



Delaware Department of Education

FY 2015

**Interagency Collaborative Team
Annual Report
July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015**

Under 14 *Del. C.* §3124

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**Interagency Collaborative Team
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The Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT) is authorized under **Title 14 Delaware Code, Chapter 31, Section 3124**, <http://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c031/sc03/index.shtml>. The purpose of the ICT is to provide a collaborative, interagency approach to service delivery for children and youth with disabilities who present educational needs that cannot be addressed through the existing resources of a single agency. In addition to planning for individual children, the ICT identifies impediments to collaborative service delivery and recommends strategies to remove them. As established in Delaware Code, the ICT consists of members of specific agencies whose representatives for the FY 2015 reporting period follow:

Susan Cczyk, Director, Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services, DSCYF
(Harvey Doppelt, designated representative)

Vicky Kelly, Director, Division of Family Services, DSCYF
(John Bates, designated representative)

Nancy Dietz, Director, Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services, DSCYF
(Charlita Shamburger, designated representative)

Jane Gallivan, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, DHSS
(Karen Wilson & Carey Hocker, designated representatives)

Kevin Huckshorn, Director/Gerard Gallucci, Acting Director, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, DHSS

Ann Visalli, Director, Office of Management and Budget
(Elizabeth Lewis, designated representative)

Michael Morton, Controller General
(Michael Jackson, designated representative)

Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Chair, Director, Exceptional Children Resources, DOE

Michael Watson, Associate Secretary, Teaching and Learning Branch, DOE

In addition, Linda Smith, ICT Coordinator, Department of Education's Exceptional Children Resources, coordinates and attends all meetings and completes all ICT related work. Interagency Collaborative Team case review meetings include representatives of the responsible local education agency (LEA), the parent/guardian, and other invited participants who work with and have knowledge of individual student cases.

Under Delaware Code (14 Del. C. §3124), private placement with financial aid may be sought when an Individual Education Program (IEP) team finds that an eligible child with a disability cannot benefit from the regularly offered, free appropriate public educational programs (FAPE), which include regular classes, special classes or special schools. The determination shall be made by the IEP team and by the Department of Education that no school district or other state agency has a suitable free and appropriate program of education for the particular child with a disability. Such private placement shall be in a school or program approved by the Department of Education. The ICT is responsible to review all initial and renewal applications for Unique Alternative services prior to approval by the Secretary of Education. The ICT reviews existing information related to the student's evaluations and assessments, individualized services that have been provided, and proposed educational plans; makes recommendations for alternative education services and / or behavioral health treatment plans as necessary; and ensures coordinated interagency service delivery and funding.

Delaware Code also stipulates that a report is prepared annually to summarize the work of the ICT and provide progress summaries for the information items reported in the previous year's Annual Report. The report is submitted to the Governor, Budget Director, President Pro-Tempore, Speaker of the House, and the Controller General.

Delaware Department of Education Data Reporting Requirements

The reader is asked to refer to the full reporting requirements necessary to protect each student's personally identifiable information, <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/2283>.

1. Counts for groups or subgroups with 15 or fewer students are suppressed and represented by "-" in the data charts. Complementary suppression of one or more non-sensitive cells in a table may be required so that the values of the suppressed cells may not be calculated by subtracting the reported values from the row and column totals.
2. Percentages are suppressed when the underlying student counts can be derived for groups or subgroups with 15 or fewer students.

Interagency Collaborative Team Procedures

The Interagency Collaborative Team meets monthly to review Unique Alternative applications and twice monthly during the summer months to review annual renewal applications prior to August 31. The ICT reviewed 68 applications during FY 2015 in addition to three progress reviews. This included a number of cases that involved previously approved students for whom their LEAs and IEP teams requested that services be resumed or increased from day to residential. A small number of cases were approved for short-term services of six months given progress updates. An additional low number of cases were declined ICT support but services were offered through collaborating agencies or IDEA funding.

The following chart summarizes the ICT approval and service activities FY 2004 through FY 2015. It is important to note that while 68 students received approval for services, a number of these students received interim placements at residential treatment or detention centers, and other students were withdrawn to out of state placements by their parents.

