

## Education and Employment (E/E) Committee Summary

January 18, 2023

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

LIVE Streamed Via YouTube

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

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

**Members Present:** Nicole Banks, Melissa Bayham, Brenda Cosse, Christi Gonzales, Meredith Jordan, Bambi Polotzola (Chair), Erick Taylor, Mary Tarver, Renoda Washington, Vivienne Webb, Phil Wilson (present but did not count towards quorum)

**Members Absent:** Hyacinth McKee

**Staff:** Brenton Andrus, Rekeesha Branch, Lauren Brown, Stephanie Carmona, Amy Deaville, Hannah Jenkins

**Others Present:** Cynthia Bell, Carmen Cetnar, Kristie Curtis, Mylinda Elliott, Nicole Flores, Julie Folse, Corlis Gremillion, April Hampton, Mary Jacob, Chanel Jackson, Christina Martin, Ashley McReynolds, Charlie Michel, Kelly Monroe, Kristen Reed

Bambi Polotzola called the meeting to order at 3:01 PM. A quorum was established.

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

### Education and Employment Updates

Ms. Polotzola shared an update on the [letter](#) that was written from the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD) to the Special School District Board (SSD) that the Council signed on to after concerns were expressed during the October 2022 quarterly meeting. The LCD Board formally requested a joint meeting with the SSD Board and that meeting will tentatively take place on February 9<sup>th</sup>. The LCD Board will also meet on January 20<sup>th</sup> at the State Capitol and the SSD will be hosting a special meeting January 24<sup>th</sup>. The SSD Board has identified three finalist for the Superintendent of the SSD, and interviews as well as a public meeting will be held on their campus and live-streamed. Advocates were encouraged to attend the meetings.

Meredith Jordan shared a status update on the collection of policies from each school district on cameras in special education classrooms. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) has released their electronic application to collect data from school districts on the cost to install the cameras, how much of their allocated funding has been spent and the balance on their funding for each school district. LDOE has collected all (100%) city/parish school policies. However, approximately thirty-six charter schools that have self-contained classrooms have not submitted a policies. LDOE is following up with those schools to collect their policies as soon as possible. Additionally, LDOE reviewed and flagged policies that were not following the guidelines set in legislation. Those policies were

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returned and asked to be corrected. Ms. Jordan also stated that she will share the instructions on how to view policies for each school district once they are approved.

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

- The LDOE will be presenting their proposed resource allocation for the Louisiana Youth Leadership Forum to BESE during their March 2023 meeting.
- The LDOE is also working on a Family Toolbox specifically to assist students with disabilities over the summer months. Ms. Jordan stated that LDOE would be asking for feedback from families on what supports should be included in the toolbox such as Individualized Education Program (IEP) support and activities that can be done at home to support development throughout the summer.
- The LDOE is also asking for feedback from stakeholders on their new Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) application for funding. The LDOE would like to get ideas on what items should be prioritized for the budget and funding application.

The committee made suggestions to Ms. Jordan including having a video series for parents to help support students with homework, reincorporating a Parent's Weekend Workshop to discuss student's rights under IDEA and including funding to provide in-person hands-on training for teachers in the Special Education Reporting System (SER).

Melissa Bayham with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) shared updates including:

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been drafted between LDOE and LRS is currently with the LDOE executive team and LRS is waiting to receive it back before moving forward.
- LRS is conducting a pilot program with their vendor, Opportunity Now, who is also doing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) in the state of Texas. Currently, Opportunity Now is offering courses in Texas that also allow students to also receive Carnegie credits, and LRS's goal is to look into how to bring that to Louisiana as well. If students are allowed to get Carnegie credits, then more school districts could potentially want to participate in the Pre-ETS program.
- LRS and LDOE are also discussing launching a transition website together to assist students and families with information on transition options.

## **Contractual Activities**

Lastly, we received updates on contractual activities including the La Alliance of Postsecondary Inclusive Education (LAPIE) and the Employment Seminars that began with the Fiscal Year 2023 Action Plan. Additional information about these activities can be found in the Council's quarterly [Status of Planned Activities Report](#) under goal three.

## **Recommendation for FFY24 Action Plan**

The committee discussed activities to recommend to the Planning Ad-Hoc Committee for inclusion in the Council's FY2024 Action Plan under goal three which will begin October 2023. After a robust discussion about concerns in Special Education and the lack of education and employment advocacy, the committee decided to wait and make recommendations with the Full Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM by unanimous consent.