

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Quarterly Meeting
July 20, 2023

NICOLE BANKS: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the quarterly meeting of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council will come to order. I just want to update, welcome everybody. I know sometimes this may be some people first time meeting in person. So welcome to the meeting. Welcome to the council. We're here to get things done and be productive with the people that we love and the people that we care about. So let's just keep those people in mind that we are here for today.

I'm going to give it to Amy Deaville to do the roll call. So when your name is called, please say present.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Airhart. Ms. Banks.

NICOLE BANKS: Present.

AMY DEAVILLE: Dr. Barovechio. Ms. Basile.

KIM BASILE: Present.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Present.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Cosse. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Present.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Gonzales. Ms. Egle. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Here.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Present.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Here.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Hymel. Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Present.

AMY DEAVILLE: Dr. McKee. Ms. Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Here.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Richard.

MELINDA RICHARD: Here.

AMY DEAVILLE: Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Here.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Here.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Here.

AMY DEAVILLE: Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Here.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Washington. Ms. Webb. Dr. Wilson.

Fourteen people present. You have a quorum to proceed.

NICOLE BANKS: Thanks. And at this time we will have Amy read our mission statement and read the ground rules.

AMY DEAVILLE: The mission statement of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council is to increase independence, self-determination, productivity, integration and inclusion for Louisianians with developmental disabilities by engaging in advocacy, capacity building and systems change.

Our ground rules for in-person meetings. Members must be recognized by the chair before speaking. Silence or turn off all cell phones. No alphabets. Except as necessary restrict the use of electronic communication like texting during council and committee meetings. Discussing council business in a responsible manner. Be on time for meetings. Break 10 minutes every one and a half hours. Be respectful of each other's opinions. And side conversations are kept to a minimum, done quietly and restricted to the subject at hand.

NICOLE BANKS: And just keep in mind that every little thing that you do on here on the table you can hear it. They can hear that so just letting y'all know. All right. So our next item of business is the approval of the meeting summary on the draft of April 20th meeting summary was distributed. The summary will not be read unless requested by a member. Are there any corrections? If there is no objection the meeting summary is approved as distributed. Hearing none, the meeting is approved.

All right. So the next item of business is the chair report, recommendations from our executive committee. We are going to entertain a motion to adopt the executive committee recommendation. So we have a total of three recommendations. We're going to introduce the first one. The first one is a recommendation up on the disability voting rights

proposal. All these were emailed and provided before. And Dr. McKee moved to accept the disability voting rights proposal by People First and the Arc of Louisiana. It was seconded by Jill Hano. Is there a motion to accept the disability voting rights proposal by the Peoples First and Arc of Louisiana? All right. Is there a second?

TORY ROCCA: I'll second.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. It's been moved and seconded for the disability voting rights proposal by Peoples First and Arc of Louisiana will be accepted. Is there any debate? Any public comment? Are you ready for the question? The question on the disability voting rights proposal by Peoples First and Arc of Louisiana. The roll call vote will be a longer process so we're going to do the aye and nay. Just letting you guys know because we have a choice. I'm sorry. Aye and no. Those in favor of accepting the proposal, aye.

{Collective aye}

NICOLE BANKS: Those proposed to say no? All right. The ayes have it.

KIM BASILE: Excuse me. There were no abstentions asked.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Any abstentions?

KIM BASILE: I abstain.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. It's noted. All right. The ayes have it and the motion is adopted. Our next item of business is a recommendation for building advocacy, capacity in education and employment. And it was moved by Dr. McKee that the Arc of Louisiana be accepted for the proposal, and it was seconded by Jill Hano. So I will entertain a motion to accept the proposal for building advocacy, capacity in education and employment. I will be entertaining a motion to accept the advocacy capacity in education and employment.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I have a question. Can someone explain what was the discussion on the reasoning for the choice.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. So the reasoning for the choice, it was up against two different, it was up against two different entities, right. Two different proposals. One of them they wasn't accepted.

AMY DEAVILLE: There were three original proposals. One is from the Hogan Law Firm. It is not eligible for

consideration. Two of the proposals, one from the Arc of Louisiana and the third was from Families Helping Families Bayou Land. In terms of discussion of why one was picked over the other, a motion was made.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: There was no discussion?

AMY DEAVILLE: On this one I don't recall any. Jill, do you have another recollection?

JILL HANO: Can I piggyback because I, and I can't speak for anyone else, but I felt like there was not very much discussion. So I kind of missed, I kind of didn't really understand why we were going another way.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Okay. So this is a very big decision and I think that we have two exceptional applications, I mean, proposals. And by people who are, that could do the work. So I feel like there needs to be discussion about what-- we have to take the time to look at it, you know. I hope everyone has looked at it. But I feel like this is one of our larger contracts and so we need to really consider what we want and what the proposal is outlining that they'll provide or they'll do.

JILL HANO: Bambi, are you talking about the education and employment?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yeah.

JILL HANO: Capacity. Okay. Cool. Thank you.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. So what I will do is entertain a motion to either accept it or bring it back to the executive committee for further discussion up on the proposal.

JILL HANO: We don't even know who the executive committee is.

NICOLE BANKS: But we will though. You will have the elections.

SPEAKER: I have a question. Okay. So we got these packets yesterday. And I read some of it prior to but getting this proposal ready for them. So when were we supposed to do this? I thought we were going to have discussion then we do (inaudible). I'm not sure how this works.

NICOLE BANKS: Amy can answer that question or one of the staff members.

AMY DEAVILLE: Yeah. So the proposals were emailed out to all council members a number of weeks ago, probably about two weeks ago for council members to

review to be ready for discussion. This, typically the way that proposals go is they first go to the executive committee for review, discussion and a recommendation and then go to the full council for approval. So that's how it happened this time. Just as additional information, in the event that a contract vendor has to be decided in between council meetings. So in other words if what Nicole said just happened, what Nicole suggested just happens the executive committee will be the committee that makes the ultimate decision on this proposal if it follows that line. And in between quarterly council meetings if a contract decision has to be made it always refers back to the executive committee to make a decision.

NICOLE BANKS: Kim, you're recognized.

KIM BASILE: I would like to make a suggestion that since it doesn't seem like we're prepared to make a decision right now that maybe a staff member could do a compare/contrast maybe between the two and just checkmark which one's doing this and which one's not or which one is doing the same thing in their application. And that the executive committee meet, I would say, early next week and make a decision.

NICOLE BANKS: Is that a motion?

KIM BASILE: I can't make a motion. I am making a suggestion. If someone else wants to. If it has to do with Bayou Land, I cannot make the motion. But that is a suggestion.

NICOLE BANKS: Ms. Mary.

MARY TARVER: We read over these and had these. I guess I expected today that the executive committee if you made a decision about which one to recommend that you would be, traditionally what we hear now in the open meeting with everybody here is why those decisions were made so we can digest that to make a decision. Because it doesn't make any sense to me that the executive committee is going to make another decision if you've already made one based on information that y'all discussed. So I guess I'm confused about how, why we would go back to the executive committee making the decision. If y'all had some comments about the proposals that we could discuss today that would be, in my opinion, a better process.

KIM BASILE: I don't think anybody read it. That's

the whole deal.

SPEAKER: I read it.

SPEAKER: I did read it.

NICOLE BANKS: I recognize Jill.

JILL HANO: This is just my instinct judgment, but I do see both of our project directors in the room. Sorry to put you on the spot. Why can't we hear from the vendors a brief diagnostic of what they're proposing and then make our decision. Because you'll meet in person and next week I won't even be in town. So it will be a question for me to be in Baton Rouge next week.

NICOLE BANKS: So what I will do is entertain at this time a motion for a different vendor for the proposal since we still need discussion on it and in the executive committee the people that were there just they didn't have the discussion. So I'll entertain a motion.

KIM BASILE: For what?

NICOLE BANKS: For a different vendor for proposal or to revert back to executive committee because they still have to make the decision.

MARY TARVER: The only way we can get to discussion is to make a motion for the other one?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Point of order. The executive committee by virtue of them making the recommendation that is a motion. Had to have two people at least on that committee so that's the way it always used to be. The committee made a recommendation, you didn't need a motion from the floor. It served as the motion. So now we're having discussion on that motion from the committee. So we can have an open discussion right now, correct?

JILL HANO: Because the executive, unless I'm understanding something wrong like that, we throw in a third proposal? Okay.

AMY DEAVILLE: Just to try to restate it so that it hopefully makes sense. And Ms. Learson, if I'm wrong, please jump in. There are a couple of options. So the motion that came out of executive committee cannot come to the full council as a motion per our Parliamentarian. So if this recommendation is what, if the Arc of Louisiana proposal is what people, the full council want to accept then someone has to make that

motion again and then it has to be seconded and voted on. If this proposal is not what people want to accept and they want to make a motion to accept the other proposal, which is the FHF Bayou Land proposal, then that motion can be made, discussion can be had, and the vote can occur. Or if you want to revert the decision back to the executive committee, that can happen as well.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So I make a motion that we open up the floor for discussion about the two eligible proposals.

NICOLE BANKS: As per our Parliamentarian that is not an appropriate motion.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: That is not how we've operated for over a decade. So I don't see why we can't discuss proposals. How are we going to have conversations?

NICOLE LEARSON: Good morning, folks. So the way that you all, you don't have to make a motion to discuss something. You make a motion to take action on something which is a vote. And when that motion is made there is discussion or debate that's supposed to happen before a vote and public comment. So if your motion is to accept a proposal then you can make that motion, have open discussion and debate about that proposal or the other and then either vote down the proposal that the motion is about or make a motion or amend the motion to accept the other proposal. You just don't have to make a motion to debate and discuss cause that's part of the process. Does that make sense?

JILL HANO: So I can make a motion and then someone second it. Then we hear from the vendors, the public?

NICOLE LEARSON: You hear from the council members and then the public, correct.

JILL HANO: Okay. Is it People First or Bayou Land?

SPEAKER: The Arc.

JILL HANO: I make a motion that we accept the proposal on the education and employment capacity building from the Arc of Louisiana.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Is there a second?

MARY TARVER: I'll second.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. It is moved and seconded upon building capacity, advocacy. I'm sorry. Building

advocacy, capacity in education and employment proposal. Is there any debate?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I would like to have, if they're willing, the directors to share, give them a certain allotted amount of time to share their vision in their own words. And I don't know if perhaps we should have the other one out of the room when one shares. I don't want to give any type of advantage to either one. I don't know if that's necessary or appropriate, but if they're willing to do that I think that would be helpful for our decision-making.

AMY DEAVILLE: If you wouldn't mind, Dr. Michel.

KELLY MONROE: So, I think, I read both of the, of course I read ours, but I read his proposal also and they are very different. So I'm wondering what is it that you guys are looking for. Because when you look at both of the proposals, we are clearly offering two totally different things. And so I think that is one of the questions. For the Arc of Louisiana we'd like to, we've been in several conversations with you guys about, not directly with each of you, but about education and employment and some of the problems surrounding education and employment for people with disabilities. And so we're offering to go out, meet with some of the department heads, do training across the state, one in each region, do for both subjects. Also do a couple of webinars for those who could not meet in person. Participate on workgroups and workgroups and committees and then bring the information back to the DD Council as far as like the DD Council quarterly meetings. I don't have it in front of me so I would be happy to answer some questions if you guys have any questions maybe that might be easier.

JILL HANO: For my part I want to apologize to the council and especially Kelly and the whole group that I did not review this. And y'all all know that's very out of character. And I see everyone that knows me looking at me. So I wanted to apologize that today is my first day that my eyes have landed on this. So I greatly apologize.

KELLY MONROE: Not a problem. Also, you'll notice-- and instead of having like one project director, Ashley will be the project director over the

contract. But as far as like the education piece, that is Ashley's specialty. And the employment piece would be mine because that's what I've always done. And so we do kind of have that in our office where we both really do specialize in a certain area and just happens to be the ones that you guys are requesting. But I would be happy to like answer any questions. We have, you know, lots of experience. It really, when you look at the contracts, I mean the grant proposals, they're both great proposals. They're just both doing two totally different things. And it's kind of like what does the council want to see.

JILL HANO: Can we put the SOP on the big screen?

KIM BASILE: Kelly, in 25 words or less can you just say what you're proposing to do.

KELLY MONROE: We're proposing to educate individuals who have disabilities and their families about upcoming laws and programs and stuff for people in education and employment. I mean, that's the gist of it. And then also working with the council. I know the council has had some issues not really getting information education wise so that was going to be another big focus is making sure that the staff at the DD Council had the information that they needed in order to spread it out to their membership.

KIM BASILE: Thank you.

KELLY MONROE: And had I known we were going to do this I would have been more prepared.

MEREDITH JORDAN: One of the things that stood out to me about this proposal, and I agree they're both very different. I will have to abstain because I contract or work with these entities. But you all also plan to present and work directly with employers and folks in the employment community which I think is huge communicating to them and bringing them onboard with inclusive employment and what are the requirements. So that was one of the differences that I noticed too with the work that you plan on doing and some of the trainings you plan on doing directly in the community with employers and some of those businesses.

MELINDA RICHARD: If I could have the floor, I would just give a couple of comments as well. Melinda Richard.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you, Ms. Richard. You do have

the floor.

MELINDA RICHARD: Just a couple of observations. I think one thing that I see as a difference is in the Arc's proposal there's very specific budgetary items that kind of indicate and support the fact that you're going to be out in the community doing the visits and working with the participants. I also think that the idea that you've thought out what those steps and timelines would be also is a plus. You've obviously mapped this out as to when you will accomplish the different phases of work. And the fact that you've also included travel and hotel stay to me is a commitment that you're going to be doing this work in the community. The other point that I noticed too was your point as well about it does feel to be both employer education as well as participant education, you know, individual education with the parents. And individuals. And so I think that's a plus. I don't think it's insignificant that there's a lower cost associated with it. Almost 6,500-dollars lower in cost. So I think that that's not to be overlooked. That's my two cents on how I read the proposals.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. So we're done with it? Are we finished with Ms. Kelly? Okay. All right. Thank you.

CHARLIE MICHEL: Can I talk? All right. Very briefly. In my role as a special educator for all these years we have been monitoring the problem of lack of employment for people with disabilities and lack of education for the parents of people with disabilities. Partly because of the butting heads between parents and schools. It's a lack of trust issue. What I want to do with this grant is be able to get from family members, from individuals with disabilities, from employers and from special ed directors what are the barriers. We know there are barriers, but I don't know that we spend the time to actually define what those barriers are. So let's find out what those barriers are. And then as a result of that when we find out what the barriers to employment are I want to work with LRS. And I've had a relationship with LRS on a personal level because of my son and on a professional level because we engaged when I was in Lafourche Parish, we engaged with LRS on (inaudible) programs.

So I would like to be able to build with that relationship. Work with OCDD, our local LGE, around the state so that we can see what benefits there are to explain what kind of benefits are lost, and I put that in air quotes, with employment.

And when we do all these focus groups, cause that's kind of the way I want to do this, when we do all these focus groups then develop some trainings for parents, employers, special ed directors to be able to develop those trainings so that they know what those barriers are, and they can work through them. Because when you're drowning it's hard to realize all you have to do is stand up. It's only four feet of water. And that's where I think a lot of special ed directors are. I do believe that. So what I want to do is identify the problem, target some solutions in collaboration with all of the party players.

And then the last part of it that I want to do, there are a lot of trainings, legal trainings for special educators that I would like to include, send some to some of those trainings, but parents, individuals with disabilities, maybe a special ed director or two and some FHF directors, a couple directors. Because if we don't know and keep up with those laws these problems that we're seeing are going to just keep on going and going and going. So that's kind of the big picture of what I had planned on doing.

But I will also say this as discussion has gone on, whoever gets this, cause I went to bed last night okay, this is done. And it was fine. I was fine. And I told Ashley this morning I didn't realize that was Kelly sitting in front of me. But I told Ashley this morning whoever gets it, if y'all get it, that's great. The goal is to get this job done. It's not to get the money. It's to get the job done. So whoever gets it, if Arc gets it, I will do whatever I can to lend my expertise, such as it is, and my time to this project because I think it's important and I don't know who else can do it at this point as far as the other party players. We're sort of outside looking in. So whatever your decision is we're going to get the job done, whoever it is. And I appreciate the time. I appreciate the opportunity. And I will say that was a long grant process. I mean, it was hard to write

because it's a big problem. It's a huge problem. So anyway, that's all I got to say. If you have any questions, I'm more than happy to answer them and we're good to go.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you.

CHARLIE MICHEL: Thank y'all.

JILL HANO: I do have a question.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay, Jill. You're recognized.

JILL HANO: Are you the director?

CHARLIE MICHEL: Sorry?

JILL HANO: You're the project director?

CHARLIE MICHEL: I am the project director. And the reason I chose that is because I think I have the expertise and the skill, and I don't think it's something that I want to assign to someone else because I think something will get lost in the translation. And Jill, I don't think I'm all that and a bag of chips. What I do know is what I know and if that knowledge will help this process, I'm the one to do it.

JILL HANO: Okay.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I have a question.

NICOLE BANKS: Any other questions? Okay. Bambi, you're recognized.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Charlie, given what you said, and I don't know if it would be appropriate to have the other person--

CHARLIE MICHEL: I told them they could stay in here because I don't have an issue. I would say the same thing if they were in here or not.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I guess I'll wait. Probably my comment would be a question to both of you. I don't know if someone else has a question just for Charlie if you want to go to that person, that's fine.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Go ahead, Bambi.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Okay. So what I'm going to say I know is really like out of the box and it's okay for people to have to think about it and even our proposers to have to think about. But first off, I would say that we have what I think is the best people in the state who made proposals. All of them are incredible at doing this work. We couldn't have asked for anyone better to be able to put forth these proposals. And I was just thinking, and I think this is such a big problem and the money that was put in-- or big issue, I

should say. Frame it in not such a negative way. A big issue. And that's why we put a larger amount of money on this because we knew this work was really extensive work. And just wondering if the proposers could in any way figure out a way to be able to work together in some type of joint way and use your expertise, I think it would just make for a better project. And as Charlie said, this work is so important and to be able to collaborate. And I don't expect you guys to answer that right now, but if that would be something that we could consider and allow for. I don't how it would go forward, but that's my recommendation and suggestion.

AMY DEAVILLE: Can I ask the proposers is that something that y'all are interested in entertaining?

CHARLIE MICHEL: I was going to help anyway. Whether or not they were getting it I was going to help anyway. It's the work that needs to be done. It's not about the money, it's about the results and I think that's what we're all about.

JILL HANO: So can I ask the Arc their thoughts if Bayou got it.

KELLY MONROE: Would we be interested in helping?

JILL HANO: Yes.

KELLY MONROE: Yeah. We could help. We would help anybody. That's what we do. But as far as like splitting the contract I would have to, just being honest, would have to go back and look at my budget because whether we split the contract or not that means we're going to bring other staff in to help with other contracts we have and I need to make sure financially we'll be able to afford it with the travel costs and all that other stuff that it could cost us. And so just being responsible I would need to go back and look at my budget and see if I could afford to do that.

LAUREN WOMACK: Permission to speak. I was going to piggyback, my name's Lauren Womack, on what Bambi was saying. And I wrote down there's amazing qualities and it's going to be really hard for the committee, I think, to pick. And I serve people, obviously I'm a person with a disability, developmental disability, but I also serve people with disabilities as like a service provider. And what's really hard in Louisiana is we're a hire/fire state. So every day I have people coming

to me and it's blatant that it's the disability that they were let go. And some things, you know, you need to know the law, but we also need to I think empower, you know, clients to say okay, to know their laws and things like that.

And then the other thing I was going to say is when we were working on state as a model employer, we had a lot of technical assistance come in from federal and I don't know if that's something that either of y'all have thought about or maybe requested to see. I'm not sure if it's great, but just to see if it's working in other states. I'm sure they've done some of this. And, you know, you wouldn't have to go back to the drawing board for that. That would just be making connections with other states and even our universities. Connecting with rehabilitation counselor programs because a lot of the students work on projects or even the professors. So I think they're an untapped resource. I know definitely when I was in school I kind of hoped that some of these grant projects would have inspired the next generation of service providers to get more involved.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Ms. Mary, you're recognized.

