



Delaware Department of Education

**Fiscal Year 2019
Interagency Collaborative Team
Annual Report
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019**

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 2019
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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 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 2019 reporting period follow:

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

Trenee Parker, Director, Division of Family Services, DSCYF
(Kimberly Warren, designated representative)

John Stevenson, Director, Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services, DSCYF
(Alicia Kendorski, designated representative)

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

Elizabeth Romero, Director, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, DHSS

Michael Jackson, Director, Office of Management and Budget
(Mary Nash Wilson, designated representative)

Michael Morton, Office of Controller General
(Ruth Ann Jones, designated representative)

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

Monica Minor Gant, Associate Secretary, Academic Support, DOE

In addition, Linda Smith, ICT Coordinator, 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, confirms individualized services were provided, discusses proposed educational plans, makes recommendations for alternative education services, and ensures coordinated interagency service delivery and funding are available to youth. The coordinated services may include behavioral health treatment plans.

Delaware Department of Education Data Reporting Requirements

The reader can refer to the full reporting requirements necessary to protect each student's personally identifiable information: <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/3024>.

Please note the following suppression rules for all tables:

1. Any cell whose population value is less than fifteen (15), regardless of the cell's value.
2. Any cell whose corresponding population value is at or above fifteen (15), but whose cell value is less than five (5).
3. Any cell whose corresponding population is at or above fifteen (15), but whose cell value is within five (5) of the population.

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 47 unduplicated cases during FY 2019, which represented 3 more case reviews than the previous fiscal year. The following chart summarizes the ICT approvals and service activities FY 2005 through FY 2019.

Historical Summary of Unique Alternative Services

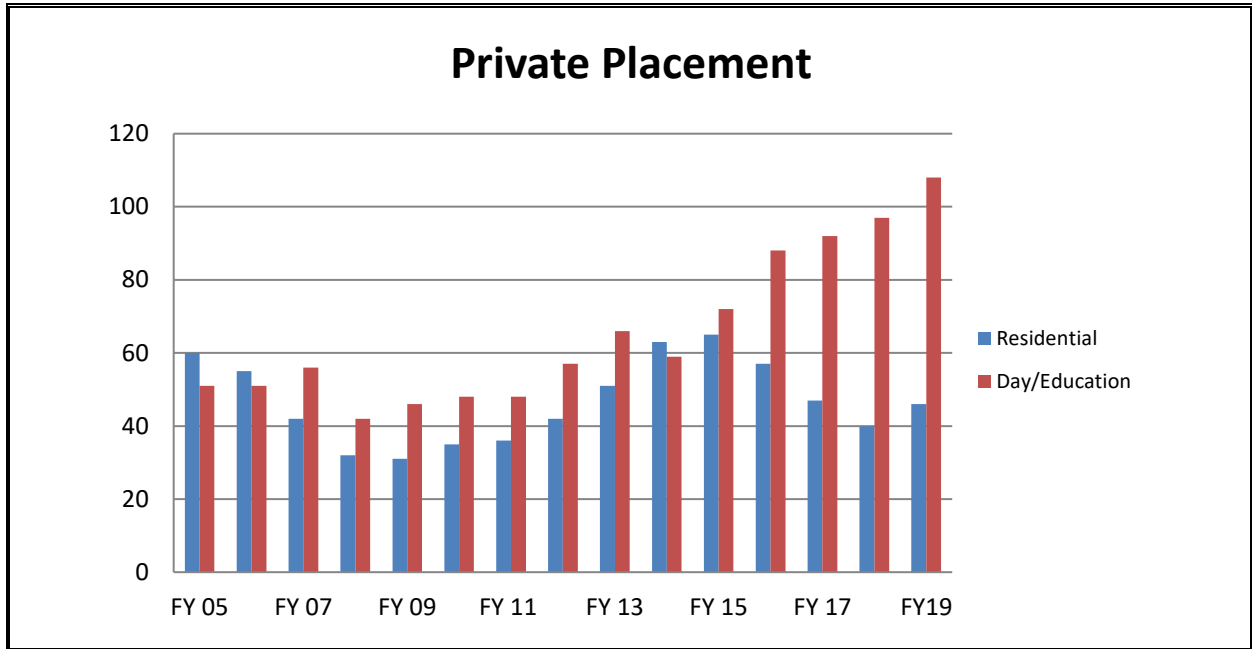
	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19
Total # of Cases Reviewed: New, Continuing, Increased Services	85	87	77	61	58	46	32	32	43	42	68	37	41	44	47
Total Served 7/1 – 6/30	226	243	220	160	182	105	90	105	120	144	140	142	139	138	154

During FY 2019, the ICT supported 154 students in private programs, which include day and residential placements. Since some students transfer between day and residential programs, as well as to temporary mental health treatment or detention centers, the data in this report represents each student’s most recent placement during FY 2019. The number of students served in residential programs at the conclusion of FY 2019 was 46, which is 6 greater students than in FY 2018. The number of students served in private day or education-only programs increased by 8 to 108 students.

