

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council  
Education and Employment Committee  
July 20, 2021

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hey, everyone. I just got a message from my coworker. She told me there's two Cynthia Bells as attendees. Is it possible if you're not Cynthia Bell to change your name or is there another person here as Cynthia Bell?

MARY TARVER: Marilee, do we have a quorum yet?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I am not sure. I'm trying to count. I'm not sure. I see Bambi's name. I'm not sure if that's Bambi or someone on her account cause I think she's going to be late.

JAMAR ENNIS: Good morning. This is Jamar Ennis. I'm Bambi's assistant director with GODA.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Great. How are you?

JAMAR ENNIS: I'm doing well. How are you?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Good. So I don't think we do quite yet, Ms. Mary. Give me one second. So I see six people and a quorum is six. Do you want me to go ahead and call roll or do you want to call roll and we'll know for sure?

MARY TARVER: Yes. If you don't mind calling roll and we'll see if we can get started.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Sure. So if everybody can turn their cameras on who is a member of this committee and I'll go ahead and start roll. Nicole Banks.

NICOLE BANKS: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hi Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: Good morning.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Melissa Bayham I believe is absent. Carmen Cetnar.

CARMEN CETNAR: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Brenda Cosse. Mitch Iddins. Bambi Polotzola is absent. Ms. Mary Tarver, chair. Temisha Sonnier.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Present.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Dr. Phil Wilson.

PHIL WILSON: Hello everybody.

MARILEE ANDREWS: And Dr. Hyacinth McKee.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Present.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So that's six. So you have a quorum.

MARY TARVER: Thank you for joining the meeting. We'll call the meeting to order and get started.

MARILEE ANDREWS: And I have the virtual meeting protocols if you wanted to go over those or if you want me to?

MARY TARVER: If you don't mind, if you could.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Sure. So I'm going to read from the teleconference meeting protocols that the executive committee put out a while back. And if you would like to follow along it's hyperlinked in your agenda at the top under protocols. Council meetings shall be accessible via Zoom and live streamed on YouTube. Council or committee members will participate via Zoom and shall be considered present when they display a live feed video of their face with their first and last name. Have microphones muted unless called upon by the chairperson. Electronically raise their hand to request the chair recognize them to speak. Once recognized to speak by the chair their microphone shall be turned on. After speaking the microphone shall be returned to mute. Guests may participate via Zoom or observe meetings live on YouTube. All public meetings shall be recorded and may be made available for the council's YouTube channel as determined appropriate by the chairperson. Public comments submitted during a meeting via any format below shall be considered. The first one, during a Zoom meeting guests may electronically raise their hand to request to comment. Upon being recognized to speak by the chair their microphone should be turned on. After speaking their microphone shall be returned to mute. Or guest may post comments relevant to the item under consideration in the chat box. Secondly, post comments during the live stream of the meeting on the council's YouTube channel. Or thirdly, public comments, thirdly public

comments of a person's character will not be heard. If the comment continues after being asked to stop by the chairperson council staff may be instructed to end the meeting. The chairperson will notify the executive committee of this occurrence. Council chair will seek guidance to determine if it legally appropriate to redact or share the video of the meeting on the council's social media. And that is the virtual meeting protocols. Back to you, Ms. Mary.

MARY TARVER: All right. Thank you. I need to request approval for the April 15th committee summary if anybody can do that.

NICOLE BANKS: You want us just to approve it?

MARY TARVER: Yes, ma'am. Make a motion to approve it.

NICOLE BANKS: I motion to approve the minutes.

MARY TARVER: Thank you, Nicole. And I need a second.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Second.

TEMISHA SONNIER: I second. Temisha. I hope y'all can hear me. I'm having some trouble with my connection.

MARY TARVER: We can see you and hear you. Okay. Thank you. We have the agenda, but we've gotten requests to move people and scoot people around. So if y'all just bear with us we'll go through and get updates from everybody today, it just may be in a different order. Cause I think, Marilee, you said Department of Health is not ready at this time.

MARILEE ANDREWS: The Department of Education.

MARY TARVER: You know I work at the hospital so that's my go to when I'm talking about a department. Sorry.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Dr. Peterson who has agreed to present on behalf of LDOE to our committee is running a little bit behind. So I know that we have Angela Montgomery here for Melissa. Angela, are you prepared to present right now?

ANGELA MONTGOMERY: I am. I really don't have a whole lot to share. Melissa just wanted me to let you

all know that we recently hired a REDS in the New Orleans region. So we currently have REDS in every region except Houma and Alexandria. So we are still working to hire others for those two regions. And I just wanted to also mention that the customized employment pilot with LSU HDC is still ongoing. There are currently four staff members that are going through the training working with their learning partners as they go through. And that's really all we have to share today.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Does anybody have any questions or any comments about the LRS for the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services that we need to ask for the next meeting?

EBONY HAVEN: Hey, Mary. Nicole Banks has her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Thank you. Ms. Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: Yes. So she said that they hired someone in New Orleans, and they were looking for someone in Houma and what was the other place?

MARY TARVER: Alexandria.

NICOLE BANKS: Alexandria. Okay. Where can individuals apply to be for that position?

ANGELA MONTGOMERY: Those positions will be posted on the state civil service website.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. That's what I wanted to know. I know some individuals that was interested so I will pass that information along to them.

ANGELA MONTGOMERY: Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Okay. I think Julie the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities is the next thing on the agenda. But I think they were going to have to be here at ten. Unless somebody's on the call now we'll have to skip over them.

ROSEMARY MORALES: Hey, there. I'm sorry. I'm Rosemary Morales with OCQD. So I had just gotten a message from Julie that said she's not sure she's going to be able to make it because her meeting is running late. So I feel like I can go ahead and probably give you any information that you're looking for. So I'm

not really sure exactly what you were looking for. I don't know if you guys just had questions you wanted me to answer. Or if you wanted me just to kind of give you like a little quick summary of what's going on and where we're at with our vocational or our community employment providers. So however you want to handle it, I'm more than happy to proceed if you would like.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Rosemary. Yes, at our last meeting we had some discussions about the sheltered workshops and also about agreement or something was being worked on between LRS and OCDD. So any updates or any information. And then if there was other questions then we can.

ROSEMARY MORALES: Sure. So I'll just do the MOU real quick. We are in the process of getting that MOU finalized. It is within the legal department right now being reviewed. And so once that is done, then it will be finalized and signatures will be obtained. So I think that we're moving that along as well.

So as far as our vocational providers, so, you know, there's a lot going on with them because we've been shut down for the last year. And we've had providers open back up. We still have about 23 around the state that are not open providing services. As far as our settings rule, we are still working along with that. We lost a year, essentially, when we had last year's covid. We had planned to be at our compliance date March of this year. But because of everyone being shut down and things being kind of crazy and still continuing to be that way we have pushed it back to 2022. CMS during all of this time pushed it back actually the final compliance state to 2023. That's March 17th of 2023. We are still looking at March 17th of 2022 to make sure that we have enough time to do any kind of transitioning, if providers aren't in compliance, we'll have to transition them to providers and services that are in compliance. So we have kind of an earlier date for that.

Let's see. We still have a hand full of providers that are paying a subminimum wage. The majority of our

providers have moved to minimum wage that is in group employment. There's no sheltered employment at this time. Let me rephrase that. There may be a couple of holdouts, but by March 17th of 2022 that will be gone away. Our providers had started moving away from the sheltered workshops, meaning the work inside of the workshop or the facility that they were paid a subminimum wage or a piece rate. The majority of our providers have exited from that. There are a couple of holdouts which we've allowed because of all the craziness with covid. Because sometimes those providers had contracts that they did in house that were for a company. And then so they're still trying to figure out how that's going to work out. Some have moved into those facilities and do the work there now. And so, but as March 17th, 2022 they will no longer be allowed to do it no matter what.

Our group employment will be required to pay minimum wage. The majority of our providers are already doing that. They've already complied with that because they were working to meet that compliance date of this year. So they had already moved people into that. I will tell you that the majority of our individuals that are served through our day programs have not returned to day programs. Our providers are open, but most of them are operating at like 50 percent capacity. There's a few that are a little higher like 85 percent, but no one is fully back to where they were prior to covid. In fact, I just received word this morning that one provider has shut down again because they're worried about the new variant and their parish had kind of reached like a surge and they were concerned. There's not been any orders to do that. That's just something they did on their own this morning. So, you know, as we continue to try and work through covid I'm not sure how things are going to actually play out. We do have appendix K services right now that allow for virtual services to be delivered. Much like we're doing now through Zoom. We did not have a large group of participation with that

for various reasons. But we do still have that in place and that will actually be moved into our waivers as a permanent service.

