

Education and Employment
7/15/20

COURTNEY RYLAND: Committee members, if you have joined us please share your screen and start your video so we may see your face so it can be counted towards quorum.

MARY TARVER: Do we need to do a roll call to know they are here.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Yes, ma'am. We do have to do roll call for attendance.

MARY TARVER: Do you want to start that? What happens?

COURTNEY RYLAND: I can do that. I think we still got some people joining us though. Ms. Chair, we need six for a quorum so I'm going to begin roll call for attendance. So, the education and employment committee members are Ms. Melisa Bayham, which I believe she said she was going to join us around 10:30. Ms. Brenda Cosse, are you with us? Dr. Hyacinth McKee. Mr. Robert Paddy. Ms. Bambi Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Here.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Ms. Kristi-Joe Preston.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: I'm here.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Thank you for joining us. Mr. Christopher Rodriguez.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Here.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Thank you. Ms. Temisha Sonnier.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Here.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Thank you. And Mr. Phil Wilson.

PHIL WILSON: Here.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Including yourself madam chair, you have a quorum.

MARY TARVER: Thank y'all. Since this was our first education employment committee meeting that we have done through zoom and web I did, usually we meet I think three hours. And so, I did this for two hours. So, I hope that I made a good decision. We'll see as we get started. I want everybody to be able to discuss

what we need to. But hopefully we will be able to use our time to stay on task and talk about the things that are on the agenda. And if there is anything that we need to spend some extra time on we'll just be mindful of that. But we will try and stay on the two-hour timeframe that we have scheduled for the meeting. Do we need to do any other introductions? Usually whenever we are face to face, we go around the room to say who is here.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Actually, we have two new appointments to this committee.

MARY TARVER: Who.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Ms. Brenda and Ms. Kristi-Joe.

MARY TARVER: Welcome. I don't think Ms. Brenda is on. But Kristi-Joe is here. Thank you so much for being able to come today. You will be the lady of the hour because everyone wants to know what is going on with education and covid. We look forward hearing from you. I guess I don't know if we have education, I mean employment first. But I know Melissa is not on here. So, I am wondering should we start with education.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Yes. And also Ms. Rosemary is not on yet.

MARY TARVER: Can we move that around or have to vote on it? Usually I am sitting right next to you.

SHAWN FLEMING: I think you can just take up education.

MARY TARVER: All right. So, is that okay with everybody? We will just do education first. Kristi-Joe, is that okay with you?

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: Yeah, definitely. Thank you, guys, for letting me join the ranks and also just to be able to take some time today to speak about education both in the covid 19 space, and now well, we're still in the covid 19 space. Transitioning from last year and reopening. What I would like to do is talk to you about a few things. First is going to be some of the BESE policy that was adopted yesterday on safety standards. And then if I could in a few moments if I could like get this screen shared with me, I can take

you guys through a lot of the guidance and resource documents we produced in response to the initial outbreak. And then talk through the process that we're going to go through as we transition to reopening. And where we're going to update those resources and provide new guidance and information to address needs. Would that be okay Mary?

MARY TARVER: I muted myself. Yes. That is great. Courtney, would we be able to do the screen sharing thing? Not sure how all that works.

SHAWN FLEMING: Shawn. Haley is working on it. Kristi-Joe, you should be able to share your screen. She says you should be able to share your screen.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: What I can do is talk for a minute about the BESE policy that passed yesterday. I think this is a critical update for this group, obviously. Yesterday BESE met and because they were charged by the legislature to create minimum safety standards for school reopening, as that policy was being developed we heard a lot from the field both from special education directors, but also from families and folks in the advocacy community about making sure the needs of students with disabilities would be met by schools during reopening. To address that the department and BESE included a few provisions in the policy that would provide some flexibility to make sure we're meeting the needs of students with disabilities. The first one is the area we are hearing the most about was around well, just fundamentally making sort of statement to and providing reassurance that students with disabilities would continue to receive special education and related services. Of course, that is the case. IDEA is still in full affect. No waiver to requirements and the obligation to continue service. We included a note to that. And then also provided for some flexibility, particularly when students are in static groups to make sure that service providers would still have access to students with disabilities if they are in the classroom or could continue to receive services. For example, pull out model or therapy

outside the classroom. That sort of thing. That was included there and the prompt for so that can be continued. I think another element that was included in there were specific provisions that allows an exemption for essential workers or essential providers to enter school and daycare facilities so they can provide services. Amongst that list was things like class observation providers, but also providers of special education related services. Because we wanted to make sure both they had access to the school building, but also to daycare buildings and private schools so services can continue for kids so that was included in there.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Can we get you to turn your volume up? Sorry, some people are having difficulty with hearing.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: Maybe they could turn it up on their end. I don't know how to turn a mike volume up. I can turn my volume up; it just turns up my volume. I will talk louder. The third area is providing an exception basically for the mask requirement for students with disabilities. We included a medical exception also a specific call out for disability because we know medical need and disability need is not a one on one correlation. For example, students who have like sensory issues that there is some flexibility there as well. All that was included, all approved by BESE. And I think provides at least the foundation for how we can move forward in making sure both providing education services, but also special education related services regardless of whether it's virtual, in person or hybrid approach. So really great and also just very needed. I want to sort of give a shout out to our superintendent who was very open and perceptive to the needs of parents of families and really felt strongly about making sure that we were including their needs. Very exciting to see that. What I am going to do now is just pivot for a few moments into the resources that we released over the course of the last few months to help folks as they have navigated the closure. And the

professional development technical assistance. And then talk through a little bit where we are going in terms of updates to guidance. What I am particularly curious about with this group is you know whether there are emerging needs that we need to raise up through this that we can then address in our guidance. So, we can make sure that this is hitting the mark and is meeting the needs across the state. So, I am going to try to show my screen. Can you guys see the screen here, the Louisiana believes landing page. So, when you go to Louisiana believes you will see here, we have the quick link for students with disabilities. If you click on that what it's going to do is take you right away to what we have called our continuous education resources. A lot have been living documents. Updated a number of times as we received novel sort of issues have arisen or trends in the types of questions folks have been asking and need to be addressed. This is all intended to compliment the larger strong start guidance that the department has released, right. And all of that guidance has been intentionally designed as well to incorporate teaching and learning. Right here housing and calling out things that are specific to the needs of students with disabilities. Also want to be really clear about the fact our larger guidance as well has been tailored in that way. So, for example, we have guidance on high quality instructional materials and adapted to virtual settings. In that we included information and resources and guidance on ensuring that those would be accessible to students with disabilities. Which was one of the first key needs that arose in the course of all of this. Both we have the holistic piece how are we planning to hit the needs. And here what we are seeing okay that is true, but there are also going to be things that are unique and specific to this population that we also want to produce to help folks in the situation. And this falls into two general categories one, academic supports for students with disabilities. The other would be special education timelines and documentation. A little bit