MARY TARVER: Yeah. Can you tell me what the budget is for this?

AMY DEAVILLE: The council approved a budget of 87,000 for this activity.

MARY TARVER: I liked on the Bayou Land the focus groups and I always think we get a lot out of going throughout the state to do that. Sometimes we don't have that included in proposals, so I was a big fan of that. And the other proposal I think has a lot of good outreach on education and those kinds of things. So that was the two things like is there a way that we could look at doing, even if you split, I mean, can we add to the budget. Could we do this focus group pieces that are a part that, you know, I think that we're very passionate about. And then still be able to take some of the things that they learned from that, the things they already know. I mean, some things are going to be the same things we've heard for the last, you know, forever. But there's always new ways and new opportunities so I'm just wondering if that is a possibility.

AMY DEAVILLE: To add to the budget for this activity you'll need to take from the budget of another activity. The easiest way to do it at this point would be one of these three new ones that you're discussing right now because nothing has truly been set in stone except for the disability and voting rights which was just voted on.

NICOLE BANKS: Jill, you're recognized.

JILL HANO: Ms. Monroe, I don't want to insult anyone. But because, and I like definite answers and I like to ask the question. If the question doesn't answer, move on. Probably something I should work on. But my opinion is because Mr. Charlie said that he would give a hand, he would collaborate with People First and I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings.

KELLY MONROE: No worries.

JILL HANO: And since we had a look at People First budget at a later date for collaboration then I recommend, I'm kind of going with People First. But that is just my immediate thought.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Mr. Taylor.

AMY DEAVILLE: I'm sorry. I need to clarify. People First did not propose for this activity. The Arc of Louisiana did.

JILL HANO: I'm sorry.

AMY DEAVILLE: I just need to make sure that we're on the same page.

JILL HANO: Sorry.

NICOLE BANKS: Mr. Taylor, do you still need to be recognized?

ERICK TAYLOR: My comments on this is we got two great candidates that did the proposal. I just don't think we should try to split it. The young man said he would help anyway. Just do it the way we're doing it. Look at which one we want to pick and go from there. I don't think we should try to, I don't know her name, she would have to go back and look at what she needs to look at. I think we should just keep it how it is. Work on the grant. I think leave it like it is and people can see which one we're going to pick. That's just my opinion.

NICOLE BANKS: Is there anymore debate?

CHARLIE MICHEL: I just want to make a comment. He called me a young man. Thank you so much.

NICOLE BANKS: So the question is-- oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see you.

CHERI CRAIN: It's okay. It's Cheri Crain. I just have one question. In the proposal was it mentioned that there would be multiple awards or just one award?

AMY DEAVILLE: One award.

NICOLE BANKS: One.

CHERI CRAIN: So with it being that, just my opinion, I don't think that we need to split it because it wouldn't be fair to them knowing that they would only be having one award and now they would have to separate and collaboratively work with someone else. That's just my input.

NICOLE BANKS: Anymore debate or discussion? Public comment?

BROOKE STEWART: I would like to say-- okay. I have a question. If we're going to go with the Arc of Louisiana and they did not request the full amount, is it possible to go ahead and do the full amount and whatever was left I would like to supplement Dr. Michaels, Michel, sorry, you know, like time and effort with supporting Arc in whatever way. You know, since he's offered to support the Arc in the project since they didn't request the full amount is it possible just to give the full amount and that difference be given?

AMY DEAVILLE: If the Arc of Louisiana agrees to basically subcontract with Dr. Michel and pay him that portion, then it could be done.

BROOKE STEWART: I would like that.

KELLY MONROE: We did that with supported decision making with Disability Rights.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. So I guess just to add on and to clarify. There are components of both that are great. So I guess like what you're saying is that we want to make sure that Dr. Michel for what he's going to be contributing and adding value to what your proposal is, that you guys will work together and figure that out and making sure that he has some compensation for whatever resources and time he's putting into that. That y'all will figure that out and work together.

CHARLIE MICHEL: I think that's something-- we work together all the time.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Right. And I know that. But if

Kelly, if we say, if what she says is the Arc would give it the 87,000 that would give you some more flexibility to maybe expand a little bit on what you guys have already put into it.

KELLY MONROE: The question was just like if we split it how would that look on my budget and would I be able to do that with an extra person.

BROOKE STEWART: But doing full funding at the 87 and you all could reconfigure your budget and supplement his time and effort.

JILL HANO: So I'm sorry, y'all. So if we did, and I'm sorry my back is to you. If we gave the Arc the contract, we would give the 87, yes?

SPEAKER: That's what we're talking about.

JILL HANO: Okay. Cool.

BROOKE STEWART: With knowing that they will be using some of that portion to supplement.

JILL HANO: For Dr. Michelle. Say your last name, please.

CHARLIE MICHEL: Michel.

JILL HANO: I went to Nichols, but I didn't pick up (inaudible).

CHARLIE MICHEL: Some of the names I've been called by my wife you don't want to know.

JILL HANO: I'm sure I don't.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Any other debates? Questions? All right. You ready for the question? The question is for us to accept the motion to building capacity, advocacy-- building advocacy, capacity in education and employment for the Arc of Louisiana.

SPEAKER: Can we amend that?

NICOLE BANKS: You cannot amend it. That's the motion that was on the floor. We just discussed it. Nobody made a motion to amend so. Mr. Taylor. Is there a second?

BROOKE STEWART: I second.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. We have a second by Ms. Brooke. All right. It's moved and second that building advocacy and capacity in education and employment proposal be accepted for the Arc of Louisiana. I'm sorry. And it was amended. You guys got to be specific.

BROOKE STEWART: I would like to amend it to say I would like to make a motion to approve the Arc of

Louisiana building advocacy, capacity in education and employment to be funded at the 87,000.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Can she say it on your behalf?

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes. She can.

NICOLE BANKS: The amendment is to accept the proposal of the Arc of Louisiana and fund it at 87,000-dollars.

BROOKE STEWART: With the stipulation...

NICOLE BANKS: With the stipulation...

BROOKE STEWART: That Dr. Michel-- I'm sorry. With the stipulation that they collaborate with Bayou Land Families Helping Families.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Can you make the screen bigger.

BROOKE STEWART: Yeah.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. So the amendment is to accept the proposal from the Arc of Louisiana and fund it at the full 87,000 amount with the stipulation that Families Helping Families of Bayou Land and the Arc of Louisiana collaborate together.

BROOKE STEWART: Together on this project. And I want to make sure that he gets funded for his time and effort. And subcontract Dr. Michel.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. So we're going to be voting on just the change and the amendment. To accept the proposal for the Arc of Louisiana and fund the full 87,000 with the stipulation that Families Helping Families of Bayou Land and Arc of Louisiana collaborate on this project and Arc of Louisiana subcontracts with Families Helping Families Bayou Land. Any debates?

CHARLIE MICHEL: We are Bayou Land Families Helping Families.

NICOLE BANKS: Sorry. Any other public comments?

KELLY MONROE: I have a question. Are we going to put an amount in there? I'm just thinking about my budget again. I'm sorry. But are we going to put the amount in there that we would subcontract with? I don't want to accept something I can't do. I just want to make sure that is it going to be open for me and Charlie to talk about or are we saying that we're subcontracting for a certain amount?

JILL HANO: Permission to speak.

NICOLE BANKS: Yes, Jill. You have the floor.

JILL HANO: I thought that we would give you the 87,000 then what you would divvy out Dr. Michel is on

you, right?

KELLY MONROE: The difference? I just didn't know if we were going to put that in here.

BROOKE STEWART: So could we say collaborate on this project and the Arc of Louisiana subcontract, like a subcontract of the 5638. I would ideally like it to be like whatever wiggle room you have.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Can't it just be you guys can work out?

KELLY MONROE: Yeah. I just didn't want anybody to say like oh, it was only 6,000 or oh, it was only 7,000. You know, it just depends on travel and, you know, what we would break out. Because we really did think about how much the travel was going to be. How much staff was going to be. Those kind of things. I just didn't want it to be where it was expected, because it's vague here, that it was half, that it would be 70 percent. You know what I'm saying. Like I just want to make sure it still gives us the opportunity to work together that Charlie and I could work this out.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: That's my prospective.

BROOKE STEWART: I guess we could put like at a minimum of the 5638. Cause I don't want him to work so hard, you know, and then he's not fairly compensated. So I guess could we put some language in there at the minimum of 5638.68.

NICOLE BANKS: Any other debates? Questions? Public comment? All right. Are you ready for the question? The question is on the amendment to accept the proposal for the Arc of Louisiana to be funded at the full 87,000 amount with the stipulation that Bayou Land Families Helping Families and the Arc of Louisiana collaborate on this project and the Arc of Louisiana subcontract with Bayou Land Families Helping Families at a minimum amount of \$5,638.68. All right. And this is in favor of the amendment. So we're going to do aye and no. And abstentions. All in favor of the motion say aye.

{Collective aye}

NICOLE BANKS: Opposed say no. Abstentions?

KIM BASILE: I abstain.

MEREDITH JORDAN: I abstain.

NICOLE BANKS: Two abstentions. All right. The

eyes have it and the amended motion is adopted. The amendment is adopted.

All right. So now our motion is for us to actually put this in place. Will be up to vote on it. We will do a roll call vote. So now we are voting on to accept our amended motion that we just put in place. And we're going to do a roll call vote.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Basile. I'm sorry. Before we take a vote. Voting yes means that you are voting to accept the proposal from the Arc of Louisiana at the full amount of 87,000-dollars with the stipulation that they subcontract with Bayou Land Families Helping Families at a minimum amount of \$5,638.68. Ms. Basile.

KIM BASILE: Abstain.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Abstain.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Richard.

MELINDA RICHARD: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: The yeses have it.

NICOLE BANKS: The eyes have it and the motion is adopted. All right. Our next item of business is our motion of navigating the system of co-occurring disorders for the Hustle and Grow.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Just point of order. We didn't

call on Ms. Renoda Washington.

AMY DEAVILLE: I'm sorry. I missed her. Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

NICOLE BANKS: So sorry, Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: No problem.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. So we do have a motion on the floor. And the motion is for navigating the systems, co-occurring disorders for the Hustle and Grow.

MARY TARVER: Can you remind us what we need to do. I have no idea but whatever it is.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. We have two proposals for this one. The Arc of Louisiana and the Hustle and Grow. So those are the two that you guys should be comparing and looking at.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Is it appropriate to ask what was the reasoning for this, the decision of the executive committee? Like some discussion.

NICOLE BANKS: It is. From our discussion from the executive committee, cause we did have discussion up on this one, we just felt that the Hustle and Grow had a little bit more insight on what we wanted to do according to Dr. McKee and the discussion that we had with these proposals. Yes, ma'am.

KIM BASILE: Why does the Hustle and Grow proposal not cover the entire state?

AMY DEAVILLE: I don't know other than to say (inaudible).

MARY TARVER: I just want to say from an area in Central Louisiana that has been overlooked a lot sometimes I think that we should have some, if it's a scorecard that we're using then we should use the scorecard in executive committee and one of the things should be if it's going to be statewide or not. If it's going to be in person or not. So if there's a scorecard were y'all using it I kind of think that we could have avoided some of this lengthy discussion today had we followed our processes that we've had in place in the past. I guess that's the discussion for later, but I do want to say I'm not for any project that's not going to be statewide.

NICOLE BANKS: Ms. Crain, you're recognized.

CHERI CRAIN: That was my question too. Was it in the proposal, was it stipulated that it was to be

statewide or was it available to do regionally or by parish?

AMY DEAVILLE: All of our projects are always statewide. We're a statewide council. Or let me follow that by saying unless specified.

BROOKE STEWART: I would like to make a comment if possible. Just looking at the Hustle and Grow it does say virtual options will be facilitated for statewide impact. But also the parishes that she mentioned are in Northern Louisiana, they're low income, they have people of color that are often overlooked or unable to be reached in a lot of our statewide programs that we have. So I think this is a good opportunity that they're focused on and highlighted in this. I don't feel like by it not being specifically statewide we're taking away from anyone else because they may not have internet connection or things like that. I just feel like by Kristen highlighting the Northern Louisiana or North Louisiana it's a great opportunity for that portion of the state.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Anymore debate or discussion?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I guess my concern is, and I totally agree with what Brooke just said because that is not just the most impoverished place in our state. It is one of the most impoverished and have the least resources in our entire country. So to focus on that is really important. So that to me I would normally say that we need to be statewide but given that it is sort of a focus there I think that's needed. But I also think about what the Arc, they have done extensive work in this already so I'm wondering if we're going to get the same impact if we can build upon the work that they've done in this area and expand on it as opposed to this one that is done by Hustle and Grow. I just don't know if either of the impact will be the same. Maybe it will be different and maybe it will be better. I don't know but that's just the two questions that I'm thinking about right now.

NICOLE BANKS: Any other questions? So what is the will of the council? Do you have a motion to accept or decline the motion that is currently on the floor?

BROOKE STEWART: I would like to make a motion to accept the proposal for Hustle and Grow.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Do we have a second?

ANGELA HARMON: I second it.

NICOLE BANKS: We have a second by Ms. Harmon. All right. We will do a roll call vote.

AMY DEAVILLE: Kim Basile.

NICOLE BANKS: We're voting on the motion to accept navigating the systems of co-occurring disability systems with the Hustle and Grow proposal.

MARY TARVER: To be clear if you're a no then we have another discussion about the other proposal.

NICOLE BANKS: Right.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Basile.

KIM BASILE: No.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Abstain.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: No.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: No.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Abstain.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Abstain.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Richard.

MELINDA RICHARD: No.

AMY DEAVILLE: Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Tarver.

MARY TARVER: No.

AMY DEAVILLE: Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

AMY DEAVILLE: Six yeses, five noes, three abstentions.

NICOLE BANKS: The yeses have it. The motion is adopted. All right. Our next item of business is the budget report. And the chair recognizes Ms. Amy

Deaville for your report. The chair recognizes Ms. Amy Deaville.

AMY DEAVILLE: I'm going to be really quick because we still have a lot to do. So both the executive director and (inaudible) report are in your packet and they are posted online. For the executive director's report the only thing that I really want to mention is legislative session just ended, now we're kind of in a veto session. But overall for the council's legislative advocacy agenda we did very well. We secured the additional 500,000-dollars for the Families Helping Families centers. We were successful in getting incontinent supplies added to the adult waivers. We did that prior to the session. The one thing to mention there is there is a slight delay in implementation and that's due to the LDH budget being questionable right up to the very end of session. Ms. Hagan let us know that we're now looking at an October 1 start date for that service to be available. For those supplies to be available.

We asked for 3 million-dollars for the post-secondary inclusive education fund. We were successful in securing 1 million. So that's easily going to get them through another year. And the last one was SB201 which is making some changes to the open meetings law. That is now Act 393. And it contains a lot of information as it applies to a lot of different types of groups. So I'm just going to focus on what it means for us for now and say a rule still has to be promulgated and we're waiting for that to happen. So that rule promulgation process I guess could possibly change things a little. We will have to follow the rule once it's promulgated. But what it means for us is we should be able to move back to a hybrid meeting. The requirement right now is that whoever is the presiding officer of the meeting must be at the anchor location, but we will still have an anchor location where the public can come and attend the meeting if they want where whichever council members want to can be present. And the presiding officer will have to be present. And then we can, everyone else can attend virtually through Zoom. In discussions that I had with LDH legal our mutual understanding at this point is that even the agency reps will be able to be virtual

and not have to be in person if they choose. Because we were a group that focuses primarily on disability we can also meet remotely for every meeting. If you read through the whole act, you'll see that's it's not the case for every group. That is the case for groups like ours.

I think those are the highlights. I'm hoping that by the time the October meeting comes the rule should be promulgated by that point and we should be able to move back to whatever our new meeting situation is. So more to come when we know more. I received a note. For clarity the veto session is now open.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you, Amy, for your report. Are there any questions from the council members?

MARY TARVER: Amy, on the open meeting law whenever you're saying about the hybrid meeting, I know one of the things was about public and public comment. So how would that look for us? Would the meetings go back to like they were where the public that's watching the meetings will be able to participate in the meetings as well?

AMY DEAVILLE: Yes. I don't think that whatever rule they promulgate is really going to talk a lot about public comment. I believe they'll probably leave it up to every council to kind of structure it how they see fit. But yeah, we will, I believe, the executive committee will need to have a conversation about how we structure public comments when we move back to that environment to make sure that it's productive and on topic.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. I'm sorry, Bambi. I didn't see you.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Just a couple of things. Amy, in the past probably prior to you we would get in our folder a list of all of the members with their address and terms and contact information and it would be passed around and we would sign off that it's still accurate. I think that's something that would be good for the council as well as there was a document that we listed all of the organizations we are...

AMY DEAVILLE: I'm so glad you brought it up. We were going to cycle it around today.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Very good. And that leads into

another issue. And while we're all very excited about the opportunity for more accessibility and virtual options I think that due to Covid and a lot of transitions that the relationships, which is really the strength of our council, has been diminished tremendously. So while virtual is an option-- this will likely be my last meeting as a council member. I'll still attend because you can't get rid of me. But I'm saying all this as you go forward the relationships that we make, not just during these meetings, but that we make by being in each other's presence and having conversations is the strength of our council. Not just our relationships, but our relationships with other people. And so I really encourage the council to like utilize that option that's needed for people to be able to be a part of the council and increase access, don't allow it to kind of diminish those relationships.

And that goes back to the question about those documents. There's a lot of people that don't know one another on this council because we've been virtual. And so I think that there needs to be even more than just these council meetings. There needs to be some activities by you as executive director to lead to help facilitate the building of relationships. In the past if you remember, we would have in-person meetings and we would have sit-downs around roundtables and have lunch together and we would sit down at dinner and we got to know one another. That was really important and that was the strength of the council and the community. So I really encourage for some of those things to be reimplemented now that we're fully back and operational.

JILL HANO: To piggyback on what Bambi said, I really like when everything, I mean, granted this conference room can accommodate, but I really like when everything was done in the hotel because, I mean, like the relationships and then transportation for people who don't necessarily drive.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Any questions on the report? Any public comment? You have a question on the report?

ERICK TAYLOR: No. I don't have a question.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. All right. So the report requires no action and will be placed on file. Our next item of business is the budget report. The chair

recognizes Ms. Amy Deaville for the report.

AMY DEAVILLE: This is not truly the yearend budget because there's still expenses. But this is through the fourth quarter. Majority of most of the invoices are probably in. At this point you would be expecting to see percentages that are somewhere around 75 to 100 percent spent in most areas. Salaries are going to run low because we were not fully staffed throughout the whole year. Travel will also run low and that's because we had-- well, we didn't have in-person meetings for the majority of the year. And then the other expenses are running on track. You know, postage is a little low and that's fine. And our contracts are at 91 percent spent at the time that this was ran. We're going to get closer to 100 percent when it's a true yearend.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you, Amy. Are there any questions from the council members on the report? From the public? All right. This report requires no action and will be placed on file. So our next item of business is our committee reports. Our first report will come from the nominating committee and the chair recognizes Ms. Bambi Polotzola for the reports.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: It's not in the packet, is it?

EBONY HAVEN: It's all the way in the back.

AMY DEAVILLE: Everything is in that packet.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So the nominating committee recommends the following slate of officers for the council's consideration. And this was from our July meeting. This is what the recommendations were. There has been a change, not accepting. Council chairperson Vivienne Webb. It's my understanding that she is not accepting the nomination.

