



Fiscal Year 2016

**Interagency Collaborative Team
Annual Report
July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016**

Under 14 *Del. C.* §3124

Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Director
Exceptional Children Resources
Delaware Department of Education
Townsend Building
401 Federal Street, Suite 2
Dover, Delaware 19901

**Interagency Collaborative Team
Annual Report for FY 2016
July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016**

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 unique educational needs that cannot be addressed through the existing resources of a single agency or the regularly offered free, appropriate, public education programs of the State. In addition to planning for individual children, the ICT identifies impediments to collaborative service delivery and engages with partner agencies to recommend strategies to remove them. As established in Delaware Code, the ICT consists of members of specific agencies whose representatives for the FY 2016 reporting period follow:

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

Shirley Roberts, Director, Division of Family Services, DSCYF
(Kimberly Warren, designated representative)

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

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

Michael Barbieri, Director, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, DHSS

Brian Maxwell, Acting 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 ICT meetings and completes all related work. Interagency Collaborative Team case review meetings include representatives of the responsible local education agency (LEA), the parent/guardian or Educational Surrogate Parent, 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 education programs (FAPE), which include regular classes, special classes or special schools. The determination shall be made by the IEP team and the Department of Education that no LEA or other state agency has a suitable 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 as required in Code. The ICT reviewed 37 applications during FY 2016, which represented 31 fewer case reviews than the previous fiscal year and a significantly lower number of requests. Of the 37 cases, a number of cases included continuing discussions to provide updates or request changes to the student's program, such as increased services. In some cases, the LEAs returned to the ICT after the initial applications were declined ICT support because public school options were not exhausted. Following provision of additional services and demonstrated need, the cases were reviewed and accepted for ICT support.

The following chart summarizes the ICT approvals and service activities FY 2004 through FY 2016. It is important to note that while 37 students received approval for services, there is a low number of cases in which the student’s admission to private programs did not move forward due to their parents’ decisions or the students remained on a wait list with admission pending. Additional students remain in mental health treatment centers and are not currently supported by the ICT.

Historical Summary of Unique Alternative Services

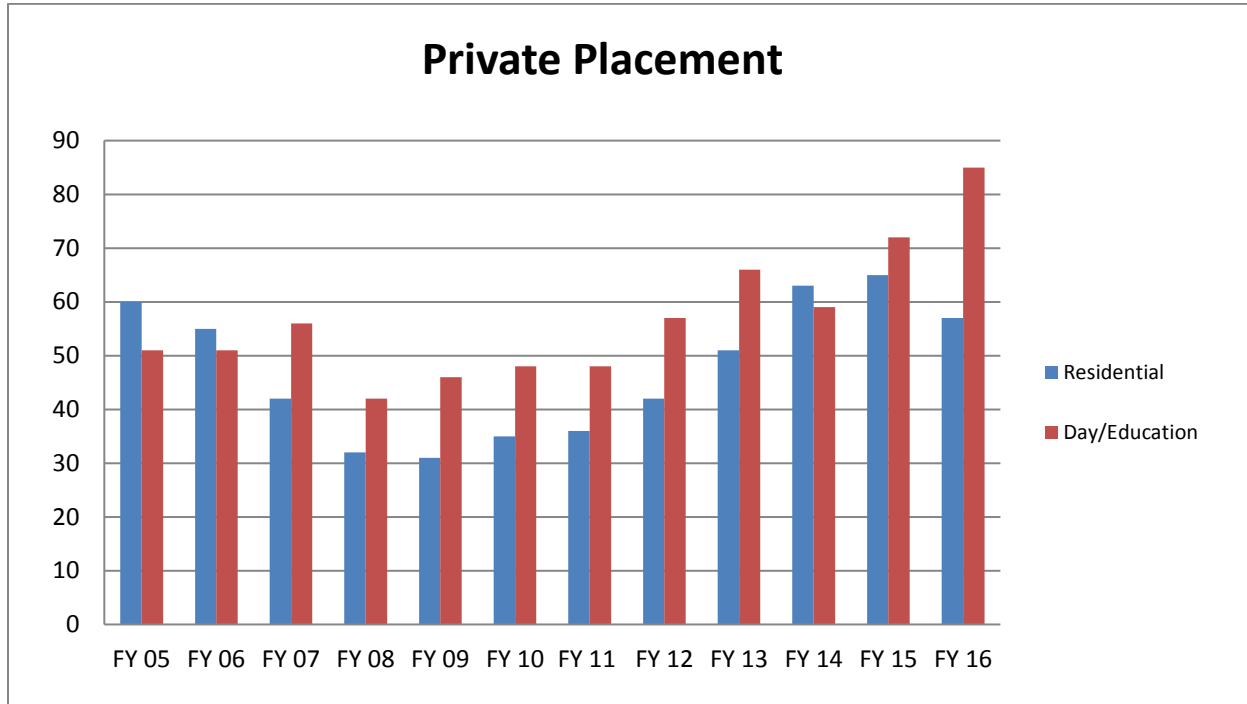
	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16
Total # of Cases Reviewed: New, Continuing, Increased Services	69	85	87	77	61	58	46	32	32	43	42	68	37
Total Served 7/1 – 6/30	217	226	243	220	160	182	105	90	105	120	144	140	142