Historical Summary of Unique Alternative Services

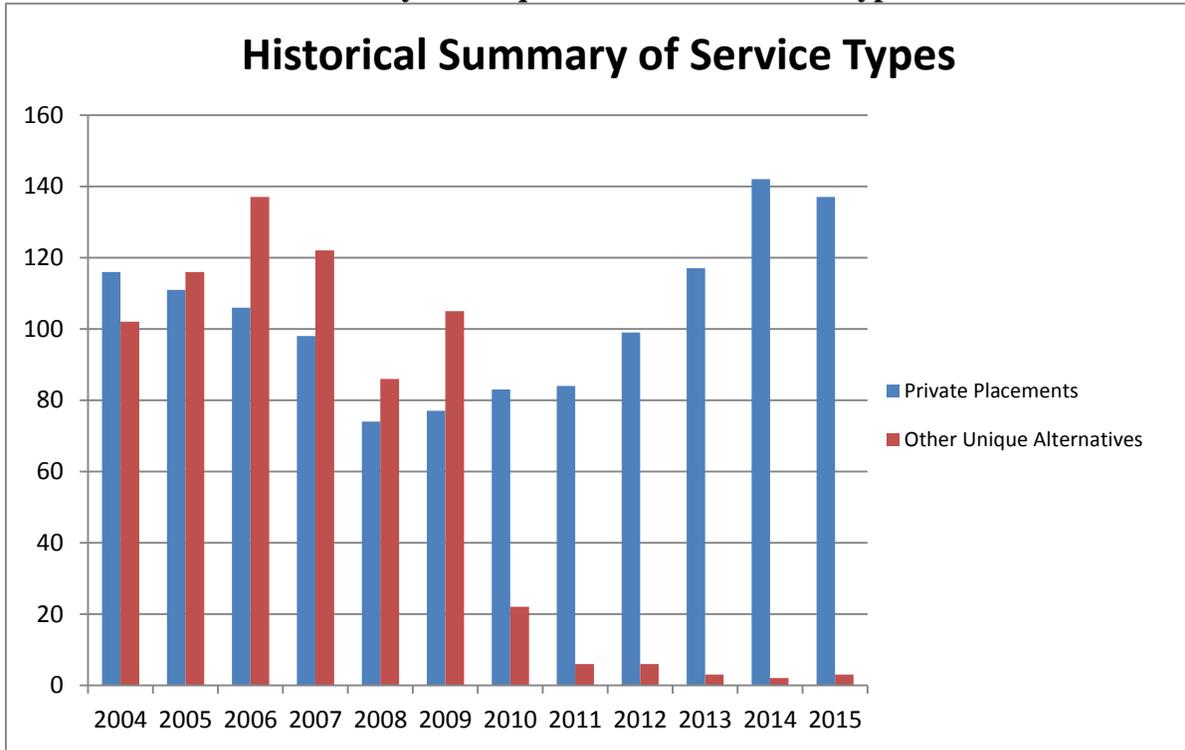
	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15
Total # of cases reviewed for new or increased services	69	85	87	77	61	58	46	32	32	43	42	68
Total Students Served 7/1 – 6/30	217	226	243	220	160	182	105	90	105	120	144	140

After correcting for duplicated students who transitioned between residential and day programs, the total number of students served in residential programs during FY 2015 was 65, which is 2 more than in FY 2014. The number of students served in private day programs decreased by 2 to 57 students. For purposes of this unduplicated summary, the students' final placement of the 2014-2015 school year was counted.

Additional students received support for their education program while a partnering agency funded their residential services. This occurs when an agency makes a unilateral placement typically due to a student's behavioral health, family, or foster care status. The corresponding LEA participates in education funding through the ICT if the LEA determines it cannot provide a free, appropriate public education to the student given their current status.

During FY 2015, few students received other Unique Alternative services through one-on-one staffing support. This type of Unique Alternative support is rarely necessary due to statewide implementation of the Needs-based Funding System. Despite the support provided by this funding system, a small number of students have learning needs or demonstrate such significant behaviors that they required both a teacher and a special education paraprofessional in order to be educated in their classrooms. For students who reside in Delmar School District, the elementary students attend school in Maryland and, therefore, would not receive funding support by the Delaware Needs-based Funding System until they transition to the Delaware middle and high schools.

