

Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services
NC Department of Health and Human Services

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Education of Children in Private Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs)

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Jointly Prepared By:

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Mental Health/Developmental
Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services

and

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Exceptional Children Division

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Education of Children in Private Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities

This is a joint report as required by NC G.S. 122C-450.4 to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) have assumed the responsibility of the qualification and disbursement of funds for educational services in private Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs).

Leadership Team

Staff from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Exceptional Children Division (EC), Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS), and the Division of Health Service Regulation (DHSR) have continued to work together this State fiscal year (SFY) to ensure that children in Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs) are receiving an appropriate education and to ensure that the requirements of the legislation are met. The leadership team is composed of the following agency representatives:

Department of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children Division

- William J. Hussey, Director
- Carol Ann Hudgens, Section Chief, Policy, Monitoring and Audit
- Glendora Hagins, Monitoring Consultant; on-going assessment, monitoring, technical assistance and consultation to EC Programs.

Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services

- Eric Harbour, Child Lead, Community Mental Health Section
- Mary Ellen Anderson, Project Manager; on-going monitoring of PRTF requirements and execution and monitoring of contracts for funding

Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Services Regulation

- Stephanie Gilliam, Chief, Mental Health Licensure and Certification Section

Eligibility, Allocations and Contracts

In SFY17, there were eighteen (18) parent organizations in North Carolina with sites licensed through the DHHS Division of Health Services Regulation (DHSR) to provide PRTF services that fall under the requirements of the legislation. The eighteen (18) parent organizations manage thirty-one (31) licensed facilities. A list of the parent organizations is attached. These organizations also have non-public school registration with the NC Department of Administration. The Non-Public Exceptional Children Program Approval Process was developed and implemented through the DPI EC Division in 2014 after the PRTF Education legislation was enacted. Each licensed site has been assessed through an on-site monitoring visit by EC Division consultants and the DMH Project Manager. As of June 2017, all but two contract programs have full approval by DPI of their EC program. Two programs were licensed during SFY17 and have provisional approval of their EC program. This information has been provided to DHSR. Eighteen (18) contracts were executed for SFY17 to provide funding for educational services. Allocations and budgets were approved by the EC Division and DMH/DD/SAS leadership teams as agreed upon in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health and Human Services. Funding was allocated to providers to ensure that teacher ratios were met, including the requirement of a licensed EC teacher if a student with an IEP was enrolled, and to ensure that quality educational services were being provided to students.

Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Support

PRTF Summer Academy:

For the SFY17, The PRTF Summer Academy was held on July 25-26, 2016, as a session during the annual Summer Institutes sponsored by DPI EC Division in Greensboro. The PRTF Summer Academy is designed to address the specific needs of the educational staff responsible for the provision of Special Education Services in PRTFs. DPI EC Division Consultants and the DMH Project Manager served as facilitators of the session for participants. Educational staff from each of the parent PRTF contracts were in attendance.

PRTF Collaborative Meetings:

DPI EC Division and DMH sponsored two PRTF Collaborative meetings on October 12, 2016, and April 3, 2017, in Raleigh. There was 100% representation from each PRTF parent organization. In collaboration, the Director of the Department of Administration Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE) presented information at the April 3, 2017, meeting. Based on feedback from the previous fiscal year, the meeting participants preferred to attend two meetings each year. The PRTF Collaborative meetings for the 2017-18 school year are tentatively scheduled for October 9, 2017, and April 10, 2018, in Raleigh.

Professional Development Opportunities:

Administrative and educational staff in the PRTFs are provided information about the annual Conference on Exceptional Children sponsored by the DPI EC Division in Greensboro. During the 2016-17 school year, conference and registration information was shared with the educational and meeting contacts for each PRTF. The 66th Conference on Exceptional Children was held November 8 – 10, 2016.

Website: While the DPI EC Division continues to maintain information specifically for PRTFs on the EC Division's website, access to a wide-range of topics is also available on the Division's website to support the PRTFs' educational programs for students with disabilities in the areas of:

- Conferences, PD and Webinars to promote professional development;
- Disability Resources for information about a variety of eligibility categories and services;
- Instructional Resources to access a variety of instructional services;
- Parent Resources to provide support to families;
- Policies for support to ensure compliance for improved services for students with disabilities;
- Recruitment and Retention to support recruiting, hiring, and retaining teachers with EC licensure;
- Directory of regionally and statewide assigned EC Division Consultants; and
- A calendar of professional development events and activities sponsored by the EC Division.