As noted above, for FY 2016, the ICT supported students in private programs, which include day or residential placements. The following summary reflects these services during the 2015 – 2016 school year, compared with the previous years. Since some students transfer between day and residential programs, as well as to temporary mental health treatment or detention centers, the most recent placement during FY 2016 was counted. The number of students served in residential programs at the conclusion of FY 2016 was 57, which is 8 fewer students than in FY 2015. The number of students served in private day programs increased by 14 to 71 students. It is significant to note that due to students’ progress in residential programs, 17 students transferred from out – of – state residential programs to in – state day programs.

In addition to the students discussed above, a number of students also received support for their education program while a partnering agency funded their residential services. This “education only” arrangement occurs when an agency makes a unilateral placement without the engagement of the LEA of residence. Typically, this is due to a student’s behavioral health, family, or foster care status. However, the corresponding LEA participates in education funding through the ICT if the student was previously served in a day program with ICT support or if the LEA subsequently determines it cannot provide a free, appropriate public education to the student given their current status.

During FY 2016, there were no students funded for one-on-one staffing support through the ICT. This is the first year over the past decade that this is the case. With full implementation of the Needs-based Funding System, students can receive this type of staffing support through the State and LEA funding systems.

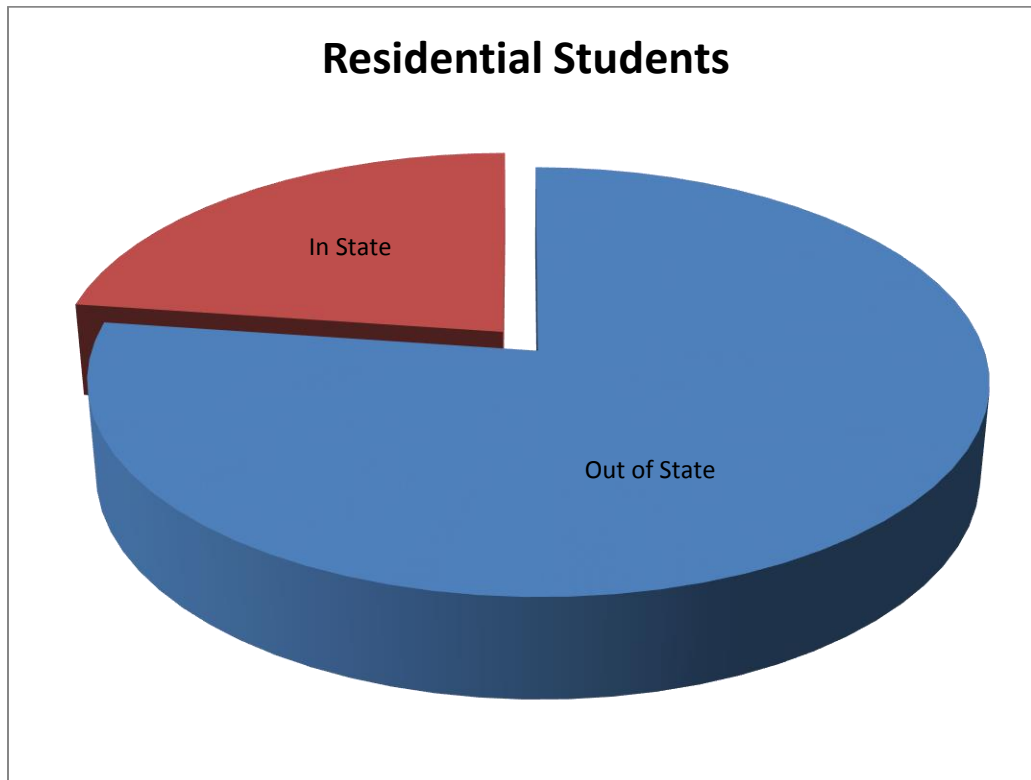
Summary of Unique Alternative Service Types