NICOLE BANKS: That's correct.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Council vice chair, Jill Hano. Education and employment chairperson, Christi Gonzales. Self-direction community inclusion chairperson, Brooke Stewart. And then member at large, Angela Harmon.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you, Bambi. So the nominating committee nominates, we have Vivienne Webb, but she pulled out. We have Jill Hano for vice chair. Christi Gonzales for employment chairperson. Brooke Stewart for self-determination community

inclusion chairperson and Ms. Angela Harmon for member at large. Nominations from the floor are in order. The position for the council chair, are there any nominations from the floor. Ms. Jill.

JILL HANO: I nominate Kim Basile for chairperson.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Kim Basile is nominated. Are there any other? Do you accept? Hold on. Do you accept, Kim?

KIM BASILE: Yes.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. And Ms. Angela.

ANGELA HARMON: I nominate Christi Gonzales.

NICOLE BANKS: Christi Gonzales. Do you accept?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: She's not at this meeting but she did accept.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. All right. Are there any other nominations?

ERICK TAYLOR: I nominate Ms. Washington.

NICOLE BANKS: Ms. Renoda Washington. Do you accept, Ms. Washington?

RENODA WASHINGTON: No, ma'am.

NICOLE BANKS: Are there any further nominations? All right. Hearing no further nominations for the council chairperson the nominations are closed. All right. Now we have Jill Hano for vice chair. Are there any nominations from the floor for vice chair? All right. Hearing no further nominations for vice chair nominations are closed. All right. Now we have Christi Gonzales for education employment chairperson. Are there any nominations from the floor?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I nominate Renoda Washington.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Renoda Washington is nominated. Do you accept?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes, ma'am.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Are there any further nominations? Hearing no further nominations, the nominations are closed for education, employment and inclusion chair. All right. Now Ms. Brooke Stewart for self-determination, community inclusion chair. Are there any nominations from the floor? All right. Hearing no nominations from the floor for the self-determination and community inclusion chairperson is closed. And Ms. Angela Harmon for member at large. Is there any nominations from the floor? All right. Hearing no nominations from the floor, the member at

large nominations are closed. Okay. So our nominations go as follows. We have the nominations for the chair and that is Ms. Kim Basile and Ms. Christi Gonzales. All right. And our nominations for vice chair is Jill Hano. The nominations for education and inclusion is Ms. Renoda Washington.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: And Christi Gonzales.

NICOLE BANKS: I'm sorry. And Christi Gonzales. And then the member at large Angela Harmon. And the SDCI chair is Brooke Stewart. So according to article 6 section 2 of the bylaws all officers shall be elected by the majority of the council at the July meeting to serve for 2 years effective October 1st. If there is no objection the election voting method will be by unanimous consent if there is only one candidate for the position. Otherwise, the vote will be roll call for multiple candidates. Hearing none, the vote of election will proceed. So the election for the chair position, the vote requires for the election get the majority vote. The candidate is Kim Basile. If you are in favor of Ms. Basile when your name is called, you're going to say yes. If you are opposed, you're going to say no. And if you abstain, abstain.

MARY TARVER: Can we like have an introduction of the people who it is or we're not having any discussion about it or what?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Point of order. The way that we're doing the election I don't think that that's right. So if you go with one candidate and one candidate gets the majority of the vote then they automatically, people aren't choosing between the two. Like it seems like you should say I want this candidate one or candidate two.

JILL HANO: That's how we did it in 2021.

NICOLE BANKS: As per our Parliamentarian I'm going to let her explain how the voting goes.

NICOLE LEARSON: The voting has to be by voice. You call the nominees one at a time since this is not a ballot vote. If it were a ballot vote. But according to the public meetings law you cannot have a ballot vote. So you vote them one at a time in the order in which they are nominated. If you want this person, you vote yes, if not you vote no. The first person to receive a majority will be the person elected.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So how did we go with the order the way that we're going where we're voting for Ms. Basile whenever it was the committee's recommendation? That's right. I'm sorry.

NICOLE LEARSON: There was no candidate for council chairperson because the person declined. Now the nominees are according to what was nominated from the floor and in that order that's how you all will vote via roll call.

NICOLE BANKS: We have our roll call voting started with Ms. Kim Basile. Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: I'm calling everybody. So Ms. Airhart. Dr. Barovechio. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Cosse. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain, no. Ms. Egle. Ms. Gonzales. Ms. Hagan. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Hano, yes. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Harmon, no. Ms. Hymel. Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan, yes. Dr. McKee. Ms. Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Polotzola, no. Ms. Richard.

MELINDA RICHARD: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Richard, no. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Rocca abstains. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Stewart, no. Ms. Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Tarver, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Taylor, no. Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, no. Ms. Webb. Dr. Wilson. Three yeses, eight noes, one abstention.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. So the noes have it. Kim Basile is not elected. We're going to move onto the next nomination, Ms. Christi Gonzales. We'll do a roll

call vote. Ms. Airhart. Dr. Barovechio. Ms. Basile.

KIM BASILE: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Basile, no. Ms. Cosse. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain, yes. Ms. Egle. Ms. Gonzales. Ms. Hagan. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Hano, no. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms. Hymel. Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan, yes. Dr. McKee. Ms.

Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Polotzola, yes. Ms. Richard.

MELINDA RICHARD: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Richard, yes. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Rocca, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Stewart, yes. Ms. Tarver.

MARY TARVER: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Tarver, no. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Taylor, no. Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb. Dr. Wilson. Eight yeses, four noes.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. The yeses have it and Christi Gonzales is elected as the chair of the DD Council. Congratulations. All right. For vice chair, Jill Hano. If there's no objection Jill Hano is elected for vice chair. Hearing none, Jill is elected for the vice chair of the DD Council. Congratulations, Jill.

JILL HANO: Thank you.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. And the position for the SDIC self-determination-- I'm sorry. The education and employment committee.

AMY DEAVILLE: She just won chair so there was another nomination from the floor, Ms. Washington.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. So for education and inclusion will be Ms. Renoda Washington. If there's no

objection Ms. Renoda Washington is elected for the education and employment chair of the DD Council. Congratulations, Ms. Washington. All right. Our member at large. I'm sorry. The SDIC chair is Ms. Stewart. If there's no objections? All right. Hearing none, Ms. Brooke Stewart is our new chair of the self-determination and inclusion committee of the DD Council. Congratulations, Ms. Stewart. So our member at large is Ms. Angela Harmon. Is there any objections? Hearing no objections, Ms. Angela Harmon is our member at large for the DD Council. Congratulations, Ms. Angela. All right.

So if there is no objection the meeting will recess for 15 minutes, and we will reconvene and start at 10:32.

Come to order. And now the committee is going to be-- our next item of business is the report of Act 378 subcommittee.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. The Act 378 subcommittee met yesterday. We do not have any recommendations for the council to consider. We did spend time reviewing fiscal year 23 fourth quarter data for programs within the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral Health and Aging and Adult Services through the Arc of Louisiana. These reports can be found linked in our committee agenda on the council meeting's web page if you would like to review. We had a lot of good discussion about various topics. There were some concerns for the local governing entities or LGEs that had not expended all of their funds. However, it was noted that this was not the final report and all invoices and services have not been processed at the time the reports were created. We should have a better picture of actual expenditures at our October meeting when we receive the year-end reports.

There was also a discussion about Acadiana Area Human Service district not contributing enough to the developmental disabilities services they offer. It was explained that the additional funding was received for a special project which inflated their state general fund amount, but that funding was never used. They were working with the department to reconcile this issue, which would show that they were actually in

compliance with Act 73. And just so you know Act 73 requires that each human service district or LGE spend 9 percent of their state general funds on developmental disabilities services.

So when discussing the state personal assistance plan or SPAs there were some concerns noted for race and income being asked on the application process. Some felt this may cause people to not want to apply. We did find out that the income portion was a requirement, but these concerns would be brought back to OAAS to develop the application. The SPAs report will also start including information about how many people on the waiting list are receiving services from other sources.

We also discussed the need for individuals with co-occurring diagnosis and needs. The department work would be the Arc of Louisiana, and I think that's the OCDD work with the Arc of Louisiana to develop a guide-- it was actually Department of Health because all of their agencies, to develop a guide that should be released next week that will help families and individuals with disabilities navigate the disability system. It will provide information about resources available and how and where to access them. We also discussed concerns for the OCDD resource center. The website made it difficult to locate information for the resource center and no 800 number was provided. We urged the department to include an 800 number so no one would incur long-distance charges when calling for help.

We were also informed the department was looking to make updates to their website to make it more user friendly. Lastly, there was a lot of questions about the Act 378 program, what the Act 378 programs were and what the eligibility requirements are. So department representatives stated they would create a document for the next quarterly meeting that would give a brief overview of each service. And that concludes the report.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you, Bambi, for the reports. Are there any questions from the council? Any public comment? All right. This report requires no action and will be placed on file. All right. Now the next item of business is our Self-determination and Community Inclusion Committee. The chair recognizes

Ms. Brooke Stewart for her report.

BROOKE STEWART: The Self-determination and Community Inclusion Committee met yesterday and has one recommendation to present to the council. The committee discussed the recent audit that was completed on Families Helping Families of New Orleans which found multiple concerns spanning the past two fiscal years. Bank account reconciliations not being completed regularly and accurately. Operating on lines of credit at or near the limit for much of the year. Overdraft fees being charged. Many being due to payroll being drafted from an account with insufficient funds. Lack of supporting documentation on hand such as invoices and grant documentation. Receivables not being tracked which led to invoices going unpaid. Insufficient methods for tracking and recording employees' receivables such as loans and pay advances. Payroll taxes for an employee went unpaid for a year. Failure to submit an annual financial report to the legislative auditor within six months of yearend.

We also reviewed the corrective action plan that was submitted to the council staff and had the executive director Aisha Johnson in attendance to answer questions and explain what actions the center is taking to address these numerous concerns. While Ms. Jackson did discuss many of the changes being implemented to address these concerns the committee still expressed concerns for the operations and management of the center. Thus the Self-determination and Community Inclusion Committee recommends the council continue its contract with Families Helping Families of New Orleans at its current funding level but be required-- okay. To stipulate that the reoccurring funds made to Aisha be dispersed and monthly reconciliations be sent to the council and the nonrecurring portion be only used to pay down debit. So quarterly reports submitted to the committee and council staff detailing the concerns noted in the fiscal year 2021 and 2022 audit and actions taken to address and mitigate those concerns. Data to support those changes should also be included such as copies of updated policies and procedures, findings on completed updated analysis as recommended in the audit, any trends identified, etc. Leadership assessment to

determine current needs with management including all directors, assistant directors and supervisors. And a detailed and specific plan of the actions that are being taken to address all identified needs. The committee offers this recommendation to the full council for consideration.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you.

BROOKE STEWART: We also received a lot of great updates from the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities for OCDD, Department of Health and Medicaid. A lot of the information shared is included in their agency report and our committee specific report linked in the agenda. I encourage you all to take a look at these reports.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Thank you, Brooke. All right. Since this motion is coming from a committee it does not require a second. Is there any debate or question from council members? Ms. Angela, you're recognized.

ANGELA HARMON: The only concern I had I wanted to make a motion for the stipulation of them receiving their funds. On reoccurring funds are sent in with their bank statements monthly. Like you know what I'm saying, so we get an actual view. Does that make sense to you guys?

NICOLE BANKS: What you're saying is we are asking for bank statements for every single month so we can see how they are spending the funds, correct?

ANGELA HARMON: Right.

JILL HANO: So I have a question.

NICOLE BANKS: Jill, you have the floor.

JILL HANO: So if the DDC gets monthly bank statements, then the staff gets bank statements. We as council members on the quarterly report would just say okay, this was August, this was September. Get two months off you guys.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Kim, you're recognized.

KIM BASILE: I think Angela what she's trying to say is we don't necessarily need the bank statements, we want to see bank reconciliations to make sure that they are being done on a timely manner and not piled up and doing three and four months at a time. Is that?

ANGELA HARMON: Yeah. It doesn't get like it was previously.

CHERI CRAIN: But wouldn't that be included in their report that they're sending on the corrective action plans and what's being taken. Are you wanting it spelled out specifically? Okay.

KIM BASILE: Is there anyone here from that Families Helping Families that I can ask questions? Okay. That's very disappointing that no one could be here to answer my questions. I did go over some of the financial stuff yesterday and prior to because I too received that anonymous email. I know yesterday she talked about a 30 something thousand-dollar fundraiser that was unable to happen for two years because of Covid and in the last financial records, actually for two years running, contributions and donations ran 30,600 but the expenses for fundraising were 57-58,000. So it cost that center 27,000-dollars to raise money which didn't sit well with me.

JILL HANO: How much?

KIM BASILE: They lost 27,000 fundraising. They also had 4,400-dollars in traveling meetings and conferences when they said that they were working from home, and they were trying to rebuild and that they weren't at the office. There's 74,000 in occupancy and office supplies. Now those were lumped in together and I'm assuming occupancy is rent. And it's my understanding that they're doing a like kind exchange with possibly the school board, so they have no rent. So does that mean that there was 74,000-dollars' worth of office supplies. I was concerned that they hired an accounting firm that has no experience with nonprofits. That would have been my first question. And if you don't have experience with nonprofits, then why are you hired. I don't know who did this management report that's dated June 27th, but there's no such thing as cost of goods sold for this nonprofit which is a line item on here. And I'm just touching on big stuff. Office supplies, again, on here is a negative 79,000-dollars which makes no sense. Expenses are not negative. Employee advances on here are about 7,000-dollars. They have a negative loan repayment which that's not a thing. They have negative furniture and equipment which is also not a thing. Like I said, I was doing a quick and dirty. They have positive direct deposit liabilities which I'm guessing that

means that's payroll owed to employees. But there's negative payroll taxes due, federal payroll taxes. And if a negative is on a liability that means it's a positive and it's owed back to them. So why are you stating you have money owed back to you for federal payroll taxes. They have a direct deposit payable, that's a negative. SBA, which I don't know what that is, is a negative under liabilities. There are just a lot of problems with a lot of things that were said yesterday and a lot of problems with the financial numbers.

JILL HANO: This is where you tell everyone you were a CPA before Caroline was born.

KIM BASILE: I was a CPA before Caroline was born. So I don't vote or do anything with Families Helping Families because I sit on Bayou Land's board. I wanted to bring this to y'all's attention and then y'all can discuss.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. So I'm going to step my position down as the chair because I want to weigh in on this and I'm going to pass it to Jill just to run the meeting while I weigh in.

JILL HANO: Because I know nothing.

NICOLE BANKS: Just right quick.

MARY TARVER: She wants you to go sit where she's at.

NICOLE BANKS: We have to actually physically. Just one minute. I don't know if they can hear me or not. What Kim is saying is very concerning to me. That is too much money. I'm sorry. That's too much money not being accounted for that's lost that doesn't add up, doesn't make sense. And it's our Families Helping Families that we fought hard for our people. This cannot continue to happen. Are they fired or? Cause I will fire them like literally. I don't want a corrective action plan for these people. They have messed up way too much money. We have to figure out and find somebody else to run this cause this is unacceptable. This is way too much money that is not accounted for, that's just loss. And I don't even see the report. I'm just looking at what Kim is saying. That's alarming y'all. It's too much. It's too much. So that's my weigh in on this situation. I don't want to work with Families Helping Families of New Orleans

if our budget and our money is going to be done like this. Okay. I'll take my chair back.

NICOLE LEARSON: No. No. You sit until it's voted.

JILL HANO: The chair recognizes Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: Did you say how much? Can you repeat that again.

KIM BASILE: Repeat what?

ERICK TAYLOR: The whole thing.

KIM BASILE: Well, I won't go through the whole thing. I'll say the one that caught me first was the fundraising that they took in, and I'm talking round numbers, they took in 33,000-dollars in fundraising, but they spent 57,000 to earn that 33. So they lost money. That was one thing. And just the coding of stuff. I'm sure it's a coding issue, but if you're an accounting firm you know how to code. That's basic. And if they hired an accounting firm that does not know how to do nonprofit accounting they shouldn't have been hired. It's definitely a management issue. But to what you said we cannot hire or fire anybody from New Orleans. But you can vote not to fund them and then it would be up to their board and their executive director to go from there.

NICOLE BANKS: I know we can't hire and fire anybody. But pulling funding away because it's not being allocated correctly, yeah.

JILL HANO: Okay. Ms. Crain has a comment. You're recognized by me.

CHERI CRAIN: Thank you. So yes, yesterday she was here, the director, and she answered to a lot of these questions. And yes, they did let go of their bookkeeper. So I think that, I mean, I understand Kim's concerns and everything but a lot of this was taken care of and talked about yesterday. She did address some things. You know, the committee talked about it, we made some stipulations. And I get everybody's concern, but I think that if it was that concerning you should have been there, and you could weigh in and it would open our eyes to some things that we did not see from other people.

KIM BASILE: My daughter was in the hospital.

CHERI CRAIN: I get it. We all have issues and everything. The only thing is we have these

subcommittees for a reason and now we're spending another what 45 minutes or so on a topic that we did a recommendation. I get it, but I just think that we need to refocus on what the recommendation is and if we're going to go with it or not going to go with it. And give everybody the opportunity who wasn't here, you know, to get tidbits. And I value your expertise as a CPA. I get it. That is some insight on it. Unfortunately, we didn't have the insight yesterday when we made the recommendation. I just don't want to keep going on and on about the same thing and just kind of get on track and, you know, make the motion, deny it, whatever. Just my input.

JILL HANO: Okay. Brooke, you're recognized.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you. So from yesterday understanding that and then looking over it last night and speaking with people on the council they were funded around 56,000 as their original contract and then we got more money and gave them an extra 50,000 as like a supplement but their deliverables were not increased with that. So I would like to just bring it to the council that we possibly just lower that back to the 56,000. They can use that to pay down or reconcile bills and we split that 50,000 amongst the other eight Families Helping Families since we do have to spend that money as Amy said yesterday. We still have to spend that money. So give that to the other Families Helping Families and then lower them cause that was a supplement. They're not promised this. They did show us that they could not keep their end of the contract yesterday. But just with the more information I got, like after she said everything, I was able to look at that blue folder because that was a lot of information she did give to us. I would just like to maybe we can lower that to 56,000, spread that 50K amongst the other Families Helping Families since she did not do her end of the contract. There should be some financial repercussions given. So use that 56,000 that she is getting to reconcile debits that they have or whatever else. Not sure how to put that in a motion.

JILL HANO: If this is the will of the council y'all can make that motion after we vote on what is on the board. Okay. I'm being told that Bambi had her hand up first.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yeah. I just, I kind of disagree with Brooke. I made this comment yesterday. Is that we have to remember the purpose of this is to serve the families across the state. So what will happen essentially is that other parts of the state will get more funding, and New Orleans will not be getting that funding if we go by what Brooke said. And I would rather have, if the council thinks it's so egregious that we need to make some transition in the center, give the funding to another organization, let them reorganize. But I would like for the state, for that part of the state to have the same funding that the other parts of the state has. So I think that's a decision we just need to kind of talk more about.

BROOKE STEWART: I just wanted to say this, I was making--

JILL HANO: I'm sorry. But I seen Ms. Basile's hand up for a minute now. So Ms. Basile, if it's okay with y'all, Ms. Basile, you have the floor.

KIM BASILE: Thank you. Just a thought. Instead of pulling funding you can always give them the full amount with the stipulation that the nonrecurring funds be used to pay down old debit. So stipulate how they use that money that they pay down their liabilities so that they don't get further in debit. And then that way they can still get their full funding but they're using it to pay down their debit.

JILL HANO: Okay. Does anymore council members have questions?

BROOKE STEWART: I just have a comment. I just was making that recommendation. I don't want any families to go without the funding. But with reading the letter that was submitted, the anonymous letter that was submitted a lot of them mentioned that they were going to the neighboring Families Helping Families that does not receive any of the DD Council's. So that's why I just mentioned that we could, you know, I understand that there's one in close proximity that serves a lot of the New Orleans area. All this is coming based off the information given yesterday. Of course, I do want all families to get programs and services with our funds.

JILL HANO: I saw Erick's hand.