Specific information for the PRTFs can be found at - <http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/policies/non-public-schools> and general information can be located on the EC Division's homepage at - <http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/>

Handbook: The PRTF Handbook that was collaboratively developed during the SFY15 by the DPI EC Division and DMH/DD/SAS continues to serve as a resource to the facility staff. The handbook provides guidance to the PRTF administration and educational staff focusing on the legislative, special education, and contract requirements. An electronic version of the handbook is available on the EC Division's website at – <http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/policies/non-public-schools>

[schools/prtf-handbook.pdf](#). Printed copies of the guidance document have been made available during on-site activities (technical assistance/support and monitoring visits), collaborative meetings, and the PRTF Summer Academy. This handbook also serves as a resource to staff in the traditional schools and charter schools.

EC Program Approval Visits: Initial EC Program Approval on-site visits were conducted at two (2) PRTFS during the 2016-17 school year. These visits were conducted by DPI EC Division Consultants in collaboration with the DMH Project Manager

Technical Assistance and Support: DPI EC Division Consultants and DMH Project Manager provide customized and individualized support to the PRTFs' educational staff through a variety of exchanges (such as phone calls, face to face contacts, and emails) in the areas of record requests, process and policy questions, transitions and discharges, budgets and contracts, etc. Technical support was provided to one (1) facility working towards obtaining its PRTF license.

On-site visits: The DMH Project Manager conducted annual site visit to each PRTF facility to ensure compliance with contract requirements. The DPI EC Division Consultants conduct on-site visits as a part of monitoring as outlined in the EC Program Approval process.

Each PRTF is required to submit the Self-Assessment to the DPI EC Division monitoring consultant annually. The EC Program Approval process is conducted every three years to renew the facility's status as a program approved to provide special education services.

Information Sharing

PRTFs have been informed of the notification requirements to the DPI EC Division. A procedure is in place to report admissions and discharges and to request records from previous schools. A form letter was developed and revised, as appropriate, to be used to request records upon admission to PRTFs. A contact list of designated staff in the local education agencies (LEAs) who will assist with record requests and discharge planning when students are admitted to PRTFs has been developed and is updated annually. PRTF staff can also contact the EC Division Consultants and the DMH Project Manager if assistance is needed with obtaining records or discharge planning.

Reporting Requirements

A data base spreadsheet was developed and implemented for the PRTFs on August 1, 2015. Data was reported to DMH/DD/SAS on a quarterly basis. The PRTF database was revised to collect information better. The revised database was implemented July 1, 2017. The tool will continue to be refined and improve data collection in the next fiscal year.

The contract PRTF agencies submitted the following data based on services provided from July1, 2016-June 30, 2017.

- **Number of Children served** – 1217
- **Average Age** –
 - Two facilities only serve latency-age children – generally ages 6-13. The average age in these two facilities was 10.
 - The remaining facilities serve adolescents – generally ages 12-17. The average age was 14.5
- **Average length of stay** – 163 days
- **Number of Children with IEPs** (identified as Exceptional Children) – 468
- **Categories of Disability** - number of children in each category for children identified as Exceptional Children:

