



Fiscal Year 2017

**Interagency Collaborative Team
Annual Report
July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017**

Under 14 *Del. C.* §3124

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**Interagency Collaborative Team
Annual Report for FY 2017
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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 2017 reporting period follow:

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

Carla Benson Green, Director, Division of Family Services, DSCYF
(Kimberly Warren, designated representative)

Nancy Dietz, 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)

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

Michael Jackson, Director, Office of Management and Budget
(Melissa Marlin, designated representative)

Michael Morton, Office of Controller General

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. 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 39 unduplicated cases during FY 2017, which represented 2 more case reviews than the previous fiscal year. Additionally, 2 students required multiple reviews over the year, which totaled 41 case reviews. Of the 39 unduplicated cases, 27 were initial requests for ICT support and 12 reflected continuing discussions about students approved in prior years. These students required program or transition updates or requested changes to the student's program, such as increased services. The following chart summarizes the ICT approvals and service activities FY 2004 through FY 2017.

Historical Summary of Unique Alternative Services

	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17
Total # of Cases Reviewed: New, Continuing, Increased Services	69	85	87	77	61	58	46	32	32	43	42	68	37	41
Total # private placements	116	111	106	98	74	77	83	84	99	117	142	137	142	139

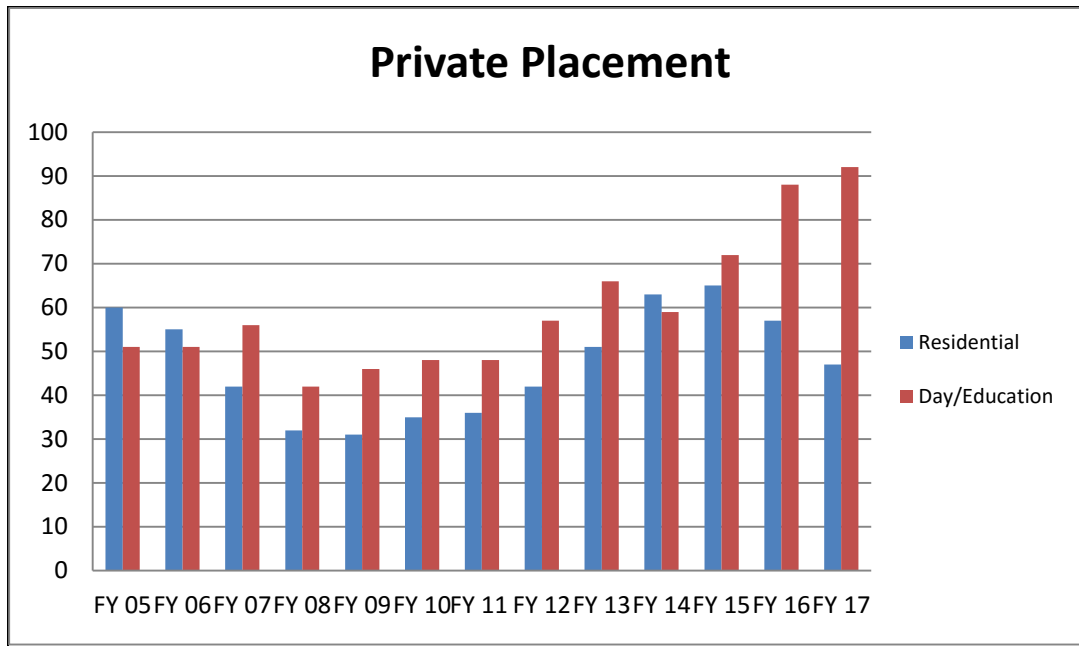
During FY 2017, the ICT supported 139 students in private programs, which include day or residential placements. The following summary reflects these services during the 2016 – 2017 school year, compared with previous years. During each fiscal year, a number of students transfer between day and residential programs, as well as to temporary behavioral health treatment or detention centers; therefore, each student’s most recent placement during FY 2017 was counted. The number of students served in residential programs at the conclusion of FY 2017 was 47, which is 10 fewer students than in FY 2016. The number of students served in private day or education programs increased by to 92 students. Students who received support for their education program while a partnering agency funded their residential services are considered to be in an “education” placement.

