

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council  
Education and Employment Committee

October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

HYACINTH MCKEE: Good morning, everyone. Good morning, everyone. And we want to check to see if we have a quorum. We are right at 8:30.

SHANDRELL STEWART: No, ma'am. We don't have a quorum right at this moment.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Ms. Stewart. We will allow for a few moments for other committee members to join the call.

Hey, Stewart. We are right at 8:35. Do we have a quorum to begin?

SHANDRELL STEWART: No, ma'am. We do not.

HYACINTH MCKEE: At this time we will allow for committee members to join for another five minutes. At 8:40 if we do not have a quorum we will not proceed and move forward with our education and employment committee meeting for today. So we will allow five additional minutes for committee members to join in order to establish a quorum to move forward.

Ms. Stewart, do we have a quorum to proceed?

SHANDRELL STEWART: No, ma'am. We don't.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. For the purposes of who's on the call this morning, we do not have a quorum to vote on any measures or information that's on the agenda for today. We can proceed with this meeting in terms of it being more informational. And I know that we have individuals on the call who were prepared to share information as it relates to what is indicated on the agenda. And I do not want to waste any of their time as they have committed to attend this morning. So I will ask that we just conduct a roll call to see who's present on the call and then proceed into welcoming individuals and just share information that's on this agenda. But again, we cannot vote or make any permanent decisions without a quorum. So for the purpose of that, I would like to get a roll call

started. So Ms. Stewart, could you please call the roll.

SHANDRELL STEWART: Yes, ma'am. Ms. Nicole Banks. Mr. Mitch Iddins. Ms. Brenda Cosse. I thought I saw Ms. Brenda.

BRENDA COSSE: Good morning. Brenda Cosse. Parent, Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council.

SHANDRELL STEWART: Good morning. Ms. Mary Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Here.

SHANDRELL STEWART: Dr. Phil Wilson. Ms. Bambi Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Here.

SHANDRELL STEWART: Ms. Carmen Cetnar.

CARMEN CETNAR: Here.

SHANDRELL STEWART: Ms. Melissa Bayham. And Ms. Temisha Victorian. That's it.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Ms. Stewart. And Hyacinth McKee is present. So welcome to the individuals who are on the call. We can review quickly the virtual meeting protocols. Ms. Stewart, could you either post that so everyone can see on the screen. And I will ask you, Ms. Stewart, to read the virtual protocols for this meeting. I don't know if you're still muted, Ms. Stewart.

SHANDRELL STEWART: I was.

HYACINTH MCKEE: That's okay. Okay. And welcome. Welcome. I believe this is your first education and employment committee meeting, Ms. Stewart, as a staff member that's serving in this role. So we are going to allow her to read the virtual meeting protocols.

SHANDRELL STEWART: Yes, ma'am. Teleconference meeting protocols, which was amended by executive committee September 9th, 2020. Council meetings shall be accessible via Zoom and live streamed on YouTube. Council or committee members will participate in 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 on the council's YouTube channel as determined appropriate by the chairperson. Public comment submitted during a meeting via any format below shall be considered. 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 the microphone shall be returned to mute. Post comments relevant to the item under consideration in the chat box. Post comments during the live stream of the meeting on the council's YouTube channel. 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 is legally appropriate to redact or share the video of the meeting on the council's social media.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Ms. Stewart. And so now we'll just proceed with the agenda. Moving right along. Before we do that, I want to double check to make sure, do we have a quorum now?

SHANDRELL STEWART: No, ma'am. We do not. We're still one short.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. No worries. We are going to proceed. We cannot approve the minutes of the July 20th meeting at this time because we do not have a quorum. So we will move forward to just hear the update from Ms. Meredith Jordan from Louisiana Department of Education. And welcome, Ms. Jordan, for your attendance at our education and employment committee meeting. So just please proceed and provide us with the informational update.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Wonderful. Good morning,

everyone, madam chairman, council members, stakeholders viewing. It's wonderful to be here with you all this morning. I do apologize, I'm suffering from allergies. But I'm super happy to be here and provide an update from the Department of Education for you all. As you all know at the last meeting I had literally just stepped into this role. And so Dr. Peterson provided that update as I was really focused on on-boarding into this new role. But since have absolutely dove in. And I want to start this morning by just kind of recapping Superintendent Brumley received an outreach letter from Chair Mr. Randall Brown and really around two questions that he and the council posed in that letter back in August. And I wanted to bring that up today and just kind of recap, go through the response that Superintendent Brumley submitted to Mr. Brown and the council just so that I can recap that and go through it. So really there were two main questions posed in the letter to Superintendent Brumley. One was around ensuring that we safely reopen schools. What were those operational guidelines for safely reopening schools. Especially considering our students with disabilities. So part of that response of our letter on August the 27th is linked to our school operational guidelines. We also informed the committee in that letter that, of course, those guidelines may be revised, of course, throughout the school year to meet the needs of our school systems. And so since those guidelines have absolutely been updated. But that link in the letter should still bring you to the updated version of those guidelines. Specifically, one of those updates, as many of you already know, was around the parent option for the parent quarantine option for students who had come in close contact with an individual with covid 19. And so that option is now listed in the guidance. And when you go to the updated guidance everything that is highlighted are the updates since the previous version of those guidelines. So kind of just to let everyone know here how do you know what's been updated from version to version. And so we

provided the link to those guidelines. We, of course, told everyone we would update those alongside medical professionals as the school year progressed and as needs change.

The second key question in Mr. Brown's letter to Superintendent Brumley was around how are we supporting educators with addressing the learning gaps potentially that have been further widened due to the pandemic. How are we going to address those learning gaps. And we all know that some of our students with disabilities may still be accessing learning virtually from home or in a homebound setting. And so how are we going to support our educators to support those students in meeting success this year and meeting their individual goals. So our response included several different key resources. Those are all linked in the response. A couple of those include, that are still very relevant, and in fact, I shared all of these resources in our back-to-school webinar with our SPED leaders across state in August. Just to put some of these resources back on their radar. Because as really indicated in the letter this is still an ongoing challenge that we'll face this year. So one of those resources is a link to our pandemic relief funding planning guidance and our resource page. So on that page we include funding guidance, our operational guidance. And so really ways that school systems can leverage their federal dollars to help support some of our students who may still be learning virtually, you know, due to the medical concerns or some other extenuating circumstances. So that was a key link that we provided in our response. Another one, of course, our students with disabilities landing page. And we shared that, again, with our SPED leaders. That has a lot of resources there around continuous learning for students with disabilities. Considerations for students who may be attending virtual instruction. So included that link as well as our Louisiana virtual instruction guide. Which we did a lot of professional development around and really that document, that guidance came out

due to the pandemic. But, of course, we know that we still have students who are learning in that modality. And that guidance may really help our educators. So I shared that again with our special education leaders in August as part of a back-to-school sort of reset.

I also included our Louisiana virtual instruction guide for parents. And I'll talk a bit later around some parent resources. Because we also know that we have to support our families at home in order to set up a successful environment for these students who may be still learning virtually at home. So we included that link. And also our accelerate resources, which are instructional resources aligned to high quality materials that educators can use to help accelerate learning. And when I say accelerate, I don't mean in speed or speed up the learning. But rather it's to take students where they are, use those materials to help prepare them to be successful for current grade level material. So that we don't keep going backwards and they're getting behind, but rather we're accelerating their learning. We're giving them just in time support to cover maybe some prerequisite skills that where gaps may exist, but how do we connect those to their current learning to ensure success and that students continue to move forward. So I wanted to recap that response just because I knew that that all developed after the July meeting. So I wanted to bring that back up today for you.

So with that said, I'll move onto my report. And the first item there is around, I wanted to give you several updates around parent and family engagement. This is something as I come into this role new that I feel very strongly about. Our parents, our stakeholders, our family engagement is a key initiative for us. And so at the previous meeting one of the requests that came out of this July council meeting was around the district management group report that was the result of a partnership with LDOE. And there were several focus groups, I believe there were some many members of this council and parents here who were a

part of those focus groups. And so I did link to that report in a document that I submitted to be posted for today. I do want to clarify that it does. It is called a summary report and I think in my mind, as well in July as I was listening to you all coming into this role, that there were several different focus groups and that maybe there were going to be separate responses or reports based on a group that you participated in. But all of those responses were summarized into one report. And so I link you there to that report, but I also kind of summarized it in the document that we posted. And so this was a partnership with the department that started last winter and spring. It was just over a four-month process where DMG alongside the department conducted a planning and needs assessment process. So Dr. Brumley was also doing sort of a road tour, a listening tour as he came into the superintendent role. The process included focus groups, interviews with key stakeholders. Like I said, many of you were a part of that. They conducted over 40 interviews and focus groups with over 100 stakeholders. And you can see the districts and the schools that were represented in that linked report. Also you can see the specific groups, for example, the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council was a focus group. And so I won't read all of those to you, but they're definitely linked there in the report as far as the school districts that were involved in those focus groups and interviews as well as different various stakeholder groups across the state.

And so individuals represented including district superintendents, directors of special education. We included our Families Helping Families groups. The Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs. LDOE leaders. Our LDOE Office of Equity, Inclusion and Opportunities. Staff members. This council. National experts. We had school psychologists, paras, special educators. Our SEAP panel. University deans, and so forth. So you can see that list. So I'd like to pivot here and go specifically to the strengths that were

identified by this group. And the first one was a sense of optimism and hope. The second was the fact that there are important prior successes. So acknowledging that previous individuals, previous LDOE employees involved in this work, of course, and that over the years that we have met success. The third strength is around the occurrence of innovation and best practices across the state. So recognizing that we do have school systems where there are innovative and best practices occurring. Strength number four was around a willingness and appreciation for the importance of collaboration. I am excited that that was a finding from this focus group. It's certainly something that I believe very strongly about as well.

