

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Partners in Policymaking
October 29, 2020

MIKE BILLINGS: Trying to see if we have a quorum here yet.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think you do have a quorum. I don't know if you want to wait a few more minutes or not. Whenever you call the meeting to order I can take roll and we should have a quorum.

MIKE BILLINGS: It looks like we have a quorum. Let's give it another minute or two to see if others can get on. And also there is a note from Bambi, she hasn't been let into the meeting yet.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I'm in. That was before I was let in.

MIKE BILLINGS: We're going to give it another minute or so. See if Adrienne can get online. While Adrienne tries to continue to get online it's 9:05 so let's go ahead and get started and call the meeting to order. Like to say good morning to everyone. I hope everybody made it through the storm safe. I know we have a couple people who are with us in their vehicles this morning because they are out of power. And we appreciate you folks being here this morning. It's definitely a task trying to carve out these meeting times and getting everybody with a time that works for everyone. I appreciate everybody being here this morning. Like to begin first by calling roll. So let me go through the roll for the committee members. Rashad Bristo.

RASHAD BRISTO: Present.

MIKE BILLINGS: Jill Hano is absent. She has no power. Bambi are you still here?

MARILEE ANDREWS: She is. She is having trouble with her volume. You are unmuted, but we can't hear you.

MIKE BILLINGS: Corhonda.

CORHONDA CORLEY: I am present.

MIKE BILLINGS: Nicole Flores.

NICOLE FLORES: Present.

MIKE BILLINGS: Selina Gilliland. Not with us. Liz Gary.

LIZ GARY: Present.

MIKE BILLINGS: Once again, thank you everybody for being here this morning. Go over our virtual meeting

protocols. As you know we are having to participate via zoom and broadcast on YouTube. So as we participate, committee members, we ask for you to be considered present when they display the live feed video of their face with their first and last name. Please keep Your mikes muted unless you are called on by the chairperson. Electronically raise your hand to request the chair to speak. I know we have folks on cell phones this morning so we might have to work around that a little bit. Try to get our attention if you do have something to speak. Once recognized to speak by the chair the mike will be turned on and after speaking the mike will be returned to mute. Public comment will be any public comment submitted during the meeting via any format be considered during a zoom meeting they can electronically raise their hand to request to comment and once being recognized mikes should be turned on and after speaking mikes returned to mute. Post comments relevant to the item under consideration in the chat box. If comments are posted on the YouTube channel, we try to get those as well during the meeting. And public comments of a person's character will not be heard. If the comment continues after being asked to stop by the chairperson council staff may be instructed to end the meeting. Chairperson notifies executive committee when this occurs. So the council chair will seek guidance to determine if it's legally appropriate to redact or share the video on the council's website. A brief overview of meeting protocols. And now just like to go around and have everybody introduce themselves. And just to keep that in order when I call your name if you can just give a brief introduction of yourselves. I would appreciate it. My name is Michael Billings. I am a parent of children with developmental disabilities and executive committee member on the council. And then we will go to Rashad.

RASHAD BRISTO: Good morning. Rashad Bristo, a parent of a child with a disability, autism spectrum, self-advocate. I live in Mansville, which is in the Shreveport area.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you Rashad. Bambi.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Bambi Polotzola, the executive director for Governor's Office of Disability Affairs. I am a parent of a young man with a developmental disability and I am 2007 graduate of Partners in Policymaking.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you Bambi. Corhonda.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Great morning. My name is Corhonda Corley. I am a proud parent of a child with developmental disabilities that is medically complex and fragile. I am also a proud alumni of Partners in Policymaking and a national disability advocate that helps represent our State of Louisiana.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you Corhonda. Nicole.

NICOLE FLORES: My name is Nicole Flores, the parent of a daughter with a developmental disability. I am also a former proud graduate of Partners in Policymaking and also the director of Families Helping Families of Acadian.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you Nicole. And Liz Gary.

LIZ GARY: Good morning. I am a parent from region nine. I am a 2008 graduate of Partners in Policymaking and presently the policy and advocacy coordinator for the leadership excellence in neuro developmental disorders at LSU HDC.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you Liz. So Marilee, can you give us the update on how the formation of the ad hoc committee came about.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Sure. Before I do that, do you mind if I introduce myself.

MIKE BILLINGS: Sure. Sorry.

MARILEE ANDREWS: That's fine. I think everybody should know me, but my name a Marilee Andrews. I work here at the council. I am the staff person assigned to this committee. So I will be here for housekeeping items, your contact person if you have any questions or concerns. At the council I do monitor the PIP contract. So hopefully I will be able to provide you guys with information if you need it or if you have any questions during this ad hoc committee. I will mention, the first year I was here at the council I came in on a second half of partners. And the second year I was at the council we only had the first part of partners and then the second half was canceled due to the covid shutdown. But I am here, and you can always reach out to me and I will help you guys and answer your questions to the best of my knowledge. And if I don't have the right answer, I will find it for you. And I just also want to point out Mike, if it's okay with you, kind of our standing guests.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes, ma'am.

MARILEE ANDREWS: We have just as a stand in guest, Mr. Jim Sprinkle, executive director Families Helping Families

Crossroads. This is the entity that holds contract with the partners coordinator. And also Ms. Adrian Thomas. And she served as partners coordinator last year. The year it was canceled in the middle due to covid. So the next thing on the agenda I am just going to give you guys a quick summary of the formation of the ad hoc committee. You all should have the transcript from the self-determination and community inclusion committee meeting that took place in July. And that is where the PIP ad hoc committee was formed. It's a lot to read. But if you did read over it it's great, and if you didn't, you can, and it starts around page four and goes to the next few pages. Essentially the discussion of what to do with the 2020 class that only completed three months was being discussed in multiple committees. And it ended up being discussed again in self-determination community inclusion. And that is when a motion was made to create a PIP ad hoc committee to decide what to do with the 2020 class that only completed three months. And how to go about a 2021 class or 22 class and future classes. And so all that information is there for you guys to read. If you want the details and the back and forth on it. That's all I have for that Mike.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you. Was Adrian able to get on?

