

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Education and Employment Committee
April 20, 2022

LOGAN DAVIS: Okay. It is 10:16. Are we started?
I can't hear anybody.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hey, Logan. Can you hear me?

LOGAN DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Can hear me, but not see me.
We're waiting on just a few more people to see if we
can get a quorum.

MARY TARVER: Good morning, everybody. It's Mary
Tarver. Ebony, are we ready?

LOGAN DAVIS: Can I make a statement real quick?
I'm council member Logan Davis.

MARY TARVER: Sure.

LOGAN DAVIS: Okay. I just want to let the record
reflect that it is currently 10:20. I received an email
that it was at 10:00. I listened to salad while I was
waiting. This is unprofessional. Okay. I'm done.
Okay. Thank you. Bye.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. I think the meeting was
scheduled to start at 10:15 and we have to make sure
that we have quorum before the meeting can start.
We'll make sure that we get the, make sure that you
have the information on meeting starting times so that
you can avoid any of that. My name's Mary Tarver and
I'm filling in for Dr. McKee who had to be out today.
So I want to welcome everybody. And I know this is the
first time we've done the kind of hybrid council
meetings since the governor did not reissue the public
health emergency. So I don't know if there's somebody
there from the council that needs to give us new rules
or how things work. I'm not sure since there's people
in the room and then there's people on the computer.
So I'll take direction from y'all.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hi, Ms. Mary. I'm here, but I'm
really on the computer. And Ebony's in here. She's
taking notes and stuff like that. So your question,
she was just asking about-- were you asking about the
protocols or how it works?

MARY TARVER: Right. Like if somebody had to ask a

question. You know, before everybody was on the computer, so it was easier to see what was going on. But y'all will continue to monitor the computer to let us know if there's any questions or comments and then the same from the room?

EBONY HAVEN: Right. Yeah. Mary, we'll assist in letting you know when people's hands are raised or if there are any comments from any of the individuals that are in the room present for the meeting. Marilee and I will make sure that we notify you.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Thank you. So with that I guess we're ready to get started. Do y'all want to do the roll call?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I can do that. Nicole Banks. Melissa Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Brenda Cosse. Logan Davis.

LOGAN DAVIS: Present.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Christi Gonzales.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Mitch Iddins. Dr. Hyacinth McKee. Bambi Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Mary Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Dr. Phil Wilson.

PHIL WILSON: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hi, Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: I'm here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hi, Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: Hi, guys.

MARILEE ANDREWS: You have a quorum, Ms. Mary.

EBONY HAVEN: You're muted, Mary. We can't hear you.

MARY TARVER: I'm back. Now we'll ask for approval of the January 2022 employment and education committee meeting summary.

LOGAN DAVIS: I move to have that read out loud.

MARY TARVER: There's a motion to have them read aloud. Is there a second? Okay. With no second, then the motion does not pass.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Logan, do you have them in front of you? Would it help if I email you again?

LOGAN DAVIS: Ma'am? I couldn't hear you. I'm

sorry.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Do you have the summary in front of you or would it be helpful if I sent them to you right now?

LOGAN DAVIS: No. It would be helpful if it was read out loud so I could hear it. Because I'm not in a position where I can read it on my computer or in front of me. So that's why I made the motion to have it read out loud.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay. I got you.

LOGAN DAVIS: But if there's no seconds, then I guess y'all don't care about if I know.

MARY TARVER: Well, Logan, the information for the meetings are sent out in advance for people to be able to have time to look over things. So we do want you to, you know, have an opportunity to read it and understand what we're going to be talking about today. So I'm sorry that that didn't work out for you. But, you know, you can continue to work with the staff to make sure that you get the information you need ahead of time.

LOGAN DAVIS: I just don't understand why y'all don't want to second a motion to have it read aloud. So it is on tape so that the public knows. But are y'all trying to conceal something? I mean, I'm just trying to do my best to be informed. And it was sent in advance. But I'm sorry to not reading it in my off-time. But I've been going from work to home. Pretty much asleep. And so I'm currently still at work. I love my job. And so I couldn't take time off to go to Baton Rouge which is a four-hour drive. And I don't do-- well, more than four-hour drive. So I really wouldn't have had a chance to read it then. And y'all have it in front of you in the council room. And so I just don't understand.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Well, I'm sorry about that. We'll have to maybe get with you after the meeting to make sure that we can help get everything you need. We're not trying to conceal or hide anything. It's public record.

LOGAN DAVIS: If it's public record, then why can't you read it out loud. I'm just asking questions. And y'all are not helping me and y'all. And so I'm just asking to be informed.

RASHAD BRISTO: I'm going to interject here. This is the chairman. Point of order. Mr. Davis, we're going to ask that this conversation is taken offline. Due to Roberts rules of order if there was no second, this conversation is no longer a conversation point anymore. We do respect the fact that you did make the motion. But if the committee members did not see fit to move forward with a second there's no other way we can be proactive as far as doing the reading of the minutes. So I'm going to ask that this continue to be taken offline as far as this discussion and please proceed with the committee meeting.

LOGAN DAVIS: Yes, sir. Yes, chair. I'm sorry for wanting to know the information. My bad. I'm done.

MARY TARVER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

RASHAD BRISTO: I yield the floor back to you, Ms. Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Thank you, sir. So the summary that we have before us for the meeting that occurred in January is up for approval.

NICOLE BANKS: I motion that the minutes be approved.

MARY TARVER: Thank you, Ms. Banks. Is there a second?

LOGAN DAVIS: I'll second even though I haven't read them or seen them. Or whatever.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Thank you. All right. With that we will move on the agenda for today. Our first item on the agenda is cameras in the classroom. And we're going to get an update because lots of things have been going on with the legislative session. So I ask Ebony if she can give us an update.

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. I sure can. And I'm going to try and make it as brief as I can because we're already behind schedule. I'm just going to give a brief update on the council's advocacy efforts. And I'll let Ms. Jordan give you guys an update on behalf of the Louisiana Department of Education. So Act 456 of 2021 by Senator Foil passed and it requires governing authorities of public and charter schools to adopt policies relative to the installation and operation of cameras in special education classrooms upon request. However, if you guys have been kind of watching the legislative session you know that very few school

districts have created a policy. And the reason being a lot of them were stating that the lack of funding was the reason for the delay in them even creating policies. However, the intention of the law was for the districts to create the policies regardless of if funding was available and implement the policies once they located funding. So Senator Foil has brought SB45 in the 2022 legislative session. Which originally only had a deadline for the policies to be created which was December 31st, 2022. However, based on feedback that he received from parents, from LaCAN members, the LaCAN leaders, council staff about particular language that was included in the bill about the districts, that the districts were using not to create the policies. And it was specifically section G of the original bill and not having data on which districts had actually created a policy. Senator Foil has added a few amendments that I'm going to just kind of read off real quick.

One of the amendments is requiring the public governing authorities to submit a copy of the policies to the Louisiana Department of Education by January 15th, 2023. And they have to submit any revisions to the policies that they make to the department within ten days after they make the revisions. Another amendment that he's added requires the policies to include provisions on how a parent or a legal guardian may request the installation and operation of cameras in their child's classroom. And then he also added language that states that upon receipts of funds, whether those funds be federal, state, local, public, private grants, or donations, or nonmonetary resources, which could come in the form of services or equipment, that the cameras be installed and operated.

And then I mentioned section G. He actually repealed section G. So that section in the bill is no longer an issue. And if you're wondering what section G stated, it stated as specific funding becomes available for this purpose each public-school governing authority shall implement the provisions of the law. Which we had received feedback from our LaCAN leaders. I even got an email from a parent after she submitted a public records request from a superintendent and their IT officer that section G was the key in them not implementing the policy. So Senator Foil has decided

to repeal that section. So it's no longer included in the bill. Now the council, when you guys originally passed the advocacy agenda in October, you wanted to see more oversight and monitoring by the Louisiana Department of Education. However, the bill currently only requires that the governing authorities submit their policies to LDOE by January 15th. It doesn't give the department, and I'm sure Ms. Jordan will go into more detail in her update about the cameras, but it doesn't give them authority for any other oversight or monitoring. Which is what I think the council was hoping to see.

Lastly, due to the overwhelming and unexpected positive feedback that we received from legislators at the roundtables, legislative visits during preliminary committee meetings prior to the start of session on March 14th and LaCAN's first yellow shirt day at senate finance on March 23rd, the funding has been added to our request. So at the public testimony day in house appropriations on April 5th Representative Bacala informed council staff and LaCAN that he would add an amendment to HB1 for the 8 million-dollars to fund the cameras. But on Monday April 18th the funding was not included in the amendment package. Chairman Zeringue of the house appropriations committee stated that the committee didn't include the 8 million because the committee felt that the Louisiana Department of Education should be able to identify the funding needed in its current budget. However, in that same committee meeting on Monday the committee passed a concept amendment which would appropriate the 8 million-dollars that we need for the funding for cameras should the Louisiana Department of Health return funds to the state treasury as a result of the increased federal funds in the enhanced F map. But unfortunately this source of funding is not guaranteed. So we're hoping that some of the money will be returned to the treasury. So in that case that 8 million-dollars can be used to fund the cameras. So does anybody have any questions about the council's advocacy efforts? Ms. Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. That was a lot. And I was trying to keep up with everything that was going on. So my question is they are saying that Louisiana should

be able to fund these cameras with the current funding that we have. But then they turned around and they increased the funding. Am I correct? They increased it. I'm sorry. They put the 8 million into the bill. So did that happen, or did that not happen?

EBONY HAVEN: So we were hoping-- Representative Bacala when we went to public testimony day on April 5th, he did tell us he was trying to get an amendment passed. Or he was trying to get an amendment added in the amendment package for the 8 million-dollars. Unfortunately the committee decided that I think they just felt that the Louisiana Department of Education should be able to find the funding within their current budget. So they did not include it in their amendment package. However, there was an amendment that was passed on Monday. I think it's a concept amendment. So if LDH, if they are able to return some of the funds to the state treasury, due to the enhanced F map, if some of that funding is returned to the state treasury, the 8 million-dollars, I guess, the first item would be the cameras. To fund the cameras for the 8 million-dollars. Does that make sense?

NICOLE BANKS: Yeah. That made sense. My question was was this extra funds that they're getting from the F map? What is F map? Or maybe I'm saying it not correct.

EBONY HAVEN: No. You are saying it. It's the federal-- and I can't remember.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: It's the formula for how the centers for Medicaid and Medicare fund Department of Health. Those services for Medicaid.

NICOLE BANKS: For funding. So they're saying that if the formula for funding allows them to return funds back into the general fund, then they'll be able to give them the money allowed for them to use if they can't find it in their budget. Is that correct?

SPEAKER: Right.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay.

EBONY HAVEN: But that funding isn't guaranteed. So I just want to make that clear. It's not a guarantee that the funds are going to go back to the general fund, the state general fund. It's not guaranteed. So, I mean, it is a step forward. I'm happy that they made the amendment. But I just don't

want parents or LaCAN members to get their hopes up to say that we're going to get the funding cause it's just not guaranteed.

NICOLE BANKS: Right.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. So what you're saying is the legislature thinks the Department of Education should be able to find the money within their funds. But then they're also saying the Department of Health if they send money back to the treasury. That sounds very convoluted. Like that sounds like nobody is responsible and it's not going to happen. Cause I don't know, maybe I'm wrong cause I don't keep up with everything, but I don't know of anytime Department of Health is sending money back to the treasury.