Despite the increase in the number of students in residential placements, due to specific students’ progress in residential programs, a number of students transferred from services in out-of-state residential programs to in-state day programs during 2018-2019. 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 outpatient or in-home therapeutic support services.

Additionally, students also received support for their education program while a partnering agency funded their residential services. The “education only” arrangement typically occurs when an agency makes a unilateral placement with the engagement of the LEA of residence. This might be due to a student’s behavioral health, family, or foster care and dependency status. However, the corresponding LEA participates in education funding through the ICT if the student is supported by the ICT and the LEA agrees the program can meet the youth’s educational needs. If an agency makes a unilateral placement prior to ICT approval and the LEA subsequently determines it cannot provide a free, appropriate public education to the student, the LEA may apply to the ICT for support of the education program.

Summary of Unique Alternative Placements



The chart above illustrates longitudinal ICT private placements, comparing the number of students who received support for residential services (n=46) with the number of students whose private day or education-only services (n=108) were supported by the ICT during FY 2019.

During FY 2019, students were served in 15 residential and 15 day programs. Of these, Bancroft, Benedictine, Devereux, Foundations Behavioral Health/ LifeWorks School, 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.

The overall increase in the number of students supported in day programs was possible due to the availability of private program options at High Road Schools in each of the State's three 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. Further, the directors of the High Road School programs are responsive to the needs of students who are transient or in the custody of the Division of Family Services and have changes in foster family locations. When this occurs, students have been able to transfer between High Road School locations, often with the benefit of familiar staff who support multiple locations.

At the invitation of the ICT Chair/ Exceptional Children Resources Director, High Road School administrators had previously presented service options to the Special Education Directors during Directors' county meetings. This led to district collaboration across all three counties in that High Road School administrators and direct service staff helped the districts to establish In-District classrooms (IDCs) at Brandywine, Smyrna, and Woodbridge School Districts.

Additionally, High Road School administrators provided consultation services to Milford School District to establish a classroom that provides similar services. These efforts provided needed capacity within the district to serve students in the least restrictive environment, reduced private school placements and supported students' transitions to the districts from the private schools.

Discussions are in progress to provide direct support of new IDCs in Indian River School District and to add another in Woodbridge School District for 2020-2021 school year. Lake Forest and Seaford School Districts are also engaged in future planning. However, High Road School administrators distribute the expansions across school years to maintain quality at the three sites that serve students supported by the ICT, as well as the current IDCs.

Residential Service by Location

During FY 2019 there were 46 students supported by the ICT in residential programs. This count does not include the "education only" students who resided in private programs through partner 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. During FY 2019, there were no in-state, private residential options available to students. Two of the out-of-state programs, Benedictine School and Shorehaven, are located close to Delaware in neighboring Maryland counties. Neighboring Pennsylvania also provided residential services to 31 students, as well as a number of the aforementioned "education only" students' for whom partner Agencies supported their residential services.

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 or their complex behavioral health needs. 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, 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 the requirements 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, assistance to identify solutions to program and service barriers, 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 renewal

information for the ICT to review in order to approve continuation of services through Unique Alternative funding.

The ICT members prepare for the renewal process through consultation with their respective agencies and divisions to confirm status of student, and sometimes family, support. In determining whether to continue support, the ICT members consider students' progress and continuing need for unique alternative services. Renewals typically extend through a full fiscal year. However, in an effort to return youth to their homes and local communities, focusing on least restrictive environment (LRE) and community-based services, the ICT might request three- and six- month updates for students whose progress data indicate potential readiness to return to their home or local school. At times, the ICT grants approvals for a partial year of funding, with requests for written transition plans that detail the supports for the students in order to facilitate their return to the local school and community. The ICT Chair recommends that IEP teams begin transition planning on admission to a private program. Transition plans may focus on return to local schools, home or post-secondary services, depending on the age and needs of the student.