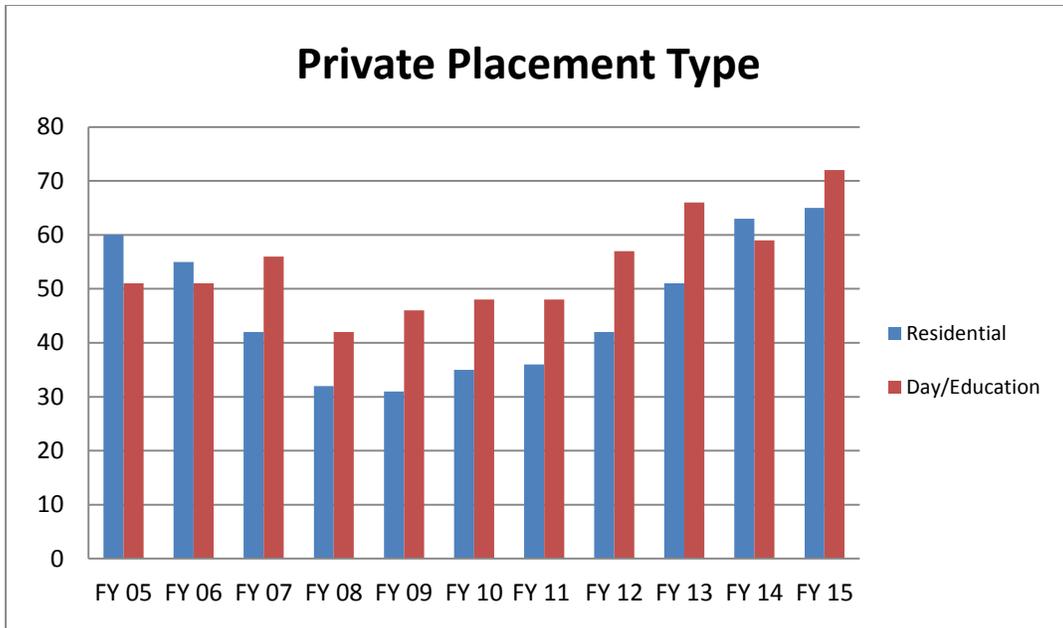
Summary of Unique Alternative Service Types



Residential Services

During FY 2015 there were 65 students served in residential programs. Through collaboration with the Local Education Agencies (LEA) and families, the ICT attempts to provide residential services to students as close to their homes as possible. In state residential services can be provided at AdvoServ Program in Bear, Delaware. Options for out-of-state residential programs in close proximity to Delaware include Benedictine School and Shorehaven, located in neighboring Maryland counties. Collectively these three programs served 37% (n = 24) of the students placed in residential programs. Additional out-of-state residential services were provided by programs in neighboring states of Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, in addition to a small number of programs at greater distance but necessary due to the unique nature of the students’ disabilities. It is important to note that given a percentage of students’ behavioral health needs, it is necessary to provide services in out-of-state programs that provide these necessary services.

The following chart illustrates longitudinal ICT placements, comparing students who receive support for residential services with those whose day or education-only services are supported by the ICT. Students with education-only services supported by the ICT receive residential services from partnering agencies.