NICOLE BANKS: Right.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So I think that sounds like a very convoluted process that's probably not going to end up the way we want it to end up.

NICOLE BANKS: Can I ask one more question right quick? What does the Department of Health have to do with the Department of Education when it comes down to cameras? Like I'm confused why is that even simulated or even related to that. Because what do they have to do with that?

AMY DEAVILLE: This is Amy. It's not related. But what they're banking on is that they think that LDH will have funds to return to the state treasury. And that they would be the first ones to do it because of this enhanced F map funding. So they're just banking on LDH having some funds to return. And once it returns back to the state general funds it could then be divvied out however legislators want. And what they're saying is what they want is for the first 8 million to go to cameras.

NICOLE BANKS: Right. Okay. So let me just pick anyone's brain that has already been working in the legislative area, right. How many times have the LDH ever sent back funds when they have increased federal funds from another program?

PHIL WILSON: This is Phil. I can't say this with any certainty, but I'm pretty sure that, because I know how it works in universities. When we get match money for a grant if for some reason the federal government would say you know what, we're going to change the

match requirement. Those dollars, the only time we get money from the university is not to pay salaries, or travel, or cost of things. We have to generate all those dollars ourself. But in order to get most federal grants, not all, but most, you have the state has to put up a match. Okay. That's what the F map is related to. So let's just use a simple number and say, you know, the F map, this is not accurate, is, you know, 40 percent. So that means that if that were the case in order for the state to get this money from CMS, Medicaid, Medicare services that State of Louisiana's general fund would have to put that match money in. Okay. If for some reason that changed, I don't believe the department would get to keep those dollars and reallocate them. Those dollars were given to LDH for the purpose of drawing down money from the federal government. So again, I am not, you know, an accountant or elected official that really understands that on this side of the state agency side. But seems very parallel to what we do when we get federal grants. I go to my dean. And we can't use state or federal money. We have to use state money and it has to be very easily documented. So I do think given the billions of dollars that have been going out the door from the federal government in most states, including Louisiana, have not been able to spend those dollars. There's going to come a point in time when some of these dollars may go back into the general fund. And if the right rules are in place or certain rules are in place that would mean yes, you know, there isn't a history of LDH giving money back to the general fund. If there is, it was way back in some day when we had lots of oil revenue or something. You know, had a surplus of cash. But I think under this circumstance that money would go back to the general fund and this amendment would say you know what, that's now earmarked to go to pay for the cameras. You can't have it to build a bridge or something else. So I think there is a path. I don't think it's a total. But I totally agree that this is not a guarantee.

EBONY HAVEN: Yeah. I would be cautiously optimistic about the amendment. I'm cautiously optimistic about the amendment. I'm happy that they passed it. But I'm very cautious because I don't want

to get the parents' hopes up. Parents really want the cameras in special education classrooms. But I do want to make sure that we recognize the positive response that we've had from Senator Foil by adding all of those other amendments. Because originally SB45 only had a deadline. And so he's added all those other things to the bill. And so I do think we should recognize that and, you know, celebrate the small wins.

PHIL WILSON: That's right.

EBONY HAVEN: Yeah. That's awesome.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. And I know we're going to have a little bit more update or input from Meredith. So we'll get another opportunity to hear from the Department of Education as well. Is there any other questions about this at this point or we're ready to, I'm going to turnover to Meredith? All right. Meredith, good morning.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Thank you. Good morning. Good morning. Glad to be back in-person and putting faces to in-person. Say in-person faces cause it's always very different. I ran into Amy and some of you at session. That person looks familiar. Oh, my gosh. It's so different. So yeah. I'm happy to continue the discussion on the cameras in the classroom. You know, like Ebony mentioned, originally remember that legislation had gave LDOE no authority, no oversight. We could not assist our LEAs with even a template or a policy. Or, you know, how could you write this to meet the requirements of the law. So happy about the progress moving forward. As you all know BESE did favorably support. What we have been charged to do at LDOE is to determine the possibilities for using our federal, any of our federal funds. We have received the first question was around our ESSER dollars. Because due to the pandemic we received a large number of, in the numbers of 4 billion-dollars in ESSER funds. That was one of the first funding sources that we looked at. We were pretty sure, but we got USDE, the US Department of Education to also send us communication and confirm that the ESSER dollars could not be used in this instance because those dollars are extremely targeted towards Covid 19 relief. And what USDE communicated to us was they did not see how security cameras in our self-contained classrooms would

meet that requirement. That very targeted use of those dollars. So we got clear guidance on the ESSER funds that that would not be an allowable expense. What we have since done, and I have had conversations with the US department of ed really starting back in the fall around our IDEA funds and allowable uses. As you all know federal funds come with very highly regulated allowable expenditures. So what US department of ed pointed me towards when they looked at our legislation, they pointed us toward Texas and how Texas handled their legislation around cameras. Very similar, if not almost identical, to our legislation for security purposes. And in that case, it was that IDEA funds were not allowed to be used to support those cameras for security purposes. We have since reached back out to ask for clarification. Are there any instances where cameras for security purposes for safety concerns would be allowable to use for IDEA. So we are seeking additional in writing so that we are transparent with our families, with the community on will this be allowed. Because what we don't want is to end up in any sanctions from the federal government for misuse of funds, right. I've only been in this position less than a year. But we are reaching out for that guidance. We have also asked specifically about every single title fund stream that we receive so that we are very thorough and that we explore all of our federal funding options. So we are asking around title one which is very much geared towards school improvement. We are asking around title four. I know that has-- I've had conversations as well with parents around title four and the possibilities there. So I just kind of wanted to bring to all of you we have not received that confirmation yet on my contact and communications around the IDEA requests in writing. And we haven't received that response yet on those other title funds. But we look forward and are hopeful to get that response in the next few weeks.

PHIL WILSON: Could you just remind all of us, but especially me, what title one, title four are actually.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes. Title one is very much geared towards school improvement efforts. And there are only certain schools in our state that receive those title one funds. So you have to be labeled a

struggling school. So that would not cover all schools in which this may be needed, right. Title four is around safe, and what's the other piece of it, safe and healthy schools. Something like that. So those are funds that we see a lot of uses around positive behavior supports. Training around bullying. Like really making that safe culture within our schools and our school systems. There is a thought, it has not been confirmed, just to make that clear, that it is possible that title four could be used in this purpose. We're waiting on that confirmation to be super clear. But I do know there are stipulations in title four about what percent of those dollars can be used to purchase equipment. Which is what the cameras and all of those systems would be considered. So it is also possible that if title four could be used that it may not cover all of it. But again, progress, you know, what can we do. So that is, that's kind of our steps forward right now as the department is really trying to find out and flush out is it possible for any of these federal funding streams getting confirmation from USDE that we are appropriately using those federal dollars.

AMY DEAVILLE: Meredith, there was a question about what ESSER funds are.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes. Those are our emergency relief funds that were awarded post pandemic for recovery efforts across our state. So those dollars are strictly geared towards any expenditures that are covered under ESSER must be directly tied to a response to the pandemic, recovering learning loss. A lot of those funds were used by school systems to safely open. Buying supplies that were needed for safety, for mitigation of the Covid virus. So that was the intent of those dollars.

AMY DEAVILLE: Thank you.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Sure. And I will proceed unless you want me to pause and answer any more questions regarding the cameras. Because I know that's a topic of interest.

MARY TARVER: I think you can go ahead. If we've got any questions, we'll catch them.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Okay. So I'll do a couple more updates here through the agenda and then I'll go through a couple more items that I have on my report

just to kind of share. So the next bullet here is we covered last, at the last meeting around our process for target setting for our state performance plan and our annual performance report that we receive as a state from the federal government around 17 indicators. I provided copies of all of that to you guys. We had a lot of input. We met with our state Special Education Advisory Panel. Engaged them in that process of target setting and looking at our data for those indicators. So our next steps is kind of what I wanted to talk about with you all. So where we're at in this process now. The next step is we're in what's called a clarification period with OSEP at US department of ed, the Office of Special Education Programs, where our USDE contact can us questions about our targets or any of the information that any of the data that we reported as part of that annual report that we reported in February. And as a result of that, so if there's a question, sort of period of clarification period, and then as a result of that they go back, they review from all of the states, all of those reports, all of that data and we will get our determination result over the summer. Likely end of June.

As most of you are probably aware for years past Louisiana's determination has been needs improvement. And so that is based on our compliance measures and outcome. So performance of our students with disabilities on statewide assessments, our graduation rates of those students. And so we've done very, very well as a state around the compliance measures or evals done on time, IEPs completed within timeline. What we really struggle with, and most states struggle with, that performance. That academic outcome piece. So that is, you know, sort of my goal coming into this role is to make sure that across the department we're communicating these results. Everyone in the department understands these indicators, why they're important, and how we're going to support educators in the field, in our school systems to help us increase this and better our determination as a state. So there are four levels. There's meets or satisfactory. I may not get the labels exactly correct. Then there's needs improvement. That's where we are. There's needs intensive improvement. And then there's another fourth

level that is, you know, basically you're not doing anything as a state right in special education and you need serious support. So my goal, of course, is to move us up to that level. Which ultimately means improving outcomes for students. Which we know is a challenge. Especially with our pandemic results. We know our statewide assessment results decreased and so it's going to be a challenge to move up. But we have no choice. It's what's best for students and that will be our goal. So we will get our result over the summer. I plan on sharing that with you all. Being very transparent about what that result is. It's all public information. It's posted on OSEP's website for every single state. So I just kind of wanted to give y'all an update there.

Our SPED funding piece. So you all know we started our process for our IDEA set aside application back in January. We had over 500 public comments. A lot of that is thanks to you all for sharing that. A lot of that is thanks to our Families Helping Families centers, our parent information training center, who blasted that. And it was phenomenal. The most comments I believe we've ever had. So where we're at with that we've developed our draft application. I shared that with you at the last meeting. We are in public comment process right now. That process will close, public comment will close on our draft application this week. So please feel free to share. It's on our SPED funding page that's linked here. You can find the access to that public comment page, right. So please, please share. I will, total transparency, admit we have not had a lot of public comment. And part of me wonders is that because we had a lot of great input on the front end as we developed that draft and as we met with SEAP. And we talked through every single one of those activities as we drafted that application. Now what we don't have yet is the allocations for next year. I reached out to US department of ed. They are also extremely busy. I hear they are short staffed and behind. So we don't know our total state set aside for next year. So we drafted our application based on last year's which was around 22 million. And so as soon as we get those updated allocation tables, we will have to go in and

you may see on our final application some of those amounts may change. I may be able to increase certain funding in some areas if we get additional dollars. Which I'm hopeful for based on some of the communications we're getting from US department of ed and increase in funding for special education which is exciting. So I wanted to let y'all know where we're at with our application. And that last piece there, link on the agenda, and that should say IDEA FFY22 funding activities. When you click on that link that is our current funding activities broken down. So that you can kind of see that if you're going in and you're providing some public comment you can see what all of those activities and those line items are. With that I'm going to switch over, if it is okay with our chair and the council, to some other updates around on my report for this month.