Approval of annual renewal applications is required by August 31 of each year. During the Summer 2019 renewal period, staffing changes at multiple LEAs contributed to later submissions of renewal applications. During June 2018, the ICT members approved 77 students' renewal applications; however, in June 2019, the ICT was only able to approve 18 renewal applications due to delayed submissions. The ICT Coordinator worked closely with the novice coordinators to facilitate their completion of the renewal process. Additional 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.

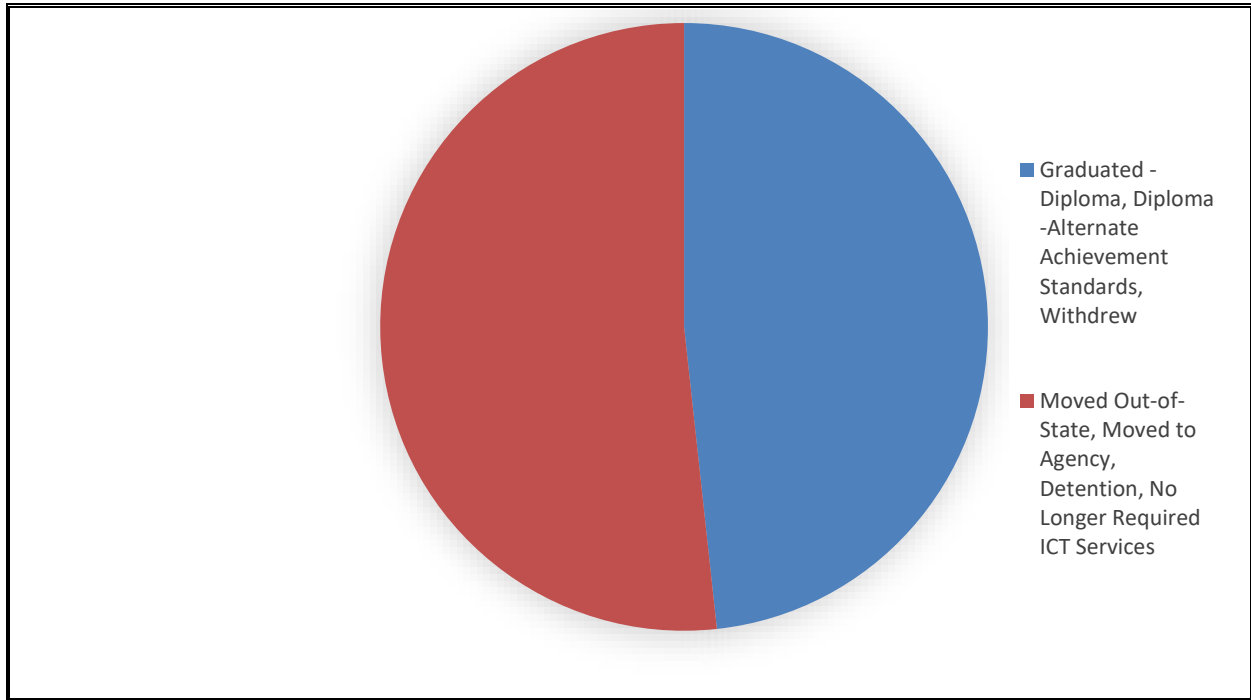
Student Discharge and Exit Summary

When students discharge from Unique Alternative services, the LEA is required to notify the ICT Coordinator with an explanation, the date of discharge, and submit final cost information if applicable. A small percentage of students who withdraw may return to the ICT for support in subsequent years.

The graph below summarizes the 29 students who exited Unique Alternative services during FY 2019 and the corresponding reasons, which included:

- the increased level of service was no longer required,
- families moved out of state,
- students withdrew from the education system,
- students were placed in detention,
- students graduated with a regular diploma, or
- students aged out at the conclusion of the school year in which they reached 21 years of age, earning a Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards.

