

**2017 - 2018**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
  
*of the*  
  
**West Virginia**  
**Advisory Council**  
  
**for the**  
  
**Education of**  
  
**Exceptional Children**



**July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018**

## Preface

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) requires each state to have an Advisory Panel. The West Virginia Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Children (WVACEEC) is also mandated by State Code §18-20-6. The Council is charged in part with advising decision makers regarding the unmet needs of exceptional children. The mission adopted by the Council is to influence the State Board of Education, public policy makers, and West Virginia's citizens in ways that continuously improve educational outcomes for children with exceptionalities. The Council is composed of members appointed by the State Superintendent of Schools.

## Council Members, 2017-2018

Michelle Norweck	Barboursville, WV (Cabell)	Parent
Jeff McCroskey	Amma, WV (Roane)	Community Member
Kathy Stonemark	Fayetteville, WV (Fayette)	Parent
Jacob Green	Madison, WV (Boone)	Parent, Office of Diversion/Transition
Patricia Homberg	Charleston, WV (Kanawha)	State Agency Representative
Rebecca Derenge	Charleston, WV (Kanawha)	McKinney-Vento (HEARTH Act)
Ashley Mann	Peterstown, WV (Monroe)	Parent, Teacher of Gifted
Conrae Lucas Adkins	Hamlin, WV (Lincoln)	Marshall University
Kelly Miller	Sweetland, WV (Lincoln)	Parent
Brenda Lamkin	Buckhannon, WV (Upshur)	Parent, WVPTI
Melanie Hesse	Romney, WV (Hampshire)	Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

## Council Staff

Susan A. White, Executive Director  
Kristin Clendinning, Administrative Assistant  
West Virginia Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Children  
Marshall University Graduate College  
100 Angus E. Peyton Drive  
South Charleston, WV 25303

(304) 746-1992  
e-mail: [sawhite2012@gmail.com](mailto:sawhite2012@gmail.com)

The activities of the West Virginia Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Children are supported and funded by a Federal grant from the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education.

## COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The Advisory Council plans and initiates a variety of activities in order to meet its charge and achieve its mission. The Council:

- schedules and conducts regional meetings across the state to seek input and gain information about programs and services for exceptional students.
- informs local media, local and regional special education administrators, Parent Educator Resource Centers, principals, superintendents, school board members, school improvement councils, faculty senates and community members about scheduled meetings.
- provides a forum for programs to be showcased and issues to be identified.
- develops and shares information and the Annual Report of recommendations with the State Board of Education, Legislature, schools, and members of the public.
- reviews and comments on proposed policies, regulations and procedures affecting children with exceptionalities.
- provides a part-time staff to ensure access to the Council.
- participates in related special education activities.
- assigns members to various state committees and task forces.
- provides practical information to parents on how to deal with concerns.
- participates in meetings with other groups associated with providing special education services.
- serves as a stakeholder group for the development of the State Performance Plan and the Annual Performance Report, both required by federal law.
- cooperates and collaborates with the Office of Special Education (OSE) of the West Virginia Department of Education and other public and private agencies to address the unmet needs of students with exceptionalities.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2017-2018**

Although the Council is charged with identifying the unmet needs of children with exceptionalities, it is important to recognize that there are many parents, families, educators, and other agencies working together to ensure access to the benefits of public education. Examples include, but are by no means limited to:

### **PARENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES**

Enormous gratitude is extended to all the parents, families and community members committed to supporting and improving services for all students. Special thanks are due to all those community members who provided testimony at the Council's public hearings this year and the Eastern Panhandle Deaf Association who seek creative and effective ways to support and guide individuals with hearing loss and deafness find resources to enhance their lives.

The Council admires the work of the WV Parent Training & Information Inc. in its work with families of children and youth with disabilities through training, information and technical assistance. The Council is fortunate to have two representatives from this organization working with us to improve collaboration and share information with parents. Parent Educator Resource Centers in some counties provide additional support and assistance in understanding special education programs and obligations.