So that's kind of where we're at right now. Still struggling to kind of get back to getting our individuals back into day programs. But again, now that we're having a surge, I'm not sure how things will pan out. Specific questions that you have? I think I saw something in that email someone was concerned about like just an on-slot of referrals to LRS. I don't anticipate that. The majority of individuals that were being served inside of sheltered workshops were receiving what they called prevocational services. The majority of them would not necessarily be referrals for LRS. We are actually developing a program within our waiver implemented over the next year that will kind of do what prevocational service is meant to do. Which is kind of be a time limited service to do some job preparation, job readiness, kind of do some exploration and discovery with them to try and get them to where someone might want to get a job. We are still working with our groups, supported employment. Same thing, trying to, you know, continue to have those conversations they would be wanting to move into individual employment. So, you know, if we can just get past our pandemic and kind of reach another area of normalcy, then hopefully we can start regaining some grounds there and move forward with our plan.

MARY TARVER: I was curious, I guess, is it the clients that are hesitant to move forward with the program? You know, like in a program because of covid, or is it the actual service providers who I heard you say that one had closed. But is it the service providers or the clients that are the most concerned, do you think?

ROSEMARY MORALES: So the majority, so like I said, the majority of our providers, we have approximately 86 providers in our state. Some have a couple of satellite offices, but I still count them as like one provider. Only 23 have not completely opened yet. And

some of those 23 may actually be doing supported employment, but just haven't opened up the day program. So there's several factors there. Some of it is staffing issues. There's not enough staff, which I'm sure y'all are very aware of. The staffing is terrible right now. You can't get IFS workers, let alone a day program worker. Some of the day programs that actually have both IFS and day program, you know, are staffing their IFS first because they feel that's, I guess, of higher importance. So staffing is one issue. Another issue there are lots of people that do not want to leave and go back into an environment. They're just not ready. Families aren't ready for it to happen. And then I will tell you this, I know that this has been something that has been discussed. Because of appendix K and allowing of family to be workers that's being utilized. And so individuals are staying home with the family being paid, etc. So those were kind of the main things that are kind of holding things from moving forward. Staffing, individuals themselves that are either were more medically compromised or older and don't want to return just yet. And then the family is kind of holding it back as well. Several reasons there. I think overall, all of the providers would love to open right back up and be able to move forward with some of our services that we're trying to implement now. But that's kind of what's holding us all back.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Does anybody have any questions?

EBONY HAVEN: Mary, you have a question in the chat from Ms. Corhonda Corley. Well, she has her hand raised so, I guess, I'll let her speak.

MARY TARVER: All right. Ms. Corhonda.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Great morning, madam chair. I have several questions. First and foremost, I'm thankful that she provided that information, but exactly how are you disseminating this information out to the public? I have spoken to many families and many case managers that are not aware of any of this



information. I know of plenty of case managers, plenty companies that cannot disseminate information to our families accurately and provide them with any of this help that they so desperately need because they don't know. So I really would like to know how exactly are these agencies making sure that this information get disseminated out. Not just to the companies that are contracted and the case managers, but also to the families. Cause it should not be that individuals like myself is having to educate or inform case managers about this type of information. And it should not be that families that attend our DD Council meetings like this one today actually learn this type of information today. This is something we've been in covid now for over a year and I continue to ask over and over again how is information being disseminated out. We already know that there's a large number of people that do not have access to internet so how is that information being disseminated out. Cause we cannot say that we're posting it on websites cause it's not on these websites. I looked. The list dealing with anything for people with disabilities has not been updated in over two years. So I'm just inquiring on how exactly are we ensuring that people in this disability community actually receive access to all of this wonderful information. Thank you.

ROSEMARY MORALES: Specifically are you talking about the information that I gave like about the providers? Because the providers are the ones who have been in contact with the individuals letting them know when they're opening back up. You know, they've kept that open to, you know, they call the individuals that were, you know, with them prior to covid. So they have like a list, you know, they have the people that are receiving their services and that's who they call them and ask them these questions. You know, are you ready to come back, you know, how are things going. They've maintained contact with them throughout the pandemic even though they have not been being paid to provide services because they've not provided services.

As far as, you know, that information it is always available through our local governing entities. If you, you know, calling into your local LGE I always say is the best thing you can do, or your first place of contact should be your local governing entity. If your support coordinator is not able to answer your questions or provide you information or they don't know, your next line is your local governing entity. That's your capital areas, your Acadiana's, depending on your region. There's ten of them statewide. That is your next line of contact that you should be reaching out to to find out, you know, any information that you feel, you know, as far as support coordinators not giving you information. Because we do depend on our support coordinators as well as our partner agencies to get information out. We hope that you guys share this information. Even if you just say hey, there's lots of information, you need to call your LGE or your support coordinators. Like, again, if your support coordinator can't help you, we have such a turnover in support coordination so they may not be as well informed. But someone in their office, their supervisor should be well informed if your support coordinator is not. You know, that's struggle that I hear from everybody no matter the agency. It's like getting that information out. How do you get all that information out. You know, we do post it. We send, you know, we put memos out. We, you know, talk with our partner agencies and our support coordinators. We get a ton of calls every day within OCDD state office. We have an email address OCDD-HCBS@la.gov email that we get tons of emails for people asking questions. If nothing else, you give them that email and say send an email to this email address. We put that email out for years now and it's one that we monitor every day and someone responds, you know, within the day, typically. So, you know, I agree that, you know, we probably need a better method, I just don't know what that method is. We've put out, you know, like I said, we talk to our partner agencies, we have the email address available,

we get it our stakeholder groups, we get it to our SCs, we get it to our local governing entities. You know, I don't know what else to add to that. I'm more than happy to take back suggestions to my management. Again, I'm just a program manager delivering information about employment cause that's what I do. So I'm not sure. Like I said, Ms. Hagan is tied up the capitol today so I'm not sure what time she'll be able to pop in.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. That was a great deal of information to help everybody understand different avenues. And, of course, we all know in our developmental disabilities world that that is a lot of families biggest hurdles is sometimes trying to figure out which direction to go, and what's best for their families, and how to get it started. And I think the LGEs are probably the best way to do that in most cases. So I appreciate that. And then the email address that you gave us, I didn't write it down, but can you give it to us again? We can put it in the chat.

ROSEMARY MORALES: It's OCDD-HCBS@la.gov.

MARY TARVER: Got it.

ROSEMARY MORALES: And like I said, it's monitored daily, and we get questions all the time. So it's out there because we get lots of questions, you know, from families and from everybody. So it's not just, you know, providers, it's everybody, families, individuals.

MARY TARVER: Thank you.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Rosemary, I just put it in the chat. Will you just look and make sure I typed it correctly that way people can see it.

ROSEMARY MORALES: That's it.

EBONY HAVEN: Mary, Nicole Banks has her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Ms. Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: So I know Ms. Rosemary was saying, you know, they're trying to come up with a way to get this information out, a more effective way than what we have in place now, correct. So I know that when I was

working up in the field and we had to go inside the homes, and we had to do all that we had to document this kind of thing in a system. We had phone call logs and not only that, we also had our supervisor, whoever they were, they called after us to make sure that these people knew what was going on, you know, what issue they had going on as far as, you know, what services they needed or what part of the service they wasn't getting. So it is logs that can be looked up and pulled up depending on what system they're using that are documenting everything in that they can see did they try to get in touch with these families. Like we even to the point where we couldn't phone call, there was no email, there was nothing we made like an actual trip to the house to make sure the person was there to make sure. So I mean like I'm sitting here listening to, you know, Ms. Cor-- I'm not sure how to say her name. I'll just say Ms. C. How you say it?

MARY TARVER: Ms. Corhonda.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Ms. Corhonda. All right. So there is way that they can pull that up to see who has been contacted, who wasn't being contacted, who still needs to be contacted and which ways they were contacted. So at least they will know who else we got to get in touch with. You know, who else needs this information so at least they can tackle that part of it. And they can start, you know, moving this information along because she's right. Some of this stuff isn't getting to some of the people. So that just is a suggestion if they, you know, want to take that into consideration.

MARY TARVER: Thank you.

ROSEMARY MORALES: So we still require monthly contact and during this time of covid we've not been in the homes because of covid. But we've still maintained that monthly contact, at least monthly. For some individuals it's more than monthly. But for, you know, just to maintain that contact our SCs are required to do that. There is follow-up, even our LGEs follow up, you know, to make sure information is getting out. But

again, you know, you may only do a random sample of people. It may not be all 13 plus thousand of people that you're contacting. So but we do, we have checks and balances in place for that. I know that we have done surveys with our individuals during covid time. We've had surveys completed that SCs had to complete for each individuals and enter into Survey Monkey because we know not everyone can do it themselves. So, you know, I feel like we've done a good job of getting our information out and getting it. But there's going to always be information that slips through the cracks, that's not quite understood, you know, that's just, you know, maybe you missed that bit of information. Maybe it wasn't delivered, you know, like you needed it to be heard. I feel like our SCs do a good job or, you know, we all try to do a good job of getting that information out. Like I said, when you're serving that many thousands of people, you know, I think that, you know, we're going have some miscommunications along the way.