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Good morning.

MIKE BILLINGS: Good morning. Would you mind taking a moment to introduce yourself to everyone.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Sure. My name is Adrian Thomas. I am serving as the Partners in Policymaking coordinator. I am the mother of a young adult daughter with a developmental disability. I have a background in working with people with disabilities. Having served as a special educator, inclusive coordinator and as well as working in vocational rehabilitation field.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you. We also have you on the agenda next. Are you ready for that?

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Yes. I have a small presentation. Marilee, you have a copy of my power point? Can you share my screen?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I did not ever receive a copy of anything.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Can I share my screen.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I will ask Hannah if she can make that possible.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: It's okay if she can't.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think you should be able to because you're in here as a panelist. At the bottom bar, do you see that green arrow that says share screen.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Yes. I just want to start off, I briefly ran some of the information that was pulled in the ad hoc committee as well as the information that was provided to me by the former partners in policymaking coordinator. Thank you, Ms. Liz Gary, as well as Marilee Andrews. So what I have is the first slide just shows how the Partners in Policymaking has been implemented since Louisiana has adopted it, Louisiana Developmental Disability Council has adopted since 1993. Which is the year that I have on record. So phase one, and I am calling it in phases. So phase one, 100 percent statewide in person. Traditionally the preferred format approved by the Louisiana Developmental Disability Council. Phase two is the regional format. At some point this was approved alternate format. The regional format is the approval format when the minimal required applicants by recruitment and selection has not been met. So for reference, there are two approved formats for implementation. So since 1993, with the exception of 201,6, there have been 500 individuals that have graduated from the Partners in Policymaking program. And of this number, the top three regions of graduates have been region nine with about 19.8 percent of the graduates. Region two with 14.2 percent. And region ten with 12.4 percent. The regions with the least amount of graduates is region eight with only 4.4 percent. This is how it looked. These are all the numbers where it shows region nine which is Livingston, St. Tammany. This is where most of the Partners in Policymaking graduates are coming from. Region ten is right in here. There were about 3.2 percent of the graduates that were not placed in a regional area. Now one of the things that I also wanted to note of the 500 graduates' records indicates 378 identified as parents, self-advocates. Of this number 74 percent are parents, 25 are self-advocate and 1 percent were identified as both parent and self-advocate.

Then we come to our 2020 pandemic emergency, just as Marilee stated that she came in on the first, the second half of her first class and then her second class ended with pandemic. Well, I came in on my first class and we went to three months and then it was ended. Of course the

pandemic emergency came. And at some point, September 8, 2020, trying to find out what other states was doing. I sent an email to all of the Partners in Policymaking coordinators throughout the United States that was listed on the Minnesota website who actually holds the trademark for the Partners in Policymaking program. And just reached out to the other coordinators to see what was going on. So I introduced myself. What you see in front of you is how that email went. Greetings, I hope this email finds you well and safe. I introduced myself. I kind of gave a background of how I became the coordinator in 2019. And facilitated my first class in January 2020. And then, of course, by the time we got to the March session we were shutdown compliments of covid 19. I gave an introduction of myself. But it's also listed on here about me having a young adult daughter with an intellectual disability and I have a background in rehabilitation council, social work and special education.

One of the other things I wanted to note that I was not aware about the Partners in Policymaking program until I applied for the position, and I have been quite active in the disability world with my background. I was also served in early steps. Original trainers for early steps. I stood on the interagency coordinating council. Also when I interviewed for the position that was one of my concerns, how I would reach or recruit others to participate in the Partners in Policymaking program. I went onto ask other Partners in Policymaking coordinators, I asked them six questions. You have the six questions in front of you. Number one, how long have you been with the Partners in Policymaking program. Number two is there a discussion platform, or website, social media group where the coordinators are communicating with each other. If yes, can you provide a link or information. Question three, was your Partners in Policymaking 20 class completed or shutdown due to covid 19. Was there an alternate format used for completion. Question four, are there plans in your state to commence completion of the 2020 class and how. Question five, are you recruiting applicants for a 2021 class with an alternate format proposed. And question six, have you ever partnered, recruited, enrolled, interned and/or other with an inclusive program in higher education. If so, please describe. And that question was pretty much asked because of the national efforts in

programs being developed for young adults with developmental disabilities in higher education programs to see how others may be interfacing with those programs.

So based on some of those responses I received I have recommended three additional phases for the Partners in Policymaking implementation rollout. And so phase three, these phases can be determined, there is a formula that is set, and that formula pretty much aligns itself where the leader of our state. Just for example, if the leader of our state states we are in phase one or on phase two this pandemic effort then this implementation rollout the opportunity to say we can identify phase three, phase four, phase five. The additional phases of implementation phase three would determine whether or not you want to start regional or virtual. Not both. But regional or virtual. And then have in person format as well. You might be regional or virtual for all of the sessions except for maybe three sessions. Might be the first session. May be in person session at the state capitol and the graduation. Pretty much like three of those sessions that may be in person. Phase four would be a roll out of three phases. Virtual, regional and then in person, if possible. In person may only be only for the graduation. And phase five is when you determine that you have to do 100 percent virtual. And so that means where are we now. Based off of where we are in the state and what is going on in the country and the world, I would say we are a four. Which is virtual, regional and in person. And why I am saying that we should start off as virtual. Here are the two main concerns. Number one, the pandemic concern when it comes to families with individuals with disabilities. All of us on this call, the majority or a great percentage of us on this call have individuals in our home that have disabilities. Some of us have underlying conditions and we want to know if it is really safe to meet in person. Always going to be that concern. Is it really safe to meet in person. And then another concern should the 2020 class be combined with 2021. The concern in that area is where we are now. It's October 29, 2020. In reviewing what my, my former, Liz Gary, I appreciate all of the documentation that has been given to me in showing where we are, what we should be doing. And working with Marilee and Jim where we are by now as of October 29, 2020 there are a lot of factors that would have been accomplished by October 29th. The