more of the nitty-gritty, the technical space of this. So, I am going to pull up a few of the documents. I won't do all of them. Give you a couple to give you a sense of it. Start here on the academic side and I am actually going to, I actually want to start with the direct services guide. So, this is our direct services guide. It's targeted at school systems to help them in planning to make sure that they are continuing to provide particularly related services to students with disabilities as they were transitioning to remote learning. And can also be used and we are planning on updating this as we are now moving into the three-option scenario of traditional face to face hybrid or remote. And so in here what you are going to see is that we have taken school systems through a three step process of identifying the resources they have available, developing the approach they are going to use whether it's low tech options like typical paper based or high tech including what we are doing now, or something in between. And then implement actually the process of implementing remote direct services. We did this and then you will see we have some yellow highlighted here right here, assess student family needs. We added that because we heard from the field, they needed assistance with that. Wanted to be responsive and we have been updating as needs have arisen. See it going through with the process there in more details of identifying those resources, giving folks the critical steps they need to take to do that process effectively. Providing them with examples of the types of technology we can use to provide direct services through these different types of methods. And then going through with communication with parents and families. And steps for actually implementing. So for example, we including a sample schedule because one of the biggest challenges we heard about in terms of the technicalities of implementation when you have a kid physically in a building a lot easier to schedule then when you are at home. And so, who do you actually figure out how to protect that time, ensure you are

delivering the services that are outlined in the IEP and balancing that with different instructors and providers who are located in different places. We gave folks examples how that could potentially look for the family and provider as well. We also made some effort here to talk about student engagement in this process because we know the way that you actually engage and bring a kid into this type of service is going to look different than a traditional face to face where you have physical cues that you will have over online ones. And then we also, you know a lot of our professional organizations have done just a tremendous amount of work to help providers transition to different types of instructional delivery such as virtual learning. Folks who have specific expertise and understand that more as well. And so, this has been I think, a number of these documents really impactful in the field. This is definitely one of them. We have supported school systems in doing this through a series of workgroups. And then one on one technical assistance and also some of the associations here in Louisiana. And has been a very helpful process through that. I want to mock a nod to the ingenuity we have seen in the field here, as particularly from related service providers who are in schools doing the work every day coming up with very creative solutions how they can support kids. Regardless of the situation that they are in in terms of instructional delivery model. At times in the midst of this bogged down in all of it. Definitely inspiring to see that play out that has been one of the key ones there. And then another one I am going to highlight for you guys a little bit is our guidance for supporting students with significant cognitive disabilities. I think to acknowledge upfront that this is going to be one of the hardest populations to serve effectively through virtual learning, right. That doesn't mean it's not possible to some extent. But I don't think we're doing ourselves any service if we say that it is as, well, not easy for anyone. To say you are going to do the same thing you would do for general

education students that you would do for this population and expect the same outcome. And so, this one has been really exciting. I think in a similar way to the direct services here go through a similar process of identifying resources, planning for instruction, and delivering the lessons and monitoring the progress here. Talks about the special education teachers role in identifying resources, the instructional model resources at home, ways to plan for instruction going through a process of looking at the IEP goals, connecting that to lesson objective and then assessment measures, lesson activities and targeted skills in there. And how you can actually, ways to effectively deliver those lessons and monitor progress. And this one I think also included a sample schedule here as well. The steps specific examples of what that can look like. And then I think the heart of this really has been the case studies that were developed with teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities in the field in partnership show what this can look like for different profiles. Here is the profile of the student, here is what their IEP goals are, the lesson objective can look like, the assessment measure, the lesson activities, what skills we are targeting, the actual materials you can use, lesson delivery, monitoring and documentation. And so, we got a lot of positive feedback from the field on this element in particular because it really helped to show in practical steps how you can go about doing this for this population of students. Similar to what we did with direct services, we also had a series of webinars and professional development specifically for educators of students with disabilities. Also, A number of special education directors involved in that so they can effectively support these teachers. Where they came together and actually even highlighted the work a number of our LEAs are doing implementing this in real-time. So, they actually showed step by step like with actual students how they made it work, how they were troubleshooting, how they were engaging families, how

they are addressing functional skills, all of that stuff. Incredibly powerful to see. And just really wonderful and really created, help to create a community of educators who were really focused on the problem solving and real-time of this ensuring these services were still going. Another one like the direct service. Taking a look at this now and thinking through and it has to a degree of reopening as we are in this space of virtual what adjustments do we need to make here to continue to support educators and students with disabilities. I am really curious, open up for feedback if folks have ideas on that, really be very interested in hearing that and learning from you guys as well in that. Okay. So that is another big one. And then I would like to bring up maybe one more, although if you see another one on here and you want to discuss that I am happy to do that too. This one is going to be the strong start compensatory service guidance. I don't know if you guys have been following the news, but the lens actually did an article a little more than a week ago, I think. Highlighting this work and the sort of call to action to ensure that we know that everybody is doing their best to continue to provide services. The reality is that there will be an educational impact on kids. And so, we can't sort of pretend that we're in a space because we're sort of trying our best here. There will be instances where there will be educational impact on kids, there will be regression or skill loss. And if that happens, we have an obligation and students have a right to receive additional services to make up for that lost. What this compensatory guidance is a FAQ style approach to help school systems understand the steps they need to take. This isn't something we have just put out to say hey, do this and good luck. First of all, not every state has done this. Many have taken different approaches. We have taken an intentional and firm approach to this because we know that there is impact and we know that we have to address that impact. I think particularly for all kids I do think a lot about

students with disabilities who are younger, who are reaching certain developmental milestones and like understanding that if we are missing services for those kids it has a follow on affect to them. Similar for students who about to graduate or transition out. If there was an impact on those services that is going to have a real impact on their post-secondary opportunities and transition to living. To independent living I should say. Like knowing we have to call these things out and make sure we are addressing. Actually, taken a stance and put this in the strong start application that every school system that was going to receive funds provided an assurance to us they would conduct compensatory service review on every student with a disability. As early as over the summer up to the first month of school. And so similar to the other ones we have done a lot of professional development technical assistance in the field. Identify funding sources to helping them understand what they can do in terms of data reviews, to help to be able to assess this effectively, to how you document this on the IEP. All of that sort of stuff. And so that is another critical area. And this is another area that we are going to continue to monitor. And while this one like some of the other ones see the highlighted yellow areas there has been a living document as more questions have come in provided additional on that as well. I am not going to say this isn't something I don't think we can say we put it out there and that's the end. We know there is going to be continued engagement there to push this. And similar to direct services and supporting students with significant cognitive disabilities. We also had professional development for special education directors where some of our directors who had taken the lead and done really excellent work in setting up systems presented on how they were doing this and other directors had the opportunity to learn from that and ask questions and follow up with that. Also, really great to see. Sort of levels up the level of impact