So now I'm going to switch and go to the eight key opportunities that the group identified. First is that teachers, school leaders, district administrators are uncertain how best to serve diverse learners and are looking to the LDOE to provide clear, concrete direction. The second key opportunity teachers, school leaders and district administrators want and need actionable technical assistance in order to effectively implement those recommended best practices. The third key opportunity, districts will need clear direction on the allowable uses of IDEA funds, title one and other federal dollars to implement best practices. The fourth key opportunity is the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Opportunities cannot be successful on its own. And I'll take a minute to pause here and tell you some of these, of course, I'm beginning to, as a department, we're beginning to address. With regard to this one, at the time this report and the focus groups were conducted the division of diverse learners and the office of SPED did fall under the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Opportunities. Since this report, and really over the past few months, since I have been at the department the Division of Diverse Learners has now transitioned in the department under the Office of Teaching and Learning. And this is an area that it lends itself to a lot of collaboration and cross



teamwork alongside our academic team. Our assessment team. Our early childhood team. All of those other important key pieces where our students with disabilities crosses over all of that work crosses over. And so now our Office of Diverse Learners is running right alongside in teaching and learning all of those other offices. So it's going to be a wonderful opportunity for our team, our diverse learners team and our SPED team to push into all of those other key offices. And really make sure that our students with disabilities voice is at the forefront of our planning across the agency. That is my goal. And that we all have a shared ownership in the outcomes for these students. And so that transition is one that I wanted to let this council, for sure, know about. Especially in the context of this report and when the focus groups were happening, we fell under the Office of Equity, Inclusion Opportunities. Now we have transitioned to the Office of Teaching and Learning.

So let's continue to go through the key opportunities here. So the fifth one is that the traditional structure of the Office of Equity, Inclusion Opportunities is not well suited for the work ahead. And so again, our transition to teaching and learning will address a piece of that opportunity. Opportunity number six, there's a shortage of special educators with no relief in sight. And that is nationwide a realization. And so we have several initiatives that we're working on to try to address that, that key opportunity. Number seven, the LDOE lacks the infrastructure to measure and monitor impact of its key initiatives. So our academic return on investment. Our funding that we are using, how do we know that we're making an impact. Opportunity number eight. Many want to help the LDOE in its mission to improve the outcomes for diverse learners, but wonder if their help is wanted. And I've talked to many people since coming into this position and it's very humbling, it's very, I'm very appreciative of everyone who wants to and has a deep interest in this work. And

so I take a lot of, there's a lot of importance for me in listening to all of our stakeholders, understanding their key concerns and taking that feedback and turning some action on that feedback from our stakeholders.

So I'll go next into I also wanted to give an overview of our Families Helping Families initiative. We are working with ten Families Helping Families centers across our state. We're supporting and assisting in their work with families of children with disabilities ages three to 21. This is a key partnership for us because for many of our school systems their regional Families Helping Families centers are one of their first go-tos when they need to know the community resources around them and in their region. And where can they find supports. The staff at our Families Helping Families centers are uniquely positioned to provide that support knowing and listening to their families, knowing the needs in their communities and where those resources are. And because they're staffed by individuals who have family members with disabilities. And so they have that unique, they have that set of insight that our families need when they're looking for support and when they're looking for help. Our center directors will be conducting meetings or web-based sessions for LEA special ed supervisors and directors. And I have also communicated that to our special ed leaders that these individuals are key resources for you. They are wonderful at coming in, giving presentations to families, giving presentations to your schools around the resources in the community.

And so just to kind of wrap up this parent and family engagement, sort of report, update for you guys. I also linked in the report to post that all of the different ways that our parents and families can support students with disabilities this school year. Again, for me this is a very important piece of what we do. And so I think communicating with families around where are those tools, where do I find them, where do I find these supports. And so I linked to several

different key resources in the report. Our families support toolbox which has many different resources for families. I also linked to our back-to-school guides for this year. So this year we created a PreK to two parent guide and a 3-12 back to school parent guide. Those are very helpful in just general information, what do you need to know as far as helping your student succeed in school for the school year. We also have our 2021 back to school guide for parents for students with disabilities. So I linked that here. And I also linked our new literacy landing page. Of course, the department has launched a new literacy initiative and a reading revival initiative. And so some of our resources are our literacy landing page are around family resources for literacy and what activities can I do at home to support literacy. And I know that page is also being built out and updated regularly.

And I'll finish my last two updates and then madam chair, however you want to handle questions, we can certainly do that. The next update is around our high-cost services grant opportunity. I wanted to give this council just an overview of this program and initiative. So we established a high-cost services grant several years ago to support school systems and schools that are serving our students with the most challenging needs. The grant provides additional funding for those high-cost services for our students with disabilities. And we fund that through our state IDEA allocation as well as it's supported through our MFP formula. And so we've released that application, our school systems are now in the process of submitting applications for those funds this month for round one. We also have a second round that happened several months later. And the reason for that is really to capture students who may be moving or may be transitioning in the first couple of months of school for various reasons and they land in another school system and have some of those high-cost needs. School systems will have the opportunity to apply for any of those students in round two. So I just wanted to kind

of give you that overview and let you know how we're trying to, one way that we're trying to support our school systems with funding. How they can fund some of these very challenging needs. And we communicate that opportunity through I have regularly monthly calls with our SPED leaders. And we also communicate that through our weekly newsletters. So notification about this grant as well as other funding opportunities happen in a variety of avenues so that we ensure our system leaders are aware of these opportunities.

And then the last piece on my report and then I'll take questions if allowable. I wanted to provide you all an update on our alternate assessment participation waiver. And so I believe this council has been involved with this and has been updated on this in years past. This is a waiver that we apply for annually. So each year school systems that exceed the 1 percent participation in an alternate assessment, they have to take certain actions. And they're outlined in the alternate assessment participation review requirements in bulletin 111. And every student, at ESA. Our Every Student Succeeds Act is the federal requirement that places that cap at 1 percent for participation and alternate assessment. And so all school systems are going to review their data and systems who exceed 1 percent, they have to participate in a student file review, complete a justification document telling the department this is why we exceeded the 1 percent cap. And those reasons vary. It could be that I'm a small school, but I have a handful of students with disabilities who need to participate in alternate assessment. So therefore my participation, my participation percentage may go over 1 percent. So those justifications vary, the reasonings vary.

And so school systems have to provide evidence and assurance that their IEP teams follow the state guidelines, use the criteria correctly in determining which students participate in alternate assessment. And they provide assurance that their IEP teams are receiving training on that criteria and on those

guidelines. And so, like I said, the department intends (inaudible) extension for our 2021-2022 school year of this federal requirement that would limit the number of students who participate in those assessments. And so I sent Amy an updated report. I just got the link last night that is up for public comment. So that should be linked in the new report. And so anyone wishing to submit public comment around this extension for this waiver can submit an email to [specialeducation@la.gov](mailto:specialeducation@la.gov). And that is the email where we are accepting public comment around this extension for this waiver. And that concludes kind of my summary update.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Ms. Jordan, for your extensive reporting from LDOE. Thank you for that. And also thank you for addressing some of the concerns that our stakeholders had at the last meeting and coming back with those responses. At this time I am going to open the floor for any questions from the council, any council members. And then I will open the floor for questions from the public. And I will encourage the public to, if you're comfortable, with unmuting themselves and allowing them the ability to have the floor for two minutes. So let's start to see if there's any questions from current council members or committee members first.

EBONY HAVEN: Bambi and Temisha have their hands raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Bambi Polotzola, you are recognized.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Hi. I just wanted to go back to the report in regards to the power point. And I meant to get with you last week and just have been busy, Ms. Jordan. But in regard to that focus group, I think it's great that we had 107 people participate and many school districts. But I am concerned about that report. It's not really a report, it's eight slides with only three slides providing information. And, you know, not only did the Department of Education spend almost 50,000-dollars on this, and, you know, utilize

our time of 107 people, but there should be a more extensive report. From GACDA, we gave a more extensive report of what the issues are than what that report provided. So I just feel like, I just have to believe there's a more extensive report than what's contained in the three slides that provide information.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Right. Got you. Thanks for that, Bambi. I'm noting that. And we'll certainly take that back. Absolutely.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Anyone else on the committee that wants to ask questions?

EBONY HAVEN: Temisha has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Victorian, you're being recognized.

TEMISHA VICTORIAN: Thank you, madam chair. Ms. Jordan, you mentioned when you gave your report that you were having monthly calls with SPED. What is your form of knowing the trainings are being implemented. Cause I find that sometimes the training is provided, but we're not following to make sure that the initiatives are being implemented. That's a concern. (Inaudible) That's my first question. I have one more after that, if you don't mind.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Ms. Temisha, I don't know if I'm having connectivity issues. It was a little choppy for me, but I think I was able to make out your first question.

TEMISHA VICTORIAN: Can you hear me?

HYACINTH MCKEE: I am also having trouble. I thought it was my internet connection. Let's see if we can allow Ms. Victorian an opportunity to restate what she said for the record because it wasn't clear. We want to make sure she has that opportunity. Ms. Victorian, are you still there? Can you hear us? You're kind of going in and out.

TEMISHA VICTORIAN: Can y'all hear me now?

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yes. Okay. Thank you for that. While Ms. Victorian is trying to work on her connection, do we have any other questions from the committee members? Any committee members on the call

have questions that are next?

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Mary Tarver has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Hi, Ms. Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Hello.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Good morning. You have the floor.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. I wanted to ask about the next step. So from the opportunities that you have and a lot of them certainly agree with and know that we have lots of work to be done and need to just start taking little bites out and trying to get us where we need to be for our students. So could you talk about what the next steps are and how these opportunities will be addressed.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. Absolutely. So certainly internally we are meeting with our teams, of course, planning for on my team, right, hiring some of the experts, some of those individuals that can help in some of these areas. As many of you know this team, the diverse learners team had seen some turnover, of course, prior to my coming on board. And so in the process of, for example, recently hiring an English learner coordinator, someone to lead our English learner strategy. Which also includes our English learners who also have significant cognitive disabilities. We do know that those students are in our state. And so we have to do a better job to support our English learners as well who have significant cognitive disabilities. And so also making sure, I know one of the opportunities was around the expertise in having a diverse learners team who can meet the needs of our students in our state. So certainly that is a next step. Certainly operational planning around, you know, what are the initiatives, what are the things that we are going to adopt and know that this technical assistance is going to help our special educators in the field and as well as improve our outcomes for these students. So certainly internally we are taking a look at these opportunities and knowing, setting this department up and this division up for success and in a place where we can

provide support to our school systems based on their need. To our families based on the need. Based on what input and feedback that we are hearing. And so part of that next step, like I said, was around shifting to the Office of Teaching and Learning. And that is critical for me. Because to me it signals to our school districts exactly what we think should be happening which is that our special education leaders and our special educators have to be at the table next to our general educators and our content teachers and leaders working alongside one another. And so I think, Ms. Mary, to your point definitely making some of those shifts to address those opportunities, modeling and signaling for our school systems what it is that we believe and the importance and the ownership around the outcomes for these students.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Do we have any other questions from committee members or council members at this time?

