

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Education and Employment Committee
January 19, 2021

MARY TARVER: Hello.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hey Ms. Mary

MARY TARVER: I'm sorry. I am having every computer problem I could have. I have my computer and a laptop not cooperating with me today. I have somebody running downstairs to grab another one.

MARILEE ANDREWS: No problem. We don't have a quorum.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Just shout out when we do and hopefully by then I will have the computer working.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Sounds good.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. For the staff I just got a text from Sue Killman, she is participating for Phil today. Can she be let into the meeting. Thanks.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Ms. Mary, it's 9:12 and there are only four committee members present. A quorum is six. If you wanted to wait a bit longer.

MARY TARVER: Let's wait till 9:15.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I just received word Nicole Banks will be absent and it sounds from what Ms. Bambi shared Mr. Phil Wilson will not be present either.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Let's give them a couple more minutes. Let's wait till 9:15 and see what we look like.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. Who are the other four members?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Carmen Cetnar, Brenda Cosse, Mitch Iddins and Temisha Sonnier.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Okay.

MARY TARVER: Okay, it's Mary. We still haven't got anybody else to help us with the quorum?

MARILEE ANDREWS: No, ma'am.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Then I guess we'll have to reschedule. I hate to ask everybody to continue to

wait and these other four people we would have to call them probably if they haven't gotten on by now. So we'll just have to work on rescheduling.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay.

MARY TARVER: Sorry.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. Is there any way we can just discuss the items? It's very disheartening this is an honor to serve in this capacity for this council that means so much to our state. And I don't know where the breakdown is, but it's not respectful to those of us who have scheduled our time to be here. And so I think we need to address that somehow to make sure people, make sure we have the meetings whenever it's convenient for the majority of people and get a commitment that we have a quorum. Sorry, my phone is going off. I apologize. Maybe if we can just have a discussion about the items. May not be a formal recommendation, but people can go back and watch it. We can't do anything as a committee unless the council approves it. So maybe we have discussion and recommendations can be made from the floor. Sorry, I did not have my camera on. Apologize. Maybe have discussion and then formal recommendations can be made from the floor. Just a suggestion. I don't know what everyone else wants to do.

MARY TARVER: That's fine with me. Is there somebody on with Louisiana Rehab Services and the Department of Education?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Hi, this is Melissa. I am here and so is Angela Montgomery for LRS.

SARAH FLETCHER: And I am here from LDOE, Sarah Fletcher.

MARY TARVER: Hi. Welcome to our first half meeting.

SARAH FLETCHER: Glad to be here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: If I would like I can call roll so we can have on the record who attended and who didn't. And just take note. It's not an actual meeting, we are just discussing. Bambi Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Melissa Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Christopher Rodriguez

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Mary Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Carmine Cetnar. Brenda Cosse. Mitch Iddins. Temisha Sonnier. Nicole Banks. Dr. Phil Wilson.

SUE KILLMAN: This is Sue Killman sitting in for him today. Referring it back to him.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Great. I have you down as sitting in for him. Unfortunately, you don't count towards the quorum.

SUE KILLMAN: I understand. I do count though.

MARILEE ANDREWS: You definitely count. Thank you for coming.

MARY TARVER: Can we just go through, I guess won't discuss, but we can get updates and then introduce Sarah and kind of, is that?

MARILEE ANDREWS: As I understand it you guys can always discuss. You just can't conduct any council business like voting or making a formal recommendation.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Well, let's do that. Welcome to those who are here. We'll go through the agenda for the things, skip over the summary cause it just needs a vote and get an update and kind of play it by ear. Informal for sure today. So for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Angela Montgomery.

MELISSA BAYHAM: It's Melissa. At the last minute my meeting got canceled so I am here. I will be making our update today. Which I don't have a lot to update you on, but I will take any questions that any of the members have. I was asked to give a covid update. No major updates there other than continuing to see clients by appointment in our offices and also seeing clients still predominately virtually. We are definitely still seeing clients and we welcome referrals. Our referrals are starting, luckily starting to increase a little more. But our production

is still down because, and for good reason, a lot of individuals are still not wanting to engage. But we would like to get as many clients through our doors or virtually because we are here to serve them. As far as preemployment transition services, still continuing to try to get more school districts on board. Obviously, a very difficult time for school districts, but we are not stopping. Still trying to make sure we engage students, especially all public schools and charter schools. So we are continuing our efforts there. I think the agenda also asked for customized employment update. I don't think we have anything there. I know Sue's team at LSUHDC are continuing their work with University of South Florida in their training. I don't know if she has anything to add. She would know better than me specifically what has been going on with University of South Florida. They are continuing their training and certification so they can start training and certifying our community rehab programs. Any questions or anything you want me to talk about specifically?

MARY TARVER: I know Kelly Monroe had talked about at the last meeting about sending people to Mississippi for a different training than the one that was LSU. I didn't know if we finally reached like that is okay.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Right. That's Mark Gold and Associates and they provide a certification in customized employment. The only thing I wanted to make them aware of is there are two different things they do at Mark Gold Associates. And one is more of like just a certificate of completion. And one is an actual certification, and they would have to actually be going through certification process. The reason why we are engaging LSU, and luckily we got some funding for that for them to be trained so that they could provide training. And I don't know the numbers off the top of my head, but their training is going to be a lot more cost efficient because the training in Mississippi is quite expensive. That was one of the concerns early on was that CRPs, this was just community rehab programs,

it was just too expensive to go through the training through Mark Gold and Associates. This was our avenue to create a good training, but a more cost-effective training.

MARY TARVER: I have one other question, just wondering about the covid vaccine. Would people who are in employment situations if they meet the criteria of, I guess, maybe in this next phase when they open to essential workers, do you think there is any opportunities for some of the clients to get the vaccine or.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I honestly don't know the answer, so I don't even want to speculate. I would have to get some more information from the Department of Health.

MARY TARVER: I was wondering what would be the connection, I guess I was just thinking about people who go to employment jobs if they were able, I work at the hospital, so I know we are giving it now. It's only to healthcare providers.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Definitely something I can find out more information on.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Does anybody have any questions for Melissa or for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services?

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Quick question. I know an incredible amount of work has been done to eliminate and combat 14C waivers in the State of Louisiana, subminimum wage. I was just curious, I don't think subminimum wage exist in Louisiana, is that right, or are there still outstanding 14C waivers. The reason I ask this question because I haven't read the language and I don't know if the bill has been written up yet, but in the summary of Biden's next, not necessarily the covid bill, the economic reinvigoration act or whatever it's called, it actually has tucked in there an elimination of 14C, getting rid of the Wagner Oday act 1930 whatever. Just curious the actual impact that might make on Louisiana to determine like our level of advocacy behind the federal bill.

