Members Present
Meredith Benson
Dale Carpenter
Jennifer Degen
Jennifer Grady
Laura Hall
Katie Holler
Susan Humbert
Nicole Jimerson
Mary LaCorte
Teresa Mebane
Tim Montgomery
Martin Pharr
Lisa Phillips
Vicki Simmons
Greg Singleton
Gina Smith
Rick Smith

Staff
Tish Bynum
Carol Ann Hudgens
William Hussey
Heather Ouzts
Sherry Thomas
Deanna Townsend-Smith

Visitors
Linda Creamer
Cynthia Daniels-Hall
Leanna George
Elizabeth Grovenstein
Eric Hall
Sarah Harrington
Jacqui Hawkins
Cheryl Posner-Cahill
Gerri Smith
Jennine Vlasty

Call to Order
Chairperson Nicole Jimerson called the meeting to order and announced the official start time of Council meetings is 9:30 (not 9:00 as reflected on today’s agenda). Members made self-introductions and stated their role on the Council. Chairperson also gave a brief overview to new members of the structure of Council meetings.
**Action on Minutes** – Due to the backlog of meeting minutes and changes in membership, the Council decided not to vote on the previous meeting minutes but investigate posting the agendas along with handouts to the web. The executive subcommittee will review/approve the posting and move forward.

**Office of Charter Schools** – Deanna Townsend-Smith, Lead Consultant for Office of Charter Schools

A Charter School is a public school operating on a contract for a specific period of time. Charter Schools do have some areas of flexibility, but areas that are non-negotiable include federal laws relative to exceptional children, state mandates for testing/assessment. Most Charter Schools are run by a nonprofit Board. Currently, the SBE is only charter-issuing entity in NC. There is a one year planning period required prior to issuance of a charter. Charter Schools cannot exclude EC students.

A myth to dispel is that Charter Schools take money from LEAs; monies follow the child. In reality, tracking child-specific funding for students moving in and out of LEAs and Charter Schools is difficult.

The Office of Charter Schools has a staff of seven for the entire state. Adam Levinson is the interim director.

Last year there were 149 Charter Schools; this year there were 160; 14 new Charter Schools are scheduled for opening next year. Charter Schools outnumber LEAs. Office of Charter Schools works in conjunction with other DPI divisions. Mission: The NC Office of Charter Schools through collaboration, provides leadership to establish and engage a quality charter school culture resulting in legal compliance, board performance, financial integrity and academic excellence.

This past year three Charter School charters revoked: PACE, Dynamic and Entrepreneurial. The trend is most charters are revoked due to financial difficulties, some academic for issues.


**Charter School Q&A**

Currently Charter Schools can only opt in to state retirement plan during the first year. This is difficult with recruitment and retention of teachers, especially EC teachers and EC teachers for high-needs students. There is legislation pending that provides more flexibility for the Charter School Board to opt into the retirement system beyond the one year period.

Most high school Charter Schools are college prep and not required to provide the Occupational Course of Study pathway but they are required to provide an alternate option. Not all students are college prep but all students’ needs must be met. However, once a Charter Schools receives federal funds, they are required to provide the full continuum of services for EC students.

Approximately 20% of Charter Schools participate in free and reduced lunch; 15% provide transportation. If the IEP requires transportation, the Charter School must provide transportation.

Two virtual Charter Schools with administrative offices in Durham are scheduled to open. DPI will monitor them just like any other school.
Charter Schools typically do not have full-time related services (OT, PT, speech) providers and therefore, contract with vendors. Previously, Charter Schools had more flexibility relative to nursing services but now a fully licensed nurse is required.

The timeframe to provide performance framework feedback is open.

When Charter Schools close and EC students go back to public schools the transfer of records back into LEA can be extremely difficult. The Office of Charter Schools does have a closure framework that is provided to Charter School Board of Directors and it outlines all aspects of closure. The problem is a lot of times the Board of Directors is dismantled and it is difficult to have them complete the requirements. Some corrective actions include contacting the landlord of where the actual records are housed and the Office of Charter School goes and picks them up to disseminate to the proper place. Parents can contact the Office of Charter Schools regarding this situation. The funding aspect is also difficult for the LEA even though the money should follow the child it usually doesn’t or there is a significant delay based on child count funding and the timing of the student transfer.

Teacher and employee salary is decided by the Charter School’s Board of Directors. Charter Schools do not have to adhere to state teacher pay scale. 100% Special education teachers must be licensed. A Charter School Administrator has no certification requirements. EC Coordinators at Charter Schools vary school by school – licensure requirements depends on actual job responsibilities.

Office of Charter Schools does have a FAQ on their website, wiki page, and monthly guidance doc as a parent resource. There is no parent advisory council at the state level, but may be in the Charter School.