### **COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

Of the fifteen school systems represented this year, all should be commended for their efforts to increase the level of student achievement and increase the graduation rate for students. Noteworthy efforts include extensive professional development opportunities, interagency collaboration, specialized training for new special education teachers, monthly support groups, computer/technology assisted instruction and enhanced collaboration with institutions of higher education. These are widespread efforts improve teachers' capacity to address the needs of all students and require dedication and persistence to maintain these initiatives year after year.

Districts articulated many innovative and creative methods used to overcome barriers that inhibit the effective provision of services to students with disabilities. While noting that compliance is essential for accountability, districts continue to engage in activities that promote "results driven accountability" and continue to partner with external agencies for the benefit of transient and transitional students. All of these efforts strengthen the capacity of school systems to provide a free appropriate public education to exceptional students in West Virginia.

The Council would like to commend all of the districts visited for their attention to two significant concerns. First, each county is focused on increasing the graduation rate of students with disabilities through expansion of transition services to post-secondary education, careers and community opportunities. Secondly, interagency networks are evolving to support students with emotional and social challenges through school and community based mental health clinics, parent support groups and other community enterprises. Although the success rate of students with emotional problems caused by chemical or environmental circumstances is less than optimistic, all districts are open to collaboration with other agencies to break the cycle of this national epidemic.

## **REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCIES**

RESAs and their respective special education administrators provided valuable training, targeted technical assistance, and support for school improvement activities at the local school and district level. RESAs provided a tremendous variety of professional learning during the school year, at summer institutes, and in academies partnering with the Office of Special Education.

During the transition year (2017-18) from RESAs to Educational Service Cooperatives, some regions are pooling resources to continue the wide array of training and facilitation for professional learning communities and other related needs. Some districts will use funding provided by the Office of Special Education to implement Results Driven Priorities (RDP).

The WV Council of Administrators of Special Education (WV CASE) and the WVDE Office of Special Education are commended for establishing a mentor program for novice special education administrators. The Council supports this project in order to promote continuing knowledge and expertise in the administration of the most highly regulated and complex program of education – Special Education.

## **WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

The Office of Special Education is to be commended for taking the lead in fostering social-emotional learning, developing awareness of mental health issues and forming partnerships with state, regional and national technical assistance centers. Collaboration with the Autism Training Center, specifically to address concerns about positive school climate, through School-Age Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. The Council supports the on-going need for teacher training related to research-based strategies through the West Virginia Summit for Educational Excellence.

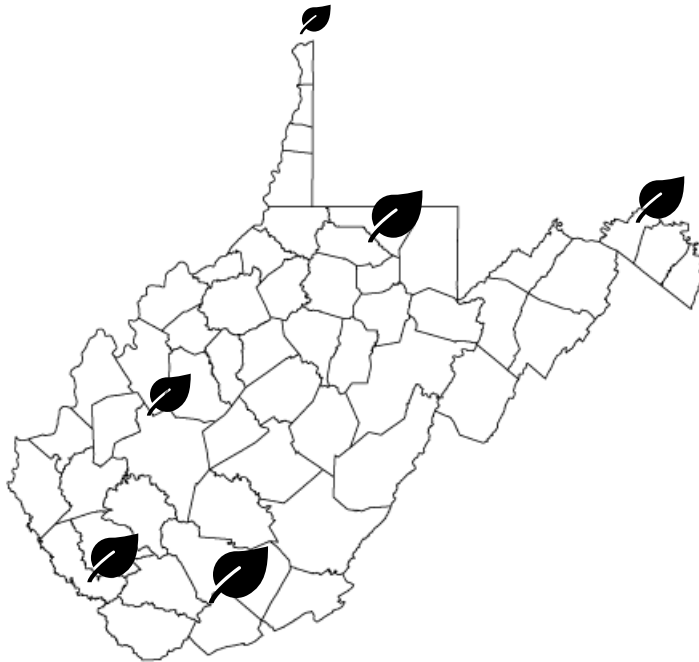
The Council has the privilege and obligation of serving as one of the stakeholder groups for the Office of Special Education's State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR), both required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004).