MARY TARVER: Sure. Go ahead.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Okay. So I do want to give just a broad, this is not on my report, but give a broad team update because as you all know when I came into this role there were quite a few vacancies. When my team is complete and fully staffed, we will have 11 total team members. We currently have seven. I have filled four vacancies since my hire. But remember when I came on my first step was to get an approved team structure. Those vacancies had been there, and we had to go back through civil service rewriting job descriptions to get an approved team structure which took time. I have four vacancies remaining, so I'll go through and tell you all what those are. I have a pupil appraisal focused position that just closed. So we're very close to filling. I have another program consulting position that you'll see post very soon. That expertise I am looking for will be more of a mild, moderate experience. I have a position that recently closed that we're in the process of filling. The expertise that I'm looking to fill there is one with more of the significant disabilities experience. And then I have another program consultant position. I had a team member who had a job advancement opportunity and left my team about a month ago. She was our team member who was leading our SPED fellow academy work. So I have that position that will post and will be

filled very, very soon. So I just kind of wanted to give that overview of the team to keep you all posted around the positions and what that is looking like and our progress there.

So let's talk a little bit about our guidance for leading inclusive special education programs. I don't think I've provided an update for you yet around this. But one of the things when I came on board that I heard very often-- and I'll give you an update on our SPED fellow academy. But we had so many school systems' special education directors who wanted to be in our academy. But right now we only have 12 participating fellows in our academy. And it's really about the grant and the manpower and the mentors needed to support these new special education directors. So one of the things that I put in place beginning in January for a way to expand that support for all special education directors, it's not as intense, but every month we are releasing a guidance document that covers a topic that addresses challenges that they face as SPED directors on a day-to-day bases. And we work with a group of advisers that includes current SPED directors who help inform us and say this is the need. So these guidance documents expand a little bit on the support we're giving to a narrow few in our academy and allow us to support the whole state. And release some guidance around topics that are relevant to them, that are challenges unique to special education that they face every day. And so we started in January. I have here the first three topics released and links to those documents. So the first one was around leveraging data, aligning their budget. Which was perfect timing because it was coming out as they were engaged in their school system planning process for the upcoming year. So we talked through how do they align their budgets to match the needs of their students. And then we did creating compliance systems for student success. How do I create compliant, inclusive special education programs. And the latest one that we released was around staff wellbeing.

Future topics. We're releasing one in a few weeks around student wellbeing. Creating a student-centered vision and inclusive vision of teaching and learning. Positive behavior interventions. We're going to talk

about FBAs with them. How to support behavior. And then identifying, engaging and managing stakeholders. Which I think is interesting and tied to some of the legislation and updates to legislation around their local special education advisory councils. You know, how to make those effective. And so after each guidance document release, we give them a week. Our special education directors, and our school superintendents, our school systems leaders to review. We usually start that document with a self-assessment. Where are you at with this, what are your struggles. And then a week later we get all of those folks on a webinar, and we call it the implementation. And so it's that place for them to talk through that topic. It's almost like a community of practice. Here's my struggle. But we also ask school systems who may have unique ideas or ideas that are working well to share their model. So it's that community of practice. That learning environment. So I wanted to share this. It has been, y'all know, it is a lot of work, but it was something that I felt listening to our SPED directors' needs and listening to our communities about the support that's needed that we really needed to expand.

So the next piece that I want to talk through, I'm going to skip IDEA budget stakeholder input cause I kind of talked about that and gave y'all an update of where we are with the public comment. So let's talk for a minute about our SPED fellow academy. We are opening our applications for cohort three. We will end cohort two this summer. We will recognize them after they present their culminating project at BESE. Those individuals will get recognition. Our application is open right now for cohort three. It will close in May. And then we will convene a panel to do interviews and select our next cohort of SPED fellow applicants. Right now we have 12 who are participating in the current cohort. My goal is to expand this exponentially in the future. But for next year we're expanding by at least five. And I'll tell you that, again, the struggle there and the reason why you can't go big so quickly is having enough mentors. Because in my mind one of the key pieces to support new special education directors, or novice special education directors, and to really impact retention in those

roles and our school systems is partnering them with a mentor. Someone that, you know, is really there to bounce ideas and guide them along the way. We're there as the department. But someone at their level who's effective and who can be a thought partner with them. They can pick up the phone any day and call. So finding the number of mentors that we need to support a small number of fellows and be there alongside them. You know, so that's kind of the issue there. Like I would expand and have 50 fellows if I could. If I had enough mentors to work with them and be alongside them.

So the other piece that I'm expanding this year with the SPED fellows academy right now our application is geared towards novice special education leaders. Meaning they are in a SPED director or supervisor role currently and have zero to three years in that role. So this year I'm going to accept five individuals who are what I'm calling aspiring to try to help that pipeline, try to help move folks into and motivate folks into those leadership roles in their school systems by catching them maybe at a coordinator role. Especially some of our larger districts who may have a SPED director who's overseeing pupil appraisal, related services, SPED. They may have a SPED coordinator that we can help. We can begin to support and train and get interested in that next level. So that's one of the pieces that we're going to add this year to that academy. So I wanted to share that with y'all. You know, and, of course, always welcome, you know, additional ways that we can help motivate and engage interested individuals to become leaders in our field and in the work that we do.

The next update. SEAP vacancies. I wanted to share with you all cause I will likely ask you all to help me communicate this out a little bit. We're going to be launching a communication, several different avenues that we will use to advertise for our state special education advisory panel vacancies. So I just had some basics here around our terms and how we rotate off membership each year, staggered. Members can serve two terms. But our folks who are rotating off this year, they have to reapply if they're interested. And so I linked to the application here for vacant positions that we kind of, you know, we're required to

post it three months in advance, but we kind of leave our application open. If anyone is interested, we'll keep our application on file. I don't want to limit it at this point. But here are the roles, I'll just kind of call it out to you that we're looking for. We're also going to start doing, again, some coms around this so you'll start to see this. Our charter school representative is going to be rotating off. She is eligible to reapply. But we'll be advertising for a charter school rep. One of our related service provider individuals, her term is ending. We have four parent positions whose terms are ending. Those individuals, I believe all of them are eligible to apply for their second term. But I definitely want to share here that we'll be looking for four parents. Our state child welfare or foster care representative, that person is also set to rotate off. And then our voc rehab community business partner that Melissa, she fills that position now. But, of course, she can also apply for a second term, I believe. So that one will also be posted and will be vacant. So y'all will start to see those communications. If you have anybody you want to share this with, feel free.

PHIL WILSON: If whoever is managing that for you guys, if you have a link or anything like that, and you want to do it, we will be happy to post it on our website.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Excellent.

PHIL WILSON: Just have a link directly back to you guys.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Perfect. I'll send it to you. Absolutely. Absolutely. And then last thing, y'all. Our SPED parent involvement survey. Every year, and this is a requirement from the US department of ed. It's also linked to that indicator, those indicators in that performance report that I talked about earlier. We have to report to the US department of ed our parent involvement and those results. So each year we survey parents of children with disabilities who are receiving SPED services in their school system. That purpose is to seek feedback on how well schools are doing with parent involvement. And then we kind of use that information to guide our efforts. Again, we have to report that information. That is one of our

indicators. That survey is now available. I have the link here in the report. We do use a sampling method. So the US department of ed wants us to ensure that we are receiving parent input representative of the demographics of our state. So we worked with our data and analytics team to help, you know, choose school systems, school districts that represent demographics, that represent from North Louisiana to South Louisiana. And so we target school systems. So there's a list of participating school systems here on the site as well that we have reached out to. We provide them a copy of that survey. We're trying to hit multiple modes. Electronic. They can hand out a paper survey to parents, scan it back. And so that we get a large number of responses.

I do know in past years that, again, our parent information center and our Families Helping Families centers have been key in helping us get responses. If we're struggling to kind of get some of those responses, they'll send it out into those targeted districts and areas for us and help us get some of those responses back. What I am doing this year while we are targeting for federal reporting and to meet some of those needs, in my mind the more input I can get from parents, the better. And so you'll see here if parents want to complete the survey, but they're not in one of those listed districts or charters, they can still complete the survey. It's going to be available until June 30th and we can disaggregate by the way that we set up the survey based on those schools. For the reporting needs that we need for those specific schools verses anybody that wants to tell us your thoughts, how your school system is doing. We want that too. So I wanted to also share that here. And if anyone, I mean feel free to share that as well throughout your avenues. And I know that was very lengthy, but that is it for me.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. I am very happy to see how much progress that has been made under your leadership because I've been on the education and employment committee for a while, and I can see the movement in the right direction. And certainly we all know there's lots of things that can be improved upon. But I appreciate the work that y'all have been doing

and the team development. I do remember those first meetings with you. And we're like we don't have anybody on our team, and we have all kinds of things that we need to do. So I appreciate that report and the efforts that y'all are going through. So thank you.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Thank you. Thank you.

MARY TARVER: All right. Questions. Nicole, I see your hand is up.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you, chair. Can you guys hear me now? Sorry. In regards to job positions that you were telling us. I know you said you were going to send us an email. But is there a specific place they can go and apply for those positions? Because you said you were looking for someone that was for mild and moderate, like a director. And I have someone in mind. She has a degree. She has a masters. And I told her about one of these positions, but she couldn't find it. And I'm like I don't know what it was, girl. I don't know. I said but the next time we have a council meeting I'll see what the exact position would be so that she could at least file because I think she would do phenomenal up in this position.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Nicole, the mild, moderate one I believe is going to post this week, possibly next week. If I have your email, I'll send you the link to the job posting if that works.

NICOLE BANKS: That would be so perfect. Thank you so much. Okay. That's all I had.

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

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hey, Ms. Mary. We have, I don't think we have anymore council members with comment, but I do see a physical hand raised from the public in the back row. Which I'm not sure if you can see where you are.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Go ahead.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you, Chairperson Mary Tarver and Council Chair Rashad Bristo. My questions are for Ms. Meredith Jordan. And then I have questions for the council as a whole. My name is Corhonda Corley. I actually attended the executive committee meeting, and my questions were not read into comment that I had on the executive committee. My questions

are in regards to how our meetings are actually being set up right now as of today. One, SEAP meetings have been all in-person. And they went back to being fully in-person before the actual governor as well as the president lifted any type of CDC guidance in regards to the mask mandate. And that prohibited a lot of individuals in the disabilities community from actually being able to attend. Which then allowed a lot of opportunities for individuals with disabilities to not actually have things addressed that SEAP is supposed to address. And SEAP actually advises our BESE board. So that provided our individuals with disabilities to not be addressed again. Time and time again. I have stated multiple times where our individuals with disabilities are not being put at the forefront when that is the sole purpose for the DD Council. It's also the sole purpose for SEAP. And according to SEAP, SEAP is supposed to implement everything that individuals with disabilities education act has, and it never does. It's not right now under your leadership especially when you made sure that individuals and family members of individuals with disabilities were not able to participate. So going forward what is our DD Council going to have Meredith Jordan and this SEAP advisory council to address on behalf our individuals with disabilities? Because everybody in the disability community is not able to go out into the world right now still because Covid numbers are rising. So we cannot act like we still don't have a pandemic going on.

Second, we having our DD council meeting right now, everybody is forced to watch it via YouTube. YouTube is not an American disabilities act compliant. So now you have individuals with disabilities unable to participate. Please explain how are we doing this legally. That's not legal. Your job as a DD Council is to make sure you hear the voices of the individuals with disabilities. And you can't hear because they can't participate in the meeting. You have people that are visually impaired, I'm one of them, that are on bifocals. I couldn't see not one single document that you had on that meeting. And even when I wasn't driving coming to the meeting, I couldn't see it. And I couldn't type quick enough to tell you to enlarge it

because it wasn't going to do any good because you're not reading the comments. How are we keeping record of who's actually attending in the public. We can't. If they don't have a YouTube account, you're not going to be able to do that. So when the council member asked for the document and the information to be read in the record because people like me that was driving couldn't read it, and even if I could have read it, I couldn't see it because I have on glasses and y'all couldn't provide me with that accommodation, what are you telling the people in the disabilities community. You're telling us that we don't matter. And that's your soul purpose. Your soul purpose is to make sure that individuals with disabilities are heard. And individuals with disabilities are serviced throughout the State of Louisiana.

