy really goes into a lot deeper dive into each of those three areas that are required, but I wanted to go down here to share that, again, this does require a
memorandum of understanding that LEAs must have with their local LMEs or managed care providers, so these are the folks within their region that are the administrators of community-based mental health.

That there is suicide risk referral protocol that I had spoke to just a minute ago and then also stakeholder engagement, and that as each LEA or PSU develops their own plan for engagement, that they have to include relevant stakeholders in the development of that plan, which includes families, students, and community providers and cross-system partners.

So the timeline for that is that this is going to be implemented over this current school year, and by July 1st of 2021, that each LEA must adopt -- I'm going to make this just a little bigger too -- adopt a plan that they're going to use for promoting student mental health and well-being, begin implementation of that plan, and then also begin the training of staff.

The rest of this really discusses the requirements of DPI to be able to support the implementation of this plan. We were required to development training programs that are free and
available to all LEAs across the state that focus on youth mental health, suicide prevention, substance use, teenage dating violence, child sexual abuse and prevention, and sex trafficking prevention.

There's also some reporting features that we have in here. Again, the target audience are those who work directly with students and the different modes in which that training can be provided, and we do have a wide range of modalities in which those trainings can occur from face-to-face, in-depth, ongoing coaching to virtual training for things more like around school mental health awareness.

And so I also just wanted to bring to your attention on the website as well that we have models with a lot of the different things that are required of the policy on this particular website. So we discussed specifically what their local plan components must be, and then for each of the components of those plans, we tried to provide them with resources that they can use in the development and implementation of that plan.

And also have some examples of MOAs and MOUs that have been used across the state with
local -- that LEAs have had with their local MCOs and LMEs. So there's just some examples of what some of that looks like and also sample MOAs and MOUs for things like day treatment and other entities that may be occurring within the district as well. We have samples for the suicide risk referral protocol.

And there will also be some reporting that is required by September 15th of each year that they provide us information about the plan that they're implementing, the number of students that are being impacted. With that, we've given them some resources to some data sources that they can share with us during that reporting [inaudible] also with that reporting including that in some other reporting that LEAs are required to submit through Healthy Schools on an annual basis so that they're submitting all of that reporting at one time.

So we are super excited that we have the strength of a statute and now policy and now these resources that have really been a collaboration not only at DPI but also with DHHS and their Division of Mental Health and community providers across the state, that we're hopeful
that this will be one step in beginning to
minimize some of the gaps that we see with mental
health for students.

So I know I've said a lot in a brief
period of time, but I'd love to answer any
questions or talk through any thoughts or concerns
that folks have about the statute, the policy,
DPI's response, anything that I can -- anything
that I can help with.

MS. DEGEN: Hey, Matt. This is
Jennifer Degen. I'm from Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Schools. I have just a question. You know,
obviously, mental health has been a huge issue
this year. I mean I've had almost -- I think nine
in and out of, you know, treatment facilities this
year.

I feel like our school-based team --
and my husband works for CMS and lots of friends,
so I know in multiple schools, especially at the
high school level, our teams are strong with the
school-based mental health using, you know, our
psychologists and support staff in mental health.

I think where the breakdown is, is
once they go into a treatment facility, the
feedback to the schools is very difficult. So
we're having difficulty getting any records, understanding what we're supposed to do. You know, we've brought students back to full-time learning that are having mental health issues, but there's just that breakdown.

And I didn't know if any of this -- is there going to be some support between the two or with the requirements of -- you know, I don't know if that's something that's totally different. It's just the school-based teams are doing a great job, but then there's a breakdown of when the kids are referred and how we're supposed to help them at the school level, if that makes sense.

MR. HOSKINS: It does, and you know, making sure that -- one is that, you know, schools and community-based mental health providers work in slightly different -- different models and have different outcomes and expectations at some point, and so that's really where the requirements for the MOUs that have come into place.

I can also say that we are working with a couple of sites pretty in-depth on developing partnerships with local community providers to really make a determination of what is the role of those facts and how can we better
support them, to understand what the needs of the school are, and the teams that are providing those supports within the school and the need for, you know, community providers to be in frequent communication with the teachers or IEP teams or problem-solving teams.

And so those are the types of things that are captured in those MOUs. There are also things that through the North Carolina School Mental Health Initiative, we have some regional networks that -- we're really fortunate to have representatives from the MCOs on quite a few f those that were able to just provide some thoughts in terms of what the needs of the school are and how we can better collaborate there.

So I do think that we have two different systems that both have similar goals, but they work in very different ways, and then trying to bridge those gaps is definitely, I think, a part of both the statute and this policy and then the plans that schools are developing or districts are developing.

MS. DEGEN: Awesome. Thank you.

MR. HOSKINS: Yeah.

MS. UTZ: Okay. Matt, Terri has a
question. I unmuted you, Terri, so you can ask it.

MS. LEYTON: Okay. Great. Thank you. Thank you, Matt. My question is less about the plan going forward and more about this year and how the State is supporting students' mental health, as we're seeing information about particularly middle and high school students being really impacted -- their mental health by remote and hybrid learning.

How is the State supporting LEAs and even at the individual school level for the students this year?

MR. HOSKINS: Yeah, that's a great question and something that we anticipated early on even before there were data about the impact that remote learning would have on students, and what we're seeing -- the data that are coming back are pretty clear that we're seeing higher incidents of depression and anxiety and then also just some underreporting of some things, that a lot of times things get found out at school that aren't happening when students are away from school.