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Temisha still has her hand raised and Roslyn Hymel has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Victorian, you are recognized. And then Ms. Hymel.

TEMISHA VICTORIAN: Is this better? Can y'all hear me?

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yes.

TEMISHA VICTORIAN: Okay. Thank you. I'm sorry about that earlier. My first question was you mentioned that you were having meetings with the special education directors and things like that, monthly meetings. What kind of reports are being generated and things like that to monitor what's being implemented by those special education directors? And to know that the training is not just being done, but it's actually working. What are we doing to monitor those outcomes? That's my first question.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Very good question. We have a statewide monitoring process in place for IDEA where we determine those risk base factors for our school systems and who are supporting these students in the best way. So that's one way that we kind of look at



the results for our students and how do we know which school systems are increasing or their students are meeting their targets is through our statewide monitoring. Now one of the things that we know we have to do better, and I think the report also brought to light, is around technical assistance. And so one thing that I'm trying to do right now is be very available to our school system leaders, our special ed directors. One thing that we heard is that when I have a question, I want to call and reach a person. You know, I don't want to send an email, or I don't get a response. It's kind of like, you know, that situation where you keep calling and you get the voice operator and you're just trying to get to a person, and you get frustrated. So that is one of my goals is to be very available to them, to our school leaders when they have questions around initiatives, around funding that they know they can call me. And that I'm going to pick up. Or if they email me, that I'm going to get back to them very timely.

So the other piece of that is for some of our funding initiatives, Temisha, when we're communicating those, you know, I am also, and my team is also involved in those reviews in our grants management system. So we have a direct, we have direct input around, you know, what are their funding requests, what are the initiatives that they are requesting funding for. And we can go in and review and provide feedback on those ideas and on those initiatives as well. But certainly we know that we have to do better in terms of technical assistance, Ms. Temisha, for sure. One idea is around sort of a tiered support, right. So we tier those schools, not saying we do this now, but we could develop protocol and do some additional monitoring and additional-- I want to call it support. I want to be able to go out, provide our school systems with here are best practices around supporting these students and support them with the how. I think that's a key piece to this, Ms. Temisha, is our school systems want to know how. Like the report said, everyone is in.

Everyone is optimistic. Everyone, every educator, we believe, wants to do what's best for kids. They want to know how to do it. So we have to regularly communicate exactly what we want them to do and what those best practices are. Very good question.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Hymel, you're being recognized.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah. This is what I want to know in that what the figures that you was really talking about in that it's how are you going to really keep the schools open with this epidemic? And how are you going to pay the staff and that to really be with the students to teach them and everything. And kind of spend the time that they are there and how are they going to learn the things that they have to learn. Especially like with math or what kind of things the students are going to really learn from with that kind what you end up mentioning.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. Thank you for those questions. So our operational guidance kind of outlines those steps that schools took to reopen their schools, reopen them safely. But there are flexibilities in that guidance around, and, of course, we know, we hear it, that for some of our students with disabilities systems must be flexible. And they're going to have to address individual safety needs, individual student concerns, parent concerns that are happening in their local school systems to ensure that our students with disabilities have access to a safe learning environment. But also understanding that some of them may require instruction at home for whatever medical reason that may be. And so our local school systems are, of course, working with their local boards in determining, you know, what additional steps, for example, the new parent option for quarantine. A lot of the local school boards took votes on that. And so you see some school systems who chose to implement that option and some who did not. And so that set of operational guidelines, Ms. Roslyn, was just really around how do we open our schools up and do that

safely. Are just that. They're a set of guidelines. And then, of course, our school systems are working with their local boards in determining, you know, what are some of the other best ways to do this. And we saw a lot, quite a bit of innovation, in fact, you know, for some kids who needed to learn at home when the pandemic happened. You know, we saw school systems who were using buses as Wi-Fi spots to make online learning accessible. And so it also, you know, Ms. Roslyn, also depends on local school system need. You know, what is the need in that system and in that community. Your other, tied to that, your other question was around funding to support that. And so the department did make available funds, and, in fact, included a priority around using funds to ensure that school environments were safe to reopen for students. So school systems have received quite a bit of additional federal relief funding to help them accomplish just that. What you said around keeping our schools open during a pandemic. And so they do have funding opportunities and funding options. One of the things that we really encouraged our SPED leaders to think about were our kids who may still need to be receiving services at home and making sure they're receiving equitable services. So, for example, if they wanted to use some of their federal funding to contract out speech services, OT services so that the student has enough access for those services at home. You know, they have flexibilities within their federal funding to use those dollars to help support some of these specific needs in response to the pandemic.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you. Ms. Victorian.

TEMISHA VICTORIAN: Thank you, madam chair. Ms. Jordan, I have a question regarding something you had mentioned just now with the pandemic and so many of our educators being out. But it was a concern prior to the covid pandemic with subs and paras being, well, paras being used as substitutes in our special education classrooms. Does Louisiana Department of Education have a plan for long-term use of subs. Because, you

know, there is a concern for that because, you know, kids aren't getting educated in that way if we are just subbing those classrooms and we don't have an active plan in place to address those needs. It was a problem before, but concerning now, for sure, you know, bringing light to that. Is there a plan for that as well.

MEREDITH JORDAN: I'm glad you asked that. We actually through some of the incentive funding, some of the achieve incentive funding, federal funding we actually opened it up for systems to request funding to pay for educators to get, or professionals to get special education certification along with some others. English learner certification, which is a growing need in our state. And so I think part of that is providing funding for our school systems like we've done to open some of this up to where we're fully funding some of these shortage areas to help get individuals certified and trained. Cause we want the very best in those classrooms with those students. And individuals who have been highly trained to support those students. So that's one way that we've kind of opened up, Ms. Temisha, some funding for systems to fully pay for some professionals to get certified in some of these areas. We've also released some guidance around developing partnerships, even some retire, rehire options as well as some tutoring options to provide students some additional services. So it's definitely something, Ms. Temisha, that we're addressing and approaching and thinking through. Of course, open to any ideas or any innovation that's happening across our state in our districts. But certainly our special ed teaching shortages are for sure on our minds and hopefully we're providing districts with some options there. But I appreciate that.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Any other questions from the council members?

TEMISHA VICTORIAN: (Inaudible)

HYACINTH MCKEE: You're breaking up. I'm sorry. You still have more questions? You're breaking up.

TEMISHA VICTORIAN: That's okay. I'm going to type it in the chat.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Great. Thank you. Okay. So we will now entertain questions from the public. I do want to inform everyone of the time right now. We are at 9:35. This is some really engaging conversation as it is welcomed, Ms. Jordan. We have some very informed, proactive, engaged stakeholders. And we have, honestly, have not been able to get the responses and the information that we need, you know, as it relates to our students and families. And so you will see questions because people really want the answers. And so I am going to allow for the public to ask some questions. If they are comfortable with unmuting themselves, I'll ask that they raise their hand, and we will recognize them.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Karen Artus and Ms. Corhonda Corley have their hands raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Artus, you're recognized. Ms. Artus, you are recognized.

KAREN ARTUS: I'm sorry. That was an error. Thank you for recognizing me.

HYACINTH MCKEE: No problem. Who's next in line? Ms. Corley.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Good morning chair and council members. Thank you, Ms. Jordan, for actually being present this morning. First and foremost, what you just did to us was gave us a lot of smoke. That's my personal opinion. Because, first question, when will SEAP meet. We have not had a SEAP meeting in over four months. I'm inquisitive of when we will have a SEAP meeting. Number two, a lot of information you just disseminated out, that is nowhere on LDOE's report. So I definitely want to know when will we actually have access to that information. And number three, LDOE is the governing body for every LEA in this entire state. When will y'all actually do your job and actually monitor and put some enforcement in place. Because nothing as it is required for children with disabilities is actually being addressed by our current

administration for LDOE and a part of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion department is to make sure that our diverse learners are addressed. And that is still not happening even up under your leadership. So I definitely would like to know when will that information be disseminated out because you telling it to us is one thing, but us seeing it in writing is definitely something different. And I would love to see it in writing. But I definitely want to know the answers to those questions that I have. And also, madam chair, I definitely would love if the council could consider having the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion have Ms. Jordan come back for some more questions as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion including the new department that they will now be housed up under so that she can explain to us why they switched the department that it's up under and what this will mean as far as-- and what it would mean as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion for all students across the State of Louisiana. Thank you so much.

MEREDITH JORDAN: I will address SEAP met in September and our next meeting is November the 17th. Let me make sure I have that date right. Yes. Our next SEAP meeting will be on November the 17th.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Are you able to provide any other answers to the questions that Ms. Corley raised?

MEREDITH JORDAN: I guess the other question was around sort of some of the responses to the report and my responses being in writing. I will say I did see the question as well like who's over the Office of Teaching and Learning. So now the Division of Diverse Learners is under the Office of Teaching and Learning which is under the leadership of Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jenna Chiasson. So we are definitely bringing over, I definitely want Ms. Corley to believe that we are definitely bringing over the idea of and the belief in inclusion for these students. Equitable access to high quality teaching and learning. The highest quality educators with these students, like

I've mentioned. And so I don't want anyone to believe or think that we have left the idea of inclusion and equity and opportunity just because we made a division shift over into the Office of Teaching and Learning. For sure those values follow with me and follow with the division. I definitely appreciate the passion as well. And if there are specific questions, for sure, I'm absolutely able to provide input to some of those.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you. Do we have any more questions from the public at this time?