The chart above illustrates longitudinal ICT placements, comparing the number of students who receive support for residential services (n=57) with the number of students whose private day or education-only services (n=85) are supported by the ICT. As noted previously, 17 students transferred from out – of – state residential programs to in – state day programs during FY 2016. This reflects the progress of individual students, as well as the LEAs’ and IEP teams’ work with students, partner agencies, and private programs to successfully transition the youth to day programs with or without mobile outpatient or in-home support services.

The transition to in-state day programming was also made possible, in part, due to the opening of High Road School of Southern Delaware, a private day program in Kent County. The addition of a second High Road School of Delaware site was the result of collaboration between the ICT Chair and Coordinator, the Kent and Sussex County Special Education Directors, and the administration of High Road School of Wilmington and its parent company. The administration of Capital School District was generous in sharing the Kent County Secondary Intensive Learning Center facility so that High Road School of Southern Delaware could accept students prior to the opening of their new location in Felton, Delaware. This new site provided a needed private day option for students from Kent and Sussex Counties. This also enabled students who had progressed to return to Delaware from out of state residential programs and receive a lower intensity of services while living at home and in their communities.

Residential Service by Location



During FY 2016 there were 57 students supported by the ICT in residential programs. This count does not include the additional students who reside in private programs with partnering agency support for the residential component.

Through collaboration with the Local Education Agencies and families, the ICT attempts to provide residential services to students as close to their homes as possible. The chart above illustrates the ratio of students served residentially by the ICT during FY 2016 at Bellwether Behavioral Health (formerly AdvoServ) in Bear, Delaware. Additional “education –only” students were supported there residentially by partnering agencies. Beyond the scope of ICT placements, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) supports students at Bellwether Behavioral Health for residential services due to student and family need. These students received their education services in county-based public schools and currently continue in this arrangement.

During FY 2016, the number of students served in out-of-state residential programs decreased from FY 2015. Two of the out-of-state programs, Benedictine School and Shorehaven, are located close to Delaware in neighboring Maryland counties. Collectively these programs served a low percentage of the students placed in out-of-state programs. Neighboring Pennsylvania also provided residential services to 30 students. Additionally, a small number of students received residential services at programs located at a greater distance, which is necessary due to the unique nature of the students’ disabilities. It is important to note that given a student’s behavioral health

needs, it is often necessary to provide services in out-of-state programs that are accredited to provide these necessary services.