So we've done a couple of things
around that. We have a Social-Emotional State Team that has developed a number of strategies for how to support kids not only during remote learning but also now during the reentry process. We've been fortunate to fund some of that through one of the -- a grant that we have through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services agency. But we're really trying to develop the best practice for reentry. From that, we've also developed a website and what we are referring to as practice guide -- and I can put that link in the chat in just a minute -- that basically looked at all of the evidence-based practices that we know in the terms of meeting students' mental health needs in the circumstances that we're in right now, and we got this in partnership with Rockingham County Schools, Cleveland County Schools, and Guilford County Schools based on some work that they were doing that provides, basically, some protocols on how can we check in on students and ensure that we're meeting their mental health needs on a regular basis; what do we do when we have concerns that come up; what are our next steps for that; and then also during reentry, what are some things we need to do at a
school level to understand that this has really been a collective trauma for all of us, and what do we need to do to address that even virtually across -- with all kids to help process through that.

Those are some resources that we sent out to the schools and had a number of different webinars and trainings on that with some of the districts who wanted to work more intensely with the state SEL Team, Social-Emotional Learning Team. I think we have 14 or 15 districts right now, but that's really something that we're continuing to learn from and trying to scale up.

MS. LEYTON: Great. Thank you.

MR. HOSKINS: Uh-huh. And if the Council ever has any questions around social-emotional learning or mental health, don't ever hesitate to reach out. I'm always happy to have conversations about it, get stakeholder input. It's incredibly important to the work that we do around this.

MS. UTZ: All right. I'm not seeing any more questions in the chat box for you.

MR. HOSKINS: Okay.

MS. THOMAS: Thank you, Matt. And hi
to all the council members. It's good to be able to meet with you today, and one day soon, we're going to all be back face-to-face. So that's exciting news, as we are making, it sounds like, really good progress in the state of North Carolina not only in containing but continuing to wear masks and continuing to do those metric-reducing items like washing hands and social distancing.

And I think there was just an announcement about there's been an agreement reached between the Governor and the General Assembly on the bill to return back to school fully, so I think we're making good progress. I have no details on that because I was on this call, but I got a feed on phone. So I'll be curious to see how they settled. I think it was around the social distancing and making sure our high school kids were safe. So that was the issue that was controversial between the two entities.

So I'm going to spend just a few minutes today -- one of the asks that you had was to talk about the state -- the SEA, or the state education agency, complaint that was a systemic statewide complaint for all of our LEAs to respond
to with corrective action.

Alexis, I'm seeing your agenda and not the PowerPoint. There we go. We actually presented to the State Board because there had to be a policy change per our corrective action order, and so I thought it would be just beneficial to talk through that presentation because that really has a lot of the information in it around the state complaint.

So if you don't mind moving that forward, Alexis, and thank you for running this.

MS. UTZ: Hang on. I'm trying.

MS. THOMAS: I know. I know. Okay.

So we had to go to the State Board to request that we make a policy change because, even though we have about 90 percent alignment of our policies governing services for children with disabilities, exactly as the language from IDEA is stated, there are also places where we have some levity from the federal regs where we can make adjustments.

One example is that North Carolina had a 90-day timeline. When the regs came out requiring a 60-day timeline from referral to replacement, we could stay with our 90-day timeline because we had encompassed everything in
that. It's referral to identification of placement to services, and so that's one place North Carolina differs.

Our developmentally delayed, for example, categories -- that goes up to eight or until the student is enrolled in the third grade. Federally, the Register says age nine, but it also gives us the flexibility to use age eight. So those are just a couple of examples of where we vary. But pretty much our language is pretty tight with the federal regs. And so what we did as part of one of these corrective action items was to actually go back to the exact language at 34 CFR 300 that was around Child Find.

And so next slide. So there was a state complaint that was filed by the Literacy Moms, and that's the entity they are using, so I'm not using that in an off -- response term. That's a term they have aligned themselves to. When they file state complaints, they are filing them as the Literacy Moms NC.

And so they filed a complaint around Child Find procedures and, in particular, students who may have stayed in tiers of intervention for too long and not been moved forward by the IEP
team to determine whether or not there was a true
disability there rather than an intervention, so
kids that had been stalled in the intervention
process.

Another piece of the complaint
referenced parents not being aware that at any
time in the intervention process, they could make
a referral and that a referral can be made
anytime. They cited an example at a district at a
school level where the school required only the
MTSS Team to make referrals at Tier 3, and that's
not at all what the law says. There should be
parent referral at any time.

And so because we saw this as a
potential risk, we treated this as a typographical
error, meaning we didn't have to go back to rules
and get the policy change approved for a lengthy
process because what we've done is just recaptured
exactly what it says in IDEA and the Federal
Register.

And this is really critical because
our SLD policy change took effect July 1, and we
want to make sure we are not having children who
are being delayed their due process, and a lot of
this we can monitor through our compliance
monitoring, but the MTSS side isn't under special ed. It is under general ed, it's all ed, it's a whole school improvement model.

   And, Alexis, I don't know if it's my screen or yours, but I'm seeing some really funny stuff all of a sudden. There you go. That's better. That's fine.

   So here was the change we requested with the State Board. The federal regs you'll see on the screen on the left side, and the part that's highlighted is the part that we asked to insert into our policy, so to strike-through what we had "Following a referral from school personnel or a parent, if additional data is sought for determining a child's eligibility, parental consent must be obtained and the public agency,"

   blah, blah, blah. It went on.

   That was not clean and that was not clear. That had been kind of a combo of two pieces of regulation. So we've gone back to just following IDEA completely, and you'll see that the right side from the red down matches the left side, and it's our new policy, then, which really talks about a parent can request a referral at any time.
We had to do some training on that phrase because a referral means you must be considered for a referral. It does not mean testing has to immediately happen. And so we had some panic out in the field that that means every child we now are testing and we're behind and we can't catch up because of COVID and now we've got more referrals.

And that is not at all what the law says. The law says you must consider a referral. The IEP Team must make that consideration, but that is not an automatic referral that means the child's parent provides immediate permission and the child immediately gets a thorough evaluation.