EBONY HAVEN: Not from the public, but Dr. Wilson has his hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Dr. Wilson, you are recognized.

PHIL WILSON: Good morning, everybody. I apologize. I had a dentist appointment so that's why Sue was sitting in for me. And I also apologize, just really, literally jumped on so I missed, obviously, quite a bit of what this morning's discussion was. So my question may be a little bit disjointed from what the discussion in the group has been. But I figured since Meredith is here, I would just like to raise a question and if it doesn't fit in today's agenda, I'll try to keep it short and maybe we can consider it and respond to it at another time. So as you may know, council members should know, Sue Killam has, for the last 30 years, been doing a lot of work in the area of employment and in the last decade specifically in the area of transition from school to adult life with a heavy emphasis, but not exclusive focus on careers and employment and careers. We've presented different pictures and stories and data about the work that Sue and her team have been doing. I think it's really, really important work, obviously, since that's what we're doing here at HDC. One of the things we're doing at HDC. The stumbling block we keep having though is in order to move things from single examples to more taking things to scale kind of approach we run into there's a culture in schools and a belief in schools that teachers teach in boxes called school buildings. And that, unfortunately, for kids particularly with

more significant challenges, but really not even that, just kids in general when they get to be 16, 17, 18 come on guys, when we were 16, 17, 18 the world was a different place than it is now. These kids are ready and need to be ready for living and functioning in the community. We seem to have a belief that we can do some kind of, I don't know, strange choreographed not very well dance called transition where kids in school go to school until a certain age and then somehow, they have a meeting with LRS and LRS signs some papers and then we hook them up with a counselor. But things really don't happen until that kid exits school. That, friends, is not a transition. That's a handoff. I think the program that Sue has developed and is implementing and taking to scale, not large scale, but it's populating around the metro area now with several different school districts. It doesn't work that way. We take kids, we accept kids into the program who they go right to community college or other adult settings. They get their education there in coordination with their IEP goals, in coordination with a special ed teacher. But Sue's staff is doing all the work. And we aren't changing anything. We're changing things for 50, 60, 75 kids. But we're not changing any systems because at the end of the day our school systems are not structured, are not flexible, are not innovative enough to change to say, you know what, if you're 18 and you're still learning to spell your name it's time to go on. It's time to get ready for adult life. To not get ready. Getting ready as we know from the rehab system was rejected. Readiness model doesn't work. You have to be in the setting where you're going to learn the things you need to learn. It's not, you can't just have identified goals and that's what you're working on. It's all the things that happen to you when you go to work from the time that you forgot your lunch, to the time your phone battery died, your bus didn't show up on time. All those things without instruction and support while you still have the most services, the most support you're ever going to have in



your life. Because take a kid with autism. Many of them, many of them especially the kids that are intellectually functioning quite well will not qualify. They're not eligible for LRS and other adult services. Because they can do most of the things they need to do in life, but they can't do enough of them to where they can really have an independent launched fully, you know, life where they have agency, and they can have a living and they can live in the community. A real life, right.

So I'm not trying to get on a soapbox. I'm just trying to make enough of an impression that we can at least begin a discussion. I know there's many reasons why this is a revolution. Just like the revolution that we're talking about with race and diversity kinds of stuff. We are kind of just taking baby steps. And I would hope that we could have some bold leadership to move forward. I know our state superintendent was the superintendent of Jefferson Parish and that's where Sue did a lot of her work three or four years ago. And I know he's a former special educator. So, I mean, it's like I'm hoping that the message can get back that we can't just keep doing the status quo unless we just want to keep having the status quo. So I'm sorry if this is way out of whack and way out of line. And I've been, you know, other places and not engaged here today. It was just bad timing. So I apologize to you, Meredith, because I know you came in and had an agenda to speak about certain things. So if I'm way off, like I said, we can have this conversation in the future. And I hope the council will also get engaged in pushing this agenda.

MEREDITH JORDAN: I appreciate your passion.

PHIL WILSON: One last thing, Meredith, when you're done responding if you choose to. I would respectfully ask if Sue, if she has any comments, she could kind of take this ball from here. Cause I realize as not an actual voting member of the council she was here to represent me. So I'm not sure what the rules of Sue adding things. But Sue is the expert, okay.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Dr. Wilson, for that. And I believe that what you just said was a proper way to frame up even though you arrived with apologies of a dental appointment, you actually framed it up, I believe, the passion that our parents and our caregivers and stakeholders on the call is trying to convey. And I believe you did it in such a way that serves that we are open to engage and develop a relationship to move forward. And I believe that the comments that we get are from parents and families who are just feeling like they're not being heard. And so, again, Meredith, we thank you for being here. Know that we will continue to have these conversations, these going deeper in thought so that we can make sure that we put something together. And honestly, putting theory to practice. And I believe that our parents are exhausted with theory and now they really want to see practice. Things put in practice that actually move to work towards our families. So again, thank you for your report. I'm certain you will be reporting tomorrow to the full council. There may be more questions coming from the full council and the public as well directed your way.

At this time we are going to move forward with the agenda. I do need to do a role check to see if we do have a quorum at this time because we may need to vote on some issues. And so Ms. Stewart, I believe we do have a quorum, so I am going to ask that committee members look at-- I'm having connection issues too. We're going to ask that the committee review the agenda and vote to approve or if any amendments or changes to the previous minutes. I'm sorry. To the previous minutes. So let's take maybe one minute to look at the previous minutes and vote to accept or if there are any amendments that are needed.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. I make a motion to approve the minutes.

MARY TARVER: This is Mary. I second.

HYACINTH MCKEE: It has been moved by Ms. Polotzola and seconded by Ms. Tarver to accept the minutes from

the previous meeting, from the July meeting. Any objections? Abstentions? Discussion?

NICOLE BANKS: I have a question.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Banks, you're being recognized.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you, madam chair, for recognizing me. I am reading over the minutes and my name is not on there. And I know I was at that meeting. So yeah, my name isn't on there and I was at that meeting.

HYACINTH MCKEE: So at this time it has been motioned to accept the minutes. Ms. Polotzola, do you want to resubmit your motion with an amendment to ensure that Ms. Nicole Banks is added?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yes, ma'am. Yeah, just verify that. Whatever needs to be done, yes.

HYACINTH MCKEE: So it's been motioned by Ms. Polotzola to amend her motion to include Ms. Nicole Banks as an attendee at the last July Education and Employment Committee meeting. Do I hear a second?

NICOLE BANKS: I'll second it.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Any objections? Any abstentions? Discussion or comments? Okay. Motion carried. Okay. Folks, so now we're going to move onto the next item on the agenda. I hope that I see Ms. Stacy Marbs from LRS who is subbing for Ms. Melissa Bayham. Is she still on the call?

STACY MARBS: Yes, ma'am. I am.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. I believe your volume is very low. So we can't quite hear you.

STACY MARBS: Okay. Is this better?

HYACINTH MCKEE: Much better, Ms. Stacy.

STACY MARBS: Thank you. I work in a cubicle (inaudible) so I had to go somewhere else.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Can everyone hear Ms. Marbs?

STACY MARBS: Okay. Hold on a second. Let's see. Okay. How's that?

HYACINTH MCKEE: That's much better, Ms. Marbs. I do hear you now.

STACY MARBS: Thank you. I was worried Mitch was

like I don't hear her. Thank you, guys. Well, good morning. My name is Stacy Marbs. I'm a program manager with Louisiana Rehab Services and I am sitting in for the Director Melissa Bayham. I have an update to provide you guys regarding our preemployment transition program. We are continuing to make contacts with the schools with the students to get these applications in for students that are in transition. One of the big things we have going on right now is there's a pilot program we have going on in just three of our eight regions. And hopefully if it's successful we will be able to expand it. Right now we're working the pilot program out of the Baton Rouge region, the Houma region and the Lafayette regional offices. And basically what it does is the vendor that's working with the students is making the connection with them while they're in their study skills classes. We've increased the number of sessions from six to four sessions to 108 sessions per student. We're looking at targeting 800 students within 27 schools. And that's between the three parishes. We're also looking to increase their work-based learning experiences from two experiences to three experiences. One session for work-based learning experience actually 240 hours. So looking to increase from 240 hours to, I mean, from 480 hours to 720 over a period of two years with the student working with a vendor and an employer. This just got started about a month ago. So actually this Friday we have a meeting scheduled to review the process between the vendor and the three regional managers and just get some numbers going and see how things are looking from that point. And, of course, statewide we are still pushing to continue to increase the student contact for preemployment transition services. It has been a little bit challenging due to covid, of course, just like everything. But we are definitely continuing to have a counselor assigned to each school and bring our preETS numbers up and make that contact so there is a school transition not just a handoff from students prior to exiting school. That

was the information that I had to present on. Just providing an update for the preemployment transition services. I may be able to answer a few questions and if not, I'll be glad to take any issues or concerns to Melissa so she can provide more information once she meets with you guys for the full meeting.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Do we have any questions? Thank you so much, Ms. Marbs, for the report and standing in for Ms. Bayham today. Do we have any questions for Ms. Marbs from the committee or council members?

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bambi Polotzola has her hand raised and Ms. Sue Killam has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Polotzola, you're being recognized.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yeah. So I just wanted to know when you talked about the students are getting the transitional services, and I think you talked about in their study skills class, it brought to mind a question. Are all of the students, even our students with the most significant needs being served in preETS? Because I know often times, I don't even remember my son having a study skills class. So it was called different, he was included, and he had special education classes. So I'm just wondering when you say study skills, that's not always in certain students' schedules. So how is that being worked out? And, I guess, the most important point, are kids with the most significant disabilities able to access these services?

STACY MARBS: Yes, ma'am. The goal is for all students with disabilities that are able or want to participate in the service they are definitely allowed to complete an application with the assistance of their parent doing that and getting that information to us. Of course, definitely not excluding anyone. And I say study skills because that was the target where the vendor would meet with the student in their study skills. But for those that do not have study skills, they are definitely able and should apply and receive preemployment transition services at whatever level they are able to participate.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: And can I have a follow-up question. I think I've dealt with school systems long enough to know if you are not explicit and you say their study skills class, they will only provide it for kids in their study skills class. I've had that experience with my son and the preETS when they would do the summer program where they do the employment during the summer because he wasn't in a certain setting. The school system's not going to make that connection that we might make having this discussion. So I think there has to be some explicit training and, you know, really not putting things in a box.