question would be do we have a great opportunity to effectively recruit and select a 2021 class with it being October 2021. That can or can't be done. Also could be can we go back and look at some of the other past participants, maybe selected as alternates participants that did not get to participate. And then another concern may be the cohesiveness of the group. Just by working with the class of 2020 this group has already formed bonds. Just as any other class maybe. You know if you are a graduate of the Partners in Policymaking class you have a cohesive bond with the group of people you participated with. Not only do you have a cohesive bond with that group, you may have subgroups of people. And that doesn't necessarily go by region. It could be subgroups by personal attributes you have in common. And the class of 2020 has on those cohesive bonds even though they only met three months. They are constantly on the Facebook group together. They have reached out to each other. The participants in region five that was affected by Hurricane Laura and Delta. Members in region nine have gathered donations and given to them. So they have a bond. So how would you, how can we have two groups and not have a divided class by combining two groups.

Well, I am not saying that can't be done. But one of the most effective ways to do that is to go back and go into a virtual format in phase four when you bring this group or these two groups together virtually. And then once you roll out a virtual format, a platform of being these two groups together if the choice is to combine 2021 with 2020 bringing them together virtually and then bringing them together regional. So when those 2020 region nine and the 2021 region nine have an opportunity to meet together as a region and then work together as a region even if it's with something that is a common goal or common task in that region and then bring them together in person. Where you can have a successful graduation or successful activity with how does the legislative work. And that is what I have. Do you have any questions? We do have one hand raised now.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I have a question, either slide three, four, five in regards to the numbers of parents and self-advocates. At the bottom it says the records indicates 378. Everybody should either be a parent or self-advocate.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Everyone should be a parent or self-advocate. However, when I print out all the spread sheet there is a line that says parents or self-advocates and I don't know if you can see that. If it doesn't have an indication it means I have to go back. The number 378 are those that have been identified. I am not going to present numbers I made up or assume. Until I go back and identify of the hundred plus participants and parents or self-advocates, I am only going to present the numbers I have.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: That makes sense. My other question had to do towards the end of the presentation. This will go onto other part of the discussion. I think the purpose of this meeting. And I am not on this committee that looked at this. But I don't think that based on now we are almost in November, we haven't selected a class for 2021. So I don't see how that is even possible that recommendation of combining two classes. It seems like it's too late in the game to pick a 2021 class. Wouldn't the best option be to somehow get that 2020 class during 2021. Someway we can figure out to get them through the process. Hopefully, the risks are reduced at some point in 2021 and figure out some way to get that class through their completion of the program.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: I am going to answer you. I am just the coordinator. I am not determining whether or not we have a 2021 class. I have an opinion, but I will reserve that opinion for myself. However, my goal is whatever is decided to make the best solution possible for adequate implementation. Does that answer your question?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yes, ma'am. And I think that is probably the part I just stated is really more targeted towards the council members and their decision.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: And I can say that, and I hate to, I am going to go back, I hate to throw a wrench in this. We can go back to the class of 2021 and I have my records, I am just going to go off the top of my head. I think originally there was 22 participants selected. I think it was originally 22 applicants selected and then on the first session in January of 2020 there were 17 that actually participated. That class had 17. Trying to find my records. There were actually 17 that participated. From there on the March session there were three absences. And then on the contract, a notation if you missed the first

session or the March session that you would not be able to continue with the program. And so there are three people in that March session that actually possibly had covid and did not attend. My question or concern would be more of allowing those three participants to restart with their class and continue verses adding a 2021. But once again, you allow me to slip out my opinion and I was trying to reserve it.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: No, thank you. I think we have to make concessions because of all the things that happened in 2020. And I have some other questions, but I think it's not appropriate at this time so I will reserve that till later. Thank you.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you Bambi. A couple other hands raised. Corhonda.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Ms. Adrienne, in this class what is the racial and ethnic breakdown for this class? As well as what is the number of self-advocates represented in this class? That is my first question.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Give me one second. I have all those numbers. I can tell you right now just off the top of my head there were four self-advocates. Do you want percentages or just the number?

CORHONDA CORLEY: The number and percentage.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: I have that. I can get that. I have it in a previous report. But I can tell you there is four self-advocates, and I can give you those numbers. Four self-advocates would be 24 percent of that class was self-advocates. There were three males, which is a minority in the partners' class. Which is 18 percent were males.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Do you want me to read that. I have it pulled up right here.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Thank you. That's what I was looking for. I couldn't find my report.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Bambi will remember this. Not sure if anybody else was on the selection committee for the 2020 class. But the selection committee met, I think it was in October, and we selected the participants. And then from there I created a demographics representation of the selected applicants. What I am about to read you is the breakdown of the applicants that were selected. And as Ms. Thomas mentioned, some people dropped off along the way.

So those numbers would have shifted. I can share my screen.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: If not I have those.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I will just read them. For advocacy representation six self-advocates and 21 parent advocates. And so the percent is 22 percent self, 78 percent parent. And this was at 27. The geographic representation we had about two and three people from regions two, two, three, four, five and seven. Region six had no one. Region eight had one. Region ten had four. And the most came from region nine with six. The gender representation we had three males which was 11 percent. And 24 females which was 89 percent. And minority representation we had 16 Caucasian at 59 percent. Nine African Americans at 33 percent. One biracial, 4 percent. And one American Indian which was 4 percent.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: And then of that number the final count was 17. So after the first session there was 17 members. And of that number four were self-advocates for 24 percent. Three males out of that 17 which is 18 percent. And seven minorities which is 41 percent.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you. Just as a brief housekeeping. I know some of us have to step away or put our cameras down, but please try keep your cameras on, so we maintain a quorum. Salina sent a message her power is out, and cell service has been pretty bad. With her hand raised is Nicole. You have the floor.

