



**NORTH CAROLINA**  
State Board of Education  
Department of Public Instruction



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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# Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

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

GS § 122C-454

**Date Due: January 15, 2025**

DPI Chronological Schedule, 2024-2025

**Submitted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and/or  
State Board of Education, in conjunction with North Carolina Department of  
Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental  
Disabilities, and Substance Use Services**

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## **Education of Children in Private Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities**

G.S. § 122C-454, *Reporting Requirement*, requires the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), in collaboration with other interested agencies, to submit a joint report annually on the delivery of educational services in Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs) to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services. The report is to include (i) the annual number of children by age residing in a PRTF both with and without an Individualized Education Program, (ii) the average length of stay of these children, (iii) the types of educational services, including number of hours each type of service has been provided, (iv) the costs and outcomes of providing educational services, and (v) recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering educational services to children residing in PRTFs. DHHS and DPI have assumed the responsibility of the qualification and disbursement of funds for educational services in private PRTFs.

### **Leadership Team**

Staff from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Office of Exceptional Children (OEC) and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services (DMH/DD/SUS), and the Division of Health Service Regulation (DHSR) have continued to work together this State fiscal year (SFY) to ensure that children in 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:

#### **DPI, OEC**

1. Dr. Carol Ann Hudgens, Executive Director
2. Leigh Mobley, Section Chief, Policy, Monitoring, and Audit
3. Glendora Hagins, Monitoring Consultant, Policy, Monitoring, and Audit

#### **DHHS, DMH/DD/SUS**

1. Petra Mozzetti, Assistant Director: Contracts and Grants Management, DMH
2. Brad Looper, Contract Administrator, DMH
3. Wilden Sanchez, Contract Administrator, DMH

#### **DHHS, DHSR**

1. Robin Sulfridge, Section Chief, Mental Health Licensure and Certification Section
2. Azzie Conley, Section Chief, Acute and Home Care Licensure and Certification Section

### **Eligibility, Allocations and Contracts**

In SFY 2024, 12 contracts were executed to provide funding for educational services. The parent organizations managed 25 individually licensed facilities. These facilities met the following requirements for funding:

1. Licensed through the DHHS, DHSR, to provide PRTF services that fall under the requirements of the legislation.
2. Registered as a non-public school with the NC Department of Administration (DOA), Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE).
3. Approved as an Exceptional Children Program by the DPI, OEC.

Allocations and budgets were approved by the OEC and DMH/DD/SUS leadership teams as agreed upon in the Memorandum of Agreement between DPI and DHHS. Funding was allocated to the

facilities to ensure teacher ratios were met, including the requirement of a licensed EC teacher to meet the needs of students admitted with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and to ensure that quality educational services were being provided while the children and adolescents were receiving treatment at the facilities.

A list of the parent organizations is included at the end of this report.

## **Technical Assistance, Monitoring, and Support**

### **Ongoing Communications**

The DPI and DHHS consultants disseminated quarterly newsletters to the PRTF staff with agency updates, reminders, and professional learning opportunities. These included, but were not limited to, the following:

- 1. PRTF Collaborative Meetings**

OEC and DMH/DD/SUS sponsored a PRTF Collaborative meeting virtually on April 17, 2024, providing administrative and educational staff in attendance opportunities for professional development and networking.

- 2. Summer Institutes**

In person sessions were held the week of July 24, 2023, at UNC-Greensboro and live virtual sessions were scheduled during the week of July 31, 2023, which included a session designed specifically for the PRTF staff.

- 3. Annual Conference**

The 72<sup>nd</sup> Conference on Exceptional Children was held at the Koury Center in Greensboro on October 23 – 25, 2023. Information about the conference was provided to each PRTF facility so that Education Staff had an opportunity to attend this annual conference.

### **NC DPI Online Resources**

The website for the [Office of Exceptional Children](#) serves as a resource for all special education programs. While the division maintains information specifically for PRTFs on its website, access to a wide range of subjects is also available to support the PRTFs' special education services for students with disabilities.

### **EC Program Approval Visits**

The EC Program Approval (ECPA) process is the monitoring activity used to ensure that students with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate public education and to improve their academic and functional skills while they are receiving treatment in a PRTF setting. This activity occurs upon initial licensure as a PRTF and every three years to renew the facility's status as approved to provide special education services.

