



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Catherine Truitt, Superintendent of Public Instruction
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Directors, Exceptional Children Programs
Lead Administrators, Charter Schools
Local Superintendents

FROM: Sherry H. Thomas, Director *SH*

DATE: March 29, 2022

The EC Division always supports advocacy for parents and students with disabilities. On March 27, 2022, a memorandum was issued by an advocacy group to Public School Unit (PSU) staff and named North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and Office of State Education Program (OSEP) Staff as points of contact for technical assistance. While both NCDPI and OSEP are available to the public and PSUs for technical assistance, this memorandum was created and distributed outside of established protocols and was not an authorized communication from NCDPI and the EC Division. NCDPI and OSEP are concerned that the attached memo could be construed as being sent on behalf of or in partnership with DPI. Therefore, the following clarification is being provided:

- The attached memo was not an official email from the EC Division at NCDPI and was not sent under authority of NCDPI.
- Independent advocacy groups are not authorized to direct work to NCDPI staff, including the EC Division nor the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to circumvent the established systems of technical support and due process. These processes are in place to ensure timely, accurate and efficient responses to stakeholders.
- Concerns regarding violations of IDEA, including the focus of this memo, should always be directed to the EC Division through the state complaint process or directly to me, as Director of the EC Division.
- The EC Division has consistently provided to EC Directors/EC Charter Coordinators and district personnel training and information through FAQs, webinars, professional learning, and direct conversations regarding the requirement for child find.
- Anyone with direct evidence of parents experiencing IDEA violations regarding child find should be directed to the EC Division's parents page on the Division website. There they can find information to support them and clarification of due process.
- NCDPI and the EC Division requests that future communication from Literacy Moms should disclose their advocacy status and clarify that content is not sent in partnership or on behalf of the EC Division at NC DPI. Further communication should not direct local Directors/Coordinators of EC and Superintendents to contact NCDPI or OSEP staff.

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DIVISION

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