Again, that's why I think that it's important we get it out to you guys so that you can carry it to your groups and so forth and so on. But again, I'm going to bring it back to LGEs. Our LGEs are always in the loop, they always know what's going on. You know, so if you ever have questions or concerns or anything like that, that to me would be, you know, who you should contact to figure out what's going on. And then again, like I said, that email, we get lots of emails. We get please call me email. That's appropriate as well. So we just like to, you know, we try to get everything out. We do electronically send things out. We post things on our website. But we know that not everyone has access to that. But, yes, Nicole. We still try to do kind of what you described there. We try to make sure we're doing that process and getting everything out to everybody.

EBONY HAVEN: Marry, Temisha has her hand raised and you have a comment in the chat.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Temisha.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Thank you, madam chair. I think

if I'm understanding Ms. Corley right and me looking from a prospective of a parent with a child like many other parents when you're dealing with so many things and you're already overwhelmed and may not, like she said, have internet service or some other, you know, mechanism of electronic communication. If I'm understanding I'm thinking she's trying to say that what other way are we making an effort to get this information out to the public. Not necessarily just the vendors or the people who are already receiving services. I think she's more or less talking about people who have no idea about how to start and where to start. And I'm going to just say this, and I think systemically being a parent a lot of our children are in school. I feel like it may be a good idea, and I know, I don't think the Department of Education is on here, I'm not sure. I think they may have been one of the people we said would be late. If there is some kind of way getting that information out at the school level to these families to say hey, these are, you know, this is the list of, you know, providers, people who help just like Families Helping Families. Some of those Office of Developmental Disabilities. Like a list. Cause some of those parents are grandparents, caregivers, foster families who do not know where to start for those resources. Cause sometimes they are calling these places. And there have been times, since we already know we're talking about staffing where that's even limited for people to be answering questions or comments. So they're kind of getting led from place to place without having someone to really speak to directly. But maybe shortening that, I guess you could say the burden of trying to figure out where to begin. But I do remember, you know, having that as a place of direction, having the resources available. And I know, you know, cause when I see things on the internet a lot of families, a lot of people, a lot of advocates are sharing it, reposting it, resending it, but truth be told, some of those families because of the burden of dealing with the magnitude of the hard

copies delivered to our school districts or resource areas the children and family services offices. And I'm not saying it's not there but giving them those links to those Families Helping Families office, having that hard copy in there so that information can be picked up. And also the IEP teams can discuss those resources with those families. Because I remember, you know, being in that position and not even thinking about where to go. Had I had someone tell me about Families Helping Families when my child, you know, was in the early steps department. You know, those kind of things. I think that's where we're missing the gap of trying to get the information out if I'm understanding right. But that's just my opinion to share from my angle looking at it. Just some ideas, you know. Just recommendations of, you know, where those gaps. Not so far as into the process of the channel of services cause some of them haven't even gotten to that point. They haven't gotten to the Office of Developmental Disabilities. We're trying to get them into the system. So we can't forget about those who, you know, haven't even started. And I think part of that is the foundation. If I'm understanding what Ms. Corley is talking about. Thank y'all for letting me speak.

MARY TARVER: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. And I see in the comments about Families Helping Families. It is kind of a multitiered, and it comes at you from all different levels of the information you get. But I do think having a way for families to connect and usually they are either hearing about OCDD or Families Helping Families. Thank goodness they're able to kind of get families going in the right direction. So I do think, I know we use our DD Council to try and help get information out about Families Helping Families across the state too. So we'll continue to work on resources. I think that's something that I heard everybody say, like how people find and connect with resources. Thank you. Okay. I see that Dr. Peterson has gotten on the call from Louisiana Department of Education.

KELLI PETERSON: Good morning.

MARY TARVER: Good morning.

KELLI PETERSON: How you doing?

MARY TARVER: I'm good. Thank you for joining us today. I know there's been some changes with the department as far as our representative on the DD Council. So you are filling in today.

KELLI PETERSON: Yes, Ms. Tarver. I'm actually trying to look through all of my boxes on the screen to see if she's on. But I wanted to also be able to introduce to the council Meredith Jordan who is with us now at the agency who will be serving on the council. And this is like her first week, so definitely didn't want to baptism by fire in a sense. So wanted her at least to just be able to join today. I'll just deliver some of the points that Dr. Fletcher left off but wanted at least her to be able to be on and just kind of observe today so the next meeting she'll be able to be the agency representative.

MARY TARVER: Perfect. Thank you.

KELLI PETERSON: No problem. So this morning I think one, to pick up somewhat of the conversation just to add from the department, I think one of the things, you know, we do have contracts with Families Helping Families to help support students across the regions. I think what I definitely hear is the need for more coordination of care. That's something we've been talking about is like how do we better do that. Because I think for a parent there's lot of different places to get information that somewhat is fragmented and it's like how do we do a better job of that. So definitely open to having that conversation with those on the call. But I think it's really about trying to create like more of a cohesive way that we make sure that parents get information at the beginning of the process, right. And even before evaluation just in terms of like how do I know, right. And what do I know. And what resources are there. And how do I get support along the way. I definitely think that's the conversation I think we should think about having of like how do we create that, how do we have coordination



of care for our families as well.

One of the things that I have on the agenda as agenda topic to discuss today is just picking up with you all from where Dr. Fletcher left off around our IDEA budget and just some information there. As you all know, the IDEA part B611 budget that was, we did have that up for stakeholder input and on our website in February, I believe. The final budget was due in May. And so just a couple of points to give some context on the IDEA budget. One, is the budget, there's a flow-through where we give that money directly to our LEAs or the local education agencies. And that's about 87 percent of the total award. Then there's also the IDEA set aside funds which is approximately 11 percent of the total award. And this is managed at the actual state level. And then there's just 2 percent that is allocated for state admin. So majority of that we want to make sure everyone is aware that goes directly to our systems. And so this year the total award amount was (inaudible) and so that is our total award. I believe Dr. Fletcher in reading the transcripts of where she left off, we had received some indication that there might be more money than what we initially had budgeted for. What we did find out is that there wasn't any additional money in the IDEA 611 so the budget in which we put up for public comment and people, stakeholder input and all of those pieces was the actual amount that we received. What we did receive, however, was additional funds through the American Recovery Plan, the ARP. And in that we received 41 million-dollars. That 41 million-dollars from the American Recovery Plan, that actually goes directly to systems. So that there's no set aside at the state that specifically goes to the system. So that's 41 million-dollars that's going to the actual LEAs systems. There's a question in the chat around what was the budgeted amount. 248 million. The IDEA part B611. 248 million-dollars. And the additional funds that Dr. Fletcher discussed was through the American recovery plan and that was 41 million-dollars.

And that goes directly to the systems. So we're really excited about that going to the systems and making sure they're able to support their students and families in that way. And so our budget was approved. We received the stakeholder input, made adjustments from there and then was able to submit that and that budget was recently approved. And so beginning, at the beginning of the month we received notification of that. So at that point systems, our finance office and federal programs office will begin working with systems for them to begin to get those allocations to their systems.

MARY TARVER: Are there any guidelines or directions about how the money can be used and what part of that will be, you know, I guess a budget for those things so we can kind of track and see how the funding and then the additional funding is helping with our kiddos.

KELLI PETERSON: Yeah. So with the IDEA budget there are required activities and authorized activities that are required and allowable. And same thing for the ARP. Specific things that are allowable. I don't have that list in front of me to give you point by point for the allowability there, but there are specific allowable expenses in all of those.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Thank you. I'll open it up for questions about that. Was there any questions for Department of Education about the IDEA budget?

EBONY HAVEN: Temisha has her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Temisha.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Thank you, madam chair. Dr. Peterson, I probably have a question everybody else is kind of having. I know you said you don't have the information on the required and allowed activities, but is that information posted somewhere online where we can find it and the public can find it? Or, you know, to go and look it up or how would we be able to obtain this information as in the guidelines on what's allowable and what activities are allowed.

KELLI PETERSON: Yeah. The IDEA, those are

allowable federal expenses. So I will check on our website. It has been posted. I'll just make sure it's still up there in terms of we've had it posted for a while now. But I'll make sure it's still up there so you can see the allowable expenses based on required and authorized ones.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Thank you.

KELLI PETERSON: Uh-huh. And actually it's the special education funding page. I'm just looking through my notes. There's a special education funding page and it has it outlined there.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Okay. Thank you.

KELLI PETERSON: No problem.

EBONY HAVEN: Mary, you have a couple of comments in the chat and Ms. Brenda Cosse has her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Ms. Brenda.

BRENDA COSSE: Good morning. Can you hear me?

MARY TARVER: Yes, ma'am.

BRENDA COSSE: Good morning. Brenda Cosse. Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, parent. I do apologize for my hand was raised earlier because I wasn't able to get into the session and I was having extreme technical difficulties. That's why my hand was raised earlier.