In addition to that, we're talking about education and employment opportunities. Our council still have yet to hire individuals with disabilities. Which is federally required. We're not even asking for SEAP. For the diversity, equity, inclusion department of our state Department of Education to hire individuals with disabilities. And we should. We should. That's the problem for why your children are not receiving a proper education because they don't have people that are working that actually know about dealing with children with disabilities. We keep having all these people getting these nice positions, getting salaries of hundred thousand dollars and more and they don't know anything about working with a person with a disability. Let alone any law.

Now we are going into civil rights violations. And those civil rights violations it's important that we understand it. You just had a president from Dillard University speak publicly, nationally in regards to people and civil rights violations in Louisiana. But we are not making the one group that we supposed to make a priority our priority. So now we're talking about the funding activities. How are we going to talk about funding activities under IDEA when we have a diversity, equity, inclusion department under the state Department of Education that doesn't know anything about IDEA? We're not going to get anything. Y'all saying you want to disseminate this information

electronically, how are people with disabilities going to access that? You have people with disabilities that cannot access YouTube. That's been the problem. We're not actually looking at how can we reach every person where they are. You had the vice president of the United States of America Kamala Harris come to Eunice and talk about that they still don't have access to internet. So how exactly do you think that those rural communities are going to actually be able to provide information to SEAP, to the DD Council or any other entity if the only way you're disseminating it out is electronically? Cameras in the classroom. This bill is asking now for the individuals, for these school systems to finally create a policy. This bill, the bill passed for cameras in the classroom over a year ago. So now why are we finally telling them you have a deadline to create a policy? That's moot. They should have been created a policy. Now it's time for our DD Council, education and employment, to submit a letter to the state Department of Education, to the senate education committee and tell them we don't want them to create a policy now. It's now time for you to give these cameras cause your policy should have been created. And what penalty are we giving to these school districts that did not do that? You have other school districts that have provided actual policy regarding cameras. But we still have kids with disabilities getting abused in the school system arena every single day. So we are not having this bill, that's absurd. It's a slap in the face to every parent of a child with a disability that's getting abused right now. And Lafayette Parish School System have a number of them. A number of abused cases. As well as EBR. As well as St. Tammany. Ascension. The list go on and on. We're not addressing that now the children with disabilities at alarming rates are being sent to juvenile detention and jail. It's happening and it's happening so bad to the point where you're causing parents to have to take loans to actually try to get attorney services. We shouldn't have to have parents having to push for bills and laws when we have a DD Council and that's what our DD Council mission is. So I'm asking that our DD Council actually for once, under education and employment, start sending out some

letters to these centers as a council. Because the parents are doing their part. But it's the DD Council's job to be at the forefront, not the parents' job.

MARY TARVER: Ms. Corley. I'm sorry. You know, our time limits on public comment are also limited and you've covered a lot of information without us being able to spend any time on giving you any information about all those things you just discussed. And I know they're all very important.

RASHAD BRISTO: Ms. Tarver, if I may?

MARY TARVER: Yes, sir.

RASHAD BRISTO: I want to address. Let me interject just a minute. Cause I did write notes. Thank you, Ms. Corley, for those comments. Now in regards to the current platform we're on, if you heard the meeting earlier, I asked for three words. Please be patient. Because we're working on virgin territory with the fact that we had to make such a quick transition back. And we're really trying to be considerate of the accommodations. And hopefully you heard me ask all the council members please take notes of any hiccups we experience the next two days with the executive committee meetings, the subcommittee meetings. And the council meeting itself because hopefully we won't be in this space where we are now trying to scramble just to make everything compliant as much as we possibly can. There's no other thing that I can say, like I said, we're trying to. Now in regards to the request for the things we read, that was left on a vote. There was no second for the vote for it to be read. There was nothing other that we could do other than to just interject and say move on. Now had anybody from that committee agreed to the vote for it to be read, it would have followed through. Those are the only things that I can address. But I did want to let you know that it's not that this is what we wanted to do. This is more of a scramble and we're just really trying to make everything fall into place as much as we can for this go round. Hopefully we won't even be having this discussion for our next council meeting. But thank you for that. Thank you, Ms. Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. I know there were a lot

of other points that you were discussing, Ms. Corley, and I don't know if there's any other feedback that we have right now either from council staff or from Department of Education at this point. So I will pause for a second and see if anybody else has any other information to share with you about any of the other points that you have.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. Mary, if I may? I was going to say thank you, as well, for the comments, concerns. We are also trying to, you know, and I'm kind of excited to go back and say hey, why can't we offer some accommodations like the DD Council did for our open public meetings. That's one of the things that, you know, when I asked legal can we do a hybrid situation for our SEAP meetings it was no, open public meetings law you got to be back in-person now. We did start live streaming which doesn't allow for participation. At the last meeting our equipment was broken. But definitely something that I want to look into and say hey, like why can't we offer something similar to this in terms of accommodations. And allow folks to be able to participate remotely, if possible, as well. So I do appreciate that.

CORHONDA CORLEY: And I'm going to comment to that. Actually, when Dr. Kelly Peterson was here SEAP meetings were on Zoom. So the public was able to participate, and we were actually able-- she, in fact, also ensured that we had a ASL interpreter as well. So the capability exist for SEAP. The reason and for why SEAP isn't doing it is just simply because they don't want the public to attend. And I think that's very important that we acknowledge. We can't say SEAP don't have the capability of doing it when they actually did it. So that was my comment on that. That was my regard and response. And there is a council member that had their hand up.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. Ms. Mary, Logan Davis has his hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Logan. You'll have to unmute. Yeah.

LOGAN DAVIS: Can you hear me?

MARY TARVER: Yes, sir.

LOGAN DAVIS: Okay. I just wanted to thank the member that came from the public. I can't see her.

MARY TARVER: Ms. Corley.

LOGAN DAVIS: What's her name again?

MARY TARVER: Ms. Corley.

LOGAN DAVIS: Ms. Corley, thank you so much for coming and sharing your feelings, beliefs, what not. I am right there with you. That's why I wanted the document to be read. Because, you know, for public record. Cause not everyone has access to the document or the, you know, can't read them at the moment like me. I was working. And so that is a, you were right, that is a violation of ADA. And thank you so much for coming and speaking on that. And just thank you. I'm trying to make things equal for everybody and I keep getting the barrier from my own committee or council, what not. But thank you so much for coming. Okay. And I reserve the rest of my time. Bye, bye.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Okay. Does anybody else have any other? Mitch, I see your hand up.

MITCH IDDINS: Thank you, Mary. Ms. Corhonda, you said that you didn't feel like SEAP wanted the public to be able to attend. Can you elaborate on that for a second? Why do you feel that way?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you, Mr. Mitch, for asking that question. So when Dr. Kelly Peterson was the chair for the diversity, equity, inclusion for the state Department of Education she ensured that all individuals with disabilities were able to participate by having the SEAP meetings open to the public via Zoom. So we had the ASL interpreter on there. We also had the closed captioning provided on there. As well as every person was able to participate. Because it was the same platform that the DD Council was using when the world was shut down with Covid. So everyone knew how to use it. Since Dr. Kelly Peterson has left and Ms. Meredith Jordan became the executive director for diversity, equity and inclusion she's now over the SEAP meetings and the SEAP meetings went completely to full in-person. They did not allow us the opportunity to be able to attend via Zoom in any shape or form. In fact, they don't even have a YouTube either so that we can watch it via YouTube. We have to wait until the meeting is finished, it has been recorded and then it is finally posted on LDOE's website. Which we are still waiting on some of those meetings to be posted.

So it puts all of the families that have children with disabilities in the education arena in the blind. And that's because we're not able to participate because the accommodations in regards to Covid was also not provided at those SEAP meetings either. So now you have people with disabilities having to try to go into a building that has over 30 people in that room without any accommodations whatsoever to try to actually advocate, if you will, for their child in the education arena. And their voices are not being heard. Many members of the disabilities community have written Meredith Jordan, including myself. I've spoken with her at the BESE board meetings in regards to SEAP meetings not being accessible for our individuals with disabilities. And again, nothing has been done. So it can be done. It just has not been done. Which means that the people with disabilities, our requests are falling on Deaf ears. And that's why our DD Council it's time for them to actually implement that part of the federal DD Act where they actually lead and actually write letters to Meredith Jordan and to Dr. Cade Brumley requesting the individuals with disabilities be accommodated in every meeting. In every level of accommodations so that we can attend the SEAP meeting and we can receive the transcript in a timely fashion.

MITCH IDDINS: Thank you. When you were able to participate via Zoom was that, do you feel that was an accessible platform? And was the public able to give comment adequately? Do you think doing those meetings via Zoom was accommodating?

CORHONDA CORLEY: They were extremely accommodating. And not only were they accommodating, you even had Deaf Focus that was able to participate. That was able to have a translator for them as well to actually allow the members that are Deaf and Hard of Hearing that only communicate with ASL or with some type of AT device actually be able to be meaningful participants. And we were able to receive the information in a timely fashion back from Dr. Peterson. So it was very much accommodating. As well as the BESE board members were adequately informed what the disabilities community felt and believed from those SEAP meetings. It allowed us a real true meeting of

accessibility as well as the accommodations during a time when the world was shutdown. And it also allowed us the opportunity to see that that's something that can continue. It should not stop. It can definitely be continued. But it hasn't under the leadership of Ms. Meredith Jordan.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Thank you.

MITCH IDDINS: Thank you. What can we do as a committee to recommend that we begin to have those SEAP meetings via Zoom? Do we need to write a letter to make that request? Or what can we do to get back to a point where those meetings are accommodating and more accessible to everyone that would like to attend from the public?

MARY TARVER: I think what I understood from Meredith was that they had gotten some feedback, I guess, from their legal about what they can and cannot do. And that's what all of us have had to do. The DD Council included. So, I mean, we're all kind of learning as we go.

MITCH IDDINS: Is there a legal issue, Meredith?

MARY TARVER: About the public meeting laws.

MITCH IDDINS: I'm sorry.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. What I'd like to do is go back and see if we can do something similar where if there is an accommodation request kind of like what the DD Council did if we can--

MITCH IDDINS: Well, you have an accommodation request. Ms. Corhonda's making an accommodation request.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Right. Right. Yeah. And we did, my first two were in Zoom. I think the last two starting in February when the emergency health order was released is when we were told okay, all of our council meetings have to go back in-person. All of our current council meetings are happening as such. I do have a Deaf member on my panel. We do have an interpreter in-person. We did have them online. So we can accommodate. So that's what I would like to go back and do is say hey, request again. Can we do a hybrid situation and honor some of these requests for individuals who would still like to attend via Zoom.

MITCH IDDINS: Would it be helpful to have a letter from the DD Council?

MEREDITH JORDAN: It might would be helpful.

MITCH IDDINS: Okay.

MEREDITH JORDAN: And I can always kind of come back and let you all know what I hear in the next few days.