Next slide. So the state complaint did list any particular children in that state complaint, and the state complaint number is 20-043, I believe. I hope I got that number right. But it said there are children who may have been impacted. So no children were specifically identified in this state complaint that the SEA, the state agency, found against itself as being out of compliance and, therefore, requiring corrective action.

There have been other state
complaints that have been filed with particular children identified. There has been a finding of noncompliance in those other complaints, and that happened before this state complaint and it has happened after this state complaint. In those cases, there has been corrective action ordered and, in some cases, above and beyond what has been ordered for the statewide corrective action.

But one of those corrective actions was to go in and look at all those students who may have been, for an extended period of time, in a tiered intervention without making progress, and that's the key. Because a student could be in an intervention for two years or three years and making progress to the point they don't need special education if that gap is closing and they are making good progress and they're getting the intervention that is needed to catch them up in whatever area -- academic area or behavioral area they're struggling in.

But when kids aren't making good progress, aren't making progressive aims toward closing that gap, then we shouldn't be letting those students continue at an intervention phase without the consideration of the need for special
ed. So that corrective action is already in place in the state complaint where districts have to go through all the students that have been in that tiered intervention, and they have to meet to evaluate whether that is a child that needs to be referred and whether they've held up that referral with that intervention process.

And then we've had the Child Find procedures posted, written. Districts know the rules. They have to do Child Find every year. They get documents and information and pamphlets to do that. They have to post that at their schools. We have to post it on our website. And, you know, there's still going to be gaps. We're going to still have some folks who don't push that at the level it needs to be, for whatever reason. That's not a judgment. That's just -- that's just the way things are.

If we -- if our school systems with all the rules and regulations functioned at a hundred percent, there would be no need for us, for monitoring, for our general supervision. So we know that just based on human error that we're going to have gaps, but our goal is to catch those gaps and close those as quickly as possibly and
train and inform and educate so that a school or a
district doesn't continue to repeat that bad
practice.

So, again, while there have been kids
that were identified that were caught up in that
loop, that corrective action has addressed those
students. This state complaint just didn't
address particular students because there were no
students named in this particular state complaint.

Next slide. So we have done some
very extensive work with our corrective action
plan. Carol Ann Hudgens has led this work. She
has been the point person for the corrective
action. We've started with webinars, and we had
two webinars where each district -- we had two
different webinars -- the same webinar but offered
two different times -- where every public school
unit or every LEA, every charter, every lab
school, every public school, and the IFC school --
every school entity of the public schools of North
Carolina were requested to be at one of those two
webinars.

I think we have about ten districts
that we cannot confirm someone from their district
attended, and so we have reached out to them
because we'll either provide them the training that was captured with a script that they can go through and then confirm that they've done it, or we'll schedule a third training to provide it to that last small group of folks.

What we're thinking is the people registered but didn't either log in the correct school or didn't make that clear. They just put in a county name, which sometimes with a charter school. So we just need to make sure we have a clear understanding of who did not attend.

We have provided a ton of materials and tools for the districts to then go back and train staff. So we've provided training videos. We've provided scripts with those training videos. We've provided checklists. We provided sign-off sheets. We've provided a draft letter to parents notifying them that their child is being moved into an intervention process and what that looks like and what's the data behind that.

There's a requirement for a lot more formal documentation that we can go check off and ensure that it has been done because another piece of the complaint was about the communication with parents, that parents didn't know when a child had
been moved into a tiered level of intervention in some places.

I am not going to say that is statewide because we have some districts who are doing an incredible job with the communication piece with parents with their intervention process, with keeping kids from being misidentified as having a disability when what they need is solid intervention to get them caught up and move on. So it is not a broken system, but it is -- there are places where it is not following all best practices. And so that's what this state complaint is working on, is to try to level that out and get everybody into a best practice mode.

I'm trying to think of some other things. We've created Google Docs where they can go in and have access to all this. We have done updates over several weeks, and then we held office hours for people to join the call, ask questions, problem solve. Those went through February. We've got another one scheduled about mid March to kind of do a checkpoint.

We provided a timeline for when all of this must be completed, and we had set one
early timeline in early March. That was before
the Governor and Secretary Cohen came out three
weeks ago now and said we want you to start
working on getting all kids back to school at
least the elementary level.

So we've given LEAs a little
breathing room with that timeline of March about
who they have to train and when they have to
train. We've given them a little wiggle room.
It's still well within our timeline. In a state
complaint, you have one year to complete your
corrective action. The finding for the state
complaint was issued in November, and our plan is
to close the state complaint by the end of June.

So we have shortened our own timeline
to get this work done because it's critical that
we don't let this carry on and we don't fix those
bad practices that might be out there as quickly
as possible. So our goal is, by the end of this
school year, this will be done. People will be
back on track, documentation will be better in
place so parent communication is better in place,
and we've got a cleaner system moving forward.

Next slide. I got ahead of myself,
but this is just, again, a summary of some of the
things we've done to support this corrective action. So we didn't ask districts or LEAs to go back and create their plan. We created the plan. We provided the materials, we provided the information. They just had to then implement that at the local level so that statewide everyone is getting the same information, the same training, the same communication.

We have looped in superintendents, chief academic officers, MTSS coordinators, our regional case managers as well as our EC directors, our division, and the Integrated Academic and Behavior System Team that does the MTSS work. So it has been a total collaborative effort between those two groups, EC and MTSS. The MTSS folks have been a part of our office hours. We have participated in their regional MTSS meetings, and we are being very clear and intentional on the same message.

And so going back to the State Board last week, what we asked for was this technical change to make this change with the policy. They did approve that. We will be going back to clean up the rest of our policies because there is a new rulemaking piece in place now where every time we
make a policy in State Board, it has to go back to
this overall, state-level rules authority for
approval.