when folks can see it in action from their peers. That is a lot of talking there. But I would encourage you in here to take a look if you haven't already and happy to answer any questions on this. I think as we transition now what we are in the course of doing is now that BESE has adopted policy now that the department has issued the reopening guidance we are going back into these to scrub them and say what are the changes need to happen here and what else do we need to produce to meet emergent needs. I will say one of the things we know we are going to update for support for students with significant cognitive disabilities. We know we are going to update direct service guide. Planning to provide additional resources for families as they are navigating reopening. Lots of questions coming up about what this means for their kids and we want to make sure in the most parent friendly language that we can help them to navigate that process there. And so, I am just going to pause there and see what questions you have. What feedback you have. I think most importantly where you think, where do we need to be focusing our attention, so we are meeting the needs of our kids.

MARY TARVER: Thank you Kristi-Joe. That was very helpful. I know that I have been trying to keep up with information, but it is overwhelming. I saw there was a family toolbox on there and I just wonder about like what is there a communication plan with families to help them even know this is here. Is there something the council could do to help get the word out. Should we work together on some kind of press release. Something that we can do to help support y'all's efforts. Because I know it has taken a lot to get where you are, and everybody is going to have to be ready to kind of change course and have some guidelines. But need to know there is going to be changes along the way and we are going to learn as they get into school and what happens. I don't know if you have any thoughts about that or y'all already have a communication plan to get the word out more. I know

they initially made that smart start stuff that went out, but is there a communication plan that we can help with from our end?

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: Yeah, love and welcome the help, right. I think it's hard to get the word out across the state to families of 91,000 students. It's hard to get that. So, I honestly didn't think about the sort of potential for a press release. But really would love and lean on the DD Council to be able to spread the word on that. Particularly on the family end. And yeah, I think that would be amazing. And even others too who are representing agencies like the arc or GODA and others here as well. I think anywhere we are partner on that would be really wonderful.

MARY TARVER: We definitely want to do that.

PHIL WILSON: I think I would wait for wording to come to me whether from the council or the department, but happy to send that out to our Facebook and email list and put it on our website as well. A follow up thing is one of the last things Mr. White did seemingly before he left was to put in a request or requirement of whatever for local school districts to have a special ed advisory council or board. And I asked at the time when I first heard about it was the department going to somehow keep track who is the liaison to each district as they begin to be established. I don't know if Dr. Brumley might have more of an interest in special ed than maybe some of the other predecessors may appear to have had. Maybe something that could be carried up to try to establish this network so things like this can go to an LEA. If there is an advisory group there see it as part of their essential mission verses, we put it on Facebook on the DD Council. But that is people far away in many cases. That is just a question slash recommendation, I guess.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: A great point Phil. And I think I am curious about the ways to make that happen. I think one way is about communication with sped directors who are typically the folks who are on point on these in the districts. We actually can't mandate

what is on their agenda. I also I should have mentioned this at the beginning, but we're also involving our special education advisory panel in the development of these resources as well as to, and trying to think through the ways that we can leverage them as both parents and representatives of organizations similar to you all to spread the word through that venue as well.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Thanks so much for the presentation. Obviously, you all have put an incredible amount of work into the documents and the resources. Just want to say thank you. Definitely not a special education expert. On this committee little more on the employment side. From a limited amount of information I have about special education, obviously so much depends on the IEP. The IEP is the document that allows supports and services to be provided in an individualistic way to the individual with disabilities so they can obviously have free and appropriate public education say meet these guidelines. And until that document is agreed upon by both parties in many circumstances the service or the support or the way it is delivered is not obligated upon the school districts or the school providing the services. I guess my question is provided this is such an unusual circumstance, I would imagine there will need to be significant amendments to an abundance of IEPs. Would that be fair to say? That we would expect to see a lot of IEP edits or revisions as a result of this posture?

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: Is that the question or another point? I want to hear the whole thing before I responded.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: If there is an expectation there is going to be an abundance of IEPs that need to be reevaluated in light of perhaps virtual learning or certain accommodations that would need to be made to allow a child to feel safe, perhaps leave them more venerable to covid 19. How do we get that process started now? To what extent has that process been started in March and to what extent can we get that

moving. In my mind I think until the IEP is agreed upon there isn't necessarily an obligation of the school to provide those services to the individual. So, the sooner we can get the IEPs, which can be extremely complicated done, the sooner we can start not only trying out new things with these students, but evaluating what is working and what is not working. What is the process or are there any attempts to, I wouldn't say hasten the IEP process, but get it started so folks can hit the ground running in terms of providing the individualized supports and services to the students with disabilities as opposed to on day one schools not open, but school commences in whatever capacity it does and then you start the process and the child really is just out there hanging for months until the IEP, of which an abundance of IEPs probably have to be negotiated or done.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: Really good question Chris. I want to use an example to sort of play this out a little bit. The IEP, and you are right about that, codifies the special education related services that must be provided to the kid in the least restrictive environment.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: It might be the mike, but I am having a really hard time hearing you.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: I am going to try to talk louder again. You are right in the IEP is what codifies the special education and related services that are required and obligated to be provided to the student for free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, right. So, the question here is as we went through the extended school facility closure as we are now pivoting to school reopening those services must still be provided. And so, if you use an example of that, right, a student has been, the IEP team has decided a student needs speech services 30 minutes, twice a week that still needs to be provided. And so regardless of the setting, or method of instructional delivery, which is the terms the feds are using for this, right. That method of instructional

delivery in person, or virtual, or hybrid you still have to provide the services. Now the question that becomes did you provide those services, right. Are you monitoring progress to make sure that they are progressing towards the IEP goal? If the answer is yes, that's great. If the answer is no, then we shift to a question of whether compensatory services need to be provided and whether the IEP team needs to be reconvened to discuss what needs to be done there. The mechanisms for that. We do anticipate and we have seen from what we are hearing from districts that there are more IEP meetings that are happening as folks make adjustments for school reopening. But the foundation there of the obligation to provide what is codified in the IEP remains. And so, we aren't, and correct me if I am misunderstanding, there is no hold on services until the IEP team meets. The services continue. It's a matter if they call a meeting to make adjustments.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: I understand. And just for point of clarification, we use the term school openings we're talking about education resuming in some fashion or talking about schools opening?

