

**Education and Employment (E/E) Committee**

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

[YouTube Broadcast](#)

**SUMMARY**

**Members Present:** Dr. Hyacinth McKee, Brenda Cosse, Dr. Phil Wilson, Melissa Bayham, Bambi Polotzola, Mitch Iddins, Nicole Banks

**Members Absent:** Mary Tarver

**Attendees:** Ashley McReynolds, Cynthia Bell, Annie Cummer, Nicole Flores, Kristie Curtis, Meredith Jordan (LDOE), Katie Kroes, Susan Riehn, Corlis Gremillion, Alishia Vallien, Kelly Monroe, Dr. Charles Michel, Dr. Gerlinde Beckers, Corhonda Corley, Kathleen Cannino, Verla Farlough, Kim Basile, Bridget Bergeron, Kimona Hogan, Mylinda Elliott, Devika Rao, Karen Artus

**Staff:** Marilee Andrews, Ebony Haven, Halie Belin, Brenton Andrus, Amy Deaville

**Transcriptionist:** Lynsey Hebert

Chairperson Dr. McKee calls meeting to order at 1:03 PM. Ms. Andrews calls role and a quorum is established. Dr. McKee reads the [Virtual Meeting Protocols](#).

**MOTION PASSED.** Motion to approve the [October 20, 2021 E/E Committee Summary](#) with an amendment to change the date from July 20, 2021 to October 20, 2021 made by Ms. Polotzola, seconded by Ms. Bayham passed without objection or abstention. A note has been made to change the date to reflect the meeting date of October 20, 2021.

Update from Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), *Meredith Jordan*

- [Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force](#)
- Current Opportunities:
  - Paraeducator teacher opportunity to incentivize paraeducators to obtain bachelor's degree at no cost
  - Optional funding schools can request for add on-certifications (i.e., special education mild/moderate, English as a Second Language). For questions email [believeandprepare@la.gov](mailto:believeandprepare@la.gov)
  - [2022 Jump Start Convention](#) (Sold Out)
  - [2022 Teacher Leader Summit](#)
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) requires each state to have in place a State Performance Plan (SPP). LDOE is currently setting targets for the State Performance Plan (SPP) for the next 6-year cycle via the [State Performance Plan/ Annual Performance Report \(SPP/APR\) Target Setting FFY 2020](#)

– 2025. LDOE will engage stakeholders in this process via a fillable PDF survey called the [SPP / APR Target Setting Survey: FFY 2020-FFY 2025](#).

- [SPED Funding](#)
- [IDEA FFY21 Funding Activities](#)
- Next Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) meeting is in February and planning for in person. Will adjust to virtual if the Governor's Emergency Order is extended.
- Cameras in the Classroom ([SB 86 of the 2021 Legislative Session/ Act 456](#))
  - Requires development of policies to install, operate, and maintain cameras in certain special education (SPED) classrooms
  - Does not give Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) or LDOE authority to provide technical assistance to school systems in creating policies
  - No funding is attached to the legislation
  - Guidance to SPED Directors is to work with local legal Counsel and draft policy in alignment with the law
  - LDOE currently has no oversight ability
- Ms. Jordan shared her email address for questions: [Meredith.Jordan@la.gov](mailto:Meredith.Jordan@la.gov)

Update from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), *Melissa Bayham*

- Customized employment training from LSU-HDC
- Vacant counselor positions; all are posted on the State Civil Service website
- Shreveport region has the most need
- STEM Up with Southern University assisting minority students with disabilities in STEM occupations

Update on E/E Contractual Activities for [FFY2022 Action Plan](#) (Oct. 1, 2021 – Sep. 30, 2022)

