

Education and Employment (E/E) Committee Summary

October 19, 2022

5615 Corporate Blvd. Ste. 500B, Baton Rouge, LA 70808

LIVE Streamed Via YouTube

You can watch the meeting here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LADDCouncil/videos>

You can view the meeting transcript [here](#)

Members Present: Nicole Banks, Melissa Bayham, Brenda Cosse, Meredith Jordan, Hyacinth McKee (Chair), Bambi Polotozola, Vivienne Webb

Members Absent: Christi Gonzales, Mary Tarver and Phil Wilson

Staff: Brenton Andrus, Rekeesha Branch, Lauren Brown, Amy Deaville, Ebony Haven and Hannah Jenkins

Others Present: Libby Airhart, Gwendolyn Amelin, Brenda Bares, Cynthia Bell, Jana Broussard, Corhonda Corley, Kristie Curtis, Mylinda Elliott, Liz Gary, Rachel Hausmann, Lynsey Hebert, Christina Martin, Yiesha McFarland, Kelly Monroe, Cynthia Posey, Susan Riehn, Tory Rocca, Brooke Stewart, Erick Taylor, Mollie Tinnin, Renoda Washington, Mimi Webb

Dr. Hyacinth McKee called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM. A quorum was established.

Approval of the [July 2022 E/E Committee Summary](#) passed by unanimous consent.

Meredith Jordan shared an update on the Cameras in Special Education classrooms. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) has distributed the funding to the districts based on [allocations](#) that were approved at the August BESE meeting. Now that the funding has been released, LDOE has also released a survey to collect the policies from each school district, and will continue to follow up with school districts who have not submitted their policies as they get closer to that deadline. LDOE is also still working to release an electronic application to collect data on how much funding was allocated to each district, how much was spent and the balance for each school district to present to BESE during their June 2023 meeting. Ms. Jordan will submit a report to the committee on which districts have submitted a policy and which districts have not at the January 2023 Council meeting.

Ms. Jordan also shared multiple other updates on behalf of the LDOE including:

- The Diverse Learners Division will also be releasing a survey that will be geared towards educators who serve and support students with significant disabilities to get input on what supports are needed.
- The LDOE is working with a workgroup to assist the department in revamping their accountability system for grades 3-11 which includes high school accountability. This will also be brought to the November SEAP meeting to get feedback as well. BESE will be holding an emergency meeting on November 10th at the Claiborne building.

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council

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The committee again discussed the need for LDOE and LRS to collaborate and partner with each other for pre-employment transition services. There is currently a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been drafted and is being revised between LDOE and LRS. The committee requested that LDOE and LRS provide an updated report on their collaboration at the January 2023 Council meeting.

The committee also added a topic to the agenda in regards to the recent concerns and issues regarding the Special School District. There have been ongoing allegations for quite some and the issues culminated this past Friday, October 14th, with the firing of the School for the Deaf administrator. The Louisiana Commission for the Deaf has consulted with the Department of Health's attorney in drafting a letter to the Special School District Board urging them to investigate all of the issues that have been brought before them due to community outrage. The committee felt it was necessary to also express concerns on behalf of the Council as well since many students there are members of the developmental disabilities community.

MOTION PASSED: The Education and Employment committee recommends that the La Developmental Disabilities Council sign-on to the letter that the La Commission for the Deaf will send to the Special School District regarding investigating the list of concerns made by Ms. Polotzola seconded by Ms. Banks passed without objection or abstention.

Melissa Bayham with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services thanked the committee for writing a letter to State Civil Service regarding the recruitment and retention issues with rehabilitation counselors that LRS is currently experiencing. She also thanked Council Chair Rashad Bristo who sponsored and assisted LRS with hosting a virtual job fair with Healthy Blue on October 12th.

Ms. Bayham also shared updates on behalf of the [Louisiana Rehabilitation Services](#) which included:

- The Disability Innovation Fund STEM UP Grant where LRS is partnering with Southern University (SU) and SU will begin to recruit for career pathway coordinators who will be assisting individuals one-on-one with employment in STEM occupations.
- LRS is also in the process of writing a Request for Proposals for rate setting on their employment services.

The committee also received an update on the Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline. It was mentioned that the Council has had issues with getting quorum to conduct meetings, but the new Chair, Ms. Corhonda Corley stated that she has reached out to members personally and that should not be an issue moving forward.

Lastly, we received updates on contractual activities in Goal 3 of the Council's FY22 action plan which can be found in the [Status of Planned Activities Report](#). During the update on the Louisiana Alliance for post-secondary inclusive education (LAPIE), the committee was informed that there are several schools interested in starting a program and the new Advisory Council for Post-secondary inclusive education created during the 2022 legislative session recognizes that the \$1M funding that was allocated for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) will not be enough to help start and sustain the programs.

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MOTION PASSED: The Education and Employment committee recommends that the La Developmental Disabilities Council add additional funding of \$3M for the post-secondary inclusive education fund to the 2023 Legislative Advocacy Agenda made by Ms. Polotzola seconded by Ms. Webb passed without objection or abstention.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 PM by unanimous consent.