ERICK TAYLOR: I think it still need to be a

stipulation put in place because this situation is what, two years. This has been a two-year thing. And it should be stipulation put in place that-- I know this we need to help families and I get that Bambi, but at the same time it needs to be fixed and something needs to be put in place so if they do this again hey, we're not going to come to the table the second time and say okay, we're going to keep giving you a chance. And we lost a lot of money at this center that's unaccountable for.

JILL HANO: Any public comment?

SPEAKER: You still have one.

JILL HANO: I'm sorry.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. So this is just clarification. What we're talking about is a letter and an email that was sent that everybody, you know, we didn't get in our original packet. So some people don't know what was in the email and what was in the committee meeting. I just read that, and I read hers so that's kind of where we are right now with this, with the clarification why people don't know exactly what is going on. This is why because everybody didn't get that in the packet. Only the people that was in that committee.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you for clarifying.

NICOLE BANKS: Yeah. Just wanted to clarify and clear that up for everybody.

LAUREN WOMACK: I just wanted to say I heard her speaking yesterday and I don't know how anyone else felt, but I think it's gross mismanagement. And she doesn't, if she was coming to me for a job interview all of that stuff that she gave me I would not give her executive director job. I mean, that is the impression that I got, and I didn't know any of this stuff. I didn't know about any of that. But I didn't feel confident that she was taking ownership and actually moving forward. It was a lot of nice words, but I didn't feel like she gave concrete and that's two years. So I don't know. If there's a way that you can transition and maybe open up the contract to another agency they can go for it again, but I would want to see for those families give them the best option that they have. Now I don't even know if that's possible, but I just, I didn't feel like she was taking it

seriously enough.

JILL HANO: In the interest of time my last member comment will have to be from Erick because we still have to get to our public comment, and I know we are only on the second committee.

ERICK TAYLOR: My thing is she was here yesterday. There's nobody here today to address the whole board. If you was here one day to address the committee, why nobody's here to address the whole board and let them get an understanding what's going on too. I don't see nobody here. So that's another concern to me that if something, if you looking to straighten out something and to get it back on track there should be somebody here today to be ready to answer any questions to fix whatever's going on. Now grant you I get that we're here to serve the people. We're not here to just take. But we also here to make sure things run smoothly and the way it goes and not just okay, we're going to push it under the table, we got away this time and just let go. Somebody should be here speaking for that center.

JILL HANO: Okay. Now I will proceed to, I have Mr. Charlie which had you been at YLF you would be considered (inaudible).

CHARLIE MICHEL: All right. Let me just say how awkward this is for me today. But I'm going to speak because I think all of you have good points and you're all right. The question is how do we converge all those thoughts and make something happen. First off, to start off with a very unpleasant statement, I knew when I started this job and I started because our center was having some of the same problems. Not as egregious as these allegations, but some of the same kinds of management issues. When DD Council got involved, it was (inaudible). You have to have new leadership. You have to have a new board or you're going to lose your money. Plus, if they didn't do that, DD Council, it wasn't Amy, it was different leaders, they went after other funding sources as well. It would have shut the doors down. I came in, and while I'm not all that and a bag of chips, I was new, so I was trying to do what needed to be done. So what I'm thinking is perhaps in order to make sure that the families are served like they are in region three and were before hopefully, make sure that the families are

served, make sure that we don't have a center shutdown which will reflect badly on the council and the other centers. What if we did something to set them up for success. If it's bad leadership, it's been going on for two years based on the audits, if that's the case, give them a shot to be successful. And let them know, I think it was this gentleman back here, this younger man back here that said something about tell them if this doesn't work then we're going to do this. Because one of the things is give them the money cause it's not a debtor's prison. If you don't give them the money and they're not paying their bills they'll never be able to pay the bills. So they're set up for failure on that. But put some limits on how they're going to do. As somebody mentioned, use that extra 56,000-dollars to pay down their debit because they have a huge credit line. And my concern is if they don't do that then they're set up for failure next year if that money doesn't come because these are nonrecurring funds. We can't use it for salary and electricity and telephones and expect to survive after the fact. So do that. And as far as getting the bank statement, it's a good idea in theory but one thing major wrong with it. It doesn't tell you how we spend the money. It says check number 1457 \$3,412. It doesn't tell you, unless you have the hot link, you can't see the checks. But you can get a reconciliation report from when they do it. I think I heard her say she does Quick Books. It's a touch of a button and you get a report on reconciliation. It shows the beginning balance, the end balance, the number of debits and credits. So you've got that.

And the other thing is on Quick Books if you help them to set it up and you delineate your expenses by class. And like I said, DD Council is a class. So at the end of every month before I do my invoice I go in and I do a report by class, so it tells me we paid this much in salaries from DD Council. We paid this much in travel from DD Council. Whatever it was we paid. So I can see this is how much money we're getting from DD Council this month. This how much money we spent this month. It will give her a visual representation so that she can be more successful. So rather than throwing that down and cutting them off at the knees

help them be more successful. But sorry, Aisha, but to be fair if she doesn't take that opportunity then you have the hammer and cut it off at the knees. Because you can't afford to be spending more money. And if you're concerned that the families aren't being served (inaudible). So anyway, set them up for success. And every concern you have, give them a deliverable, if you will, that has to come in with the monthly invoice.

JILL HANO: I'm sorry. Your time is up. Your time was up just as you said cut them off at the knee. I was like well speaking of. Ma'am, I never knew your name, but you're recognized.

MARILYN THORTON: Thank you so much. I'm Dr. Marilyn Thornton, the executive director of Families Helping Families Greater Baton Rouge. And I appreciate hearing all of the discussions. And obviously it impacts what we do. We're all EDs of Families Helping Families. I want to echo what Dr. Michel, this young man, had to say. I am starting my third year as executive director. I came under after someone else had been there for 14 years and I came in with the understanding that I need to know how this organization has operated, needs to operate in order to go forward. So it allowed me to take an understanding from a very fundamental level with the organization. One thing after reviewing some of what had happened even yesterday and before concerning, and I'm going to say real quick, real fast. Without having a bookkeeper on board you got a problem. The financials, because of the contracts that are coming in, you have to have a knowledge of that. Now when I looked at, because I dealt with organizations as nonprofits as a consultant before coming there, there's some fundamental things that you have to understand and know as you move forward to make sure you're running the organization. If you don't have the support there to do that all kinds of things could happen. You can open up.

Now when I looked at the act and how Families Helping Families was initially set up with parents coming in to run the organization and not having some of those pieces there, you're already set up for failure if you don't have those basic components there. If you want to set up an organization for success you need to make sure the funding is going to help support

that. Not just say we want to have the families served, yes. But they have to have the foundation and organization to be able to serve the families to go out. So I saw a lot of pieces and elements that unless you have that support there you have challenges and don't know how to get it when everybody's trying to come after you because of the finances. But very key, having a bookkeeper and someone, there are other elements there that the council needs to make sure that those pieces are available so that people can succeed with the nature of this particular organization as a nonprofit. You have major nonprofits out there who are, sometimes we have the tendency to measure all nonprofits with the same stamp and that may not necessarily be a good thing. I do have a lot more but let me sit down. But thank you so much.

JILL HANO: Thank you. You're recognized.

NICOLE FLORES: Nicole Flores, Families Helping Families Acadiana director. Again, mirror what they're saying. Having the support is key. Having the direction and corrective action plan. But having that bookkeeper, the treasurer and the board to support you to make sure you're as transparent as possible and accountable are key. So I know they had a new bookkeeper. They had some things in place. But like you said, not cutting them off at the knees and giving them a chance to succeed now that they've had some things in place.

JILL HANO: Okay.

ERICK TAYLOR: They have nine other centers they could have reached out to y'all say hey, we need to set this up and line this right and you need to help. You could have did that.

MARILYN THORTON: We're meeting weekly. Every Monday we all meet together. But sometimes if you've ever had a problem that seemed overwhelming it's hard to verbalize it.

CHARLIE MICHEL: I'll be honest with you, I didn't know, I don't think we knew that any of this stuff was going on. But now that it's out in the open it's fresher and you can address it and it won't be so hard. After she met with the committee yesterday it won't be so hard for her to share that with us. And we have a good working relationship. It's airing out. I think

it's going to help. If y'all have support and we can provide some support for her the chances of that center's success are far greater than they would have been.

ERICK TAYLOR: You came in the room and if you didn't get the money today you came in the room today, sir, and you was like hey, I will help anyway I can either way if I don't get it or if I do get it, you said I will help either way. That's reaching anyway you have to reach.

CHARLIE MICHEL: And I agree. But the difference there is me not getting that grant didn't pose a problem because in my mind I knew the work was going to get done by someone and we're always about helping each other. That was part of our dynamic as Families Helping Families, we want to help each other and help everybody who shares the same mission that we do. It's different with her.

JILL HANO: Okay. Great conversation, but it's time to call the question. We may have a motion. So the question is is about Self-determination and Community Inclusion recommends the council continue its contract with FHF of NOLA at its current funding but require the following provided such as quarterly reports to the committee and council staff detailing FY21 and 22 audits and actions to migrate those concerns. The data to support changes should also be included such as updated policies and findings and then we vote. We are proposing a leadership assessment to determine current needs in management including director, assistant director, supervisor and detailed plans of actions that are being taken to address all needs. So now it's time to vote. So can Ebony take a roll call vote. Or can actually Ebony explain what the yea is and what the nay is.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. So a yes vote you're in agreement with the motion that's on the screen. A no vote means you're not in agreement. Can you make it bigger.

BROOKE STEWART: And then you can amend after a no vote?

EBONY HAVEN: Well, after everyone's done voting. I'm calling everybody just for the record. Ms. Airhart. Ms. Banks.

NICOLE BANKS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Banks, yes. Dr. Barovechio. Ms. Basile.

KIM BASILE: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Basile abstains. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham, yes. Ms. Cosse. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain, yes. Ms. Egle. Ms. Gonzales. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Hagan, no. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Harmon, no. Ms. Hymel. Ms. Jordan. Dr. McKee. Ms. Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Polotzola, no. Ms. Richard.

MELINDA RICHARD: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Richard, no. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Rocca, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Stewart, no. Ms. Tarver.

MARY TARVER: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Tarver, no. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Taylor, no. Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, no. Ms. Webb. Dr. Wilson. We have four yeses, eight noes, one abstention.

JILL HANO: So the noes have it. This motion fails. So is there another motion the council would like to offer?

BROOKE STEWART: Yes. I would like to make a motion to amend. Oh, make a motion. I want the motion to be the same that we wrote but I want to add that we use the funds to reconcile debits or pay down debits.

AMY DEAVILLE: Okay. When you say the additional money.

BROOKE STEWART: The nonrecurring portion.

AMY DEAVILLE: And repeat that part for me, please.

BROOKE STEWART: The nonrecurring portion of their

funding be used to pay down debits.

AMY DEAVILLE: Just a comment. I might need for you to have a plan B. Their money is state general funds and I'll have to verify that they can use those funds to pay down that debit in that way. Given that they are a nonprofit and they are not a state government entity.

BROOKE STEWART: Okay. Thank you.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I have just a question. So does it specify in their contract what they're allowed to use the funds for?

AMY DEAVILLE: They use the funds for our statement of work for their deliverable. So it's to make sure that they deliver what we're asking them to do. They don't spend it on...

MELISSA BAYHAM: So they would have to show--

JILL HANO: There is a motion on the floor. I'm so sorry, Melissa.

MELISSA BAYHAM: That's okay. I'm just thinking about contracts and that's why I wondered what was in their actual contract because to me then you would have to show how the debit was used to pay--

JILL HANO: Can we hold this off, the debate, Ms. Bayham. Because I really need a second for Ms. Stewart's motion. Does anyone second?

ANGELA HARMON: I'll second.

JILL HANO: Ms. Harmon. Okay. So the motion has been moved and seconded. Now we can continue our debate. I'm going to call Melissa first since I had to cut you off.

MELISSA BAYHAM: No, that was my fault. I just, I'm not familiar of any government contracts where you can pay debits but, I mean, I could definitely be wrong. I definitely think that that needs to be researched.

JILL HANO: Okay. Thank you. Ms. Mary, you have the floor.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. I wondered about our council staff, have we, has somebody gone there, does their board know what's going on? And how, if we are putting some stipulations who on the council staff would be helping to make sure that those things are happening?

EBONY HAVEN: So Rekeesha Branch is the program

monitor. Brenton Andrus is the program manager over all the FHF centers. So they would be the ones to monitor. And we do monitoring and audits ourselves, Mary, but we don't go if the legislative auditor goes. We're mostly looking for things that are on the council's deliverables. And then we'll do like random customer service calls while we're there, but we also interview the staff and interview the executive director to determine like to allow her to do her own self-evaluation, but also to get information from the staff on how things are running at the center. So I know yesterday Rekeesha announced that she and Brenton will be doing a roadshow so they're going to be going to all the Families Helping Families centers in the next couple of months. They're hoping to have their report to the council and to the Self-determination Committee by October. But that's kind of like where the monitoring happens.

MARY TARVER: I just wonder if we need to stipulate that our staff is going to do some extra something. Something extra. We wait till a quarterly report we're, you know, at the state that they're in now as it appears I don't know that, I wonder, Brenton, is there something you feel like y'all could do to help make this work out better. Like they're saying, you don't want them to fail. Is there something that they're lacking that there's something that we need to be doing from the council's standpoint I guess is my question.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I mean, I guess what I had in my head based on the conversation yesterday as far as monitoring would go, and certainly, I mean, it takes time to write a contract depending on what you want and how you want it and all the details. Certainly the more specific you are, the more we have to go off of. If you're not very specific, then we just kind of determine what we think should be included.

I will say one thing, we don't have anyone on the council that has been a CPA in the past. So that's why Ebony stated we rely on these legislative audit reports to provide us a picture of how fiscally sound a center is because we don't do that. I can't even say I'm great at my own personal budget. I know where my deficiencies are, okay. So we do look more at certain deliverable aspects. But what I had in my mind based

on some of this information when we were writing the contract was, we would go through what the audit says and a lot of the responses that the director gave you and the committee yesterday were responses to a lot of the concerns in the audit but I felt like there could be more details. I like the details because the devil's in the details. So we wanted more information of what is that specific policy. Who is responsible for those things. And that stuff would be reported to us monthly. So if we are looking at data to support changes so we would want those reconciliation statements because that was one of the things they mentioned was a concern. We would put that that that would be submitted monthly to staff as part of our monitoring process.

Some other stuff I had thought about was she had made the comment I think she had a plan or that center had a plan to pay off debits by December of this year. So at least until December until that debit is paid off a monthly report of what progress you're making to pay that, what was your balance, where is it at now, are you still on track. Sort of that kind of idea is what I had in my head. The quarterly report would then be on the responsibility of the center as well because you're giving me this stuff monthly, but I still have that accountability in mind. So it's on you to develop, with all that stuff you sent me monthly, you put it in a quarterly report that's then going to go to the Self-determination Committee. And I have an expectation, I don't know if it was going to be something to put in the contract, I don't know, but that someone from the center would then report on that. Because sort of the situation we have right here, you have a lot of accusations, you have a lot of concerns. We can't answer those questions. We can tell you what our concerns are just as your concerns are. But I can't tell you what you're doing. So it would be helpful for someone from that center to come and provide that quarterly report.

As far as the leadership assessment, the idea that I had in my mind is that this would be a third party. Not someone on staff, not your board president. This would be someone else outside of your agency that comes in and talks to everyone that is responsible for any

management in that center and do a thorough assessment of where those deficiencies are. And then give me your plan that you've developed with your board on how you will address those things. And then from there based on what your plan is then we have another set of monitoring that's going to kick in that I want to make sure you're following that path as well. But that's just a very off the top of my head because I don't know what you're going to do so I haven't put too much thought into how to proceed.

MARY TARVER: Are you talking about a contract when you're saying, you know, from monthly that that's going to be written down somewhere. Is this some new deliverables or contract that you have with them that you're about to put in place after these things change?

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. Their contract will have to be different. If you decide to continue contracting with them you would have these additional things. They would be deliverables, not in the deliverables in a sense of what they're doing currently. The stuff that we're monitoring currently is how many trainings you actually did, how many people you spoke with, how many referrals you made. This is going to be more focused on those particular statements or written statements. Things that they are reporting out to us. It's not necessarily that interaction with families that we're looking at. It would be addressing those concerns that have been identified. So it would be another set of deliverables so they would have a different contract than they have had in previous years. It would also be different from other centers. Because all of our centers get the same contract. They all have the same responsibilities as far as what we're asking them to do.

KIM BASILE: Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the board is seated according to their bylaws? Because I'm going back to Bayou Land. Their board stayed the same for 20 years. No new members, no one rolled off and they had checked out. So I don't know if that could be this case. They could be in total compliance. I have no clue.

BRENTON ANDRUS: It would be the board is responsible for making sure they're in compliance. But whenever we do our audits and whenever we do our

in-person visits we look at those bylaws to the best that they're written, and we try to make a determination if they are in compliance which is why we do try to ask information about your board specifically what box they're checking off as far as the makeup. But some centers as far as bylaws go, some are more specific than others and so you have to compare.

JILL HANO: Bambi.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Do we have the information on what was done with Bayou Land whenever we had these issues?

KIM BASILE: We got a new board and the board fired--

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: The council say like go back and say this is what the council required. I mean, it seems like it's a similar type situation and it worked pretty well. I mean, if y'all okay with Charlie.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I mean, we would have to go back into records from whenever that was. I was here for that.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I was here too.

BRENTON ANDRUS: My recollection is--

CHARLIE MICHEL: (Inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: Right. So we initially had concerns. We brought it up in the meetings. We discussed that these are the concerns and we put in an action plan that said these are the things that you're going to address. Whenever we still saw those concerns were there the director at the time and myself, we had a meeting with the board at Bayou Land and basically said that at that time their board was not in compliance, we had concerns there. And we did not feel that at the time leadership was effective and we didn't think the concerns that we had were taken seriously. And it was basically if our funding was going to continue for that center, we needed different leadership. And the board did resign, the director resigned, and we have this young man that everybody keeps saying that came in. And then certainly if you were going that much into the weeds Charlie can answer, but basically, we had what those concerns were and Charlie developed a plan whenever he came on board that basically said these are the concerns, this what I'm doing, this is how we're going to achieve it. This was

his kind of timeframe and what he thought those turnarounds can happen. And certainly there were massive changes within that center especially when you look at the financial stability of that center. But that's what we did in that situation based on where we were with that center at that time.

JILL HANO: Okay. Are there any more questions from this table? Any public comment?

BROOKE STEWART: Is it possible when things like this come up that we, so to know what we did in the past to kind of mimic our decisions in the past. You know, so we have like a standard, consistent. Cause it sounds like we did something, and they revamped the board, got a new ED but it wasn't as drastic as what's going on now with New Orleans. So I just don't want us to have like irregular direct decisions. To be a new member I didn't know that this had happened in the past so it would be nice to know historically what happened, what decision came from the council so we can kind of be consistent.

JILL HANO: Any other questions? Okay. Public comment? Yes.

MARILYN THORTON: What you're asking about is called precedent. So that's the precedent that is established by the council. The council will have to take that into consideration, but you have to make sure that the action was closer in similarity to what previously occurred. So you do take that into consideration. The other thing that I will caution you about is that all of the Families Helping Families are independent organizations. They have a life connected with their incorporation so you can't overstep what is the responsibility of the board of directors that the state holds the board accountable for as well. You can make the suggestion based on the obligation you have in funding but be careful of the decisions you make that does not allow the board to take on its responsibility for the organization.

JILL HANO: Dr. Charlie.

CHARLIE MICHEL: I'm going to just suggest that you put it in writing as a procedure or policy a guideline or something because as the staff changes, as the council changes the only way to keep continuity is if it's in writing. And I don't know that changing the

rules after the game has begun is a good thing. So start the game now and make the rules now so that way no matter who's in charge, who's working for the council, who's working on the council it will be the same. And do it for all members, not just Families Helping Families. This grant that you gave out this morning, if I would have gotten that grant and I didn't do my job there should be something in place to show how the council will deal with that.

