

WV Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Students
Annual Report
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The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) requires each state to have an Advisory Council. 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 12 members approved by the State Superintendent of Schools.

2022-2023 Council Members

Jacob Green, Chair
Melanie Hesse, Chair
Brenda Lamkin
Cara Price
Deb Lockwood
Ashley Orndorff
Happy Plaugher
Samantha Ribeiro-Matos
Katie Veazey-Keener
Rhonda Hayes
Sheila Paitsel
Erica Sauer

Council Staff

Dawn Embrey-King, Executive Director
Becky Sloan, Administrative Assistant
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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.

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, 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.
- 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.

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Date 8/31/2022
Meeting Format- Virtual
WVACEEC Member Resignations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Melanie Britton• Katie Arbaugh• Patricia Sheverant• Emily Robertson
WVACEEC Nominations and Elected Members <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Happy Plaugher• Ashley Orndorff• Samantha Ribeiro Matos• Katie Veazey Keener
Proposed Meeting Dates and Locations
Date 9/24/2022
Meeting Format- Virtual
WVACEEC Role and Function <p>The role of a WVACEEC Council member is to <i>work together</i> with other members of the committee to fulfill the local SEA’s functions. Through personal experience, community involvement and public comment, members identify needs in the education of students with disabilities. The Council “works” when there is <i>collaborative, problem-solving, and positive relationship building between parents and school leaders</i> as they establish shared priorities that benefit students with disabilities.</p> <p>The State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) is an accountability mechanism for states and LEAs. There are 17 Indicators for Part B and 11 indicators for Part C that have been purposely written to provide a measurable indication of a state’s performance in specific statutory priority areas of Part B of the IDEA.</p> <p>The council should review APR Indicator Data before the APR is submitted each February to OSEP. The council should also be a stakeholder group for SPP/APR public input.</p>

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The council should provide input and suggest APR targets, suggest APR improvement strategies, and keep updated on progress and slippage of each indicator. The council should use SPP/APR data to help establish Council priorities.

Date 10/13/2022 and 10/14/2022

Meeting Format- Face to Face

Districts: Mercer, Summers, Wyoming, McDowell

WVDE Spotlight

Sheila Paitsel presented to the Council on Special Education Results- Targeted Schools and the State Performance Plan which includes 17 indicators.

Sheila addressed indicator 3:

Assessment and Achievement in the State. 50 schools across the state have been identified to receive support in the special education subgroup. Year one support from WVDE will focus on a needs assessment and goal setting for the following year. The identified schools have been made public. Mercer county has 3 identified schools and Summers county has 2 identified schools.

District Reporting

Mercer County-

Special Education Director *Lynn Bayle* presented to the council on the county's determination findings, highlights/successes/ accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- Best ADA that the district had ever had.
- 100% compliance
- Current focus on after school tutoring
- Dropout rate decrease (proactive approach with Guidepost to Graduation (WVDE)
- Challenges- proficiency rate and supporting students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).
- Mercer county is utilizing the Orton Gillingham Reading Program. Teachers have received extensive training.
- The district is using a multi-sensory math approach to meet student need.
- Emphasis on Personalized Education (PEP) Plan.

Summers County

Special Education Director *Linda Knott* presented to the council on the county's determination findings, highlights/successes/ Accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- Community Work Exploration Program was made part of the student schedule – credit bearing for 11th and 12th grade.
- Struggles- behavior and mental health support and WVEIS 2.0
- There are no teachers in the county with more than 5 years teaching experience.