STACY MARBS: We can definitely make that distinction with the vendor and the school system. Again, it's just not targeted for study skills. That was just a way of having maybe the majority of students in a particular setting. And again, it's not limited. Because we do have vendors, counselors that are working with students in other regions that may not have a study skills class. Definitely not limited to that, but that was a vocation, like I said, where the majority of students may possibly be. But definitely not limited in that capacity.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Do we have any other comments from committee members or council members at this time or questions?

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Temisha Victorian has her hand raised. And Ms. Roslyn Hymel has her hand raised. And Ms. Sue Killam has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Victorian, you're being recognized. Oh, your question. Okay. So what we will do is read those questions from out of the chat. Ms. Victorian has some questions as well. Ms. Victorian, can we get someone to read her question out of the chat. Staff member.

EBONY HAVEN: It says how are we reaching that information to all families as some of these students are at home learning.

STACY MARBS: The schools have that information, the guidance counselor. And so I'm not sure, but that

would be something to look into if they continue to make that contact with the students that are not school based, those that may be home based. I can definitely look into that. I really don't have an answer to that. Get Melissa to give you guys some feedback.

HYACINTH MCKEE: I'm sorry. Ms. Marbs, did you say you're going to give us some more feedback on it? It was as if your volume was going out. Okay. I just want it stated for the record.

STACY MARBS: I'm honestly not sure. But I would say the schools should be making that contact since they are the first primary, like they would refer the students to us to do the applications on. So for those that are not school based, I'm not sure. So I don't want to give any misinformation so I will take note of that and maybe contact a few of our counselors and see if they're getting any feedback or any applications from students that are home based verses those that are readily available in the school setting.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Victorian, do you have any other questions while you still have the floor? Do you want to put them in the chat? Otherwise I'm going to move onto the next committee member to allow them to ask. Is there another committee member, I believe it was Ms. Hymel that was next.

EBONY HAVEN: Yes.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Roslyn Hymel, you're recognized.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Thank you, chairman. Yeah. This is what I want to know because I was, I'm not a student, but I live in Magnolia in that. And because of the epidemic I was moved from Cafe Du Monde. This is what I want to know. I want to get back into the community. How can I go about that and all? I have this in two parts. And I brought it up to like my job coach. That's one. Two, do I have to return back to y'all LRS to do the paperwork again since I have to get a new job again in the community? That's what I want to know for myself.

STACY MARBS: Okay. Well, first thing we would

have to do I would recommend you contact your counselor. I'm not sure if your case is open. If your case is still open, then no ma'am. You don't have to reapply and do all the paperwork again. If your case has been closed then yes, ma'am. That would be a process you have to go through just to meet with your counselor and have your case reopened so they can continue to provide you with employment placement assistance. But if you're still working with a job coach your case may still be opened or those may be extended services they're providing to you. So without knowing the specifics, my first recommendation would be to reach back out to the office and/or your counselor where you receive your services to determine the status of your case. That would be first. And then we can follow through from that point.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Are there any other questions or comments from the committee or council members at this time?

STACY MARBS: I believe they said Sue had her hand up.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Killam, or staff, is Ms. Killam hand raised to be recognized at this time?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, ma'am.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Killam, you're recognized.

SUE KILLAM: Thank you. Hi, Stacy.

STACY MARBS: Hey, Sue. Long time no see.

SUE KILLAM: Yeah. Exactly. Just two quick questions. I'm glad to hear you're increasing the amount of preETS in a pilot to look at how that would shape out. I'm wondering, and this kind of dovetails with something that Dr. Wilson kind of brought up. I'm wondering if in the technical guidance that you all were writing and included in your manual whether you have any plans or would consider plans to have some more teeth in the policy about these preETS that some of them, if not all of them, are provided in the community. Now I know the skills training or the wibbles have to be. They have to be at an employer site. So that's the good news there. But the 108



preETS for the vendors who are going in and doing some one-to-one preETS or some of the vendors who are doing it by Zoom all the time, it's pretty hard to teach some of these preETS that way. And I'm wondering if there could be a balance because I think like someone just said, the policies would benefit from having some actual descriptions of what that has to be like. Thirty percent must be provided in the community. Or 10 percent in the classroom and provided only in study skills if there is no other opportunity. Last thing is that I know we're in a couple schools, we don't do any services in the school. They're all done in the community. And we never do study skills. They've always been offered to us, but we do after hours or weekends. And, you know, we work around it cause I think it's hard to be able to get people more employment training and kind of in-person training when it's done in the school. It's just so artificial for these services. And I know you agree with that. I'm just saying maybe I think if you all could think of some things that when you say the reason why you want to increase them is I know you want to see more kids get more preETS training. And that will lead to employment. Cause everything you fund leads to employment. So I just think it should be done, even those preETS should be done out in the community while riding a bus, while doing something.

STACY MARBS: Okay. I'm just taking a few notes. Now I don't think that we're limited to do it in the classroom setting at this current moment. It's just like maybe unlike yourself some of the vendors are not getting great response from the students wanting to work or meet outside of school hours, on weekends, during breaks and things like that. So I do think that is actually allowable, but in certain areas the participation is just not there. So I don't think we limit that, but I will definitely revisit (inaudible) that's ever changing and updating. So I'll look at it and see if we can possibly make a recommendation to Melissa and see what she thinks about it. I honestly,

don't think that we're limited to that. It's just a matter of getting more participation and more availability to do it outside of the school setting. (Inaudible) real life verses sitting in the classroom that would definitely be better.

SUE KILLAM: Your current preETS in the guidance manual do not limit that. But you said it very eloquently. It's more difficult to orchestrate this in the community definitely, but I think that the outcomes are greater. And, you know, I think you think that as well. And probably Melissa. But anyway, yeah. That's how we think here at the Human Development Center anyway. And anything that you can do to kind of promote that would be great.

STACY MARBS: Will do.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Are there any other comments or questions at this time from any committee members or council members for LRS?

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Wilson has his hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Dr. Wilson, you have the floor.

PHIL WILSON: Thank you, Hyacinth.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Dr. McKee.

PHIL WILSON: I'm sorry?

HYACINTH MCKEE: Dr. Wilson, you have the floor.

This is Dr. McKee.

PHIL WILSON: Yes. Thank you. I just wanted to reinforce what both you and Sue have said, Stacy. But I think it comes back to our experience has been that, you know, whether-- I give you an example from schools. So a while ago, a decade maybe back there was a lot of co-teaching going on, right. Co-teaching meaning you had a special ed teacher or a specialist of some sort and you had, or reading specialist something like that, in someone's classroom. Ms. Joan's third grade classroom and she's the regular ed teacher. There was huge pushback for many teachers because their culture is my classroom is my little world, right. And this is how we do things in school. Everybody knows that. That's how we all went to school, right. So I think we're running into that same clash of cultures thing

here where what are you talking about, you know, I'm a teacher. I come to school. I teach my students in the school, right. And so it's got to come from the superintendent, the principal, the state department of ed. Whatever that folks, we'll do whatever it takes to retain you, to support you, to incentivize you. But at the end of the day we can't keep doing school the way we've been doing it for the last 100 years. And so I think we're really at that point, the data are very, very clear. That kids who go out and learn things in the actual settings in which they occur it launches them. They figure out. Not only the hard skills of I have the knowledge to do these things. Like I can't tell you how many times we see young people in the program that Sue directs go from these shy, insecure, you know, I've been in a self-contained classroom for the last 12 years to just feeling, they just exude confidence. And I didn't realize I could ride the bus, or I could do whatever it is. And it changes them. So I really, I don't think this is a problem, if I stated too strongly, you know, the people are doing their job, they are doing what they believe is the right thing and I assume they're doing it well. But we've got to figure out how, a lot of things have to come from the bottom up. This is one of those things that has to come from the top down. And I know that Stacy, both you and all the leadership at LRS believe the same things. But I just think this is a great moment where we could actually with the pilot, as Sue had kind of suggested or recommended, let's try something bold, you know, with it. I think that's the comment I wanted to make. That's it.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you. So at this time we will entertain any public questions or comments. Anyone from the public has their hand raised or would like to be recognized?

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Corhonda Corley has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Corley, you're being recognized.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Great morning, madam chair and council members. First, I'm going to make a statement. I know that many school systems such as EBR Parish, East Baton Rouge Parish, Lafayette Parish, St. Tammany Parish have all created virtual schools. And just like Ms. Polotzola stated, many of these schools do not have a study skills class. They do have community home based class or home and community-based class. So my question is number one, what is LRS doing to actually assist and help the children that are in the virtual schools because we do have children in ESS or children that have disabilities that are in the virtual skill setting. Number two, has LRS and the Department of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion considered a collaboration in order to make sure that more children with disabilities are aware of LRS and actually start transitioning at the proper age such as 14 years of age. And number three, does LRS take referrals from parents considering the majority of the school systems do not know LRS exist. Just like they don't know Ms. Jordan is the director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. So I'm just trying to find out what are you doing to actually disseminate information out that your service is actually an option and available. As well as what you doing to get parents to consider you as an option. Thank you so much.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Marbs.

STACY MARBS: Yes, ma'am. I will try to answer a few of her questions. I'm not aware of any collaboration between LRS and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. I will mention it or ask Melissa. She may be as she is the director and maybe someone on the senior management level may be involved or that may be something that we need to look into if we're not. So I will definitely get an answer on that.