MITCH IDDINS: Okay. Well, after you do that let us know what you hear back and then the DD Council can address it from there.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Absolutely. I appreciate it.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. For the Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs since we are a disability organization, we have a universal ADA accommodation. So it's not necessarily that you have to send in a form to say that you have a disability. By virtue of the majority of our people having a disability in order to be able to hold the meeting in a way that's organized and efficient, we just provide that accommodation for everyone. I think that that's something that could apply to various disability councils. And I would also say that while I am not an attorney, I believe that there could be pushback that the advice that's being given by the attorneys within some of our agencies, that are they considering the ADA. Cause I think it's a violation of the ADA if you are not allowing people to participate in a way that where they're able to access it in a way that maintains their health.

MITCH IDDINS: That's very good point, Bambi. Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So I just want-- it is 11:42. And we have not gotten through half of our agenda. I do see some hands raised. But I want to make sure that everybody is aware of our time. I'll make these last two. I see Nicole and Logan's hands are raised. And so we'll move from there and then go into our Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you. So since the DD Council have already set up something like this, like we already have people in hybrid, and we have people in-person, I'm clearly, I don't know what other better word to use, but confused why everybody else can't use the same thing. Like isn't it all legal? Isn't it all the same stuff? I know it's not all the same department. But it's all the same law. So we could

all do this. I'm pretty sure that everybody can come about. And if the DD Council is okay and our legal department has approved it, it should be approved across the state for all agencies so that we don't run in the risk of violating ourself with the ADA. Because that's fines. So, you know, just want to put it out there. And I know you said we're going to table and bring it again. But that's going to be another three months before we come back and discuss this again. And that's too much time went by for the people that want to participate in the meeting for next time.

MARY TARVER: Make a motion to have a letter written and we'll follow up with them before the next meeting if that's something that you might want to entertain.

NICOLE BANKS: Yeah. I think I'm going to go ahead and make the motion that the DD Council education, inclusion department comprise a letter requesting that they come up with a strategy like ours to do hybrid and in-person meetings so that everyone is allowed the chance to be heard and be able to participate in these public meetings.

LOGAN DAVIS: I second.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay. So I was just trying to write that down. I'm the one writing the motions today.

NICOLE BANKS: Sorry. I could do it slower. I'm sorry.

MARILEE ANDREWS: No. That's fine. I just want to make sure we're all on the same page. I think we're talking about SEAP and other meetings like that. And I think Meredith said she was going to follow up with us like very soon.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Within a few days. Like within a day if I can.

NICOLE BANKS: All of the organizations that's having this issue with meeting in-person, in hybrid just make it across the whole board so we don't have to come and address this issue again.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay. So I totally see what you're saying. And I know the discussion was SEAP and I understand about it kind of, obviously, we were thinking it should apply to everything. Which totally makes sense. Did you still want to make a motion? And

I guess you would need to list the specific organizations that you would like a letter written to or did you want to wait until we heard back?

LOGAN DAVIS: Oh, my God.

NICOLE BANKS: Well, what we can do is the organizations that we currently work with that we know aren't getting these services, which we know that for a fact, but just the organizations that we work with in general. All of the organizations that the DD Council works with we need to have a letter going out so that we won't have this issue and running into this in other meetings and other committees and stuff. So that it can be across the board where we don't have to keep addressing this over and over and over.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Right. I guess I don't know how to word that.

NICOLE BANKS: I know we deal with about 12 agencies, right? It's about 12 agencies that we kind of deal with just in regards to all the information that's put up against us that the DD Council works with. All need to be listed in there.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So what are the 12 you have in mind?

EBONY HAVEN: So are you talking about the state agency reps?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I have a suggestion. It's everybody's legal department. Like my legal department might say something different from hers. So maybe there needs to be some interpretation at the state level. I don't know if that would be the Division of Administration or who that would be.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Probably the attorney general, right?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Maybe so. I think it needs to be addressed at a state level. So whoever is the legal authority over open meetings laws.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: And I've told this to the staff that years ago the DD Council got an opinion from the attorney general. And nobody seems to be able to find it, but there was an opinion that the ADA does trump state law. And the purpose of the open meetings law is for people to have access to the meetings. This is completely the opposite. What we're using open meetings law to cause the opposite of what it's

intended to do.

MITCH IDDINS: Right.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So I think that an opinion, get another opinion from the attorney general. I don't know how to go about doing that. But that would be the way to go about it.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So Nicole, you were like kind of in the middle of making a motion. Did you want to change the language based on that discussion that you just heard?

NICOLE BANKS: Yeah. So I'm going to motion that the DD Council-- trying to put it in the right words.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I know. I know.

MARY TARVER: The DD Council would pursue an opinion from the attorney general for open meeting laws related to ADA compliance so that we can make sure we can offer every available means for people with disabilities to participate in meetings, public meetings.

MITCH IDDINS: Yes.

MARY TARVER: Sorry, Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you. I like the way that was worded because that is kind of what I wanted to say. Do I have to resay that all the way over again?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I know. It's so different like just having a discussion and then the person that's typing, you know, it's a little more challenging. So I'll just do what we have.

NICOLE BANKS: I can motion that we comprise a letter to get with the attorney general to get a second opinion in regards to meeting public forum-- well, meeting public forum in regards to being in compliance with the ADA.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Can I read it?

NICOLE BANKS: Yeah. Go ahead.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay. Motion that the DD Council pursues an opinion from the attorney general on open meetings law regarding ADA compliance to ensure the council offers every available accommodation for individuals to participate.

NICOLE BANKS: Correct.

MARY TARVER: And I don't think it's the DD Council.

MITCH IDDINS: Right.

MARILEE ANDREWS: To ensure all state agencies. Is that right?

NICOLE BANKS: Yeah.

MITCH IDDINS: Yeah. Because the issue was SEAP making those open meeting law accommodations.

MARILEE ANDREWS: To ensure state agencies offer every available accommodation for individuals to participate.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I would say it's even more than that. It's about all open meetings. Anybody who has open meetings we want people with disabilities to be able to attend and want this opinion to show that.

MELISSA BAYHAM: All open meetings and boards and commissions.

NICOLE BANKS: Yes.

LOGAN DAVIS: I second the motion whenever it's hammered out.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I'm sorry. Was there any other discussion?

PHIL WILSON: I have a comment that I don't want to-- do you have captured what you're trying to capture?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think. I can read it again if you guys are ready? Or did you want to comment before?

PHIL WILSON: I can wait till after you read it.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay. Motion that the DD Council pursues an opinion from the attorney general on open meetings law regarding ADA compliance to ensure all public meetings offer every available accommodation for individuals to participate.

LOGAN DAVIS: I second it.

EBONY HAVEN: Is everybody okay with that language? Nicole, are you okay?

NICOLE BANKS: I'm okay with that language. I'm fine with it.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Read it one more time.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay. Motion that the DD Council pursues an opinion from the attorney general on open meetings law regarding ADA compliance to ensure all public meetings offer every available accommodation for individuals to participate. People are nodding here.

PHIL WILSON: Do we want to say individuals with disabilities?

MITCH IDDINS: Ms. Corhonda's concern for people

with disabilities were not able to participate. So I think people with disabilities need to be in the language.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Motion that the DD Council pursues an opinion from the attorney general on open meetings law regarding ADA compliance to ensure all public meetings offer every available accommodation for individuals with disabilities to participate.

NICOLE BANKS: Correct.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So thank you, Marilee. That is the motion. It has been seconded by Logan. Is there any other discussion? All right.

PHIL WILSON: I have a comment. But I think it probably-- let me just say I think it actually goes after the vote. But my comment is, you know, Amy and I represent two of the three DD Act organizations. The third organization doesn't appear to be represented today. But I think, I don't know where this fits, but Disability Rights Louisiana is a legal arm. And what I think the Disability Rights Louisiana should do for in general is if our attorney general, and what are the odds, comes back and says oh, yeah. Sorry, folks. That's just not going to pass muster. Legal this, legal that. I think Disability Rights Louisiana should have the expertise or be able to partner with other PNAs or whatever to actually put some pressure on the attorney general to not just give some blanket ruling. So I don't know where that fits. I don't think it fits in this vote. I think that motion stands on its own. And I don't want to put pressure on another agency that's not even represented. But they seem to be the people that we should expect to actually help push against. That's what they're here for. That's why they're in the law. So I apologize. I didn't know where that goes. I don't think it's part of this motion.

MARILEE ANDREWS: No. But we'll have it in the notes and if it comes up, we'll be able to look at the historical conversation.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So now we have a motion and a second. We had comments.

CORHONDA CORLEY: So out of curiosity, because I'm in agreement with him. What I think he's asking is that it should be that once we get the statement if the

statement does not allow individuals with disabilities to be able to participate then that would be our next step. That we have the next step already listed. So that we don't have to wait three months out before we address it again.

MARY TARVER: Well, I think that the council staff would be able to help us to manage that. And there's always executive committee that you can call if we had to. But I don't know how to add something to the opinion when we haven't gotten the opinion back. The letter that we're talking about is going to the attorney general. So I think we can work with, after we get the opinion, we can go ahead and know that the staff would certainly have the ability to be able to work on our behalf on any other feedback that they get from them. Okay. So are there any further comments?

EBONY HAVEN: Mary, Logan still has his hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Didn't see it. Okay. Logan, do you still have a comment? Your hand is raised.

LOGAN DAVIS: Yes. I do. I just wanted to make a motion.

MARY TARVER: We already have a motion on the floor, and it's been seconded.

LOGAN DAVIS: Oh, okay. I seconded it. There were discussions that I wasn't sure where it was.

MARY TARVER: Right.

LOGAN DAVIS: I have a motion after this. And I just don't want you to forget about me.

MARY TARVER: Okay. All right. We'll do that. Thank you. Okay. So are there any objections? Are there any abstentions? Okay. The motion passes. Thank y'all. That was a lot of great discussion and I think will lead us in a good direction moving forward. I'm sorry we are so far behind on the agenda. So I'm going to see if we can get back on track. And that would be to recognize Melissa from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services.

LOGAN DAVIS: I had my hand up. You know, what, whatever.

MARY TARVER: Logan, we're going to follow with the agenda and at the end there's going to be an opportunity for anything for you to make a motion about.

LOGAN DAVIS: But you said at the end before you recognized Ms. Banks and got this big drawn-out motion and re-clarifying and rewriting it, you said I'm going to recognize Ms. Banks and Mr. Davis or Logan. And you recognized Ms. Banks, but then just didn't recognize me.

MARY TARVER: Sorry. Okay. Then Logan, I'll recognize you now.

LOGAN DAVIS: Okay. Thank you. Before we get any further to read any supporting documentation, like the one I tried to get read aloud for the public, and no one backed me up on it. So I just wanted to see if we could get that all read out loud for the public.

MARY TARVER: To get what read out loud? I'm sorry.

LOGAN DAVIS: Any other supporting documentation. Like minutes, schedule, agenda read aloud.

MARY TARVER: Not for this meeting for right now. Okay.

EBONY HAVEN: Are you trying to make a motion, Logan?

LOGAN DAVIS: Yes. I'm sorry. My service is really bad. I'm driving. So yes. I would like to make a motion all documentation is read aloud.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I'm just asking. We have to read all of this?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think it would be the entire packet based on the motion that I'm understanding.

EBONY HAVEN: Right. Supporting documentation and the summary. So Mary, he's made a motion. I don't know if you want to ask for a second.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So as I understand it Logan has made a motion for all of the documents that we are talking and using today, that they would be read aloud.

EBONY HAVEN: Including the agenda and the summary from the previous meeting.