JILL HANO: Okay. Are you ready for the question? Okay. The question is on the screen. So I call your attention to the screen. And then I call for a roll call vote. Eb, you're up.

EBONY HAVEN: So a yes vote would be to accept the motion as it is on the screen. A no vote would be not to accept. Ms. Airhart. Ms. Banks.

NICOLE BANKS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Banks, yes. Dr. Barovechio. Ms. Basile.

KIM BASILE: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Basile abstains. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham, yes. Ms. Cosse. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain, yes. Ms. Egle. Ms. Gonzales. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Hagan, yes. Ms. Harmon

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms. Hymel. Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan, abstain. Dr. McKee. Ms. Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Polotzola, yes. Ms. Richard.

MELINDA RICHARD: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Richard, yes. Mr. Rocca

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Rocca, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Stewart, yes. Ms. Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Tarver, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Taylor, yes. Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb. Dr. Wilson. Twelve yeses, two abstentions.

JILL HANO: Okay. The yeses have it. This motion passes.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Our next item of business is the report from the Education and Employment Committee. The chair recognizes Ms. Bambi Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Okay. So I am giving this report cause Dr. McKee is not able to be with us today, but she did lead the meeting yesterday. And so the Education and Employment Committee met yesterday and has one recommendation to present for the council. We received updates on contractual activities in goal three of the council's fiscal year 23 action plan. I encourage all of you to review the status update document that we received quarterly for specific updates on each activity and any documents linked in our committee agenda.

We then received an update from Louisiana Rehab Services regarding approval of the memorandum of understanding between LRS and Louisiana Department of Education which is the LDOE. The memorandum of understanding is an agreement between LRS and Department of Education that helped to better serve students in preemployment transition services which is known as preETS. Transition services and third-party provider services within the school systems. The Department of Education cannot mandate that school districts use third-party partnerships, but they are encouraging them that it is available and advise them to utilize these services. They are also providing steps to families to get those services. LRS also spoke on rate increase for supported employment. They will now get funded for job search assistance. The next step is to get that increase in the other employment sections. The hope is that the rate increase will fill LRS vacancies as well as provider vacancies.

Dr. Cade Brumley, the state superintendent of

education gave an update that included the shifted diverse learners to teaching and learning department. Networking with special education directors around the state sharing challenges and ideas. The special education fellowship program. Veterans special education directors are mentoring new special education directors. Cameras in the classroom. Ten percent upkeep amount included in the budget. Special education teacher pay. There's differentiated compensation. And then special education playbook, inclusive education and instructional strategies receiving national attention. And updating the dispute resolution process. They're commissioning an independent study and will have a report with recommendations for improvement.

The Department of Education then gave their report on the Special Education Advisory Council annual reports. Each school district submitted a report. They are linked on the Department of Education website. And the report includes links. The report will be updated on the LDOE website as new information becomes available. LDOE then spoke on cameras in the classroom. There will be a report from every school system that will include but not limited to the total allocation, the number of special education classes, the number of parent requests, the numbers of cameras purchased and the amount of money remaining. This report will be presented to BESE in August.

The governor's office spoke on the Louisiana Special School District, that was me, and there's a new superintendent announced for the special school district. He was the superintendent for the Tennessee School for the Visually Impaired. And so far, the stakeholder feedback regarding him in that role has been positive. He has implemented a lot of changes and is in the process of hiring a principal, administrators for the school for the Deaf and for the school for the visually impaired. And those announcements will be made today. I didn't say that yesterday, but I found out. So they will be made today. And that is it. Any questions?

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you. Are there any questions from the council members? Ms. Mary.

MARY TARVER: I just want to say how much I

appreciated yesterday that the superintendent was here. And I think that it's come a long way and so I just wanted to say to you, Meredith, I appreciate the work that y'all have done. And I know it's been collaborative and there's a lot of people involved but I really appreciate that and hope that you'll let him know how much we appreciated him being here.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Thanks. I will. He really appreciated the invitation and the welcome just to be able to listen and engage with this community. So I thought it was a wonderful opportunity.

MARY TARVER: Thank you.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Are there any public comment? All right. The report requires no action and will be placed on file. Our next item of business is our standing reports from our agency. The first one we have is our Human Development Center from LSU.

AMY DEAVILLE: No one's here.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. The next item of business is our report from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. The chair recognizes Ms. Melissa Bayham for your report.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Thank you. For Louisiana Rehabilitation Services the first program on our report is preemployment transition services which are our services for students with disabilities. LRS is currently providing services to approximately 3,885 students statewide which includes 50 active third-party cooperative arrangements. In vocational rehabilitation we currently have 8,572 open vocational rehabilitation cases. And 2,943 preemployment transition services cases. Just to kind of explain that. You can receive preemployment transition services through VR so that's why your top number is a little bit different. The 2,943 are people who are students who are only receiving preemployment transition services and have not applied yet for vocational rehabilitation.

JILL HANO: Wait. What number?

MELISSA BAYHAM: That's how many students we're serving, 3,885 and 2,943 only receive preemployment transition services. So if you do the math the other individuals are receiving their services through a vocational rehabilitation case. You can receive preemployment transition services prior to an application for the full vocational rehabilitation

program. We currently have 2,375 open cases of individuals with developmental disabilities. And for the last quarter we closed 97 of those individuals into competitive integrated employment. We also have our numbers for our rehabilitation employment development specialists by region. And as we discussed yesterday in the Education and Employment Committee, we have this position which is an in-house job developer in every region with the exception of region three, Houma. We have not had a qualified applicant yet for that particular region.

Our Louisiana Rehabilitation Council, which is the advisory council for LRS will be meeting on July the 27th. We currently, I'm excited to say that we have filled most of our positions on the council with the exception of the director of a federal section 121 project which is the tribal VR program. So we're still looking to fill that particular vacancy.

LRS also has an in-house benefits planner and that particular staff person assisted 55 consumers since January the 1st. And we also continue to vet individuals to Lighthouse for the Blind and LSU Human Development Center who also have work incentives planning and assistance programs. And LRS will also be, we will have our second annual national-- I'm sorry. The second annual virtual job fair which will be held on October the 11th. And it's being done in conjunction with Healthy Blue who has, again, generously sponsored the event. And so you will start to see fliers and such on that. We're working to get a QR code and things like that in order to-- losing my words.

SPEAKER: Advertise.

MELISSA BAYHAM: The QR code so you can sign up. I apologize. We also have continued our disability innovation fund project with Southern University. And we are starting to see participants for this particular project. This project is to help students and individuals with disabilities who are seeking jobs or-- I'm sorry. Job training and/or jobs in STEM fields. And that project is being held at the Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Lafayette and Monroe regions.

Also, as briefly I've stated in the Education and Employment Committee report we have increased our

supported employment milestone system payments. So vendors are compensated now it's an increase of 3,500 per participant. But one thing we're really excited about is our milestone one is now job search assistance. We were, a lot of the feedback that we received from our vendors was that they were not being compensated well enough at the beginning of the process which was difficult for recruitment and retention of their staff. And so now that's payable after one week. So they will have compensation more often throughout the process so that they can better fund their programs.

And also, we are working to also increase our rates in job readiness and placement, time limited job coaching and customized employment to be able to compensate vendors that are in those services as well. And we will have those rates out by October the 1st but we want to make sure that our staff is properly trained as well as our providers. And those services we will also be including that job search assistance to help our vendors as they are job developing for our consumers. But those are my, that's my report and I'll be happy to take any questions.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Are there any questions? Thank you, Ms. Bayham, for your report. Are there any questions from the council members? No questions from the public? All right.

SPEAKER: I just want to make a comment. Just kind of piggyback what we talked about on yesterday. According to Louisiana Believes there is 1,303 public schools, 70 school districts. I think we need to see who is in LRS is active in all of those districts. Who are you guys, you know, sponsoring or whatever you guys do. Where are you active and where are you nonactive so that we can see that all of these students are getting services. Because there is not, LRS is not active in all. It's just not. So I think that we need to see this. I mean, school is about to start. Quarterly, yes, we do meet quarterly. But before school starts, I think that we need this information. That way we can help, you know, make sure that these students are getting services. Everybody in the school district should know about LRS. Everybody.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes, ma'am.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Public comment. Dr. Michel.

CHARLIE MICHEL: I think Melissa made reference to this yesterday. When I was special ed director we used it in Lafourche Parish and for the most part it went pretty well. A lot of districts are hesitant to use it not because it's not a great program but because they don't have the match funds. After I heard you say that one of the things I was thinking is I don't exactly know where those match funds come from with the school districts, but that might be something (inaudible) for so that we can increase the availability maybe through NFP or some other process like that so that the school districts would have that and it would be allocated to that purpose. That gives you what you're asking for which is appropriate. Everybody needs to know about it, and everybody needs to have access to it. But then the problem comes up that that school system has the money. Y'all have the people to do it. So we need to look at that. But I think most of the pushback on that is the fact that there are just no available funds. Especially in the areas that are rural, and they operate off of, the school districts operate off a shoestring budget anyway. See how we can fix that problem.

SPEAKER: Right. I agree with that. I think that, as you stated, if they don't know then how can you allocate if they don't know.

CHARLIE MICHEL: The money where they have to spend it.

SPEAKER: So I think just a plan, just something that we can see showing that information and then we can go from there to see how we can, you know, get the word out. Who's using it. Who doesn't want to use it. Where's the funds. All that information.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Okay.

LAUREN WOMACK: Dr. Michel, and if you could speak to this better being in the education. Do you think that it's the school board's responsibility to connect with LRS than it's a twofold thing?

CHARLIE MICHEL: It is a legal requirement through IDEA that all students are offered the opportunity to hook up with LRS in the transition (inaudible). So from that sense in a broader sense it is the school

board's responsibility. It's typically the special ed department that does it, but then the special ed department is the department that benefits from these services of LRS for their students. But they can't use the IDEA funds for the match funding because it's federal dollars. You can't match federal to federal. So yeah, it is the school board's responsibility. It's also part of the school board's priority how can they get that money out of their budget.

But school systems, and I'm not contending school systems but it's the reality. The budget they have might be, it is in often cases hundreds of millions of dollars, but you've got 83 percent, that's for salaries and you have to have salaries in order to keep everything moving. Then you got a huge percentage that is dedicated because it's bond money. You can only spend it on those bond issues. You've got a very small percentage of discretionary income of general fund of the school systems, so they have to figure out like everybody else how are they going to spend this. And 28 percent of 100,000-dollars is a lot of money. They may not have that. So that is the school board's responsibility and it's part of the vision and the prioritization of that school board under the leadership of the superintendent. But they're between a rock and a hard place.

LAUREN WOMACK: LRS is too. It seems like it's a dual responsibility.

CHARLIE MICHEL: Yes.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Is there any more questions or comments? Council? The public? All right. Well, thank you, Ms. Bayham, for your report. It requires no action and will be placed on file. At this time we will be breaking for lunch. Hearing no objections we will resume at 1:00.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Good afternoon. The session for the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council will be now in session. Our next item of business is the report from the Bureau of Health Service Finance, Medicaid. And the chair recognizes Ms. Tangela Womack for the report.

TANGELA WOMACK: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome, everyone. I just want to highlight a couple

of things. Our report is the blue in your folders. Starting over on page three I mentioned at the last meeting we have started redetermining all of our members. Our first cohort their coverage ended June 30th if they were determined to be ineligible. Those people still have 90 days to reach out and provide needed information to determine eligibility. If you feel like or if you know someone who may have lost coverage and feel like they are still eligible they still have 90 days to be reinstated.

Also, on section one there's three bullets that tell you different ways that you can get reinstated for those services. You can go onto the self-service portal. You can email the packet back to Medicaid, fax or mail. You can also go to one of our regional locations and there's a link here that will show you where the closest location is to you. And you can also call our customer service line.

We have partnered with multiple community partners. We're working with your council on aging. We're working with southwest and southeast (inaudible). They're doing canvassing going door to door. We have a list on our website that tells all of the contractors we're working with. These people are sending text message reminders, phone calls, emails. Any type of contact that we have on file for you they're using that to make sure that any member that is eligible returns those packets and knows when their eligibility is up for redetermination.

So just so you know we had to start this back. We did not speak to any of our members regarding the eligibility for three years. So March of 2020 until March of this year no one was contacted regarding eligibility. So we had to redetermine over two million people. So it's not everybody at the same time. It's broken up over a 12-month time period. And we just want to make sure everybody who is eligible obtains coverage. So if you have any questions, please feel free to dial our customer service line at the bottom of section one.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Can I ask you a question. I think that it was confusing for me because I know you said it's been three years. So my son has a NOW waiver. I don't ever recall, and it could be just my

memory's bad, ever going in and doing the Medicaid application for him. Maybe when he first got the NOW waiver. I don't know if his support coordinator was doing it or somehow. Like I never did it before.

TANGELA WOMACK: Some of your providers and support coordination agencies are reaching out to those waiver participants when they are up for redetermination. We're reaching out. So once those waiver members come up, especially if they're seeing that you have not responded, they're reaching out to you and giving you a phone call.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: But I guess the confusing part for me was that okay, I've heard in all the meetings like you have to redetermine. But I was like but that's for, not for my son for a waiver because he's already determined eligible for Medicaid. And so that was a confusing part for me. I mean, we did it, but it did take some conversations with the support coordinator and with different people. And so I'm just wondering, did we ever have to do that before?

TANGELA WOMACK: You have to be Medicaid eligible to receive the waiver.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: But that was the first. I don't remember doing that like every year or determining. It was a simple process going online. The website is really easy. The answers and then it shows you your answers and then you have to accept it so it's really easy. But I don't know how that happened. It could just be my memory. But so I was just like no, we don't do that and that was my confusion on it.

TANGELA WOMACK: So that's a great question. Some of our members are able to automatically be able to be renewed because we have enough information from our sources that we can say okay, we verify this, this and this and they're still eligible and you will not hear from us. Or you'll say hey, you're eligible, we're going to continue your Medicaid, and nobody has reached out to you. And that could be the case. But that's only about 50 percent. So the other half of people have to respond to us to make sure they're still eligible.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I think just our DD population that has waivers needs to know that. Like we might have never had to do what I had to do but now you have

to do it.

LAUREN WOMACK: Bambi, I guess I'm one of the 50 percent. I just got a letter that said we've redetermined you eligible and I didn't do anything. I went in and double checked it, but that's all I did. Maybe just didn't get a letter yet.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: No. We had to go through it. It was like you have to do it or he's getting cut off June 30th. Okay. So I did it. Had to twist my arm but I did it.

TANGELA WOMACK: Thank you for responding.

NICOLE BANKS: Wait. Hold on, guys. We're going to let her finish her report and then we're going to finish discussion because that's the order. Let her finish her report and then afterwards we'll do the comments. But you have to be recognized by the chair before you can just start conversation so our meeting can run in order.

TANGELA WOMACK: No problem. I know that's a really important topic so I'm happy to answer questions once we get through. I'll move down to the second part. Act 421, if you're not familiar this is our Medicaid option for children under 19 that have disabilities, and it disregards the family's income. Just like she stated, being on a waiver you would think it makes you automatically eligible. It does not. Even our Act 421 recipients still have to be redetermined. So what we've done for those recipients is align the level of care assessment. They should receive a level of care assessment packet along with your redetermination packet. But you have to respond to both. Again, just as OCDD and OAAS our Medicaid staff once we see that someone has received their redetermination, we're going to call you. Hey, you've got this in the mail. We need you to have a lookout for this. We need you to respond to both. So we're trying to align those to make it a little less of the documentation side for the members.

Moving down to the permanent supported housing. Along with our sister agencies we are supporting participants in permanent supported housing. There's currently 3,850 individuals using that service. Moving over to page five, the money follows the person program. As of June 1st, 2023, we have approximately

3,967 individuals in that program. And those are individuals transitioning from institutions into our home and community-based services.

Over on page six as of April 30th there's 2,249 individuals participating in self-direction. And we plan to have a stakeholder meeting for this service next month in August. So I will make sure that the council receives the information on that. With our electronic visit verification, if you're not aware we did put out an RFP. It was canceled so we're in the process of working with the Office of State Procurement to develop a new RFP and that will be released to find a contractor for this service.

Sections seven and eight are stats on our behavior health services starting with the CSOC program. As of March there's a total of 2500 people enrolled in that. And then the chart displays a breakdown by the region. There's also starting on page eight and finishing on page nine, network advocacy by region for behavioral health services. And then the conclusion of the report provides information for our ABA services that are offered through the managed care program, and it's broken down by MCO. So we have six MCOs and it shows you each MCO breakdown on page 10. That concludes the report. I'm happy to take any additional questions.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you, Ms. Womack, for your report. Are there any questions from the council members on the report?

BROOKE STEWART: I have one question. For section one, the cohort, June 30th, I didn't know how many cohorts in total you guys had planned?

TANGELA WOMACK: So CMS gave us 12 months to redetermine the just over 2 million people. And I'm not sure of the terms, but we did divide that over 12 months. So the first group of people received a notice back in April saying we need you to respond by this date or you will close effective June 30th. The same happened for July. So at the beginning of June we need to respond by this date, or you will close at the end of the month. So we're trying to give those people at least 30 days to respond. And with that information we're also reaching out to those partners that we have throughout the state. And canvassing organizations are broken out by region, so they have the regional

information of each person. If they have the correct address some of them are going to the house, knocking on the door. Sending text messages, phone calls. Please, if you know anybody with Medicaid and they have not updated their contact information, please share this.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you.

NICOLE BANKS: Anymore questions? You're recognized, sir.

MR. SPENCER: Thank you. Can you expand a bit on the managed care program?

TANGELA WOMACK: Sure. So we have six MCOs and I always miss one. So I'll go ACLA is the first. And Etna, Healthy Blue, Humana, LACT and UHC is United Health. And our behavioral health services are through our managed care organization. So we have managed care fee for service and those six MCOs manage the ABA program. So if you need services through ABA, you reach out to your specific MCO, and they help you retain them.

MR. SPENCER: Thank you.

NICOLE BANKS: For clarification, what does MCO mean?

TANGELA WOMACK: I'm sorry. Managed care organization.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. For everybody that didn't know. All right. Any more questions? All right. Not hearing any, the report requires no action and will be placed on file. Our next item of business is the report from the Office of Public Health. And Ms. Lenora Robinson is recognized by the chair.

LENORA ROBINSON: Okay. Definitely putting me on the spot.

JILL HANO: Ms. Patti.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: That's the report that Ms. Patti.

JILL HANO: Oh.

LENORA ROBINSON: I am going to report from the Office of Public Health quarterly report to the developmental disabilities council. Children with special healthcare needs work to ensure children with special healthcare needs and I'm going to go down and give you the family resource center. The referrals, we had 386. Families engaged was 127. Total number of

outreach efforts, 420. And total resource needs identified was 598. And I would like to say we're going, and I think we're touching families in an amazing way. It is a wonderful thing to call families and have them just totally be at awe that we can provide them with resources. And I love being here because I am learning a lot from the council and how we are affecting families with children with special healthcare needs. Any questions?

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Any questions from the council members? Any questions from the public? Hearing none, the report requires no action and will be placed on file. Next item of business is the report of Office of Aging and Adult Services. The chair recognizes Ms. Mendy Richard.

MELINDA RICHARD: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Good afternoon, y'all. I'm going to go over a few things that we have going on in our office's updates. You will see the package handout that you have is this peach color and this is all of our numbers. I would like to talk to you kind of in general of some things we have going on. As far as the legislative session, it was a good session for us. We had during the pandemic there was American Rescue Plan dollars that went out to our department, and we had several initiatives, one of which raised the provider rates during the time of the pandemic to really kind of secure that direct service worker workforce and support coordinators. And so the money paid for those increases, some of them were 30, 40 percent. They were very nice increases. But that money was onetime money. And so we had proposed in our budget for fiscal year 24, which began this month in July, to I'm going to say bake in those rates into our normal budget. And so happy to say with the veto session having finished yesterday that those rates are baked in our budget now. So what that means to our providers is that they can breathe a sigh of relief that those rates didn't end in June of this year. That they are now part of our budget going forward. And so that was a good, good thing for us and our partners.