MELISSA BAYHAM: My understanding of the situation,

and I have heard in one of Biden's packages he definitely is looking to eliminate subminimum wage. Obviously, we do not support subminimum wage. But we do have responsibility to go to the community rehab programs to provide guidance counseling to individuals who are under those certificates. I haven't looked at it recently. But we definitely do have the rehab programs who still have the certificates. But I don't know if there is somebody from OCDD, because I don't know where they are at in their process. Most from what I understand the majority of individuals in subminimum wage are generally in those developmental disability facilities. And I know the Department of Health also has the OCDD program, they had a plan in place to eliminate the use of subminimum wage as far as the wages were concerned. I think where the majority of those individuals receive their funding. So that is my understanding of it, if that makes sense.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: A little bit. You are saying basically I guess two entities that would be interesting in having a 14C waiver. One of which would be a typical business that might invest in a 14C waiver. I think relatively rare. Where you really have 14C waivers basically day hab programs.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Right.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: And we don't know how many of those sheltered workshops have and are exercising 14C waivers, subminimum wage.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Right. And we have looked at that in the past. We just haven't done it recently cause I know they were dropping off because they knew the rules that were coming with the waivers. A lot of entities were getting rid of 14C certificates, but I haven't taken a look recently to see where we were at with that. But I know definitely reducing the amount.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Is that something you could look at or is it something we need to follow up with OCDD.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I think it's on Department of Labor's website. This is done by Department of Labor,

these certificates. I think I can go to Department of Labor's website. We researched this in the past, I just haven't done it recently. And you can get a list of any state 14C certificate holders. I will do that. But it might, to get better information, you get better information from OCDD. Because somebody might actually have that certificate but told OCDD they are not using. They would be able to give you more accurate information, but I can look up the information for you.

MARY TARVER: All right. Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Would it be possible, I have seen the website, I know it's in the bowels of DOL. If you find it can you send it around to us.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Absolutely.

SUE KILLMAN: I am on the site now and appears to be about 25 to 30. If you would like, I can put it in the comment section for everybody now. Not maybe all the information Melissa is able to get, but it is the table of 14C waiver holders in the State of Louisiana.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: I seem to remember they actually tell how many individuals are served under each waiver typically. You can actually determine the number of individuals actually being compensated, is that right.

SUE KILLMAN: It has the number of workers paid subminimum wage in the last column. I will send you the link.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Great. Thank you so much.

SUE KILLMAN: No problem.

MARY TARVER: Thank y'all.

EBONY HAVEN: Charlie Michel has his hand raised.

CHARLIE MICHEL: Hi there. Good morning. I was just curious, Melissa, I know when I was in Lafourche Parish, we had a great partnership with LRS. But I know a lot of the other special ed directors in the state, especially the more rural areas were having a little bit more difficulty because of manpower and everything else. With the advent of all the virtual meetings has the representation or the collaboration between LRS and the school systems have been able to

happen so more students can receive those services?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I know we definitely have improved because of virtual services and being able to attend IEPs virtually we have been able to participate more. Not going to tell you a hundred percent across the board. I will definitely get an update for you. I know you are asking because it's been difficult in rural areas. Hopefully, that has improved, but I will definitely look into that for you.

CHARLIE MICHEL: Great. Thanks.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Are there any other questions?

EBONY HAVEN: No, but there is a comment in the chat.

MARY TARVER: Can you, I can't, I am on my phone.

EBONY HAVEN: I can read it. It's from Ms. Corhonda Corley. Says a lot of healthcare workers and DSWs are allowed to get the vaccine, however you have to remember, especially people with disabilities, cannot get the vaccine, especially individuals with any type of allergies. Additionally a lawsuit regarding the requirements for individuals to receive the vaccine in their employment has been filed here in Louisiana. The lawsuit is filed under the American Disabilities Act. That's all we have in the comments.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. The Louisiana Department of Education, Sarah Fletcher. And you are new to our group, so if you will introduce yourself and we'll let you have the floor.

SARAH FLETCHER: Thank you. Really excited to be here today. Thanks for welcoming me and inviting me. I am Dr. Sarah Fletcher. I am a school psychologist by training and a former teacher and excited to be working at the department now. Got a lot of new things happening. A lot of good work to do. Really excited. So we have a couple of updates for covid 19 along the same lines. We got about 8 million-dollars from Louisiana legislature for distance learning devices. Purchase chrome books. And then along the lines of the vaccination, Dr. Brumley in a letter to Louisiana

Department of Health Dr. Brumley ask the 166,000 teachers and other education staff get voluntary access to the vaccine and move up in priority level. We're still working on administration this year. In light of continuing challenges we're offering some flexibilities in how that is being administrated. And the testing windows have been expanded and more virtual tests being offered. And also announced an additional \$1.2 million in services funding for school systems that they are able to apply for now to get money for the services they have been providing so far this year to make up for any lost learning or services due to the pandemic last spring. I think that's all I have for covid. We have released the developmental screening guidebook which can be found on the young children with disabilities landing feed. That has been a big update on our website. The webinar gives an in-depth review of the guidebook. And then an updated resource guide on early childhood transition for families to help navigate special education. We have another exciting partnership with DM group. We have a partnership with the District Management Group to development a comprehensive plan to guide the work of LDOE to better service students with special needs. You may have been, they may have reached out to you already to do a focus group. So we encourage you to give really candid feedback and provide a lot of input there so we can charter the new direction for this administration at LDOE. Here to answer any questions.

MARY TARVER: Do you want to see if Mr. James is on the call if he wants to give a little spill about what he is working on?

EBONY HAVEN: Actually, Mr. James is on the call. I can allow him to speak.

MARY TARVER: Yes, please.

DAVID JAMES: Hi everyone. Can y'all hear me.

MARY TARVER: Yes, sir.

DAVID JAMES: Excellent. Good morning everybody. My name is David James. I'm a director at District Management Group. And as Ms. Fletcher mentioned we're

currently partnering with LDOE and specifically office of equity, inclusion and opportunities to develop a plan to guide the work of LDOE to better service students with special needs. So again, as Ms. Fletcher mentioned, conducting a series of confidential conversations and focus groups. Spoken with some folks on this call already. But with stakeholders across the state to provide folks a voice in that planning process. And so wanted to check with this group in terms of what would be the best way to collect the input and feedback from individuals and stakeholders on the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council. That I understand there is specific ways or methods y'all would like to offer up folks on the council to provide feedback. Wanted to join the meeting today to see what would be the best way to collect feedback from this council.