MARY TARVER: Well, I'm glad you made it. Sorry for the difficulties. Thank you. Did you say....

EBONY HAVEN: There's some questions and comments in the chat. The first question is will LDOE form a group to help with how they should utilize these moneys under IDEA.

KELLI PETERSON: Yes. So as stated, this was open in February. So in February all this information was provided via SEAP council. Dr. Fletcher discussed it on this call as well. And our monthly calls as well. All this was posted as it relates to we are required to provide, get public input from our budget. And so that was posted in February through May. And so based off of that input we put a draft up, we received stakeholder input, made adjustments to that based on that input and that's what was submitted in May and

approved by the US Department of Ed.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. Dr. Hyacinth McKee says please provide the guidelines on how this money will be spent in writing.

KELLI PETERSON: That, again, is online. It has already been done. It's also related to the IDE federal funding. So it's not anything that we are creating. It is federally required.

EBONY HAVEN: There are a few more questions. Ms. Corhonda Corley says when will SEAP meet to address the BESE minimum requirements for children with disabilities in the school arena.

KELLI PETERSON: The next SEAP meeting I believe is going to be held in September. And also wanted to state to this group we are in the process of if people are interested on serving on our SEAP panel, which is our Special Education Advisory Panel, we've had several members to roll off. Our bylaws do require that we do have representation across the different regions and from different people, community members. And so if you are interested in wanting to get any more information there, I will put an email address in the chat. It will be ashleyaugustine@la.gov. I'll put that in the chat. If you are interested or have someone that is interested in potentially serving on that committee, which is our Special Education Advisory Panel, we would love to get you that information and application so that we can get more representation. So I'm going to drop that email address in the chat now.

MARY TARVER: Thank you.

EBONY HAVEN: There are a couple of more questions. Dr. Charlie Michel asked does the SDE post financial transactions on Louisianacheckbook.com.

KELLI PETERSON: I am not sure. I can ask with our finance department, but that's not something we do in terms of special education. So I'm not sure.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Corhonda Corley asked will the subgroup data be provided to the public?

KELLI PETERSON: I'm not sure what subgroup data we're speaking of.

EBONY HAVEN: I will allow her to speak.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Great morning, madam chair. Dr. Peterson, the subgroup that they had with various parents across the state that are parents of children with disabilities, and they met in regards to LDOE where they were able to disclose what problems the school arena is having and how LDOE could better serve our children with disabilities. They did state that they were going to provide that data back to LDOE and that they were providing it in a way in which it could be shared with the public, but the public has not been able to access it in any shape or form. And so I'm just inquiring on if we would actually be able to get that information.

KELLI PETERSON: Ms. Corley, what group did you say that was that met?

CORHONDA CORLEY: It was several, it was a subgroup that LDOE actually paid, they outsourced and paid an entity to actually collect that data. The information was actually shared by the DD Council also to the public. They actually helped with disseminating that information out and we had approximately 100 parents throughout the state that actually actively participated in those subgroups and provided information. And I'm just inquiring on when that data would be accessible cause that's been over five months since those subgroups actually met.

KELLI PETERSON: Are you speaking of not the subgroups, are you talking about the focus groups?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes, ma'am.

KELLI PETERSON: Okay. Got it. Yeah. Okay. Yes. We do have that report, so I'll make sure that you all get a copy of it.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. We'll put that on our agenda for a follow-up next quarter.

KELLI PETERSON: Okay. That works. Yeah.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Peterson, Dr. McKee asked can you please post the link in the chat. I think she's referring to how the moneys will be spent. You said you can find it on the website. If you can, can you

please post the link in the chat. And then I think Ms. Corley had one more question about what will LDOE put in place to allow individuals with disabilities to actively participate in BESE meetings.

KELLI PETERSON: Yeah. That question actually should be best answered by the BESE staff. They handle any BESE meetings. It's not us. We work with our special education in terms of at the school site. That is a question that that should be directed to the BESE staff.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Is there any other chat or hands raised?

EBONY HAVEN: Marilee, did you have a clarification question?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. Thank you, Ebony. I wasn't clear. It sounds like Ms. Corley and Dr. Peterson understood each other, but what is this focus group that we're going to get follow-up on at the next meeting just so I can ensure that I have that down in my notes and I can make sure we have it on the agenda?

MARY TARVER: I think it was in January or maybe even before that. We had the information about the focus groups that they were doing throughout the state and parents were signing up.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Right. LDOEs focus groups. Is that right?

MARY TARVER: Yes.

KELLI PETERSON: To help with some strategic planning in terms of the focus areas for special education program and potentially reorganizing the office. Yeah.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay. That's perfect. Thank you.

EBONY HAVEN: Then Mary, Temisha has her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Ms. Temisha.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Thank you. I just wanted to make sure we didn't overlook Ms. Susan from Families Helping Families and Ms. Canino's comments in the chat. I know I think we kind of just went forward with Dr. Peterson

when we were talking about some stuff. But they had gave some good information regarding, you know, filling the gaps for parents to get information so I just wanted to make sure we address that before we got too far.

EBONY HAVEN: So I can read the comments, Mary. Susan from Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana said this would be for more general information, but don't forget the Families Helping Families network to help out get info to families through websites, newsletters, et cetera. And I think that was in regards to Ms. Rosemary Morales' presentation. And then if I go down Ms. Kathleen Canino says maybe Families Helping Families could do a video that the school districts could share on the school website and social media just introducing themselves and explaining what they do. And Dr. Peterson has added the link about the funding in the chat as well.

MARY TARVER: Perfect. Thank you.

EBONY HAVEN: Temisha, did you have another question? Your hand is still raised. Okay.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Sorry. No, ma'am.

EBONY HAVEN: It's fine.

MARY TARVER: Okay. We've skipped around so much. All right. I think the next thing is our updates on our contractual activities. Is that right, Marilee?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes, ma'am. That's what's next. We're a little bit ahead. I do see that Devika is here with O'Neal Communications.

MARY TARVER: Okay.

MARILEE ANDREWS: And that is the first contractual update. So I can open it up and then let her give her presentation if that's okay with you.

MARY TARVER: Okay.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So the next, the last part, the last piece of updates on our agenda, like Ms. Mary said, are the contractual activities. And these are for FFY 2021 action plan. So that's our council's action plan from October 1, 2020 to September 30th,

2021. So the first activity that falls under education and employment is within that action plan activity 5.3.3 seminars on hiring individuals with developmental disabilities. You can click on the hyperlink in the agenda FFY 2021 action plan if you wanted to read the specific activity. So I'll just open it up on employment and then I'll let Devika jump in. If everybody remembers from our last committee meeting our contractor O'Neal Communications was working on scheduling the employment seminars in the remaining regions that weren't scheduled which was regions one, ten, four, five, six and nine. And we were lucky to have Sue Killam on who's with LSU HDC. She was here as a proxy for Phil Wilson, and she volunteered to help us connect with some people in the New Orleans area. So that was done. Inclusive employment webinars have been secured in all ten regions and they're customized for each region. Again, I really want to thank LSU HDC and Ms. Sue for helping us with that. If you missed a webinar from your region, in other words, if that webinar's already been done, we had it set up you can still access that recorded webinar. And that's all on our website.

Another suggestion that came at our last committee meeting was to streamline, and this is from Ms. Temisha Victorian, was to streamline the clicks that you have to go through to get to the page on the webinars. The way it was prior was there was one page that described it and a different page to see the webinar dates and registration and things like that. So we did take that suggestion so the route to the inclusive employment webinar site is streamlined. There's only one site that has the description and the ability to register. And it's on the banner of our website LADDC.org. It's right there in a banner so you can easily get to it if you just go straight to our website. Click on that banner, it takes you to the site that has everything. If you look at the status report, the final status reports which is a different document for the full council meeting you can read all this specifics of what



I just said. If there's any questions from me, I can take them or we can open it up to Devika and Gordon who have their own little update, presentation for you as well.

MARY TARVER: All right. Devika.

DEVIKA RAO: Good morning, everyone. Marilee, would you be able to throw up our presentation? Oh, I can share it.

MARILEE ANDREWS: You got it?

DEVIKA RAO: Uh-huh. Everyone, can you see my screen? It's a power point presentation. Can you all see my screen?

GORDON: Yes.

DEVIKA RAO: Okay. Thank you. So hi, everyone. I'm Devika with O'Neal Communications. We have been working on the employment webinars as well as the video projects, the videos for LADDC which I'll be presenting on tomorrow in the other committee. We are here to do a report on the webinars and their progress. My colleague Gordon has been leading this initiative and will be kind of taking the lead from here on the progress we've made, the success the webinars have had and some points of improvement that we can think about taking it to the next level. So I'll actually hand it off to Gordon now. And thanks for having us on here.

