

**Partners in Policymaking (PIP) Ad-Hoc Committee**

Meeting Two

Thursday, November 19, 2020

[YouTube Broadcast](#)

**SUMMARY**

**Members Present:** Mike Billings, Corhonda Corley, Nicole Flores, Liz Gary, Jill Hano, Selina Gilliland, Bambi Polotzola

**Members Absent:** RaShad Bristo

**Attendees:** Jim Sprinkle, Adrienne Thomas, Mylinda Elliot, Bridget Bergeron, Kim Basile, Harlon Cowsar, Julie Folse

**Staff:** Marilee Andrews, Ebony Haven, Hannah Jenkins

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 AM.

Chairperson Mike Billings calls the meeting to order. Ms. Andrews takes roll and establishes a quorum. Chairperson Billings reads meeting rules and protocols.

**Recommendation re: 2020 PIP Class**

Mr. Billings recommends making recommendation to Executive Committee for the 2020 PIP class.

Ms. Flores shares viewpoint that class should be given chance to be together and finish virtually.

Ms. Corley requests information on 2020 PIP class. Ms. Thomas shares the following: they met January, February, and March; there are 4 self-advocates and 17 total members in 2020 PIP class; some members missed the March session and this could possibly have been due to COVID.

Ms. Thomas recommends a reacquaintance with 2020 class, then recap of March session virtually for those who missed March.

Ms. Corley recommends the 2020 class finish 100% virtually. She also recommends we recruit more self-advocates to be a part of this class. She also recommends they start the whole entire class over to receive complete refresher and become a cohesive unit.

Ms. Thomas shares that this class is cohesive and bonded right now and have remained in contact following the pandemic and hurricanes. She shares she is not sure how to recruit to an existing group and create cohesive group with new people.

Ms. Gilliland shares that she is a 2020 PIP class member and that the class is bonded. She sought her classmates' input and completing it virtually would be very difficult. The class requires so much focus and time, and cannot see how it works at home with distractions. Everyone would like to do it all in person once that's safe. She recommends a recap of completed sessions or starting over at the beginning of the course. It will not be the same and will be hard for self-advocates and parents with really involved children to participate virtually. She also shares that the three members dismissed in March for absences should be reinstated. Now that we know more about COVID, it would be irresponsible to punish them for staying home. As far as a 2021 class, she is not sure how to recruit or start a new class when there is so much unfinished for 2020. Everyone in her class really wants to complete the class together in the best way possible and participating virtually would not be the same as in person. In the three months, the class bonded and connected.

Ms. Thomas asks if childcare stipends were used for childcare so that participants could participate virtually without distraction, would that work for Ms. Gilliland.

Ms. Polotzola interjects that she could not isolate herself in her home focused, even if she had no children at home. Majority of people she knows it would not work with kids being cared for in another place for an entire weekend.

Ms. Gilliland shares how the stretch for each session is long and intense. Carving out that amount of time at home virtually seems challenging. This also doesn't take into account the networking and social side which cannot be replicated virtually. She recommends again that the class start over in person once the COVID issues pass.

Ms. Gary shares her experience as a PIP class member is reflective of Ms. Gilliland's comments, specifically the social connection piece that takes place "after hours." One of the most important things was to always make sure members had the in-person experience. She respects Ms. Gilliland's comments on starting over due to large period of time that has passed and the challenges of engaging in learning at home. Ms. Gary is

not sure where she stands re: moving forward virtually, unless perhaps the recap session is done virtually.

Ms. Corley shares again how there are not enough self-advocates on this committee. She questions the liability of a person contracting COVID if classes are done in person and recommends opening up applications to join the existing 2020 class, but only to self-advocates.

Mr. Sprinkle shares it's difficult to get self-advocates. Ms. Gary agrees and shares its more of a recruitment issue than a selection issue. Ms. Gary suggests that we temporarily table this topic and move to the 2021 class. She shares her recommendations on doing information regional sessions and hiring speakers that speak at regular PIP sessions. This is what was done in 2016.

Ms. Andrews' recommends making final recommendation to Executive Committee on 2020 PIP class.

Ms. Thomas shares how other states are at the same juncture as we are, and some have agreed to move forward virtually.

**MOTION ON THE FLOOR.** The Executive Committee reviews having the PIP 2020 class move forward in a virtual format; and those absent in the March session are accepted back; and the March session is repeated for all, made by Ms. Gary. Ms. Flores seconds.

**MOTION AMENDED AND PASSED.** The Executive Committee reviews having the PIP 2020 class move forward in a virtual format; and those absent in the March session are accepted back; and the January through February sessions are reviewed; and the March session is repeated for all, amended by Ms. Corley. Ms. Flores seconds. No objections. No abstentions. Motion carries.

Public Comment: Consider additional virtual options to allow participants to share some social activities; strongly recommendation that more self-advocate participation be promoted.