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- Co-teaching training – no common planning
- 4 students have been hired at Bluestone State Park
- The county is hiring a Transition Specialist

Wyoming County

Special Education Director *Brenda Shumate* presented to the council on Wyoming County's determination findings, highlights/successes/ accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- It was shared that all but one student in Wyoming county graduated last year.
- County emphasis on co-teaching
- Co-teaching is happening at every school in the county.
- The county brought Brian Withrow's group (Education Systems Solutions) in to provide training and support on co-teaching.
- Districts greatest challenge is student behavior and attendance.
- The district has Tier 4 classroom in place for behavior.
- The district has hired a Behavior Specialist, Behavior Interventionist, conducted ECPBIS training, Positive Behavior programs and an Intervention Academy to address student behavior concerns.
- Reestablished school level attendance plans, CIS facilitator at every school
- Wyoming county has made a deliberate change in the vocabulary of special education to include special services rather than special education.
- County emphasis on community awareness- disability awareness/ teaching the community and school (teachers, parents, students) how to better interact with students with disabilities.

McDowell County

Special Education Director *Kristy East* presented to the council on McDowell County's determination findings, highlights/successes/ accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- The district is working hard to get special ed teachers' seats at the tables at all trainings
- Revamping gifted program for enrichment and acceleration (including partnership with Cummings Aerospace)
- Marshall Autism did a 6-week training with 50 participants.
- The district has a full-time behavior interventionist, full time autism teacher.
- District greatest challenges- pre-k attendance, behavior, staffing.
- Student Proficiency: corrective math programs to parallel reading, reading mastery K-2 pull-out program (I have "students smiled because they could read for the test"), WIN Groups (What I Need) where students choose a group and can change every 6 weeks.
- Post-School Outcomes: DRS--trying to strengthen relationship, looking for more partnerships for job shadowing, are utilizing state parks, do have Guideposts for Graduation

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- Family Engagement: academic parent-teacher teams to discuss data (the parent becomes the student), "Data & Desserts", district-wide home visit project (can meet at library or McDonald's)-first visit is to establish Hopes and Dreams and build the relationship, and second visit provides materials and resources, discuss attendance goals, etc. and each of the teachers participating has 10 students assigned to them and they do 2 visits with each family.

Public Comments and Concerns:

Two parents addressed the council with concerns that students in the gifted program in Mercer County were “stuck”. They indicated that students were not being challenged and were bored. The parents indicated that the students were past the point where the school could help them out.

A gentleman addressed the council with concerns that there is a negative feeling toward black students and black men in general in the county. He indicated that there was a bullying issue in the district toward black students.

Parents addressed the council concerning the need for general information from the school to be better shared by the school such as (getting to know the teachers, and where to park at the school etc.)

Information was shared about the district’s Ability Week- showcasing different exceptionalities.

Mercer County does not have a Parent Education Resource Center (PERC)- there is a possible interest in a PERC being started. Nancy Cline (WVDE) addressed the group about the possibility of meeting with parents in Mercer County to discuss solutions pertaining to their concerns.

Council Takeaways

The Council appreciates the openness of each director of special education and recognizes the effort by each district to support students with exceptionalities.

The Council recognizes the discrepancy between compliance and proficiency. Although Annual Desk Audit (ADA) results can be at 100%, student’s academic needs may still not be met.

Student behavior and mental health continues to be a need along with teacher recruitment and retention.

A positive communication system between the school and home is vital to a successful school experience for both students and families.

Date 11/17/2022 and 11/18/2022

Meeting Format Face to Face

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Districts: Upshur, Lewis, Barbour

WVDE Spotlight

IDEA General Supervision- Policies, Procedures and Effective Implementation
Policy 2419 Updates

District Reporting

Upshur County

Special Education Director *Kasey Baisden* presented to the council on Upshur County's determination findings, highlights/successes/ accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- A major struggle for the district is teacher and service personnel turnover.
- COVID had a huge impact on student proficiency, but the district leadership feels that they are back on track and have a good plan for going forward.
- A significant district need is writing effective and compliant IEPs.
- The district has started IEP Help Sessions- 2 coordinators work with teachers utilizing actual student IEPs and SAT files.
- The district addresses post school outcomes by utilizing Guidepost to Graduation, ensuring DRS attends IEP meetings.
- This is the first year that Upshur County has hired a Special Education Coordinator.
- Empowerment Academy is in place at the Middle School level.
- Family Engagement is an emphasis. Most families are responsive to phone calls.
- Each school has a Facebook page and monthly newsletters.
- The district no longer has a work program.
- Successful Block Party after homecoming parade- information and resources provided to families and community.

