

***Executive Director's Report***  
***April 18-19, 2018 Council Meeting***

**Budget**

- The budget report with expenditures through February 2018 is included in the packet.

**Council Federal Funding and Federal Issues**

- The President signed the Omnibus bill passed by Congress to fund the Federal government for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018. A \$3 million increase for DD Councils is included in the bill, bringing the total to \$76 million. The Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) has not yet provided Councils with the increased amount each will receive.
- Our sister programs, the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) and the Protection and Advocacy Agencies (P&As) each received a \$2 million increase. The Projects of National Significance received a \$2 million increase as well.
- This increase demonstrates how Congress values the DD Act programs and our contributions to systems change, especially at a time when level funding is considered a win.
- On March 28<sup>th</sup>, Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) issued a [press release](#) announcing that she and 42 of her colleagues wrote to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) saying they'd oppose HR620, the *ADA Education and Reform Act*. Together, the group of 43 Senators is large enough to defeat the bill. The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) worked with the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) and many other groups to advocate against this legislation that was seen as a direct assault on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Ad Hoc Committees**

- The Planning Ad Hoc Committee met on February 22<sup>nd</sup> to develop recommendations for FFY 2019 plan activities. These will be considered by the full Council at the April meeting and are linked on the agenda.
- The Membership Committee is scheduled to meet on April 9<sup>th</sup> to consider and make recommendations for the full Council's consideration.

**Advocacy Activities and Provision of Information**

- Nine Regional Legislative Roundtables were held across the state with a total of 473 participants and 35 legislators, legislative assistants and/or BESE members participating. Twelve Council members attended. Council staff attended all of these events and presented the information on the Council's advocacy agenda.

**Community Supports**

- Successfully advocated for the retention of the New Opportunities Waiver Fund and the Community and Family Support System (CFSS) Fund before the Designated Fund Review Sub-Committee of Joint Budget. A \$513,910 balance in the CFSS Fund will be used for new waiver slots in the FY19 budget.
- Advocated for the Council's legislative agenda in a meeting with Dr. Rebekah Gee and her leadership team.

- Advocated for capturing savings from institutional settings when people move into the community in meeting with Senator Sharon Hewitt, LA Department of Health leadership, and advocates.
- Expressed concerns related to proposed changes to the delegation of medical tasks to direct support workers in meeting with Senator Sharon Hewitt, LA Department of Health leadership, and advocates.
- Provided information to Senator Jack Donahue on the calculations used to determine the cost of funding 800 waiver slots for people in the most urgent need and why this funding is needed.

### Education

- Advocated for the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to receive the 2017 Annual Report from the Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline (ACSBD) and to receive all future annual reports from the ACSBD without delay.
- Advocated for BESE to direct the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) to reach out to a legislator so the ACSBD can collaborate with legislative staff in developing recommendations for changes in the major discipline law (La. R.S. 17:416). The goal is to have recommendations ready for consideration for the 2019 Legislative Session. BESE received the ACSBD report on this matter without objection.
- Advocated for the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) Task Force to include equitable levels of the local share of funds to charter schools and consider recommending BESE develop an MFP with an increase to the existing per student funding level. The MFP Task Force agreed to include equitable funding of local share of funds on its agenda; however, this item was not included for discussion in subsequent MFP Task Force meetings. The MFP Task Force voted to recommend a one percent increase in the base per student amount to the MFP allocations to schools; however, BESE did not accept the recommendation from the MFP Task Force. The MFP formula submitted by BESE to the Legislature has the same level of per student funding as has been used for the past four years (since the 2014-15 school year).
- Advocated for the Senate Education Committee to consider ramifications related to allowing teachers to unilaterally remove students from campus, using physical force and physical restraint, and calling law enforcement related to student behavior. Council staff also offered language recommendations for the legal definition of bullying related to concerns over the significant reduction in the number of reported incidents of bullying. The Senate Education Committee passed SB301 with the expectation the author will work to address concerns of advocates and involuntarily deferred SB303.
- Advocated for the Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA) to request the LDOE determine the appropriateness of using applied courses for working toward a high school diploma in Local Education Agencies with large numbers of students with disabilities who are not assessed through the alternative assessment yet enrolled in applied courses and to report findings and next steps prior to the next GACDA meeting.

### Employment

- Advocated for the certification of Employment Support Professionals and for a system of accountability during the La. Rehabilitation Council (LRC) meeting.
- Sent letter to the Director of the Office of Workforce Development regarding the Council's vision for a new director of LA Rehabilitation Services.