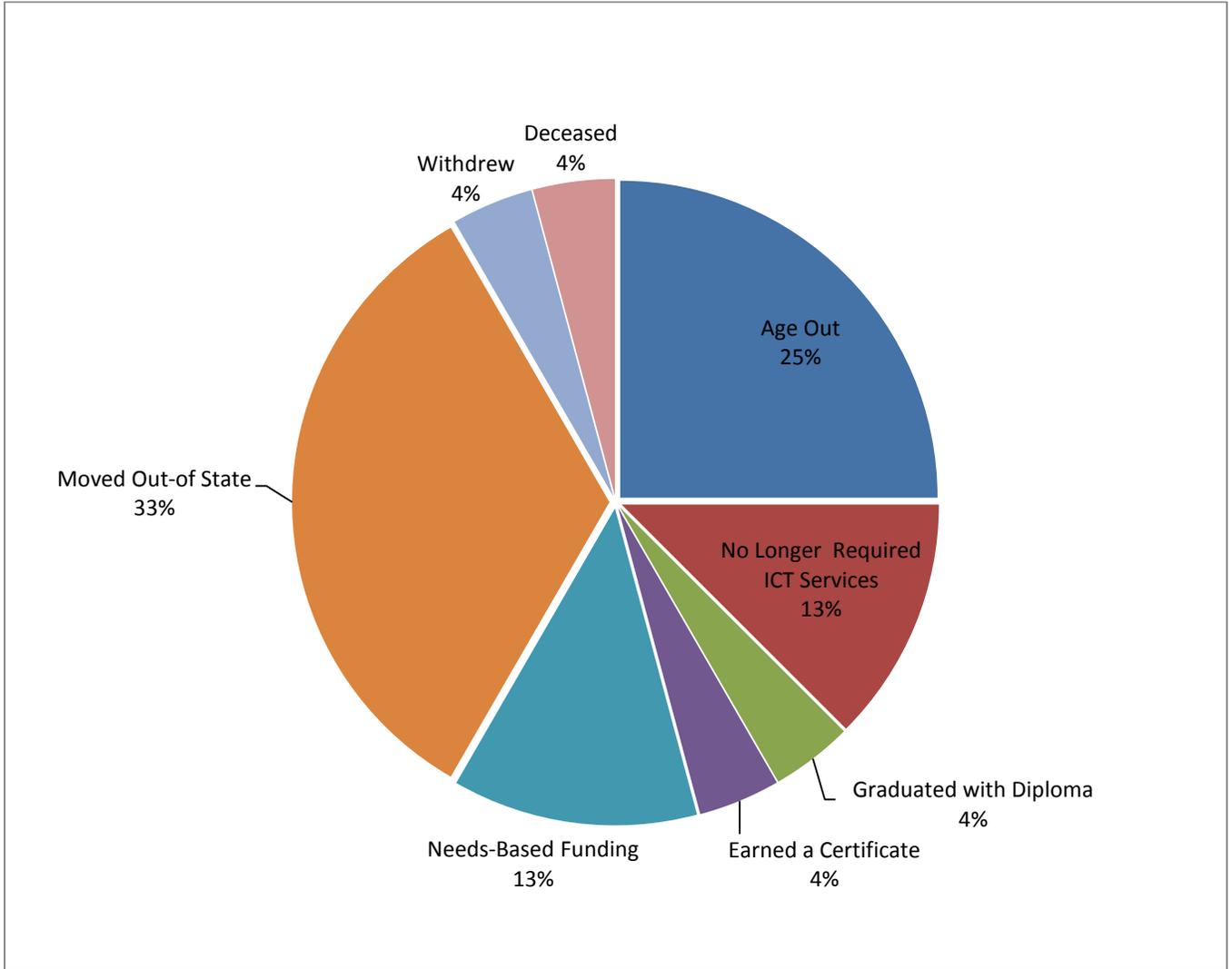


Unique Alternative Service Renewal and Discharge Processes

Annually, the ICT Coordinator provides each LEA with technical assistance regarding the provisions of the Delaware Code and Special Education Regulations related to unique education alternatives and private placement procedures, application and financial documents, and a list of children in the district receiving Unique Alternative service funding. The LEA is then responsible for preparing information for the ICT to review in order to approve continuation of services through Unique Alternative funding if the IEP team plans to continue the current services and placements. The ICT members consider students' progress and continuing need for unique alternative services in making decisions about whether to renew or continue services. While annual renewal applications are required to be approved prior to August 31 of each year, barriers to timely completion of the renewal process can include difficulty engaging parents in the process, families' movement across districts or out of state, or maintaining the engagement of students over the age of majority.

The LEA is also required to notify the ICT coordinator and provide an explanation when students will be discharged from Unique Alternative services. The following graph summarizes the students who exited or were discharged from Unique Alternative services during FY 2015 and the corresponding reasons.

Student Discharge Summary



Student Discharge and Exit Summary

Across each school year students are discharged from or exit Unique Alternative services for multiple reasons. A small percentage of students who withdraw may return to the ICT for support in subsequent years.

During FY 2015, students exited Unique Alternative supports due to: graduation with a diploma or certificate of completion, no longer required ICT support but continued to receive a variety of special education supports within their LEA, transitioned to a local public school under the Needs-based Funding System, moved out of state, withdrew from education service, or “aged out” of special education services at the conclusion of the school year in which they reached 21 years of age. The school year may include extended school year services through the summer and continuing to August 31 of the final year of service, depending on the individual student’s needs. Students who age out typically continue to need specialized living and work environments

provided through the adult services system. Collaborative, interagency efforts to support students’ transitions to post-secondary education or training, supported or independent employment and adult services are the responsibility of the LEAs and IEP teams and typically begin years before the students reach age 21.