And so since so much of our guidance
already in our policies governing services for
children with disabilities is a repeat of the
federal regs, we're going to try to go in and
do -- just to separate out what is specific to
North Carolina and get that through rulemaking to
get us kind of back on track with that group.
It's not duplicating the policy word for word when
we're just going to cite the policy to begin with.

Next slide, Alexis. And so we are
working now -- these are our next steps. They did
approve the policy. We are working to get that
policy change updated on the website, and we are
also working to -- to try and get our new policy
manual back in line so we can get -- people are
needing new policy manuals. So we've got to get
this inserted and get it up on the website so
people can download that.

When we are ready to take that full
policy of whatever we're doing with the Rules
Commission, that will certainly come before you
for your input and for your feedback.
And I think that's everything I had on that, Alexis. If there are any questions, I'll be happy to take those now.

MS. UTZ: There is nothing in the chat box so far.

MS. THOMAS: Okay. Great. Then, I'll move on to the strategic plan, and I am happy to say this is the final version of the strategic plan for the Exceptional Children Division. Some of you did use the opportunity to provide us feedback when we asked for that from all of our stakeholder groups, and I greatly appreciate that.

And, in particular, one item that came from a council member -- and it was all anonymous, but if you are on this call and you're the person that did this, I want to personally thank you because we try to make sure we don't use acronyms. But what we've found is that we still use terms or titles -- on this page you're looking at, for example, where it says, "coaching continuum," that we don't necessarily explain as we've used it here. So people reading this may not know what the context is.

And so one of the things from your feedback we did was -- and we'll get to it in a
minute, but we created a glossary at the end where we have explained the terms, the titles, the courses, anything that we thought a user not deeply embedded in special ed or a reader not deeply embedded in special ed would wonder what that was, and there's a really cute little tool.

Alexis, can you hover over where it says "coaching continuum" and click on that? So we have this--- It went away. Try it again.

There's a link that's been connected so that when you hover over a term that we've defined, the definition pops up for you. There you go. So it's going to give the reader context as they go through, and then at the end, there is the full glossary.

So I provided this to Alexis to share with you. I shared this with our State Board.

And I apologize. I need to take two seconds. If you'll give me seconds.

MS. UTZ: Sure. And as Sherry is doing that, we do have a number that just joined us that is not on the Council. Laura, I see you're logged in. Are you here for public comment?

(No audible response.)
MS. UTZ: Laura, can you hear us?

(No audible response.)

MS. UTZ: All right. Well, we'll try again in a little bit.

MS. THOMAS: I'm back. Can you hear me?


MS. THOMAS: All right. So I have provided this to Alexis. We did try to clean up some of the language. This is very broad because it is the Division's targeted plan, and then I have asked each section to take the actions and the indicators or evidence of success and create their section plan that aligns to where they see their work impacting these objectives and these actions in our overall strategic plan.

So, for example, the second bullet under "Actions" is applying the full coaching continuum. We as a division went through training last year on the full e-coaching continuum, and so everything we are doing as far as technical support is taking the lens of coaching -- now we're not just coaching because people have been through Reading Research to Classroom Practice or our significant disabilities literacy work. It's
they're being coached anytime we provide PD,
anytime we provide technical assistance.

So our program improvement and
professional developmental folks that have done
Reading Research to Classroom Practice [inaudible]
to that action item with their e-coaching around
that reading course or the Foundations of Math.

Dreama McCoy's section of Supporting
Teaching and Related Services that has the
significant disabilities work, they're going to
report on how they're supporting that literacy for
significant disabilities. So each section will be
able to customize their responses to the actions,
the indicators, and the evidence, and then they
are submitting those plans to me so that we really
do have a very broad casting of the net of how we
are approaching this work to ensure that we're
providing equity and access for all kids.

And if you were able to review this,
you'd see that this is very heavily aligned with
the State Board's strategic plan, and there's a
huge focus on equity. We are now in the Office of
Equity. My new supervisor is Dr. Catherine
Edmonds, and our whole area that reports to her is
focused on equity as part of the reorganization
with Superintendent Truitt coming on board.

So I shared this with the State Board as just an item they were going to send out because they knew we were working on it. We have since been asked to present on our strategic plan at the April board meeting to show them where we've aligned and what our focus is around equity, and I'm really excited about that because I feel like we did some really good work in putting the priorities in place in this plan, to keep guiding our division, to keep us all focused on equity.

And that happened before we got moved into the Office of Equity. So sometimes things just align appropriately, and you don't have any clue that that's happening, but I feel like we're in a good place. We've also been doing work within our division on equity, and we chose to work on disability and race equity. Those two areas, we feel, impact our work the most.

So staff are going through some professional development from an outside source and we're having conversations. We're looking at everything through this lens of equity so that we can then better support our districts as they try to do the very same thing.
So I'm not going to go through the whole plan. I know it was shared with you. You will get this final plan. You will also get the PowerPoint that we just went through, but I am happy to take questions about the strategic plan if you have those.

MS. UTZ: And for those of you that have the agenda pulled up, if you refresh your agenda, these links are linked into the agenda.

MS. THOMAS: Oh, thank you, Alexis. And, again, if you are the person that said please define these terms, thank you, thank you, thank you. That's why we need stakeholder input. In our world, we know what those things are, but everybody doesn't, and that was a huge help for us.

MS. UTZ: And, Sherry, I'm not seeing any questions that have come up in the chat box.

MS. THOMAS: Okay. Well, if there are later, you-all know how to find me, and I am always happy to get your emails and -- or make a phone call and talk through any questions you may have. Thank you again.

MS. DEGEN: I'm sorry. Sherry, can I ask one question?
MS. THOMAS: Absolutely.

MS. DEGEN: This is Jennifer from Charlotte.

MS. THOMAS: Hey, Jennifer.