Secondly, yes. We are definitely and can definitely take referrals from parents and anyone that has a student with a disability or themselves have a disability in order to refer for vocational rehabilitation services or even preemployment

transition services. We mentioned the school because the school is the primary point of contact with the student. So that we provide the schools with information and the schools should, we would hope, disseminate that information accordingly to the students and/or their parents. Now in some cases, particularly with home and community-based learning situations, this may not be happening. Again, I will inquire to the regional managers about how the contact is made with the schools and how things are being or may need to be addressed with students that are being taught from home based or virtual learning situations. I can't say if they're giving out the information to those students. And I say giving, we provide the information to the schools and hopefully the schools disseminate that information further. But if that is not happening then, yes. That is a disconnect that we need to look into. Unfortunately, I don't have an answer right at the moment. But that is similar to, I believe, Sue may have mentioned it or someone else. So I did jot that down and I will definitely inquire about that as well. I guess that was it.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Ms. Marbs, for your comment. I do want to insert something while we do have LRS and the Louisiana Department of Education on the call. There have been numerous times in which this idea of a collaboration, a connection between the two entities have been discussed over several full council meetings, committee meetings. I think, from my knowledge, at least the past two years. And the biggest concern is that collaboration has not taken place. And I don't know at what point or what something, and I'm saying this to the committee members on the line and possibly will ask that this be added back again to the full council to have a conversation about. There are some significant gaps between the communication of LDOE and LRS. And I'm hearing this from all of the different committee members that are on the call. So at this point we are at, we are over and I'm being, you know, I'm listening to the public and

I'm being as consistent as I can. But the biggest concern there is no, it appears to be no communication or no collaboration between these two entities and a lot of these questions come up because parents do not know where to go or where to turn. Especially during those transition years. I hear parents all they get is a flier from LRS at an IEP meeting or something stuck in a backpack or reach out or call them. There's something that needs to happen. I will impress upon the two entities that are on the call to start engaging and developing collaboration because the DD Council will expect to have that issue be addressed. And we'll be expecting to have some accountability in that collaboration because it was made and promised over and over again. So just want to ask you Ms. Marbs to bring that back to your leadership and ask Ms. Meredith Jordan on the line as well to start, you know, acting on those promises that have been made. So with that being said, I believe that we may have more comments from the public before we move on the agenda. Do we have any more for LRS?

EBONY HAVEN: There's a question in the chat. Can the DEI committee address LRS and LDOE providing services as well as collaboration for the DDID community.

HYACINTH MCKEE: So I will make a brief statement about that. The DEI Committee attempted to meet last week and did not have a quorum in order to move forward to conduct the business. And being that it's not a standing committee, my recommendation is that that be submitted, you know, emailed in writing so that could be put on the next DEI Committee meeting to be addressed. But the Education and Employment Committee as well as the full council in the past two years have been promised that a collaboration will occur between LDOE and LRS prior to even the DEI Committee being established. So I also want to circle back and say if there are any questions in the chat, and I'm saying this to staff because it's hard for me to monitor the chat as well as moderate and be in charge of the

agenda. If there are any questions that are in the chat that have been provided by public, we are going to circle back and ask that those questions be read if they have not been answered in the announcement section after we get through our next section. Okay. Thank you.

We're going to move right along to the next item in the agenda. Thank you, Ms. Marbs. So do we have an update on our contractual activities for FY21 action plan? Do we have that available and is O'Neill Communications and Dr. Beckers present? And Ms. Monroe?

DEVIKA RAO: Hi. This is Devika Rao with O'Neill Communications. I'm present.

GERLINDE BECKERS: This is Dr. Beckers. I'm present.

KELLY MONROE: This is Kelly Monroe. I'm here.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you. So we will go on ahead and start getting those updates in that order.

DEVIKA RAO: Okay. Do I need to, is everyone able to hear me or am I allowed to proceed? This is Devika.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yes.

DEVIKA RAO: Okay. Great. Sorry about that. Well, good morning, everyone. I'm Devika Rao if we've not met. I'm with O'Neill Communications. We worked on the employment webinars, and we concluded them in September. So my report is really just kind of our findings and open to any questions or recommendations from the committee.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Rao, I apologize for interrupting. I am getting a request from the committee to, and I'm not sure if you were present during the virtual meeting protocols, but when someone is presenting, we are asking that their cameras be turned on.

DEVIKA RAO: I'm sorry. You broke up when you said the protocols.

HYACINTH MCKEE: So again, I'm not sure if you were present for our virtual meeting protocols, but when you are presenting, cameras should be turned on.

DEVIKA RAO: Oh, okay. They just turned me into a panelist. That's probably why I didn't have my camera.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Thank you. No problem.

DEVIKA RAO: I was wondering that, but it just flipped. So thank you so much.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you. We see you.

DEVIKA RAO: Okay. Good morning, everyone. So just to kind of go over the report about what we were able to accomplish for the council. Just going to pull my report up here so I don't look away from you all. So just to kind of give everyone a recap of where we were and what the firm was able to accomplish for the council. We were able to create, we created a campaign called working together. We were able to define it with a logo, build a website and a Zoom webinar registration system similar to yours. And with that we were able to design ten specific webinars according to every region, the regions in the state. And hold webinars with employers as well as select employment organizations to talk about hiring people with disabilities and the resources that are available to employers across the state as well, of course, as the benefits and how it supports the entire workforce as a whole. To do that we were partnered with local chambers. We worked with SHRM or the Society of Human Resource Management chapters with a promotional packet to start encouraging a lot of local promotions. And so we had a lot of community swell. We were working on that grassroots effort. And we also got a great opportunity with, and I'm so sorry if I'm going to say this name incorrectly, but Evie Poitevent Sanders who is the human capital manager at the Greater New Orleans Inc. And Ashley Llewellyn who is with St. Tammany Corporation who was recommended to us by Susan Killam. With them we really saw even a bigger groundswell with the employment webinars. And we were able to partner, we were able to partner and get a total 165 registrations across the webinars. That number might be a little small, but what we were really focused on is working on employers and having tactical curriculum



trainings on the benefits of hiring people with disabilities, what resources are available across the state. And we had speakers and resource specialists in the regions themselves to be able to talk about how to impact and how to hire and what they needed to know. With that we had, we sent emails and we were doing press. And we were also able to really start creating a lot of conversation about working together. We had a great support with the staff and LRS. And we also developed a curriculum that is now kind of a part of the booklet that we provide with working together and is still relevant on. And we have it available on the website of working together. And it is downloadable. People can also watch the webinars in case they were missing them. And so we wanted to give you kind of an update. And it's a 28-page booklet. And it is also being submitted for evaluation. And it was also approved by HRCI and SHRM which is the Society of Human Resource Management for CEU credits or continuing education. So that is a great step for the council to work on the webinars further because now this curriculum has been accepted for professional education. And that's the report. And any more information I'm happy to provide.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you Ms. Rao. Do we have any questions from the committee or council members regarding Ms. Rao's report? Okay. Do we have any questions from the public regarding the report?

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Roslyn has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Roslyn Hymel, you have the floor.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yes. If I understood you right in that you said the numbers are very low in that. Why is the numbers so low. Y'all don't have very many, I mean, any higher numbers than for what you really spend in that. Are you expecting any more so the numbers could go higher?

DEVIKA RAO: That's a great question. So the numbers I apologize to make it sound they were low. That's not what I meant. So we sent it out to a vast

variety of employers. Because this was very specific to employers who are hiring or we're wanting to make sure they are having that conversation in their human resources departments who are responsible for hiring or developing jobs across their companies or organizations. That number, I meant I should clarify. I meant to say that those numbers were very targeted, and we definitely want to grow that because we want more employers getting into that webinar series. We had a tasks of ten and we did finish all of them across the regions in Louisiana. Across the ten regions. So they were specifically trying to target those employers and organizations that work within those, I keep wanting to say Families Helping Families regions, but I know that's incorrect. But the departmental regions. And so the number in our world it's actually pretty good. But it was very targeted, and they were employers. We hope to grow that and as the council thinks about moving on with these webinars that would be our goal to increase that effort to get more employers, more human resources professionals and other decisionmakers and organizations and companies to participate. So for a first round of series of webinars we think that's actually a great number. But it gives us a goal to improve upon. I apologize for my miscommunication. The tasks from the webinars was for employers and who hire and encouraging them to make sure they're also looking at hiring people with disabilities and making that a part of their hiring practices. Thank you for that question. That was great.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Thank you.

HYACINTH MCKEE: If we don't have any more questions, we're going to move onto Dr. Beckers' report.

SPEAKER: Nicole Banks has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Banks, you're being recognized.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you, madam chair. I have a question. You said it's a 28-page booklet with a

curriculum that you guys offer to all of the stakeholders. Not stakeholders, to the employers. Do we have a copy of that, the little 28-page booklet?

DEVIKA RAO: Yes. I will drop the link of the website in the chat and all of that is available there.

NICOLE BANKS: Oh, thank you so much.

DEVIKA RAO: You're so welcome.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Do we have anymore comments from the public for Ms. Rao?

SPEAKER: Corhonda Corley has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Corley, you're being recognized.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you so much, madam chair. My question is do we happen to have a breakdown of how many of these employers are diverse? Meaning how many of these employers are English language learners. How many are individuals with disabilities themselves. How many are minority owned companies such as women owned companies, et cetera. That's number one. Number two, do we have a breakdown of how many of these companies are Fortune 500 companies such as Microsoft, Exxon Mobile which is a large employer in our state? But do we happen to have a real true breakdown of what companies and what their demographics look like as it relates to employing diverse, equity and inclusive members. And if they are diverse themselves. So I'm just wondering if that's information that they have. And if so, if that information can be shared with the public.

DEVIKA RAO: Thank you for that question. That's a great question. So the first question you had was one, the diversity makeup of the people who participated. Am I correct?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes. That's correct.

DEVIKA RAO: And the second one was how many of them are Fortune 500 or kind of like on the bigger than small businesses of employers?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Correct.

DEVIKA RAO: Okay. So those are great questions. In terms of the diversity breakdown, I do not have that

in my report. But I'm happy to look into that. As for the-- excuse me. Sorry. I'm just recovering from a slight cold. As for the Fortune 500 breakdown that is, again, something I will dive into deeper on our list that we sent out. But I think that presents itself the next level up of these webinars is how to improve upon them. And also make them more like bigger and increase that swell that you were talking about. So I can look into those numbers and find those out for you if they are available and return that back to the council.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions for Ms. Rao? We're going to move onto Dr. Beckers' report. Dr. Beckers.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Good morning. I want to kind of remind everybody, LAPIE which is Louisiana Alliance Post-Secondary Inclusive Education. We were just funded again. Thank you for our third year. We started in the fall of 2019 and after that in that time we've had three major hurricanes, an ice storm and a pandemic. But I want to report positive news even though we've had some interesting experiences. In fall of 19 we had three universities who had post-secondary inclusive programs. And then two community colleges. In that time BRCC did receive their accreditation from the US Department of Education. So all five of our existing programs are certified CTP programs. And if you're not familiar with that, that means that students who attend can receive Pell grants. Pell funding if they'll eligible. Which is really good. And we have been working with LRS on all the programs to make sure that students who don't receive Pell, LRS is able to assist if the students are eligible too. As we know everything is based on eligibility. So I think the funding right now is good for students who want to attend post-secondary programs.