Unique Alternative Student Population

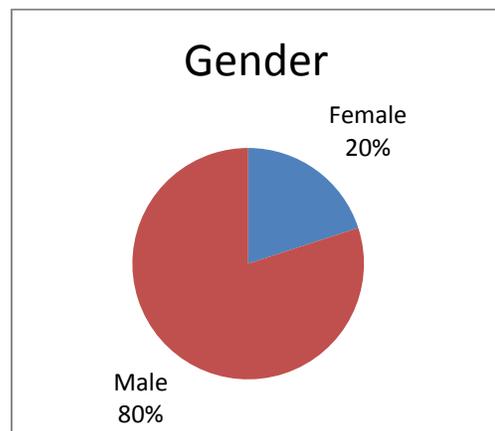
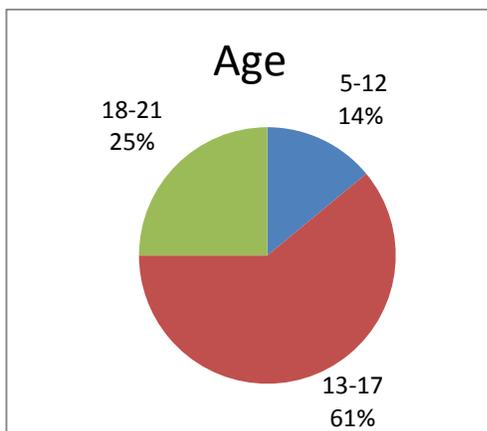
The following are demographic comparisons from FY 2014 to FY 2015. The ratio of boys to girls changed with an increase in the percentage of girls from 18% to 20%. The number of students in the 5-12 range remained stable at 20, students in the 13-17 range increased from 67 to 85, and the number of students in the 18 – 21 year range decreased from 50 to 35.

While the following chart and graphs summarize demographic information for the students served by the ICT during FY 2015, they do not reflect the students who were approved for Unique Alternative support but were not placed until the 2015-2016 school year. These students included both female and male students.

Age and Gender of Unique Alternative Students

FY 2015	Gender			Age		
	Male	Female	Total	5-12	13-17	18-21
Totals	112	28	140	20	85	35
Percentages	80%	20%		14%	61%	25%

Age and Gender of Unique Alternative Students



Unique Alternative Placements and Costs

During FY 2015, Delaware students in need of Unique Alternative services were served in 12 residential and 8 day programs. Some of these programs maintain multiple campuses, which focus on specialized services. The following information shows a range of costs for both residential and day programs. The costs may represent tuition, transportation, related services, or enhanced individual supports required by some students with complex educational and behavioral health needs.

	High Cost	Low Cost
Residential Programs	Shorehaven Elkton, MD \$498,847	Devereux West Chester, PA \$166,588
Day Programs	Devereux West Chester, PA \$92,225	AdvoServ Bear, DE \$61,223

Agency Involvement

Because the children and youth supported through Unique Alternatives funding present a broad range of complex disabilities and needs, interagency collaboration is critical. Often these students have multiple disabilities and/ or behavioral health needs that contribute to challenges in the home and community, in addition to the school setting. For these reasons, some students receive services from multiple agencies. The following chart summarizes the interagency involvement necessary to meet the needs of some of the students who are served in residential and day programs through the ICT. Additionally, a number of students received support for their education program while a partnering agency funded their residential services due to students' intense behavioral health needs, family circumstances, or changes in foster care status. When this occurs, the responsible LEAs participate in education funding through the ICT if a free, appropriate public education cannot be provided to the student in the local school.

Interagency Collaboration

Agency Division	Number of Students Supported	Number of Students with Shared Funding
Prevention & Behavioral Health	20**	-**
Family Services	-**	-
Youth Rehabilitative Services	-	
Developmental Disabilities	42**	33**
Substance Abuse & Mental Health	-	
Division of Visual Impairments	-	
Medicaid *	-	

*This includes students placed at Voorhees Pediatric Center, a skilled nursing facility funded by Medicaid.
DOE funds educational costs from Bancroft Education Services.
**Includes duplicated count of students supported by multiple Agencies/ Divisions
Student counts ≤ 15 are suppressed as well as complementary cells

Service Needs and Trends

While Unique Alternative services are available for children and youth with significant disabilities and behavioral health needs, LEAs and families are challenged with identifying a range of appropriate programs that are close to home and meet least restrictive environment requirements. Increasingly, students' behavioral health challenges cannot be met within the public school system. To meet the needs of these students, including those who present with aggressive or dangerous behaviors, and those students involved in the juvenile justice system, it is often necessary to seek admission to private programs located beyond Delaware. This presents complications to families for visits with their youth, participation in counseling, transitions to the community and family reunification plans.