GORDON: Thank you, Devika. So can you go to first slide please. So we started on this project and set some very specific goals that we were trying to accomplish. One we wanted to communicate to employers and that was our target market employers as opposed to consumers or parents or anything like that. And step by step strategies to successfully recruit, hire and retain people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in an inclusive and competitive work environment. And we really stressed that kind of would talk a little bit about the evolution from sheltered type employment to where we're trying to achieve today. We also wanted to provide employers access to a unique pool of potential employees who offer diversity of skills who are eager, reliable and committed to

succeeding in competitive and integrated workforce. We also wanted to allow them to do it themselves to rely heavily on Louisiana Rehabilitation Services or to seek out independent consultants that might help them along with this type of program. Next.

Just a couple of comments about curriculum development. We used a number of sources and will talk about that here in a minute. I submitted our curriculum to Rosemary Morales who's been on this morning, staff, Jeff Arceneaux and one or two others all commented and tried to improve or offered improvements to the curriculum before it was adopted. We ended up with a 28-page booklet that offers them a long list of other resources that they can go to beyond our booklet if they so desire. Very proud to say that the curriculum was approved by the Human Resource Certification Institute and SHRM for continuing education credits and Desiree Provost who's the president of (inaudible) SHRM was responsible for that. We thought that was a very good endorsement of the quality of that curriculum. Next.

The curriculum was developed primarily relying on three sources, SHRM. SHRM is the Society for Human Resource Management. It's a national and international organization that really focuses on human resource management. They do a tremendous amount of work in employing people with cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities. All those types of things and have any number of research papers and documents that were valuable in developing the curriculum. That was, of course, enhanced further by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services guide to vocational rehabilitation. And then we also depended on ODEP which is the Office for Disability Employment in Washington for much of our content. I think it was a very thorough and appropriate curriculum that served us well. Next.

We then kind of started out to develop partners to help us promote it. Promote the webinars series. And I first started out trying to get all the chambers. There was 62 of them. And it was, we really didn't get

much of a response. I didn't know whether it was poor brand recognition. But also it was in the early or later stages of the covid pandemic, and we know in some cases people just weren't actively engaged in some of this type of work. And so we really, it was almost disheartening at points. So then we reduced it down and handpicked the largest chambers in each region. Focused on those larger chambers and just had to be very, very persistent in reaching out to them via email, phone messages and those types of things. And so a lot of persistence went into this. I think Marilee just mentioned Susan Killam. She was critical in really re-energizing the entire program. She introduced me to Evie Point de Van Sanders who's a human capital manager at Greater New Orleans Inc. And she immediately gave me like 40 names throughout the state, emails. And sent them emails under her signature saying we need to get behind this and all of a sudden we just started, our sails started getting full and our momentum moving forward. So I was glad she was recognized earlier, but I cannot say enough about those two women and their support of our efforts.

What they did basically was shared our emphasis in the promotion on economic development and workforce development type organizations as well as the local chambers. Some chambers are very active in that area, and some are not. Also would like to just mention Ashley Lewellen which was one of the people Evie Sanders pointed us to with St. Tammany Corporation. She jumped in and did yeoman's job getting us moving forward. So it was really a very momentous event when we got those introductions. And so now we have a pretty large contingent involved in promoting the Jefferson Greater New Orleans event which is later this month on the 28th, I believe. Tuesday the 28th. And so we already have 40 plus registrants which will be, of course, and it should have been, by far and away our largest. Next, please.

So we created a targeted promotion effort. We created a campaign logo, working together, which you

can see down in the corner of our slides. Built the website. Built a Zoom registration system. So we had to build the infrastructure from this campaign from the beginning. We bought an email list of 22,000, almost 23,000 Louisiana companies and organizations with 15 or more employees segmented by each of the ten regions. And so that allowed us to start focusing our message on organizations that may or may not be members of the chamber, may or may not be involved with economic development and that type of thing. We also, well we partnered with local chambers and the SHRM chapters. Not all of them got really behind it. But especially early on. It was hard, that goes back to coming out of that covid situation, it was hard to get people to really quickly engage with us. And so while it was frustrating later on, we really started doing much better with the SHRM chapters. And then we've, of course, as suggested expanded our internal promotion to focus on economic development and select employment organizations as opportunities arose. So perhaps in one area we might find that Goodwill really wants to get involved with it and so thus allow them to do so. Next.

So our presentations were originally designed to go 60 minutes. We find that they really end up going sometimes as many as 75 minutes. Registrants receive a reminder email the day of the event with the curriculum booklet and a brochure on Louisiana Development Disabilities Council. We generally have three to four presenters. I'm the primary presenter. And so our firm not only has developed a curriculum and what have you, we've also gone out and are very active in bringing in students from college and that type of thing and what we call a NIPSE program, post-secondary program. Having them come in as interns and helping train them and getting them job ready. So it's not, we don't just, you know, talk the talk, we try and walk the walk. And so we are ourselves employers. Jeff Arceneaux was the 2019 recipient of the Ken Vince memorial award from the governor. He was kind of the

color man. He was the guy, he has cerebral palsy, he's in his later forties and he will jump in and say you know Gordon, you mentioned this, and he will add his personal experience and how that's impacted him in his career and those types of things. So, you know, we didn't want to get to that dry professor presentation. We wanted to break it up. We generally introduce somebody from the chamber or the local economic development group and they give an overview of the employment situation and why it might be so critical to start really looking for new avenues for employees. We always each one had the regional manager or perhaps what's called a RED specialist on the call. And they all just brought a great deal of authentic information and experiences to each presentation. And all of them have done extremely well. And I think Melissa Bayham, I saw her was on the call earlier. It's all her people that work for her and they all did a great job. And those that we could get SHRM representation we engaged them, and they always bring a little bit more added depth to whatever the presentation is. Next.

So the results. We have sent out over 87,000 almost 88,000 promotional emails from the campaign in all ten regions of the state. We had an average open rate of 15.4 percent. So if we sent out a thousand, 154 of them would open it up. Not necessarily, and then each time, so we sent each one 4 trying to get them to register. And when they each one continued to maintain 13 to 16, 17 percent open rate. And then they averaged a click through rate of 4.4 percent. So we made that investment and felt like it was significant and produced a consistent result, so we recommend continuing that in the future. We are already heavily, we've completed all but the Jefferson New Orleans event and that is scheduled later this month. We already have over 40 people registered in it. And so we'll have served over 130 participants and included 30 local area experts serving as our panelist. Next.

Just a couple of comments. I understand that employment is a major objective within the five-year

plan. And I think what we did this year was a good basis to launch from and continue to grow an employment strategy for employers. So I think you need, you know, employers, you need people with disabilities, strategies and all those are different approaches. But in the beginning, I think more collaboration on the strategic planning would have been helpful. So if I had gotten Sue Killam's input early on and some others, I think we would have just been able to more quickly get the momentum that we ended up with. I say LADDC appears to lack a strong brand recognition across the state. I don't know if that's true or not. Part of it was we had difficulties with covid, but we did work similar to this in North Carolina, and we had a big-name person within state government to lead the project. And so my name would never have come up in that case. We always used that person's name. It was the secretary of health and human services. And so she was, she could pack a room. We were doing those on site, and she would just pack a room. I mean she'd have 100, 120 people there. And the message was about employment and that type of thing and how employers can take advantage of this great opportunity. So perhaps more emphasis in the future on building your own brand recognition for LADDC. Just a thought. Not sure whether I misinterpreted how strong your brand recognition is. But I didn't get the sense everybody knew who you were. And frankly, the project wasn't adequately funded. We gave far more hours than we were paid for. The email list, the ASL, CART services. So all of our presentations had ASL and CART services provided. And just the number of hours required, and sheer persistence was pretty well unexpected. But that's quite all right. Just in closing, I just would like to next please.

Just comment these were our participating chambers. Monroe, Houma, Terrebonne, Bossier, Baton Rouge Area of Chamber, St. Tammany Corporation, St. Tammany Chamber, Chamber of Southwest Louisiana, Central Louisiana Chamber, One Acadiana and Jefferson

Chamber and Greater New Orleans Inc. And one more. And these are the economic development people that we were introduced by Evie and really has brought a whole new momentum to it. That's a brief overview of what we've done and if there's question, I'd be happy to answer what I can.

MARY TARVER: Thank you for that. It looks like a lot of great work and effort went into being involved with that employment seminars. And just a great way to get word out to employers of the great work that so many people that are in the DD community can offer to employers. So I appreciate all that hard work. Does anyone have any questions?

EBONY HAVEN: Bambi has her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Bambi.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Hi everyone. So is this, I'm sorry, I came on late. I had another meeting. But is this project, are we voting to fund it again? Is that part of our recommendation to fund it next year?

