

LADDC
Education and Employment Committee
February 10, 2021

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hey Ms. Mary. Just wanted to let you know you don't quite have a quorum yet. There are two more people who said they were coming so we can wait and see.

MARY TARVER: Do we have to have both the people who were supposed to be on the call to have a quorum?

MARILEE ANDREWS: No, ma'am. We need six members to have a quorum. I just emailed them both. I don't have their phone numbers.

MARY TARVER: Okay. I wonder on our DD Council roster stuff that we keep updated if it has a phone number. I would be glad to call. But I don't have a copy of one of our old sheets.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Let me see if Hannah might have one.

MARY TARVER: I'm going to go on mute. I found one of their phone numbers. Marilee, I have Mitch. His internet is down so he only has phone.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Does he not know how to do it from his phone?

MARY TARVER: Do you know how to get on the meeting from your phone?

MITCH IDDINS: I have never done that. I might could try.

MARY TARVER: Do you have an iPhone? He has an Android. I have no idea. We have a phone number you can call in, but I don't think that will help us with being able to be seen. That is what the rule is.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Ms. Fletcher, thank you for coming. I know you said you weren't available. I appreciate it.

SARAH FLETCHER: No problem. I moved some things around.

MARY TARVER: The list I have doesn't have Mr. Phil on there.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Mine either. I haven't seen an email back. Let me refresh. He cannot make it. He has a time sensitive project he has to stay focused on. He asked someone to sit in on behalf of HDC.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Well.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Everyone else already said they couldn't come on this date. So I'm not sure.

MARY TARVER: Well, I have no, I guess, we have already had some discussion, so I don't know if it does us any good to discuss more cause we won't be able to submit anything to the planning committee yet.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay. I appreciate everybody who did take the time to attend and all of our guests.

MARY TARVER: Marilee, maybe you and I can talk after and we will just look at some more, Bambi are you trying to tell us something? You are on mute.

MARILEE ANDREWS: You are not on mute, but we cannot hear you. You might want to type it in. There is six people she is saying. Oh, Chris came.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Hi everyone. I apologize. I had meetings. We had the exact same meeting but for GACDA yesterday. I got them confused.

MARY TARVER: Chris, you save the day.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: I apologize for being late.

MARY TARVER: You haven't missed a thing. Now are we good, Marilee?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes, ma'am.

MARY TARVER: All right. Thank you. My stress level just came down a smidge. All right, well then, we will get started. Today we need to focus on our action plan and what we would like to have as our activities for our education and employment committee. And we did have some discussion the last time, and so hopefully we have a few things in mind. I know that Sarah is new to the process, so just to kind of give you a little quick rundown. The council has action plans and those were attached, the ones that we have for, we have a five-year action plan and each year we kind of carve out what we are trying to get done in that fiscal year. For us we have, for education and

employment committee if you look at the attachment that was the five-year plan, the goal about individuals with developmental disabilities will have access to quality education in inclusive and safe environments throughout all the stages of life and access to self-determination, individualized, equal and gainful employment opportunities that provide competitive wages and integrated work environments. And then from there we made two objectives. One of them was parents of students with developmental disabilities will have increased access to early diagnosis identification of needs, early intervention services, childcare and information and opportunities to collaborate with educators regarding individualized education planning or programming to meet the needs of the student. The other one is individuals with developmental disabilities will have increased employment outcomes upon transitioning from secondary educational settings, access to employment opportunities, inclusive of services from highly qualified employment support providers, and increase competitive and integrative opportunities from employers who are educated on how to support people with developmental disabilities. So we take those objectives, and we decide on activities, actual things that we want to happen and work towards for the next year. So that's what we are trying to do today. Our objectives, obviously, and our goals are very, very broad so that we can zone in on the things that we, you know, want to accomplish, but gives us a broad scope to start with. In the past one of the things that we had in our action plan, I included that just to give everybody an idea of some of the things we had on our list to accomplish. So some things can be activities that don't cost any money. We're going to advocate for increased focus of capacity with Department of Education on special education. And then we could have some things that would cost money that we're going to provide financial support. Which is one of the things we had been working on, provide financial support to establish the post-secondary inclusive

education alliance and have them do some work for us. So those I guess the outlines of the things we are working towards today to come up with a couple of activities, at least one for education and one for employment that we could present to the planning committee.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Can y'all hear me.

MARY TARVER: Yes.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Can you share the screen because I guess I am not good with just processing, I need to see something visually.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. I was about to do that.

MARY TARVER: I got so excited everybody was here, I just jumped right in. I need to call the meeting to order and go over the virtual protocols, which I don't know what they say except raise your hand, be recognized by the chairperson. I am afraid to move anything off my screen or y'all could disappear and I will never see y'all again. So I am not going to touch my computer. Marilee is going to pull that up. Chris, I see you have your hand raised.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Yeah. Good morning everyone. I don't know if it would be beneficial as we do some planning, but the meeting that I actually got this one confused with, I know I had an education and vocation meeting this week. Melissa and I, Melissa is our great leader and chair on the committee are in kind of a newly formed subcommittee of GACDA and we met yesterday to discuss two major plans that we had. I don't know if it would be beneficial to talk about those very briefly. There is two schools of thought. One could be since there is another group doing something maybe we don't need to do it as much over here. Or the other school of thought would be why not make them both move in the same direction and kind of consolidate efforts. Melissa, as kind of the chair of that, do you want to tell these folks a little bit about that meeting.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Sure. You know I was reluctant about that.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: I know.