SIDE NOTE: More parent advisory panels in LEAs the better; the more education parents receive relative to EC requirements – everyone benefits. The DPI Parent Liaison will support Charters as well and work to build capacity for parent education and advisory councils at local levels.

**Review/Vote of Statement Regarding Proposed Policy Changes Related to the Definition, Evaluation and Identification of Students with SLD**

A handout was provided in response to proposed Policies changes and the Council met in small groups to review the draft response.

Below are the concerns/recommendations:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Word choice – re: elimination of cognitive evaluation (MTSS); not eliminating assessments; only the discrepancy model</td>
<td>Timeline for interventions at/during each tier to evaluate effectiveness of intervention &amp; whether there is need to go ahead and refer to special education.</td>
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<td>Pilot studies – any available data sets for review now (impact test scores, time spent in/out RtI, graduation outcomes, time in MTSS-SPED, if identified)</td>
<td>The statement should state the proposal be accepted but CESEC has questions regarding... Parents should be informed of Rights at beginning of RtI process.</td>
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<td>Review section of regulation to make sure that is cited correctly</td>
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Under Equity:

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<th>Trim wordiness/length of content</th>
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<td>Be clear regarding questions raised, action/recommendation</td>
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This will be sent to Council after edits / prior to SBE submission.

Agency Updates

Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) – State Board of Education (SBE) not voting on it in October. EC Division is still working with SBE members that request now to hear from more principals or low poverty schools in small groups. SBE members are trying to see what happens in schools. SBE’s focus is implementation concerns. The first rollout cohort of MTSS started yesterday; approximately 20 schools. By end of 2015; 40% of state will have entered into MTSS and identifying SLD according to changes even though it’s not policy. Cohorts 3 and 4 will begin in the fall of 2016.

Mental Health – EC Division started a School-Based Mental Health Stakeholder group which is creating a survey tool (multiple tool) to find out the current state of mental health in school; next step will be to gather a legislative group for future legislation. Schools indicate student with mental health issues has to have a reaction plan. The essential questions: What is the response if the school recognizes a student has a mental health issue? RFP for ECATS (Exceptional Children Accountability Tracking System) is out of DPI and pending with state ITS and is almost ready to go to vendors. The system is also looking to create universal screening and progress monitoring tools, but will not change the K-2 assessments.

State Budget – 2.5 million (6%) cut at DPI level; hopefully this will not affect positions. Travel will be cut.

Special Education Study – about special education from legislature that Council needs to participate in.
EC Funding Stakeholder Group – exceptional children funding has been the same since 1992. The issues have not changed. Need to start talking to legislators, which are part of the stakeholder group; will include national review; what NC does with funding; CAP; along with potentially expanding Medicaid.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) – the week of Oct. 20-21 NC will be meeting with other states looking at graduation rates and begin collaborative work.

EC Scholarships – HB 334 - Currently technical corrections to vouchers for private schools. EC vouchers still an issue. Conflict of federal law vs. state law. EC Division is concerned about the conflict. The three prongs to identify as EC are still in place. EC Division stance is that once child is in private school, the LEA’s responsibility all but drops off, at that point we don’t serve private school students. It would be difficult to apply the third prong of eligibility. During first three-year reevaluation, LEA has to determine eligibility and offer FAPE.

OSEP – released findings/report that NC did not meet expectations. Discipline data was not accurate and caused NC to not meet it by one point due to PowerSchool data collection issue.

Development of CESEC Vision Statement
The Council collaborated and developed the following mission statement:
As a diverse representation of stakeholders, the CESEC informs and advises the SBE on policies and matters relating to improving the educational outcomes for students with disabilities in NC.

Committee Work
Reports & Data
Simple form /template for committee work – turned in at end of meeting. Will work on form, to begin using in December. Nancy Johnson will present SPP info in Dec. (Gina will contact) and capture Council’s questions and debrief for committee work. Council suggested more discussion on the Indicators; debrief and report on various indicators at each meeting

Unmet Needs
How to process info from website; not being a complaint dept.; include parent involvement; Spanish speaking opportunities needed. Memo to Bill for agency concerns and/or stakeholder groups. Hopefully in December can provide update with timeline.

Executive Committee
Clarify: voting – subs voting/nonvoting and ex officios; secretarial need; how Council is connecting in their region - attending PTA or parent advisory council meeting, speaking to groups, goal is for people to know you are Council member and their voice. Encouraged members to see what other states advisory councils are doing.
Other suggestions from this committee include: newsletters on website, talking points for Council members when out in region, representation at conferences – ie booths, tables, and publish brochures / map with Council representative – can add to ECAC newsletter.

Misc.
March 2016 meeting at Haynes-Inman in Jamestown, NC
In between quarterly meeting – subcommittees should meet.
Suggested Council put future goals and time line for goals (IN DEC PACKET)