MARY TARVER: I wonder if there's something we can do, like get a date and time that we could have a couple of opportunities for a focus group. Can you do it, when you were saying it was confidential, but is it that you need individuals and you are doing one on one, or you want a group.

DAVID JAMES: You have been doing a combination, but I think for a body like the council it could be helpful to do it as a focus group to give multiple folks the opportunity to participate. So typically set the groups up to be anywhere between four and six individuals. And we will run for that group between 30 and sixties minute to offer folks a chance to provide feedback. Typically for a group like this we don't talk with everybody, but a representative sample of the council.

MARY TARVER: Right. That sounds great. This opportunity for the DD Council is awesome so we appreciate you including us and certainly want to help with the work that you are starting. I would wonder if there would be an opportunity to do a couple of focus groups to operate at a couple different times and the DD Council staff could send it out and we could get

volunteers. I have a feeling we would have lots of people that would want to volunteer and be a part of a focus group. Would it be better for all of us, for you to give us some days and times and then we could fill it in.

DAVID JAMES: Yeah, we would be happy to host say two or three focus groups, put a date and time out there and allow folks to join one at a time so it's convenient to them. Is there somebody on the council it would make to sense with to connect with offline to coordinate dates and times that would work well for folks on your end?

MARY TARVER: Sure. Marilee, what staff would help us?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think that would be me. I would send you my email Mr. James. And I am not sure, Ms. Mary, I don't know if we should suggest this at the main council meeting?

MARY TARVER: Yes.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Since there is not a quorum is what I was thinking.

MARY TARVER: Oh, yeah. Yes.

DAVID JAMES: Would it make sense, Ms. Andrews, should I connect with you offline and then coordinate from there pending the full council's approval.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. I think that's great. I will send you my email in this chat.

MARY TARVER: When is the council meeting, is it next week?

MARILEE ANDREWS: The council meeting is this Thursday at 8:30 a.m.

MARY TARVER: Perfect. So Mr. James, we will definitely look forward to working with you and getting a couple groups together for feedback and appreciate you being on the call. And appreciate Louisiana Department of Education working with y'all to start this new initiative and planning.

DAVID JAMES: Excellent. Thank y'all so much for your time.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. Before Mr. James

leaves, I saw Charlie Michel made a recommendation that one of the focus groups be with our Families Helping Families directors or designee. And I think they are working in the field every day that would be a great focus group. Make that recommendation.

MARY TARVER: That's good.

DAVID JAMES: Yes. So just a quick reaction to that. So we have had a chance to talk with folks from Families Helping Families already. We did host a focus group, looks like five different individuals from that group. That was an organization that LDOE recommended we reach out to. So we did have a chance to connect with them.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Are there any other comments or chats?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. You have six comments, and we have two hands raised.

MARY TARVER: Let's go with the hands raised.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Good morning madam chair and the rest of this committee. This is Ms. Corley. I am deeply troubled that we would say we would like to recommend for them to actually speak with Families Helping Families first instead of speaking directly with a focus group that consist of people that are directly in the education community. Such as our parents. If we are going to create a focus group, yeah, they can be at the table. But definitely have parents that have children in the school systems at the table. Cause nobody is being impacted more heavily by covid being in these school buildings than our parents who have children that enter those brick-and-mortar buildings every single day. And to silence them and not have them heard and be part of a focus group is absurd. Secondly, why are we having an education committee meeting today when BESE is currently meeting. BESE have a meeting today. BESE 2021 schedule has been posted on their website. We are not represented right now in BESE. BESE today in regards to the schools. Which I know we have multiple lawsuits in charter schools specifically in New Orleans area not servicing

our children with disabilities. Who is our representative that is attending the BESE board meetings today. I would definitely love to know that. In addition to that, the compensatory services money. Compensatory services legally are supposed to be addressed at the very beginning of the school year. What is the deadline on when this money have to be used. What is the deadline. The state department of education is about to give \$1.2 billion dollars. How is the developmental council going to ensure that that 1.2 billion is utilized to server our children that are going into the brick-and-mortar buildings as well as children that are home bound. The vaccine, most of our people with disabilities cannot receive it. Cannot. Most of our direct support workers cannot receive it. They either have an underlying issue or because they have something like allergies. I need everybody on this education committee to actually think about what you're telling our people who go in these buildings. We have more than 200,000 children with developmental disabilities that are a part of this school system. Louisiana school system. And right now their voices are not being heard. The voices are not being heard. If you are going to create a focus group, bring parents to the table that actually send their children into this brick-and-mortar building. Bring parents that have children with low incident. Bring parents to the table who children are not being served. Served right now in the midst of a pandemic.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. We will cover a couple of the questions. One, on the focus group, that is what they're here today to do. This is an agreement and a process that Louisiana Department of Education has started. And so they are working through a management group that is having focus groups across the state. So what you are saying is what they are doing. The Families Helping Families is one piece. Parents are a piece. The DD Council is a piece. They will get an opportunity, or people will have an opportunity to become part of focus groups throughout the state. And

I applaud them for doing that. So there will be representatives from parents across the state as well as other groups that will be doing that. As far as the BESE board and their meetings, we will look at what our calendars are for the BESE board and try to avoid scheduling our meetings at that time. But it was yesterday before I think you made a comment about it or this morning. And so our agenda and our meetings have also been posted. So we, unfortunately, have the same date and time and try to do a better job of not doing that. But it would have helped had we realized that last week or two weeks ago whenever we set our meeting. About the money the Department of Education is getting and what they are going to be using it for, I will ask Ms. Sarah Fletcher if she has any other information about that that she can share.

SARAH FLETCHER: A good question. You are exactly right Ms. Corley. The schools were supposed to start delivering those compensatory services at the beginning of the school year. And really over the summer they could have been looking at the data they had from any distance learning they had done to determine whether or not compensatory services were needed. At the start of the school year most of the systems made an offer of compensatory services for the families and for each student that needed it. If they accepted that offer, then they planned for the services for this year. And so the students likely have been receiving these services for this year. The extra money is to go on top of the money they get from their IDEA budget to support extra services these students need. There is no deadline. Just the school year for these extra services.

MARY TARVER: Perfect. Thank you.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. I have been trying to raise my hand. I am very concerned that our meeting is public and there was a comment made about our Families Helping Families centers that people could perceive that our Families Helping Families centers are not family members. The Families Helping Families are

people with disabilities and family members. They are not the only one, so everybody's voice should be at the table. But they do represent families. Not only their own families, but they interact and support families in the community across our state. I just want to make sure that is clear. I wish I could have interjected sooner so the public would not be confused about our Families Helping Families centers.