The Graduation 20/20, West Virginia's State Systemic Improvement Plan initiative, has resulted in improved graduation rates for students with disabilities and is nationally recognized for its accomplishments. (WestEd National Center for Systemic Improvement).

## **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Council applauds the West Virginia Board of Education for its leadership in setting strategic goals for school improvement and for developing the policy structure and accountability measures necessary to achieve them. Such leadership, coupled with policy oversight and ongoing professional development, has provided many new opportunities to improve achievement for all students.

## Meeting Sites 2016-2017



**September 14-15, 2017**

**Morgan, Berkeley, Jefferson Counties & RESA 8**

**October 12-13, 2017**

**Mingo & Wyoming Counties**

**November 16-17, 2017**

**Taylor, Preston, Monongalia Counties & RESA 7**

**December 14-15, 2017**

**Mercer, Monroe, McDowell, Summers Counties  
& RESA 1**

**April 5-6, 2018**

**Hancock County & RESA 6**

**May 3-4, 2018**

**Annual Work Session in Kanawha County**

**All meetings are open to the public for comments and reports are provided by state, regional and district staff. Additionally, speakers are invited to address topics of concern and interest.**

## LONG-STANDING CONCERNS

At the final public meeting of the Council in April, staff from the Offices of Special Education and Federal Programs provided detailed reports of the Annual Compliance Report, Due Process, Complaints, Out-of-State Placements and West Virginia Results Driven Priorities. The Council is elated with the response and outcomes to past years recommendations and subsequent benefits to students with disabilities. Although we are delighted with these outcomes, we want to recommend that the WVDE continue to monitor and support the following initiatives.

- Without a doubt, the longest standing concern for districts has been the shortage of related service personnel, especially **speech/language pathologists**. Recent changes to Policy 5202 that allow therapists who previously passed the Praxis to be employed or contracted in schools without having to repeat the testing process is sure to have tremendous benefit to districts who are spending huge amounts of money to contract with agencies for these services. Additionally, the shift from a clinical/medical model of therapy to an educationally relevant model will alleviate some of the stress of small group instruction and expand practical models for language therapy in collaboration with classroom teachers. The Council would like to offer a word of caution. Parents are accustomed to speech therapy being offered in a clinical model and will need reassurance that the educationally relevant model will be equally effective. Likewise, therapists will need assurance that Comprehensive Language Evaluation and Functional Listening Evaluation training and support will be available.
- Results of increasing graduation rates for students with disabilities are partially attributable to expanded **Transition Services** for students preparing for post-secondary careers and employment through community-based work exploration and experiences. The collaboration between the Division of Rehabilitation Services, districts and private companies (Community Access, Inc.) have accomplished a smooth implementation of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, designated funding for school age clients has helped make this happen. The newly formed Transition Technical Assistance Center within the Office of Special Education is a welcome addition to insure continuation of transition to work services.
- **Graduation 20/20** continues to improve the outcomes for all students toward meaningful preparation for life after secondary education. Without the backing and support of the Office of Special Education for regional school support specialists, it is doubtful that the steady growth in graduation rates would have happened. Through collaboration with the National Dropout Prevention Center and with clear and concise goals, the network for building capacity has grown to 77 high schools, 25 middle schools and 10 elementary schools. The Council looks forward to additional schools at all levels becoming involved in Graduation 20/20 activities.