Lewis County

Special Education Director Crystal Smithson presented to the council on Lewis County's determination findings, highlights/successes/ accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- Determination findings – Academic proficiency ELA and Math. The district implemented strategic plan interventions based on student data from iReady which was analyzed 3 times a year. An analysis of curriculum-based assessments was also utilized to gather information on student proficiency and growth.
- The district hired a consultant (Ashlock consulting) to support data analysis.
- Classroom benchmark asses
- Assessments were analyzed against the WVGSA data.
- Contributing factors that would yield the data above include behavior, attendance issues and environmental issues.
- New textbook adoption in 2020
- After-school tutoring

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- Partnered with Mathia for middle and high school math.
- Onsight professional learning for Mathia was provided.
- A county curriculum math specialist was hired.
- Scheduling adjustment to allow for time in content areas.
- After school tutoring was provided.
- Ongoing training was provided for PreK teachers.
- A review of all IEPs was conducted to determine LRE of services for students.
- Completed PALS, ELRS data after enrollment for accurate progress monitoring.
- The district attempted to collect more surveys and information regarding student data after graduation.
- Provide services to students throughout the Guidepost to Graduation grant for job skill training support.
- Struggles and challenges include- filling positions with certified staff.
- Continuing to provide updated training with the rate that policies have changed.
- The increased transfer of students within and between counties.
- Mental health issues are increasing the need for services within the school and county.
- More students in kinship and foster care
- Recovering from gap in achievement following Covid
- Staff retention

Barbour County

Special Education Director *Julie Bibey* presented to the council on Barbour County determination findings, highlights/successes/ accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- Barbour county has an emphasis on providing IEP training for educators on how to hold meetings more effectively by making parents feel heard and respected.
- The district did not meet Pre-K indicator on the Annual Desk Audit (ADA)- LRE codes.
- The district has implemented an improvement plan which includes behavior strategies to address student behavior needs.
- The county has provided Insights to Behavior training and has Policy 2419 training planned.
- Student proficiency rates are being addressed by an emphasis on co-teaching at all levels.
- A pull-out intervention block has been added at the elementary level to support student need.

Public Comments and Concerns

Jarod and Albani St. Martin Brown addressed the council concerning their 2 foster children.

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The family lives in Barbour County. The husband teaches at Bridgeport High. 2 foster children attended Buckhannon Academy (their home school) and they stayed there because the original plan was reunification. When the plan changed, parents asked to transfer the boys to Harrison County where dad works. One son is deaf/HOH and needs services for this.

- Approached the school in Harrison Co informally in May or June of 2022 and were told it shouldn't be a problem, wait for open enrollment
- County "enrollment person" told them they couldn't accept the deaf son because he needs an interpreter.
- The children started school in Upshur County where they had been attending (which was not their home school since they lived in Barbour Co)
- Family was told schools were "at capacity" but that Norwood was available (Harrison Co)
- Family filed an appeal with WVDE
- The HI teacher from Harrison County was never consulted in the process to determine if resources were available

Council Takeaways

The Council appreciates the openness of each director of special education and recognizes the effort by each district to support students with exceptionalities.

In addition to teacher turnover, behavior and mental health concerns, the Council recognizes the importance of writing compliant and effective IEP's. Although IEP's can be written correctly, to be effective, they must be standards based and identify and address the learning gaps and behavior needs that are present.

Kinship and foster care of students with disabilities continues to rise. Dealing with the foster care system and the special education system are both hard. Dealing with them at the same time can be overwhelming.