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: So, the terminology is school reopening, right. We know if you are, and the feds were very clear about this in the guidance that came out in March when this was really sort of hitting, is that if you are providing educational services to general education students you have to provide special education related services to students with disabilities. No sort of opt out for that. The only time when services can cease is if everything is shut down and no one is doing anything for anyone. And I think when we saw how things were playing out in the spring when the school facility closure happened there was initial, folks really took, folks being school systems, took very different attacks to all of that. Some shut down completely and didn't provide services to anyone. What we as a department did in response to that was to use the leverage we had available to us and to really push for schools to provide a level of

learning for all kids because it's so essential, but also to students with disabilities. So, we are not sort of creating a situation where we are aggregate to the sort of the negative impact. Minimizing that as much as possible providing what we could.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: In light of the answer of the question it's disheartening to see, I understand where they are coming from, but so many different education related entities and advocacy groups that are advocating to loosen the rules, regulations, obligations of schools to provide IDEA supports and services because, as you said, the school and people who currently have an IEPs have made an agreement with the educators that X, Y and Z needs to be provided. Made it under the assumption of having certain resources available to provide those, from what I understand. Now since the situation has changed, I have heard, and I have read a lot basically saying the IEPs just aren't going to be possible and therefore we need to allow schools to loosen up rules and regulations. So, I read letters like that.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: No. No way. A, that requires an act of Congress, right. And the sort of flow, I am actually really glad you brought this up, I heard a lot of fears and anxiety around that. And I really want to emphasize I totally understand where that comes from, but that is not the case. And so, the way this is sort of played out is that you would have to, IDEA is a federal law. To make an exception or a waiver of that has to come through congressional action. In the spring looked like they might waive some things in the IDEA. But the advocacy community quickly galvanized and that quickly died. Instead of providing the waivers, they went to the secretary and said within 30 days you need to provide us a report with any waivers you are recommending for a number of federal education programs including IDEA. In that report that DeVos developed she made a single recommendation and that was on part C to be transition when IEP teams couldn't meet or certain evaluations couldn't happen. The intent

there was to be able to continue to provide services. She sent that report to Congress, but Congress still has not acted on that. A, they haven't even acted on the very limited thing she was recommending on a waiver. And B, no indication any larger type of waiver, rights, services. Because you know I hear you saying this and heard this from parents as we want to dispel that misunderstanding that is out there. In our next generation of family guidance, we are going to do that. You need to know your rights aren't changing here. Let's talk about what happens. Make sure your kid will continue to receive critical services.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: Definitely. Chris, working more in the transition space and anyone else who is having, who is in that space here too there are challenges that are arising. And so bummed that Melissa can't make it, maybe she joined. Particularly around some of the preETS type services of like WEBLS, which is my favorite acronym. And those types of things of how those can be provided is an issue being raised by the field as well. And I love any thoughts you guys have any or partnership we can have for me rising up as one of the hot spot areas. Not everyone is fully aware, but I think people are going to start grapple with it as we get into the school reopening. If we can work together on that I would really welcome that.

PHIL WILSON: I have one more question. Sort of along the vein Chris was asking about. So, in the IEP now for kids that require any sort of alternative or augmentative communication that there is going to be a device or software. Where I am going is, as we move into an environment where more and more kids are going to be receiving their education at a distance, my understanding of the way the rules have been promulgated or the law, whatever here in Louisiana, is in order to have equipment provided to a child for their education the IEP team has to mark that little box says this is required. So, as I am thinking about

particularly families who as we know poverty and disability are linked. And we know so we are going to have a high proportion of kids with disabilities who are poor or come from families who are poor. Who try to do distance type education and they have a computer as big as your washing machine it's going to be crappy education for them? I realize I am opening up a financial Pandora's box. Has any thought, how do we level that playing field. I certainly don't have any ideas. I am concerned about those kids who may end up needing to do their education from a distance. But as far as the academic part of it, may not really have equal access. You can take it from there.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: A great question. I agree that is a real issue. I think disproportionately it affects students with disabilities. All students. Both the governor's office and the department have committed to providing as much funding as possible to ensure one to one device. That includes device needs for students with disabilities, right. And so, we have tens of millions of dollars going to this. We also in the strong start 2020 application which included incentive funding opportunities we had 25 million, roughly, thereabouts in funding at the state level we can give for specific priorities. One of the few priorities made the cut was assistance technology for students with disabilities. We made that available to all parishes as well when they were putting in their applications. Both the governor's funding, the specific call out and the incentive funding for that. And then we also included in the funding guidance for school systems receiving the cares act formula funds, called E serve, don't ask me to name the whole thing. I am limited on my acronyms on this one. The formula funds had full allowability for IDEA expenses. Both comp services and assistive technology is also available. I think that doesn't mean, we have money. Doesn't mean full need. We are doing surveys to see where gaps remain. I think more work needs to be done there. Particularly for students with disabilities

often have device sharing at the school system. Now a school, students at home where you would have had one to meet the need, now multiple. I have heard of parishes even sending keyboards home. All sorts of things there. If you have any thoughts. My concern right now is on the piece of how do we actually get into the space of getting a deep assessment, how far the dollars that we have committed have gone, where the gaps still there, and how do we sort of go to the next phase. And then is the well you have to device, how do you use it, right. I think both for the student and for the educator there is training and development and using that effectively through this method. I think once you get past the barrier that really is the next critical thing. If you guys have thoughts or feedback. I am not going to claim we have a full provision for that and love to dialogue on that either now or offline.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. I know we have some other questions and you are providing such valuable information, but if there is things like that that would be a great way y'all continue to have the discussion offline or so that we can keep everybody, give everybody a chance to ask questions if they still have some. We are not going to get all the answers we want today. This is the first step in this group and appreciate all the information you have been able to provide so far. I know we do have some questions that have been put in the chat. And then I would ask that as y'all are wanting to ask questions if you can put the chat or raise your hand so we can kind of see so we can go through the list of people who have questions. Courtney, could you read the questions that we have.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Yes, ma'am. And Ms. Temisha's hand is raised.

MARY TARVER: You are a committee member. Let's let you go first.