While progress has been made in a number of areas, there remain on-going concerns about student academic and behavior performance. The requirements of teacher time for Medicaid paperwork is significant. There remain shortages of certified classroom teachers. It is important to recognize that the concerns listed here tend to be perennial in nature because they are so difficult to fully resolve. The four components of Results Driven Priorities appear to be well focused on the Literacy, Numeracy, Graduation, and Engagement. The Implementation Manual for RDP provides supporting data and a clear guide for implementing the Strategic Plan. State and national attention to mental health issues in schools remain critical concerns.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The content of this section of the report was based on testimony requested by Council or received during public hearings within the past year. A listing of individuals who provided this testimony is located elsewhere in this document. The intent of these recommendations is to meet the Council's mandate to identify unmet needs of the state's exceptional students and to do that in a fashion that maximizes resources to improve services. Recommendations, based on guidance from the United States Department of Education, results of data analysis in the State Performance Report and other sources, include the following:

### **PARENTS AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

For the past several years, the Council has heard from parents of children with disabilities and children who are gifted and talented. At this time, diversity of cultures and changes in societal norms in schools make the need for family participation even more important. It has long been acknowledged that when parents and families attend school functions, meetings and conferences, children are more likely to stay in school through graduation, have better social adjustment and attendance. Students are more likely to value education as a means of furthering successful transition to post-secondary education, training and careers. Family support for learning is important for all students but is most important for students who have disabilities. One of the main tenets of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is that parent participation in decision-making is necessary to insure full access to a Free Appropriate Public Education.

According to a national longitudinal transition study from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition Institute on Community Integration, slightly more than half of families report participation in developing individual education program goals. Unfortunately, participation does not always mean engagement in the decision-making process. The IEP process is complicated and can be confusing and often evokes anxiety in parents due to an imbalance of knowledge and information. Additionally, in West Virginia between 50% and 65% of students with disabilities are eligible for low socio-economic assistance, which further compounds genuine engagement. There are a number of barriers that inhibit parent participation in academic functions: both parents working, participation in non-academic functions like athletics, lack of transportation, single parent households, grandparents raising children, and communication issues.

West Virginia schools are fortunate to have a continuing focus on early childhood enrollment and intervention that gives three and four-year old children the benefits of structured pre-school preparation for learning. Parents of young children demonstrate a higher frequency of participation in school activities than parents of students in upper middle school and high school. Parents influence during adolescent years typically gives way to peer groups. When students reach high school, parents report limited opportunity to participate in general academic decision-making. Many parents report that secondary schools often do not have parent organizations such as, PTA and PTO. The good news is that WV Policy 2200 authorizes each school to have a local school improvement council (LSIC) to engage parents, families, students, businesses and communities in education. All LSIC meetings are open to anyone who wants to attend, not just the committee. The West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) believes that community engagement is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education (§ 126-11A-2).

This policy, as authorized by WV Code §18-2-5 and §§18-5A-1 through 3, outlines the purpose, rationale, activities and expectations for each LSIC which includes, but is not limited to:

- Encouraging collaboration with other school and community groups (5.2),
- Utilizing data to determine the local school annual agenda (5.2a),
- Providing a welcoming community for all parents, families, etc. (5.2.b.1),
- Using different modes of communication to interact with the community (5.2.b.2),
- Working to support families' parenting skills and activities (5.2.b.4),



- Providing educators with current research for best practices for engaging parents (5.2.b.6),
- Developing student leadership and student voice (5.2.b.7), and
- Having high expectations for parents and partners in education (5.2.b.8).

An informal analysis of the 2017 Parent Survey for School Age students with disabilities, required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, approved by the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (<http://www.monitoringcenter.lsuhs.edu>) and tabulated by Measurement Incorporated of Durham, N.C. illustrates perspectives reflected in the comments submitted by parents. Annually, the Office of Special Education selects about one third of the districts in the State in which to conduct this survey. The questionnaire consists of about 25 questions designed to elicit information relative to local special education programs. The response rate to the surveys is typically between 20-28% which raises doubt about the validity of the conclusions with regard to parent attitudes and dispositions. Although the comments were evenly distributed between satisfactory and not satisfactory, it should be noted that responders tend to be highly satisfied with teachers and staff, but less satisfied with processes and procedures. This does not mean that processes are wrong, but that there are likely many reasons for parents to feel less than satisfied.

