

Executive Director's Report
January 17-18, 2018 Council Meeting

Budget

- The budget report with expenditures through November 2017 is included in the packet.

Membership Update

- The Governor appointed Michael Billings, Lillian DeJean, and Susan Meyers on November 9th to replace Paula Moreau, Stuart Simon, and Kim Jones.
- The Membership Committee met on November 30th to consider and select two candidates for the Governor's consideration to replace Bonnie Buckelew and Delery Rice who resigned in September. Mitch Iddins and Kim Basile were selected and were appointed by the Governor on December 15th.

Raising Expectations: Employment for ALL Conference

- The Council's 2017 conference on November 9th drew an attendance of 182 people including 20 self-advocates, 45 family members, and 117 professionals/advocates. Attendees heard from two national speakers, Allan I. Bergman and Dr. Steven Hunt, on Customized Employment, a new model of service delivery that discovers the skills and interests of people with significant disabilities and matches those with the specific needs of employers in a customized job. Mr. Bergman also discussed Employment First as a national priority for individuals with disabilities.
- The conference received rave reviews from parents who have new expectations of employment for their sons and daughters and from professionals who are eager to be trained to implement customized employment.

Ad Hoc Committees

- The Partners in Policymaking Ad Hoc Committee met on December 6th to make recommendations to the Self-Determination/Community Inclusion Committee for possible changes to the Partners' application and application selection process.

LaCAN

- Fact sheets were developed on all four of the issues the Council adopted for its legislative advocacy agenda and are available on our website [here](#). In addition, fact sheets were developed to assist advocates in Florida Parishes and Northwest LA in their advocacy efforts to equitably fund the human services districts in those regions.
- Our LaCAN Leaders are in the process of making legislative visits and planning the 2018 Legislative Roundtables. The schedule of Roundtables can also be found on our website [here](#). Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.
- Training for our LaCAN leaders was provided on November 29th in Baton Rouge to ensure they fully understand and can share the issues on the Council's legislative agenda.

Advocacy Activities and Provision of Information

Community Supports/Healthcare

- Provided written public comment to the LA Medicaid Director in support of the proposed changes to the DD Waiver System published in the September LA Register.
- Provided information and advocacy support on the negative impact of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act on people with disabilities.
- Sent a letter to Northeast Delta Human Services Authority expressing concern over its Consumer Care Resources Program.

- Sent a letter to the Office of Behavioral Health expressing concern over the Human Services Districts/Authorities' apparent ability to discontinue a statewide program.

Education

- Advocated for BESE to not accept the LA Department of Education's (LDOE) recommendations for extensions and renewals of charter schools in violation of state law related to student enrollment (R.S. 17:3991B). BESE followed LDOE's recommendation to extend (for up to 10 years) or renew charter school compacts after Superintendent White indicated the state law does not specify what the consequence should be for charter schools violating state law. In contrast, BESE published in Bulletin 126 "The Charter School Law expresses the intention of the legislature that the best interests of at-risk pupils shall be the overriding consideration in implementing the provisions of the law."
- In a meeting with parents and LDOE staff on December 5th, advocated for LDOE to provide the following information related to a report on Alternative Education Settings: LDOE's staff qualifications related to behavior; reports issued to Local Education Agencies with findings and required corrective actions for violations of students with disabilities; LDOE's actions related to excessive behavioral practices and evidence LDOE has adopted a proactive, prevention model known as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports" as indicated on its website. This information has not been provided to date.
- Successfully advocated for the Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline (ACSBD) to request that LDOE make data on disciplinary actions by school system and statewide counts and percentages broken down by student characteristics, such as disability and race, publicly accessible on its website.
- Successfully advocated for the ACSBD to recommend that LDOE provide the names of any members of any workgroups related to behavior and provide any reports and/or recommendations from any behavior related workgroups prior to submitting to BESE. This was in response to LDOE submitting a report on behavior issues in Alternative Settings to BESE without having the report or recommendations contained within the report vetted by the ACSBD. Concerns were raised that how the report was released would be perceived as an endorsement for segregated settings for students with behavioral challenges.

Employment

- Advocated for the certification of Employment Support Professionals during La Rehabilitation Council (LRC) meetings. As a result of this advocacy, the LRC formally requested a method for increasing certification be sought.
- Advocated for a system of accountability in the LRC meeting.

General

- Provided information through LaDDC News on the following:
 - Disability Employment Awareness Month
 - Transportation Needs Survey
 - Recruitment of Applicants for Council Membership Vacancies
 - Proposed Changes to DD Waiver System
 - Louisiana Selected as Vision Quest State
 - Council Sponsored Self-Direction Workshops
 - DD Council Members and LaCAN Leader Recognized with Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities Award
 - Council's 2018 Legislative Advocacy Agenda
 - Louisiana Rehabilitation Services Needs Survey
- Provided information through Facebook and Twitter on various issues of interest to people with developmental disabilities and their families. Most notably was the Disability Employment Awareness Month campaign when we highlighted and promoted the employment of people with disabilities throughout October. A total of 512 reacted to this campaign by liking, sharing or commenting on the posts.

Collaborative Efforts

Employment First Work Group Sub-Committee

- The sub-committee was formed to complete the report on Employment First prior to delivery to the Governor.
- The report is expected to be completed within the next several weeks.

Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline (ACSBD)

- The group developed draft recommendations for overhauling Louisiana law related to school discipline. The goal is to provide final recommendations for BESE and LDOE to consider supporting by mid-February, with the intent to have legislation considered in 2018.

OCDD Mortality Review Committee

- Of the eight cases reviewed in December, the Committee noted no issues related to potential abuse/neglect. This was the last meeting in which the Council will participate.

Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA)

- At GACDA's request, Senator Blade Morrish requested the Legislative Auditor conduct a comprehensive audit of LDOE's use of federal (IDEA) and state funds designated for special education programs.
- GACDA voted to support the DD Council's legislative agenda items related to LDH.
- GACDA voted to recommend the Governor include the following issues in his legislative package:
 - For members of the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) to be appointed by the Governor (SEAP would remain housed in and be staffed by the Department of Education)
 - For the ability of retired deaf educators to be rehired as full time school system employees

OCDD System Transformation Core Work Group

- Updates were provided by OCDD on several OCDD initiatives.
- Feedback from stakeholders was provided to OCDD on the importance of filling the 628 waiver slots funded in the 2017 legislative session as soon as the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approves the proposed changes to the DD waiver system. CMS approval is expected before January 1st.

Meetings Attended (by Executive Director) Since October 3, 2017

Meeting with LRS Staff re: customized employment – October 12

New Council Member Orientation – October 17

Council meeting – October 18-19

Conference call with Dr. Steven Hunt re: employment conference – October 27

Conference call with Allan Bergman re: employment conference – November 2

LaCAN Leader Conference Call – November 2

Conference calls with conference panel presenters – November 3 and 7

Meeting with Allan Bergman, LRS and OCDD – November 8

Council's 2017 Employment Conference – November 9

LaCAN Leader Training – November 29

Membership Committee – November 30

OCDD System Transformation Core Stakeholders Group – December 5

Partners in Policymaking Ad Hoc Committee – December 6

Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs – December 19