MARY TARVER: I appreciate you saying that Bambi. Ebony, are there any other hands?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. Ms. Roslyn Hymel has her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Okay, Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: I don't know if y'all could hear me or not.

MARY TARVER: We can hear you now.

ROSLYN HYMEL: The thing is I ran a little late, I am sorry about that. But I know I missed a lot of it. But how can for like children in the State of Louisiana, and I know it's a little hard with the covid and that, how can they go to school especially when they are wearing their mask. And they are trying to talk for the children who are in the centers and trying to talk through the mask. I know teachers could they ever really understand them if they talking through their mask. How does that work?

MARY TARVER: Well, I know from my own experience with Haden he has gotten so used to wearing a mask the other day when we got out of the car and outside, he was like mask. So the kids have definitely gotten used to wearing mask and compensate, I think, for whenever they are talking in the classroom. I don't know if they continue to have issues. I think in each school they kind of work through whatever issues they have. I know also some masks that have a clear face where you can see people's lips. And one of our clinics actually has a pediatric therapy and that's what they have been using with the children. So sometimes making accommodations for that.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah. Like you said with the clear

ones, I wish they would have made more clear mask to be easier mainly to sit in the centers or classrooms, no matter what school for every parish they have instead of the cloth and the mask they are really using.

MARY TARVER: Thank you for that comment. Are there any other hands raised?

EBONY HAVEN: No, Mary. But you have several comments in the chat. So the first question I think is for Dr. Fletcher. Can you explain what the compensatory services will look like for students with disabilities. That's from Ms. Liz Gary.

SARAH FLETCHER: That is going to be different for each child depending on their situation and disability. And what learning or what services they lost during the facility closure this past spring. The schools and the IEP teams, to answer that question, about what additional services would the child need above and beyond what they would currently be receiving to make up that lost ground. So that's what we would be calling compensatory services for this school year. Could be anything. Extra instructional time, could be extra time with the service provider, could be anything. Depends on the IEP team decision.

EBONY HAVEN: Second question is from Mr. Harlin. He is asking why are the school systems so devoted to the chrome book when they have many accessibility issues for people with disabilities.

SARAH FLETCHER: A good question too. I think with chrome books it's something I know internet accessibility this pandemic has brought that issue to light for sure around the state. And so chrome books are pretty cheap and easy ways to get kids on the internet. When it comes to the more specific and like special specific technology that students need, we definitely acknowledge that is a need too. And so that is something that could be paid for through compensatory service on an individual bases if that is necessary.

EBONY HAVEN: And the rest of the comments are comments, not questions. Charlie Michel says please

know many of the executive directors do, in fact, have children in the schools. Additionally all of us have employees that have children in the schools right now as well. Nicole Flores says I am an executive director with FHF and have a child receiving special education and related services in the public school system as do other employees. Ms. Corley says I didn't say the FHF centers were not family members and do not serve the community. I am saying it should not be just agencies or families who children are directly impacted in the school system with problems being service such as medically fragile children like mine that actually enter the building and cannot wear a mask. All of the other comments are questions were already addressed. You do have one committee member with her hand raised. I think it's Bambi.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Dr. Fletcher, not sure if you shared this or not, but what department within LDOE do you work under?

SARAH FLETCHER: I am in the equity, inclusion and opportunities office.

MARY TARVER: Which is a new, isn't that new from the new superintendent? I think we talked a little bit about that at our last meeting. Can you give a little blurb for somebody who wasn't here the last time.

SARAH FLETCHER: Yeah. I think we reorganized a little bit and still, I think, in the process of reorganizing. I think there is this new office that's been created, and we are now under that. I guess I was formally under special education policy team. That team is now under, on the diverse learners division of the equity, inclusion, opportunities office.

MARY TARVER: So who is over that, who is the director or the top of that chain of the group that you are in?

SARAH FLETCHER: Dr. Kelly Peterson. I think you met her last time.

MARY TARVER: Right. She was at our last meeting and maybe last two meetings, I think. She had talked to us about just the realignment and things they were

going to be doing with the Department of Education moving forward. And some of it was going to be things that could happen quickly and some that would take more time. I think one of the reasons they have the focus group and looking throughout the state to try and help recognize where there are opportunities for improvement. And I think working towards that across the state. So we appreciate that and glad to see you on our committee.

SARAH FLETCHER: Thanks. Happy to be here.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Anything else with Department of Education? Our next items that we had on the agenda were about our goals and objectives for our five-year plan and then the council's legislative agenda. Which is the cameras in special education classrooms upon request. And then ideas and activities for the full council to consider. So y'all have to help me. I know some of this would be votes. How do we move through this section?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I can provide updates on that if you would like.

MARY TARVER: Yes. That would be great.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So at our last, at this committee's last meeting in October we discussed, I asked the committee to begin thinking of ideas and activities for the full council to consider including in its FFY 2022 action plan. Which begins October 1, 2021. Not sure if anybody did that. But this is, I guess, FFY 2022 action plan run October 1, 2021 to September 30th, 2022. You can use the state's five-year plan for 2022 to 2026 which was adopted at the October council meeting. You can look at that to see the plan to help you come up with ideas. But I would just, again, ask you guys to do that so when there is an education and employment committee that meets with a quorum and able to vote hopefully you all can come to that meeting with ideas to vote on to bring to the full council. And those hyperlinks are in our agenda to the state five-year plan. You guys talked a lot at the last meeting in October also about cameras in the

classroom upon request. A lot of committee discussion. I just linked that information here for you. Ms. Mary had encouraged these discussions to come back at the next education and employment committee meeting as ideas for the FFY 2022 action plan. So I will give you just the basics, but this is more under SDCI, the legislative agenda. The council has its 2021 legislative agenda. It does include cameras in special education classrooms upon request. I know LaCAN is working on the legislative agenda right now, reaching out to legislators scheduling legislative visits. I know there is round table information coming soon. I think to create an activity for cameras in that classroom before that has become a law is probably putting the cart before the horse. That's kind of my thoughts on that. Like I said, just wanted to update you guys on where cameras in the classroom was. I know a big piece of the discussion at the last meeting. I don't know if that's what you were looking for. You're back. Ms. Mary?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: While we are waiting on Mary, in regards to you talking about the five-year plan did I understand you correctly to say we're going to decide on what those activities are.

