
Recommendations

Recommendation 1. The General Assembly should direct the Department of Public Instruction to establish methods for soliciting feedback from Exceptional Children Directors of local education agencies.

As discussed in Finding 3, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) provides several types of technical assistance to local education agency (LEA) Exceptional Children Directors in order to assist directors in meeting the demands of their positions. Anecdotally, directors reported satisfaction with the support they receive from DPI. However, interviews with directors revealed varying degrees of satisfaction with regional consultants and a perceived need for a formal mentorship program. Customer satisfaction data could inform DPI about which technical assistance efforts are most effective and which efforts need improvement.

The General Assembly should direct DPI to establish methods for soliciting feedback on each of its technical assistance efforts: the New Directors' Leadership Institute, annual conferences, regional consultants, regional director meetings, and webinars. DPI should consider seeking feedback in the form of customer satisfaction surveys. The methods for soliciting feedback should be incorporated into DPI's Exceptional Children Division policies and procedures. DPI should report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by December 15, 2019 on its efforts to seek systematic feedback from LEA Exceptional Children Directors.

Recommendation 2. The General Assembly should direct the Department of Information Technology, in conjunction with the Departments of Health and Human Services and Public Instruction, to determine the feasibility of and fiscal impact on local education agencies in meeting mandatory NC HealthConnex connectivity requirements.

As discussed in Finding 4, LEAs must connect to NC HealthConnex by June 1, 2019. LEAs not connected to NC HealthConnex by that date will stop receiving state funds for healthcare services. As of October 2018, Health Information Exchange Authority officials had failed to consider the impact of the statutory connectivity requirement on LEAs. Furthermore, officials of the Department of Public Instruction's Exceptional Children Division were unaware of NC HealthConnex.

The General Assembly should direct the Department of Information Technology, in conjunction with the Departments of Health and Human Services and Public Instruction, to determine the feasibility of and fiscal impact on LEAs in meeting NC HealthConnex's connectivity requirements. The Department of Information Technology should report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Information Technology, Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee, and Fiscal Research Division by April 15, 2019. Based on the report, LEAs may need additional time and resources to meet connectivity requirements.