- Seminars on Hiring Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (Activity 3.2.2), *Devika Rao*
  - Plan of Action: Working on building out webinars from a curriculum approach to one topic per webinar with a deeper dive with subject matter experts
  - Will submit a calendar shortly to staff with plan of activities
  - Plan to be inclusive of big businesses and small businesses
  - Hope is to get first webinar off the ground in March, which is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.
- [Louisiana Post-Secondary Inclusive Education Alliance \(LaPIE\)](#) (Activity 3.1.1), *Dr. Gerlinde Beckers*
  - McNeese is looking forward to starting a LaPIE program.
  - Meeting in February with Northwestern State University to help start a program there.
  - Still working on Grambling University.
  - Ms. Polotzola shares Sen. Boudreaux will look into information Ms. Polotzola sent him regarding LaPIE and is interested in carrying the bill, but this should not stop advocacy to get other legislators involved.
  - Dr. Beckers will compose letter to send to alliance members that is consistent on what is being asked.

- Customized Employment Training (Activity 3.2.1), *Kelly Monroe*
  - Current class is moving slow. Eight are in the current class and four have not identified a learning partner in the discovery process. A student cannot move forward without a learning partner. COVID is becoming a problem with this class as well. The customized employment training for this class is in a holding pattern.
  - Planning for refresher and restart in March with hopes of finishing by the end of the contract year.

## Discussion of Ideas for FFY 2023 Action Plan

- Dr. McKee reads “Goal 3 Education and Employment” and its objectives and activities from the [FFY2022 Action Plan](#).
- Dr. Wilson comments that there are 2 entities working on Customized Employment: LSU-HDC and The Arc. Suggests LSU-HDC and The Arc work in concert as opposed to competing for the same customers. Dr. McKee questions if the Council can suggest or encourage this, without imposing it.
- Ms. Monroe shares that the Council chose to contract with Marc Gold & Associates (MG&A), and the Arc is simply the fiscal agent. This contract began maybe 4 years ago and within the past 2 years LRS reached out to LSU-HDC to make it a service. Ms. Monroe does not think the 2 entities will be competing for customers.
- Ms. Bayham understands Dr. Wilson’s concerns. LRS was trying to find a way to enact customized employment and the Council funded it. LRS reached out to LSU-HDC to continue after funding.
- Mr. Michel comments on Activity 3.1.8: LDOE is lacking teachers with practical experience in SPED. There are no outreaches with appropriate entities because the appropriate entities do not exist. SPED teachers should adjust to the child, not the child adjust to the SPED teacher. There are SPED teachers with virtually no experience in SPED. There is no expertise to guide the students to success and that needs to be considered in all parts of this plan. LDOE has not shown priority to 3.1.8 and it is beginning to show. Activity 3.1.8 needs to permeate in this document and has been missing for past 10 years.
- Dr. McKee comments on Activity 3.2.5 and Activity 3.2.6: Interested in discussion of individuals with disabilities approaching retirement age and how to advocate with employers to offer ABLE Accounts as an option for retirement.
- Ms. Polotzola shares that LSU-HDC and Disability Rights Louisiana (DRLA) each cover retirement planning. There is limit to that funding. Has to be a person with a disability who has a job offer, so there is a need for expanded services (i.e., hypothetical scenarios). The Arc has been working with families for supported decision making (SDM), which could be a component of that.
- Ms. Polotzola: Students graduating from post-secondary institutions have high employment rate.
- Dr. McKee is interested in Activity 3.1.8, 3.2.5, and 3.2.6 and would like staff to do research on those. Dr. McKee would like to present these activities to the full Council.

**MOTION CARRIED:** Ms. Polotzola motions to bring Activities 3.1.8, 3.2.5, and 3.2.6 (from the [FFY 2022 Action Plan](#)) to the full Council and staff to conduct research on these. Mr. Iddins seconds the motion. No objections. No abstentions.

- *Activity 3.1.8 Conduct outreach with appropriate entities on current services and training opportunities for traditional and special education teachers including ongoing support (i.e., high quality ongoing teacher education) which may lead to capacity building efforts to increase high quality educators.*
- *Activity 3.2.5 Share the benefits planning services to a variety of agencies and stakeholders.*
- *Activity 3.2.6 Advocate for systems change based on emergent employment issues.*

Dr. McKee adjourns the meeting at 3:12 PM.