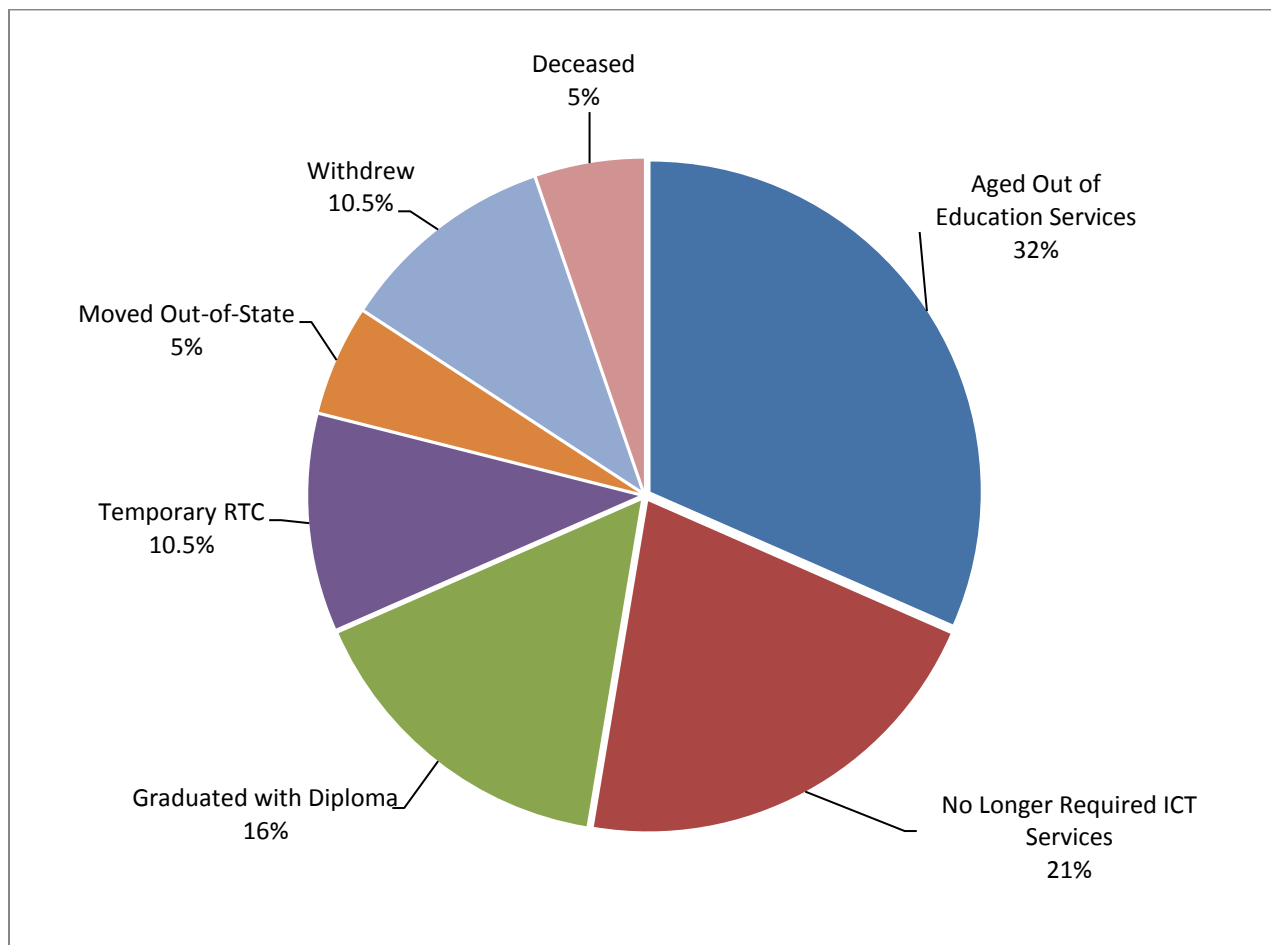
Unique Alternative Initial Placement, Renewal and Discharge Processes

A primary role of the ICT Coordinator is the provision of technical assistance to LEA Special Education Directors and Specialists regarding the program options available for new student cases, best practices to support students, and elements of Delaware Code and Special Education Regulations related to unique education alternatives. This includes support to complete the processes for initial private placement in collaboration with partner agencies, as well as the annual renewal process. The ICT Coordinator provides annual training in the initial and renewal case review processes, navigating applications and financial document procedures, and a list of the respective LEA's children and youth who receive Unique Alternative service funding. If the IEP team plans to continue the current services and placement, the LEA is then responsible for preparing information for the ICT to review in order to approve continuation of services through Unique Alternative funding.

The ICT members consider students' progress and continuing need for unique alternative services in making decisions about whether to renew or continue support. Renewals are typically granted for a full fiscal year. In an effort to return youth to their homes and local communities, more recently the ICT has requested three- and six- month progress updates across the school year for those students whose progress data indicate potential readiness to return to their home and local school. 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 LEAs' difficulty involving some parents in the process, families' movement across districts or out of state, or maintaining the engagement of students who have reached the age of majority. The ICT Coordinator collaborates with LEA, partner agency, and private program representatives to address these barriers.

The LEA is also required to notify the ICT Coordinator with an explanation when students will be discharged from Unique Alternative services. The following graph represents the reasons that students exited or were discharged from Unique Alternative services during FY 2016.