NICOLE FLORES: Thank you very much. Corhonda actually asked one of my questions about the diversity and ethnicity and self-advocates. Another thing I would like to be considered and to ask based on the 2020 class of those how many have been displaced due to hurricanes at the time? And part of that consideration would be because if you are even considering in person what is the availability of any kind of spaces, especially hotels that are filled with evacuees from Laura and possibly Delta still.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: There were three 2020 class members that was in the region five that was greatly affected. Of those three, only one person indicated that they were, at that time, they were still displaced. And I think they were working on getting back in their home. The other two have been able to get back home. What was the second part of your question?

NICOLE FLORES: Just to consider the possibility that

even looking at in person, which is kind of scary because of talking about covid exposure possibly already happening in the classes, how would you even be able to find hotels that are available due to the high number of people, evacuees from Laura and possibly Delta still residing in most of the hotels around the state.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Well, I would go back, if I may answer Mr. Chairperson, I would have to go back to the phase four where we would actually be meeting and convene virtually with all of the participants as well as regional. With the regional format the coordinator goes to that region. Right now, because of not only the pandemic, actually what Louisiana is going through with the hurricanes I think it would be easier for us to find one hotel room verses ten hotel rooms. Then the two sessions I would recommend in person would only be where we would do legislative session and the graduation. And that could be pending to be determined in April or June of 2021. I know the efforts we are committed to as a State of Louisiana to get our fellow Louisianians back in their home. We know how to get people back where they need to be. And then therefore all we have to do is focus on how to stay safe with the pandemic. Did I answer your question?

NICOLE FLORES: Yes, ma'am. And one final thing just to consider whenever we would go back since you mentioned possibly already people who had covid in the classes, how they could address that for attendance for future classes.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: I would be asking Marilee Andrews and Mr. Jim Sprinkle to allow us to get Partners in Policymaking masks just to extend our efforts at being safe. As an educator, I am also an administrator for a small private school, so I have been working with the Department of Education how to keep our students safe. And I would want to extend those same measures with our Partners in Policymaking class. Some of the effort we go through to keep our kids at school safe, I will want to do the same for Partners in Policymaking class.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you. I see we still have a couple hands raised. And I saw Liz with her hand raised and then go down, now back up. Go ahead Liz.

LIZ GARY: Thank you. Great presentation. Very thorough. Excellent presentation. I got cutoff at one point as I was driving the electricity is in and out. I may be repeating something, and I apologize. Were you

saying considering, I saw all the phases. But was there a consideration of finishing off. Let me just backup. My thought would be a good possibility of finishing off those who started this year, finishing them since they have already had their bonds and connected. Finishing those groups virtually and then possibly considering the fact of maybe doing regional reach outs where you will go in the area or do it virtual as opposed to bringing everybody in one spot. We did that, as you said, in 2016. And it was not as effective as it could be. Great turnouts for Lake Charles area, New Orleans area. and I think Shreveport was okay. But I think it's an opportunity now that you are dealing with that it won't necessarily be Partners in Policymaking, but the dollars in 2016 wasn't either. But that option to try to regroup under the circumstances. Obviously, nobody thought six months, eight months into this and dealing this with hurricanes that now have hit southwest, southeast and God knows what. Just a thought in letting the class finish virtually since they had the bond and also maybe moving forward. I don't think personally you have time to create a whole another class. Normally in September it ends. October, we made sure everyone was still interested. By November packages created and submitting back. And by December 1st everything in place. You are definitely on a crunch time and that would be probably very difficult to move forward with a whole new class next year.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: As I said before, yes. You have actually shared my opinions. As the coordinator I just carry out the charge. And you also stated when you went out that is the desire, I think around my slide eight start virtually and then the regional, if possible, by June to possibly have an in-person graduation. If we cannot have an in-person graduation, I have been working with some other groups that have created the video presentations all around the country. I have some great ideas. I have some creative ideas where they can have the same hooray that all the previous classes have had.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you. I am only the chair of this committee, but I think it's important we guide our direction. And maybe we need to decide on the class of 2020 and then the class of 2021/22, whatever that is going to be. Or I am going to leave that up to y'all. We need to figure out how we are going to guide the conversation, and

maybe Marilee can help us with that. I do see Corhonda as has her hand raised again. If you have another question you have the floor.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Yes, Ms. Adrienne, I have several more questions. My first question is if you are going to do it virtually, what accommodations are you going to put in place for individuals with low incidence disabilities such as individuals that are visually impaired, individuals that use switches, etc. What type of accommodations and modifications would you be able to provide if you go with the virtual option. Number two, in the event considering hurricane season does not end until December, what kind of changes and accommodations would we have to make if we were to go forward with this considering right now we didn't change this meeting date and Hurricane Zeta has affected a large number of people in this state. Hurricane Laura, Hurricane Delta. Just trying to see what accommodations would be put in place for if we have state emergencies such as hurricanes that were to affect them. Also are we taking into consideration that individuals, parents of children with intellectual developmental disabilities are still having to educate their children virtually as well as work virtually from home. So what type of accommodations will we provide for them? In order for this class to actually graduate. That is my first thing. And then two, have we even spoken to this class to ensure that they want to continue, and they would actually be able to successfully continue to go forward with this class, if we were to say, let's move forward in the next month?