The “education only” arrangement typically occurs when an agency makes a unilateral placement with or without the engagement of the LEA of residence. This is 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 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.

Due to students’ progress in residential programs, a number of students transferred from education services in an out – of – state residential program to an in – state day program. These students had been placed in a residential program by a partner agency while the ICT and LEA supported the education services.

During FY 2017, there were no students funded for one-on-one staffing support through the ICT. With full implementation of the Needs-based Funding System, students receive this type of staffing support through the State and LEA funding systems.

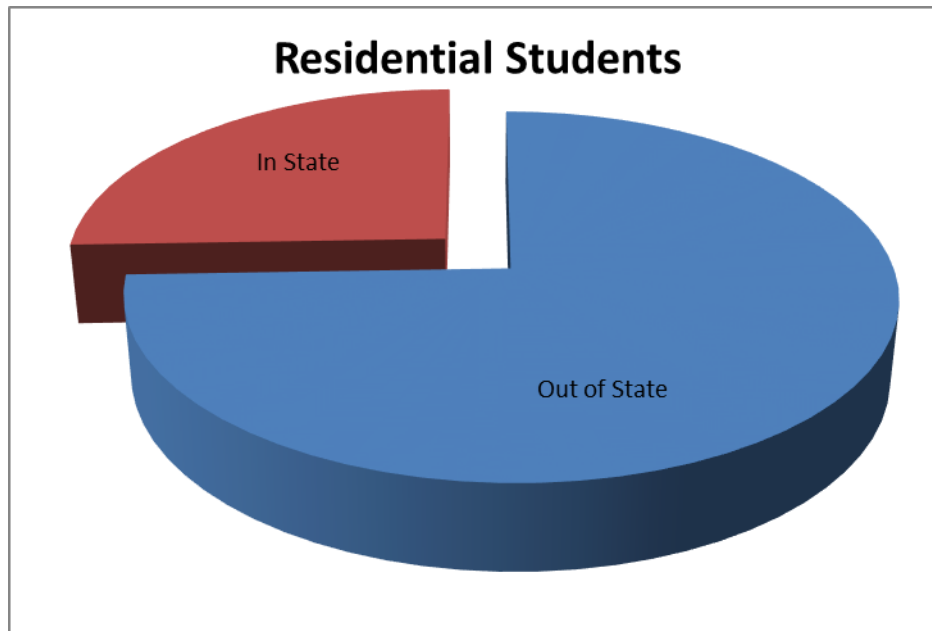
Summary of Unique Alternative Service Types



The chart above illustrates longitudinal ICT placements, comparing the number of students who receive support for residential services (n=47) with the number of students whose private day or education-only services (n=92) are supported by the ICT. As noted previously, a number of students transferred from out – of – state residential programs to in – state day programs during FY 2017. 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.

The transition to in-state day programming and the increase in the number of students supported in day programs were also made possible, in part, due to the opening of High Road School of Southern Delaware, a private day program in Kent County. The opening of an additional site of the High Road School of Delaware was the result of collaboration between the ICT Chair and Coordinator, the Kent and Sussex County Special Education Directors, and the administration and parent company of High Road School of Wilmington. This new site provided a needed private day option for students from Kent and Sussex Counties. This also enabled students who made progress to return to Delaware from out-of-state residential programs and receive a lower level of service while living at home and in their communities.

Residential Service by Location



During FY 2017 there were 47 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. During FY 2017, a number of students received in-state, residential services at Bellwether Behavioral Health. Beyond the scope of ICT placements, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) supported additional 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.

During FY 2017, the number of students served in out-of-state residential programs decreased from FY 2016. 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 23 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.