With Policy 2200 in place and functioning, and with Policy 2419 supporting the use of Parent Educator Resource Centers (now known as Family and Community Engagement Resource Centers (FCERC/PERC)), the Council believes that now is the time to encourage districts to increase efforts that support parent involvement, especially for families with children who have disabilities. Family involvement and high expectations positively affect later outcomes as youth transition from school to early adult life. Support to parents through partnerships with local organizations such as WV Parent Training and Information, Disability Rights of WV, the WV Developmental Disabilities Council along with the provision of local parent educator resource centers is an important bridge to building continuous parent engagement.

**Subsequent to these comments, the Council recommends that the Office of Special Education continue to partner with Title I programs to expand and enhance opportunities and education for all parents to become stronger partners with districts by enhancing and updating websites, sending newsletters, providing on-going training opportunities and soliciting community engagement for all students. When parents participate in parent teacher organizations, conferences, school activities and parent training groups, children benefit across socio-economic levels and educational backgrounds. Communication improves and conflict is reduced. The Council would like for the OSE to consider replication and expansion of the WV State College grandparent training and support project. The Council recommends that statewide and regional workshops be held for families which will address unique issues for parents of students with disabilities as well as typical concerns for all parents and grandparents. The Council recommends facilitation of networks that promote communication, collaboration and expansion of resources to engage inclusive representation of the community in all aspects of education.**

## **COMMUNICATION**

In today's society, schools and parents are responding to increased expectations, economic pressures, and time constraints. In these changing times, effective partnerships between teachers and parents become even more essential to meet the needs of the children they "share." Indeed, Epstein (1995) describes communicating with parents as one of six major types of parent involvement practices critical to establishing strong working relationships between teachers and parents. Cultivating the teacher-parent relationship is also considered vital to the development of schools as learning communities (Schussler, 2003). Unfortunately, many teachers are not specifically trained in the skills they need to communicate effectively with parents (Hradecky, 1994; Lawrence, Lightfoot, 2004). Because school communication practices are so fundamental to involving families in the

education process, Caspe (2003) suggests that teacher preparation and professional development programs should actively promote the development of communication skills for teachers. Communicating with Parents: Strategies for Teachers Susan Graham-Clay Indicators in Action produced by the Academic Development Institute. Based primarily on the ADI's research syntheses, Indicators in Action provides an explanation of indicators in effective practice.

In one Google search, “Communication with parents and teachers”, there were 173 million hits in less than 6/10<sup>th</sup> of a second. That suggests that this topic continues to be important for all forms of interpersonal interaction. Understanding how people communicate effectively with one another is necessary for overcoming barriers between parents and teachers, parents and children, teachers and students, schools and their respective communities. The words that teachers choose to explain test scores, procedures, rules, regulations and student performance make a difference in how parents feel toward education and educators. Effective communication is the foundation for building positive relationships that engage families in school collaboration. By building partnerships, bridges to mutual understanding are forged. Maybe the most important aspect of communication is **listening**. When individuals concentrate on listening and understanding what the speaker is saying, relationships and trust grow. When parents feel like they are heard, they will gain confidence to express their thoughts and concerns. Schools are learning communities for everyone. Everyone must concentrate on better communication.

**The Council recommends that the West Virginia Board of Education and West Virginia Department of Education promote concentrated awareness of how all forms of communication can be enhanced: verbal, non-verbal, formal and informal. The Council believes that awareness of how we communicate with each other, affects the outcome of our desired end that all children and families feel valued, respected and heard. In accomplishing this goal, the Council is not suggesting that separate professional development be provided, rather that communication practices and training be integrated in all workshops, conferences and meetings to ensure that all participants understand the intended information and message.**