Student Exit Summary

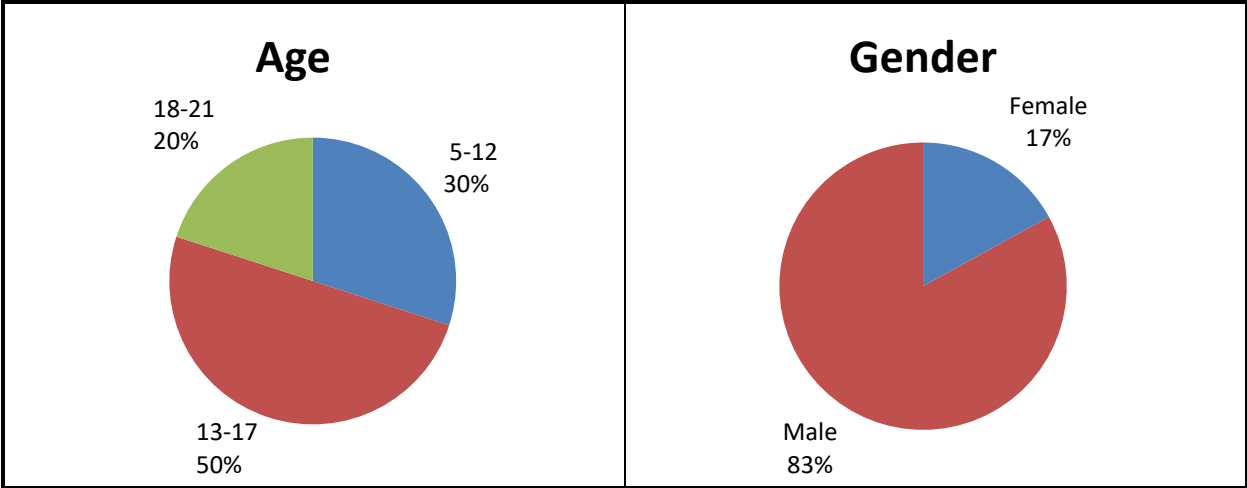


Students who attain the age of 21 after August 31 of a school year are eligible for services throughout that year. If the IEP team determines a student requires extended school year services, these youth may continue to receive school-age services through August 31 of their final year of service. Students who age-out typically continue to need specialized and supportive living and work arrangements, provided through the adult services systems. Collaborative, interagency efforts to support students’ transitions to post-secondary education or training, as well as supported or independent employment and living, are the responsibility of the LEAs and IEP teams.

Unique Alternative Student Population

The following chart and graphs summarize demographic information for the students served by the ICT during FY 2019. This includes 15 students approved for day or residential placement but not yet admitted to the private programs.

FY 2019	Gender			Age		
	Male	Female	Total	5-12	13-17	18-21
Totals	141	28	169	51	84	34
Percentages	83%	17%		30%	50%	20%



Interagency Collaboration

Interagency collaboration is essential to the support of the children and youth supported through Unique Alternatives services to ensure comprehensive and coordinated service delivery. 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 shared funding necessary to meet the needs of the students served in residential programs through the ICT.

Agency Division	Number of Students with Shared Funding
Prevention & Behavioral Health	-
Developmental Disabilities Services	28

Additionally, beyond the school day, partner agencies may provide a variety of supportive services, such as mobile outpatient and family based services, behavioral consultants, and/ or respite services. 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 LEA participates in education funding through the ICT if an appropriate program cannot be provided in the public schools.

Service Needs and Trends

Increasingly, it is difficult for LEAs and families to identify appropriate services and programs, close to home and in the least restrictive environment, for youth with complex disabilities and behavioral health needs. 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 cost-effective solutions. 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 and the Department of Education find 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 continue to increase efforts to provide community based supports to youth and their families, the need to provide services and financial support for residential placements for some students continues. However, if a free, appropriate program is available in a Delaware public school, the need for residential services would not be supported by the ICT.

Major Activities of the Interagency Collaborative Team

This section highlights the major activities relevant to the ICT during FY 2019:

1. The ICT Chair and Coordinator continued collaboration with administrators at High Road School sites in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex Counties 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 availability of the three High Road School sites provides service options across all counties.

2. 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 to assist LEAs with their placement options.
3. 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. To that end, onsite visits for the purpose of initial (indicated by *) or triennial program approval were completed at the following programs:
 - Devereux Ackerman Academy* (Georgia)
 - Benedictine School (Maryland)
 - Davidson/ Elwyn (Pennsylvania)
 - Devereux CARES, CIDDS, and STAIRS programs (Pennsylvania)
 - Devereux Brandywine and Mapleton Behavioral Health Services (Pennsylvania)
 - Foundations Behavioral Health/ LifeWorks School (Pennsylvania)
 - High Road Schools (Delaware)
 - Silver Springs/ Martin Luther School (Pennsylvania)
 - Stevens Treatment Center* (Massachusetts)
 - Vanguard (Pennsylvania)
 - Woods Services (Pennsylvania)
 - YALE School sites (New Jersey and Pennsylvania)
4. The ICT Chair and Coordinator conducted multiple onsite visits at Devereux's programs to increase monitoring of continuous improvement activities. These continuous improvement activities are ongoing.
5. As needed, 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 and ICT Coordinator continued to collaborate across DOE workgroups 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. These efforts are ongoing.
7. 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.
8. 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