TEMISHA SONNIER: My question was to Ms. Preston. Just thinking about the strong start compensatory services for students with disabilities as you reviewed

earlier. Would those funds be able to be used for say like internet access and things of that matter for students of disabilities and say communities that doesn't have that access? Or is that more or less directed to just support services for the student as in providing the extra services in that manner. Cause several students with disabilities and significant areas in Louisiana are rural on top of the fact they have disabilities. And access is a big issue. Just providing the technology device is I know some schools spent the money on that. But giving them a device without having the proper access is basically, not trying to say a waste of money, not helping the student in that way or giving them access to services. So would compensatory service be able to be used in that manner or just for certain services.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: So yeah, that's a great question. So, in the strong start application, and the purpose of that strong start application was to help school systems use their formula funds effectively. I forget the total amount of formula funds, pretty significant, I think a 165 million. Please don't quote me on that. Where the incentive funding for the state level funds roughly 25 million. I named the priority around assistive technology, like AC in an area in addition how they program formula funds, also receive additional incentive funds for that specific area. One of the other key areas or key priorities is specifically what you are calling out. Which is access, internet access both device procurement and internet access. I think I am trying to remember the exact number, it's still a significant amount of students, including with disabilities, that don't have reliable internet access. I think a lot of ingenuity happening over the spring with like people making buses hot spots and giving myfis to students, and all of that sort of stuff to make that work. Not a permanent solution, right. And so, there is funding there specifically for that. The goal there is that that access is happening for all kids. I am not going to

say we are there yet. But this is something an absolute priority of the superintendent. I know a priority from the governor. Definitely funding there for that need. I wish I could give you a sort of like we made it across the finish line answer there. There is still work to do on that. But we are using the leverage we have working with community on this to make that happen to the goal that we have which is a hundred percent.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Has the Louisiana Department of Education done any surveys of these families at the schools to see exactly the amount of students individually particular those with disabilities that would have struggle with access. For us to have a number a figure.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: Yeah. And the one I was trying to recall off the top of my head. I think Dr. Brumley cited that yesterday at BESE. Just having a recall issue. But yeah, that is happening. We are following up with surveys as we move into school reopening as well to give us an updated sense of this as funds are going out as purchases are happening as well so we can keep our finisher to that issue.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Courtney, any other messages or questions that we need to read from the public?

COURTNEY RYLAND: Yes, ma'am. From Ms. Kathleen, what about parishes who are not providing any therapy services since school has been out. What should these parents do? They have already contacted the school.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: Can we do it one by one cause I won't remember them all. That is a problem, right. If that is the case let me just fall back again and say if a student has therapy services defined in their IEP that needs to be continuing. If there is some adjustment that needs to be made the IEP team needs to get together. Can't be a unilateral decision to end or pause therapy services for students with disabilities. This whole exception I mentioned earlier if everything shut down and no school operations happening whatsoever in any setting. So, if that is the case, could you

please email specialeducation@la.gov and follow up with you. I will put that in the chat box, so you have that. And that is I think just a general rule of thumb. We do typically encourage folks to reach out to the school system first. Because the challenge is, we don't fix it at the department, right. We don't provide the therapy service. We go to the district and we try. But if you have reached out to the school system and not getting anywhere. This is a legal right. We will work with you on that to get to the right outcome for your kid.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Unfortunately, many of the parents are, still on the discussion about device and internet, one of the school systems is charging a deposit for devices. Any guidance from LDOE about that.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: I am going to be honest; I don't know if that is something we have guidance on. Something that goes beyond students with disabilities. I think the email is covid19@la.gov. We have a central covid 19 help desk for questions like this. I am going to put that email in the chat box there. You can add special education too if you want an added layer of eyes on that. We can sort of follow up and make sure that question is being answered. But they are very, very responsive. Very much on top of that and they can give you an answer on that.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Mr. Phil typed in a comment. Would you like to ask your question?

PHIL WILSON: I think it's been kind of covered by bits and pieces and Kristi-Joe probably can't answer it any better without taking it back. If you take that question back that would be fine. Keep the meeting going.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: Phil, we can connect anytime.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Ms. Corhonda has comments and also has her hand raised.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Great morning everyone. Great morning madam chair. I have several questions for Ms. Preston with LDOE cause I actually attended BESE

meeting yesterday and I was very, very disgruntled, to say the least, as far as 30 something page PowerPoint that they presented and they only had one page that actually addressed people with disabilities. And it spoke about related services. However, no related services are being provided including instructional education for those in the special school district. One thing I know that is not happening. We also know that they received more than 60,000-dollars in eser money. Already been used on cameras around the facility. Not addressing anything dealing with the instructional educational minutes which are all covered under IDEA. Again, another federal violation cause the eser money was supposed to be used for services. But have we actually considered what related services are going to look like? When I say related services, I am not just talking about therapy because we do know that health, our medical is also a related service. That's why we have health plans attached to our IEP. Have you considered what that is going to look like? Especially when we know that we actually have a real low amount of individuals that work in the medical profession. And right now, some school systems such as EBR school system outsource their medical. Our head for our hospital, our lady of the lake, Dr. O'Neal actually did a press conference. She spoke about our ICUs being completely full. That is where EBR school system gets their medical services from our lady of the lake. We are not going to have medical services if school reopens. Children with disabilities will not be able to go back in the schools if they have health plans already attached to their IEPs. Which will then put all these schools' systems in IDEA violation because safety actually has to be addressed. Medical is a safety. So I am asking how exactly is LDOE even when y'all presented three doctors yesterday at BESE and one of those doctors stated it's not matter of if your child will receive covid if they reenter into the brick and mortar building, it's a matter of when. So how exactly are you planning on addressing testing,

multiple testing. How are y'all going to address mainstreaming when mainstreaming, again, federally covered under IDEA. Mainstreaming our children in special ed go into regular education classes. So y'all have to take that if to consideration. Mr. Chris, I am making your job a little easier today. Also, how are y'all going to address child specific paraprofessionals. Some of our children have that required in their IEPs. Again, another IDEA violation for LDOE. LDOE sometimes for some reason just really don't understand that you are the governing authority over all of these local LEAs. So, it's so many questions that I have about that. But I am really trying to figure out are y'all really and truly aware of what is covered under IDEA. And how y'all will actually implement any, any of that 30-page PowerPoint when you only have one page that actually spoke to children with disabilities.