MELISSA BAYHAM: But I am happy to do that because this is, education and employment is a very important topic for both of these councils. Two of the main things we discussed, I am going to start with the second and then tell you the first because I want to tell you some follow up on that. But we talked about comprehensive transition programs and how to expand those throughout the state. And those are programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Basically to give them a college experience. Some programs you are able to obtain some type of credential. Some not. But they both, whether they provide credentials or not, they provide valuable experience to those individuals to give them that experience. We also talked about LRS has a statewide MOU with Louisiana Department of Education to make sure that we are basically in compliance with the workforce innovation and opportunity act. And one of the struggles that we talked about during that meeting, and that particular meeting we didn't have a representative from the Department of Education, is that there seems to be a type of disconnect. Like when I was the transition coordinator years ago, I always had a point of contact with the Department of Education. And we're having difficulty, basically identifying who that individual would be and how to get state support. Because we are struggling in a lot of districts to implement preemployment transition services in some of the districts across the state. We actually did reach out to the contact that we do have that serves on our advisory council yesterday and we did hear back from her and her response was basically to send stuff to an email box. And that was kind of very disheartening to me because we are a state agency and we have always had a contact with Department of Education. So if somehow, I think there is a lot of, and maybe it's just us, I'm not sure, but seemed to be also something that other individuals on the other groups spoke about. But I think we need some kind of something with the

Department of Education to explain exactly how they are structured now. Because there seems to have been some changes because we don't know who to contact. Like we need some assistance in implementing a law in school districts and we don't know who to go. So just to kind of give you, and I am not trying to, this is just the experience we are having right now. And I know like Dr. Fletcher, I don't know you. We have new people. We don't know who anybody is and just having some struggles.

MARY TARVER: All right. I will see if Dr. Fletcher has any comments.

SARAH FLETCHER: Yeah. I raised my hand. First of all thank you for the work you have done and thank you for your patience as we are working on reorganizing and restructuring with our new administration. And I will say the reason things have been probably directed to an inbox is that everyone on our team sees that and so we all have access to it, and we can quickly funnel things to the right people that have the right experience. But I would say, like your point of contact is me. So feel free to reach out. I would love to sit down and really meet all of you individually. Please feel free to do that. We are still working on restructuring and reorganization. In the meantime, I want you to know transition is a huge part of our consideration. I think a huge work stream that we are trying to think about how we can best support it. So I would love to connect, and I can put my email in the chat box.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. It sounds like Bambi.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Just a point of information. The last person I remember that was the transition specialist at the Department of Education was Rebecca Hanberry. That was her job was transition. And so she has been gone for several years now. So it's not really just the new administration. But I think that is a model that worked by having that point of contact. So hopefully the new administration will go back to having those experts or people that focus on specific

areas as point of contact.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. So do y'all want to, do y'all want to work on the employment part first, then Melissa since we definitely, I think I would recommend that we have at least one or two actions under each, hopefully. Since y'all have some fresh information you might want to just start with some ideas that you might have that we would have to have it, an activity listed. Like it needs to be worded out. Marilee can start once we are getting to a point where we are ready to type some words out Marilee will help us on the screen. But definitely want to focus on trying to get something written out that makes sense for us to have the activity ready for us to present to the planning committee.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I don't know how it would be worded. But I think there just needs to be some collaboration with the Department of Education as they are restructuring just so everyone understands exactly how things are structured and where do we go to when we have certain issues and things like that. And just to improve the communication.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Melissa, under WIOA you do have an MOU already established, right. Not something we could work on.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes. We do. And actually I think Mr. Garcia sent a copy of that to y'all yesterday. So you have a copy of it. But obviously that MOU can be amended at any time. It was written with the other administration and its strictly compliance. But there is definitely ways we could improve it. So that is an idea.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: So from my prospective of this particular subject for me it's more about what we can do to support you in voc rehab. You think the MOU could use some improvements and you think this is an appropriate group to help with that I think that would be a good start to supporting voc rehab and transition. And also compliance with the law.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Right.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Which is important.

MELISSA BAYHAM: All the compliance pieces are already in the MOU. But there is things that you can do at the state level in that MOU basically determining who is responsible for what. Because that often is something that is, of course, a contention and some confusion. Because we can provide preemployment transition services, but we are not supposed to come in and start paying for things the school districts are supposed to pay for under IDEA. Basically supposed to enhance what is done at the district level. But maybe coming in and saying we could go and put in the MOU that VR provides work-based learning experiences and things like that. Things we can do with that.

MARY TARVER: So that sounds like some kind of collaborative something needs to be going on between LRS and Louisiana Department of Education. And I guess, in my mind, I see that whatever activity then we would have that like start to be reported at our quarterly meetings for education and employment so that we are seeing that activity as it kind of plays itself out. And then if there is something that comes up that the council, the education and employment committee can help be the stakeholders be involved in those ways. We want to make sure we are putting something in place that the council is going to have an activity to monitor or to, we are either advocating for something, trying to increase our number of people who increase things. I guess just trying to figure out what we would be, how the DD Council would be involved in that MOU or is it something y'all need to work outside of the council and then come back to report. Is there something, how can we put something together that is going to make sense for the council.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I don't know if the MOU would make sense. But I'm thinking maybe an objective could be to provide recommendations and support to assist LRS and Department of Education to make preemployment transition services available to all students with disabilities. I know that is a big thing, but it's

actually what we are required to do. To provide assistance getting into those school districts that we don't have participation in.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So how would the activity be worded though?