MARY TARVER: I don't know where we are with the planning committee, the next action plan and activities. But I made a note to by 5.3.3 to say that we needed to continue to fund it and look at how we need to continue it.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: And since I was only able to hear about half, actually kind of heard the whole presentation, but was walking part of the way. You know, as far as the last few slides about getting some big names, like probably could get with the governor or someone with economic development behind it to help push that. I think whenever I received outreach like it was during the legislative session which is in the first few months of the year. So some of that, you know, I think what you said about the covid and then also with legislative session, which is usually between March and June, it's really difficult to get with people at the state level to be engaged outside of the legislature. Or legislative process. Maybe if we start early, if it is funded again, we can build something, you know, to get more outreach. Maybe in

the fall and winter months.

GORDON: I hadn't been aware of that. Thank you. That's a good point.

EBONY HAVEN: Mary, there is a question in the chat from Ms. Corhonda. She says are we depending on the employers to seek DD employees? If so, then how will the DD community know how to apply?

GORDON: So a big part of where we talk about customizing each presentation, I start out researching those organizations within those regions that might be instrumental in connecting people with jobs. Families first is one that we tell them to seek out, you know, let them know that you've got job openings and are open to applications. And so that is an example. I suggest they can all start with LRS. And, you know, I think every one of the rehabilitation spokespersons said I always have a reservoir of ready to go to work people, so we always encourage them to start there. They can go to Goodwill. And we identify all of those things. And then some of those like Go Jobs and people like that or organizations like that. So we try and give them, and that was that key step by step approach, we need to show them how to do it, where to go to connect with people that might fit this bill. Both for them and from the developmental disabilities side viewpoint.

MARY TARVER: As part of our 2021 action plan this was an activity that was part of that. We were trying to increase the developmental disabilities community to have successful, competitive, integrated, individualized employment. And so one of the ways we wanted to help support that was to provide financial support to conduct seminars with chambers of commerce throughout the state on the benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities. And we had 32,000-dollars in the project. So that's how, you know, as we move through the processes each year of doing our planning committees and do our action plan and fund things this was one of those things that were funded with an idea on how do we get employers to recognize that there are employees in the DD community



that are great assets to have for your company. And it was a matter of trying to help put together a program which had not been done before, so it took a lot of groundwork to get this going for all the different chambers of commerce and others that reached out to get the project kicked off. So this was, I guess, the first of the seminars and certainly is something that we would like to, you know, continue. But that will move forward with our future planning committees. But it is definitely something that we want to recommend from our group I think since it was successful and continues to have some momentum to be built and it can move forward so we don't want to lose this. This idea of the way the seminars were rolled out and that kind of stuff. So more to come on that. But that's the project began through one of our activities.

GORDON: And if I may just close by saying Tuesday the 27th is the last of the webinars. It's the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce at 10 a.m. You can go on the website and register there. And you can join it and experience it yourself.

EBONY HAVEN: So Mary, Ms. Corhonda had a follow-up question for Mr. O'Neal. She's asking is this including employers that will provide equitable pay.

GORDON: Yes. In all of the LRS type programs that we promote during it that is a requirement. And that is a requirement of LRS throughout. And so for them to get some reimbursements and things like that they have to be paying a person that may be disabled at the same rate they would be paying anyone else. And so yes.

MARY TARVER: All right. Thank you. Anything else?

GORDON: Thank you so much.

MARY TARVER: Thank y'all.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Thank you, Gordon and Devika. Y'all did a great job and I really appreciate it.

GORDON: Thank you, Marilee. Y'all have a great day.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I see a comment from Ms. Corley. I'm sorry, Ebony, I don't know if you saw it. I didn't

mean to jump in. She says can the DDC provide the information regarding the last webinar out for the public. So Ms. Corley, do you want to speak.

MARY TARVER: She wants I think the information from what Gordon was just saying, the 27th.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Right. Yeah. I mean, I guess I'm just wondering maybe how she wants to do it. We could do like another social media post. We've done a couple different social media posts promoting the webinars. And then we did I think an LADDC news or two.

MARY TARVER: And it's to get employers to the seminars so they understand different avenues to reach people with developmental disabilities and other disabilities that can be hired by their organization.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Right. Yeah. We can maybe do one more social media post if that's amenable.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Okay. Next. I think I'm excited about this. Dr. Beckers, I think I saw you. Yeah. Hi. To give us an update on the Louisiana postsecondary inclusive education alliance.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Good morning, everybody. I shared a video with Marilee and hopefully she can get it to go at the end. Let me give a little background for those who might not be familiar. When we started with this funding in the fall of 2019 we had three universities, Southeastern, Nicholls and UL Lafayette who had post-secondary programs. And two community colleges, Bossier Parish and Baton Rouge Community College. Of all those programs Baton Rouge Community College was not a CTP. A CTP is a certified transition program which means we meet the federal accreditations to have rigorous programs and accountability. So right now we have five schools cause CTP was gained by Baton Rouge Community College. We have three universities and two community colleges that are CTP programs. Which the big picture is the students who attend can receive Pell funding and there are standards that have to be met. So that's kind of a little background of it. Now the good news is LSU Alexandria is ready to

go. They're going to start their program in the fall of 22. So we've added a university. I have been working diligently with Dr. Danielle Williams at Grambling. She wants a program. We're struggling with buy in from the university. But that's okay. We're never going to say stop. So we're working diligently. UL at Monroe, Dr. Anita Sherman is up and running and her president has actually taken it as one of his initiatives to get a post-secondary program at UL Monroe. And just like two weeks ago I started with Lettie Goings at McNeese and I'm going there next week to sit down with her to kind of promote program at McNeese. So if we go that would be adding four more programs. So kind of really, really excited about that. My dean, Dr. Paula Calderon has been working with me helping me with the deans of other colleges across the state to kind of advocate at an administrative level for post-secondary education. So I'm really happy with the direction we're going. Including with the pandemic we have made lot of progress, I think. I don't think, I feel we've made a lot of progress improving our post-secondary education in Louisiana.

So some concerns that we have, one big concern is big college kind of governs all of these programs, put out accreditation standards. Which the new programs that are coming on we're working within those standards to make sure their programs align with accreditation. The existing programs, with Southeastern being one, our CTPs were written a certain way which is how we got approved. We're going to have to go back and relook at the accreditation to make sure we meet this. Cause they're not always going to align with how our CTP program was granted. This could be a problem because those of you who know anything about accreditation and universities that's a big part of university life is accreditation. So I don't know how those post-secondary programs are going to fit into the new accreditation standards.

Another big piece and we actually LAPIE met

yesterday, had a monthly meeting yesterday. We really want to take an initiative, a legislative initiative for future funding of post-secondary programs. I don't know if you guys are probably not familiar, and I'll share this with Marilee and maybe she can send it out. Florida, their developmental disabilities council actually has worked in 2016 to get legislated funding that supports PSC programs. We collectively as an alliance think the biggest problem is funding. A lot of schools would do programs, but the funding doesn't exist as far as supporting these types of programs. And another big fear is that because we're all of our universities, university systems the current administrations support these programs, but what happens if our administration changes. With the swipe of a pen they could get rid of our programs on campuses or within systems. So we really, again, want to take the initiative to work with our legislation to maybe get something similar to what Florida has. I know I've had a couple conversations with Bambi, and she's been very much an advocate for us to help us get, you know, we're educators by nature, we're not politicians. I've learned a lot about the political field during this.

But that's something that alliance wants to do next is to really push to get support to get us permanent so we can't be wiped away with a budget or wiped away on our campuses because we got new presidents or leaders. That would be the next line, I guess, an agenda we have as an alliance. We meet monthly. It's a good group of people. A lot of people who are just supporting and they want these programs. Even the universities or colleges that don't have them, they want them. The want is there. The desire is there. We each agreed before our next monthly meeting that we're going to develop an advisory board of parents and business partners and our students who come through our programs to kind of form that advocacy group to go out and work with our local districts to let our people know, our legislators, senators what PSC program is. And kind of hopefully with the video,

hopefully Marilee can get it going. But the video you can see the buy in is just phenomenal. I don't know if you want to show the video first and then open questions. You just tell me how you want to progress from here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I can share it. I have the link.

GERLINDE BECKERS: It's like three minutes long. And I hope you guys like it. I love it so. And there's closed captioning. I think you might have to click the button. But it is closed captioned.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So I've never shared a screen with a video playing so we'll see if it works.

GERLINDE BECKERS: It looks like it's working.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I'm going to press play and see if you guys can hear. Can y'all hear that?

>> >>: Louisiana Alliance of Post-Secondary--.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Closed captioning. I don't know if you push that or if they push that on their own.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Here we go.

>> >>: Louisiana Alliance of Post-Secondary Inclusive Education also known as LAPIE was born to increase the post-secondary educational opportunities for students with disabilities in Louisiana on both two- and four-year university and college campuses. Southeastern Louisiana University, Nicholls State University and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette offer post-secondary programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

>> >>: This allows students to build self-esteem, build communication skills, work on independence, work on communicating with others. That way they can become contributing members of society.

>> >>: To see them interact and have the ability to say oh, my God. I'm on Southeastern's campus. I'm an actual student at a college. They get so happy and so excited.