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Okay. So I think I have all your questions and attempt to answer all of them. Noting just because I reply with an answer, doesn't mean that is what actually is going to be voted onto happen. Number one, in regards to the virtual platform for self-advocates and other disabilities, including visually impaired. As a vocational rehabilitation counselor I have been involved in virtual platforms that take all of these disabilities into consideration. So number one, let me say most people, majority people with visually impaired disability already have the adaptive or assistive technology to be able to use technology. If not, if I came across an applicant or participant that does not have what they need we need to get them with latan so they can get the equipment they need.

The virtual platforms I would encourage is more like a college platform where the information is provided, and the participants and the students have a week to submit. Not like we would go into a virtual chat room immediately. The platform would be carefully designed to keep all of the number two, the changes with accommodations, three other questions about parents with intellectual disabilities. That virtual platform, that rollout would take all of those personal considerations. I can say I am glad I have an advantage of actually having participated, and still participate in school virtually. So I am familiar with the different platforms that can effectively work with our participants that have these challenges. I also wanted to note virtual platforms actually have an advantage for self-advocates. When we are in a class when we are meeting in person and in a class sometimes that class is moving so fast that those advocates or people with disabilities don't have the amount of time to process and ask questions the information they receive. As a coordinator I am always going back. I am sure Liz can address this too. We have had to go back and reassure our participants with disabilities understood and understand and are okay with the information provided. We have to extend efforts to make sure that they are actually included. Even though I only had three in person classes, I have actually been in situations where I have self-advocates and partnered them with a parent to make sure they are being included. And so when we kind of step back into a virtual platform they have all the comfortability in the house. I myself, my daughter have an intellectual disability and she can operate on her computer and in a virtual platform and in social media better than she can in person. When she would struggle to talk to you to tell you what she is trying to say, if she has her computer and her iPad, she can quickly respond to you better than she can when she is in person. I think it would have some benefits for our participants with disabilities. And then I think that answered question one, two, and three. And you had a fourth question that said have we spoken to this class. I have not surveyed this class in its entirety. But I have been in communication with this class. I have also addressed issues with class members as to how this class was being a part of their classwork and how we should move forward so they can move on. So I think this format, especially

the virtual format and the regional format, would actually give them a sense of effort that we are trying and extending all efforts so they actually can participate.

CORHONDA CORLEY: And thank you so much. My other question is how many English language learners do we have represented in this class.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: English as a second language.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: There are no participants that have English as a second language.

CORHONDA CORLEY: When you said people identifying as self-advocates as well as parents of children with disabilities, are we identifying them as self-advocates accordingly by the federal DD act.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Let me tell you this, that is information that I was given. I would have to go back and look at the actual disability. I am almost positive I can enter from the standpoint if it was coming from Louisiana Developmental Disability Council, they take the ADA and all the federal regulations in consideration. Now if you want a more, I am doing an extensive study of past participants. That is pretty much out of curiosity and not necessarily as a charge from the council. But more so we can have an accurate account of information that was presented to me.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Mr. Chairman, if you don't mind, I would like to make a motion for us to actually have a full breakdown provided, not only to the full council, but to the public showing the breakdown by region, as well as by alumni of racial ethnicity as well as self-advocates. As well as English language learners or English as a second language so we can see for future classes how we can actually encourage a more diverse and inclusive Partners in Policymaking class.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: May I respond as well? That is actually one of the charges Jim Sprinkle and Marilee Andrews, we discussed in December. When I was interviewed, they gave me the opportunity to ask questions and that was actually one of my questions. And they kind of boomeranged it back on me. If you go back, there were several points in my presentation that actually noted what you were saying. One being as an advocate of individuals with disabilities as being involved with organizations like early steps and voc rehab I had not heard about Partners in Policymaking until I applied for the job. One

of the things I want to change. Number two, whereas noted in that area the number of self-advocates that was reported out of that 378, 25 percent were self-advocates and 74 percent were parents. We want that number to raise up to be even or higher. And then actually in the other numbers that were presented we want to increase those numbers too. This may get into a different type of debate or discussion, but there is a concern when individuals with disabilities graduate from high school they go into this world of unknown. And so because there is a disconnect with department of ed and outside of after you graduate from high school, what do you do. An effort and initiative of higher education institutions of creating programs for individuals with disabilities. And I think it would be an awesome effort if Partners in Policymaking target these programs that are helping students with disabilities to have a college experience that they actually also experience what else to do within your adult life. As adults we are greatly affecting policies and advocating for others. I think probably should also interface. As far as the information is there, like I said, I was given this information as a record of what Liz Gary was doing. Also remember we are two different people. We look at numbers different. She may be able to pick up the spread sheet and automatically call out. Whereas I was just picking up the information. Some people are numbers people. Just depends how you want to look at the information. Do you want to look at the information from a quantitative or qualitative standpoint. That information could be presented either way. But the charge is that it's almost like the glass full or empty. We can sit here and talk about whether not half full or half empty, but the point is we have to get the water to those people.

MIKE BILLINGS: Just going back to Corhonda's comment just to clarify. It sounds like both as the PIP coordinator and as the council we are going to be tracking the demographics a lot more in depth than we were. Am I following that right or need to go back to actually putting forth a motion to do so?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I can answer that a little bit if you would like. The demographics information will be tracked every selection committee by who we select. Sort of like I read it out to you earlier. I am not sure exactly. I wasn't clear exactly what you were asking. A full

breakdown by region and alumni. I think it would just make more sense to do it by class who was accepted. And then I would ask Ms. Thomas to be tasked with compiling all that information from alumni. I think that would be appropriate and helpful. And she is only going to be able to do that with as much information as she has. We have to keep in mind today October, whatever it is, 29th you can say I want every piece of information from the inception of partners, but it may not have been historically recorded. Adrienne and I can do our best with the information we have.