MARY TARVER: Maybe like an increase work with LRS and Department of Education to increase the number of school districts participating in preemployment, y'all have to help me with the words. But transition.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So we have goal three, which I think you guys can all see it okay on the screen. And under there, there is two objectives. So I am thinking would you want this under objective 3.1 or 3.2? That might be a good place to start.

MARY TARVER: I think under 3.2.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So then if you read objective 3.2 that might help you guys, it might funnel you towards some language maybe. I don't know if you want to read that while thinking about what you want to do if that makes sense.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I think what y'all were talking about, about getting into the preETS services into more school districts is going to lead to better outcomes. That is what that is geared to do. That would be an activity. Don't know how to exactly word it. I am not a wordsmith.

MARILEE ANDREWS: It doesn't have to be worded perfect because this is going to the planning committee. And they are going to take the ideas and wordsmith it if they decide to adopt it.

MELISSA BAYHAM: It talks about access, so I think that's what we are talking it about here, access to services.

MARY TARVER: Advocate for access to.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Preemployment transition services for all students with disabilities.

MARY TARVER: Marilee, would you like type out so we can see.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I have to switch my screen.

MARY TARVER: Melissa, is there anything, would any

of it involve any funding?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I have to tell you; we have the funding that we need for preemployment transition services. I can't think of anything. Now that is for the actual services. I can't think of anything administrative or anything like that at this moment that we would need.

MARY TARVER: I think one of the things we talked about at the last meeting was about how families don't have a good understanding of what that even looks like to even advocate for themselves before for the whole process gets relooked at and gets kicked off better. So would it also be something about trying to provide some education to families to help, I don't know what I am trying to say, the families need to have education about what is available and that might be that we need to develop some, or you may already have like a tool or website that's set up. Or how would a family, how would I know they get my child into that.

MELISSA BAYHAM: We definitely don't have a website yet. But we are working on an informational brochure. It's with PR right now. But that could be distributed, definitely. And y'all could assist with distributing that if y'all would like. So we should have that soon.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I also think to Mary's point, I know Melissa, the preETS they have, LRS has to use 15 percent of their budget for preETS services and they have more than enough money right now. Like they have money available they have to spend. An issue that people have brought up is about having LRS counselors attend or participate in those IEP meetings at that certain age. And I know an issue is in regards to having the staff, LRS staff available to be able to do that. And so you know Melissa, as much as she wants to do it, if staff is not available, it's not available. There was big cuts during the Jindal administration to the LRS staff and that's never been brought back up. Probably wasn't at the most it should have been at that point. But still a big cut. So that might be something. Until they can actually have the people

there to attend the IEP meetings, I think it's always just going to be a confusing thing for families.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I agree Bambi. Just to give everyone a prospective, I think right now it's a fluid number. I have about 68 counselors. For the whole State of Louisiana. If you think of how many school districts. If you think about in terms of funding that is 15 percent of their job. So they also have the adults and other individuals they need to serve. So that kind of gives you prospective why we can't attend every IEP meeting we would like to attend. But we are continuing to hire. We do have some recruiting difficulties. I think a lot of state government has issues with that with our pay and things like that. Trying to work through those things to hire qualified staff to assist these individuals.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So to that point, Melissa is doing everything that she can, but I think as advocates this is something we can do is to advocate. They need to have more; the legislature has to provide more TOs. TOs are positions. If the legislature, they can have millions and millions of extra dollars, if they don't have the positions allotted, they cannot hire people. That is an advocacy thing. They have the positions available, the funding, and then it still takes some time. A long-term thing to ramp up to have the capacity to serve to the degree I think we all think would be best.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Does anybody, I am not seeing anything, does anybody have, is this like the three kind of some ideas that we could now wordsmith into the activities that we need for objective 3.2? And I will open that to any of our committee members and then for any public comment.

MARILEE ANDREWS: You have Carmine's hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Sorry. I can't see.

CARMINE CETNAR: It was on the last comment. Just a heads up, for I don't know about other districts, but Lafayette Parish has a transition team and it's some of the counselors. I actually had, I guess it was a

counselor, but she worked for the parish, the school system and she attended my second grader's IEP and just made sure I was linked with Acadiana Area Human Services District. We talked about what the plan would be educationally, what track was my goal. It was really forward thinking for someone to be in second grade IEP. Obviously, that is kind on the earlier end. I just wanted to say it's a unicorn. Probably not usual, but it does happen here and there. When I saw somebody at that second grade IEP, I was pretty impressed.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I just want to remind about IEPs, and it was discussed at the last education and employment committee discussion cause there was no quorum, just a meeting. So another idea for y'all is you can still look at our current five-year plan, the one that is ending in September 2021 that has activities for FFY 2021 listed. Cause I think some of those may be what you are touching on. If you don't feel they were met in that five-year plan or don't feel like they will be completely met, we could bring those as suggestions or tweak them. If y'all want to see it, I can also share it. Just wanted to share that.