Date- December- No Meeting

Date- January 12, 2023

Meeting Format- Virtual

WVDE Spotlight- Complete Policy 2419 Updates

WVACEEC Discussion

Upcoming meetings

- Jackson, Roane, Wirt, Calhoun in March
- Braxton, Nicholas in April

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of year meeting in Charleston in May or June <p>By-Laws Section Review and Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Functions • Membership • Meetings • Rules and Duties • Amendments
Date- February 9, 2023
Meeting Format- Virtual
<p>WVACEEC Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of District Focus Areas (Student Proficiency, Post-School Outcomes, Family Engagement) • Upcoming meetings • WVACEEC Facebook Page- a FB page has been created to provide the council a platform to share information concerning meeting dates and locations as well as topical information pertaining to the council’s priority areas and district highlights and challenges. <p>By-Law Update Completion- The by-laws were last updated in 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functions: Removed by July 1 of each year. Submit an annual report <i>*each year to the State Board of Education which shall be made to the available by the SEA to the Legislature and the public.</i> • Membership: <i>One third of the membership shall rotate annually. Members may be eligible for reappointment. Addition: No member shall serve more than two consecutive three year terms.</i> • The Council Shall Fulfill the Following Duties: Advise the SEA on development of correction action plans. Addition: <i>to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports.</i> • The Executive Director Shall: Coordinate WVACEEC activities with other agency activities/presentations Addition: <i>(SEA, Local Education - Agencies, Advocacy Agencies etc.).</i> • Meetings: The Council shall hold at least four Addition: <i>Public meeting each year.</i> • Rules and Duties: Removed (in May) at the annual meeting* <i>the Council shall</i>
Date- March 2, 2023, and March 3, 2023
Meeting Format- Face to Face
Districts- Jackson, Roane, Wirt, Calhoun
WVDE Spotlight- Lee Ann Brammer, Coordinator WVDE Office of Federal Programs

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- New Eligibility criteria for Speech Sound Disorders in the proposed Policy 2419 updates.
- The use of Assessment Summaries.
- The importance of meeting the “Three Prongs of Eligibility” when making a student eligible for speech therapy services.

District Reporting

Jackson County

Special Education Director *Melissa Browning* presented to the council on Jackson County determination findings, highlights/successes/accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- District reports that they have data talks with parents if their child is 2 or more years behind.
- A Focus Plan is written for math, reading, and attendance. Strategies are provided that are data driven.
- District challenges: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)- pulling students out of GEE to receive special education services.
- Another challenge are students on the alternate standards.
- The district is utilizing Unique Learning System.
- The district is over 1% at this time. Currently it is 1.14%
- Proficiency rate is a focus for the district.
- Personal Education Plans (PEP) plans are being written for students that are in alignment with student IEPs.
- MTSS is skill specific, and data driven.
- Elementary emphasis is a push in approach for Targeted Instruction
- There is an overidentification of speech students.

Calhoun County

Special Education Director *Jeannie Bennett* presented to the council on Calhoun County determination findings, highlights/successes/accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- County emphasis is on a Strong Mental Health Program that includes Save the children Literacy Interventions, Expectant Moms Program, Early Interventions up to age 3 including home visits and play groups.
- Mobile Crisis Team- The district has 41 students on suicide watch.
- Rural county declining enrollment and high unemployment rate.
- Generational Poverty
- Each school has a school pantry- food, clothing, hygiene items, shoes, water bottles, school supplies etc...
- County wide book study- Fostering Resilient Learners
- County has contracted with a school psychologist 3 days a week.

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Wirt County

Special Education Director *Angela Domico-Cox* and Superintendent John McKnown presented to the council on Wirt County determination findings, highlights/successes/accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- The county attributes much success to the I-Ready program and Just in Time Interventions for all students.
- Sustained Professional Development is important to the district. Teachers are responding and buying into training because it is supported and evaluated by district leadership.
- County wide math scores have raised 18 points.
- Superintendent quote “You cannot intervene your way through poor core instruction.”