MIKE BILLINGS: I am asking for clarification too. Corhonda are you looking going forward or going back?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you. I am looking at both. Because most of the time when you take a look at the history you can see how you need to move and navigate going forward. And so I know the information is available from the previous years. So I just think we need to actually take a good look and scrutinize the data from the previous years. And I am not saying we have to go back all the way to the existence of Partners in Policymaking, but I am saying we can go back at least ten years and from there moving forward look at the trajectory of what the data is showing us and see how we can make it an equal level playing field for all that is impacted by this community. What I am saying we need to look at that information so that we can actually have it correctly reflected moving forward on how many individuals we have enrolled in our Partners in Policymaking class that are English language learners or English as a second language. How many we have that are self-advocates. And how many we have that are parents of individuals with disabilities. And how many that we have that are just lay people that are working in the industry of working with individuals with disabilities. I think we just need to have those numbers with the full breakdown of the targeted disparities that ITAC has provided so we can ensure all populations are being served.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Like I said, Ms. Corley, I don't know that we are going to have all that information. I just don't know if we are going to have all that information. The person who might know, if she is willing to speak, would be Liz. I saw her shaking her head earlier. I don't know if she has any thoughts. She is nodding. Liz did this for almost like a decade.

LIZ GARY: I was waiting to be acknowledged. I am sorry. Yes, thank you. I am going to reinforce what you say. There is limited information because there is limited information asked on the application over the years. I can say Corhonda did say the last ten years I feel comforted you can probably get that information as far as males, females, the different ethnicity, and things like that. English language, we never asked that question. So that question would mostly like not be able to be answered from that standpoint because it was never asked. Obviously, something that needs to be done. As far as that past probably ten or 11 years the information is very, very sketchy. It took me years to try to re-create who went back far, whether they were a self-advocate and male, female, things like that. But I would say probably the last ten years you can get most of that information except for the English second language learners.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you Liz. And Corhonda before I come back to you, mind if I take, Bambi has her hand raised for quite a while. See if she has something to add for this conversation.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So I think Corhonda, correct me if I am wrong, having that data in order to be able to have a more diverse representation of people who are in partners. I have been probably on the selection committee almost every year over the past decade. We work really hard at trying to get diversity and select people who met those representations. But the issue is, is recruitment. Just to answer your question Corhonda, primarily the majority of people are white mothers from South Louisiana. Every other demographic area is underrepresented in partners. And so we have to do a better job of recruitment. We need to have self-advocates, more men, we need to have, particularly in some particular regions. I know region six hardly ever have any applicants. Region seven, Northeast Louisiana. We just need to do a better job. And it sounds like Adrienne, I love you are targeting higher ed institutions. The DD Council has a contract working with the higher ed institution. So we can really tap into that. I have a son in a program, and I listen to their class online. We got on this meeting he was still having his morning class and there is some exceptional young people in that program. And I am sure the case across the state. And so that is a great opportunity to tap into some young

self-advocates and get them when they are young and get them started in advocating. Just my input on our recruitment. And the other thing, Adrienne, so I don't have to come back on later. One of the things we really work on is making sure we keep our alumni active and cohesive and working together. We have a Partners in Policymaking Facebook group, private group. I think you should be added to and that has over hundred of our alumni. So that is a way, I don't think that needs to be your job, really alumni's job to stay active and encouraging. You could also be a part in providing information. We invest so much money in Partners in Policymaking in each person that is a graduate, and we have to make sure we continue, we are getting a return on our investment in this program. Thank you.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you Bambi. Corhonda, I don't know if that answered your questions or still want to put forth a motion?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Now I would like to change my motion and have the motion where the motion is that we look at the data to see if we can actually identify those targeted disparities that I mentioned beforehand. But if I need to mention them again, I can. And going forward that it is a question on the application on those targeted disparities so we can track that information. And that we form a committee to actually help with recruitment in those targeted areas.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Can you please list the targeted disparities so I can type it into the motion?

CORHONDA CORLEY: The targeted disparities are all the ones according to ITAC. English as a second language, self-advocates, individuals that are social economically disadvantaged, racial ethnic minority, rural or urban areas. And if there is self-advocate or not that have another disability in addition to DD or intellectual.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So this is the motion I have. The motion is long. I am going to read it. A motion to look at demographics status to see if we can identify targeted disparities. English as second language, self-advocates, individual that are social and economically disadvantaged, racial ethnic minorities, rural or urban areas, and self-advocates with a secondary disability. And going forward include that information as a question on the application so we can track it moving forward. And that we form a committee for recruitment. Made by Ms. Corley.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Let me ask Ms. Corley, I am not wearing my Parliamentarian hat, to see before there is a second on that motion. If I am not mistaken, correct me if I am wrong, there is a selection committee for Partners in Policymaking. Is there a possibility, and I am not asking you to change your motion, but I am asking if there is a selection committee right now that is deeply involved in the selection process that that committee has an added task of looking at these things in the recruitment process verses creating a different committee. I don't know if that makes sense or not.

MIKE BILLINGS: I have several hands raised.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I would just say I agree with what Ms. Thomas just suggested. I think that makes more sense.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I was going to say men have not been represented in partners. I think that should be added to a targeted group we look at. I know it's not in the DD act that Corhonda talked about. But I think something we should include.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Do you want me to add that to the motion?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes. And please add men as well as LGBTQ that may be in the disability community.

MIKE BILLINGS: Just to clarify, do we still want to try for a separate committee?