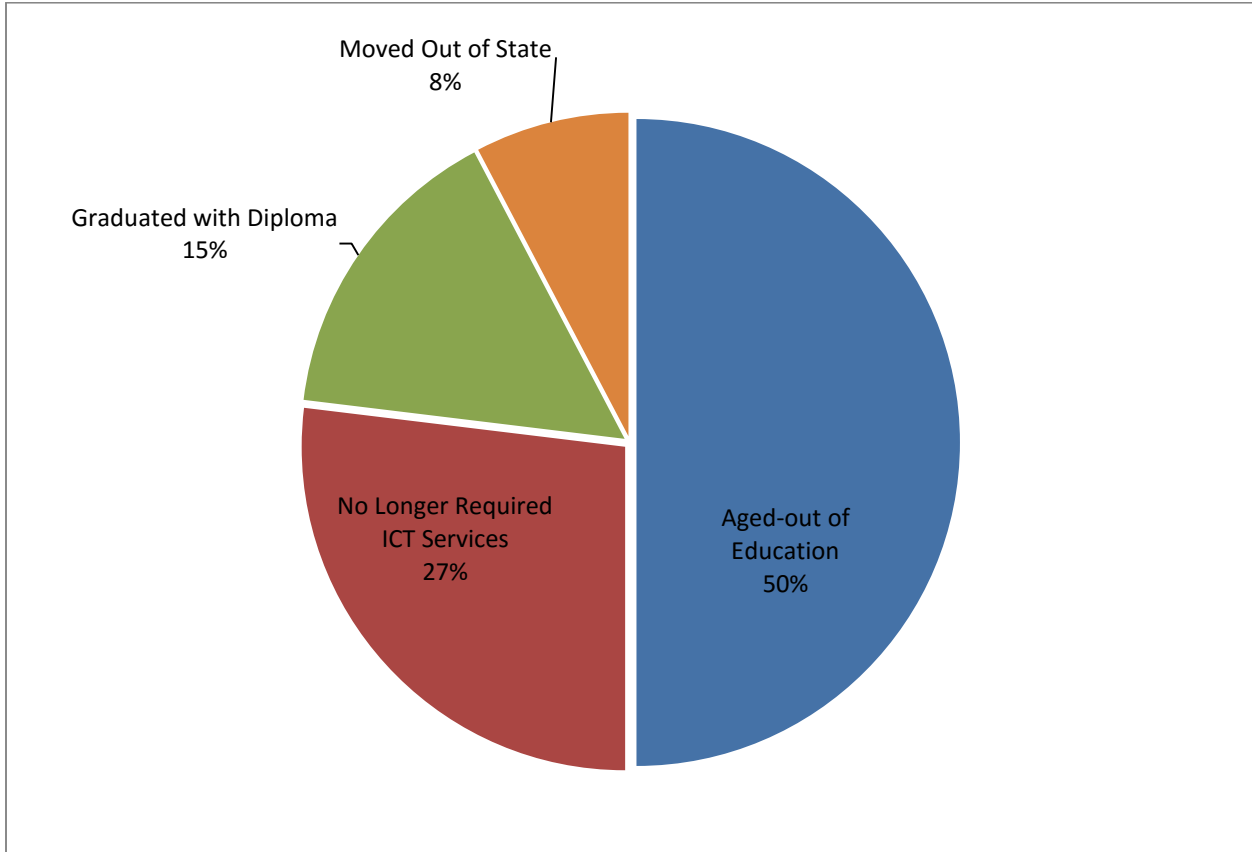
Unique Alternative Initial Placement, Renewal and Discharge Processes

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 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, and a list of each LEA's children and youth who receive Unique Alternative service funding to help with the renewal process. If the IEP team plans to continue the current services and placement, the LEA is then responsible for preparing progress and outcome 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. However, in an effort to return youth to their homes and local communities, focusing on least restrictive environment (LRE), the ICT has requested three- and six- month progress updates across the school year for some of the students whose progress data indicated potential readiness to return to their home and local school. At times, the ICT grants approvals for a partial year of funding, with requests for written transition plans with benchmarks that detail supports to be provided to students to facilitate their return to the local community.

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.

Student Discharge Summary



Student Discharge and Exit Summary

The LEA is also required to notify the ICT Coordinator with an explanation when students are discharged from Unique Alternative services. The graph above illustrates the students who exited or were discharged from Unique Alternative services during FY 2017 and the corresponding reasons, which included: the increased level of service was no longer required and students returned to the public school, families moved out of state, students graduated, or students “aged out” at the conclusion of the school year in which they reached 21 years of age. A small percentage of students who withdraw to public school may return to the ICT for support in subsequent years.

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 arrangements 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. However, transition supports are discussed among

the ICT members and then, within their respective agency or division. LEA and IEP team 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.