Roane County

Special Education Director *Michelle Ash* presented to the council on Roane County determination findings, highlights/successes/accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- Building a student support staff is currently the most important task.
- The following positions have been filled:
 - School Psychologist
 - School Based Therapists
 - School Social Worker (truancy, behavior plan writing, trauma therapy)
- Jim Ball (BCBA) has been contracted and is supporting the district in ABA therapy.
- County now has an ABA classroom.

Public Comments and Concerns- DeAnna Thompson, parent from Jackson County addressed the council concerning her child that is in the 6th grade. Child has had difficulties in school since the 1st grade. The student has an IEP and attends Ravenswood Middle. The student has behavior issues and a behavior plan. The parent reports that her child did not receive any special education support during the first nine weeks of school. Parent reports that there was little to no communication with the school during this time.

Student exceptionalities: Autism, ADHD, Explosive ODD, and Sensory Disorder.

The council discussed systemic issues- WVEIS 2.0, communication between home and school, schools checking IEP against school schedules to make sure that minutes on IEP match student schedule.

Lori Wallen from Disabilities Rights made the comment that a manifestation determination should have occurred (student had 15 days out of school suspensions).

Council Takeaways

The Council appreciates the openness of each director of special education and recognizes the effort by each district to support students with exceptionalities.

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The Council recognizes the importance of all students receiving grade level content in the least restrictive environment (LRE) with non-exceptional peers for as much time as possible.
Students receiving instruction on the WV Alternate Standards should also be in GEE as much as possible learning grade level skills.
Mental Health/Behavior can and should be addressed through a multi-tiered approach (WVTSS) as academic instruction is.
Communication with parents/families must always be improved upon.

Date April 27-28, 2023

Meeting Format Face to Face

Districts- Braxton, Nicholas

WVDE Spotlight- Terry Riley

The SPP/APR is submitted by West Virginia on 17 special education indicators.

Data submitted is compiled from the Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

The WVDE compiles LEA data on Indicators 1-14 for individual LEAs for the Annual Desk Audit which opens in April each school year.

Indicator 15 Resolution Sessions and Indicator 16 Mediation as well as Timely and Accurate Reporting are not included in the Annual Desk Audit but are part of the LEA Determination Process.

The ADA includes the most recent LEA specific results compared to state determined targets for both result and compliance indicators 1-14.

Indicator 17 is the WV State Systemic Improvement Plan. The LEAs will develop their own Targeted Systemic Improvement Plan (TSIP) as appropriate as based on the ADA results.

District Reporting

Braxton County

Special Education Director *Christina Bailey* presented to the council on Braxton County's determination findings, highlights/successes/ accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- The number one concern in Braxton County schools is finding and retaining qualified staff.
- Concern: Student proficiency rate- The county is providing supplemental materials and is providing substitute and new teacher training from Beverly Kingery.
- The county is utilizing quarterly data from iReady
- to monitor student growth.
- Preschool is a district success- tracking data success rate is high.
- All Preschool teachers are special education certified.
- The graduation rate of special education students is 100%
- Post-school outcomes for students is low
- Training is being provided on writing quality IEPs.

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- The Autism Training Center at Marshall University is providing training and modeling to teachers.

Nicholas County

Special Education Director *Lydia Young* presented to the council on Nicholas County's determination findings, highlights/successes/accomplishments as well as the struggles and challenges in providing support to students with exceptionalities.