### **ACADEMIC & BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE & EXPOSURE**

At this time the Council wishes to commend the West Virginia Board of Education, Department of Education and the Office of Special Education for addressing the concerns of all West Virginians regarding the “drug” crisis in our schools and communities at large. Likewise, numerous other public and independent organizations are engaged in the effort to intervene on behalf of students and families that are affected by this epidemic. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) grant awards have resulted in over \$11 million for assistance programs for youth to combat this problem in West Virginia. (*See the following table.*) This funding does not include other revenue sources for Handle with Care (police alerts to schools in the event of a home crisis); Non-violent Crisis Intervention training (to de-escalate situations); Mental Health First Aid training (to recognize symptoms of emotional distress), and Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (to create school environments where students feel safe and supports are available for those in crisis). Collaboration with Marshall University’s Healthy Connections is a great beginning for the Behavior Stakeholder Group in the Office of Special Education. By delving into the deeper problems that teachers face and the challenges that come from this crisis, more effective responses and solutions can be implemented. Even before children enter pre-school and especially when they reach teenage years, teachers and families must have the discussions that will benefit every child, family, and community.

<b>SUBSTANCE ABUSE &amp; MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ASSOCIATION</b>			
<b>GRANTS AWARDED IN WEST VIRGINIA IN 2014 THROUGH 2017</b>			
<b>GRANT RECIPIENT</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>GRANT AWARD</b>	<b>PROJECT PERIOD</b>
DEPT HLTH/HUMAN RSCS	Crisis Counseling	\$2,192,991.00	11/30/16-8/29/17
DEPT HLTH/HUMAN RSCS	Project Launch - families & parents	\$736,000.00	9/30/14-9/29/19
DEPT HLTH/HUMAN RSCS	prescription drug misuse among youth ages 12-17 and adults 18 years of age and older;	\$369,237.00	9/1/16-8/31/21
DEPT HLTH/HUMAN RSCS	overdose-related deaths and adverse events among adults	\$497,946.00	9/1/16-8/31/24
DEPT HLTH/HUMAN RSCS	homeless	\$1,317,736.00	9/30/16-9/29/19
DEPARTMENT/EDUCATION	NITT-AWARE-SEA families, schools, communities 3 counties	\$3,771,522.00	9/30/14-9/29/19
MOUNTAIN STATE PARENTS CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENT NETWORK, INC.	statewide family network	\$95,000.00	9/30/15-9/29/18
WESTBROOK HEALTH SERVICES, INC.	behavioral & health issues Parkersburg	\$246,824.00	9/30/15-9/29/19
BLUEFIELD STATE COLLEGE	Campus Suicide Prevention	\$102,000.00	9/30/16-9/29/19
FMRS HEALTH SYSTEMS, INC.	Resilience for Appalachian Youth (RAPP) Community Treatment and Services Center, Beckley	\$399,956.00	9/30/16-9/29/21
JACKSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT	prevent and reduce youth substance use	\$125,000.00	9/30/09-9/29/19
YOUTH SERVICES SYSTEM, INC.	prevent and reduce youth substance use	\$125,000.00	9/30/09-9/29/19
JACKSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT	prevent and reduce youth substance use	\$125,000.00	9/30/09-9/29/19
YOUTH SERVICES SYSTEM, INC.	prevent and reduce youth substance use	\$125,000.00	9/30/09-9/29/19
BROOKE HANCOCK FAMILY RESOURCE NETWORK	prevent and reduce youth substance use	\$125,000.00	9/30/09-9/29/21
MORGAN COUNTY PARTNERSHIP, INC.	prevent and reduce youth substance use	\$125,000.00	9/30/09-9/29/24
REGIONAL FAMILY RESOURCE NETWORK, INC.	prevent and reduce youth substance use	\$125,000.00	9/30/10-9/29/20
UNITED WAY OF THE RIVER CITIES, INC.	prevent and reduce youth substance use	\$125,000.00	9/30/14-9/29/19
MORGAN COUNTY PARTNERSHIP, INC.	prevent and reduce youth substance use	\$125,000.00	9/30/16-9/29/20
BROOKE HANCOCK FAMILY RESOURCE NETWORK	prevent and reduce youth substance use	\$125,000.00	9/30/16-9/29/21
BROOKE HANCOCK FAMILY RESOURCE NETWORK	reduce underage drinking	\$125,000.00	9/30/10-9/29/20
PRESTERA CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, INC.	Women's Empowerment and Addiction Recovery (W.E.A.R.) Program Cabell Co. Drug Court- Adult	\$141,237.00	9/30/15-9/29/18
RECOVERY POINT OF HUNTINGTON, INC.	Expand the residential recovery service continuum- Adult	\$250,000.00	9/30/16-9/29/19
DEPT HLTH/HUMAN RSCS	treatment, and recovery activities pertaining to opioids -Adult	\$5,881,983.00	5/1/17-4/30/19
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$17,377,432.00</b>	