LIZ GARY: The only thing I would say is when we would meet for the selection committee all of those things were looked, except for English second language, there was a criteria by partners you always look at. Bambi and Marilee at the same time, we would look at that and focus on the disparities first based on the applications. But I think I need to go back with what Bambi said, the recruitment is really the bigger issue than the actual selection at the time. Because you are limited with what you got when you got the applications in. And so I think it's a recruitment issue to focus on the recruiting of making sure you are getting the list of all those different disparities out there as opposed to the actual selection. When the selection comes down to it, we would choose based on starting the least amount of applicants with all the different disparities to touch on throughout the state based on different ethnicities. We would focus on that first before we would do anything else. Almost every time region nine and region two went last getting picked because

we had to make sure we had geographic representation, disparities, the things you are requesting listed on the application. Because I think rural and urban the only thing would be based on where the application came from. You knew that something came from little town outside of something. Cause I had to look up a lot of these towns to see what region and what parish. I think the only way unless you specifically ask the question on the application as to those to be able to really, really tap into making sure you have all the disparities other than the ethnicity, other than male or female, self-advocate or parent.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Ms. Corley going back to your motion. As stated, before I think the concern is the recruitment process. And that is one of the things that I was discussing earlier as far as looking at the history of the recruitment process. A lot of the recruitment process is fairly standard. Whereas it goes on the partners website. Ma be passed through Families Helping Families. One of the recruitment strategies I would suggest is being able to promote the Partners in Policymaking program. More to those underserved communities that you are speaking of.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So I am just going to try to put us a little bit on track.

MIKE BILLINGS: We have a motion on the floor.

MARILEE ANDREWS: We have a motion on the floor and Ms. Corley, you haven't said whether or not you want to keep forming a PIP recruitment committee in your motion or if you want to take it out. Wonder if you can answer that one thing first.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes, thank you so much. I would like to keep the recruitment committee in that motion, and I would like to make sure that targeted disparities are questions that are listed on the application as well.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I am going to read that motion and then we will see if we have a second. A motion to look at demographics data to see if we can identify targeted disparities, English as second language, self-advocates, individuals that are social and economically disadvantaged, racial ethnic minority, rural urban areas, self-advocates with secondary disability, men, and LGBTQ. And going forward include that information as a question on the application so that we can track it moving forward. And that we form a committee for PIP recruitment. That is the motion.

MIKE BILLINGS: So we have a motion on the floor. Do we have a second? Does anyone want to second? The motion did not pass.

NICOLE FLORES: A question about clarification in the chat about the motion. Wanted to make sure that was addressed. For the socially disadvantaged, would that be self-identifying. From Lillian DeJean, just a point of clarification. Does this motion specify the questions would be added to the application regarding if the applicant is a part of the targeted disparity. IE, do you consider yourself to be socially disadvantaged. Are they going to be self-identifying as socially disadvantaged.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I didn't see that was specified in the motion, so I don't have an answer for that. I am assuming if you are putting it on the application and the application is filled out by the applier, they would have to be self-identified.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: I am not answering that question, just giving you a point of clarity. In the initial survey participants are asked a few questions, ten questions, several questions. And one being gender, ethnicity, age group, is there a place of residence which is urban, suburban, metro areas, rural. And then there is also an income question that is listed less than 12,000, 12 to 19,999, 20 so on. Level of education. Types of disability. Involvement in advocacy and personal responsibility in contacting local officials. As well as have they did any type of advocacy work by letters, phone calls or office visits. So there are, this initial survey covers 14 questions and I think some of your concerns are in those 14 questions in the initial survey.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you Adrienne. We are actually over on our time right now. That motion never received a second. Unless no one is planning on making a separate motion then we will move on with discussion. I see Liz has her hand raised.

LIZ GARY: What I was thinking what about a recommendation for Adrienne to reach out, since she already reached out to other coordinators, what about to reach out to the other coordinators and speak with them to see how they go about ensuring the disparities or even Minnesota where partners is done. Also the handbook that might have recommendations as to how to go about getting that information. The other thing was there is plenty of

applications and I think they might be still saved on your computer where I had gotten other applications from other states and comparing them. Because we've redone the application several times. I am wondering if I need to make a motion on that or just a recommendation that she researches that information. Cause I think if you get that information on the application then you will be able to have that information and push it with recruitment and also the selection will be even more broader with those questions being answered. Mike is that something we can just do as a recommendation or a motion. Not saying we don't still need to look at the information from the last ten years. But at least going forward look at that to see how it appears on other applications in other states.

MARILEE ANDREWS: It's 10:36. We've spent a lot of time talking about this. I think Liz's comment is a segue, just so we can remain productive. Why don't we jump down to future agenda items and I would recommend putting what Liz just said as a future agenda item. And that can possibly be Adrienne's homework. And then on our next meeting will be on the agenda. And then I would suggest quickly opening up the floor to see what else we want to put on our agenda. And also want to note, so it's October 29th. And we are really tasked with making recommendations to the council on what to do with the 2020 partners class and how to do a 2021 class, or maybe not, and then a 2022 class. Nothing can really even be decided until January when this committee will present to the full council its recommendation and the council can approve it or not approve it. Move forward with future agenda items while still taking into account the concerns we have here with diversity.

MIKE BILLINGS: I agree. Let's go ahead and open the floor for the future agenda items. As Marilee stated, we need to really work on the determination of that class of 20. What we are going to project forward for them and Partners in Policymaking classes going forward.

LIZ GARY: Then I would just recommend we put on the agenda for next time to make sure we make the decision about the 2020 class and how we are going to move forward with them. The one thing I think we decide to move forward with them as a virtual for their last three classes. I think we could potentially have for that one April, May, June since they got through February, January and March. Just

a possibility. Still give time for Adrienne to plan that if it's approved in January. And then also put on the list to go ahead and move forward with 2021 possibly starting out as regional things for next year. Throwing as to put on the agenda.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you Liz. Any other discussion on those items? I think they would be good agenda items.

JIM SPRINKLE: I do have a slight concern being the fiscal agent here. Adrienne, as you know, is not being paid at this point because there is no contract. And our center is going to pay her 500-dollars just to carry through this. It is not fair to her to be working and doing all this. Just want to make you all aware of that. We are going to cover her to the best of our ability until such decision is made where the council can do it.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: We have funding set aside for partners. So as a council member I would really encourage we do what we need to do to make sure that we are compensating for these things we are asking. I don't want to get in that discussion right now. I make a recommendation that is rectified.

