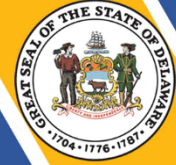
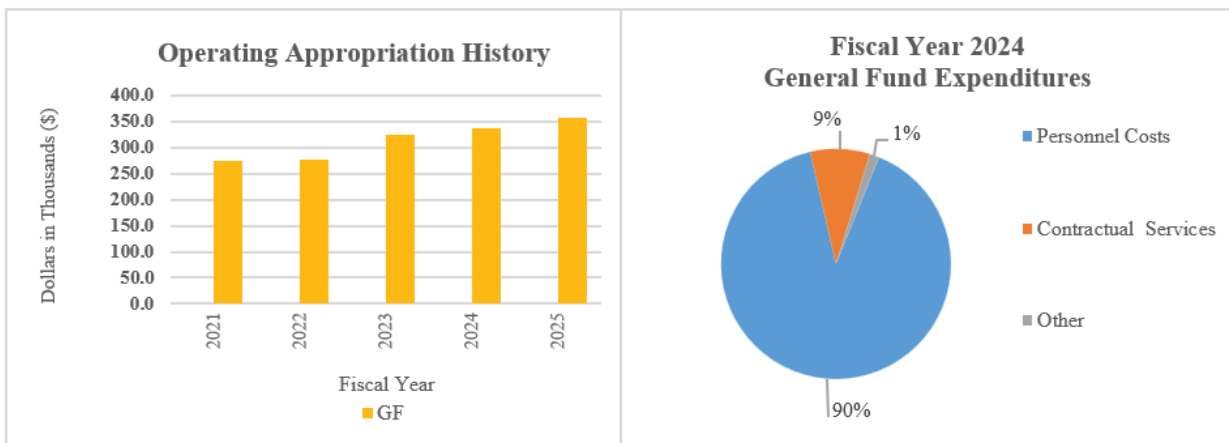


Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens



At a Glance

- In FY24, the GACEC submitted 1,300 letters on legislation and regulations to elected officials and agencies on educational services and the service needs of individuals with exceptionalities, in addition to in person discussions and public comment;
- GACEC members and staff participated on over 60 boards, task forces, committees and workgroups;
- The GACEC provided information to the public utilizing hybrid and in-person formats to connect with over 2,881 individuals on issues relevant to the disability community;
- The DelAWARE DisABILITY Hub (DelDHub) transition website received over 20,921 hits, with over 12,233 unique visits; and
- The GACEC discussed the provision of services to individuals in the Department of Education and Department of Correction joint agency 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 also serves as the state advisory panel (SAP) for agencies providing educational services and programs to children in Delaware between the ages of 3 and 21 through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its amendments. The GACEC served as the State’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Children beginning in 1972 and was later renamed the Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens to encompass the expansion of its role. The passage of Senate Bill No. 20 in 2015 expanded

Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens



the role of the GACEC to include acting in an advisory capacity with the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and the Department of Correction (DOC) on the provision of educational services to inmates with disabilities in the joint agency prison education system.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the GACEC continued its collaborative efforts with the DDOE to ensure the needs of students are being addressed, particularly students in special education. DDOE representatives Dale Matusevich and Cindy Brown met with GACEC members at the annual planning retreat to discuss current projects at the DDOE and future trends to look forward to in education.

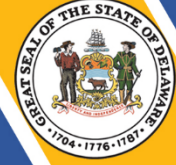
The GACEC reviewed, discussed impact and commented on 22 bills and 34 regulations over the past fiscal year. Council supported House Bill No. 263, which will prohibit schools from excluding a student from participating in a school sponsored extracurricular activity on the basis the student has an outstanding debt for unpaid school meals and other legislation that have been signed by the Governor.

GACEC members continue to serve as stakeholders with the DDOE, Special Education Strategic Plan workgroup (SESPAC), Redding Consortium, Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Advisory Panel as these groups work towards developing and enhancing strategies to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities in Delaware. Council staff also work with the United States Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and SAP/State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) workgroup to support the implementation of IDEA in all states.

The GACEC continues to promote Disability History and Awareness Month (DHAM) in Delaware. The poster contest was held with the theme of "Same Dreams; Different Abilities". Over 100 posters were received from around the State. An award ceremony/cookie reception was held at Massey Station to celebrate the first, second and third place winners from each of the five categories. The students were accompanied by members of their families and staff from their respective schools. Delaware legislators and Dover Mayor Robin Christiansen attended the reception to show their support. Other legislators sent certificates and congratulatory notes to the winners from their districts.

The GACEC also collaborated with the Delaware YMCA to host a resource fair during Disability History and Awareness Month (DHAM). The purpose of the fair was to give Delawareans an opportunity to learn more about disability resources, recognize the contributions of people with disabilities to our communities, and learn how to actively participate in inclusion efforts throughout our state. Over 20 vendors took part in the inaugural event. Several Delaware Representatives and Senators also attended the resource fair to learn more about resources and show their support for the disability community. Information on voting rights and accessibility was presented by representatives from the Disabilities Law Program (DLP) of the Community Legal Aid Society Inc. (CLASI).

Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens



On the Web

For more information, visit gacec.delaware.gov.

Performance Measures

IPU	Performance Measure Name	Fiscal Year 2024 Actual	Fiscal Year 2025 Budget	Fiscal Year 2026 Governor's Recommended
77-01-01	<i>Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens</i>			
	# of letters on legislation and regulations written to elected officials and agencies	1300	1250	1200
	# of boards, councils and committees with participation by GACEC staff and members	60	62	65
	# of individuals reached via GACEC presentations, co-sponsorship of conferences, press releases and workshops by members and staff	2881	3000	3100