### **Recommendation on Possible PIP Informational Regional Sessions for 2021**

Ms. Thomas comments re: regional PIP sessions and post-secondary education institutions in Louisiana that have programs for students with disabilities.

Ms. Gary recommends considering the PIP informational sessions in a virtual format. Ms. Gary recommends moving forward with virtual meetings presented by PIP speakers (without calling it Partners in Policymaking) as this will have a powerful impact and lead to a higher number of applicants when PIP does go back live.

**MOTION PASSED.** The Executive Committee consider a virtual format in 2021 for Partners in Policymaking sessions, open to anyone who would like to join in, recommending using PIP speakers based on their topics and gives participants an entire PIP class for a year in a PIP format, which will also work as recruiting tool for next year's applicant pool, made by Ms. Gary, seconded by Ms. Polotzola. No objections. Ms. Hano abstains. Motion carries.

Ms. Hano asks if PIP virtual sessions can mirror the format in which the Council meetings are done, which is a few days at a time. Ms. Hano asks how many hours a PIP class is per year and Ms. Gary shares it is around 128 hours a year. Ms. Hano discusses if Ms. Gary seeks to spread the 128 hours out across the year. Ms. Gary explains yes, but it is not the actual PIP class and participants will not be PIP graduates; it's more about giving main speakers' main information to families. Ms. Gilliland shares the importance of differentiating between a PIP graduate from a PIP class versus a regional/ informational session.

Ms. Polotzola shares possibility of 2020 class participating in 2021 regional virtual sessions. The regional virtual sessions can be promoted by PIP graduates and reach those who don't normally have access to PIP or meet requirements to be a PIP participant. She sees the opportunity through this virtual option to reach self-advocates and their support system at the same time, rather than by family, waiver staff, higher ed staff/mentors, etc.

Ms. Corley agrees with the motion, but also believes we should collect data to find out if participant is self-advocate, etc to see what demographics we are reaching with the PIP regional virtual sessions. We can then use this pool to reach possible future PIP applicants.

Mr. Sprinkle shares his agreement with the motion made by Ms. Gary.

Public comment: Love the idea; the virtual option will allow the program to reach people with various disabilities; I agree that a survey for each virtual session would be a great indicator of the demographic info we are trying to capture; the survey will be a great recruiting tool.

**MOTION FAILED.** Executive Committee to consider a satisfaction survey for participants in the PIP regional virtual sessions that captures participants' demographic information, made by Ms. Corley. No second. Motion fails.

Ms. Gary shares that this may not be necessary as post-consumer satisfaction surveys are already done.

**Contract Between Council and Families Helping Families at the Crossroads;  
Contract Between Families Helping Families at the Crossroads and the PIP  
Coordinator**

Ms. Andrews' updates the committee that a contract has not been signed between the Council and Families Helping Families at the Crossroads for PIP.

Ms. Gary shared this does not make sense as Ms. Thomas has been doing the work of the PIP Coordinator.

Mr. Sprinkle shared he believes there should be a contract. He does not see a reason why the contract can't be put in place. The money is there, but does not have to be spent. If the money is not spent at end of contract, it can be adjusted and the money put somewhere else.

**MOTION PASSED.** Executive Committee to act as expeditiously as possible in signing a contract with Families Helping Families at the Crossroads for PIP, made by Ms. Corley. Ms. Hano seconds. Ms. Flores abstains. Ms. Gary objects. Roll call vote. 4 yays, 1 nay. Motion carries.

Ms. Hano – Yes

Ms. Polotzola – Yes

Ms. Corley – Yes

Ms. Flores – Abstain

Ms. Gilliland – Yes

Ms. Gary – No

Ms. Gary questions if its the Executive Committee that needs to act. It sounds like it's the Interim Executive Director, not the Executive Committee, who made the decision not

to sign the contract. Ms. Gary does not believe the Executive Committee is supposed to be enforcing a contract.

Ms. Gilliland does not want the details of the 2020 class to further hinder the signing of the contract and Ms. Corley's salary.

Ms. Hano and Mr. Sprinkle believe this motion, while may not be under the purview of the Executive Committee, will be a good push for the Executive Committee to get the contract on the right track with the Interim Executive Director.

Ms. Hano requests the budget breakdown of the Council's contract with Families Helping Families at the Crossroads. Ms. Andrews' will share last year's budget breakdown:

[10/1/2019 – 6/30/2020](#)

[7/1/2020 – 9/30/2020](#)

Ms. Gary recommends pushing remaining agenda items to next meeting.

**MOTION PASSED.** Motion to move remaining agenda items to the next meeting, made by Ms. Corley. Ms. Polotzola seconds. No objections. No abstentions. Motion carries.

Public Comment: Volunteers to help in any way.

**MOTION PASSED.** Motion to adjourn, made by Ms. Corley. Ms. Gary seconds. No objections.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 AM.