

**COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN**  
**Department of Corrections**  
**2020 Yonkers Road, Raleigh**  
**September 16, 2015**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**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.

69,779 students attend Charter Schools in 2014-15. Average Charter School student membership is 470 students. Most popular size is 100-200 students. Three-fourths of all Charter Schools made academic growth in 2014-15.

**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:

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

<i>Under Equity:</i>	Trim wordiness/length of content
Be clear regarding questions raised, action/recommendation	3 <sup>rd</sup> paragraph sentence – clarify in relation to “eligibility”
	End with recommendation/action from SBE
	Clear on purpose
	Revise for organization, wording
	Have we advised in past?
	Agree with research-based timeframe
	Recommend specific finite # of strategies (not 15-35)
	Recommend parent involvement in RtI process; move to Tier 2
	Recommend communicate w/parent – accessible to parents – mode of communication
	Parent recognizes RtI/MTSS is part of gen ed process not beginning spec ed process.
	Teachers need to be trained in RtI
	Recommends hybrid version
	Parent education would address many of the equity issues.
	Parent should receive strategies in RtI so they can follow through at home.
	Prioritize concerns
	Follow format of previous position statements

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)