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 2016, students exited Unique Alternative supports for the following reasons: were graduated with a diploma, attained a certificate of completion and aged out of school age services at the conclusion of the year in which they reached 21 years, no longer required ICT support due to progress and, thus, transitioned to a variety of special education supports within their respective LEAs. Additionally, students transferred to a residential treatment center through a partner agency, moved out of state, withdrew from education services, or were deceased.

Students who attain the age of 21 after August 31 of a school year are eligible for services throughout that year. If the IEP team determines a student's needs necessitate extended school year services, these young adults may continue to receive school age services through August 31 of their final year of service. It is important to note that students who age out typically continue to need specialized and supportive 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. Planning should begin with the start of the secondary transition process at age 14 years or in preparation for eighth grade and beyond. At the time of ICT approval, the ICT Chair recommends that IEP teams begin transition planning on admission to a private program. The transition plans may focus on return to local schools and home or to post-secondary services, depending on the age and needs of the student.

Unique Alternative Student Population

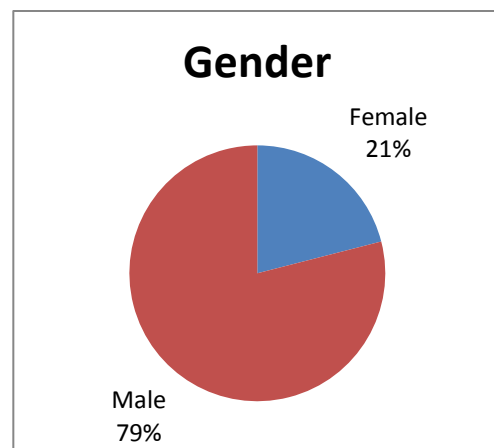
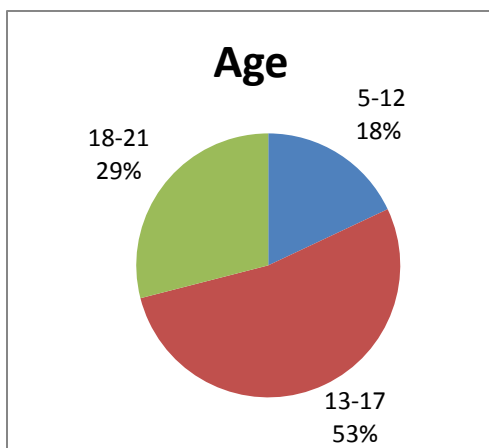
The following are demographic comparisons from FY 2015 to FY 2016. The ratio of boys to girls changed with an increase in the percentage of girls from 20% to 21%. The number of students in the 5-12 range increased from 20 to 25, students in the 13-17 range decreased from 85 to 75, and the number of students in the 18 – 21 year range increased from 35 to 42.

The following chart and graphs summarize demographic information for the students served by the ICT during FY 2016. This does not include students who were approved for Unique Alternative support but were not placed during the 2015-2016 school year.

Age and Gender of Unique Alternative Students

FY 2016	Gender			Age		
	Male	Female	Total	5-12	13-17	18-21
Totals	112	30	142	25	75	42
Percentages	79%	21%		18%	53%	29%

Age and Gender of Unique Alternative Students



Unique Alternative Placements and Costs

During FY 2016, Delaware students in need of Unique Alternative services were served in 15 residential and 11 day programs. Of these, Bellwether Behavioral Health (AdvoServ), Benedictine, Devereux, High Road, Shorehaven, and Silver Springs/ Martin Luther School can provide both day and residential services. Programs such as High Road School, Devereux, and KidsPeace operate multiple campuses, some of which focus on specialized services. The following information shows a range of costs for both residential and day programs. The costs may represent a combination of tuition, transportation, related services, or enhanced individual supports required by some students with complex educational and behavioral health needs. Of the programs listed below, AdvoServ/ Bellwether Behavioral Health, Devereux, and Shorehaven serve a number of students with very complex education and behavior needs. In fact, both Bellwether Behavioral Health and Shorehaven have accepted students who were not successful in other private programs due to the complexity of their needs.