The other thing that was in our budget was to add an additional 500 community choice waivers. Now it comes at a good time because our wait list has been

growing for those registry services. So you'll see on our numbers on the page here, let's see, about 1/3rd of the way down you'll see that we have 8339 people on our registry. But only just under 4,000 are awaiting services with nothing else in place. I'll just remind you that last October we were down to below 900 on that wait list. So we've seen a huge increase in request for services. So we're glad to see people asking for services. On the other hand, our ability with our waivers was not keeping up with our requests. So we're spending a large amount of time right now trying to I'm going to say skinny our wait list for people who have no other services back down to where we were trying to makeup that time. Right now it's about 37 weeks that somebody waits on the registry before they get some type of service and we've gotten it down to within two months. So we lost some ground over the past six months but I like to look at the sunny side of it to say that people are now wanting services. We think that's a good thing. We've just got to catch up to our waist list.

Some of the things that you'll notice in there or one of the things that affects that wait list is the direct service worker workforce. So we're spending a lot of our ARPA dollars with initiatives that should help stabilize that workforce. As you all know we increased the minimum wage that was required for direct service workers from 9-dollars an hour. We're just now starting to see impact for that. We don't have our final reports yet for the fiscal year. But all indications are it has helped to reduce the turnover in that worker workforce. Another thing that we find that we've been working on as part of our ARPA funds, and I think Julie will talk about this a little bit more so Julie, I'll let you kind of--

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Go for it.

MELINDA RICHARD: Don't want to steal your thunder there. Yeah, but the bonus payments for our direct service workers were part of our spending plan. And that was to provide a bonus for people who worked from April of 2021, no. April of 2021 through October of 2022. So for those 19 months workers that stuck it out and really worked during that time we were offering a monthly bonus that they had to meet certain

requirements for how much interaction they had with patients, there had to be a certain minimum level. And those bonus payments have been pending all this time because we ran into some things with the Department of Labor that were going to cost the providers some additional taxes. So we had to kind of revamp the way we were doing that. But we just got approval last week for all those bonuses. And those checks will be going out next week. And so we're having various provider webinars to explain to people how it works, who gets paid what, when you'll get the check. All of that. But we're thrilled about that because it is millions and millions of dollars that will be going to the hands of those people who did that critical work during the pandemic. We're excited about that.

There's some other initiatives that I'll talk about probably in future meetings because we're still waiting on approval from CMS on some of these other initiatives that I've kind of mentioned in previous meetings. But we're still waiting on approval.

There was another legislative thing that came out of this year's session and that was for us to form a workgroup with our support coordinators to look at some of their processes. And we have, Julie and I are working together with those folks to get together. These were issues we were already talking about, you know, how quickly they get paid, what point they get paid. And so we're working through very collaboratively with that group. I expect there will be some good things to come out of that work.

And lastly, one of the things, and this is really more of an OAAS initiative, but as part of our business plan I think you all remember that Secretary Phillips put forth a business plan each year that she was our secretary. And our second business plan, which ended in June of this year was an initiative, one of our initiatives to increase the response rate. When we send a letter to someone to say hey, your chip's come in. You're getting a waiver. We only heard back from the person about 70 percent of the time. We really did not get very good responses on that. So one of our initiatives was to increase that response rate by 5 percent. And so what we did is we've started every time we send a waiver, we call the person, and we say

it's coming. Because what we found out through a survey we did, we call people and say why didn't you respond. And they said oh, I don't get my mail. They probably threw it away. They probably thought it was junk mail. Whatever the reason. So we put them in blue envelopes. We made the letters very simple, so it was clear to say that you have to do something when you get this letter. We call them now when we mail it to say it's coming, be on the lookout for it. And then those people we don't get responses from we call them and say hey, did you get it. Why didn't you respond. Do you not want it. Et cetera, et cetera. And what that does for us is if they don't need it anymore, they moved out of state or their person passed away, it allows us to say okay, let's close that and we can open it for someone else. So we don't have offers languishing. And our response rate, we hoped to increase it by five percent. We've increased it 14 percent this past year. So I think for at least our population I find that people just want to be talked to by person. And so that's kind of our mode of operation going forward. I guess I feel like I'm one of those people in that generation too. I get on those phone things, and they say press one, press three, press four, press five. And I'm like I just want to talk to a human. And I think I can relate to our population cause they just want to talk to a human. And so we're doing that.

I think that's most of what I had. I guess I also wanted to say that, you know, as you know we are partners with Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs, DCFS. We each have protective services for different age groups. Ours is adult protective services from 18 to 59. And our adult protective service team, we recently kicked off a project where we're bringing in some outside experts to look through all of our policies and all of our protocols and make sure we have the best of the policies. So they're looking at best practices across the country and through these subject matter experts to make sure that we have very solid, very tight protocols. And they're also going to be doing a sampling of our investigative reports to make sure that we did everything we could have in our investigation. So kind of like an outside final exam,

if you will. And so I'm excited about that. We kicked that work off last week and so I don't expect that there will be any major things. But again, we want to be the A plus students and we're trying to make sure we don't have any gaps or blind spots that we're not seeing. And that's it for me. Answer any questions you all might have.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you, Ms. Mendy. All right. Is there any comment from the public? All right. Hearing none, this report doesn't require any action and will be placed on file. Our next item of business is the report for Department of Education, Ms. Meredith Jordan. You have the floor.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Mine is one of the light pink papers. I'll go through each of these. So excited for the conversations yesterday in our EE Committee and some of the things moving forward that I want to do to support work of a lot of different people around this table. One thing that we are very excited about, we started this work about a year ago alongside SEAP, multiple stakeholders is really digging into, you know, one of our pillars, if you will, of our division is around ensuring access to high quality instruction for students with disabilities. And what I found very quickly is we have to be very intentional and specific about the what and the how. What does that mean for school systems. So super excited. In May we finalized, launched, published. It's linked here. We talked about it yesterday in committee, our special education playbook for system leaders. So remember when you take a look at this document the intended audience is for school superintendents, special education directors, CAOs, chief academic officers. How do school system leaders really ensure inclusive high-quality instruction for students with disabilities across our state. So we launched that playbook during Teacher Leader Summit in May. Dr. Brumley and I have also presented that final document to our June SEAP, and we sort of had some interaction, some interactive discussions, solicited some additional feedback about next steps. What do we also need to-- so that document is aimed at school system leaders. We are trying to better instruction, instructional practices in our school systems but also realize there's a level of

knowledge for families and parents of how do we get all the way from school system leader level to every level. Principals, educators, support professionals around these best practices and what implementation looks like at all of those levels. And so again, we created this resource alongside national, state, local levels. We talked a little bit yesterday about some of the national recognition that we have gotten. That is not why you take big steps in our work. But also recognize that, you know, we're going to have to start having some frank and maybe sometimes challenging conversations around current practices in schools. And so we know that we need sometimes some of those national organizations and experts to say yes, you're taking the right steps to question sometimes some historical practices and things that have been done.

And not that they're being done because anyone wants to hurt children or wants to do a practice that is taking away from an inclusive setting, but we just need to start talking about them and what best practice and what research says. So our playbook puts into practice, and we really communicated this to special education leaders and superintendents at Teacher Leader Summit as not guidance. These are expectations. These are things that we want to see change for children in our schools to improve the outcomes. And so the first practice is around ensuring high quality core instruction. And people say well, Meredith, are you getting rid of self-contained settings. No. I don't have the authority to do that. We cannot get rid of any least restrictive environment continuum. We know that for some students a self-contained classroom may be the best setting for them. And so we will never say or get rid of, we legally cannot do that, that is a part of IDEA, to have a continuum of placement options for students. But for the vast majority of them and for as many as possible we want them to have inclusive instruction, high quality core instruction, content instruction. I can't tell you how many times I talk with parents who have concerns about their student who may be in a self-contained setting or who may have a significant disability and they want us to try to teach them to read. They want us to expose their children to literacy instruction and opportunities. And so access

to high quality core instruction is the very first practice.

The second one is ensuring that students with disabilities have access to intervention in an equitable way. We have known for years that students with disabilities a lot of times need more time to master instruction. And if we're going to close achievement gaps what that actually means is, and what you as Department of Ed actually expects us to do is to grow students with disabilities faster which is a challenge, right. So we've always known that they need more time but a lot of times in school systems we have, not intentionally or not thinking about who may be excluded, but we may be providing tutoring before school, after school or for the students who could come and see that teacher in different points of the day, those were the kids who were getting some additional intervention. What this playbook calls for is that all students with disabilities have access to high quality intervention and built into the day. We've done a lot at the department around staffing and scheduling guidance and how to help support school systems in building schedules that are responsive to student needs. Not adult needs. Or I like this period of the day off. This is the time of the day I want my planning period. But what schedules are conducive and best meet student needs.

And so I think post pandemic we're seeing a lot of school systems who are blocking out time for intervention. They call those things a lot of different things in schools. Acceleration periods, what I need, WIN periods, intervention, accelerate time. And so we got more and more school systems who have built-in intervention during the day. One of the things I really want to shift now is what's happening during that intervention time. Is it connected to high quality core. Is it connected to standards. And building on the foundational skills that they need to access grade level curriculum. So that's second-best practice is intervention. Making sure all of our kids have that extra time they need.

And the last best practice that is covered in our playbook is around content strong educators. How do we build and make sure that we have the best people in

front of our students with disabilities. Making sure special educators are attending professional learning communities alongside general educators and content. Making sure our special educators are attending science and reading training. Do they all know and understand how to support literacy instruction. The vast majority of our kids with disabilities in Louisiana, our specific learning disability is reading. We have a lot of children who have faced challenges with learning to read. And so really making sure that our special educators, our interventionists are included in all of those professional development opportunities. I don't think that it has been intentional. They have not always been included in certain professional development opportunities. Or been expected to attend some of those opportunities. So those are the three practices that are covered in our playbook. We know that there are a set of specific supports, communication, assistive technology that are needed for some students above and beyond just three instructional best practices. So the I in IEP is always going to be, always has been individual. We know students need also some individual supports to be able to thrive within these best practices. But I'm really excited to really get some expectations in front of school system leaders around our children with disabilities and some steps forward in trying to close some achievement gaps.

We have a lot more work to do so releasing a document is not going to change practice. We all know that. So there's a lot of support that we're going to continue to do. We'll be doing a regional tour so that we want to hit every single-- we didn't hit everybody. Not every school system leader, not every special education director comes to Teacher Leader Summit. We hit a lot of them, but we want to try to go to them and do a regional tour around these best practices to continue to support. We'll do some E learning modules with them as well that they can also use. And we're also thinking through how to, I want to get in front of principals. And even at Teacher Leader Summit interestingly we talked and did sessions around for general educators and how they can better support students with disabilities. Because I think for far too long, we have left out a key piece of our puzzle in

supporting our students with disabilities. And also realizing that we have to also support general educators with knowledge and skills about how to support these children who are in their classrooms. So we have a lot more work to do with our playbook, but very excited about starting that work and actually releasing that document.

So I mentioned a little bit about Teacher Leader Summit. I wanted to bring a bit of a debrief here. I talked to you all a little bit about the additional sessions that we held there. That should clearly say nearly. We had nearly 6,000 school system leaders, educators, special educators, special education leaders who were in attendance. We did a special collaborative for our special education directors. It was very intentional to get them to come and take part in all of that learning that happens at Teacher Leader Summit. We did a special session for them and did a special invite for them to make sure that they came and felt welcomed at Teacher Leader Summit. So we, of course, had sessions around our practices.

High quality teaching and learning align to curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities. We are getting more and more requests around support for students with significant cognitive disabilities, so we did some sessions designed just for them. LASARD, we had many, many vendors who were present helping us present at Teacher Leader Summit. Utilizing para educators. So we had sessions designed for a system and school leaders on how to utilize their para educators to support students. Highlighting strengths of special educators. How do we build them as content leaders. How do we try to target their strengths. For far too long we have asked special educators to know and do everything, right. They have special in their title. And we feel like they can support reading. You're going to support math this year. You may support multiple grade levels. So how do we better staff for special education. And I think it will also ultimately even help with retention. If I know that as a special educator, I'm going to be hired to support this subject I can really become an expert in it. Maybe (inaudible) grade level. But at least if I can hone in on my strength that I can provide some

great intervention.

We had some dyslexia sessions at summit. Literacy and math, of course. We had sessions around, and, you know, we're really trying to get in front of all educators and how to really connect the needs of a student determined by their evaluation and what is in that IEP. How those things connect. How they can add to and suggest interventions for students and what supports are needed. We had the Helen Keller Deaf Blind Institute come. We had sessions around executive functioning. I'm sure I left some off of this list. But we had a lot of great feedback at Teacher Leader Summit this year. So many folks came up just around the diverse learners and SPED sessions and said this was the best one yet. So I don't know how we'll top it, but we'll try to for next year. But we're really trying to almost create like a mini SPED Teacher Leader Summit within the big summit. Like really making sure we have a lot of sessions focused on our students and how to support them.

So our SPED leadership cohorts. We just completed cohort three. We recognized them at June BESE. We are launching cohort four in the coming months. We will have 22. So when I came into this role, which was during cohort two, we had about 12. So we are nearly doubling. And that was one of the things that I recognize is we have to get in front of more of our new special education directors and support them so that again, it's about that retention piece because special education is a lot. And there are a lot of dynamics. There are laws, funding, just data. A lot of different things when you talk about students with IEPs. And we want to retain these people. We want to support them. Give them the support they need. The mentoring they need so that that overwhelming feeling doesn't get to them, and they think why am I doing this, you know. I can go back to the classroom. Or I can go back to my job where I'm doing this single focus. But really try to build a group of special education directors who will stay in it for the long haul and who will really commit. So we'll have 22 in cohort four. And so these are special education directors or supervisors at that central office level who have, they're either newly appointed. So zero years to three years in that

directorship role. And so we're launching cohort four in September.

This next item about a year ago I expanded our fellows and added a track for what we call our aspiring. So these are people who are maybe they are principals. Maybe they are SPED lead teachers, or a SPED teacher, or a pupil appraisal person who is not yet in a special education director or supervisor role, but they have experience and have the potential to fill a vacancy if one becomes available or if they-- so these are people who are desiring to be in a directorship or a special education leadership role. And so, you know, really again, post pandemic, thinking about all of the shortages, turnover rates and even nationally in STEM directors and special education directors nationally trying to really get ahead of this and think through let's start inspiring people to be in these roles and supporting them and showing them some of that knowledge ahead of time to really get them interested. And so we're launching cohort two of this. These applications are currently open. We'll be closing those soon to select our aspiring cohort to start soon.

Our summer regional literacy tour. So our literacy division has traveled the state for their second annual literacy regional PD tour. It included six stops. Lots of sessions. We also shared and targeted our special educators and our interventionists because the more we look at the challenges that our students with disabilities across our state face around reading, and we know that's the foundational skill, we know that's why the vast majority of our children with disabilities are referred to and identified as a student who needs an IP, we have been targeting them and saying hey, we need you to come join these meetings. Making sure they get science or reading training and know how to support reading struggles. And so we just finished that literacy tour that really focused on how to use literacy screener data to support growth. How do we set appropriate reading goals. And we'll be doing more in our office in diving into current IPs. What do reading goals look like. And supporting educators around writing literacy goals and supporting that instruction. So I just wanted to talk

to you all and let you know about the literacy tour.

The department also recently launched our educational progress and investment charts dashboard in June. This was really dreamed of and requested by BESE. So you can access this link and it includes a lot of progress indicator data on students across Louisiana and their performance. There is some student with disabilities data on there. But we have talked to stakeholders. We also have gotten some feedback. We want to include some additional specific data there on students with disabilities. So you'll kind of see here so you guys can access it, take a look at it if you have any suggestions. But you will see what the upcoming updates also will include. And so once we get our 2023 spring assessment results you will see that updated. So the current assessment results are from 2022. We're still certifying and analyzing the 2023 results so that will be updated. We will include the national assessment of educational progress data. And OSA and USDE also look at NAPE and those scores for students with disabilities. That's one of the things that we need to start bringing more attention to because NAPE assessments are not required in Louisiana. There's a selection process for a group of students and students with disabilities who are administered NAPE. It's not required as a state. But that data impacts us. And it impacts our students with disabilities as well. So we want to start communicating even more about NAPE results.

We're going to add alternate assessments results so that will capture our students with disabilities and their performance with the LEAP Connect. So we're going to add that to the Epic Dashboard. All of our ESSER incentive investments, those dollars, there are some things tied to that on the Epic launch. So there's a lot of information on it. If you want to go take a look at it if y'all have any suggestions. If there's anything else that you all would like to see on there as public, as stakeholders let me know and I'm happy to relay that. But I wanted to share that here because it's new.

We're launching our new teacher experience this summer on July 26th. The reason I want to share it with you all is we've added a focus group and so this

new teacher experience brings in just what it says, brand new teachers to the profession, gives them a community of practice and some learning and some support from the department as a brand-new teacher. One of the things that we have done this year is we have added a group that is specific for special educators, right. So they will also get the opportunity to be with other all new teachers and some of their learning. But they will also have a specific affinity group where they will get to talk about and think through specific things as a special educator, a new special educator that I may have questions about. What is it like to sit in, right. I may sit in my first IEP meeting in this first year. What is that like. What are my responsibilities. And so I wanted to share that with this group that that is something that we have added to our new teacher experience.

We have some new family resources that I've been so excited Dr. Michel is in the audience because I kept remembering that meeting where we talked about, you know, we really need some family resources for math. And so we have some new math family grab-and-go activities that you can do at home. So I linked those here. And I also linked our family summer support toolkit which really if you go look at the summer support toolkit, it's great. I mean, as a parent you can pick it up and think through what can I do this summer to support my student. We have some specific resources in there for students with disabilities. We link to some really great things that our Families Helping Families centers have created as well. Lots of inclusive summer camps. What can I do with my child with a disability in the summer to bridge that summer gap. But that family support toolkit, we really messaged it to school systems in saying you work with families on sending home what are some things families can do in the summer. And so easy things. Just ideas about going to the grocery store together or what could we do at home as we're looking to support literacy or to support math. So I wanted to share a couple new family resources that were released.

And then finally, just a SEAP update. SEAP met in June. We also do our retreat in June. We discuss our state performance plan, our annual performance report

that comes from OSEP including what were some of our state's key gains, what are some continued areas of growth. We're actually going to create a workgroup around all of that special education data that we collect that we need to do a better job of analyzing and looking at those massive sets of data to determine next steps for our state. So we're going to be putting a workgroup together for that. Diving into our educator data, making necessary updates moving forward.

We also discussed, again, our playbook. We engaged in our planning steps moving forward. And we also recognized our SEAP members who are rolling off. Those who ended their first term and/or their second term. And I have, so I have on here our next SEAP meeting is supposed to be September 20th. Make a tentative note that is likely going to change to September 27th because of building space and meeting space challenges that we're having. And we definitely want to continue to be able to live stream. And to kind of piggyback on conversations about some of the updates. We're in conversation as far as SEAP and what the changes to open public meetings law will mean for SEAP. And we'll hopefully have that in place for our September meeting. If not, for sure the November meeting depending on when those rules are finalized.

And then that's pretty much for it for me. The biggest legislative item for us coming out of this legislative session that will live in my office will be our newly required dyslexia screening for all kindergarteners. Which is going to be a process because the bill calls for the state department to select and pay for that so we will likely have to go out to RFP, follow all of our procurement rules. So we are, of course, you know, we will try to shoot for an implementation of that this year, but it will just really depend on procurement rules from when we are able to select and purchase that one statewide dyslexia screener for all of our kindergarteners. And that concludes my report. Happy to answer any questions.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you, Ms. Meredith, for your report. Are there any questions? I see your hand, Jill. You're recognized.