MARY TARVER: Kristi-Joe, that was a whole lot of information to take in all at once. Not all that is going to be answered today for sure, but I will let Kristi-Joe respond.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: A lot of great questions. Trying to think through all of those. I think the fundamental thing here, and this is included in the policies and Dr. Brumley spoke to this specifically too yesterday as well, IDEA is a federal law. It trumps everything, right. So, the rights, protections and obligation there were made. What we did with the policy specifically was to make sure that we had flexibility and allowances for special education, so those services continue. I think talked about mainstreaming there so in the policy when we talk about groups and stuff, we talk about specifically how students with disabilities have to receive their services in least restrictive environment. That is specifically called out. And then talk about the flexibilities that school systems need to plan for so they can continue to receive services there. And so, when that means you are planning for service providers

to come in, special education teacher, can be a service provider, that could also be a child specific para. Another part of the question. That is included in the policy. Also includes like the nod for planning if a student with disabilities needs to leave the classroom. Basically, an exception to that following, of course, health guidelines. For example, one of the examples we were discussing with some folks in the field a student was working on physical therapy that is going to be a hard thing to do in the classroom, right. Very awkward, very hard to do. And so, allowing that student to leave and come back so they can continue to receive those services, but still following the health guidelines of the policies. So that happens. And then also I think a third area in there which is alternate instructional delivery. Also included in the policy provision for essential providers to enter school facilities and daycares so that is included in all of the bulletins. The public, the charter and the private as well. So, there is not at least one policy prospective a barrier to special education providers to enter the building, they are considered essential. I know you named some other things. I am happy to follow up on that if you want to email specialeducation@la.gov we can set up some time there. I think you raised an issue with SSD. If you want to email on that I will raise that up as well. We can follow up on that too. If anything else as well. I really do appreciate your thoughts and your passion here making sure we are doing what is right for kids.

MARY TARVER: Thank you Kristi-Joe. And Ms. Corhonda, we would ask for you to follow up with her with that special education email. And we will also from the DD Council ask the staff to help us to get that information out on our website too to help parents so that gives them a great avenue to ask specific questions. Cause I can imagine y'all get several a day. Are there any other questions or hands raised? I know in the time we have left we have gone over into the employment and we really haven't finished. I know

one thing we needed to vote on for education. So, I just wanted to throw that out there. Anything else?

COURTNEY RYLAND: No comments and no hands raised.

MARY TARVER: Thank y'all.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Would you like to continue with education or begin the employment.

MARY TARVER: We needed to, I see on the agenda something that we needed to have a vote on.

COURTNEY RYLAND: I was going to give an update on post-secondary inclusive education alliance initiative. Dr. Beckers with Southeast University who have the contract for that initiative was able to conduct a public forum in North Louisiana where she invited all universities and had LSUA and Grambling attend and begin the process for developing post-secondary inclusive education programs at both of those institutions. I know they have already started a needs assessment. And I believe LSUA has actually already started planning for this program to be implemented for the fall of 2021. The ball is rolling for those universities in North Louisiana. Unfortunately, due to the covid pandemic the South Louisiana forum had to be canceled. That is the update for that initiative. The update for the inclusive childcare project there was, sorry, hold on just a moment. There were two in person trainings conducted at the beginning of February. Unfortunately, due to another early steps initiative being conducted at the same time there was limited attendance to those in person trainings. Just a moment. And also due to the covid pandemic the in person coaching sessions had to be canceled because of that. So, I have got data on the attendance for the Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Covington, Lafayette and Shreveport in person trainings. There was coaching done during the Baton Rouge and New Orleans sessions. However, again due to covid coaching sessions for Covington, Lafayette and Shreveport have not been able to be conducted. Because of this the federal fiscal year 2021 planning committee has made a recommendation that this initiative not receive funding for 2021. So

that is why this has been put on the agenda for a possible vote. It would be appropriate for this committee to make a determination if they want this initiative to continue for 2021.

PHIL WILSON: I think that we are in a world we all have to work differently. I don't think we are in a world we all should just stop doing things that need to be done. There are protocols from online coaching just the same as there are protocols for online training. I don't see this is a time for us to all say we can't do this. We will just wait another year.

MARY TARVER: If I remember right, I think they were having trouble even before covid with this initiative. That may have been one of the things with the planning committee that was discussed.

PHIL WILSON: Again, not privy to that. Just say it makes sense to me, I am not saying current contracts, whatever it is, that may be needs to be revised to reflect a different approach or different timelines, deliverables. But to say we are not going to address an issue that has been identified by the council as an important issue or we wouldn't have funded to begin with. I don't think probably what whatever was initially proposed isn't the way to go. I don't know exactly what was initially in the contract. Maybe letting the contract out again to be, or whatever it is, to be a better proposal. If people weren't able to do the things they proposed to do when the world was different. Does that make sense? That is my thoughts.

MARY TARVER: If Courtney, if the EE committee wants to have this put back into the bucket for our planning committee, they would have to have a motion for this to be reconsidered?

COURTNEY RYLAND: Yes, ma'am. Because as of right now there have not been any funds obligated for this initiative. Require taking funds away from other initiatives that have been proposed by the 2021 planning committee.

MARY TARVER: I will just say if there is somebody who wants to make a motion that this is put back on

with an amount then we can see where that goes. If we don't get a motion then we will not be reporting back, I guess this won't be put back on the agenda with the planning committee.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: A point of clarity. Maybe somebody can help. Maybe one of the DD staff members. What exactly is the relationship between let's say this committee and the planning committee in terms of decision making. I feel as though, cause I was on the planning committee as well we talked about a number of different issues. Presumably made determinations, correct me if I am wrong, if the next years certain things are going to be funded and almost the exact same conversation in various committees can either overturn, or reject, or agree with the planning committee. I don't understand.

SHAWN FLEMING: Great question Chris. I wish this would have been clarified better in self-determination committee inclusion committee last week cause the same confusion occurred there. The roles and responsibilities of the planning committee verse standing committee. Start with standing committees. Y'all provide oversight. That may involve whether y'all might make a recommendation to stop an initiative or activity if something could be going awry. But the planning committee made recommendations. If there is any recommendation to amend that very inappropriate for another committee to then make a motion on another committee's motion. That would just add so much confusion to everything. So, what we are seeking is just y'all direction for activities. Like y'all have a plan right now that runs through September 30th. And some of those activities will continue next year. Some won't. Just speak to last week's meeting. Even the ones that are moving forward this, any activity or initiative in the FY21 plan this committee will have to have oversight and provide guidance on what y'all expectations are and giving us that insight. With all of those underneath say education and employment which are in the last two goal areas of the plans.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: One of the subcommittees to basically give direction and oversight and implementation of a program that has already been decided.

SHAWN FLEMING: Except the planning committee doesn't assign y'all any responsibility. That is already established in the council bylaws.