MS. DEGEN: Hi. Thank you for all this information. I think it's so great. I know that our whole school has already taken the videos and they were very helpful. My principal keeps commenting about the MTSS video. He's like, "I learned so much." So he really did get a lot from those, so he's excited to learn a lot.

But my question is, as far as like the equity, you know, there's some different tiers when you look at -- so I know -- and I think it's a statewide requirement that, you know, if a parent presents with a private psychological eval, you know, that they've paid for and they bring it to the school, technically, we are supposed to open it up with a -- you know, with a referral process to see if we need to move forward with the EC process, you know, and test.

If a parent requests testing, we run concurrent with MTSS, and then looking at equities, you see so many students who have either language issues because [inaudible] just different
levels like maybe a parent doesn't speak English
or you have maybe a poverty area where a parent
isn't as educated to say, "Hey, I'm requesting
testing" or "I can't afford a private eval," and
those kids are then going through the MTSS
process.

And in some districts -- you know,
I'm going to admit that some of them have gotten
lost in my school. I think we have a great
program, but you know, at the high school level,
sometimes it does -- you know, it gets stuck. So
where is that equity being addressed as far as,
you know, the language barrier and the financial
part when you're looking at a parent who is
working and not -- doesn't know the system? Those
kids are getting stuck in MTSS, but if you have a
parent that's knowledgeable and just goes ahead
and says, "I want testing," or comes in with a
private eval, they're skipping all that part.

And I just -- that's a huge concern
for me. I know we open all these kids with these
private evals that come in, and I feel like, you
know, it's -- there are kids I want to say, "Hey, Mom, go ahead and request testing," but you know,
I know that that's not appropriate to do either
for some of these lower income families, but they
don't know the system. So how is that being
addressed, if that makes sense?

MS. THOMAS: Yeah, it does make
sense. And so part of that corrective action is
that that is -- that's an issue. That was one of
the issues, that there may be parents who don't
have that access or that knowledge. They're not
being told.

And so the communication -- some of
the communication documents that we've provided
are in English and Spanish because that's the
primary second language that we deal with.
Anything else -- schools have the responsibility
to translate into the appropriate language that is
needed by that parent or to have an interpreter
there. That's always been a requirement for
access.

And, hopefully, this notification
when they say "Your child is going into
intervention," it also states in there, "At any
time, you may request an evaluation," and that had
to be -- that was one of the pieces that had to be
put in writing, that while it was out there, it's
in policy, it's in the regulations, and there are
a lot of school sites -- it's on their website.
It wasn't on every school website.

So one of the corrective action items
is to say you have to inform parents and you have
to keep that documentation that you informed that
parent in their native language that they have the
right to request a referral.

MS. MOOREFIELD: Sherry, this is
Ginny Moorefield. I just wanted to put a bug in
your ear and anyone else on this Council here
that, you know, when we make -- you know, we're
making all these strides to make sure that our
parents are aware and we're putting things in
different languages and we're offering all these
different language services for bilingual
families, I just want to put a bug in your ear
that deaf families, English is usually their
second language, and of course, American Sign
Language does not have a written form.

So, you know, your office may
consider, when they're creating these documents,
to have a link to an interpretative video of the
information and then, you know, include that as a
QR code or include that as a link for deaf
families to have access to that information.
MS. THOMAS: That is a great idea.

We have talked about the braille piece of this, but that's -- I'm surprised Sherri Vernelson hasn't already told me I needed to do that. She is usually on top of that, but that is a great idea and that is certainly something we can add and add in that toolbox for districts. That's a great idea. Thank you for that.

MS. MOOREFIELD: No problem.

MS. THOMAS: I will also tell you one of the things we are working on, not related to this, but I have been pushing very hard, and pushing hard doesn't move it faster or it doesn't move it as fast as I want, but we are very close to having full translation within ECATS, which will make a huge difference for all of our parents. So districts can stop interpreting or translating at that point.

So we're trying to get that accessibility there as well, and to your point, trying to use closed captioning as much as we can, and I think some of those -- I think the videos we prepared for schools were supposed to have closed captioning on them. That's not going to parents, but it's trying to capture staff as well.
MS. MOOREFIELD: Excellent.

MS. UTZ: Sherry, there is a question, "Are there videos for the MTSS for families and where are they?"

MS. THOMAS: There are posted videos that I think ECAC has done or is working on. I don't know if the MTSS website has any of those videos or not, so that's a question I am happy to follow up on.

MS. UTZ: I'm trying to think if I know the answer too, but nothing comes right to the front of my head either.

MS. THOMAS: There are some old videos that we did, oh, probably back in 2009 when I was doing RTI, which is now MTSS, and we did videos for families at that point, but it was on a four-tier process, which is very much not what we're doing now. So I'll check on that. I know that -- I know that ECAC was working on some. I don't know if those are up or not.

And I love all the comments and the questions. So thank you for those.

MS. UTZ: And Terri shared -- Terri, who is from ECAC, shared that she's not sure either. So we definitely will have to check on
that.

MS. THOMAS: Yes, we will. I know there was something done around MTSS for SLD eligibility. I just don't know what else has been done. So I will check on that and get that back to you, Alexis, to share with Council.

MS. UTZ: Sure.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So any more questions, Alexis?

MS. UTZ: Nope, that was it.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So thank you so much, Sherry, and thank you, Matt.

MS. THOMAS: You are most welcome. Thank you for your time today. I think I went a little over, but I hope it was helpful information.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Very helpful.

Thank you.


THE CHAIRPERSON: So we are at 12:13. We're actually early. So what's our official they have to be signed in for public comment by?

MS. UTZ: By 12:00. And I did get communication from the Laura that was in. She's not here for public comment. So we don't have to
worry about that. We just had the one that was
emailed into us.

THE CHAIRPERSON: And we had no
sign-ups?

MS. UTZ: Nope.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So, Diane, would
you like to read the public comment that we got in
e-mail form?