MARILEE ANDREWS: As I understand it the committees are tasked with bringing forward proposed ideas and activities to put on the action plan for FFY 2022. Does that make sense?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: And what is the timeframe for that?

MARILEE ANDREWS: So I don't have it in front of me, but I think generally we would have mentioned it last meeting. Would have had ideas for this meeting. And brought them forward at the full council this meeting or the full council at the next meeting. So begins October 1, 2021. Would want to wind up prior to that.

COURTNEY RYLAND: H. Can everyone hear me? This is Courtney Ryland the interim executive director of the council. Just to give you an update on the

timeline for planning committee with developing the next action plan. We have been asking for our standing committees to present ideas during their quarterly council meetings this week. And then those ideas are supposed to go before the full council on the Thursday the 21st. And those ideas that are developed or received by that full council will then go to the planning ad hoc committee meeting which will be formed and meet between February and March for them to develop and draft 2022 action plan. Then what that committee develops will then be presented during the April quarterly council meeting for the council to adopt that. And then if the council adopts those recommendations or makes changes then council staff will then do solicitation of proposals for any contractual activities that the council has decided on. So that is why it's imperative this month committees and the council come up with actual activities so that the planning committee can come up with a draft plan before the April council meeting. If that answers any other questions.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Thank you so much, Courtney.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So can we, we have open discussion now. Can someone share those items from, I pulled it up on my screen, the goal and the objective, goal three and objective 3.1 and 3.2. Have people kind of chime in with some ideas or ask questions about those things.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. Can you all see this? I can't see what you guys see.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Can you possibly enlarge it just a little.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. Does it look good? So this is the FFY 2022-to-2026-year plan. And I have highlighted what pertains to this committee. Goal three, education employment.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Just had a quick comment. The same thing was being part of the DD network, the goals and objectives. I like these, especially for a five-year plan. They are broad enough to address a

number of different areas that the council might want to get into in the future. I have seen different agencies construct their objectives very narrowly and find out two years later some kind of issue pops up and because of the way they tailored their objective so narrowly they really can't address the issue because it's outside of their goals and objectives. So these are, I think, relative to our goal and broad enough for us to really get creative if we needed to in terms of what we address over the next five years.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Those this is Bambi. On objective 3.2, just a comment as I am reading all of these items listed in 3.2 about transitioning from secondary education from high school and access to inclusive employment opportunities, high quality support providers, increase competitive and integrated opportunities, and educating employees how to support people with developmental disabilities. All of these are great. One of the, I guess the elephant in the room is that all of this requires funding. It requires funding to train people, it requires funding for the support that people need. And so again, we have been talking about this for decades, but we leave millions and millions of dollars on the table because we do not have the matching fund for LRS. We can come up with goals on how to address all these things, but if we don't advocate to have the money to be able to do it, I think we will continue to have problems in really making the progress we would like to see. If I don't know if anyone else has any comments on that. Like to hear their thoughts on it.

SUE KILLMAN: So this is Sue Killman. I am sitting in for Dr. Phil Wilson. My background is mostly the employment piece and this transition as kids exit school. 3.2 is really a focused area of mine and of the transition employment and career division at the Human Development Center. And I agree with you Bambi that is a big statement there and has a lot of things in it. It does require funding. Sometimes convince legislators to find the money to match so we can pull

down all the federal dollars we have a few strategies where we try advocate and educate those legislators within the state. And sometimes we get some money back. But I think the other part of that, I mean still continue that, important for sure. But the other thing is that I run into recently and run into with other schools and other community rehab programs is that so like the schools, when schools exit kids at 18 and they can keep them to 22 and exit them now with a diploma that kid can't be reenrolled at the school typically to get some of the MFP moneys. We are kind of turning down opportunities to gather money that exist there. And so I don't know how to shape this into a, just raising it for some of the committee members. A lot of parents think their kids should exit at 18 with everybody else. I understand why that would be. If it cuts off the nose to spite the face in terms of stopping the funding that kid could have if they remained in school and still was able to walk and do some sort of that ceremony, critical things that parents and students want to do. But what they don't always understand they are limiting their access to continued funds they could have until 22. And to do things that are community-based instruction that provide the funding to get that kid into a career and onto a pathway. And thankfully under Melissa's leadership we have more of a focus on careers and getting kids on career pathways. And in my experience been tremendous at being able to try to encourage internships. and apprenticeships. and to get kids into those services. Just putting that out there. I don't have, only attending as someone' replacement. But I do think some more teeth in these objectives to be able to increase the access to funding for all of those. One of the things we are trying to do with LRS under the customized employment training that we are providing with them is although that has been expanded, been asked to look at low-cost methodology and looking at being able to have community rehab programs be able to pay for the training for some of the service provision

in customized employment. Essentially almost becomes free. Percentage of that cause we have to work with them directly to mentor them. I think there are ways to do this. I think what it sets is a really cumbersome objective. We lose site how to access the funding and set up more activities under that objective that will increase funding and supports.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Thank you Sue. If I can just add to that and just to kind of give some information for everyone. First of all, Bambi, thank you so much. We definitely need the advocacy for continued funding, state general funds for LRS. Those of you who are familiar of how we are funded we rely on state general fund in order to pull down our grant award from the feds. And typically, last year we sent back fifty percent of our grant that was available to Louisiana because we could not provide those matching funds. But one thing I do want to confess is that we do have difficulty spending the preemployment transition services money. The money is available. Like we have to spend 15 percent of federal funds on that and there are very specific activities. We can't spend the admin cost. It definitely cost us time and effort, but some of those costs can't even be allocated to that 15 percent. The struggle we are having right now with LRS, or one of our struggles, we're having to spend an inordinate amount of time engaging these school districts and engaging these students to spend 15 percent of our funds. This is very important. But we also have to think about the general population as well. Those individuals who are not students with disabilities. I guess my point is, and I don't know exactly what the activities could be, I will have to think about that a little bit. But any assistance that we can get in engaging the school districts and engaging the students. Because we have many battles when it comes to preETS. First, we have to get the schools on board, but then certain documents that we are just required to have to have signed. Students under the age of 18 have to be signed by the parents.