JILL HANO: What act was the dyslexia screening?

MEREDITH JORDAN: House Bill 69 is the bill number.

NICOLE BANKS: Ms. Washington, you're recognized by the chair.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you. I have a question. This information here, who is this given to? Is it given to all schools, SPED directors? Like how are teachers or directors or whomever, how are they getting this information? Just the website?

MEREDITH JORDAN: The playbook information?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Everything on here. Like new teachers across Louisiana, how do they know the new teacher experience. Or the cohort, how do they know about the cohort. The SEAP update.

MEREDITH JORDAN: So we have monthly teaching and learning calls. So definitely join those. So we have monthly teaching and learning calls. Our next one will be end of August. So we take a break over the summer.

RENODA WASHINGTON: How do they know about the teaching and learning calls?

MEREDITH JORDAN: Our newsletters. Our weekly newsletter. Subscribe to it. Go to Louisiana believes and go to newsletters and you can subscribe to get it every week. And that's literally where we make all announcements. Now we also have a call monthly at the beginning of the month that's for system leaders. So superintendents, SPED directors usually will join those as well. CAOs, CTE, finance. Literally everyone in the central office building should be joining those system leader calls. Our teaching and learning monthly calls we can go a little bit more into depth. Our teaching and learning calls are meant for SPED directors, CAOs, usually your literacy, your educator development, any PD specialists in a central office they will also join our teaching and learning calls. Definitely our weekly newsletters. We also have a principal newsletter that goes out and we have charter newsletters. So I'm also trying to do a much better job at reaching our charter schools and making sure they're getting all of the information coming out of the department.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you. Another question. It's on Louisiana believes website, but what about pushing the information to their emails. Because I don't see SPED directors always just going to Louisiana believes to look up this information or to see the need

to look up this information. Maybe it can be released to their email or some other form of communication to ensure, you know, that they are getting the information. Because if they're not receiving the information like you can't hold a person accountable for anything if they don't know.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Right.

RENODA WASHINGTON: You know, so I think just a better way of pushing this information out. Because then you also have well, they may not check their email, but at least you have receipt that this was pushed out. That this was given to them. And that way accountability can begin.

MEREDITH JORDAN: I also usually try to send and get in touch with-- I have an email list for our directors but sometimes they'll change. So usually as a backup to I'll partner with our Louisiana Association for SPED directors and say hey, can you also communicate this in case your list is more updated than mine. Yeah. Getting the information out and making sure everyone is seeing it at all levels is important. Otherwise they don't know.

RENODA WASHINGTON: When you all do the audit, I know that that's very important to all SPED directors when you guys are coming into the schools and auditing them. You know, cause everyone is different in their roles, but I do know that they're going to take that very seriously because they are being held accountable. So maybe there's something that you guys can put in place just so they can get this information and at least know.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. Good point.

NICOLE BANKS: Is there any more questions?

CHARLIE MICHEL: One question about the dyslexia screening. Is that going to take the place of what was previously required between kindergarten and third grade? Everybody's going to be done in one year?

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

CHARLIE MICHEL: Okay. And a couple of things. People in this room, and maybe you don't even know this yet, but what you said about the special ed conference within the conference for the summer. I forgot what it's called.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Teacher Leader Summit.

CHARLIE MICHEL: When it first started special ed teachers weren't allowed to go. (Inaudible). So that's huge. Because you're right, they all need to learn how to do everything for that. The other thing is yesterday Dr. Brumley mentioned about the lack of special ed talent for the director positions. I'm hoping that there's a discussion among y'all staff because what happened with your predecessor, they took out the need for any knowledge or experience for special ed for anyone to be certified to be able to serve in that position. That puts that new person (inaudible). They don't know what they don't know yet. And the other thing is, it makes it very easy to manipulate by the superintendents who are looking at money situations only. So it puts them in a real awkward position, makes them less (inaudible) until they get to know some of those things. I hope this conversation about adding some sort of requirement for someone to be special ed director that they have some knowledge of special ed. That was your predecessor, just so we know.

And then quickly, one of the things that y'all have done really well is, and I was talking to somebody about this today. In order to have inclusion sometimes a child's ability will make it more difficult (inaudible) in the classroom, but with the course code that y'all have created at the state department level to allow teachers to teach basically two classes with one with just modification, that's huge for inclusion purposes. So really if the districts should get information on that because it seems like from conversations I've had with parents I think they might be forgetting that they can (inaudible). And so that will help with the inclusion issue.

And keep in mind interventions, if y'all can provide training for teachers with intervention because if you really go into the school system and look almost never will you see any intervention class align with the curriculum objectives in the general ed class. And kids, most kids, but kids with disabilities especially do not do well with isolated experiences. They need some reinforcement rather than today in my class we're going to do verbs, but then you go to their (inaudible) class and they're doing nouns. It doesn't work well

for a kid with a disability.

And the last thing that I want to say is when we're talking about NAPE, I wish y'all would go back and look to see in the news all the time how Louisiana (inaudible) and it's because of the pandemic. Well, it's not just because of the pandemic. If you look and see when that really started, I believe you will find a correlation between when LEAP ceased to be about students and became more about (inaudible). Because now we've got, when LEAP first came out it was supposed to identify problems that kids were having so teachers could then look at it and address it and build them up. Now we're teaching the LEAP, and I never said that before the last few years. But we're not teaching to the test, we are teaching the test. And with a great visual that I've got. You know, there is this much in the world that kids need to know. The curriculum in K12 will teach them this much. LEAP will teach them this much. They're leaving with this. Some of them are. That tells us why we are losing ground. And look, the state looks bad but look at it as a different perspective. The kids get out of school and don't know nearly what they need to know. And it's causing (inaudible). Go in there and look at the packets. (Inaudible) last year. Look at the packets that they sent home for parents to do with their kids. We need to teach what we need to teach and not teach the stupid test. The teachers are scared not to teach the test. That would be one of the issues.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Thanks.

NICOLE BANKS: The chair recognizes-- what's your name, Mr. Spencer.

MR. SPENCER: I just wanted to piggyback off of something she said. You guys have this newsletter and all this information that is sent out, but you guys don't have a dedicated distribution list?

MEREDITH JORDAN: I have a distribution list for SPED directors. I will say there's a challenge with turnover in charters. That's where I struggle with keeping a running list. I have a great list for our city parish schools, yes, I have a list for them.

We also do office hours. So I started those last year. We'll start those back up. But I would really like and, you know, for my office hours I do get a lot

of SPED directors who attend office hours. But we also invite educators, you know, if you're a teacher and you have a student with a disability and you have a question, join our office hours and we do keep that a little bit more open and whatever question we usually share with them some pertinent information or repeat something that I think maybe they haven't gotten. But also just question and answer. Like try to help. So we're trying to expand our communication avenues a little bit. So we do have office hours as well that will start back up monthly.

MR. SPENCER: Can you guys look into maybe rather than directing it to the SPED director that change a lot, maybe going to superintendents and then put it on the onus of the superintendent because they're in that position, I think, for four years. And letting them do the distribution so the directors and all the special education teachers are getting that information out to them.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. I really like that idea. I know what we used to do in a school system was we would take those newsletters because it is kind of divided up like special education, here's what you need to know. Accountability and assessment. Although sometimes for special education I need to know multiple things. I also need to know assessment. I also need to know finance. And so that is definitely something that we can encourage them to do as well. Like take that information, sit down with your leadership team, go through it. Who is responsible for what. What are our next action steps and make sure that we've got people going to or attending the right things who need to be attending. I like that suggestion.

MR. SPENCER: Yeah. I just know coming from I guess the community prospective there is a huge gap in knowledge in what is available for families verses what actually people are taking advantage of. Really getting that community involvement directly to (inaudible) that information out to families would be a step in the right direction.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. A quick question. So I know you're doing the screening for the kindergarten in dyslexia. What about the students that miss that? Like they're in first grade or second grade and they need

that?

MEREDITH JORDAN: Good question. So a parent can request it at any time, or a school system could do it at any time. The law now requires all kindergartners. So you can do it beyond kindergarten.

NICOLE BANKS: So act like a parent is concerned their child has dyslexia, they can just go get the test at any time. And how long does that testing, how long does it take for that testing to get done from the school to when the parent request it and it actually has to get done?

MEREDITH JORDAN: They're going to have the materials paid for by the state. It shouldn't take, there shouldn't be a long time before, you know, when you request hey, I'm concerned my child may have dyslexia or characteristics of dyslexia, can you please do a screening. You shouldn't be waiting months for that to happen.

NICOLE BANKS: Right. And then you should get some kind of documentation on what the results were, correct?

MEREDITH JORDAN: Right. Yes. And so the law will also require for kindergartners that the parents must be notified of the result of that I think within 30 days is what the law says.

NICOLE BANKS: Whether they have it or not. Okay. All right. Is there any more questions? Okay. I don't know who was first. I'm sorry. Jill. I think Jill was first. Jill, you're recognized by the chair.

JILL HANO: Dr. Charlie, my back is to you but I'm really excited when I watch this later to see how big your gaps range.

CHARLIE MICHEL: I'm sorry. I was daydreaming. I'm so sorry.

JILL HANO: My back was towards you so when I watch this later, I'm excited to see your hand gestures.

CHARLIE MICHEL: This much in the world to know. There's this much that K12 will teach you. But this much that LEAP covers. So they leave school with this. It's just a very small part of what they need to know. (Inaudible). We've narrowed the focus in not a good way in what we teach kids.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Like when you said something

about you guys have calls. So are the teachers allowed to be on these calls? And if so, are they pulled from class during teacher hours, is it after hours?

MEREDITH JORDAN: So we try to do our office hours late in the day like 3, 3:30 for office hours. Teachers are not going to be on our teaching and learning monthly call. Those are for school system level teaching and learning staff, CAOs, SPED directors. So they're not going to be on those calls. Now we also do teacher leader newsletters. I don't think they do a teacher leader monthly call. But they do send newsletters out to teacher leaders. Even the principal monthly calls that we do we also try to be cognizant of the time of the day because during the day principals can't just get up and go, you know. They have full days. But for our office hours where we do say hey, if you're a service provider or an educator come on, you're welcome. We do, our office hours are every month. I think it's the-- I forget what day of the month. Last Tuesday or the third Tuesday. But they're at like 3, 3:30.

RENODA WASHINGTON: My question is you're saying that the directors get this information on (inaudible) committee. Why can't the committee members get this so we can disseminate it to other people that we know. Because like I said, going to school make it for that particular classroom or whoever I'm in contact with.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Definitely. And I would, you know, I would definitely recommend that local SPED advisory councils for helping to get that information.

RENODA WASHINGTON: If I ask the director of our committee for this, she should be able to give me all this information?

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes. If they're following our newsletters, they're on our calls they should know about all things happening. Yes.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Ms. Renoda.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The playbook for system leaders, is this giving like right now we're about to start school. Every SPED department has this playbook? And if so, are the SPED directors trained enough to present this as professional development for the educators?

MEREDITH JORDAN: So they would have access to the

link. We're giving them printed copies, really pretty copies, printed copies at our fall collaborative which I think is October 17th. When I have them all come in, they'll get a printed copy. So these practices are going to require shifts and decisions at their system level before that rolls out into schools likely. So can they give professional development on what these practices are, yes. Start self-assessing where are we at with the school system. It won't change overnight. We've told them that. This is going to be a process of implementation. We have asked them to start self-assessing. What are some immediate steps you can take. If you don't have intervention built into your school day that students with disabilities have access to, is that something you can do starting this school year. So we've asked them, identify those one or two things that you can do and make an action step for this year. As they really start to dive in with their system level leadership team and create a plan for how are we going to make these three shifts. And my goal is within a year-- so I've got a lot of supports to do this year. We just rolled it out. A lot of professional development. A lot of support within this year. What I want to do is get to a place where we are piloting and we have school systems who say yes, I'm all in. I want to make all three shifts and work alongside us through a pilot and where we can track student performance and really look at the impact of doing this well and doing it full on. I don't expect that our school systems are going to make all three of these shifts for the beginning of this school year.

RENODA WASHINGTON: No, I don't think so either.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Is there any more public comment?

RENODA WASHINGTON: This is a lot of good information on here. But one thing as an educator, one of the most important things is high quality instruction. I do think that that should be something that should be presented to them because it's a playbook. So there's players on the team that need to know that high quality instruction, that is of importance. That is key. You know, regardless of if they're in a self-contained class or whatever class they may be in, we should not be giving coloring pages.

High quality instruction is the goal. This is the play for the 2023-24 school year. You guys need to make sure that this is being played in this game.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. And we've got some school systems who are thinking outside of the box in some of this. So when we talk about high quality instruction and when you talk about that typical self-contained setting, okay, and you have typically one teacher in that room, right, all day with that teacher. They're expected to do reading, math, science, everything. We have some school systems who are rethinking high quality instruction for all students. And even post pandemic where we've got a lot of virtual, we've got a lot of technology. But for students who have either environmental, sensory behavior, they can't take that gen ed setting for that full time, can they participate some. We have some school systems who are saying that's fine. You're going to be in a special setting but we're going to tap you into that high quality instruction in that core content teacher down the hallway. And so I think-- and that's a shift, right. But we've got some systems who are starting to think how can I, even for students who are in some of our most restrictive settings, access and be exposed to that high quality general curriculum core content. And I think those opportunities are great. And we'll keep highlighting some of those too. But I think you're right. It definitely starts with high quality core. And we kind of showed them a visual that what we have and talked about in a long time is that general education, that core content is a huge piece of this puzzle that has to be held sacred. That time held sacred. And try not to do pullout services during ELA, during math. Those areas where our students with disabilities struggle, we need to be aware of IEP teams adding lots of services to IEPs and what time of the day are those happenings in that student's actual schedule. So you're right on point with everything that we're going to support them on.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Is there any more questions? Comments by the public? All right. Hearing none, the report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is the report on the government Office of Elderly Affairs.

The chair recognizes Ms. Cheri Crain for the report.

CHERI CRAIN: Good afternoon, everybody. Try and stay awake. So I'm with the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs known as GOEA. Since there's some new people I'll try and catch the acronyms as much as I can. So GOEA, just to give you a little brief overview, is designated as the state unit on aging. And we administer the Older Americans Act which is OAA. And within that act we provide the services, and I'm not going to go through all of them on the list. I'm just going to touch on the high-level ones that most know about. The long-term care ombudsman. We reported, I reported last year that we initiated and implemented a program that is called LAPEER. And what that is is Louisiana's Program for Empowering Every Resident. What we do is we set up a program that trains individuals in long term care facilities to advocate for themselves for a six-part empowerment program. And it teaches them how to help fellow residents to improve their day-to-day life in that facility. Since we are limited on the number of ombudsmen that we pay we try to get as many volunteers as possible. And so this is where we saw the opportunity to get the volunteers to initiate and be involved.

So what we did, we had additional American Rescue Act funding for 2023 so we actually hired a LAPEER trainer who has been hired to spread the program to more facilities around Louisiana. Our first initial focus was New Orleans and so now we will be able to expand beyond New Orleans and do this program. We had three new volunteers enter into the program. And I think, I would have to go back, I don't remember, I think we did 12 last year. So have three already starting this program for this year. The ombudsman closed over 1200 complaints with 97 being resolved to the satisfaction of the resident or the resident representative or whoever made the complaint itself. We also have created a quarterly newsletter. The ombudsman, my state ombudsman did that. She shares stories and reminders and other information as she gets it. And we can share that link if anybody's interested in that. So that's for the ombudsman.

Can you open up to the next page. We talk about

elderly protective services. So I'm just going to go over some of the numbers currently. Opened cases was 5,005 last year. And sorry about the date. That is incorrect. It's not July one. It was as of June 30th, 2023. There were 539 cases classified as high priority and over 3,000 cases that were medium priority. And then we kind of just broke the number down as to what type of complaint it was or report of abuse. And, you know, unfortunately the highest was self-neglect with over 1800 cases being self-neglect.

One of our other programs that we have is aging and disability resource centers. We have eight of them throughout the state. And we call them the ADRCs. They have all kinds of resources that are available to elderly and disabled adults age 21 and over. You know, we have some instances where, you know, we have maybe an aunt that lives in the north region and, you know, a cousin that lives in the northeast and they're like oh, well, I can get this assistance. And we don't have that available. That can be the case just because of, you know, vendors within that region that that ADRC has information on, you know, that can help build that wheelchair ramp. Whereas in the north they can't. So when they start talking, you know, we have to kind of explain to them that the resources are not available statewide, unfortunately. Those resource centers have communications and partnerships with a lot of vendors as well as the churches. So we kind of get in contact with the churches and say hey, do you know anybody that can go build somebody a wheelchair ramp. Some of the times the churches have programs within their community or within their own local church where they have somebody that will donate their time or the lumber or whatever so that they can actually get that same service. It's just not through a readily available service. So we have an 800 number that you can call for assistance there.

The next program is the MIPPA program which is Medicare eligible individuals relevant to Medicare services. And we have portions of that which is LIS which is your low-income subsidy. As well as MSP which is your Medicare savings plan. So they have open enrollment every year and the seniors can go into the councils on aging or their local senior center and get

help in that enrollment each year. Let's see.

Then on the last page it just gives some of our collaborative, you know, other task force that we join up with, EMDAC being a task force and so forth. And then I kind of just want to give some information over some of the house bills that were passed with the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs. If you remember, I'm not sure if it was the last time I reported or the time before that we were talking about an upgrade to our reporting system for the feds where we asked, you know, to get funding because we did not have the funding. And it was like over 800 something thousand that we would be in compliance with the federal reports. We were granted that in House Bill 560. So we have had the kickoff meeting and one other meeting to kind of go over what the direction of getting those updates implemented. Unfortunately, it's not going to be within a year so, you know, if I'm still on the board next year I'll be pulling my hair out about this time. But, you know, just give you a heads up. And then we had House Bill 2 and House Bill 560 where some of our Councils on Aging and specific senior centers received some additional direct funding. So that's going to help some of them with some of those services that they either ran out of funding by the end of the year to help constituents, or that will help there fill a gap. And then also our Senate Bill 116 we were able to increase the senior center funding for all senior centers from 25,000 to 50,000. And we received a unanimous vote from both chambers of the legislature so that was a big win for our senior centers on that. So that's the end of my report but if you have any questions I will gladly answer.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you for your report. Do we have any comments from the council? Questions from the public? All right. Hearing none, this report requires no action and will be placed on file. Our next item of business is the report of the Office of Disability Affairs. The chair recognizes Bambi Polotzola for her report.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Okay, guys. My report is on this greenish colored paper. Of course, we talked about in the meetings that we have our annual conference next week. We have over 600 people registered. If you are

not you need to get on the bandwagon and get registered. The link is there. If you look on the last page there is a complete list of all the topics. We're really excited about this year. We put out the request for proposals and we received so many great proposals. Like it really wasn't a lot of work on our part because we just had some great proposals. As in the past we kind of had to work with people and ask people to do proposals. I think that really speaks volumes of the conference and that people want to, you know, be a part of it. So if you look at these topics, they're really great. If you go to the link that shows you the schedule you can see who's presenting and their bios. Really, really great speakers. There are probably some people that you maybe don't get to hear in other venues. And so I really encourage you guys. And I kind of just went through here. We have six sessions on education, four on employment, five on health, three on accessibility and some that cover multiple areas. There's 22 sessions in all. You register, you get one link, and you can jump on at any time, whatever sessions you want to get in on. If you can't listen to the one you want to listen to you will get the recording of it. So please register.

Also, just want to say one of the legislative bills, I don't think anyone spoke about yet, but the Disability Voting Task Force made recommendations that became Representative Willard authored a bill HB499 and it provided basically an overall like kind of an overarching kind of recommendation, not recommendation. The recommendations came from the task force, but the bill is going to enact like having an ADA coordinator in the Secretary of State's Office. Having a Disability Voting Advisory Council to the Secretary of State. Require some trainings around accessible voting. So that's a really good legislation that passed this year. And, of course, we have linked if you go online, you can see our spreadsheet of over 100 legislative items that we're tracking this year. And mostly we got the outcome that I think the disability community wanted overall for most things.