During the 2023-2024 school year, ECPA monitoring activities were conducted for facilities operated by five parent organizations. All renewal monitoring activities were conducted by a monitoring team of consultants from DPI OEC.

In addition to the monitoring visits, check-ins were conducted on-site to provide technical assistance to the education staff at three parent agencies which included five individually licensed PRTFs.

### **Technical Assistance and Support**

OEC and the DMH/DD/SUS Consultants provided customized and individualized support to educational staff in PRTFs through a variety of exchanges (phone calls, virtual meetings, and emails) in the areas of record requests, process and policy questions, transitions and discharges, budgets, and contracts, etc.

### **Monitoring**

1. The DMH/DD/SUS program and contracts staff coordinate to perform all monitoring activities required for contract management and administration which includes monthly monitoring of contracts related to funding and operations.
2. The OEC Monitoring Consultant conducts monitoring activities as outlined in the ECPA process.

### **PRTF Self-Assessment:**

Each PRTF is required to submit the ECPA Self-Assessment annually. This provides updates about the facility's academic and special education programs and documents services for the upcoming school year. The self-assessments are reviewed by the DPI Monitoring Consultant and are used to inform the EC Program Approval process.

### **Information Sharing**

PRTFs have been informed of the notification requirements to the DPI OEC. A procedure is in place to report admissions and discharges and to request records from previous schools. OEC Behavior Support Consultants maintain a contact list of designated staff in the public school units (PSUs) who will assist with record requests and discharge planning when students are admitted to PRTFs. Educational staff also contacted the OEC Consultant when further assistance was needed with obtaining records or discharge planning.

### **Agency Collaboration**

OEC, DMH/DD/SUS, and DPNE continued a partnership throughout the fiscal year.

### **Reporting Requirements**

A database was developed and implemented for the PRTFs with education service contracts. Data is reported to DHHS DMH and DPI OEC on a quarterly basis.

The contract PRTF agencies submitted the following data based on services provided from July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024.

1. **Number of Children served** – 799
2. **Average Daily Census** – 243
3. **Average Age** – 15
4. **Gender**
  - Females – 479
  - Males – 316
  - Transgender – 3
  - Did not identify - 1
5. **Average length of stay** – 227 days
6. **Number of Children with IEPs** (identified as Exceptional Children) - 259
7. **Categories of Disability** - number of children in each category for children identified as Exceptional Children:
  - Autism – 7
  - Emotional Disability - 101

- Developmental Delay - 4
- Intellectual Disability - 12
- Other Health Impaired - 96
- Specific Learning Disability - 33
- Speech/language impairment – 3
- Orthopedic Impairment – 2
- Hearing Impairment - 1

### **Types of Educational Services Provided**

The types and hours of academic services provided were determined for youth upon discharge from the PRTFs. These children received an average of 680 hours of general education services. Children with IEPs received an average of 274 hours of special education and related services.

### **Cost and Outcomes of Services**

The priorities for funding allocations are as follows: ensuring that teacher ratios and EC requirements are met, as well as, providing adequate instructional materials and resources. Funding is based on the average daily census reported by each parent organization. The total reimbursement expenditures for SFY24 were \$2,836,765.10 for education services provided by PRTFs.

### **Recommendations for SYF25**

1. Continue to enhance the quality of services that will strengthen the effectiveness of the clinical and academic practices in the PRTF setting.
2. Maintain funding at the same rate to ensure the positive outcomes for the children and adolescents receiving services in the PRTF setting.

**Parent Organizations with Contracts for Educational Services In  
Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs)**

1. Alexander Youth Network
2. Anderson Health Services
3. Brynn Marr Hospital, Inc.
4. Canyon Hills Treatment Facility
5. Carolina Dunes Behavioral Health  
(aka Strategic Behavioral Health – Wilmington)
6. Cornerstone Treatment Facility, Inc.
7. Cornerstone Treatment Facility Program, Inc. (CTFP, Inc.)
8. Nova PRTF, Inc.
9. Premier HealthCare Services, Inc.
10. Premier Services of Carolina
11. Thompson Child and Family Focus
12. Veritas Collaborative, LLC