**Based on a growing body of evidence and research, the Council respectfully recommends that the West Virginia Department of Education continues to promote and support schools with interagency collaboration efforts to address the needs of the whole child and family. The Council makes this recommendation with full knowledge that everyone wants children to be successful and that there are numerous initiatives in place, but we must continue to pursue the most effective interventions for those students who are at the greatest risk.**

## PARTICIPANTS

The Advisory Council would like to express our gratitude to the following people who attended meetings across the State during the past year. Some provided information, some expressed concerns and other gave presentations for the Council to acquire in depth information on topics of interest and as requirements of Federal law. We are especially happy to acknowledge the students who gave presentations and those who prepared refreshments.

Participant	Role/Position	Location/Date
		September, 2017
Joan Willard	Director of Special Education	Morgan
Eric Mays	Superintendent	Morgan
Lisa Wenzel	Sp Ed Teacher	Morgan
Rick Deuell	Interim Executive Director	Berkeley
Laura Sutton	General Counsel Asst Superintendent	Berkeley
David Banks	Asst. Superintendent of Special Education	Berkeley
Cindy Fitzwater	Director of Pupil Services	Jefferson
Tammy Phillips	Community Member Sp. Ed. Teacher Interpreter, Eastern Panhandle Deaf Assoc.	Hampshire
Cheri Maitinet	EPDA Vice Pres. WVCDHH	Berkeley
Gloria Hollen	EPDA President	Berkeley
Christana Vorreyer Davis		Berkeley Oct. 12-13, 2017
Don Spence	Superintendent, Mingo Co.	Mingo
Janet Varney	Director of Special Educ. Mingo	Mingo
Kim Hensley	Parent Educator Resource Center	Mingo
Christie Tilley	PERC Coordinator	Mingo
Patrick M. Billips	Technology Coordinator	Mingo
Channing Daniels	School Psychologist	Mingo
Sandy Pinson	Specialist	Mingo
Kay Maynard	Director of Child Nutrition	Mingo
Jessica George	RESA 2 Special Ed Director	Cabell
Stephen Walls	Director of Special Educ. Wyoming Co.	Wyoming
Nancy M. Cline	Coordinator Family Engagement	OSE
Renee Eckles Hardy	Coordinator Part B Data Mgr.	OSE
		Nov. 16-17, 2017
Suzanne Viski	Director of Special Educ. Taylor Co	Taylor
Elise Moore	School Psychologist	Taylor
Mindy Garrison	Special Ed Liaison	Taylor
Jana Miller	Director of Special Educ. Preston Co.	Preston
Kristie Hershman	IEP Compliance Coord. Monongalia Co.	Monongalia
Annabell Smith	Visitor	Taylor
Samantha	Pro Start student GHS	Taylor
Linda	Pro Start student GHS	Taylor