PHIL WILSON: Just for me, I didn't participate in the planning committee. I couldn't. I had multiple conflicts at the time. It's hard when I see this and it's like here is three things, two things about education that have been funded in the past and are currently about to expire funding wise. I am not understanding that a planning committee is taking that group off of their plan for next year. Maybe misaligned. I thought this was determining are we continuing. Then I would understand another body has already laid the groundwork.

SHAWN FLEMING: Some places were closed down so you should say they should figure out how to provide the support, but a lot of it was providing onsite training and stuff. So, whether during the pandemic like people were not having.(inaudible)

PHIL WILSON: Is that something to be shared, not right this moment, but during this meeting.

SHAWN FLEMING: Yes, sir. If you go look in the agenda there is a link to the planning committee's summary and within there is a proposed FY21 plan. And so, you have to kind of click those two links. And it's also posted on our website under the meetings documents. It has all that in there and that's where that will be discussed. Does that help, any other questions?

PHIL WILSON: I don't see it on my agenda. Can staff send me that information and I will be quiet, and I can read it and know what is going on.

MARY TARVER: Is it okay for us to go ahead now. Anything else that needs to happen in education? We can move to employment. And let Rosemary--

PHIL WILSON: I think we need to vote. Just call a

vote. Why does it say vote on the agenda? All right, we don't need to vote. That's fine.

MARY TARVER: If we need to, we'll come back to that. Let Ms. Rosemary from OCDD give us an update on the training sessions they had been working on.

ROSEMARY MORALES: How are y'all this morning. So, I think I know what I am supposed to be doing, the final report on the training that ended in December of 2019. So, I will just kind of give you a quick summary of that. There were at the end of the training 460 people completed it. That included people in our LGE offices. Our support coordination offices as well as our provider agency statewide. Someone from every agency completed the training and a lot of cases we had more than one completed. So that was kind of the end of that. That was the numbers there for you. We had some that either through the course of the training either left the agency or was reassigned so we had more signed up than completed. But that was the total at the end of the training. And that was every region was covered in that training. So, do you have specific questions that you want me to try and answer or? So, the training was designed, or I guess the purpose of it was to kind of get everybody on the same page and moving forward in the employment initiative. So, I think it was a very good training. I participated in the training. I found it had a lot of good information, very easy to participate in because it was online. You can do it at your leisure if you will or at your free time, very functional in that aspect and worked for a lot of people. The sessions were smaller sessions. Sometimes One topic was broken up into multiple sessions. Designed to be about 45, 50 minutes, no longer than an hour. A lot of good information. It dealt with individuals with felonies, individuals with mental health, individuals with different types of needs. It dealt with networking. A very good training. Lots of good information. Very up to date information. I felt it was a good training. We're still working to bring our individuals and our

agencies along with employment. I am not sure if any of you joined our training session yesterday with the state employment leadership network, but we had a session where they revealed our final report when they came into our state last year at the end of the year. And today we have another session at noon that is designed and geared towards families and individuals. And it's going to be the same presentation, but geared more towards our families and individuals. We are still moving along in employment. Everything of course has been halted because of covid. Our individuals are not attending any type of in person sessions with anyone. The only people that are still out are people who are working either in individual jobs or people who are working as part of a mobile crew. We are still moving forward in redesigning vocational or employment day service definitions. We have a group that is working to do that. And with that will come rate adjustments. But everything has kind of been at a halt. We have been dealing the covid event. All been working to implement all those new changes and things that had to happen because of that. So, if you have specific questions I can try and answer those for you.

MARY TARVER: Does anybody have any questions? I think we just wanted to get feedback from you and see how the final, kind of get your final thoughts about the program so I appreciate everything that y'all did and I am glad to hear that it was a successful training.

ROSEMARY MORALES: Yes. It would be wonderful if we had something like that ongoing kind of thing. But hopefully with all the training that is going on in our state through different partnerships we will continue to improve our employment services. We are still working towards our settings rule compliance. That is something that we are still pursuing and trying to get everything finalized there. I know we have submitted our final plan to CMS for approval. We finally finished all of their questions and answers and revisions and such. We will be waiting to hear from

them. Currently we are just kind of at a standstill as how we are going to proceed forward. We are not ready to open up congregate settings in our state for services. We are looking at implementing some virtual services. Also looking at possibly doing small groups community activities in groups like one to three. One of our new service definitions for day habilitation. But trying to stay away from larger groups. But we are not to that point yet. But those are things we are in the planning stage with.

MARY TARVER: Good. We appreciate the update today and keep us posted on anything you feel like would help us get the word out, help y'all get the word out of things that are going on.

ROSEMARY MORALES: Anytime. Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Is Melissa on the call?

MELLISA BAYHAM: I'm here. Sorry I am late. I had a management meeting.

MARY TARVER: That's okay. We moved the agenda around so if you want to give us kind of an update on LRS and covid. We have been talking a lot about covid. Got a good update from Kristi-Joe. So, we will let you give us the low down what is happening in your world.

MELLISA BAYHAM: Well, at LRS obviously our participation is lower than normal and lower than I would like. But we are doing a lot better job acclimating to technology and counselors are seeing clients virtually through zoom. We've implemented electronic signatures. Actually, going to do acusign, but aware program put together what they call aware sign. So, we are able electronically to sign documents. Some of our service have to be done face to face, but able to do some by zoom and electronically sign those. And the staff is doing great because actually had a statewide zoom yesterday and they were talking about different things they were doing I didn't even know. I don't even know how do some of these things. Obviously, less people. Some people are just hesitant to be involved in services right now. But our numbers do continue to go up. Obviously, at the height

of the covid they tanked. People weren't coming in. At one-point staff were not even working. But now those numbers continue to go up. I think we are seeing improvements there. There is a major concern, and I caught the end of your presentation Kristi-Joe, there is a concern with PreETS. Obviously, the school districts that we have our third-party cooperative arrangement they hire their own transition specialists. Less a concern there because they will just, as part of whatever their school plan is, whether it's hybrid, whatever the case may be that is an employee of that school district. So, they will be able to incorporate that into their plans. But we have, most of our schools we have vendors who go into the school districts to provide most services. And that is, my guess is going to be impossible. So, we will have to figure out, we may have to help our providers to become more virtual. But then obviously that is all going to have to be coordinated with the school districts. We know the challenges we have. And I have two PreETS people that work directly for me in state office that will help staff do that. But it's really difficult because obviously it's going to be different school district to school district. Angela Montgomery, she is our CRP program coordinator, recently sent out a survey to vendors just to figure out how things were going and just asking for different information. Obviously, we didn't get a hundred percent participation, but we did learn our CRPs we have over a hundred. Fourteen reported layoffs from CRPs because you have less people, less participants. Can't obviously keep as many people on board. Most of our vendors are doing some type of work, but some are not for various reasons. So, we definitely need to do some outreach and do some better coordination with our vendors. But it gets really complicated because then you have to look at employers. Are more reluctant about job coaches on the work site. So that definitely is difficult with supported employment program. You can do some of these things virtually, but depending on the