MARY TARVER: We've already not gotten a second.

LOGAN DAVIS: Starting off from here on.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So is there a second?

MITCH IDDINS: Is that an accommodation to the public at this point that Logan is asking for?

LOGAN DAVIS: I'm sorry. What was the question, Mitch?

MITCH IDDINS: Is that an accommodation for the

public that you're requesting and asking for?

LOGAN DAVIS: Yes. Because there's no ASL interrupter for this meeting nor the council, I don't think. So I'm just asking for it all to be read aloud so it's picked up by the closed caption. And those with visual impairments. So that is all I'm asking for is making it equal.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Can I read what I have down cause I want to make sure I understand your motion correctly.

LOGAN DAVIS: Yes. I'm sorry.

MARILEE ANDREWS: No. Don't be sorry. I just want to make sure I have it down because there's a little bit of interference. Motion that all supporting documentation related to the education and employment committee meetings be read aloud at future education and employment committee meetings.

LOGAN DAVIS: That is correct.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Okay.

MITCH IDDINS: I'll second the motion.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So we have a motion and a second. Is there any comments?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. All of this material is made available to everyone to the public on the website several weeks beforehand. And so I think instead of utilizing our committee meeting time to read it aloud that maybe there could be something that could be discussed with council staff to make sure that everyone understands that it's available. And should it need to be read aloud, maybe a time could be set aside where that's done for the people who want or need it to be read to them. And not utilize our council meeting times for that.

LOGAN DAVIS: Hey, Bambi. I got an email that said the meeting was going to start at 10. I got on at 10 and y'all were talking about salad. So, I mean, I recognize it started at 10:15, but I made the motion, or I put it on record that it actually started at 10:20. So don't like-- like don't say it's for committee time when you haven't, you know, helped at all. And it's already 12 and we're not even to the (inaudible), which is great. But yeah. So I'm just asking, and even heard from the public, from Ms. Corhonda, I think it was. She was driving and asking because I asked for it to be read aloud and I wasn't

backed up. And I asked for it to be read out loud for the public's sake. Not my own. Even though I haven't read it or anything. But it was for the public. I even made it on record for the public to know I wasn't backed up. This is ADA compliance.

PHIL WILSON: Pardon me. This is Phil. I think you're somewhat miss- I don't know what word to use. But I don't think that you're correct about what you're saying. A, the meeting, I don't know what email you received. It must have been a different one--

LOGAN DAVIS: I'll send it to you! I'll forward it! (Screaming inaudibly)

MARY TARVER: Logan, we're not going to-- I'm sorry. No. We are not going to do this on our committee meetings. So, I'm sorry. You will not be allowed to have these kinds of conversations with us. That's not how we operate.

RASHAD BRISTO: Point of order. Ms. Tarver, if I may?

MARY TARVER: Yes, sir.

RASHAD BRISTO: Let me remind everybody that all of these meetings are made public.

LOGAN DAVIS: (Screaming inaudibly)

RASHAD BRISTO: Also, let me remind everybody that we're to conduct ourself in a professional manner because we are the examples before the other community of how we're supposed to conduct ourselves. It's okay to disagree, but we cannot be disagreeable. And it's not saying that nobody's being discounted for anything. Again, we're following protocols. But I am concerned that we have to be mindful that this is very public. Very public on YouTube. Which means this is not just local. This is international. And you never know what kind of pushback we can receive based upon unexemplary behavior. So I'm asking all council members be very mindful from this point moving forward that this is public. We have to remain professional and not do anything that's going to be an embarrassment to ourselves as individuals or to the DD Council. Ms. Tarver, you have it.

MARY TARVER: Yes, sir.

LOGAN DAVIS: Chairman or chairwoman?

MARY TARVER: Yes, Logan.

LOGAN DAVIS: I just wanted to apologize for my

little outburst. But I want to go on record and say that every single person in that room is bad for my mental health and I hereby resign. Enjoy your, whatever you're trying to fix because there's a lot to fix. Bye.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Sorry about that. We are going to move forward. All right.

RASHAD BRISTO: Please note, Ms. Tarver, let me make a note.

MARY TARVER: Sure.

RASHAD BRISTO: Please note for the record that council member Logan Davis has just resigned from the DD Council. Okay. Ms. Tarver, I yield the floor.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Melissa.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes. Thank you. I know we are about out of time, so I'll just reserve my comments for just customized employment. I have, obviously, a more detailed report that I'll give tomorrow. And I know I think part of the agenda is for y'all to discuss the DD Council efforts for customized employment. But I also wanted to also mention in addition to the training some of our vendors are receiving that's being funded by the DD Council through Mark Gold and Associates, we are in the process of trying to identify learning partners. But also, we have our individuals with the LSU HDC, and they are progressing also in their training to become customized employment trainers. And so we are progressing with that effort as well. And so I'm very grateful for everything. All the manpower we have going into customized employment as it's going to be a very needed service for individuals with the most significant disabilities. So unless there's something else you want me to touch on, I can reserve the rest of my information about LRS for tomorrow.

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

EBONY HAVEN: Mary, before we go to questions, I just want to go back to there's still currently a motion on the table that was seconded by Mitch. So I don't know if we want to take the motion off the table or we have to address that before we move on.

MARY TARVER: What was the motion?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Well, yeah. We were just discussing that. So the motion was made that all

supporting documentation related to the education and employment committee meetings be read aloud at future education and employment committee meetings. It was made by Mr. Davis who then resigned. So I'm not sure what that does to the motion. I've truly never been in this situation in terms of parliamentary procedure.

EBONY HAVEN: Mitch has his hand raised right now.

MARY TARVER: All right. Mitch.

MITCH IDDINS: Thank you. I think initially Logan's motion came about because of the concerns that people in the public, some people with disabilities, certain types of disability may not have access to the information. So he was requesting that some of the information, agenda, things, things that could be easily read out loud that were pertinent to the meeting I'm thinking would be read out loud so that people that didn't have access to an interpreter or whatever could participate and make sure that they're getting all the information. That's a legitimate concern. Because these concerns were raised by Ms. Corhonda. And that is a very legitimate concern. That's why I seconded his motion. Now to what extent and what information needs to be read out loud, I'm not real sure. I know that Bambi said that all of this information is emailed out to the public and it's all available-- well, not emailed to the public. It's available on the DD Council website. There may be some people that aren't aware that that's available on the website. I mean, at this point I'm not sure that all that information should be read out loud. I could see it as an accommodation to some people, so I still have some concerns about it. But I'm not sure what to do about the motion at this point. I'm not sure if I should withdraw the motion or not. I just want to make sure that we're getting all the information out to everybody. That everybody that wants to participate can. Even if we do have to read some information out loud. That would have been an accommodation to someone, and we would have to make the time to do it. So that's my concern.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Right.

MARY TARVER: I'm going to recognize Kelly.

KELLY MONROE: Thanks. I think Mitch is right. I think he was just really trying to make sure that

everybody could participate. And I think maybe if we could, when you're sending out the notices for the meetings, remind them that the DD Council does have Recite Me on their website. And it could have the material read to them prior to the meeting. And won't need to have like the committee reading it to them. And I think that he was just really frustrated because he was potentially going to be voting on things that he didn't have the information. And so, but maybe we could just remind people like hey, the DD Council does have Recite Me which is a very nice, something that we have on our website as well. And it works out really well. And it will read also PDFs. That's all.

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

NICOLE BANKS: Sorry, y'all. I'll be very quick. That's fine that we like to read the accommodations to everyone. But as we can see now, we're way over our time and she didn't even get to read all of her reports yet. That's kind of how all of our meetings go. We kind of be over our time. So if we would read reports-- and if you go look at some of those reports those are like ten pages. Literally ten pages. Very, very extensive. Like we would have to extend our time for at least another hour just to get everything read. Not saying that we can't do that. But I'm just letting y'all know that this is kind of what we're going to have to do if we go and read every single report like that. Because these reports are very detailed and they're long. And it's a lot of them.

MARY TARVER: Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Couldn't the reports, instead of taking up the committee time, be read like next door by someone? As, you know, the meeting is going on so they can hear it? Just a thought.

PHIL WILSON: That may be a great thought, but I want to go back to Nicole's comment and the previous comment. There is a technology solution to this. It's already in place. That's what I was trying to say to Mr. Logan is that I can't see a five-hour committee meeting. It doesn't work. If we're going to take the time to read everything when it's already available to people, I think we need to do what Bambi suggested which is make sure that the public is aware that this technology exist and say you got to take personal

responsibility, folks. You need to read these things well in advance of the meeting to participate. And so I think that's part of what has to also come out of this motion. I think the technology is there and if we need to do a better job of enabling people to use that technology, that's where our focus needs to go, I think.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Okay. So this is Corhonda Corley.

MARY TARVER: I'm sorry. You have not--

CORHONDA CORLEY: My apology. I didn't think you could see my hand.

MARY TARVER: I can hear you talking though. And I'm not even sure right now what the motion is and where we are with this. I want to ask Marilee if you will read what the motion was so that we can make sure we're on topic with the conversation surrounding it.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes, ma'am. So we still have this motion on the floor. It was made by Mr. Davis, and it was seconded by Mr. Iddins. Motion that all supporting documentation related to the education and employment committee meetings be read aloud at future education and employment committee meetings. Made by Mr. Davis. Seconded by Mr. Iddins. So that's the motion right now on the floor.

MARY TARVER: Okay. And so we're at the conversation, comment section of this motion. So, okay. Mitch, you have your hand raised. You're on mute.

MITCH IDDINS: Thank you, Mary. I withdraw that motion based on the discussion. I agree with Dr. Phil that we just need to do a better job and make sure that the public understands there are accommodations available on the DD Council website. That they can have access to this information if they want to participate. And maybe we just make sure that we're doing everything as a council to make sure that the public understands that these accommodations are available and that they're out there. And if someone has an accommodation request or concern, that they reach out to us via our website or whatever to make sure that if they say they want to participate but they don't know how or don't have some way to participate, that we address that. So I withdraw my motion. Thank

you.

EBONY HAVEN: Bambi has her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Okay.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I just want to make sure down to Mitch's comments that I know you said about the website, and we talked about the website. But that people can call our staff and they can help direct people to get to the point to where they can independently use those accommodations that are available. So I don't want anybody to think well, if you don't have access to technology, then you don't have access to accommodations. That our staff can work through that with people as they call.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: And I want to just point out, it is on the bottom of every agenda that if anybody needs accommodations they can contact our administrative assistant, Hannah Jenkins, and let us know. And we're always available and willing to help anybody that needs support in participating in our meetings.

MARILEE ANDREWS: And Ms. Mary, I just see Ms. Banks' hand went up.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: I'm so sorry, you guys. I'll be quick. But they are so correct with the information. I wasn't able to get in-person, but I wasn't able to find the link. And I text somebody and she sent it to me. So it is literally no, I'm not going to say no excuse, but we got to hold ourselves accountable. Because we didn't do what we were supposed to do it on the time that we needed to do it on. We cannot say that oh, the council is not providing the information, or the council is not doing this, or the council isn't doing that. We cannot keep saying that because it's literally there. And you can call anyone of those numbers that's on there. And I'm going to list it. I'm going to go very slow so we can list it. It's (225)342-6804. You can call that number and they will help you. They will. So we got to start getting accountability to our own selves. If you waited till the last minute to get it done, okay. Well, then now you're going to have to get it done. But it's on there, you guys. It really is. And the council is there to help. So I'm not going to allow people to say

the council doesn't handle their business because they really are. And if you need help from any one of these ladies, gentleman they are literally there to help you and guide you and put you in the right direction where you need to go to get the information you need before the meeting.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Okay.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Ms. Mary?