MARY TARVER: I was using that, stealing more from it to make sure as we try and figure out what we want to say for any new activities related to this that we kind of, and I had highlighted some of the stuff that we had already in our plan as well. So I think that is a good idea. And I think that maybe like if you can put that up Marilee, I think that may be some of the stuff from goal number five.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I was looking at goal three. You can see there is an objective that talks about IEPs and has activities. Not sure if this is helpful if you guys want me to scroll around, just let me know.

MARY TARVER: I guess I was thinking that whenever we talked about the IEPs that we would be putting that, even if it was about an IEP that we would put that under education. And so when you read the objectives, the goals and objectives we're substituting the goal

and objectives that was goal number three from our five-year plan. So the activities is what we are looking at based on the objectives, but the wording and some of the things that we have in here as activities may be things we still want to keep on, you know, keep a focus on. Or we can use one of them and kind of tweak the words to put in or focus one on the transition, the preemployment transition project or activities. We talked about one for advocating for training or hiring people to be in that, increase the number of counselors or whatever. So maybe we can tweak one of the activities, cut and paste it maybe to put it in the other and then we can change the words around from what we want to do.

EBONY HAVEN: Chris has his hand raised.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: Just clarification, I think I understand the difference between the two documents. But right now we are looking at the 2021 action plan and what we are trying to create language for is the five-year plan, right?

MARY TARVER: Right. And what we are doing, what we provided was what our action plan was with the activities so that we could see what we already had in place. And then see if any of those we want to continue on and move it, either move it over or tweak it to fit what you want to do now and move it over the 22-26 five-year plan. And we started out with the goal, of course, and the objectives are reworded compared to what's in the 21 action plan. The activities is just giving you an idea of the wording and how we wordsmith other activities and see if there is any activities on here, we want to continue that would fit under our objectives for the education and employment committee. Kind of have it as a guide. And then, of course, make changes based on what we are talking about today. So Marilee, cause one of the little notes you had taken was about talking about employment, the activity 5.1.1 is what is coming to my mind about can you copy and paste it over to the notes that you were taking today?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. Activity 5.1.1 advocate for employment support professionals to complete high quality professional development.

MARY TARVER: Yes. I am all about copy and paste.

MARILEE ANDREWS: And I will just switch back over. And I typed just kind of some of the things y'all were saying.

MARY TARVER: So then we talked about that we would advocate legislatively for increased LRS.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Bambi talked about the funding and the positions themselves. But I heard her talking more about legislative positions. That's what I wrote. But I can write whatever you guys.

MARY TARVER: I guess what we were trying, or a lot....

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I don't even know if you put legislatively because it's both administrative and legislative. Just need to advocate for LRS counselor positions. And for me that would be inclusive of administrative, legislative and funding. You have to have the funding. And the TOs.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I'm sorry. I don't know what a PO is.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: A position. Just the technical, legislative or whatever.

MARILEE ANDREWS: You want me to put TO, or do you think everyone will understand that?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: You don't have to.

MELISSA BAYHAM: TO stands for table of organization. When you go to the legislature TO is the official number of positions that you have. So I would say, I mean increasing positions I think makes the most sense for this group.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So is that?

MARILEE ANDREWS: You want to specify in the first bullet when you have advocating for preemployment transition services that it's with LRS?

MARY TARVER: Yes.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Just thinking clarity wise if someone is reading this.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I think looking at that first bullet though, if you are looking for clarity, a big part of this is about having access to our school districts for them to be able to go in. If you want to be able to be as clear as possible part of that is....

MARILEE ANDREWS: Tell me if you like it or if you want to change it.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I like it.

MARY TARVER: These ideas are what looking at for activities. So the first one would be advocate for access to LRS preemployment transition services within school districts for all students with disabilities. Anybody have any comment about that one? Then the next one was about providing education to families about preemployment. I guess we need to write out preemployment transition services.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Or you could maybe say transition services. When you talk about preemployment transition services you are talking about a set of five activities. But LRS is actually with the whole transition process, which is inclusive with preETS, but it's also more than that if that makes sense.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Take out preemployment in the first bullet?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Not in the first one. Because that is the issue we are having is getting into the actual school districts to provide those five activities.

MARY TARVER: So that list provide education to families about what LRS transition services are available and how to access them. Example, assist in distributing LRS brochure that is being developed. And then is there any comments or thoughts about that one? I can't see everybody's hands. Advocate for LRS counselor positions including administrative, legislative and funding efforts. That sounds good? And then you can delete that last one. I was just using it as words. Okay. Are there any other activities that we had on the FY 2021 action plan that we want to continue, or we need to move over? Which I

think starts with goal five. The activities. A lot of these, Melissa I think were some of those things that got with the education and the employment piece, oh, shoot, the training they went through. Some of these things have already been addressed. I just wanted to point out. This is how we will see it as we put stuff on there for the coming years that we would mark off the things you have gotten accomplished and see if there is anything else. What do we do about that activity, the one that cost 32,000-dollars. I don't remember what that was about.

MARILEE ANDREWS: That was O'Neal Communications. I think that would be a good one because I don't think we're going to be, I don't think we should put a deadline on ourselves of when, for example, stop sharing videos. They are interviewing and making all the videos and brochures right now.