>> >>: I'm a different student going to successful people and just grow as a person.

>> >>: Everybody has a calling in life, and I think each calling needs a try being in a different

position that will help them to grow in their education, to grow as a person.

>> >>: Students take general education courses, the same as other students on campus. They participate in all the activities and services available on campus. They choose their own courses, activities and internships with varying levels of support.

>> >>: It's my first time going to college. I love college so much.

>> >>: I love to be a student at Nicholls because it helps me live independently.

>> >>: It shows you how to be independent and how to actually do things on your own.

>> >>: It is my absolute pleasure to present the candidates who have completed four years in Southeastern's comprehensive post-secondary transition program for students with intellectual disabilities and have earned their certificate of completion.

>> >>: They participate in commencement ceremonies alongside their peers without disabilities. And they receive a true college experience while preparing to become contributing members of society.

>> >>: Self advocacy, self-confidence, independence, self-sufficiency. Those are positive outcomes of alliance connected program. And these are what we can offer alliance connected students. They learn how to adjust, how to work with others, how to advocate for themselves. And then on the flip side all of us on campus learn how to give them a chance.

>> >>: Just like any other student they are fully a member of our family. And I think that's very important.

>> >>: LAPIE sets the standards for Louisiana Post-Secondary Inclusive Education develops resources to assist in the creation of new post-secondary programs and provides mentoring and technical assistance to new programs in Louisiana. We all play a vital role in improving inclusive post-secondary opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Louisiana.

GERLINDE BECKERS: That's it. Thank you for showing that.

MARY TARVER: That's awesome.

GERLINDE BECKERS: So we're really proud of that. I believe we've made great gains even with the pandemic working. I mean we just worked continuously. Being able to work virtually helped a lot. Each of us as we went through the pandemic were like how do we deal with, as all of us, how do we deal with the pandemic. How do we do a program like this with a pandemic when we have to have mentors with our students. But we did it. We're making progress. I guess I can answer questions.

EBONY HAVEN: Mary, Dr. McKee has her hand raised and Ms. Nicole Banks has her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Dr. McKee.

HYACINTH MCKEE: I don't have a question. I just wanted to say to Dr. Beckers, awesome work. I actually had an opportunity to meet with a dean of a community college about three days ago and we were just singing your praises and hoping that LAPIE can get to that community college. And so maybe offline I'll send you an email and let where you know that community college. The work is exceptional. That young man in the video saying each calling needs a try. I would love to get his name and get his permission to use his quote moving forward on everything. Cause each calling needs a try. The work that was put into this vision that the DD Council, you know, just was talking about and spoke about two years ago is exceptional the amount of work Dr. Beckers that you and your team have put in. I do want to say that, is it Mary at Nicholls state as well, her team, she does a lot of work closely with you. And it seems like there's some more work we need to do to help this support this vision in terms of getting the legislation involved to make sure this stays inside our budgets. Now as it relates to accreditation, and I'm sure there are my colleagues on the line that may not be familiar with that, but what Dr. Beckers is saying is that our push is to make sure programs like this is

recognized at the accreditation level. We want our scholars to get more than just a certificate. We want our scholars to work towards a degree. A degree. A degree. So they can have a degree. And so as we, you know, we honor you Dr. Beckers for this work, but we will stand behind you to push that our scholars get a degree. And that means that's going to require us to get aligned with these accreditation bodies to make sure these programs are recognized. Again, hats off Dr. Beckers and her team. And I will send an email about that community college and that dean's information cause they have expressed information as well. Thank you for your time.

MARY TARVER: So this, again, this activity was on our FY 21 action plan to provide financial support to establish postsecondary inclusive education alliance to provide for mentoring and technical assistance, host training events and develop resources designed to build the capacity of Louisiana postsecondary institutions in providing inclusive postsecondary education opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout Louisiana. And FY 21, we allotted 40,000-dollars for that activity.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Nicole Banks has her hand raised and Ms. Temisha Victorian. And you have a couple comments in the chat as well, Mary.

MARY TARVER: Let's start with our committee members, Ms. Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: Hi. Thank you for letting me speak Ms. Beckers, the issue that you were having with Grambling was what again? I missed that part.

GERLINDE BECKERS: I have a faculty member, Dr. Danielle Williams and she is gung ho. We actually tried to submit a TPSID grant, cause last year was a TPSID funded year federally. She's not getting the support she needs on her campus. This is not a one-person event.

NICOLE BANKS: I know.

GERLINDE BECKERS: And, you know, I don't know how familiar everyone is with universities, but chain of



command exist with universities, and we have to follow that chain of command. That's why my dean is trying to get involved to reach out to deans at the next level. But, you know, if we can't get the support to the top, I say we collectively, then programs like this are hard to establish. So we can, Dr. Williams and I, working and working and written stuff and worked and she's presented stuff. And I'm going now that we're allowed to travel again, I'm going to go up and maybe meet with her, with a group of people which is always that fine line when you meet with people that you don't, you know, between being assertive and being aggressive. Assertive about the types of programs without being aggressive. But the need of this time of program. And Dr. Williams, she wants it. And we're actually trying to work with Lincoln Parish trying to get the K12 asset. Cause you can do a feeder type program into a university-based program. We're trying every avenue to get a program started. And she is not giving up and we're not giving up. But we're just being very assertive, not aggressive.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. I'm just asking cause I'm a Grambling alum. So if there's anything that I can do. I know some people.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Right. Get on board. And if you can, my email address is gbeckers@SELU.edu. Send me your contact and then when I go maybe if you want to join us to go to help advocate. That's what it takes. It takes a family or village--.

NICOLE BANKS: Yes.

GERLINDE BECKERS: To get things like this going.

NICOLE BANKS: I just know that with my university if they see someone that has already graduated and already working towards this stuff that is a part of Grambling already, they are more likely to hear the information. Not saying that they wouldn't before. But I'm saying if they see one of their own that's really behind it and then I sit on the council, I mean, yeah. We can get some things done. I think we can really move and push towards Grambling adopting this

and for Lincoln Parish getting involved and doing the K12 stuff too. So I'm going to send you my information. And you said that was Gbeckers@.

GERLINDE BECKERS: SELU.edu. And that's one of our promotional pieces like on our brochure is to get your alum involved. If you're a graduate of a university reach out. It's not just the university faculty saying I want to do this, but if there's alums. Everyone has alumni centers. That's a big part of making this happen is people in the community also supporting it.

NICOLE BANKS: Yeah. We'll even brainstorm because I sit on the alumni chapter for Terrebonne Lafourche, we'll even bring it to them and see what we can do on our end. When I reach out to you, we'll see what we can do. Because I think this is so awesome what you guys are doing at these university. And then you're trying to push for them not to only certificate but earn a degree like Dr. McKee was saying. Like that is just, I think we need to keep that ball up and keep that momentum going while we have it going.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Absolutely. And to get it permanent. If we can get it permanently in our legislation that like Florida has so the programs can't be wiped away. We can do all this work and get this devoted and done, but then boom the system doesn't want anymore and they just kind of wash us away. And I don't want to see that happen. I don't want to go backwards.

MARY TARVER: All right. Thank y'all. We are getting close to 11:00. I think Temisha still has her hand up and so we'll go with Temisha.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Thank you. I'm sorry. I'll be real quick. I have some questions and a comment. I just want to say real fast, Dr. Beckers, I was literally brought to tears watching that video. I am so grateful. I was here two years ago when your work started and I'm full just seeing where y'all have come. This means a lot do families. A lot of them we push for education inclusion and for our kids to have equal opportunities. This closes, well, I'm sorry. Continues

that process when they're able to get, you know, equality at the collegiate level. Cause that's a big part that has been left out. So I thank you for everything you're doing. One of my questions is, real quick, how do you address it, no. Excuse me. Let me back up. You mentioned there's a monthly meeting. Is it open to the public and when do y'all normally meet?

GERLINDE BECKERS: It's actually just core alliance members. We meet and we try to meet the third Monday of the month. We technically don't have it open to the public cause it's kind of how we meet as alliance members to how we move forward. But then what we do from there is we trickle back to our, we call them stakeholders in our areas, because our programs are so uniquely set as in where they sit. Like I'm in southeast and then we have Nicholls in Thibodaux and UL Lafayette's over there. We kind of put it back to our communities to get the support within what we need.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Okay. Thank you. My next question, real fast. How do you address when a college that you've been in contact with states they don't have the funding that they need for these programs? What is your response? Cause I find that that's one of the bigger issues they use as a deterrent. How do you all address that?