MARY TARVER: Yes.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Oh, I was just making sure that you saw that we had a member of the public with her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Yes, ma'am. Ms. Corhonda.

CORHONDA CORLEY: So I think that we have to stay germane to what the actual motion was about. The motion was about people with disabilities having access during the meeting. It wasn't about whether or not the agenda is posted. Because the agenda for tomorrow's meeting is not posted. So the public don't have access to that agenda. It's not posted. I just pulled it up. It's not posted to where they can actually access it. But when you're talking about the conversation about the actual agenda items that you're having, if that person with a disability, cause right now on YouTube this motion is not posted for the people to actually be able to see if they're watching it via YouTube. So the public is actually lost on what the discussion is about. So whether or not it's an agenda item, that's not listed for the public to actually see. Which would actually cause a person with a disability whether it's visual, hearing, et cetera, it will cause that person to be lost within the weeds. And that's nothing that the actual council members or staff members can actually help with in the middle of an actual council meeting. I myself while driving called the DD Council members and I left a voice mail message for every single person. I couldn't leave one for Ms. Amy Deaville because her voice mail has been full for over a week. So I'm saying that on record so that everybody can understand. I was calling trying to ask everybody for the DD Council to actually be able to provide the agenda items listed on the YouTube stream so that I can actually be able to at least try to enlarge it to try to see what they were actually talking about. And

that's not something that the public can actually do in the middle of the meeting.

So yes, we do have the handicap accessibilities or the ADA accessibilities as you want to say on the actual council website. But when it comes to the meeting going and being directly held, no. Right now we're not getting any ADA accessibility to the public, to the members in the disabilities community. And that's where Mr. Logan got his frustration from. So I think that we actually have to take into consideration that he was frustrated because he saw that he himself was not receiving an ADA accommodation while the meeting was going on. And we're saying that it's accessible and it was not. And that is what I was saying. That it was not accessible even while the meeting was going on. And I live over 45 minutes away from this building. And I could not, I could not understand what topic y'all was on, what was going on. And even with pulling up the agenda cause I had it pulled up right here on my phone still. And it's not going to read to me while the meeting is going on what topic you're on. So that accommodation, it's extremely imperative that we actually take that into consideration especially since our chairperson said let's document the hiccups that we're having right now during these meetings. That's a major hiccup. And we're going to ask the attorney general for clarification on ADA accommodations. This motion is about an ADA accommodation for people that are attending the meeting via YouTube. Cause that's right now we're not on Zoom. So when we were on Zoom, they could actually see the agenda. We can't see that on YouTube.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Thank you. Okay. So we have had a motion. We had the second withdrawn. And now, Marilee.

MARILEE ANDREWS: The motion dies if it doesn't have a second.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So then I will say we recognize that this is what we're doing. We are going to take the notes from today and tomorrow with the issues that we know that we have, and we will address them moving forward on our meeting and accommodations for meetings. All right. The next thing that we had

on our agenda was for the contractual activities and the seminars for hiring individuals with developmental disabilities. Marilee.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Thank you, Mary. So I'll just go through that fairly quickly because I do know we're 26 minutes over time. This is an update on our FFY 2022 action plan. So the action plan itself is in this packet of materials. I'm about to update you on activity 3.2.2. And I'm going to give you my update as the person who monitors this contract. But I know I think Ebony has put together the entire status report of all of our activities. So you can always go back there and read more information there. So this activity is on employment seminars, which is in this committee, it is for 32,000. So this quarter, which ran from January 1st to March 31st, we were able to sign a contract in January and it was backdated all the way to the start date of the contract which was October 1, 2021. O'Neill had worked on this even before that contract was finalized so they were able to hit the ground running. They had reviewed archived footage from last year's employment seminars. Which is the Working Together campaign. And those are all available for viewing currently. They'll be there forever. To develop a plan to improve on that curriculum and make a plan for this year, FFY 2022. They took a creative approach to take a deeper dive into these topics in a storytelling format. They met with council staff to review the statement of work and the deliverables, confirming pools of speakers. Things like that. Later in January they sent a survey to Louisiana employers to gauge topic interests and to also begin engagement for the upcoming series. They secured Jeff Arceneaux as host of the series. They created a branded slide deck which is just slides that are used to compliment the webinars and kind of visually re-enforce the messages. It's very clear, straightforward visuals. So they completed that. It looked really, really great. They titled the campaign Discovering Abilities.

And then in February we were really intentional about getting involvement in the series. That was something that we kind of discussed last year on making sure everyone was involved that wanted to be. So we sent out an LADDC news for speakers for the series.

The council's deputy director, who's sitting right next to me, Ebony, emailed council member advocates inviting them to participate as speakers. I emailed council members individually inviting them to participate as speakers. We sent out another LADDC news advertising the series kickoff. And the series itself. The Discovering Abilities Employment webinar series. Which kind of outlined what this series aims to do. Its schedule, how to register, you know, dates, things like that. And we also advertise that on social media. And then in March the first webinar of the series happened, it was the kickoff, titled Stories of Lived Experience from the Workplace. It was voices from the workplace. Again, in that storytelling format. And that kickoff webinar was aimed to sort of bust the myths about what work looks like for people with disabilities. And it shared what the series will offer moving forward. There were 93 registrants and 48 people attended that kickoff. So if you're familiar with our activities, those are really good numbers. So that was really exciting. And that was the end of this quarter. More has happened after fifth quarter. Which I'll report on at our next quarterly meeting. But you can find out more about this series by going on our website and you can look at our previous LADDC news. Or you can look on our home page. We have a banner at the top that's scrolling with an image. You can click on that. And either one will take you to Eventbrite where you can learn more about it and register. So I think it's going really well. It's tracking really well. We're getting a lot of participation. So that is the update on that activity 3.2.2. I'm not sure if anyone has any questions.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Any questions? I see Ms. Corhonda's hand's raised.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you. I actually enjoyed the seminars in regards to hiring individuals with developmental disabilities. I think that it was very great, but I think that we missed an opportunity because a lot of individuals that do not have access to internet was not able to attend. We still have a lot of people in the State of Louisiana that do not have access to internet due to hurricanes Ida, Laura and Delta. So us relying solely on internet capability is

going to have us miss a lot of people in our disabilities community where they will not be informed, and they will continue to be unserved and underserved. Secondly, I thought that it was rather interesting that we're having seminars on hiring individuals with developmental disabilities when our own DD Council has not hired anybody with a developmental disability. We still have open positions, but we have yet to fill them with individuals with developmental disabilities. And that is very disheartening. Being a mother of a child with developmental disabilities and knowing what the federal DD Act requires, we are still under a legal obligation as the DD Council to actually have people employed that have developmental or intellectual disabilities. GODA actually does that. And that was a campaign under our chairperson April Dunn that was very, that received a lot of momentum. And that was actually something that was dear to her heart. And that's something that we should not ever allow to fall by the wayside. And that is something that we are currently right now having to constantly push for individuals with disabilities to be employed and receive accessible, equitable and gainful employment as well as gainful and equitable pay. And our DD Council under federal law is supposed to do the same. So I think that if we're going to have seminars about hiring individuals with developmental disabilities, we need to actually lead by example. GODA is actually doing that, but our DD Council is not. And so we need to actually go ahead and start leading by example as well.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. All right. Any other comments? The next thing on our agenda is the Louisiana Post-Secondary Inclusive Education Alliance, LAPIE. And I don't know if Amy or Dr. Beckers is on, or if somebody else on the staff is going to give us an update.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I think Amy's coming.

AMY DEAVILLE: Hi, everyone. So Dr. Beckers was not able to be here today, so she asked that I give an update. In the interest of time I'm going to boil it down a whole lot. The majority of the work that they were doing over this last quarter was on the bill for post-secondary inclusive education programs. So that was a lot of the work that they were doing. Dr.

Beckers attended a conference in Florida where she was able to meet with some of the people who worked on the Florida legislation that ours is modeled after and bring some of that information back and then kind of amend some things in the bill. And the bill was heard on Monday and passed through committee. And then the other thing that she's been spending time on over this last quarter was helping LSU A get their program up and running. They are scheduled to start their programming in the fall this year. And they've been working on that for, since LAPIE started as a DD Council contract.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. And LSU A has been doing some community education and getting the word out. And I think that they had four slots. And I think they're going to have those slots filled with students is what they're starting with so I'm excited about that. Okay. Any questions? Ms. Corley.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes. So I'm actually happy that the legislation has passed cause I'm actually in support of that. But I am also inquisitive on what is education employment committee going to do in regards to getting some of the HBCUs at the table. We have many HCBUs and many private colleges and universities that are not at the table. And that is problematic.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: They're at the table. They're doing outreach.

CORHONDA CORLEY: But a lot of them aren't. Dillard University is one of them. Xavier is another. UNO is another. Holly Cross is another. William Carey is another. And I can continue to name some that are not. And I'm saying this because some of the programs that has been falling up under LAPIE as it relates to our individuals with disabilities is providing them with a certificate, not an actual bachelor's degree. And that is something that Senator Katrina Jackson who's the vice chair of the senate education committee has actually addressed in regards to our individuals with disabilities actually being put on the wrong track. And their parents are not being properly informed or notified that these children are being put on the wrong track so they end up graduating from school, from high school to only receive the diploma to only be able to go into the programs that allow them to get a certificate instead of actually being able to go

to a college or university so that they can actually receive a BS or bachelors arts degree. So I think that this is something that education and employment as we talk about LAPIE need to look at because it is being disproportionately affecting individuals with disabilities that live in rural areas as well as individuals with disabilities that are minorities. So I'm asking that we as a committee look at how we can address that with LAPIE as well as with our state Department of Education and SEAP to make sure that individuals with disabilities actually really know what track they're on. If they're on track to receive a real high school diploma or if they're on track to receive the other diploma through an April Dunn Act or any other type of track. As well as they know what that means. When it goes forward to go into post-secondary institutions. That's my comment.

MARY TARVER: Thank you.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you, chair, for recognizing me. I know as far as some of the HBCUs that me and Dr. Beckers were personally working with, it is very hard to correlate times and meetings. They was having finals. I know for a fact that that's what was going on with the ones, the HBCUs that me and Dr. Beckers were working on personally. So it's not that we're not moving forward. It's just getting the right time to get everything collaborated really because we probably will get some movement once school has ended, the summertime. I'm just being honest because it's been very difficult for us to get meetings set up with everybody that makes decisions in getting these programs together. So that's kind of, that's really been our biggest hang up with the HBCUs, just to be honest.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. I knew there was a lot of work happening there, so I appreciate it. Okay. Customized employment. Kelly. Thank you for hanging in there.

KELLY MONROE: No problem. So last time we as a committee decided that we would put the customized employment on hold. There were several other participants who still did not have a learning partner.