MS. COFFEY: Yes, I can. It actually
is a very short one. It was two questions. It's
"What measures are in place to notify parents of
absences?" and "What responsibilities are in place
for application an of IEP?" And that is literally
all that's on the email.

MS. UTZ: Can you read it one more
time for me?

MS. COFFEY: Okay. And I can send it
to you, if that would make it easier, but it's
"What measures are in place to notify parents of
absences?" And then, "What responsibilities are
in place for application of an IEP?"

DR. HUTCHINSON: I'm not sure if
they're referencing absences of the student or
absences of the instructional staff or related
service providers.
MS. COFFEY: Yes, I agree. It's very vague.

DR. HUTCHINSON: I guess absences of students -- there's compulsory attendance laws that state that the school has to notify parents when a student has three, six, and then nine unexcused absences, and each school might do that a different way.

And notifications for parents of absent teachers and service providers -- Sherry might be able to speak to this, but we don't have any obligation to notify parents when a service provider is absent or a special ed teacher is absent for a limited number of days unless we're doing a long-term sub, but maybe Sherry could speak to that a little. I'm not sure -- I don't know if we're addressing the question, though.

MS. UTZ: Sherry is no longer here. She had another meeting. But, technically, you -- I mean you don't have to respond to comments to answer them. But I feel like this is a specific question that is not necessarily for this like audience, if that makes sense.

MS. COFFEY: I agree, Alexis. I think -- I don't know -- I mean the person didn't
even sign it or anything. There's not -- it's just literally those two questions. I'm wondering if it was sent multiple places to try to get the answer.

MS. UTZ: Yeah. I was going to say or, Diane, just forward it to me and I can reach out to this person individually and answer that question.

MS. COFFEY: All right. I'll be glad to do that.

MS. UTZ: I mean I don't really think the Council has anything to do with it per se.

THE CHAIRPERSON: And if the Council can agree, we can talk about the committees and reporting and goal setting now.

DR. HUTCHINSON: Cynthia, are you suggesting we do the goal setting and committee stuff first and then not have a break for lunch and then just be done and break for lunch after?

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

DR. HUTCHINSON: I'm in support of that.

MS. UTZ: So is Terri.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So is anyone not in support of it?
(No audible response.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. So I have from Alexis the committee reports from the Policy Committee, from the Unmet Needs Committee, and also from the -- what's our other committee?

MS. UTZ: Executive? Is that what you said?

THE CHAIRPERSON: I don't have the Executive Committee because I haven't done one, but I do have -- I do have the reports from the Policies and Procedures, from the Unmet Needs, and that's it, I think.

MS. UTZ: Reports and Data is the last one.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Right. And we don't have a chair for that, and if we could just have you think about -- if nobody on the call right now wants to volunteer to chair that committee, all council members are required to be on one of our committees. So if you haven't joined a committee, this is a good time to think about joining a committee. And if you have a want or interest in the Reports and Data Committee, we have a vacant position for chair.

MS. UTZ: And just as a reminder, if
you guys forget, I just pulled up the list of
people -- the list of the committees.

THE CHAIRPERSON: And any of those
members who are new to the Council, the members of
any committee are very supportive. So it's not
hard, we don't bite, and we're very welcoming.

As we're developing the report to the
State Board of Education, one of the things that
they've asked over the years is that each of us
come up with a suggestion or recommendation for
them. So in your committees, if you could think
about a recommendation that we'll propose for the
State Board of Education.

MS. UTZ: I'm sorry, Cynthia. Say
that again. I was responding to something else.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Oh. No problem.
The State Board of Education has asked that we,
the Council, provide recommendations for them. So
if we, in each of our committees, could review and
think about and maybe even suggest recommendations
for the -- proposed recommendations for the State
Board of Education.

MS. UTZ: All right. Thank you.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So Policies and
Procedures, in your report from 9/2/2020, you
spent your time on two issues that were proposed to your group, group norms and social media presence. Is anyone here that wants to talk about where you are on that?

MS. TERHAAR: I can speak to that first issue in terms of norms.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay.

MS. TERHAAR: And that is that we discussed how there have been meetings in which we need to adhere to some of the guidelines that [inaudible] in our handbook in terms of, you know, the participation of members, particularly in situations when people -- when there's a public forum. And so we thought it would be helpful if we had those succinctly stated and reviewed before we go to the public forum so everyone is aware of what our role is during those sessions.

And then the other thing we thought would be helpful is, we came up with a set of proposed group norms that we might want to start at the beginning of all of our meetings as a reminder of some guidelines for participation and what our role is on this committee. However, I don't have access to that -- to that drive.

I'm having some technology issues
today, but is there anyone here in our group who
has that who could kind of take over? And we
thought we might want to have at our next meeting
the opportunity to get people's input about these
norms so that we can come up with a consensus.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Alexis, did you
capture that?

MS. UTZ: I'm about to yes. So the
next meeting, you want to be on the agenda; is
that what I heard?

MS. TERHAAR: Yes. And if no one on
our committee wants to speak to that second issue,
my recollection on that one is that what we want
to do is discuss having a group or a person on our
committee -- on our council -- on the advisory
council who would deal with keeping up with our
presence on social media, and we had some ideas
about what social media is more heavily utilized
by our parents. So that could be put on the
agenda as well.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Thank you.

MS. TERHAAR: You're welcome. Anyone
in my group, feel free to speak if I didn't
[inaudible].

THE CHAIRPERSON: So Unmet Needs, if
you'd like to speak a little bit about the work that your group is doing.

MS. COFFEY: I need to pull our thing up real quick, Cynthia.


MS. COFFEY: Yes. And I'm going to apologize, Ginny. I think you've probably got a better handle on the last couple of meetings because I had some family things that had me out during some of that.