MARY TARVER: Let's copy that back onto our other sheet.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Just 5.3.2. Yeah, I guess.

MARY TARVER: The money and stuff, has that already been paid for, or we need to have funding for that?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Their contract is already funded, and they are just doing the work.

MARY TARVER: Do you know any of these other ones that are ongoing from the previous year that we haven't, that I guess we are looking at just at this moment.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Under objective 5.3 under is what O'Neal is doing right now. I think it would be appropriate for that middle one. I am not super familiar with 5.4.

MARY TARVER: I am not sure either.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Seems like that has to do with our state agencies and like advocating for state agencies to make sure that whatever programs are funding they have is in line with best practices are on employment issues. That is what I would think it is. It's not super clear. So there are some things, like I know within OCDD making sure that they are like funding

for waiver, the way they fund for employment services for their waiver is actually incentivizing providers to provide employment services as opposed to more segregated type services. I know they are working on some of those changes.

MARY TARVER: That might be something we need to copy over. So I will let Marilee copy that over and we will look at it again and see if anybody has any comments. We're at 10:37. I want to make sure we stay on time. Look at us doing employment before education. Sarah, we usually tend to dwell on education much more than employment. All right. So here we are. I will read through them one more time and then we will see if anybody has any comments. Advocate for access to LRS preemployment transition services within school districts for all students with disabilities. Provide education to families about what LRS transition services are available and how to access them. Advocate for increased LRS counselor positions including administrative, legislative and funding efforts. Share Developmental Disabilities Council employment videos featuring individuals with developmental disabilities on their jobs. And advocate for systems change based on emergent employment issues. Any council members have any comments? All right. Is there any public comment on activities related to employment? Chris, you have your hands raised.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: One issue that I think I brought up a long time ago, and it exist here in Louisiana, from what I understand, it just got gutted at some point. Which is the Medicaid buy in program which is I think really beneficial in terms of helping individuals with developmental disabilities, and all disabilities, gain competitive integrated employment and still maintain certain types of benefits. Anybody else has thoughts on the Medicaid buy in program and if that is something over the next five years might want to try and work on in terms of basically getting it back to where it was and perhaps making improvements.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: That is something we talked about

in GACDA. And actually something to work on. Just haven't been able to do the work, the research behind it. I definitely think that is something that would be beneficial. We need to get a lot of assistance on research like from Department of Health. But I would support that.

MARY TARVER: Would it be us doing some advocating for it or we would be trying to assist somebody. What would you think we need to put as the activity? Help us out.

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: I would say maybe support efforts to examine the effectiveness of the Louisiana Medicaid buy in program.

MARY TARVER: Bambi, who did you say was working on that or talked about it?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: GACDA. Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs. We discussed it and it was one of the policy proposals we were going to work on. We have several. But that one has not moved forward just because of other things going on.

MARY TARVER: So like a legislative piece that we have to work on?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: It might be policy. That would be something LDH can.

MARY TARVER: All right. Well, how does that sound then? Six activities for objective 3.2 about employment. All right. Does anybody have any, any of the committee members have any comments, any other ideas? Any public comment?

SPEAKER: There's a comment from Courtney Ryland. She said, I thought Mary was talking about activity 5.3.3 with the 32,000-cost attached to it.

MARILEE ANDREWS: She can speak. Courtney, do you want to speak?

COURTNEY RYLAND: Can you hear me? Sorry, I have been having technical difficulties which is why I was typing. Ms. Mary, you first mentioned you wanted to look at the activity that had the 32,000-dollar cost attached to it. And that is not the activity you copied and pasted. Just wanted to make sure we were

both talking about the same activities.

MARY TARVER: Was the 32,000-dollars, was the videos, it's something else.

COURTNEY RYLAND: Correct. A different activity.

MARY TARVER: All right. Is that one we still need to be looking at, Courtney?

COURTNEY RYLAND: If you would like for that to continue throughout 2022 this would be a good time.

MARY TARVER: Okay. I'm sorry. Have we gotten started on it at all?

COURTNEY RYLAND: Marilee has been in constant contact with O'Neal. So she can provide an update.

MARY TARVER: Are those two separate things or the same?

COURTNEY RYLAND: They are separate.

MARILEE ANDREWS: We have two contracts with O'Neal. One of them is video and it's like video and visual materials. And then there is a different one. But this activity Courtney, unless I am mistaken, is talking specifically about the employment video which should come from the employment seminars contract.

COURTNEY RYLAND: That was not my understanding. I think the employment seminars contract was just for seminars to be conducted throughout the state. Not for them to produce videos featuring individuals with developmental disabilities on their jobs. That is what the other contract.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay. So the one right here, 5.3.2, you're saying we shouldn't move that over?

COURTNEY RYLAND: That's being addressed through a different activity. So Ms. Mary was talking about the employment seminars contract for that activity that has the 32,000-dollar cost attached. This activity doesn't have a cost attached to it because it's part of a different activity in like goal number one or goal number two.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think what we are looking at talks about sharing employment videos.