- Post-School Outcomes: There were no special education students to drop out of school last year.
- The district attributes successes in graduation rate to Guidepost to Graduation, job coaches. Eagle Experience Career Exploration Program, and peer helpers.
- The State Park Job Exploration Program is not up and running currently.
- The High School participates in the following programs that support students with disabilities training opportunities: coffee shop, car wash/car detailing, craft bazaar, and a greenhouse.
- Eagle Reboot Program: Supports students with missing assignments and failing grades.
- It was reported that the culture of the district is the importance of One Caring Adult
- Preschool drive through registration is a successful way to include as many families as possible.
- The district has one of the highest rates of foster kids and kinship care.
- Young students with severe behaviors are being addressed by PBIS and ECPBIS
- District leadership team is participating in PBIS/ECPBIS training.
- The district has contracted with a BCBA to help with behavior plans and provide family support.
- The district has hired a social worker, 2 school psychologists and family engagement coordinators.
- The district has developed a good relationship with DRS.
- DRS workers are attending student IEP meetings.
- The district is utilizing a playgroup with 3 schools involving 1-2 hours a day along with therapies provided to students.
- The district participates in Guidepost the Graduation initiative from WVDE.

Public Comments and Concerns- Megan Payne addressed the council on behalf of her son with autism. Megan shared concerns with the district's ratio of child to teacher and child to aide. She indicated an understanding of the staffing shortages, the use of long-term substitutes and specialized certifications. She spoke about Quality vs Quantity Ratio.

Council Takeaways -

The Council appreciates the openness of each director of special education and recognizes the effort by each district to support students with exceptionalities.

The Council recognizes and appreciates the work of the WVDE Guidepost to Graduation.

District report success with resources and support provided but indicate that post school outcomes remain low.

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Council Recommendations Based on Meeting Takeaways

Behavioral needs were identified by most every district as a major challenge.

The Council recommends a statewide emphasis on positive behavior and mental health support for students. Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) and Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) are both exemplary programs that have been utilized and supported by the WVDE and should continue to be recommended and utilized.

The goal of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is to make schools effective and efficient and provide equitable learning environments for all students. Decreasing aggressive conduct and bullying can occur through improving culture and climate, building relationships with students and staff, changing academic outcomes, and increasing prosocial behaviors. <https://tinyurl.com/ycysphcu>

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenges or is in crisis. YMHFA is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. The YMHFA course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, review typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help you people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. <https://tinyurl.com/s8497yu2>

The Council recommends that the WVDE provide training and support on how to meet behavioral and/or mental health concerns of students with exceptionalities. It is recommended that training be provided on writing and implementing effective IEPs that address appropriate behaviors or replacement behaviors and that instruction of appropriate behavior be provided.

The West Virginia Tiered System of Support (WVTSS) is a framework that suggests flexible use of resources to provide academic, behavioral, and mental health support to enhance learning for all students.

The *need for Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)* is an essential criterion for a special education placement. The need for special instruction must be paired with actual instruction that is designed to meet the unique needs of learners. For example, SDI is not provided by a computer program utilized as an intervention in a special education classroom.

SDI is defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as “adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction—

To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum...”

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The Council recommends that the WVDE provide support and resources to the districts on what Specially Designed Instruction is and how it is provided to students with IEPs to ensure access to the general curriculum.

Kinship and Foster care of students with disabilities continues to be on the rise. Despite the availability of information, best practices, and recommendations on adequately fostering a child with special needs, it is still possible that the process will fail. Even families with the best intentions for the foster child can experience disruptions. Foster parents who cannot gauge their capacity to care for a child with special needs may also find themselves having a difficult situation later. This not only includes financial difficulty but also mental, emotional, and physical difficulties. Overall, the goal of fostering and possibly adopting a child with special needs is not just to give them a new home, but to provide them with a loving, long-term family who will provide for the child's physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

School systems also struggle with educating students in the foster care system. Special attention and deliberate support should be provided to ensure that both the student and the foster family's needs are met.

The Council recommends that the WVDE provide support and resources to families who are fostering students with special needs. The Council recognizes how transient foster children can be, but recommends that a plan be developed that would move with the student so that services and support can continue.

The Council applauds the West Virginia State Board of Education for its leadership in setting strategic goals for school improvement and for developing 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.

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The Advisory Council would like to express our gratitude to the following people who attended meetings across the State during the 2022-2023 school year. Some provided information, some expressed concerns and others gave presentations for the Council to acquire in-depth information on topics of interest and concern.