These are all hurdles that we are struggling with to get those students ready to participate in services. Just to give some prospective there just to let you all know we definitely need the continued state general fund money. That is definitely need of ours. But just to let you know, in all transparency, we do have a lot of funds available in preemployment transition services that we have got to find a way. I have been pushing my staff, putting preETS program coordinators to find mechanisms and ways to spend that money in a way that benefits the students so that we don't have to send any of that money back to the feds. Just to give prospective on exactly what is happening or transpiring here at LRS.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I think a point of we need, first off, probably all of us, even though I've been in hundreds of employment meetings over the past five years, just a better understanding of what is covered under preETS. And you are saying outreach. So it seems like to me I am gathering from that saying your administrative costs to be able do that outreach to be able to spend that preETS money to the school districts or to those students, like having the capacity to be able to do it to the point you need to be effective. So that does go back to point if you had more money you could have more staff. But the other issue is like it seems like to me is that we need to have a partnership with Department of Education to help out with that. So that could be a goal. And another issue is to the point of what Sue said about exiting at age 18. There is some issues with Department of Education rules and how they give points to schools as far as their ranking. Like are the students graduating and what timeframe with their cohorts. A disincentive for them to stay and perhaps participate in some type of employment in those maybe fifth or six years of their high school education. And so that could be something that could be perhaps worked on. That would take a change from Department of Education so then school districts aren't disincentivized for them to get

students out. If all of that makes sense what I just said.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: A couple questions. Just clarify if I remember this correctly from some meetings a while back. With respect to the transition age youth the department is, the struggle there is getting the schools to buy into this. Is the problem that voc rehab is having is basically you can't spend, not spending that money. Not that you don't have a lack of it, having a hard time spending the 15 percent that you do have because schools are uninterested. Not that you don't have enough money.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Correct.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: You are not going to have enough money for everybody else. So let me ask this also. In order to be qualified to take advantage of the 15 percent mandated to be spent as a result of WIOA what is the definition, is there an age component?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes. Sixteen to 21 or until the 22nd birthday. If they are in the school system, if they are in high school, they are going to be eligible. It gets trickier when they exit the school system. Then they have to be under the age of 22 and have to be considered a student. Have to be in some type of degree seeking program at a university or credential seeking.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Years ago transition used to be mandated by the federal government to start at age 14, right?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I think different states can elect different ages, but transition in Louisiana is at 16. Department of Education might be able to explain that more.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: I think all correct. One of the big things I think a lot on, if you really wanted to look at a single policy that could help education and employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities might include, because the state has the ability to do this, if they were to do this then you could start spending that 15 percent on a

new group of individuals or earlier. And maybe somebody on here knows this is a legislative change that needs to take place or a policy regulation or something. You could move the transition age back to 14. The idea we start transition at 16 years old doesn't make, at least to me, I haven't heard good arguments as to why not having 14 wouldn't be better. Sixteen some people only have, some people graduated high school at 17. Some people graduate at 18. You have 24 months. You might have those extra years. But if people desire to maintain with their peers starting transition, I would think at 14 might not be a bad idea to do. And open up a group of individuals that you could spend that 15 percent on that you are having a hard time spending it on. Does anybody know a good argument why that is not what takes place or how many states have elected to do that?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Just to also piggyback on that also Chris. The only other thing I have to really look at when we do get all the school districts engaged the only, not issue, but challenge we would have to figure out is we wouldn't have the funding to provide preETS from 14 to 22 for a student. So trying to figure out when to engage that student into the process. Like definitely our counselors should be involved sooner. But as far as cost services with vendors, when does that start. Just to throw that out there that that would be the next struggle. But as far as your question, I don't know off the top of my head how many states are engaging students prior to the age 16, but I know it does happen.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Anybody on here have a good history of why it might be a bad idea to start transition at 14?

SUE KILLMAN: Let me tell you. Best practice, and this is definitely to start at 14, but mostly from the people who do the research and provide evidence-based practice. All the literature will support kids need to start earlier. Typically the school is doing the services between 14 and 16 and sometimes longer. As

Melissa just said, the VR system typically doesn't engage until later on. Because it's just an IEP at that point and LRS is willing to gladly take that referral and get them to meet eligibility at the point they are exiting the school. Now with preETS we have an opportunity to start things earlier. And most states are starting at 16 and some as high as 18 for the legality of being out in the community and having kids doing the things adults do in the community. I think that one of the real issues is definitely we should start transition service earlier. But the school bears a big responsibility in that. And definitely good to have somewhere more of a focus on actually doing a job. One of the things we are being afforded in preETS is these opportunities to engage in work-based learning experience. Which can be paid or unpaid. Of course we all hope they are paid. And the employer, LRS will reimburse the employer and some cases also reimburse the agency, the CRP for providing the support. And now people will say we didn't know this. But a lot of us did know this. We tried to come to these kinds of forums to get this information. We need to get the word out. The other thing as a policy issue, a problem with interpretation of some of the acts, especially April Dunn act and some of the diploma acts in Louisiana who can get these services and what does it mean for the school. They don't want to get a D minus because they are doing the right thing, exiting kids earlier or keeping them longer. All kinds of implications that need to be addressed in policy so we can make the transition seamless between school services and onto VR services and into community rehab program. All doable and being done in other states quite well. And being done here well, but in a fragmented way and with pockets of excellence in certain districts that VR serves, and the school serves.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Let me ask this question. I don't know this very deeply. One of the criticisms behind what I think is a really excellent idea and a

good use of those 18 to 21 or 22 years, as Bambi said, getting experiences, having internships and things like that. But I guess the criticism behind that, and I think a federal level is the fact, correct me if I am wrong, the individual has to actually be in the brick and mortar building for a number of hours per week in order to be able to tap into the education dollars. I have heard that prohibits that individual from being able to go out into the community and get legitimate job experience. I have seen my brothers and they try and mimic a community. Like what might look like a pizza place or ice cream shop. But we all know, especially people with developmental disabilities who kind of learn on experience and consistency, that you can take somebody and do a great job in this manufactured atmosphere and you take them to the actual place in the community and throws them through a loop and all the skills aren't being transferred. Is that a legitimate issue, and if so, a federal thing.

SUE KILLMAN: It is a legitimate issue, but I think an interpretation of the policy. A lot of schools they want to get that 10 to 15,000 dollars per student to be able to do instruction. If they do grab that then they have to have so many hours of instruction they are providing. So some pool of students within Louisiana if they are on alternate assessment certain kids can go to those kinds of programs. But there needs to be a better policy interpretation or a better way of deciding who is who. The Human Development Center is dealing with Jefferson Parish Schools for the services we provide. And try to get a wider swath of people. They are talking with their attorneys and it's all the legality of it now. It's been okay to do. Now somebody is raising a red flag. That is a real issue. Good if we had it resolved through all the districts across the state. I think it's a policy issue, Chris.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I don't think that is accurate though what Chris said about you have to be in the brick and mortar for a certain amount of time. I think what Sue said, you have to have instruction. So it

could be that the instruction is happening on an offsite work environment. But someone from the school system has to be providing some support for part of that time. I think that is a more accurate description. You don't actually have to go to the high school campus and get instruction for a certain amount of time.