## **General**

- Provided information through LaDDC News on the following:
  - Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
  - Recruitment of Applicants for Council Membership Vacancies
  - OCDD Family Forums on Changes to Employment Services for People with DD
  - Medicaid Public Forums on Future of Managed Care
  - Changes to Waiver Waiting List/OCDD Community Meetings
  - Employment Opportunities with the LA Office of State Parks
  - Louisiana as a Model Employer of People with Disabilities
- Provided information through Facebook and Twitter on various issues of interest to people with developmental disabilities and their families. Most notably was the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month campaign when we posted a minimum of twice/day throughout March to raise awareness of people with disabilities being included in all facets of life.

## **Collaborative Efforts**

### **Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program Vision Quest Workgroup**

- The Vision Quest workgroup was created to review and recommend improvements to the state's efforts on employment for people with disabilities.
- The group has begun planning for a guide on employment and input to the Business and Career Solution Centers on improving inclusive practices.
- The GACDA Subcommittee on Employment First Report, now meeting in conjunction with the Vison Quest effort, continues to review and edit the report on Employment First prior to delivery to the Governor.

### **Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline (ACSBD)**

- The group developed initial recommendations for overhauling Louisiana law related to school discipline and will continue working to make formal recommendations for BESE to consider endorsing language for the 2019 legislative session.
- In February, Shawn Fleming was elected to serve as chairperson of the ACSBD.

### **State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)**

- Melanie Washington is the new Executive Director for the SICC
- Interviews were conducted with parents, Family Support Coordinators, and System Point of Entry staff regarding the EarlySteps family assessment process.
- EarlySteps is developing a protocol to implement for families who can't access EarlySteps services for whatever reason to ensure the child/family will receive the needed services.

### **Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA)**

- GACDA voted to support the Department of Children and Family Services' request for 50 positions (all federally funded) for Disability Determinations Services.
- GACDA voted to request that the LDOE look into the high numbers of students not on alternate assessment enrolled in non-credit high school courses (Applied courses) and the appropriateness for students working toward a high school diploma, and to provide

feedback and next steps to the Committee at least two weeks prior to the June 2018 GACDA meeting.

- It was announced that the Governor signed the State as a Model Employer Executive Order.

#### OCDD System Transformation Core Work Group

- Update was provided by OCDD on the status of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) approval of the changes to the waivers and waiver waiting list, and the release of the 627 waiver slots funded in the 2017 legislative session.
- OCDD Central Office staff will call all 627 people mailed a waiver offer to explain the waiver they are being offered.
- OCDD will host community meetings around the state to explain the waiver changes and the prioritizations of the waiting list. Stakeholders were asked to participate.

#### NACDD Public Policy Committee

- Guest speaker David Machledt of the National Health Law Program discussed how Medicaid work requirements could negatively impact individuals with disabilities.
- NACDD's work on DD Council's FFY18 and FFY19 budgets, in addition to federal bills impacting the ADA and Medicaid, was discussed.

#### **Meetings Attended (by Executive Director) Since January 3, 2018**

Meeting with Dr. Rebekah Gee, Michelle Alletto, Mark Thomas, April Dunn – January 8

Council Member Orientation for two new members – January 9

Legislative Roundtable in Lafayette – January 10

Legislative Roundtable in Shreveport – January 12

Presentation on Council at Partners in Policymaking – January 19

Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget re: Governor's Executive Budget – January 22

Legislative Roundtable in Gray – January 24

State Interagency Coordinating Council – January 25

Legislative Roundtable in Madisonville – January 30

Legislative Roundtable in Lake Charles – January 31

OCDD System Transformation Core Stakeholders Group – February 6

Legislative Roundtable in Monroe – February 8

Legislative Roundtable in Pineville – February 12

Designated Fund Review Sub-Committee of Joint Budget Committee – February 15

Opening Day of Special Legislative Session – February 19

Planning Ad Hoc Committee – February 22

Legislative Roundtable in Arabi – February 28

Meeting with Bayou Land FHF Board of Directors in Thibodaux – March 1

Meeting with Brenda Sharp and Toni Ledet re: Inclusive Child Care – March 6

Legislative Roundtable in Baton Rouge – March 8

Presentation on History of Act 378 & Current Issues at Partners in Policymaking – March 16

Meeting with Sen. Hewitt, LDH and advocates re: SB300 and SB347 – March 20

Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs – March 20

House Appropriations Committee re: LDH's budget – March 26

Senate Health and Welfare Committee re: SB357 – March 27