GERLINDE BECKERS: What we do, fortunately our programs rely on donations. So we tell them to look for donations. And to look at the industries that are in their communities, in the surrounding areas because that's a big way. If you can get the community buy in to support it financially. The hard part is the startup money. Because once you get enough students in the program, you're generating a revenue. Because universities themselves don't have this overflowing amount of money. So you can't, a program like this can't cost them thousands and thousands of dollars. But once you get programs to capacity then there's a revenue coming in so you're not always in the red. I've learned so much about this. So that's something that we have to, you know, we look for donations, look

for donors, apply for grants. Entergy does a community grant. Bell South, Blue Cross Blue Shield does grants. LSU A is looking at their big industries in paper plants and stuff like that. Those kind of resources within their communities to get funding. Now universities have budgets and foundations. We raise, we as in Alliance Connected, raised enough money that we started an endowment. Because endowments are protected monies that generate monies. So it took us, we had to have a minimum of 10,000-dollars, and we raised 10,000-dollars. It took me two years to do it, but now have an endowment that's protected money that's going to gain interest. It's not going to help me right now, but long-term it's going to help me. And I know Nicholls, Mary Braud's working on trying to get an endowment for Nicholls. Again, it's a way to generate money. Funding is I would say the number one problem is funding.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Yes, ma'am. I will be in touch with you. I appreciate you sharing the information and your contact. Thank you.

MARY TARVER: I appreciate all the comments and I know how exciting it is when you're sitting in a room two years ago hearing about this putting it on our action plan for the DD Council and then you know, helping to see it come to fruition with all the hard work that goes into the everyday work that Dr. Beckers and her colleagues have done. So we appreciate that and know it's the beginning and we're off to a good start. We've got some more work to do, and I know that I've seen some of the comments about keeping this on our action plan and trying to get this on our legislative agenda for the DD Council. And we certainly, you have our support. We're supportive of that to continue our efforts. We are at almost 11:00 and we still have customized employment training with Kelly Monroe. So I'll ask if there's not any critical questions or comments that we finish out with Kelly.

EBONY HAVEN: So Mary, there are some questions in the chat. I'm not sure if you want me to read them or

not.

MARY TARVER: Is Kelly on where she can start her presentation and then we can, I'll go back up through the chat to see if I can find the comment.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Ms. Mary, I'm presenting for Kelly. She couldn't make it and she just emailed something really short to read.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Well, then go ahead and we'll finish up with the comments.

MARILEE ANDREWS: And then just a suggestion for time, if you want to have Ebony just read the comments and then that can perhaps be a follow-up at the next meeting or via email directly to the person that made the comment. Just a thought cause we have about a minute left. So Kelly Monroe is our contractor with customized employment training. That's activity 5.1.3. Again, you can find that in the FFY 2021 action plan. So she just emailed me a quick update to read to you guys. Customized employment is a fairly new model of service to delivery that is focused on helping people who have disabilities obtain and maintain employment. This new model of service is customized to suit the strengths and preferences of the job seeker as well as the needs of the employer. Training for customized employment is split into three sections. Discovery, job development, and systemic instruction. In April MGNA provided the first of the three sections, discovery. This training was provided over six days in April with 15 participants in attendance. Of those 15 participants eight were selected to move forward with the certification process in discovery. The discovery class began on June 7th. All participants are on scheduled two and expected to complete the discovery process and receive their certification. Currently we are working on our next gateway training which is the second section of job development. This training is scheduled to take place in August via Zoom. The flier for this training has been completed and sent to LRS and others for dissemination. Registration for this training opportunity is open and available for

providers to register. And I believe if you look on the full status report, which is that document I referenced earlier with the full council meeting packet, that update is there with a little bit more information.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Thank you.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. It is there.

MARY TARVER: Okay. I don't know by the chats how much, how many messages were left that we needed to cover. Or did you say you might be able to go through them after the meeting and see if there was some that we needed to address?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I mean, I think we have to read them. And that's kind of what Ebony was doing. I do have a correction on one thing. I did find the employment update in that status report. So I will hyperlink that in the summary. And Ms. Corley had asked for that information as well as the link that Dr. Peterson provided during LDOEs update and I will put that in the summary as well. And then Ebony, do you want me to hand it over to you.

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. I can read the questions. I'm not sure if Mary wants Dr. Beckers to address the questions. But Susan with Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana said has there been any contact with Sowell or McNeese in Lake Charles.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Yes. McNeese, Lettie Goings, I'm working with her. I'm going there on the 29th to meet with them. I wrote down the other one. No. Problem we're dealing with in Lake Charles is all the natural disasters. So really careful with the Lake Charles area right now. But definitely I'm going on the 29th to meet on McNeese's campus. And I read the other one about the HBUCs. Every university in our state has been contacted. So but if you know somebody that specifically email me. Because if I have a name saying hey, so and so said to reach out to you that's better than me sending an email or going and dropping off informational cards and the video. I put the video on jump drives. So, but a name is always better. So

definitely if you're alum, you know someone shoot me their name and I will be happy to follow up. Or if I need to do it at an administrative level my dean will follow up. Again, higher education systems are different. We had to be real careful on how we go up the chain.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. So Ms. Corhonda had another question, Dr. Beckers. Is LAPIE working with LRS to connect with students prior to graduation so more will know about this opportunity.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Correct. The individual universities work with LRS at different levels, but that's a big piece of when we are providing technical support is to make that connection. To make sure, one, the students if they're eligible for services to get the funding and services cause they'll actually pay for part of their tuition if needed. And to make that continuation because we as part of our goals try to employ our students. And if we can transition them into community-based employment through LRS that is the ultimate goal. Cause a lot of our students they need to work within their communities and so that's where LRS plays. Melissa Bayham, I actually met her at a SEAP meeting. We hooked up and we've been working that avenue. A lot of networking has occurred through this project.

EBONY HAVEN: And then she had a third question. Also is LAPIE working to provide DD ID individuals with the opportunity to obtain a BS degree.

GERLINDE BECKERS: That's going to have to come through accreditation and legislation. Again, I never say no. I teach special-- I taught special education. But we have to be real careful and real methodical on how we work to get that ultimate goal. And, you know, we'll have to define what diploma, what a degree is. Because right now with our universities and our SACS accreditation and our accrediting bodies our students cannot earn a traditional degree. So we're going to have to be really careful on what we get and what it looks like to make sure everyone's successful.

EBONY HAVEN: Let's see. Dr. McGee says Bambi, Dr. Becker, let's talk more about getting closer to legislation. Bambi had a comment, but she said I didn't have to read it out loud. Mitch Iddins says I totally agree with Bambi. Nicole Banks says I also agree. Good work is being done and we will get it into legislation. Ms. Corley has another question. Has LAPIE brought the board of regents and Dr. Reed Hunter to the table to assist with bringing more post-secondary entities to the table.

GERLINDE BECKERS: We're working within our system right now, except LSU A we're all on the same, with the UL system. So we're trying to follow the chain of command, so we have to be really careful as a body because we're all employed. As we as I talk about the alliance members, we're employed by the universities. We have to be careful how we approach the board of regents. So once we get on board with the UL system and Dr. Halprin at LSU A they're working with the LSU system. Then we'll go to the next level.

EBONY HAVEN: And then she had one other comment, question. Fifteen individuals is not a lot of people from any region regarding participation in a forum. What is their plan to inform more individuals from the DD ID community to participate, especially more diversity. Oh, I'm sorry. Well, that was regarding Ms. Kelly Monroe's presentation.

GERLINDE BECKERS: I'm saying we have more than 15 people.

EBONY HAVEN: Yeah. That wasn't addressed to you, Dr. Beckers. Sorry. I don't know if we want to forward that question to Kelly.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. I have it down in the summary and I'll communicate that to Kelly and ask her to follow up at our next meeting. I apologize she wasn't able to make it. Normally our council staff and our contractors will do updates together and I don't know if you guys know, Courtney Ryland who is over this contract has left the council and she's in a different position in a different place. So we're going to have



to follow up with the contractor directly, but I'll make sure that's done.

GERLINDE BECKERS: And I saw that about the chat in the video link. Please share it with everybody you know.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Thank you, Dr. Beckers. I have it in the chat and I'll have it hyperlinked in our summary now and I can push it out as well. I think it will be a great social media post.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Are there any announcements? I know we have a full council meeting later this week. Marilee, is that Thursday?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. So we have different committee meetings, the remainder of today and tomorrow and our full council meeting is this Thursday. So for anybody that's interested in the full council meeting or any meeting that the council has, you can go to our meetings' page on our website. You can get dates and the times for every meeting we have coming up. You can see every agenda is hyperlinked and there's a registration to register for any of those meetings. And that's always there and it's always the same page. Brenton just posted it in the comments. And there's also all our documents are linked there. So I referenced a couple times our status updates for quarter three, that's in there.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Well, thank you all for getting on the call today. And for committee members for being present today and all of our speakers. We appreciate all the updates and look forward to hearing from everybody for our next meeting in October. This is July right. Yep.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I won't be here, you guys. You'll have another staff member helping y'all.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Do I need a motion to adjourn, or I can just say adjourned.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think you can just say adjourned.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Well, we adjourn the meeting.

Thank y'all.