	High Cost	Low Cost
Residential Programs	Shorehaven Elkton, MD \$546,158	Devereux West Chester, PA \$155,865
Day Programs	Bellwether BH (AdvoServ) Bear, DE \$121,390	High Road School Wilmington, DE \$61,380

Agency Involvement

To ensure comprehensive and coordinated service delivery, interagency collaboration is essential to the support of the children and youth supported through Unique Alternatives services. Students' multiple disabilities and/ or behavioral health needs may contribute to challenges beyond the school setting, such as in the home and community. Many students receive support and services from multiple agencies. The following table summarizes the interagency involvement necessary to meet the needs of the students served in both residential and day programs through the ICT. For students in day programs, a variety of supportive services, such as mobile outpatient and family based services, behavioral consultants, and/ or respite services may also be provided beyond the school day. As previously mentioned, a number of students received ICT support for their education program while a partnering agency funded their residential services due to the 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 an appropriate program cannot be provided to the student in the public schools.

Interagency Collaboration

Agency Division	Number of Students Supported	Number of Students with Shared Funding
Prevention & Behavioral Health	35**	-**
Family Services	-**	-**
Youth Rehabilitative Services	-	
Developmental Disabilities	38**	26**
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 education from Bancroft Education Services.

**Includes duplicated count of students supported by multiple Agencies/ Divisions

Service Needs and Trends

Increasingly, LEAs and families are challenged with identifying a range of appropriate services and programs that are close to home and meet least restrictive environment requirements for children and youth with complex disabilities and behavioral health needs. When students' needs cannot be met within the public school system, it is often necessary to seek services in private programs located beyond Delaware. This presents complications to families for visits with their youth, participation in counseling, family reunification plans, and transition to the local community.

The ICT members and their respective agencies have increased focus on transition services necessary to facilitate students' return to their families and local communities. To do so requires establishment of additional transitional resources within the State, which could extend beyond the ICT funding allocation.

While agencies expand the range of services available to families and youth in their homes, local schools, and the community, gaps in services continue. A percentage of youth continue to require admission to residential settings, which may occur unilaterally through 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. 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 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. While partner agencies increased efforts to provide community based supports to youth and their families, the need to provide services and financial support for residential placements when students can be appropriately served in a Delaware public school is concerning.

Major Activities of the Interagency Collaborative Team

This section highlights the major activities relevant to the ICT during FY 2016:

1. The ICT Chair and Coordinator conducted multiple onsite visits and discussions with Bellwether Behavioral Health (AdvoServ) administrators and staff, visited classrooms, and engaged in reviews of program procedures and practices. This included announced and unannounced visits to students' residences and classes. These visits continue currently. ICT Chair and Coordinator collaborated with the administrative team to monitor and review 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's sites in Wilmington and Kent County 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. The expansion to the High Road School of Southern Delaware site in Kent County provided additional services and day program options to students in Kent and Sussex Counties. Located in a temporary campus during 2015-2016 school year, the new site opened in September 2016.
3. The ICT Coordinator continued to serve as a liaison to school districts, charter schools, partner agencies, and private school programs to identify appropriate services for students and collaborate to resolve funding and service issues. The ICT Coordinator engaged in problem-solving consultations regarding specific cases prior to and following ICT approvals.
4. In addition to regular visits to Bellwether Behavioral Health and High Road School sites, on-site visits for the purpose of initial or triennial approval were completed at Centreville School, Davidson School at Elwyn, Foundations Behavioral Health, Natchez Trace Youth Academy, Overbrook School for the Blind, and the Ridge School. 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 continued to respond to State Legislators' and Cabinet Secretaries' requests for information related to constituents' contacts for support of their youth. The Chair and Coordinator continued to participate in interagency discussions to explore solutions to placement of 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) Panel and Sudden Unexplained Death in Youth (SDY) Committee.
8. The ICT Chair and ICT Coordinator participated with a group of 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 was monitored across the school year.
9. The ICT Coordinator presented information about the ICT process to the Division of Family Services supervisors to increase understanding of procedures and expand partnerships with the Division and LEAs. The ICT Coordinator collaborated with the DOE Education Associate who supervises the Educational Surrogate Parent (ESP) Program to ensure that youth who are in foster care are provided with knowledgeable support in educational decisions.
10. The ICT Coordinator continued to explore options for expanded behavioral health services.

For more information on the Interagency Collaborative Team and its activities, please contact:

Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Director
Exceptional Children Resources
Department of Education
401 Federal Street, Suite 2
Dover, DE 19901
(302) 735-4210
(302) 739-2388 fax
MaryAnn.Mieczkowski@doe.k12.de.us