MS. MOOREFIELD: I'm looking through the last -- the last notes I have are from June. Let me dig a little bit more because I think I put them in the wrong folder. Okay. I've got them. Well, nope, I don't got them. Those were just my notes from the meeting itself. Matt, do you have---

THE CHAIRPERSON: Alexis, do you have the Unmet Needs Subcommittee reporting from 9/9/2020?

MS. UTZ: If they're in the folder.

MS. COFFEY: They should be because I sent them in.

MR. POTTER: I can tell you that our conversation was very informal because it was the
first meeting that I had been able to attend as a member and our chair was not in attendance. So it was sort of a -- not necessarily a blind-leading-the-blind situation, but obviously, I didn't step in and sort of take charge. But also since our chair was not in attendance, we sort of talked productively but informally about---

MS. MOOREFIELD: Okay. I've got it now, Matt. I've got them---

MR. POTTER: Got it. Okay.

MS. MOOREFIELD: Yeah, I've got it pulled up now.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, Matt.

MR. POTTER: No problem.

MS. MOOREFIELD: So in December, it was just me and Matt, and we were kind of talking about -- I was sort of getting him caught up with some of the stuff that Diane and I had talked about in previous meetings of this committee, and so--- Let me see. So, yeah, I got Matt caught up.

We are -- you know, we're still looking at ways to address some of the transportation issues for children with disabilities as far as the law goes and it being
legal to pass school buses that are contracted and holding our contract companies accountable for -- you know, for making sure that their fleets meet those transportation regulations as far as the actual buses.

So the cars, the vans, you know, things like that, they can pull into driveways, so that's not an issue, but the actual buses, we need to hold our companies accountable for making sure they are -- that they have all three of those requirements: the swing out stop sign, the flashing lights, and "Official School Transportation" on at least three sides of the vehicle.

We also talked about -- I think I brought Matt up to speed on what we were talking as far as the -- like the emergency plans that we have been discussing and how to make sure that there are safety measures and transportation for all kids with disabilities, that we had talked about on the Council with, you know, kids who may have processing disorders or autism that may not respond verbally, kids who are in -- who are nonverbal and in wheelchairs, you know, how to keep them safe, how to transport them off campus,
things like that.

So that's what I caught Matt up on, and then we decided that we wanted to add the following to that list. We wanted to add, you know, maybe an establishment of support groups for parents with exceptional children and support groups for the kids themselves, you know, inasmuch as that's feasible.

And then we wanted to, you know, try to find a way to check on the mental health of parents, students, and teachers within our EC -- our EC community, and I was thinking about that as -- oh, what was the guy's name who was discussing the mental health from DPI?

THE CHAIRPERSON: Matt Hoskins.

MS. MOOREFIELD: Yes, Matt. As Matt was giving his presentation, I kept thinking to myself, you know, so I'm glad that we're getting the ball rolling, we're getting things established to keep a better check on our kids, but is anybody keeping check on teachers and on our staff -- our support staff.

And then we also added, you know, just to kind of check in see what our technology needs are like augmentative communication devices,
which is computers, voice out readers, interpreters for Zoom classes. We were concerned that, you know, at home with remote learning, kids may or may not have access to that technology and so various support materials and interpreters.

So that was more of a question that we had if anybody knows. I know that for my son our AT has been out a couple of times delivering various pieces of equipment for us, but I also wondered is that the same, you know, in your districts and also how are our mainstream classes handling interpreters during this -- you know, the Zoom classes.

And Matt and I talked that we hadn't -- we hadn't really heard ourselves of any specific needs that have come up during the pandemic that are not being met. So we kind of tried to put ourselves in our students' shoes and in our EC teachers' shoes and in our parents' shoes as to what possibilities might be out there that haven't been recognized yet.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, Ginny.

MS. MOOREFIELD: Uh-huh.

MS. COFFEY: And I can go back a little bit. I've pulled the 9/20 notes -- yeah,
the 9/20 notes also. And at that meeting, we really were talking about how to promote the Council as a whole, to make sure information is being shared out with families and some ideas -- which, of course, social media is a big piece of that.

That we were talking about of how we can use that to get information out to families, but also maybe looking at some of the other groups that are already out there doing family groups in general -- looking at some of those organizations too to help get the information out. But then also we talked about just making sure our board is more equity balanced too in the aspect that we're representing, you know, across the board different disabilities, not just one or two disabilities on the board itself.

So we were talking about some things like that too. So it plays right into what Ginny and them were talking on the next level too, but it just definitely was staying in that same conversation.

THE CHAIRPERSON: And you had one point there that was very interesting to me. Try to get parents to come to these meetings -- to our
council meetings as guests just to see what we're doing and to see if they're interested in doing -- joining the Council or getting more engaged.

MS. COFFEY: Right, because they can't understand what they need to join, if they haven't come to a meeting at least as a guest.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Exactly, yes.

Okay. Thank you so much for all that work that you do on these committees. The EC Committee, we meet once a month, and mostly what we're doing is addressing any issues that the EC Division brings to us to consider and thinking about guests for meetings.

So if you have a guest or you have an interest that you want to see a presentation on or more information on from the EC Division, please let Alexis know so that she can bring that to us in the EC part of the Council, and that's all.

Thank you so much.

So now, Alexis, do we need to then have the subcommittees meeting after this?

MS. UTZ: That is totally up to you guys.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So, subcommittees, do you think that you need to meet after this
meeting?

DR. HUTCHINSON: This is Christy H.

At our Executive meeting, we usually meet [inaudible] the only thought that I had kind of following Matt's presentation and then Ginny's comments was, as students are returning to the classroom buildings, whether it be March or be August, if there are resources available to the general ed and special ed population for trauma-focused practices.

Trauma comes in lots of different forms, and knowing what our students have experienced over the last year, whether it be death and loss and grief or loss of a job or, you know, transient households, even those students who are in the most stable physical environments, I suspect that there's elements of trauma that kids have experienced.