MARY TARVER: What she is saying is do we need to look at the one, the cost, because I wanted to make

sure if we had something, so far none of these have any costs associated with it. But the action plan from 2021 had this as a cost to do the seminars and I just assumed, I don't know, I was reading into it, it had something to do with videos and you said we have already done that piece. It sounds like that we do need to continue 5.3.3 if we want to move forward with doing seminars with the chamber of commerce throughout the state on benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities. I don't know how we came up with 32,000-dollars or what that, do you know who we were going to pay to do something for 32,000-dollars. Is that O'Neal as well?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Right.

MARY TARVER: So is that the part that should be moved over long with the other one. If they are making the videos, we definitely want to make sure we are sharing them.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Right.

MARY TARVER: Should we move 5.3.3 over?

MARILEE ANDREWS: So you want them to conduct seminars with the chambers of commerce throughout the state again?

MARY TARVER: If they are completed or not. I was understanding they hadn't.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Right. So their contract is going to end when this action plan ends. And then right now we are doing ideas for the one that starts October 1. So their contract will be over by then. Does that make sense?

COURTNEY RYLAND: Marilee, please correct me if I am incorrect. Aren't they conducting two seminars per month starting in March?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I don't have their schedule in front of me. I guess you just need to kind of decide if you want to do that again or not.

MARY TARVER: If they are not going to finish something, if they haven't finished doing what they were supposed to do then we need to, I guess, move it forward for an activity.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I never received information that they, I didn't receive that information. I don't have the specific schedule in front of me. But I was under the impression they would meet their contract deliverables within the contract.

MARY TARVER: All right. So if that is the case then we don't have to move that one over. These are the six activities now that we have. I don't see any public chat or anything in the chat or any public comments. So Marilee, do we just keep going and we will just make one recommendation or how would we, what is the process we have to go through?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think it would be easier, Shawn used to do it, I remember him doing it a little differently. Might be easier for you guys to agree on your ideas for activities and then kind of make a motion to present that group of ideas to the planning committee. That would be my suggestion.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Anybody thinks they have to drop off y'all holler so we can vote on this. Bambi.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I was going to make a motion.

MARY TARVER: Do not let one person leave this meeting without getting this.

MARILEE ANDREWS: A motion just for employment and then make another one.

MARY TARVER: Let's do that.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I make a motion we present or share these recommendations or ideas for activities to the planning committee.

MARY TARVER: Do I have a second?

CHRISTOPHER RODRIQUEZ: I will second. This is Chris.

MARY TARVER: Any, not sure what I'm supposed to say. Any objections?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I think I need to abstain from this vote, I believe.

MARY TARVER: Okay. I used to have a cheat sheet to tell me what order.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Just ask if there is any objections. And if nobody answers.

MARY TARVER: Looks like motion passed. Thank y'all. All right. We are not done. We have education. We have the same process for education that we need to talk about. And I will open up for any ideas and discussion and see if Department of Education has anything. I know they have so many new things going on, is there something we can help y'all with that you thought about. Don't want to put you on the spot if you don't have anything, that's fine. Anything that you feel like would be appropriate for the DD Council to help with Sarah, please let us know.

SARAH FLETCHER: The only thing I can think of the department just released a new set of priorities. And I can put a link to that in the chat, I believe to achieve priorities. That's the only thing I can think of.

MARY TARVER: I know we had talked about the IEPs. So maybe we could do something around the IEPs. I think from our past action plan we had some activities around the IEP. So do you know of any, Sarah, any of the information on that Louisiana believes has anything to do with IEPs that we might be able to?

SARAH FLETCHER: Yeah, I would say actually quite a bit about employment and transition. But I think IEPs aren't specifically mentioned in the plan. But I do think a lot of work around individualized graduation plans which are a requirement of IEPs and lots of opportunities for places to jump in here.

MARY TARVER: So in our past action plan we had to advocate for increased focus and capacity with the IEP to address special education.

SARAH FLETCHER: I do have one thought. Not necessarily mentioned, not laid out in the priorities. But one thing we are currently working on is a major overhaul to our serve system. And I know you might, depending on your role, might be familiar with the system. It's where all IEPs are stored electronically. I don't know if you have seen the website, it's pretty old. We are doing a major overhaul with this. A lot of opportunity here to encourage best practice. And I

do think it would be great, like as we have been talking this morning, thinking about getting all of your input to some key areas that might make IEP meetings go smoothly or things we could add to the system that might prompt best practice, really in the meeting. Or for school systems before and after meetings. So I don't know what kind of action step that looks like. But I do think that is a really important lever from policy to practice. And I am really excited about these changes and would like to get input from you all.

MARY TARVER: I think that is a good way to start with, maybe it could be.

SARAH FLETCHER: I see a comment in the chat about the pilot, the reevaluation and waiver pilot. And when I think, and that's also really process (inaudible). I wonder if it is like advocating for in terms of action steps for us, advocating for best practice in high impact systems. Like I don't know if you want to name the system, but I think those are areas where, those are really high-end systems and I think a role for advocacy there.

MARY TARVER: That sounds good. And I think, I guess I would say maybe that will help. I'm thinking as we move through this for the planning committee and it will kind of like trigger our memories as to what that looks like. Marilee, can you type up, start typing up some of our ideas. I see our chat box all of a sudden got busy.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I can't see the chat box.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Basically what's in the chat box are like from SEEP and GACDA, two other councils are looking at. I think in line I was thinking about what Ashley was saying, I wasn't thinking specifically those things, but in regards to teacher training and preparation we have over the past decade or so really taken away money from higher ed. So we really, I think, need to focus on having teachers. If we don't have trained teachers, even the best teachers if there is not enough, they are not going to be able to do a

good job. Building that capacity within our higher ed institutions to produce high quality teachers.