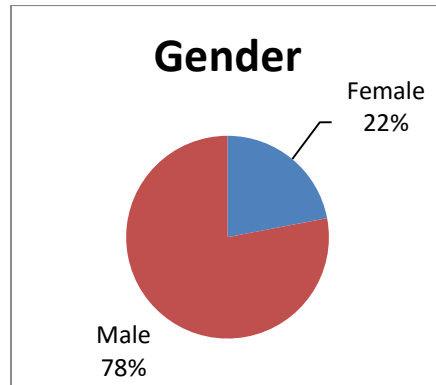
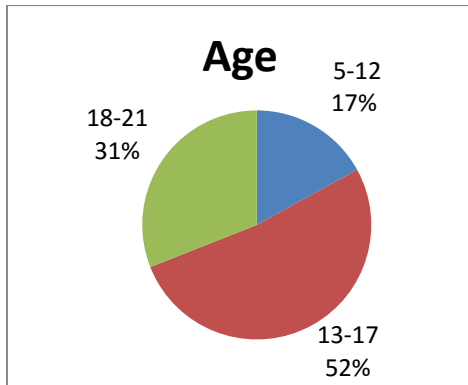
Unique Alternative Student Population

The ratio of boys to girls remained stable, with the percentage of girls remaining at 22%. Likewise, the number of students in each age range remained consistent with a difference of only one to three students more or less in each age range. The following chart and graphs summarize demographic information for the students served by the ICT during FY 2017.

Age and Gender of Unique Alternative Students

FY 2017	Gender			Age		
	Male	Female	Total	5-12	13-17	18-21
Totals	109	30	139	24	72	43
Percentages	78%	22%		17%	52%	31%

Age and Gender of Unique Alternative Students



Unique Alternative Placements and Costs

During FY 2017, Delaware students in need of Unique Alternative services were served in 12 residential and 14 day programs. Of the residential programs, Bellwether Behavioral Health (AdvoServ), Benedictine, Devereux, Shorehaven, and Silver Springs/ Martin Luther School can also provide day 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, Bellwether Behavioral Health, Devereux, and Melmark serve a number of students with very complex educational, behavioral, and behavioral health needs.

	High Cost	Low Cost
Residential Programs	Melmark Berwyn, PA \$446,790	Devereux CIDDS West Chester, PA \$169,873
Day Programs	Bellwether BH (AdvoServ) Bear, DE \$119,920	High Road School Felton, DE \$59,085

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, in the home and community. Many students receive services from multiple agencies. The following table summarizes the interagency funding support necessary to meet the needs of the students served in residential programs through the ICT.

Interagency Collaboration

Agency Division	Number of Students with Shared Funding N = 32
Prevention & Behavioral Health	<5
Family Services	<5
Youth Rehabilitative Services	<5
Developmental Disabilities	>21
Substance Abuse & Mental Health	<5
Division of Visual Impairments	<5
Medicaid *	<5

*Students whose education services were supported by the ICT while Medicaid funding their inpatient services in a pediatric nursing facility.

In addition, students served in day programs receive a variety of supportive services, such as mobile outpatient and family based services, behavioral consultants, and/ or respite services, which may be provided beyond the school day by partner agencies. 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.

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 continue to 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 would 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 at home or in the community preclude 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 for some students continues. However, if students can be appropriately served in a Delaware public school, the need for residential services cannot be supported by the ICT.

Major Activities of the Interagency Collaborative Team

This section highlights the major activities relevant to the ICT during FY 2017:

1. For various reasons, DOE determined not to renew approval for the educational services for Bellwether Behavioral Health/ AdvoServ beyond the 2016-2017 school year. In the interim, to

ensure the safety of students and continuing provision of free, appropriate education services, the ICT Chair and Coordinator conducted weekly onsite visits and discussions with Bellwether Behavioral Health administrators and staff, visited classrooms, and reviewed program procedures and practices until the final day of education programming in June 2017. This included weekly announced and unannounced visits to students' residences and classes. LEA representatives were also recommended to conduct similarly frequent monitoring visits.

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 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 Kent County 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 Devereux, Elwyn School, KidsPeace, and Woods Services in Pennsylvania; Grafton in Midlothian, Virginia; May Center and Stetson School in Massachusetts, and Shorehaven in Maryland. 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 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 within both public and private schools.

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

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