

COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

State Board of Education Room

NC Dept. of Public Instruction

March 15, 2017

Summary of Actions

Welcome, Call to Order, Introductions, Review of Agenda, Upcoming Council Training

Chairperson Leanna George called the meeting to order and welcomed members and visitors. Council members provided self-instructions and reviewed the agenda.

The Chairperson announced that advisory board training has been approved, polled members on their availability and confirmed June 13 for the training followed by a half-day Council meeting on June 14.

Review of Meeting Minutes – Sept. and Dec. Summary of Actions

Council reviewed the September Summary of Actions. A motion was made and seconded to approved the September Summary of Actions.

Council then reviewed the December Summary of Actions. A motion was made and seconded to approve the December Summary of Actions.

Agency Update

Exceptional Children Division Director Bill Hussey thanked participants for showing up for the Public Comments. It's been a long time in coming.

Bill shared his experience of attending a special education attorney conference earlier in the week that focused on educating parents on special education law, policies and procedures. Bill thanked Heather Ouzts for being instrumental in numerous LEAs implementing/interested in creating local parent advisory groups. A strong parental understanding in special education is essential.

March Institute – focused on working through the new IEP forms to make it more user-friendly, logical and sequential. Parents, advocates, teachers, attorneys, LEA and Charter School staff attended and participated in the March Institute. A portion included a re-visit of policy for everyone. Exceptional Children Division (ECD) received lots and lots of feedback, mostly positive. ECD will adjust forms based on feedback, stakeholder review and then proceed with a statewide rollout.

ECATS – Exceptional Children Accountability Tracking System – contract is signed and the vendor is Public Consultant Group (PCG). There are upcoming meetings to integrate the new IEP forms as well as data integration. The target is to have the new system operational by January 2018, but realistically it may be August 2018. ECATS is a three-part system: 1-Special Education Component, 2-MTSS, and 3-Medicaid. All districts must utilize the special ed component but can choose other vendors for the MTSS / Medicaid portion.

Medicaid – Within the American Health Care Act there is a potential significant overhaul of Medicaid which could ultimately result in school-based Medicaid disappearing. The impact to NC LEAs could be about \$50 million that would directly affect positions with LEAs. LEA funds from state/federal sources consists of approximately 90% going to positions. This is not Medicaid expansion. It relates to children already serviced by Medicaid dollars. It is trying to expand billable services under Medicaid. Council members were encouraged to advocate with their state and federal representatives to not have this removed from the pending legislation. Children are 46% of the Medicaid recipients; only 1% goes to school based special education.

Mental Health Policy– via the School Mental Health Initiative (SMHI) a new policy was presented in February to the State Board of Education. It received a lot of push back, generally because of it being an “unfunded” mandate. The policy was resubmitted with three major components: 1-certified/license staff will be trained in mental health intervention; 2-create a continuum of services (not necessarily performed by the LEA) looking at prevention, intervention, re-entry and referral. ECD wants all LEAs/Charter Schools to have a plan to address mental health issues on how to promote access to services. Charter Schools would be delayed by a year. ECD (hopefully along with regular ed) will fund a position to assist in this statewide rollout.

ESSA – ECD received notification from the feds with the new templates and will have to re-do all work to fit into the new templates. There is a federal bill trying to determine which regulations inside ESSA will remain and which ones will be removed.

Related Services – Bill advised the Council that “regionalization” will be inevitable for services such as OT, PT, SLP, adapted PE, etc. ECD is asking the legislature to help with the CAP and lack of immediate funding. ECD will need to develop a cost-neutral plan to help all size districts.

EC Funding

Tracy Riddle, Section Chief for Special Programs and Data, provided a presentation on funding. The purpose of funding is to ensure children with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education. There were approximately 200,000 exceptional children on the December 2016 child count. Of this number 9,096 are in Charter Schools.

Besides the basic state and federal funding allotments, there are other funding sources available to LEAs; Behavior Support funds, Group/Foster Home, Developmental Day, Community Residential and Special State Reserve, NC SIP, Risk Pool. LEAs must apply for these additional funds.

The EC Division is currently working on a new funding formula to report to the legislature. The new formula contains short and long term solutions including raising the 12.5% cap and determining funding based on level services.

Public Comments

Public comments were received by three participants. Topics ranged from understanding MTSS and how to make things such as music therapy available in schools, ESSA and due process.

Annual Performance Report Data

Nancy Johnson, SPP/APR Consultant, reminded the Council of her December presentation on the Indicators. At that time, NC did not have data for the assessment Indicators 3B and C and this is today’s topic. Indicators 3B and C related to how students with disabilities are performing on statewide assessments in math and reading.

NC’s target for SWD participation in statewide assessments for reading (Levels 4 and 5) and math is 95%. Grades 3 – 8 have a 99+% rate participation; highschool has 96.5% - all of which are above the 95% target.

NC’s target for SWD proficiency rate in statewide assessment for reading is 39%, math is 38.8% (grades three, four, five, six, seven and eight; 36.7% for grade 10). The data for all grades are well below the target. However, trend data indicates NC does better in the earlier grades and it declines at middle school.

Reading and math at Level 3 proficiency were also presented.

NC no longer reports data by disability categories. However, the new ECATS system should be able to disaggregate this type of data. Over the last few years, SWD rates followed the same pattern as overall state data. Students with autism have performed high in reading and math at all grade levels than all other SWD. SLD students were the lowest performers.

Overall NC’s APR was good and submitted on time.

Communication Plan – Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Nancy Woytowich, Consultant for Deaf/HH, gave a brief history of how the Communication Plan Worksheet came into being to help with IEP Team discussion. HB 317 mandated the use of the Communication plan worksheet for any student with any hearing loss regardless of any other disability category. The communication plan was developed by a stakeholder group to guide questions for IEP Teams. Council asked if there was any documentation that reflects beneficial data of using the communication plan worksheet and current assessment data to guide team on vocabulary and reading goals. Data collection is taking place. The Communication Plan Worksheet is available online via ECD website.

Communication Needs – Autism

Jenny Eigenrauch, Consultant for Autism, presented to the Council on current supports for students with autism. EC Division now has four autism consultants that cover the entire state. LEAs are encouraged to apply for PRC 118 funding for Autism Teams to develop a strategic plan to increase graduation rates and goals in academics, behavior, engagement and transition for students with autism.

One main goal is to build capacity, based upon evidence and strategies. Council advised that small, rural counties may not be aware of Autism training and are hungry for it.

Committee Work

The Unmet Needs Committee is in need of a new Chairperson and was instructed to name a new Chairperson.

Reports & Data	Cynthia Daniels-Hall
Unmet Needs	Laura Hall
Policies & Procedures	Susan Humbert
Executive Committee	Leanna George

The Council meeting adjourned after Committee Work.