MARY TARVER: I thought I read that somewhere in the FY21 plan.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I know it has been talked about. But I don't think we had much movement on that recently in recent years.

SARAH FLETCHER: I agree. And not just teachers, but all service providers.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Even adding onto that, not just the teacher prep programs, but the ongoing support to those teachers. Like high quality continuing education or support.

MARY TARVER: You mean like for special education?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Not just special education. I guess the people who provide services for our students with disabilities. The entire team. That would include regular education teachers.

MARY TARVER: Okay. What about, and Sarah you will have to help me with the words, but I kind of took a few words whenever you were talking. But about advocate for the best practices in the high impact systems. That was related to the IEP stuff.

SARAH FLETCHER: Yeah. I wonder, I don't know what the verbs are, but like advocating for and providing input on high impact systems that can be used to leverage best practice. To leverage best practice around IEPs.

MARY TARVER: This was one of the objectives, but it kind of could be, maybe some of the words could be played into the activity. A new activity about the IEP team members will have increased levels of information and support to demonstrate effective individualized programs consistent with best practice and to enable each member to fully participate as members of the IEP team. Or the 3.1.2. some of those words. I wasn't watching. Marilee, was that what you copied over?

MARILEE ANDREWS: The screen I have is the 2021 action plan.

MARY TARVER: I didn't know if we were trying to

find words for the activity that we were just writing about to see if any of these.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I will copy and paste it.

SARAH FLETCHER: I like the part about enabling every member of the IEP team to participate fully and how we can use the system to encourage that. I think would be a good thing to include.

MARY TARVER: The fourth bullet point is what we are trying to work on, and you just copied that. Number four is really what we were working on and we were going to use some of these words maybe from our other one.

MARILEE ANDREWS: The highlighted 2021 action plan.

SARAH FLETCHER: Maybe it's leverage best practices on IEPs. And how do we say that part about access for participation.

MARY TARVER: And enable each member to fully participate, members of the IEP team.

MARILEE ANDREWS: One more time Ms. Mary.

MARY TARVER: To fully participate as members of the IEP team.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think that's good Ms. Mary. Just note that language, doesn't have to be perfect, but enable is more like the objective and the activity is like how to enable. So I guess the activity went with enabling members to participate fully as members of the IEP team was 3.1.2. Number six on the document y'all are looking at.

MARY TARVER: We can take those off. I was just using some of that idea as part of the IEP part. I know we wanted to have stuff with the IEP on there. Did we need to have something about oh, like that believe to achieve priority. Can we put that that we would advocate for the education, for the Department of Education. I don't know how.

SARAH FLETCHER: I think too they are really focused on the highly effective educator workforce and the cultivating high impact systems. But I think one or the other of the five priorities is ensuring every student is on track to a professional career, college

degree or service. I think really is flushed out in the employment section below. So the other two priorities are, just in case we want to address them, which may already be addressed, but provide the highest quality teaching and learning environment and remove barriers and create equitable, inclusive learning experiences for all children.

MARY TARVER: That inclusive thing is something we still need to for sure work on. That was one of the activities that we had before was, the objective was about including students in the school culture and provide information, promote inclusion and acceptance for effective models of school culture. We are still working on what inclusion looks like in this world of covid too. Marilee, then I think we would take number one, the believe to achieve priorities, we've kind of touched on those. And then I think that is kind of where we are at. I think there were some things in the chat that had lots of information in there, but I hadn't had a chance to be able to look at it all.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Can I make a suggestion. I know we will make a motion for the ideas we want to bring forward to the planning committee. But given that we have our Families Helping Families centers, they have the expertise there in working with the families in regards to education. They have a contract with the DD Council as well as Department of Education. So like I would like to be able to get, I know right now we don't have enough time. But perhaps get their input to look at it before we have our planning committee meeting. Because that may help us to just have better activities planned to put in the plan.

MARY TARVER: Maybe we could do something kind of broad that would pull that into an activity, but not necessarily, for us to have to reach out to Families Helping Families and get anything very specific or get anything specific would require us to have another meeting and we barely made it today.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: No. What I'm saying is whatever we bring, it might actually probably going to be posted

I assume, just like basically send it to the point of contact and say y'all have input, we are having this meeting, these are the things going to the planning committee. Y'all have suggestions, you can make it at this planning committee meeting. Open it up the recommendation to get input because they may have valuable input that we can't get in the next 15 minutes.

HALIE BELIN: There is another comment in the chat from Harlon Cowsar. It says I think we need to consider more advocacy around equitable education opportunities for kids with disabilities rather than just equal inclusion.

MARY TARVER: Okay. And that may be some of the activities that we had, objective 3.3 with our activity which was advocate for educational systems change based on emergent education issues. And maybe we can change that advocate for educational systems. Trying to make it where it would be.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Mary, I think that was like a placeholder for us to, you know, as we move forward each year making those plans, we would insert what is the emergent issue.