SUE KILLMAN: And you are right, Bambi. But very recently for a few people who are 18 and 19 and about to come into paycheck, for example. That would mean anybody who wants post-secondary. Not trying to bang my own drum here. But the schools are trying to figure out who can come, who can actually do that. They are asking who is allowed to go and take classes at a community college and receive instruction in the community and not have to come back to the school but meet the requirements of the diploma. And now the school is saying well, not everybody. And we are going to tell you who it is. I think a very limited group. And that is scary right there. Very scary they are saying when they meet with department of ed they say the lawyers there are constricting who can come. From what I know, and certainly not an expert on education policy or law, more employment, but it should not be that way. Things are supposed to be opening up, not closing up. I agree with your points. I think there needs to be more scrutiny around the new diploma pathways and the new career pathways within that. And what that means for whichever agency. Cause I do think everybody is trying to do the right thing, but they are all afraid of compliance. And the issues at state agencies they need to be aware of. A real point of concern, I think.

MARY TARVER: Hello. I am back in civilization. I can hear y'all, but you couldn't hear me. Sorry. Y'all, thank you for all the discussion. And just goes to show how much the interactions between Department of Education and LRS are so important for our kids as they get ready to transition out of school. And I definitely think we will need to have, we need to

consider something on our action plan around this. We can't make recommendations today and vote on stuff. But I do think certainly something we can bring up to the full council this week. And so I am hoping we will be able to do that and put this on our action plan for our committee.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Can I make one last comment on this. I saw several people made comments in the chat. I know a true point that I heard many years across the state. And it goes back to the original point I talked about with funding and I think has to do with staffing with LRS. LRS counselors attending the IEP meeting. That doesn't happen from what I am hearing. I have always had the experience, and I know it's just because it's me, it is not something that's a systemic change, but having that LRS staff person attend my son's IEP meeting was very beneficial. I think with more funding if we had more LRS staff attending these meetings it would make it easier for all the stuff we are talking about. Cause we can talk about all these things. We can give the families the information on what they should advocate for. But there comes a point where, especially at this point in the lives of these young people with disabilities, the parents are worn out. It takes so much effort to be able to get these people at the IEP meetings. It's just not going to happen and then we don't have the advocacy and things don't change. I think probably funding and having more LRS counselors to be able to attend the meetings could be beneficial potentially.

MELISSA BAYHAM: We definitely need more counselors. Our counselors are assigned to so many schools that it's really hard to meet. There is always scheduling conflicts. We do push our staff to try their best to attend as many IEPs as they possibly can.

MARY TARVER: There is a silver lining to all the covid and virtual world. It does make it easier to have meetings and get where they don't have to travel and take that travel time. They could be on an IEP by virtual means then that is helpful as well.

EBONY HAVEN: You have a hand raised and you have several comments in the chat.

MARY TARVER: Let's go with the hand raised.

LIZ GARY: Thank you. It's Liz Gary. I just wanted to reiterate what I had typed in the chat. As a parent of an 18-year-old I can tell you that the only reason my son got LRS sitting around the table when he was 14 cause I was adamant someone had to be there. And in that meeting when we were discussing, and I actually, at 14 actually when I got it because I wanted them to do an overview assessment to start planning and looking at what he enjoyed doing and what could possibly be his employment track if that's what he decided verses post-secondary. When he was 14 entering the eighth grade in the high school. They were very resistant, and I pursued and pushed it. Since then, he is in high school, I have pushed for him to be able to have preETS. And they tried this year, because he is a junior, to say no, let's wait till senior year. And I was very adamant it needed to be done this year considering covid and all the issues going on. And not only the fact he is on a rotating schedule where they don't meet every day. The schedule was very bazaar and the fact he may not be able to complete the program in a year. That's why I pushed for two years. Melissa, with that being said, very much of a resistance and very much of lack of information for parents to know what can happen and how to do it. I find that's where we need to get the education is to the parents so they understand what can be and what should be done. I will speak for at least St. Tammany Parish that it's not coming from that school system. And we are getting mostly resistance. When you talk about preETS people look like deer in a headlight. They have no idea. Not only parents, but even some of the special educators I have spoken to. Clear it's not being, not enough out there. And it has to be my mission to start educating, and I have done it a couple times on social media making sure people are aware of it and pursuing because I think it's very, very important. Thank you, Mary.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Roslyn Hymel and Ms. Corhonda Corley also have their hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: This is what I want to know. And I am not sure who said it, about ISPs. What can only, I am going to mention it, what could one, only one person can do alone with their own ISP. Like for me as an adult could that person make a difference in their life even if they are a self-advocacy person. Can somebody fill me in on that one. Could that as an adult, even as a parent or advocacy person or whatever person could be, or even a student.

MARY TARVER: Are you talking about the IEPs.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah.

MARY TARVER: That is for kids that are in school. So either up to the age of 22. So after that then that wouldn't apply, the IEP would not apply to them. It would help to have somebody there.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Well, actually for me I'm in Magnolia Community Services and we have ISPs. That's like annual ISP for a year. Could be a client, could be a student. Could that still come underneath the other schools as well? That's what I want to know. Or does it have an age bracket.

MARY TARVER: I know the IEPs is only in school. And I am not sure about an ISP. I don't know if Marilee or somebody, it might be something we could help to answer your question outside of the meeting.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I am not familiar with ISP. I can tell you if you are a client at LRS we are required to do at least an annual review of your case record. But I know you mentioned something, Roslyn, about self-advocacy. And just to kind of highlight there, that instruction in self advocacy is one of the five required preETS activity. Just to let everyone know, that is part of preemployment transition services that these students receive instruction in that area. Up to the age of 18 you do have to have parental consent to engage in preemployment transition service. Just to let you know that we definitely promote that within

LRS.

ROSLYN HYMEL: I am with LRS in that I have, I can't even think of her name off hand. But she works for LRS. She is on my tongue. It's not rolling off.

MARY TARVER: It's okay. Thank you. If you have any specific questions you can get with me or the staff and we will see if we can get the answers to the question that you have.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Because I don't have my phone at the moment cause I am trying to get my phone back because I broke my phone. Who can I get a number from so I can keep up with y'all?

MARY TARVER: I will give you my number.

ROSLYN HYMEL: I would appreciate that.

MARY TARVER: It's (318)664-0843.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Thanks. How do you spell your name though.