Name	Role	Address/District	Date
Naomi Creer	Parent	Princeton- Mercer	10/13/22
Fredrick Martin	Students of Color	Bluefield- Mercer	10/13/22
Becky Wright	Parent and Teacher	Princeton- Mercer	10/13/22
Ed Tomma	District Superintendent- Mercer	Princeton- Mercer	10/13/22
Shannon Noble	Mercer County Schools	Princeton- Mercer	10/13/22
Myra Wright	Parent- Teacher	Lerona- Mercer	10/13/22
Lynn Bayle	Special Education Director- Mercer	Princeton- Mercer	10/13/22
Emily Huddle	Assistant Director of Special Education- Mercer	Princeton- Mercer	10/13/22
Jaime McKenzie	Parent	Princeton- Mercer	10/13/22
Ashley Hackney	Parent	Princeton- Mercer	10/13/22
Linda Knott	Director of Special Education- Summers County Schools	Hinton- Summers	10/13/22
Cynthia Johnson	Parent/Graduate Student	Bluefield-Mercer	10/13/22
Angela Thompson	Parent	Princeton- Mercer	10/13/22
Debbie Sigmon	Parent	Princeton- Mercer	10/13/22
Amanda Kennada	High School Specialist- Wyoming County Schools	Pineville- Wyoming	10/14/22
Debra Clay	Special Services Specialist- Wyoming County Schools	Pineville-Wyoming	10/14/22
Cindy Boyce	Coordinator of Special Services	Pineville- Wyoming	10/14/22
Brenda Shumate	Director of Special Services	Pineville- Wyoming	10/14/22
Satyra Keener	Parent	Princeton- Mercer	10/14/22
Kristy Ann East	Director of Special Education	Welch-McDowell	10/14/22
Julie Bibey	Director of Student Support	Phillipi- Barbour	11/18/22
Rebecca M. Dickerson	Parent/Grandparent	Barbour	11/18/22

**WV Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Students
Annual Report
2022-2023**

Albani St. Martin-Brown	Parent	Barbour County	11/18/22
Crystal Smithson	Director of Special Education- Lewis Co	Weston- Lewis	11/17/22
Kasey Baisden	Director of Special Education- Upshur County	Buckhannon- Upshur	11/17/22
Amanda Craig	Coordinator of Student Services- Lewis Co	Weston- Lewis	11/17/22
Kim Moss	School Psychologist- Lewis County	Weston- Lewis	11/17/22
Lori Waller			2
Melissa Browning	Director of Special Education	Jackson County	3/2/23
Deanna Thompson	Parent	Jackson County	3/2/23
Lee Ann Brammer	WVDE Office of Federal Programs-Special Education	Jackson County	3/2/23
John McKown	Superintendent Wirt County	Wirt County	3/3/23
Jessica Bailey	School Social Worker	Roane County	3/3/23
Michele Hordyszynski	School Social Worker	Roane County	3/3/23
Jeannie Bennett-Yoak	Chief Operational Officer for Student Success	Calhoun County	3/3/23
TaLonne Gungle	High School Assistant Principal	Calhoun County	3/3/23
Stacy Richards	School Psychologist	Roane County	3/3/23
Michelle Ash	Director of Student Services	Roane County	3/3/23
Melinda Parkins	School Based Therapist	Roane County	3/3/23
Airande Rapp	Special Education Extra Support	Braxton County	4/27/23
Christina Bailey	Special Education Director	Braxton County	4/27/23
Terry Riley (virtual)	WVDE Coordinator	Braxton County	4/27/23
Lydia Young	Special Education Director	Nicholas County	4/27/23
Megan Payne	Parent	Braxton County	4/27/23
Christy Skidmore	Special Education Teacher	Braxton County	4/28/23
Kerri Lemon	Special Education Teacher	Braxton County	4/28/23