MARY TARVER: Cause we kind of did that on the employment piece. If something comes up during this time that whatever that emergent issue might be that we would be able to, like you said, kind of have a placeholder for something that was happening that was unknown now while we are figuring out what activities to do.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: An emergent education issue right now would be the pandemic. Our kids with developmental disabilities have all the services they should have. I don't know how to.

MARY TARVER: I don't know either.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: But that is an issue.

MARY TARVER: I think one of the things, there was something you had written in there about the covid stuff and I do think that needs, it was in the chat.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: It was just to examine and

monitor covid 19 impact on special education services.

MARY TARVER: So maybe advocate for educational system change based on emergent issues. Maybe that is where it includes anything that, I don't know specifically, I know there is a lot of issues. I just don't know.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I think that is like, okay so what we are looking at is advocate for the emergent issues that is leaving it open like we had covid. Like right now us advocating around kids getting services during this time is meeting that current goal. So maybe we don't need to be more specific. The way you meet that goal is by saying we did this around covid 19.

MARY TARVER: Yeah. And we will continue to get updates from Department of Education or whoever for whatever is going on related to that. I am with you. Okay. So here we are with these activities. Building capacity in higher education institutions for those individuals providing services for special education students. Traditional and special education teachers and service providers including ongoing support, example high quality ongoing teacher education. Number two, advocating for providing input on high impact systems that can be used to leverage best practice around IEPs. Enable each member to fully participate as members of the IEP team. And advocate for educational systems change based on emergent education issues that present themselves during FY22. Which an example would be getting services during the pandemic. So any thoughts on those from the committee? If we look at the previous action plan to see if there was anything on there that we wanted to continue to move forward.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think the only thing left to talk about is goal four if I'm correct.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Marilee, do you have any insight into any of the activities.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So I am not very familiar with either one of these activities. I don't know if

Courtney is. Is Courtney still on? Ashley said she might be able to help.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Halie, can you move Ashley over. Sorry Ms. Marry.

ASHLEY MCREYNOLDS: Hey, can y'all hear me.

MARY TARVER: Yes, ma'am.

ASHLEY MCREYNOLDS: So this started back when Shawn and I had worked with Senator Claitor on, I believe it's act 467 or act 267. One of them was the bill number and the other one is the act number. Not sure if I have them mixed up or not. But what it did it made changes to the MFP formula to make it equitable. At the time, the amount of money coming in and the amount of going out to charter schools was different. And it changed it on the state level. The local level is still not equal. What Claitor also put in that bill was that charter schools type two and five have to serve their fair share of students with disabilities. They have to meet 85 percent of the students with disabilities at rates similar to the other traditional public schools in their districts. Where Shawn and I found that this issue really can be solved is when BESE a developing the charter compact, I think is what they are called. It basically rates, like when a charter goes out for renewal, this is weighted so insignificantly on the compact that they can still have an A like on a compact and not meet this. So the weight of this requirement on those compacts is so insignificant it really has done nothing to require and there is no penalty if they don't. So that's what this is around. I think we passed the MFP legislation back in late 2014 or 15. It's been an ongoing issue. We used to advocate very heavily for this. And sometimes in joint education committee meeting. But for years Shawn and I went to the table when the charter compacts were up for discussion at BESE to try to get them to change it and to put some sort of accountability in place for charter schools not meeting this. Because it was, I haven't looked at them in a couple of years, but there used to be a significant number that didn't even

come close. Has been around sometime, might have triggered some memory of some conversations that occurred around this area.

MARY TARVER: It sounds like we need to continue to keep this on our action plan.

ASHLEY MCREYNOLDS: I think so too. And I don't know if there is a way to, I don't know, change it up some specific to the charter compact process that is done at BESE. I actually think they did it at the last BESE. I was watching I think last month, and I think this was on, not this activity, but the compacts were on the agenda.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Thank you.

ASHLEY MCREYNOLDS: Welcome.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I have another meeting so I can stay a couple more minutes.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So what you just did Marilee was take this copied and pasted on this for our activities. I think it could stay with that language, maybe we can put something about just put in parentheses maybe the charter compacts and that will remind us what this was supposed to be like. Sorry to rush us along. And I know Bambi is right, I didn't do a good job of time management today. But is there any other activities that are in your?

MARILEE ANDREWS: The last one I saw was increase opportunities for authentic input that impacts policy decisions or decisions on policy affecting students with disabilities.

MARY TARVER: Okay. I think that one should come over as well. All right. Does this list, does anybody on the committee have any other thoughts about any of the activities? Is there any public comment? Anything in the chat? Okay. If not, if we could ask for a motion to move these activities for the education activities and make a motion to present these to the planning committee.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I make a motion.

MARY TARVER: Thank you Bambi. Can I get a second?

SARAH FLETCHER: I will second.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Are there any abstentions? Any objections? Then motion passed. All right. Thank y'all so much. I appreciate everybody. These will be the things we will work on with the planning committee and then you will see our action plan. And then as we have meetings quarterly then we will put these activities on our agenda and move through them, so we are getting updates and everything. I appreciate it very, very much. Are there any other announcements? All right. Then can I have a motion to adjourn?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I motion.

MARY TARVER: You are on a roll Bambi.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I don't think you need a motion.

MARY TARVER: Well, good. Thank you so much. Look forward to working on this action plan with y'all this year. Thank you.