MIKE BILLINGS: Add that to the upcoming agenda?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yes, please.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I am afraid that will be too slow if we add that to the next agenda. Perhaps I can set up a meeting with the acting executive director, Courtney. And Jim and Adrienne. That was ultimately her decision to do that. That would be had her decision to change it.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Add it to the agenda you report back.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes.

MIKE BILLINGS: Anybody else. Corhonda.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you Mr. Sprinkle for that information. And I do strongly agree with Ms. Polotzola on that being a recommendation. As well as I would like to recommend that we actually, that maybe the staffers with the DD Council can poll some of the self-advocates to see what some of the problems or challenges they may have with doing the virtual. So it can actually provide data to Ms. Adrienne if we were to move forward with the Partners in Policy 2020 class, the different challenges and how that can be capped. And that information can be provided to this ad hoc committee for the next meeting.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I guess that would be more of a follow up. Is that how I understand it Ms. Corley?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes, ma'am. To actually follow up with all of our self-advocates that we have on the council and if we don't have any that have any of the low incidence impairments that maybe contact some of our Families Helping Families centers to see if they have some of those individuals on staff that can speak on the different challenges so we can have that data to determine how we can move forward.

MARILEE ANDREWS: If I can just make a suggestion, it might just be a quicker solution just to ask the actual self-advocates that we will be dealing with. So that would be the self-advocates in the 2020 class. I think the goal is to find out how to accommodate them so they can participate virtually.

ADRIANNE THOMAS: Might I also add I am actually taking notes. So everything that you guys are saying I am actually going to report back. As Liz suggested with information, I am going to be able to try to set aside as much as possible all the concerns and questions that has been, or comments floating through. I am not just sitting with the committee listening to the information waiting for you to say coordinator do this. When I hear it, I move on it because I am a numbers person. I work on curiosity. I thank you Mr. Sprinkle. I am working on curiosity. I am going to get the information to you. I am going to get the information, all the information that everyone wants. It's a matter of the process and the time being able to at least be address the compensation part. I can do numbers just out of curiosity.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thanks. Marilee, do you want to recap what we have for future agenda items.

MARILEE ANDREWS: We have putting on the agenda a decision about the 2020 class and how to move the 2020 class forward. A suggestion on that item potentially doing the missed April, May, June sessions and April, May, June of 2021. The next item would be regional sessions for the remainder of 2021. The next agenda item would be me reporting back on a contract between the council and FHF and then between FHF and then Ms. Thomas. The last item was Ms. Corley recommending that I poll the self-advocates on the council on the challenges of participation or maybe the self-advocates at Families Helping Families on the

challenges of virtual participation so that we can combine their responses to potentially help with virtual participation of the actual self-advocates in the 2020 class. And then where we left off there, I recommended asking that self-advocates in the 2020 class directly. I think that would be a quicker way to what I believe the end goal is. Ms. Corley didn't respond to me on that one yet.

MIKE BILLINGS: Do we have any other committee members with anything else they want to add to future agenda items? If not, I would like to move to public comment. Do we have any public comment?

JIM SPRINKLE: I would like to make a statement. Not sure how I raise my hand on this thing. I would like to really commend Adrienne for the work she has been doing so far. Really impressed. I think Liz probably is too. So thank you.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you. Glad to hear it. Any other public comment? I don't know if Marilee you can see any in the chat?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Bambi, just a comment from the council. Bambi mentioned compensating via a contract. Liz agreed. Ms. Corley agreed. And then Ms. Gary thanked Jim for sharing that information. Ms. Brenda Cosse just posted a question. LADDC staffer Andrew, what is the link or document with current demographics of Partners in Policymaking class. So I can post that on our website. It was just kind of an internal work document that we shared with the committee that made the selection. And then I shared it with the whole council at the following council meeting. But I can certainly share it with you. And Ms. Cosse also asked questions about when the transcript will be available. Hannah Jenkins on council staff said they will be available on our website as soon as the transcriptionist has it complete. Located on 2020 meetings page. The same page where you see all the meetings, the register for zoom meetings there. You can see an official meeting summary and then you can see a transcript. I think that is all of them. Unless Hannah, do you see anything else? I don't think she does. I will make sure to post that information.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you. I know discussion today in council lives demographics is a big deal right now. And those are important concerns. I think the more knowledge we have as far as demographics going forward the better off

we will be. I see Corhonda has her hand raised again.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Just wanted to recommend we add selecting all those demographics and the motion I made that we actually make that as a recommendation for the next meeting.

MIKE BILLINGS: Okay. Thank you.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I don't fully understand what I am writing down for the agenda item for that.

MIKE BILLINGS: Corhonda if you are still able, maybe you can explain it better. I believe she just wants to make sure that we review those demographics, the specific demographics she outlined.

MARILEE ANDREWS: We will put on the agenda the demographics from the 2020 class to review as a whole?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Recommended we actually look at, not just the demographics for the 2020 class, but that we actually put it on the agenda to look at it for previous years so we can see how to move forward when it's time for selection for the 2021 or 2022 class. And you can put it as addressing ITAC disparities.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Got it.

MIKE BILLINGS: Thank you. Do we have any more public comment? Any other comments from committee members before we close out? I think that is going to pretty much wrap it up.

LIZ GARY: I make a motion to adjourn.

MIKE BILLINGS: Do we have a second.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I will second.

MIKE BILLINGS: I appreciate y'all being here today. With that, do we have any objections to the adjournment? Appreciate y'all being here today. I hope everybody that was impacted by the storm resolves that quickly and look forward to scheduling the next meeting. Thank so much.