But one thing I would just caution in regards to legislation is that there were some bills that were authored that didn't make it through the process and,

you know, partly I think because the governor would have vetoed some of them. Particularly around some of these education bills. I'm really concerned about next year. They've been authoring these bills every year and they're bills that specifically say that they don't have to provide these services for kids with disabilities, specific exclusions. And so I think the council really needs to be cognizant of that when you look at the legislative agenda next year. That it's not so much of what maybe you support but have the resources within the council to be able to oppose some of these bills that we can anticipate will be brought up again next legislative session.

Also, of course, the Governor's Advisory Council of Disability Affairs has been meeting. We'll meet again in September. The SICC for Early Steps which is in our office. Our director, Alishia Vallien, her last day is July 31st. She's going back into education, administration and education. So she'll be leaving us, but we also have, there's a new director for Early Steps Caroline Oglesby and we're glad to have her in that role and will be working with her.

And then EMDAC, Louisiana Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition. We have been holding these monthly lunch and learns and we've been having between 150, 200 people attend the lunch and learns. They're at noon every day. You can see that on the paper we had access to assistive technology after disasters, trainings on why it's important. And then Arc of Hammond did a lunch and learn on their plans as a provider for evacuation. So we've had three of these lunch and learns. Highly successful. Really engaged. And then we have another one on August 8th which has to do with people who are electricity dependent, and we'll have power outage partners who work with the Department of Health and they're going to present. So I encourage you guys to register for that. And we have several planned out I think almost through the end of the year. So and we record all of them. You can see we put it on YouTube so you can go back and look at that.

And then Amina, she was sitting back here. She's out in the hallway. She's a governor's fellow. She's at Southern University majoring in rehab counseling and she's working with us this summer. So really glad to

have her. And she's doing a policy proposal in regards to disability service offices. And she was going to do it kind of broad and she's narrowed it down to funding in regards to the disability service offices at HBCUs, historically black colleges and universities. And so that's really what she wants to do when she finishes school. And so we're really glad to have her in our office this summer. And that's everything for me.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you, Ms. Bambi, for your report. Are there any questions from the council? Any from the public? All right. This report requires no action and will be placed on file. Our next item of business is the report of Disability Rights Louisiana. The chair recognizes Mr. Tory Rocca. I know you don't have a report, but do you have anything you want to present to the council?

TORY ROCCA: No.

NICOLE BANKS: Our next item of business is from Families Helping Families centers and the chair recognizes Ms. Nicole Flores.

NICOLE FLORES: Ours is a little two-pager. (Inaudible) shows you each center and on your first page it should be (inaudible). And we put how many contacts we've had and then the units of service. Contact is I contact the person, they come into the center. The units of service are what were the different ways we helped them. (Inaudible) and then just some of the prevalent disabilities that we have in our different centers that we encounter providing service.

And then you just the two paragraphs that highlight (inaudible). And they talk about the different programs they have. Of course, Bureau of Family Health. And all of this is outside our DD contract. Also statewide (inaudible). LDOE regional family support (inaudible). OCDD contracts (inaudible). And they also have the Early Steps contract up there and the Early Steps community outreach specialist for the regions. So that's James Sprinkle in Alexandria.

Families Helping Families Acadiana is mine and we serve the Acadiana area, seven parishes there. Our contract is Acadiana Area Human Service District, and we make sure we connect them with information about

disability systems, any families coming in, make sure they're connected with all the services, Act 378 services and things over there. Our Bureau of Family Health Contract, we're supporting families of children and youth with special healthcare needs and providers and connecting the providers, the families and the FHF centers together. Kind of closing the gaps. We also have community outreach for region four. We also have a contract for Louisiana Department of Education for support for students with disabilities and special healthcare needs. We just finished through the DD Council the Louisiana Youth Leadership Forum. One of our delegates is actually here. Louisiana, of course, YLF is a three-day, two-night residential leadership grant. It's actually incredible. We're going to have pictures and a lot of stuff to show you at our next meeting. (Inaudible). All kinds of different sessions. Staff came on Thursday for training. Delegates came in on a Friday and we had a lot of different sessions about disability pride and culture. Self-determination, advocacy. We had speakers talking about how, you know, someone you might know (inaudible) about his experience.

JILL HANO: It was phenomenal.

NICOLE FLORES: The next day we went to the state capitol where the LaCAN leaders met us. We had a mock debate, went on tour of the capitol. Then coming back that night and had a dance. The next day we had panels on dating and relationships. We had Y Life which was like a certain amount of money, and they said okay, you have to figure out do you get benefits. You go sign up for SSI, SSDI. And we had different choices. You're approved, denied, need more information. So that's the next thing. If they were approved, they had to go to the bank working on setting up a bank account, maybe talking about ABLE accounts, things like that. But it went through all kinds of stuff, housing, transportation. Of course, we had partners there, Lighthouse Louisiana for benefits planning. And at the end they can see do you have any money left. Are you bankrupt. What happened with your plan as you went through and saw this is the money I had and this is the choices I had to make. And then we had a talent show. So that was YLF. We're already getting ready planning

for our next one.

We're also an alliance member of Parent-to-Parent USA and that provides training. You have volunteer support and parents will get training and peer to peer support. And Parent-to-Parent is about like let's say you had a child with a disability, just got diagnosed. You speak Spanish and your child has autism and you're trying to get connected with a trained support parent that speaks Spanish that has children with a disability. They can contact us, and we can see, do we have a training support tech that matches that. If it is, we can match them, and they're supported for a couple weeks making those connections as they get ready in their journey in the disability world. If we don't have that particular parent, there's a national support system we can shoot out to the list serve and say do you have somebody who matches that.

We did a panel for GODA last summer and we had some training and we're continuing that this year. So overview you can kind of see Families Helping Families, a general idea of what we do. And each center will have other specific contracts depending on the needs of the families in that area.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Thank you, Ms. Flores, for your report. Are there any questions from the council. Ms. Jill, I see your hand. You're recognized by the chair.

JILL HANO: So in our committee we had an issue that was brought to us of a certain center and the deliverables that may not have been met. Do these numbers reflect that?

NICOLE FLORES: Yeah. You have like the deliverables for the FHF centers for DD Council. These don't correlate with those. These are for the fourth quarter of this fiscal year and it's showing unduplicated. We show this for Bureau of Family Health a lot of times. The contacts we have just, you know, I contacted you one time this month you count as one. And it's showing the service we provide. But it's not bringing it down like information referral, peer-to-peer support. Things like that that we have for the DD Council contract.

JILL HANO: Okay. (Inaudible).

NICOLE FLORES: Even the Greater New Orleans one

doesn't have the contract.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Are you done, Jill?

JILL HANO: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

NICOLE BANKS: Are there any more questions or comments?

CHARLIE MICHEL: Real quickly. I just want to take this opportunity to thank y'all, the council, for that extra money that y'all have been working so hard for the last couple of years to get us. Because we've been able to do things, and we have the DD Council a report on what we did with it. But specifically in our center we were able to get a new training where we can do hybrid training. People present and people online at the same time. We don't know how to use it yet, but we're planning on doing that. And that was done because of the money y'all gave us. We really appreciate that.

MARILYN THORTON: And I'm just echoing him. Thank all of you for your support and helping us to get that extra money. We were able to upgrade our technology, hardware and all of that with new phones. A new phone system. We had an antiquated system, so it allowed us to do that, upgrade what we have to be able to serve the people more efficiently. So thank you.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Just a suggestion for the report. Cause some of the other agencies do it. If y'all have any links to your website specifically for newsletters or upcoming events I would say include that in here as well just so whenever we have it on the website if folks want to go there and they can see what's going on in their region. Which I encourage everybody to sign up for your Families Helping Families newsletter. But also if y'all just have it on your website. I know a lot of you put your trainings or your newsletters there a link to that information so folks can see what's going to be coming up if they wanted to access any of that. That would be helpful, I think.

NICOLE BANKS: Any more questions or comments? All right. Hearing none, there is no action for this report and it will be placed on file. The next item of business is the report from the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities. The chair recognizes Ms. Julie Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: All right. Mine is kind of

the beige color book in your packet. I will not read the book to you. But the first few pages are data that the council has asked for over time to be able to have a feel and a better sense for people who are supported in our home and community-based waivers. And so there's information there. You can see over time we did early on in Covid have somewhat of a back slot. We're serving more people every year in our home and community-based waivers. We are keeping a close eye because we're also seeing that the average cost per waiver. So what that means is we figure out for every person how much are we spending just on waiver services for those folks. And what we are seeing is that over time that number is going up. And so we need to keep a close eye on that. When we started giving this data it was cause we wanted to make sure once we did eliminate the waiting list that we wouldn't have to go back to it. And so we don't really have a certain number of slots anymore. We have a certain amount of money. And so we just have to keep a close eye on that. And the way we estimate our money is by using the average cost of the waiver so that we can then multiply that out. No issues, just letting folks know that's really how we monitor that.

The council also asked for information related to our screening for urgency of need or our SUN which is what is the screening that we use to determine if someone has urgent and emergent needs and give a home and community-based waiver offer. So you have information about the number of screenings that were done in the last quarter and why. And then finally, just in terms of data we do have Early Steps participant data so you can see the number of children that we see in Early Steps broken down by the different age groups.

And then in our report we move onto some of the highlights of our major activities so I will touch on a couple. One of the things that we've been working on since 2014 is coming into compliance with the home and community-based settings rule. And so we are nearing the end of that. Louisiana along with 43 other states are now under a corrective action plan to get us across the finish line. And for us here in Louisiana it's primarily about making sure that our day programs and

our employment services ensure that people have opportunities to do that in the community and be a part of the community. We are super excited, in fact as I was sitting here, I just got the email that we are going to be able to make some changes to our rates for our day program and employment services. So a lot of times in the past you would have one staff person with eight people. And so when you would go in the community it would be in large groups. Or if you were going to do employment you would see kind of like a large janitorial group because you would have one person with eight. And we've now got some new services in our waivers and new rates to go with that because if you only go with two or three people of course that's going to cost more money. You're going to need more staff and you're going to need a higher rate to be able to support that. So starting October 1st we're going to have rate increases for those services that are in those smaller groups to start helping with that.

We also are doing a lot of work right now related to the post PHE and unwinding we have in place for home and community-based waivers. We have scheduled-- there's still a lot of misinformation about come November what can happen, what can't happen. There's still some folks who have the understanding that in November family members living in the same home will not be able to be paid caregivers. That's not accurate. We do have to have safeguards and guardrails in place. There will be a process but there will be the ability for that to happen. So we have in the next two or three weeks some training specifically for our support coordinators so they can help explain it to families. We will follow that up with webinars that we have for our home and community-based providers. And webinars for our self-direction employers so that everybody has, we did the roadshow but now we want to get into more detailed information about all the plans and what will be happening. We also plan to do a roadshow in the fall similar to what we did in the spring. That was very well received going out around the state and having people have an opportunity to be in person and hear from us and answer questions.

We've talked a lot about the American Rescue Plan Act so again, I won't go over all of the information.

But we were really excited that there was a lot of dentists. So we now have, Louisiana was one of the first states to start having comprehensive dental services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. But what we found is that maybe there wasn't a lot of access. So some dentists, there wasn't enough dentists who knew how to support folks. So we've now done two trainings with the Louisiana Dental Association which were continuing education so the dentists got training on how to in their practice support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And then the Louisiana Dental Association has regional dental associations that do more like lunch and learn. So less formal but they can still get continuing education, a unit. And almost every region has now reached out to us. And we're able to use these funds to also sponsor some of those smaller lunch and learns. And so we feel like we're really trying to help get the word out to dentists to help them understand how to get their practice in a way that they can support and support our folks.

Mendy mentioned the bonuses. We do have a couple of new initiatives we did get approval on, so we're sort of working our way through that. You know, we've talked in here a lot in the council the last two days about services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and behavioral support needs. So we're going to put some extra efforts there. We also know that not only is there a direct support workforce crisis, but we have a shortage of people who are support coordinators who understand how to support our population. We also know that there's a need for registered nurses and LPNs to provide skilled nursing services. So we're going to use some funding to do university partnerships. And we've got, I know we've got Southern and BRCC involved but we're reaching out to some other colleges and universities. And what we want to do is meet with them and start building curriculum. So in a school of social work part of one of the classes that they would then be required to take would have curriculum about support coordination case management. So it really would apply to more than just the IDD population. But it would just expose folks to that and that career field. Same with nursing, you

know. When you do skilled nursing it's not home health doing pop-in visits. It's not a hospital. It's a little bit different. And so giving some exposure by building curriculum to help students understand what those other possibilities are. And then, of course, at the community colleges helping to look at curriculums so when people are getting out of those community colleges, they may be able to be more effective direct support professionals.

And then lastly, we got approval which if you heard me talk before, I talked for probably 10 years now telling y'all we were trying to get our plan of care and our assessment on an electronic platform. So we got funding and we're going to be moving forward with trying to get that going. So a lot more to come on those projects. We just got approval on those.

And the remainder of the report is some additional information about our resource center. We did talk about the resource center yesterday in one of the committee meetings. So if folks are interested in more information that gives you a better idea or more detail about what our resource center activities are. And specifically what we do to help people continue to live and thrive in the community. And Jill told me to be brief so that's about as quick as I can go. But I'm happy to entertain any questions.

NICOLE BANKS: Thank you, Julie, for your report. Are there any questions from the council?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I have a question. Julie, in regards to the dental coverage you said like you're trying to do outreach so that dentists know how to work with our people with developmental disabilities. But like, for instance, with my son we have a great dentist that works great with him. But like I don't think they're in network. I went and looked at who's in network for the dental insurance that he has. And so is that an issue of them not accepting that coverage?

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Partially. So they would have to be enrolled with-- and Tangel, if I say something wrong you can kick me. But they would have to be enrolled, we have two, those services go through two dental managed care organizations. Now one thing that some dentists have been hesitant to enroll because a lot of times if you enroll that means you take any of

the Medicaid population. This is according to Brandon, so correct me if I'm wrong. But for this particular program a dentist can enroll with the dental, one of the two dental managed care organizations and say that they will provide services for the IDD waiver population and then they don't have to open their practice to others. So there is an opportunity and they have found that there's more dentists who are willing, who have been providing those services who are willing to enroll if they know that they can serve that population. And again, correct anything I might have just said.

TANGELA WOMACK: No, you're right.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Is there a rate disparity? Like is their reimbursement rate different?

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Now that I don't know.

TANGELA WOMACK: I'm not familiar.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I know sometimes that's an issue with any doctors taking Medicaid, the reimbursement might be less or something.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: I know that they were asking them to look at that. I know there's been a lot of work done on the rate for things like anesthesia because what some folks were saying is if they needed the anesthesia that the dentists weren't able to get in and there's something around the reimbursement. So I know they've done a lot of work around that but I'm not sure about the specifics in terms of just your comprehensive dental services and how that's covered under DentaQuest and...

TANGELA WOMACK: ACNA.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Like the dentists, if they would become whatever provider under those plans and they say they can take IDD. Like they're just in that service. But like if the dentist is at capacity, they don't have to take everybody who comes into their door, right? They can say that they're at capacity.

TANGELA WOMACK: That's a provider issue. That would be something on the provider. It wouldn't be something Medicaid would regulate.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Okay. Thank you.

TANGELA WOMACK: But just to add what Julie was saying. As part of our business plan it was to do an overall rate review. I don't think we've gotten to

dental services, but they are looking at all the rates across the board.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Is there any more comments? Public? All right. Hearing none, the report requires no action and will be placed on file. Our next item is public comments and that is public comments on any area of concern or question. The person will be recognized by the chair, and you have three minutes. So do we have any public comment? Jill, you're recognized by the chair.

JILL HANO: This is more a staff question but the FHF packets for New Orleans were only distributed to certain council members. Is there anyway y'all can contact that center and get more copies so every council member can know what's going on?

AMY DEAVILLE: Sure.

JILL HANO: Okay. That's it. Thank you.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I mean, we probably have a scanned copy. It's not going to be in the folder that's laid out with the tabs but, I mean, the content would be there.

JILL HANO: I think it's kind of a disadvantage to talk about an issue that only half of the council is aware of.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Bambi.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I just had a question about the membership. I know that we have some, maybe some membership vacancies that are coming up. What is the plan for that? Can you let us know. I guess it's for Amy.

AMY DEAVILLE: So we have three people who are still, whose names are still sitting in Boards and Commissions Office waiting for appointment. They were delayed because of legislative session. So that's why. But hopefully they appoint those three soon. With the nominations that were made today, the votes made on elected officers we will have two parent seats that come up in October. One parent seat that comes up in November. And I believe there was another one coming up in January. So we will be putting out a call for-- actually we already did put out a call for parent applications. We did that a few weeks ago. I have only received two so far since we put out that. So we will put it out again in the upcoming weeks. July 7th

was the date that it went out with a deadline for applications of July 28th. But seeing as how we've only got two so far, we're going to have to put it back out and extend it. And then we will work on getting, as soon as I get some applicants, we will work on getting membership together. And I would really like to have some names for council approval by the (inaudible). I'll be talking to you, Jill.

NICOLE BANKS: All right.

MR. SPENCER: Spencer. Really appreciate (inaudible) today. I just wanted to take a few moments to bring to you guys' attention something (inaudible) I guess the last nine months. Louisiana Revised Statue 17173 permits outside behavioral health services to be administered in the school settings. The law was originally formulated to make sure there wasn't a disparity between those health services that were being provided outside of the school and particular (inaudible) being implemented in the school. One thing that appears to be apparent is that the law does need some modification. (Inaudible). When you look across the state there are various characters that are very willing to allow the services to come in because they understand the need a child has as well as also how the services can improve the overall learning environment. But there are other parishes that do not recognize that need and draw very hard lines in the sand preventing those services. So I've been reaching out to various state senators trying to get them onboard and (inaudible). If you guys have time, I strongly encourage you to look into it more. I'll be able after if you want to talk more about it.

NICOLE BANKS: Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Can you repeat the bill.

MR. SPENCER: It's Revised Statue 17173.

NICOLE BANKS: All right. Any more questions?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: A question. I believe that that law was something that the DD Council had advocated for. To be able to have the ADA providers to be able to go into school. But what you said is absolutely accurate. There are disparities of districts and, you know, it's something that we need to look at. It doesn't make sense to me that our districts, the ones that don't want it. The benefit to them is added

service, helping with those really complicated behavior needs. So I'm really glad you brought that up and I would encourage the council to look into that. The law exist so we should really make it to where all the districts have to comply and kids have access to that.

NICOLE BANKS: Any other comments? Questions? Okay. We do have an announcement for our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. There is a doodle poll that was emailed out to all the council members on 6/21 obtaining a date that would be most beneficial to all council members and the results following. The training will be held on September 9th and September 13th from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The dates again are September the 6th.

JILL HANO: What?

NICOLE BANKS: I'm sorry. I meant to say September the 6th. Excuse me. That's my dyslexia coming out. And the 13th.

SPEAKER: Both or just one?

NICOLE BANKS: Both.

JILL HANO: Can we participate virtually?

AMY DEAVILLE: Yes. It will be virtual.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. So the training for the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will be held September the 6th and September the 13th from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Okay. I just want to thank you all for all of your time and your commitment that you put into all of the different issues that we've been working on with our community for disability. And I am going to say this is my last meeting chairing this council. And I truly enjoyed my time being up here. But I do want to just reiterate when we're given stuff for this council, we definitely need to go over it and review it before we get to these meetings so that we're prepared, and we can tackle these issues within this meeting and not wait three months for another meeting. So I just hope that you guys keep that in mind. And pass the chains onto Ms. Christi Gonzales when she comes for the October meeting. So if there's no further business the meeting is adjourned.