So what have we done since then. The big thing, LSUA has created a program and their start date is fall of 22. So next academic year we will have another program at LSUA which is exciting. And the conversations, Grambling State University has been at

the table. We've been working with Grambling. We have been working with McNeese, but McNeese and SOWELA, I can't pronounce it correct, but the community college. We were actually scheduled to go over there again. I've been over to go again in September, but Ida came, and I don't know if you guys are familiar, but Southeastern was closed for three weeks. We sustained significant damage. So that's kind of, hopefully, beginning of November we'll get back to Lake Charles. University Louisiana Monroe is very active. They want to start a program. And then just recently I met with Dr. Peoples at Southern University, and they are very excited about starting a program. So we have right now four other universities who are very much active, very much want to get on the table. What's the number one concern. Funding. The universities, these programs cost money and funding to start programs to maintain programs is a number one thing. They're like I would love to do this. I believe this. I support this. But we don't have any money. So the alliance initiative for this next year as well as continuing to provide technical support to help with grant writing to get funding is I've been working with Bambi and her office and we submitted a proposal, a policy proposal. I've never written one, but Bambi helped me, and I got one started and it's kind of turned over that we're trying very diligently to get legislative support for post-secondary programs. Florida has such a legislative bill. And the three main pieces that Florida has that I would like, and I submitted, again this is in the process, is one to have funding for startup programs. And enhancement grants for existing programs. Because the way our programs start you just can't open a program up and take 10 or 15 or 20 students. It's a process to get them started. So initially you're not getting tuition or program fees in return for the developmental part of the programs. So that's why we want startup money. We want grants for existing programs to enrich these programs to help these programs grow.

And then another piece that I put in there, cause I figured why not, is some type of scholarship for students who are eligible similar to what our students without disabilities get with TOPS programs. Because in our experience we have full Pell students and we have students who get LRS moneys, but then there are some kids that are full pay who really can't afford to pay. An example, I have a student whose both parents are schoolteachers. They make too much to really get any type of financial funding, but they don't make enough money, they kind of live month to month. So to help those types of families to have their students get the opportunity to come to college. And then the underlining rational of this legislative support is to put our programs in writing. To put them that they exist for decades to come. So if the alliance goes away, if the presidents of our universities retire and get changed the administration can't take away these programs. Cause right now they're gifts to our universities and our universities support us and support our programs, but there's nothing set in stone. So it could just be oh, we don't have the funding. Oh, I don't like that, so it's gone. And I don't foresee that happening. But if it's written in some kind of policy, it can't happen.

So basically that's my brief report. We're moving forward and hopefully the next time we'll have more universities on board with us. But we're making, I feel, significant progress in helping these students. And if someone's curious right now how many students do we roughly have, we have roughly 60 students who are enrolled in these programs across our state in four-year programs and about 60 in our two-year programs. We have a lot more students than that who are eligible to attend these programs and we need the opportunities. So the question is why can't we increase our enrollment. We just don't have the manpower or the funding. And all of us at the four universities, we're all faculty members. Well, most of us are. So we teach full loads, and we do this in addition to what,

you know, our faculty jobs. So that's why we need to really increase the numbers, increase the programs across the state. Hopefully, with Grambling and we'll get another program in the northern part of the state. Majority of the programs are in the southern part of the state. So that's basically the end of my report.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Dr. Beckers. Does anyone on the committee or council have any questions for Dr. Beckers at this time?

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Nicole Banks has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Banks, you're being recognized.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you, madam chair. Dr. Beckers, I was going to collaborate with you on the Grambling situation. I was waiting for you to get back with me in regards to meeting with somebody at Grambling. What is the process or is there something that--

GERLINDE BECKERS: You were actually on the agenda to move forward and then Ida hit. So we were out of the university for three weeks and we're just making up time right now. Cause our accreditation, we have to get those three weeks of hours back. So Grambling's on my list as is Lake Charles with McNeese. I didn't forget about you. You guys are on there. We're moving forward. So when we actually set it up with Dr. Williams, I'll contact you and then we'll meet. Cause again, I want advocates, I want parents who want to advocate for these types of programs who see the need. That I think is critical that we have that group of people, of stakeholders, that support these programs. But I didn't forget about you.

NICOLE BANKS: What you guys are doing is very, very important. And to take it all the way up to the college level to get the kids ready for, you know, that kind of adult living or to go further themselves into the next phase in their life in their education is awesome because they don't have that at all.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Right. And, you know, the big thing yeah, that's all, the employment is real

important, but it's also the college experience. That my friends without disabilities are going to college. Why can't I go to college. That's a big part of it. We forget that social piece that they want to do what everyone else does and why not. But I didn't forget about you. We're just moving forward.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Thank you.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Any questions? Any other questions or comments from the committee or council for Dr. Beckers at this time?

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bambi Polotzola has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Polotzola, you have the floor.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: And I'm not sure the proper way to say this, but at the appropriate time I would like to make a motion that we support this legislative agenda item and help Dr. Beckers, LAPIE to be able to formulate that. Dr. Beckers gave me credit for the possible proposal, but she actually did an excellent job. I just gave her a template and she filled it in and it's really great.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Thank you.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: But she doesn't have, you know, the experience that we have with how to get legislative support and that type of thing. So I think the council could add to that. And, you know, perhaps just, I mean, really it's developing a fund that these universities can get grants to either start up or expand. And I feel like right now's the time. If y'all have seen some of the conversations where there's some surplus money in our budget, which is not normal, this might be a time where we can get some type of fund to be able to have that money set aside and be able to move this forward. So my motion is that we support the legislative action to help fund this initiative that Dr. Beckers described.

HYACINTH MCKEE: There's a motion on the floor made by Ms. Polotzola. Is there a second?

MITCH IDDINS: This is Mitch. I second the motion.

HYACINTH MCKEE: It has been motioned by Ms.



Polotzola. Seconded by Mr. Iddins. Is there any objections or abstentions to the motion? Any discussions? Okay. Motion is carried. Thank you. Any other comments or questions for Dr. Beckers at this time?

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

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Hymel, you have the floor.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah. What I want to know because I had stepped out to get some water, but can you kind of go over for what you really said or what I really missed. I caught like and I left out in the middle. Because I really missed some of it. But before anything, I do agree with you on some of the things you was saying. Is that with the students. The teachers in the schools or what? That's what I want to know, catch up on. Because, you know, I do agree for what you was really saying.

GERLINDE BECKERS: Right. It's post-secondary programs. Our public university campuses and our community technical vocational schools is for students who have both intellectual and developmental disabilities to come to college to get a college experience and continue their education, seek employment. Like at Southeastern, ours is community-based employment because we do service a lot of rural areas. But the outcome is employment and working with LRS to continue the supports, that supports continue once they leave our supports on the university campus. And then we're pushing for legislative funding to help create new programs as well as enhanced existing programs.

ROSLYN HYMEL: And also how are you paying for the funds in that?

GERLINDE BECKERS: Right now the students who attend our programs they pay either tuition or a program fee which helps, that's how they attend the programs. And then because all the current programs are certified from US Department of Education the students can receive Pell funding if they're eligible. And then LRS will help also if they're eligible.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Can their parents help out too?

GERLINDE BECKERS: Of course. Parents or individual pay can happen. But we're trying to make it where those students who can't afford to come, can still come. We don't want to make it a system of the haves and have nots. We want all these programs open for all students who have the desire to come to college to get a post-secondary experience.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Now I kind of see where you're coming from now. Thank you.

GERLINDE BECKERS: You're welcome.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Thank you. So if there are no more comments or questions from the public for Dr. Beckers, we are going to move onto the next item on the agenda which is a customized employment training report from Ms. Kelly Monroe.

KELLY MONROE: Hello, everyone. So the Arc of Louisiana contracts with the DD Council to act as the fiscal agent for customized employment. Currently MG and A, Mark Gold and Associates is providing this training. I know most of you already are familiar with it, but just to recap. It is split up into three sections. Discovery, job development and then systematic instruction. Before anyone is to go through any of these trainings, they had to attend a gateway training. Normally it would be like three full intense days in-person, but since the pandemic we've had to like split them up and do them online. So now they're like six half days. So just wanted to give you a little background on that.

Right now they have three activities that are going on. The job development certification class. This was a class that was in the very beginning of the contract year. However, there are two individuals who are finishing up right now. The rest have already completed. They have a discovery class that's going on right now that has eight participants. They're all doing really well. However, we're having a problem getting learning partners. We have contacted LRS, and Angela is working with the presenters to try to get

some learning partners for these eight people. I think of the eight people only two of them have learning partners. And so in this process the learning partner is very important, and you can't move forward without one. So you have to be walking through the process with an individual who is currently looking for employment.

And then the last thing that we're doing is they just finished the job development gateway training. This one had to be postponed due to the hurricane and the next time that they were able to get people to the last two classes was just this past week. So it was delayed about a month which means that this activity certification will also be delayed a little bit. So that's where they are. In the job development gateway we had 35 people sign up and but only 21 like completed the whole six days. So that was disappointing. Especially because we had to cap that training off at 35 people. And then of those, I haven't spoken to Charlette and Randy just yet, but I think that there will be ten of them that will go through the certification process. So we'll have that report next time. But I know that there was some questions, Marilee had told me that you guys had some questions for last time. But she didn't really go over those. But if anybody has any questions, I'd be happy to help answer them.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Ms. Monroe, for the report. Are there any questions from the committee or council members at this time for Ms. Monroe?