And unfortunately, they still don't have a learning partner. I talked with Amy earlier in the week and we kind of talked about whether or not this is a real good use of the council's money at this time. And it's just my opinion that I don't think that this is the best use of money if we are unable to find people to participate in this program so that we can get people certified. What will the point of having people certified be. It's a huge commitment not only for the providers, but for the individuals that are being served. If you really think about it, you're asking people to wait at least 15 to 16 months before they get a job because if you're going to use the same learning partner throughout the entire process, it's going to take about that long. And so I suggested that maybe kind of like the ones who have learning partners, which may be two, I think, of them, let's let them finish. And then the others, if we did some, you know, if we did some gateway trainings which are like three-day trainings before each one of the certification classes. If we can get people to do one on discovery, one on job development, and then one on systematic instruction we could at least get people ACRE certified which is better than nothing. It's totally up to you guys. I just, you know, I would hate to see this money being wasted at this time and, you know, I want to see people trained. And at least if they have the gateway training underneath their belt, then at least what we're doing is changing people's mindsets on how to start looking at people when they're looking at employment. So I don't know what your thoughts are, what your feelings are about it, but I'm open to whatever.

MARY TARVER: Amy, do you have any other comments?

AMY DEAVILLE: I don't really have any other comments. I think Kelly did a great job of sort of explaining where we're at with that particular activity. We haven't been able to get the learning partners like was the hope. And so we do have some people who are sort of just lingering, not able to complete the process of becoming certified. So I do think that the ones that do have learning partners who can complete, we definitely need to get those through. And then I do think that trying to get the gateway

trainings done is a good use of the rest, or at least what is left of the money on that contract. We're still focusing on customized employment, but we're doing it in the way that we can to make the most of it since we can't utilize when we can't find learning partners. This will at least help people get some certification and have a better understanding of what customized employment is and why it's important.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Do you know what the funding looks like, what's left?

KELLY MONROE: Yeah. It's about, I want to say we have 18,000 left in the contract.

AMY DEAVILLE: I think that's about right.

MARY TARVER: And would that be enough to cover the other certifications?

KELLY MONROE: It would. Because if they came in-person it would cost about 16,000, I think, to do all three of them. And then if not, it would cost, like if we did it online, it would cost about, I think it was like 2200. Something like that.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So Amy, what do we need to do if the committee wants to move forward with that recommendation from you and Kelly?

KELLY MONROE: Nothing really.

AMY DEAVILLE: Yeah. I mean, you can make a motion if you choose basically just stating that you're okay with moving in that direction for the rest of this contract.

MARY TARVER: Mitch, do you have any comments about that?

MITCH IDDINS: Thank you, Mary. I'm just going to ask would there need to be any official changes to the language in the contract, Kelly?

KELLY MONROE: No. Because it's all under customized employment. You wouldn't really have to do anything. I just wanted to bring it to your attention because it's a lot of money and I wanted to make sure it's useful. And right now to me, this is just, it's not working.

MITCH IDDINS: So are you confident that kind of redirecting the certifications is the best way to spend the money at this point?

KELLY MONROE: Yeah. I do. I think that-- and right now with the time left that we have, I don't even

know if, you know, if we still don't have partners from LRS, even if we got them next week, they wouldn't even have time to complete the process. But it's hard, you know, and I'm not putting this all on LRS at all. It's just that finding people who want to wait that long to get a job, to go through the process, is very difficult. You know, like summer's coming up. People want, people are going to want summer jobs. They're not going to want to go through this process that takes forever.

MITCH IDDINS: Are these all LRS clients?

KELLY MONROE: Yes.

MITCH IDDINS: Okay. Thank you.

KELLY MONROE: I wish there was something better I could say to do, but I think if we at least do the gateway trainings you're getting people to think a different way, you know. And you're bringing stuff to their attention and possibly getting them to think, you know, a different way to move forward.

MITCH IDDINS: Well, I'll just make a motion that we continue with the contract and just allow Kelly to kind of redirect the certification process as she mentioned.

MARY TARVER: All right. Is there a second?

NICOLE BANKS: I can second that.

MARY TARVER: All right. Marilee, do you need?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Motion to continue with the contract and allow Ms. Kelly Monroe to redirect the what?

MITCH IDDINS: I think she just, to redirect who they're certifying. Is that right, Kelly?

KELLY MONROE: Yeah. Well, what I would do is redirect the activities to instead of certification to be like ACRE trained and certified. I mean, they would get a small certification in ACRE, but not in customized employment.

MITCH IDDINS: Okay. Yeah.

PHIL WILSON: This is Phil. I'm glad that you made that clarification because as you know, Sue and some of her other staff and colleagues have gone through the certification process through University of South Florida. And now we're engaged in that work with a partner. And my understanding, and since Melissa's at the table she can clarify if I have this wrong, but

that the endpoint for that, to get that certification is actually to complete that mentored experience. So I was getting a little nervous when I heard somebody say something about okay, so we can redirect the certification process. And so that's not what you were saying, right?

KELLY MONROE: What he was saying was redirect the customized employment certification to something different. Yes. It's still customized employment. It's just they won't be certified. At the end of it they'll get ACRE certification, but not customized employment certification. Which will not really help IRS because those people will still not be able to, they won't still be able to serve those individuals. But if the point is is to get people to think a different way and provide a service a different way, we can achieve it this way. But if the point is I don't want to do anything that's not going to result in certification, then we may not want to do anything. So this is just, I just want to bring everything out so everybody is fully informed on what we're doing. And I don't know, Melissa, if you, like if you have any concerns about that or?

MELISSA BAYHAM: No. But I'm glad we made that clarification just so everybody just is informed that those individuals would not be qualified to be customized employment vendors. And just to be very clear, the reason why we have stuck with requiring certification is because we have received so much feedback that part of the issues that we have is that our supported employment vendors, some of them, are really not, some of them do not have the skills to work with the individuals with the most significant disabilities. And so we want to make sure that people go through the complete certification process to be able to conduct this type of service because it is for people with unique needs. And it's very important that they go through the whole process to be qualified and trained properly to serve these individuals appropriately. I think definitely, Kelly, I think it's a great idea for people to get, you know, a feel for what it is and then we would have another avenue for them to get certified if they choose to do so after that.

KELLY MONROE: Yeah. We would only, the only thing is usually that there's a time limit in between the gateway training to the actual certification process. So we would need to see if HDC was willing to kind of like allow that to happen. So that's the only other thing is like even if we move forward later with certification for those people that, you know, would HDC be willing to still serve those people that went through gateway already.

PHIL WILSON: You know, I'd like to request that maybe, if not you, Melissa, whoever you designate and Kelly, and probably Sue Killam have that conversation. Cause I don't feel like I can represent exactly all the nuances.

MELISSA BAYHAM: And I'm in the same position.

PHIL WILSON: Yeah. I know that if it was MG and A doing it, they would do like a quick refresher for people to do the certification. So if we went back with MG and A I know that they would do it because they were willing to put things on hold for this time also with a quick refresher. I mean, that's totally up to you guys.

PHIL WILSON: Am I hearing you say I can connect you with Sue and you guys can talk about that? Because I don't think anybody here today would be comfortable making a commitment one way or the other on it.

KELLY MONROE: Sure.

MITCH IDDINS: Just for clarification for anyone who may be listening and the public. Who is a learning partner?

KELLY MONROE: The individual with a disability who's looking for the job.

MITCH IDDINS: Okay. Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Nicole.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. This certification process, you said it takes 16 to...

KELLY MONROE: It takes about 16 months.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Is there a way to shorten it or it's already a curriculum that's already set?

KELLY MONROE: I mean, everybody's-- some people working at their own pace. So it could be anywhere between 12 to 16 months. It just depends. The point is to really get to know people and to really give them experiences and opportunity. And the only way to

really do that is really take your time and go through the process. So it's a lot quicker than--

MARY TARVER: I'm sorry. Go ahead, Kelly.

KELLY MONROE: I lost-- I'm sorry. I don't even know what I was saying. Sorry.

NICOLE BANKS: You were saying that there's a lot because people are going on their own pace.

KELLY MONROE: Yeah. So like right now, the first class, it took every bit of 14 to 16 months for people to go through the whole process. The second class was between 12 and 14 months. The third class, which is this one, I think. Yeah, this one. And this one is just, it's taken a little bit longer. So even though we have the two people who started off in the very beginning, they are about 12 months, probably be about 12, 14 months out too. So everybody works at their own pace. It depends on how well you know the person. Some of these people who are a little bit quicker, they already knew the person. That they've spent time with them for a couple years maybe working in a day hab, so they already knew them. So when they came out going into customized employment, they already kind of knew the person. So it just really depends on each individual. But no more than 16 months.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay.

KELLY MONROE: And you got to think about it, you guys, this is not a typical supported employment training. This is college level, competency-based training that people are going through.

NICOLE BANKS: So it's going to be a little bit more than a regular program.

KELLY MONROE: It is. It absolutely will be. Yeah.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay.

KELLY MONROE: If you do it right.

MARY TARVER: All right. So we're going to hold--

KELLY MONROE: I think somebody's got their hand raised.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Well, there is still a motion on the floor. So I think something needs to be done about that by the committee members.

KELLY MONROE: I think we had to fix the motion cause that's where the questions first came up.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So right now it reads motion to

continue with the customized employment contract activity 3.2.1 and allow Ms. Kelly Monroe to redirect from customized employment certification to another avenue. Made by Mr. Iddins. Seconded by-- and I'm not sure, Ms. Mary, if you had asked for seconds yet. I'm reading what I have down.

NICOLE BANKS: I can second it.

MARY TARVER: All right. We are going to work on trying to get this resolved as quickly as possible cause the next meeting starts at 1:00 and nobody's had a break. And that's three minutes.

NICOLE BANKS: Let me ask this question. I know the motion is on. Since I seconded it, do we go ahead and vote now for it?

MARY TARVER: We still have to open up for comments.

NICOLE BANKS: Oh, okay. Never mind.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Ms. Corley.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes. One, I'm curious on is there an age that the person has to be in order to enter into the training? If not, if the age is, you know, a student, a person with a disability that is coming out of the high school, then have we looked at trying to get individuals that are about to be recent graduates from high school to actually be participants into the programs? And if we haven't, then if we have, then what have we done to actually disseminate the information out so that families of individuals with disabilities are aware of this employment training opportunity. Cause I am aware that many of the schools have C tech programs. As well as we do have the programs with LAPIE. But these employment training opportunities, if this is something that a student that is transitioning from high school into post-secondary can actually enter, then how can we make sure that these families know about this opportunity so that they can actually enter into it?

MARY TARVER: Kelly, can you just give us the age. And I think we just need to hit the highlights cause on this motion that's not really what this is about.

KELLY MONROE: It's the exiting year of school. And they must be-- well, they don't have to be. But we're looking at LRS individuals. So it's the exiting year of school.

MARY TARVER: Okay. So this is for us to allow this activity to continue for Kelly to move forward with whoever she needs to talk to, get input from, that we've discussed, I think. And so is there any other comments? All right. Is there any objections?

MARILEE ANDREWS: I didn't hear any, Ms. Mary.

MARY TARVER: Okay. Any abstentions? Okay. The motion passes.

MARILEE ANDREWS: And I just want to share we are 60 minutes over. We completely missed our lunch break. We have another meeting that's starting like right now that needs this platform. And we also do have a transcriptionist, that's an accommodation we provide, and she needs to have breaks as well. So I don't know what you want to do with that information, but I'm getting messages, so I just wanted to share that.

MARY TARVER: Yeah. We need to adjourn the meeting.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I make a motion to adjourn.

PHIL WILSON: Second.

KELLY MONROE: So is Act 378 going to be on this line, or do I need to like hang up and come back?

EBONY HAVEN: There should have been a separate link for that committee, Kelly.

KELLY MONROE: I'm sure there was.

MARY TARVER: Meeting adjourned.