individual they may need that one on one job coaching. That that is definitely a barrier that we have right now. There is demands in the food the grocery industry, but most other industries there is a lack of employment opportunities. And as you know there is always a disproportionate as far as the amount of people employed with disabilities. Obviously, hitting the disability population even more. We only had one vendor who permanently closed due to covid we are aware of. But that is it in a nutshell. Like I said, we are doing good considering I think everybody we're all adjusting and trying to figure out how to work. Some regions did better than others with the technology. Helping each other out trying to make sure we are improving services. I will let you know; I will talk about this more in detail tomorrow if you have any questions. But we did adopt an emergency rule on July 10th which expended our financial need criteria. Meaning for our cost services, which is generally college training related services, things like that. Generally, we look at 250 percent of the poverty guidelines. And if you are over that we are not able to, you have to contribute to your cost services. And we have expanded that to 500 percent. That will allow us to be able to provide more services in training and things like that. So that is the exciting things going on here. Because as I should have mentioned at the beginning as of right now LRS was levelly funded in house bill one. So, we did not sustain any budget cuts yet. I think we do have to reserve 10 percent of state general funds, but we are in a good position between our budget carry forward funds. We have funds to spend. We also did make one other changes to our procedures, something that was changed back when we were strapped for money. We changed our on the job training reimbursement rate, we just reimbursed the salary for three months. And we change it back to what we did previously which is one and half times the base salary for three months. We had expanded the reimbursement rate for on the job training to hopefully

increase employer's participation in that particular program. So, we're trying to make changes as we can to make things easier and to promote our services more. If anyone has any questions, any topic I didn't address that you would like me to address please just let me know.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: That was some exciting news. I just have questions for clarity and maybe my brain was wondering. So, in regard to the income, sometimes I get confused. Just say it from my prospective. Like my son is 21 just graduated from high school. He would be able, is my income looked at for him? How does that work?

MELLISA BAYHAM: Yes. Because he is under the age of 24. And you don't need to tell anybody your business, if he received social security then we don't look at your income. If he receives social security disability we do not. I was trying to pull up for y'all. Won't be able to share it with you. Kind of give you an example. Pull up the poverty guidelines. Like for a person just a single individual our cap used to be 31,900. So, if you made anywhere over that we weren't able to provide cost services. That is now 63,800. So, for a family of four, what we look at for comparison sake, went from 65,500 to 131,000. So, I think that is definitely going to increase the number of individuals we will be able to serve. Because I know a lot of individuals under the 24 because of the parent's income don't meet financial need. But that will definitely open the door up for more people. And the way the rule was written, I can provide y'all a copy, it's on the website, an emergency rule. Allows a range of 250 to 500 percent. So right now, because our budget allows, we are at the 500 percent. If we ever in the future for whatever reason had any cuts or we had to reduce that we could go back down within that range 250 to 500 percent.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: That is good. I know that will help a lot of people. And then you talked about increasing the rates, was that a rule change.

MELLISA BAYHAM: Not a rule change. Just in our procedures. So, I am sure you are familiar like a rule change, something promulgated in the registrar. We have a big procedure manual just how we provide our services. And we have rate schedules and things like that. So, on the job training we had reduced in the past just to the base pay. That was just a procedural change. It's not in rule so we didn't have to do anything for that.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: That's it.

MELLISA BAYHAM: Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Anybody else have any questions? All right. Thank you. I did forget at the beginning of the meeting to ask for approval of the January 2020 education and employment committee summary. And so, I would ask if anybody would like to make a motion to approve that.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I make a motion to approve.

MARY TARVER: Is there a second?

TEMISHA SONNIER: I will second.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Anybody...

COURTNEY RYLAND: Any objections or abstentions?

MARY TARVER: Thank you Courtney. Hearing none, then we have approved our summary. Thank y'all. Okay, the next on the agenda is discussion about the building capacity and employment providers in the customized employment. Courtney, do you have an update on that?

COURTNEY RYLAND: Yes, ma'am. I can provide an update on that. There was a job development gateway which is a three-day intensive training session conducted in February. We had 22 participants in that and at the end of that three-day gateway 14 people indicated they were interested in completing all three components of customized employment. So just a refresher, customized employment entails discovery, job development, and systematic instruction. So, we now have two people in this current class who have completed their discovery certification. They attended job development gateway and trying to see if we can get a few more people to go through the job development

certification process. Our contract is with Arc of Louisiana and we have been dealing with Mark Gold and Associates to provide that training. So, at the onset of covid they had to kind of realign how they are going to be implementing the certification process. Now going to be able to do that all virtually so we are getting that started. As far as systematic instruction, I was advised because it's so hands on that it's going to take a while for them to develop something appropriate. There is a delay in getting systematic instruction off the ground. That is the current status of that activity.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Thank you. Have we gone through all the agenda now? Yes.

COURTNEY RYLAND: I believe everything has been addressed. Yes, ma'am. Except for, I am trying to get clarification from Mr. Fleming if a vote is needed regarding that discussion on the inclusive childcare program.

SHAWN FLEMING: No. It's not.

MARY TARVER: Thank y'all. Does anybody have anything else that we need to announce? I think we have some follow up for us to help out on with Kristi-Joe working with you on information that you would like for us to get out through the DD Council to help families be able to find all that awesome information you presented today. Please let us know how we can help and what you want us to be able to share. That would be great. And so, does anybody else have any other announcements?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I don't have any announcement. I had posted a comment and wanted to share I thought it was really exciting the news about the higher education collaborative reaching out to LSUA and Grambling. I think that's really exciting and just wanted to put on the record to share with Southeastern, Ms. Beckers, to share with her that's really a great move in the right direction, that project.

MARY TARVER: Very excited. LSUA is in my backyard. Got to get through fifth grade first. All

right. Well, if you don't have any other comments, I appreciate everybody's participation today and we will talk soon.

COURTNEY RYLAND: We need a motion to adjourn.

KRISTI-JOE PRESTON: I will motion.

MARY TARVER: Anybody want to second?

MELLISA BAYHAM: I will second.

MARY TARVER: We're good. Bye.