And so if there's any organizations that have such offerings, it might be beneficial for us to just be aware of those resources.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Excellent. Thank you, Christy.

MS. UTZ: And Terri just said she can give some information from Data and Reports.
Sorry. I had you muted again, Terri. You're unmuted.

MS. LEYTON: Yeah, thank you. No problem. Okay. So the committee members that met in December were Leanna George, Kenya Pope, and myself. I think we were all new to the committee, possibly Leanna had been on it before. We were trying to even understand what kind of recommendations we are charged with making as a committee.

And at the time, we said that we would kind of dig into the SPP/APR data and look at some things like graduation rates and things like that. But we had questions, like I said, what kind of evaluations would be doing, what type of reporting do we need to do. We really needed some clarity. Maybe because we don't have a chair, that's why.

And so we were just digging into data during that last meeting trying to determine what we could -- what kind of information and recommendations we could even provide.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So, Alexis, could you -- are the previous reports from Data and Reports in the Google Drive? Do you know?
MS. UTZ: So the only information I have is what's right here.


MS. UTZ: So Reports -- and actually Unmet Needs just disappeared from there, so -- but I mean this is the one I have. I don't know when it's from. There's no date. This might be the one you're talking about. Well, it's dated up here from the 12/9 one. So this was just the only one that's in there.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So really and truly, as the Reports and Data, you're looking at all the reports and data that the EC Division provides. I would go to the EC website and take a look at that. I would certainly look at what Nancy presented to us earlier, where the changes are going to be. I would certainly look at the parent -- I think it's Indicator 8, the parent survey that goes out, that kind of information. It's just taking a look and being able to propose to the Council and then possibly to the State Board ways that we can improve maybe data collection, getting the data out so that people in the community, as well as just everyone can see what's going on in North Carolina.
Because I think so often parents are concerned because they have no knowledge of what's going on, and they just go with what they're assuming is or is not happening.

MS. LEYTON: Okay. Okay. Thank you. So based on that, I'm not really sure that we have any recommendations at this time to put forth because I don't know that -- Kenya -- I know she was on earlier. I don't know if she's still on now.

MS. UTZ: She is.

MS. LEYTON: Okay. If you want to have any additional comments.

MS. POPE: Yes, hello. This is Kenya. I'm still here. I had myself muted. I agree with what you were saying. It was my first time being on the committee -- serving on a committee, and I was kind of at a loss as to what we were supposed to be doing. So I could also use some guidance.

And I was listening to what you were saying about reviewing, you know, the data, the information on the EC website, but I'm still unsure about -- I mean we're reviewing it, but what are we -- what are we reviewing it for, what
are we reporting out on, and what recommendations -- you know, are we supposed to make recommendations of things that we're -- I could just really use some more guidance there. Thank you.

THE CHAIRPERSON: So, Alexis, would it be okay for me to email just this committee -- subcommittee?

MS. UTZ: Sure.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Then, I'll do that. I'll email you guys. And is anyone -- even though you're all new to the committee, is anyone thinking that they'd like to chair the committee? So, Terri, are you on -- are you---

MS. LEYTON: I actually am not sure if I -- my role at my job expanded, and I'm not sure whether I'm staying on this committee. We may roll that over to another staff member at ECAC in the near future like for the June meeting. So we're looking at that, so I don't -- I hate to commit to that right now.


MS. POPE: Yes, I'm sorry. I'm still here. My apologies. I have a puppy that may
start to bark. I would also piggyback off of what Terri said. There's been a lot of times where my duties call for me to fill in, in different areas, you know, and I would not want to commit to being the chair, number one, because I don't know what we're supposed to be doing, but---

THE CHAIRPERSON: Right, right.

MS. POPE: ---but two, because I don't know if I will continue to be the person attending.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Thank you so much. Any other council members out there?

(No audible response.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. I think it's something I want to have you all consider, and by June, I'd like to have a volunteer or we're going to volunteer Leanna George because she wasn't here.

MS. LEYTON: But I would definitely welcome you emailing our little small group with some additional information and maybe some places where we can look for all these reports.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Exactly.

MS. LEYTON: Yeah, that would be awesome. Thank you.
THE CHAIRPERSON: So now that we've got every -- I think every committee has kind of spoken and reported on their work, is it the opinion of the Council that we need to, then, close out this meeting and have a separate meeting for the committees, or do we think we're okay at this point?

And what I'm going to do as the Chair, I will be sending out a draft of the report that we're going to give to the State Board of Education by August. And is that okay, Alexis, to send it to you and you then send it out to the group?

MS. UTZ: Yeah, that's fine.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay.

MS. COFFEY: Cynthia, this is Diane. With what we've already got there, do you have enough to get that draft of the report done because---

THE CHAIRPERSON: I think I do.

MS. COFFEY: I don't know that we need to meet as far as my group since you've got the information to put in the report at this point unless there's something we really need to address that I'm not aware of, but---
MR. POTTER: I would defer to my chair on that one [inaudible].

THE CHAIRPERSON: So I think we do have enough. So I think that we can get a motion -- I think we're at that point -- a motion to adjourn.

MR. POTTER: So moved.

THE CHAIRPERSON: A second?

DR. HUTCHINSON: This is Christy Hutchinson. I would second that motion.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Any opposed?

(No audible response.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Any abstaining?

(No audible response.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Oh, I didn't do all in favor. All in favor?

(Multiple council members responded aye.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: So no one opposed, no abstained?

MS. UTZ: Nope.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you so much, everyone, for all of your time today on this beautiful sunny day. Enjoy the rest of your day, and we'll meet again in June, and be safe.
(At 12:45 p.m., the quarterly meeting adjourned.)
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 135, 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 25th day of March, 2021.

Rebecca P. Scott