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Nicole Banks has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Banks, you're being recognized.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you. Okay. So you said that you guys initially had 35 people. And then that dwindled down to 21 that actually completed the program. And then from that 21, only 10 is going to be certified to move on. Is that correct?

KELLY MONROE: So, okay. No. Somewhat. So that is just for the job development gateway piece. There

were 30 registrants for that. Now there's 21 that completed the entire six days. They do keep it at ten people because it's such an extensive process they really can't have a large group attend the entire class with the learning partners. This is more than a training. It's almost like, it's a very in-depth certification process that if you go through the whole three sections of customized employment, it can take you about a year and a half. So this is not like any other training that most employment providers receive.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. So it is more in depth, more detailed, more hands on.

KELLY MONROE: It's competency. So, yes.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. And what is the disconnect on why we are not getting learning partners?

KELLY MONROE: I'm not 100 percent sure. You know, it's always been somewhat of an issue and it's really not LRS's fault. It's just some of the recipients don't want to go through the whole process. Because it is, basically, if we have a learning partner going through this process, they know they're not getting a job until all three parts of this has been completed. Some people want jobs right away. So in order to get people trained, it does take a little bit of time. Some people don't want to wait that long and go through the whole process. So it's really not LRS's fault. I mean, they've been really working with us for quite a while and have been working really hard to try to get this accomplished. But once we get people trained in Louisiana, this won't be such a long process.

NICOLE BANKS: So is it that guys are picking out who's being trained for this, or you guys have a certain application that has to be filled out?

KELLY MONROE: Yeah. So what happens is is that the different people who are being trained in different regions, the LRS counselors in these regions are getting people for them to work with. Or were you talking about the people who were (inaudible) the trainers?

NICOLE BANKS: Maybe let me understand. The

learning partners are the people that actually are with the people with disabilities to help them, right. Okay. So you guys are short of learning partners. So you guys are appointing these people, are you seeking them out, is it a job application? Like you said, it's people that you handpick, right?

KELLY MONROE: So LRS is seeking them out and it's of the applicants that they have. Yes. Yeah. So LRS is looking at the people that they have who have applied for services and is sending the learning partners to them.

NICOLE BANKS: And the learners partners, are they getting like paid per hour or?

KELLY MONROE: No. Because they're currently looking for a job. So they're participating. So, no. No one's paying them. Cause they are being provided a service.

NICOLE BANKS: Got you. Okay.

KELLY MONROE: Okay. Anybody else?

HYACINTH MCKEE: Are there any other questions for Ms. Monroe at this time? Thank you, Ms. Monroe, for your report.

KELLY MONROE: Thank you.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Moving right along. We do have a couple of, I believe we have some motions that were made. I am going to ask staff if they could, if they do have the ability to post the motions that were made so that we can make sure they're worded correctly to bring to the full council and the council's report. If they have the capacity and ability to do so, to post those motions that were made during the meeting.

SHANDRELL STEWART: Dr. McKee, I have them written down, but it may take me a minute to get them posted.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. So, no worries. Could you restate the motions that we are going to present for the full council to consider.

SHANDRELL STEWART: Okay. Give me one second.

AMY DEAVILLE: Dr. McKee, I believe the only motion that was made, other than approving the July summary, was the motion to support the alliances legislative act

which is regarding additional funding for secondary programs.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Thank you for that. So, committee, it appears that we only have that one motion that we would like to bring to the full council for consideration tomorrow when we meet. I will, at this time, circle back to see if there are any-- before I say that, I do want to ask staff that if there are links that are posted inside the chat that often times our presenters put in for our public to view, I will ask that staff go through the chat, get those links out and perhaps find a way that we can post that information so the public could get it. I think it can be sometimes challenging for individuals to go back and try to get the links and all of that. So, I'm asking staff to go in that chat, click those links, find those documents and let's find a way to publish that information for everyone to view. Information from those links.

Also, I will circle back at this time to see if there were any questions or comments in the chat that were not said publicly or addressed and answered publicly. And I know it's a challenge because there's a lot of chatting going on to go through those. But there may be some questions that we may have inadvertently missed.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. So there's several questions when Ms. Meredith Jordan was giving her report. The first question is will this report be published on the DDC website. And I think she was referring, I'm not sure what--

AMY DEAVILLE: I think she's referring to the report that Meredith Jordan went over. That report is currently linked in Meredith Jordan's report which is on our website for the full council agenda. So it's both linked in the agenda, and it's also linked on the website just under the DOE report, the Department of Ed report.

EBONY HAVEN: I think the next question might have been answered already. Who's over the Office of

Teaching and Learning. The next question is will LDOE create a focus group with the educator unions, university leaders and SPED parents to discuss how they could recruit feature educators.

MEREDITH JORDAN: What I would like to do on that, we do have an educator recruitment commission. Y'all, forgive me.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Jordan, you're back on mute. That happens to me often. It happens to us often. Now we can hear you.

MEREDITH JORDAN: It's trying to shut me off. I would like to bring back to the next meeting some additional details around our educator recruitment efforts.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. The next question is how is LDOE ensuring the school systems are informed of these grant possibilities.

MEREDITH JORDAN: We actually do quite a bit of launching and webinars around our school system planning and walking them through those opportunities. We also have a link to our school system planning guide that I can share as well that kind of goes through all of those funding opportunities for them. Again, we communicate those through my monthly calls as well as our federal programs and our funding calls for our school leaders and our school system leaders calls that Dr. Brumley leads every month includes some of those operational and school system planning and funding opportunities.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. You might have answered this, where is the grant information for the public to share with their respective school systems. Is that the link you're referring to?

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes. I believe I put it in there. I believe I linked to our school system planning guide in there in the chat. I can do it again, if not. Yeah. I dropped a link in there to our school system planning guidance that talks about some of those opportunities as well.

EBONY HAVEN: There's a comment from Ms. Kathleen

Cannino. She says with all due respect, the reporting is self-reporting, and no school system will report themselves. The next question, and I think you answered, which was November 17th. The question is when will SEAP meet. November 17th is the next meeting, right. Okay. The next question was from Ms. Bambi Polotzola. She asked if you can share the link to the information about the funding for certification.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. It's in the school system planning guide. You'll pretty much see what school systems see when they go into their federal fund request. So in the school system planning guide it talks about how teachers will add SPED certification, how many will add English learner certification. And then school systems can apply for some optional funding to support that. So you'll see it in the school system planning guide that I linked to. I was just going to, just to elaborate a little bit. We also ask our school systems to tell us through their planning, you know, what post-secondary partnership do you have. You know, to help you increase that communication with your post-secondary partners for training. And helping you with those certification and recruitment efforts as well.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. The next question was from Ms. Kathleen Cannino. She says what are the requirements for long-term subs for children with disabilities.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. So, I'm diving a little bit into that, and I've been searching in policy. I do know that we are required, the state does offer per law, teaching authorizations. What we call teaching authorizations for substitute teachers. Those are continuous. I believe that school systems may have some additional policies and regulations around their substitute teachers. To my knowledge we don't have like a length restriction around that. I think that was one of the questions. But I would also like to bring that back, do a little bit more diving and find out specifically, you know, do we have any requirements, length requirements around substitute teachers in our special ed classrooms.



EBONY HAVEN: And you may have already answered this, but I want to read it for the record. Can Ms. Jordan provide the information regarding the option for certification she mentioned as well as the funding source to the public.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yep. That's in the guide.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Corhonda Corley also asked will the SEAP meeting report be provided to this committee so it can be published for the public.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. Absolutely. I'm going to make sure our SEAP materials used to be, should be posted. Our power points. I'll make sure they're posted on our website, but I can also share them, our September meeting minutes and the materials.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. She had a follow-up question. Will the next SEAP meeting be virtual considering the population which it serves.

MEREDITH JORDAN: We are going back to in-person meetings in November. Our September meeting was virtual really due to it was right after the aftermath of Hurricane Ida and we just weren't sure if folks would be able to get on the road or have that availability. So we did do that one virtually. However, for November we plan to come back in-person.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. I think this was in regards to LRS's report. Ms. Corhonda Corley comments, LRS being present in 27 schools in three parishes is highly unacceptable when East Baton Rouge Parish school system has more than 83 schools by itself. Ms. Melinda Elliot says yes, we have to say all the students with disabilities, not just study skills.

STACY MARBS: Did y'all need me to respond to that?

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. McKee, did you want Ms. Marbs to respond to the previous comment?

HYACINTH MCKEE: I'm not sure it's a comment or it's a question. So, I mean, I don't know if a response is needed unless Ms. Marbs wants to add credence to that or has data to speak to the comment.

STACY MARBS: Well, I can add to it. Those are not the only schools that we're connected to. Those are

just the ones that are targeted for the particular pilot. All schools have an LRS counselor that should be connected to the school so we're not limiting any (inaudible) to any particular schools. We're trying to make our presence in every school, in every parish that we're allowed into the school.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you. Ms. Haven, are there any other comments or questions?

EBONY HAVEN: Just one more comment from Ms. Brenda Cosse. She stated that the live transcript stopped on Zoom before contract reports were started. Please check the live Zoom. But we'll make sure that the transcript is updated with those reports.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Ms. Haven. Does that conclude the comments and the questions in the chat?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, ma'am.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you. So at this time, folks, it appears as though we did go a little over the agenda and I believe it was a conversation that was needed. And so thanks to everyone that attended today. I want to make sure that everything is covered. I am going to ask staff to just check and see, let's do a check and balance and make sure everything has been covered today before I entertain a motion to adjourn.

AMY DEAVILLE: Yes, ma'am. I believe you can proceed with adjournment.

HYACINTH MCKEE: I'm entertaining a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:14 today. I'm not sure if I actually need a motion for that. I've been told I can just kind of adjourn. But for the purpose of transparency, I will entertain that motion to adjourn at 11:14 today.

MITCH IDDINS: This is Mitch. I make the motion, Dr. Hyacinth.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Mr. Iddins. I don't believe I need a second for that. Thank you for everyone that's on the call today. Thank you for your time. We certainly hope that we see you at the rest of our meetings that we have today as well as the full council meeting tomorrow. Thank you. Have a great

day.