MARY TARVER: MARY.

ROSLYN HYMEL: I see your last name too.

MARY TARVER: TARVER.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Just making sure.

MARY TARVER: Were there any other questions or comments?

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Corhonda Corley has her hand raised and you have several comments.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you so much Ms. Chair lady and the rest of the committee. It was stated during one of our last in person special education advisory panel meetings that this was a problem. And they even went to have the executive there and he spoke about how he is having many problems with trying to get into a lot of these school systems. So if we are going to be realistic about LRS, if LRS is having problems with actually getting into the school system that means there is going to be a problem with actually meeting the actual quotas they want to set and actually providing the services they are legally required to do. Now, we have to look at how can we go about making sure that families know about it and families start doing just like Ms. Gary stated. Which is advocating for

their child receiving it at 14. When we do know a lot of school systems are giving parents pushback like Ms. Gary stated and trying to force them to do it at 17 and 18. How do we stop that. Families Helping Families only have a certain amount of staff. LRS only have a certain amount of staff. Have we ever considered making this a class action situation and go legally after it with our disability rights advocacy. It's an option. That is an option we are not discussing. An option we aren't even considering. Because we have too many people with disabilities that has been documented by LSU that are not being able to get employment opportunities due to the school systems failure as well as LRS. I am not putting the blame on LRS because it's not their fault they are meeting such resistance from the school system. I am saying as a DD Council our legal obligation is to do systemic change and we're not taking consideration of how we can go about making systemic change. It should not be that Ms. Gary had to fight the school system as much as she did to get her son LRS resources. And that is problematic because EBR school system does the same. EBR school system even utilize LRS. Parents have to push for that as well. So St. Tammany is having to do the same fight as EBR school system is doing I think we can probably take a vote just how many other schools, but we don't have to cause Ms. Sue Killman stated very much problematic existing around the state. So can we please consider doing some real action like class action lawsuit. We do have the Disability Rights Advocacy Center Executive Director Mr. Rodriguez sitting here at the table. Let's utilize him and keep figuring out how we can go about it. One way or another other, one thing they do recognize and pay attention to is lawsuits. Thank you.

EBONY HAVEN: Thank you for your comments. Is there anybody else with a hand raised? No more hands raised, but you do have several comments.

MARY TARVER: Can you read through them.

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, ma'am. Doctor Hyacinth McKee says Bambi that is an excellent comment. This issue

regarding disincentives should be addressed in the focus group. Ms. Christy Curtis says outreach and education to parents on what LRS is and what they do is desperately needed to engage students when parents are just asked to sign a paper without the service being explained there is hesitation. Ms. Kathleen Canino says I have also heard it's hard to get LRS to attend the IEPs. Dr. Hyacinth McKee says a recommendation would be that LDOE focus group plan could address all of the concerns discussed on this matter. And Mr. Harlin Cowzer says I think it is really important for us to recognize the difference between equal and equitable education supports and opportunities for people with disabilities. Equal is good, but sometimes equitable is much more beneficial to the individual. And Dr. Charlie Michel states when discussing LRS having difficulty getting into IEP meetings please remember the schools can only invite any agency to transition meetings when the parents provide a written consent. So while there are issues with LRS attending, we must consider all aspects of the situation, inadequate staffing at LRS, some schools showing resistance, and parents refusing to grant permission. Legal recourse should only be pursued once all of the problems have been discussed. Sorry, hold on one second. Sorry, I lost it. Legal recourse should only pursue once all aspects of the problem have been discussed and collaborative solutions proceed. That's all the comments for now.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. We have had a great discussion about this. I feel like we need to make sure that we are able to move forward with some actions for this and then we can't vote. Courtney or Marilee, what would we do, like anybody on the committee could bring up a focus for the preETS education?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I am not sure if this committee will be able to reschedule prior to the council meeting. Today is Tuesday and a full day Wednesday. And then the council meets Thursday. I truly have never been in this situation before. I did a little

research while we were meeting, and I think it would be appropriate for committee members to bring suggestions just at the full council meeting at the next meeting which you all will be present where there will be a quorum. I think that might make the meeting a bit longer because you are not, Ms. Mary you will go up for education and employment and you say we voted and this is what we recommend, but that can't be done. That would be, I think, my only suggestion. Unless Courtney has a better one. I am not sure if she is still on here.

MARY TARVER: We can touch base after the meeting too to see.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. It seems to me based on our discussion, and we can make an informal recommendation, but based on our discussion we don't have a solution. We have done a lot of work around employment and kind of have different things that been done, but it seems like some things have been put into focus. It may be in order to address this issue coming up with some activities. Is that we get maybe a small group of people to kind of work through some suggestions. So like have another meeting. Because by Thursday I don't think anybody have is going have a solution of an activity. If that would be appropriate that would be my suggestion.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Bambi, what you are saying is a small group, not the full education.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: No. It could be the full education committee. I don't know why I was saying that. I know there is people who like have experience, parents and professionals we could come up and be concise and make some recommendations for some activities. Definitely could be the full committee and the public to have input.

MARILEE ANDREWS: After the council meeting. It would push back the timeline a little bit.

COURTNEY RYLAND: If I may make a comment or suggestion, is that maybe during Ms. Tarver's education and employment committee report during the council

meeting to ask the full council if the education and employment committee can convene after the quarterly meeting to develop their recommendations to be sent directly to the planning ad hoc committee.

MARY TARVER: Yeah, I like that idea. I know between now and Thursday I won't be able, that just leaves tomorrow, and I already have some obligations for tomorrow. I think it will take another meeting of this group. And hopefully we can get the full quorum here. Our meeting today is just discussion. We can't vote or make any recommendations to the full committee to vote on because we did not have quorum. I think we still had some good discussion and I think we have some focus on some ideas of some actions that we can do so I appreciate that. And I think that is something we can look at. Whenever I make my notes for the full council meeting Courtney maybe you and I could get together, or Marilee, to help me to communicate with the full council what our plan is.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Sounds good.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Is there any other discussion that we need to have or comments before we adjourn?

EBONY HAVEN: Corhonda Corley does have a question. This meeting legally supposed to go forth without a quorum. We may need to have legal verification on this topic.

MARY TARVER: We were able to move forward with the meeting without the quorum, we just can't vote or make any recommendations to the full council. We were having an informal discussion, so I guess we don't need to have a formal recommendation to adjourn the meeting. So I will say its 11:00. I appreciate y'all's time for the people who were able to get on the call and look forward to our next meeting.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think I will just post these as meetings notes.

MARY TARVER: Thank you.