- Autism – 14
 - Emotional Disability – 205
 - Multiple Disabilities -4
 - Developmental Delay -14
 - Intellectual Disability – 31
 - Other Health Impaired – 150
 - Hearing Impaired – 2
 - Learning Disabilities - 46
 - Speech/Language – 2
 - The remaining 749 children received regular education services and did not have an identified disability
- **Types of Educational Services Provided** – Types and hours of services provided were determined by each child’s IEP. The DPI Regional Monitoring Consultant reviewed service delivery schedules at each facility. The PRTF Education database was revised this year to include the total number of special education hours provided. The revised database was implemented in July 2017 for the SFY18 contract year.
 - **Costs of Services** - Ensuring that teacher ratios and EC requirements are met continues to be the priority for funding allocations. Each PRTF is structured differently which makes determining costs and allocating funds a challenge. New programs are allocated one-time funds for technology and curriculum requirements as recommended by the DPI Regional Monitoring Consultant. In SFY17 DHHS requested reimbursement of \$2,755,766.25 from DPI for education services. Two new contracts executed during SFY17 were only for a partial year. During the contract process, funds were withheld in anticipation of one new PRTF opening in SFY17. However, this program was not licensed and approved in time to meet contract timeframes for SFY17. This program will be included in allocations for SFY18.
 - **Outcomes** – The PRTF database was revised to collect information better for outcomes. The revised database was implemented in July 2017 for the SFY18 contract year. Client admission and discharge from a PRTF is based on medical necessity and treatment recommendations for each individual child. Children are admitted and discharged throughout the school year and are served by other school systems prior to and following placement in the PRTF. Measuring education outcomes for the period of time a child is placed in a PRTF is a challenge.

Recommendations from the January 2016 Report with Results and SFY18 Recommendations

1. Increased collaboration between education and treatment staff in the PRTFs.

PRTF education programs are more successful in carrying out requirements when treatment staff and education staff collaborate and plan together from the time of admission through discharge. Treatment and education planning, including development of treatment plans and IEPs, must involve treatment and education staff. Education staff must be kept informed of possible client admissions or discharges to improve transition planning.

- **Results:** Admission staff with the treatment program are obtaining consents from legal guardians at the time of admission for education records. This has improved timeliness of receiving education records. Programs are using a standardized consent approved by DPI which helps ensure that records received are complete.
- **SFY18 Recommendation:** DPI Monitoring Consultant and DMH/DD/SAS Project Manager will work with education programs in SFY18 to develop PRTF Education Procedure Manuals. This manual will include procedures that must be followed by

administrative staff, treatment staff and education staff to ensure that education requirements are met.

2. Collaboration and coordination of efforts between the Department of Public Instruction, Department of Administration Division of Non-Public Education, and the Division of MH/DD/SAS in providing oversight and monitoring of education services in PRTFs to ensure that all state and federal requirements are met. This will be accomplished through quarterly meetings and communication protocols.

- **Results:** The three agencies collaborated during the PRTF Collaborative Meetings and corresponded by phone, email, etc. throughout SFY17. The Director of the Department of Non-Public Schools provided information during the April 3, 2017, PRTF Collaborative and will be included in future Collaborative meetings.
- **SFY18 Recommendation:** DPI, DHHS and DNPE will continue to develop a strong, collaborative relationship. DNPE will continue to provide technical assistance and consultation to the PRTF programs regarding non-public education requirements.

3. Improvement in the collection of data and reporting tools to provide more comprehensive data with a focus on outcome data.

- **Results:** The PRTF database has been revised to align the reporting and collection with the legislation. Admission and discharge from a PRTF is based on medical necessity and treatment recommendations. Children are admitted and discharged throughout the school year.
- **SFY18 Recommendation:** Ongoing improvement in collecting and reporting data focused on positive outcomes for students receiving treatment and educational services in PRTFs.

Additional Recommendation for SFY18:

1. **Consideration of increased funding to \$3,540,000 (an increase of \$304,000) to ensure that students receive high quality academic services while admitted in each PRTF.**

Attachment
Parent Organizations with Contracts for Educational Services In
Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities

Alexander Youth Network

Barium Springs Home for Children

Brynn Marr Hospital, Inc.

Canyon Hills Treatment Facility

Premier HealthCare Services, Inc.

Cornerstone Treatment Facility, Inc.

Cornerstone Treatment Facility Program, Inc.

Eliada Homes, Inc.

Elite Adolescent Care, Inc. dba Youth Spring

Premier HealthCare Services, Inc.

Premier Service of the Carolina, LLC

Nova, Inc.

Strategic Behavioral Health Center - SBH Charlotte, LLC

Strategic Behavioral Health Center - SBH Raleigh, LLC

Strategic Behavioral Health Center - SBH Wilmington, LLC

Thompson Child and Family Focus

Veritas Collaborative, LLC

Youth Focus, Inc.