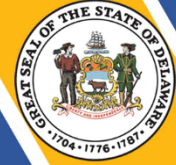
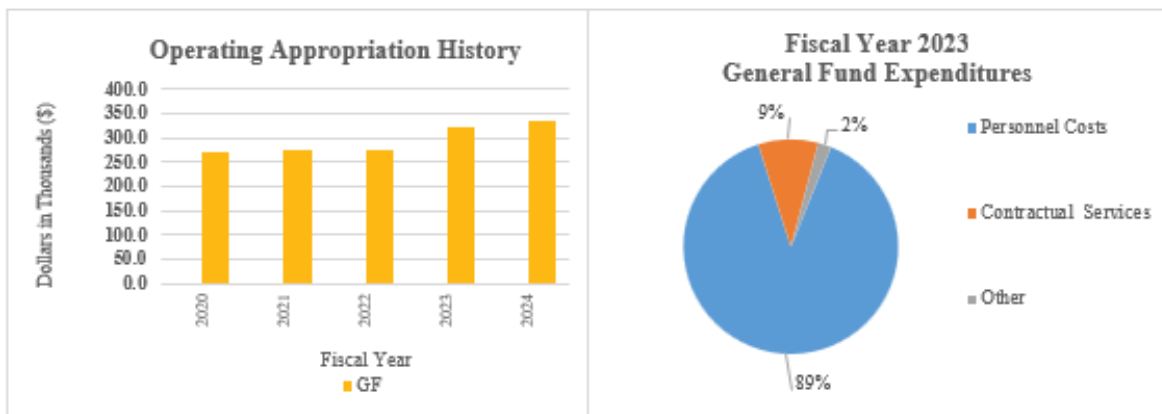


# Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens



## At a Glance

- In FY23, the GACEC submitted 1,350 letters on legislation and regulations to elected officials and agencies on educational services and the service needs of individuals with exceptionalities;
- GACEC members and staff participated on over 68 boards, task forces, committees and workgroups;
- The GACEC provided information to the public utilizing hybrid, in-person and virtual formats due to the needs of members, constituents and stakeholders since the pandemic. Council has been able to connect with over 1,500 individuals through various online and in-person conferences and workshops on issues relevant to the disability community;
- The updated DelAWARE DisABILITY Hub transition website received over 17,597 hits with over 13,124 unique visitors; and
- The GACEC collaborated with the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and Delaware Department of Correction (DDOC) to monitor services in the prison education program.



## Overview

The mission of the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) is to serve as the review board for policies, procedures and practices related to the delivery of services for all residents with exceptionalities or disabilities in Delaware from birth to death. The GACEC serves as the State Advisory Panel (SAP) for agencies providing educational services and programs to children in Delaware between the ages of 3 and 22 through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its amendments. The GACEC also acts in an advisory capacity with the DDOE and DDOC on the provision of educational services to inmates with disabilities since the passage of Senate Bill No. 20 in 2015.

# Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens



In Fiscal Year 2023, the GACEC discussed information on future collaborations with the DDOE based on the needs of students, anticipated activities/professional development with local education agencies and the role of the GACEC at its annual planning retreat. George Tilson, a career and workforce development consultant from George Washington University, worked with the Council and DDOE representatives Dale Matusevich, Director of Exceptional Children Resources, Barbara Mazza and Susan Veenema, also of the DDOE, to formalize a plan to move forward in a more collaborative manner.

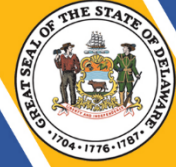
The GACEC reviewed, discussed impact and commented on 22 bills and 31 regulations over the past fiscal year. Council supported House Substitute 1 for House Bill No. 33 on funding for Pre-Kindergarten Special Education; as well as House Bill No. 83, which dealt with Kindergarten Oral Health Screening. Both of these bills were signed by the Governor.

Council continued to meet with and monitor the proposed transfer of the Infants and Toddlers Early Intervention Program/Part C from the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)/Division of Public Health (DPH) to the DDOE. Council supported the change of the original implementation date to a date that will allow DDOE to build capacity and address implementation issues. Council will continue to collaborate with the DDOE and DHSS to work towards a smooth transition that will benefit everyone involved, especially young children and their families.

GACEC members continue to function as stakeholders with the DDOE, Special Education Strategic Plan Workgroup (SESPAC), Redding Consortium and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Advisory Panel as these groups move forward with strategies and activities to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in Delaware. Council staff also work with the United States Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) SAP/State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) workgroup, which works to support the implementation of IDEA in all states.

The GACEC continues to promote Disability History and Awareness Month in Delaware. The poster contest was brought back with the theme of "Better Together" in 2022. Over 120 entries were received. An award ceremony cookie reception was held at Massey Station to celebrate the first, second and third place winner from each of the five categories, along with their families and school staff. Legislators attended the reception and provided certificates and congratulatory notes to the winners from their districts. The theme for 2023 is "Same Dreams; Different Abilities".

# Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens



## On the Web

For more information about the Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC), visit their website at: <http://gacec.delaware.gov/>.

## Performance Measures

IPU	Performance Measure Name	Fiscal Year 2023 Actual	Fiscal Year 2024 Budget	Fiscal Year 2025 Governor’s Recommended
<b>77-01-01</b>	<b><i>Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens</i></b>			
	# of letters on legislation and regulations written to elected officials and agencies	1350	1300	
	# of boards, councils and committees with participation by GACEC staff and members	68	60	
	# of individuals reached via GACEC presentations, co-sponsorship of conferences, press releases and workshops by members and staff	1500	1700	