ICT partner agencies have increased focus on expediting students' return to their families and local communities. To do so requires establishment of transitional resources within the State which may extend beyond the ICT funding allocation.

In addition, due to continuing gaps in services that support families and children in their homes and communities, an increasing number of students are placed in residential settings by multiple agencies. Often these students can receive an appropriate education within the local schools, but their behavioral health or intense behaviors prevent their ability to remain in their homes with existing resources.

The cost to any one agency to support these residential placements is prohibitive and a drain on current resources. Discussions continue across agencies to address these concerns and identify solutions that are cost effective. The ICT Chair and Coordinator continue to participate in these

discussions to address the systems issues as well as problem solve around individual student's needs when cases arise without clear solutions and for whom interagency collaboration is crucial. Despite these concerns, the provisions of Delaware Code are specific in their requirements. That is, Unique Alternative funding can be sought when an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team finds that an eligible child with a disability has needs that cannot be addressed through the existing resources and programs of the State. Thus, while partner agencies work diligently to provide community based supports to youth and their families, the problem of providing services and financial support for residential placements when students can be appropriately served in a Delaware public school continues to be unresolved.

Major Activities of the Interagency Collaborative Team

This section highlights the major activities relevant to the ICT during FY 2015:

1. The ICT Chair and Coordinator conducted multiple onsite visits and discussions with AdvoServ Program administrators and staff, visited classrooms, and engaged in reviews of program procedures and practices. This included unannounced visits to students' community residences. ICT Chair and Coordinator collaborated with the administrative team at AdvoServ to monitor and review measurable outcomes around services such as multi-tiered behavior supports, instruction and progress monitoring of individual students' replacement skills, reduction in restraint procedures, and timely reporting to LEAs and supporting Agencies when reportable events occur. Additional areas of focus continued to include instruction in Common Core State Standards, expanded secondary transition services, increased integration of instructional technology, and use of assistive technology to support students' communication systems.
2. The ICT Chair and Coordinator also collaborated with administrators at High Road School to monitor program enhancements. Areas of focus continued to include instruction in Common Core State Standards, individualized behavior supports, instruction of replacement skills and progress monitoring, and post-secondary transition services. Discussions also centered on plans to expand to a second High Road School site in Kent County to provide additional services and day program options to students in Kent and Sussex counties.
3. The ICT Coordinator continued to serve as a liaison to school districts, charter schools, other agencies, and private school programs to identify appropriate services for students and collaborate around funding and service issues. The ICT Coordinator engaged in problem-solving consultations regarding specific cases and provided referral information about community agencies to districts and charter schools as needed or requested.
4. In addition to regular visits to AdvoServ and High Road School, the ICT Chair and Coordinator conducted an on-site visit for the purpose of triennial re-approval at Melmark in Malvern, Pennsylvania. The ICT Coordinator completed an initial visit at Y.A.L.E. School in Cherry Hill, New Jersey for use and approval by the ICT. The ICT Coordinator's goal is to approve two additional programs annually to expand service

options to LEAs and families, with a focus on identifying additional programs that provide behavioral health services to meet the increased demand.

5. The ICT Chair and Coordinator responded to State legislators' and Cabinet Secretaries' requests for information related to constituents' contacts for support for their youth. The Chair and Coordinator continued to participate in interagency discussions to explore solutions to agencies' increased need to place students in residential settings, unrelated to the LEAs' ability to provide appropriate education services. These efforts are ongoing.

6. The ICT Chair continued to serve on the Child Death Commission as part of the education subcommittee.

7. The ICT Coordinator continued to serve on the New Castle County Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) and Child Death, Near Death, and Stillbirth (CDNDS) Panels, as well as the newly formed Sudden Death in Youth (SDY) Panel.

8. The ICT Chair and ICT Coordinator participated with a group of other DOE staff to ensure procedural compliance with the Limitations on the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in public schools. Timely and accurate reporting of physical restraints of students supported by the ICT were monitored across the school year.

9. The ICT Coordinator collaborated with the DOE Education Associate who coordinates the Educational Surrogate Parent (ESP) Program to ensure that youth who are in foster care or are Wards of the State are provided with knowledgeable support in educational decisions.

If you have any questions about this report or would like more information on the Interagency Collaborative Team and its activities, please contact:

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