Jasmin	Pro Start student GHS	Taylor
Meagan	Pro Start student GHS	Taylor
Colby	Pro Start student GHS	Taylor
Zayne	Pro Start student GHS	Taylor
Kaitlin	Pro Start student GHS	Taylor
		Dec. 14-15, 2017
Linda Knott	Director of Student Services, Summers Co	Summers
Kay Westfall	Sp. Ed. Specialist & Pre-K Coordinator	Summers
Lynn Bayle	Director of Special Educ. Mercer Co.	Mercer
Manette Maldonado	Teacher, Bluefield High	Mercer
Emily Huddin	Asst. Director Mercer Co.	Mercer
Melissa Lipscomb	Sp. Ed. Specialist Mercer Co.	Mercer
Rhonda Thomas	Sp. Ed. Teacher	Mercer
Shannon Noble	Sp. Ed. Supervisor	Mercer
Sue Pelts	Sp. Ed. Specialist	Mercer
Joetta Basile	Superintendent, Monroe Co..	Monroe
Lisa Mustain	Director of Special Educ. Monroe Co.	Monroe
R. Greg Bartlett	Director of Special Educ. RESA 1	RESA 1
Michael Knighton	WVDE Coordinator	OSE
Debra L. Harless	WVDE Coordinator	OSE
		April 5-6, 2018
Jeremie Frantz	Parent	Hancock
Jacob F.	Student	Hancock
Jennifeir Marchese	Parent	Hancock
Alex M.	Student	Hancock
Karen Anderson	Grandparent	Hancock
Stacie Grishkevich	Special Educ. Teacher	Hancock
Chris Grishkcvich	Visitor	Hancock
Erica Sauer	Director of Sp. Ed.Hancock Co.	Hancock
Michelle Cope	School Psychologist	Hancock
Levi Naylor	School Psychologist	Hancock
Michelle Hogan	RESA 6 Acting Sp. Ed. Dir.	RESA 6
Mary Ann Petrelle	Interventionist, Hancock Co.	Hancock
Susan Beck	Asst. Director Office of Sp. Ed.	OSE
Sheila Paitsel	Asst. Dir. Office of Fed. Programs	OSE
		Federal
Wendy Garrison	Coordinator OSE	Programs
Diana Whitlock	Coordinator OSE	OSE
Lee Ann Brammer	Coordinator OSE	OSE

## IN CONCLUSION

The West Virginia Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Children (WVACEEC) has represented its constituencies and has been productively engaged again this year in fulfilling its legal commitments and mission on behalf of students across the state of West Virginia. The primary motivation for individuals to accept appointments to the WVACEEC is to focus on quality improvement in the West Virginia education system, particularly as it relates to students with exceptionalities.

The Council traveled from the very northernmost counties all the way to the southernmost counties studying issues of significance, providing a representative advisory function, and listening to reports of signature initiatives and challenges. We take seriously each and every concern of parents, students, teachers, administrators, and other community stakeholders. We empathize with teachers and administrators who work tirelessly to serve the needs of their students with exceptionalities as well as the parents who continuously advocate on behalf of their child. We value the intent of the law and clearly understand its purposes:

*“The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 has two primary purposes. The first purpose is to provide an education that meets a child’s needs and prepares the child for further education, employment, and independent living. The second purpose is to protect the rights of both children with disabilities and their parents.”*

*[20 U.S.C. §1400 (d)(1)]*

We have worked as a team establishing a collaborative conversation between professional educators and parents. We have stressed the important role of parents as partners in this process at each location we visited.

It has been a pleasure and an honor for this council to serve in this capacity. The work of the council would not be possible without the leadership of Susan White, WVACEEC Executive Director or dedication of Pat Homberg, Executive Director of WVDE, Office of Special Education and her staff. Last, but not least, I wish to convey our greatest gratitude to each and every person that attended our meetings and provided professional as well as heartfelt testimony which allows the WVACEEC to better make recommendations to the West Virginia State Board of Education. On behalf of the WVACEEC, I hereby present our report summarizing the activities, concerns, accomplishments and recommendations for the 2017 – 2018 school year.

Sincerely,



Michelle Norweck  
Chairperson, WVACEEC