

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Education and Employment Committee
April 17th, 2024

RENODA WASHINGTON: Good afternoon, everyone. It is now 3:19 and I would like to call the meeting to order. Stephanie, would you mind doing the roll call please.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. Ms. Avera.

MARY FRANCES AVERA: Thank you.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Banks.

NICOLE BANKS: I'm here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Gonzales. Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Present.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Webb.

VIVIANNE WEBB: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Wilson.

PHIL WILSON: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: And you have a quorum.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Thank you, Stephanie.

Before we get started I just wanted to remind you all of a few rules. For committee members and members of the public attending in person please raise your hand to speak and wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking. To help the meeting run smoothly keep side conversations to a minimum and comments related to the topic we are discussing. For those committee members who are attending virtually remember you must be on camera and have your first and last name showing to be counted towards our quorum. Please keep microphones muted unless called upon by the chair. Electronically raise your hand to request to speak and wait to be called on by the chair. For attendees electronically raise your hand to request to speak. Once recognized by the chair your microphone will be turned on. After speaking the microphone will be returned to mute.

Also, the Q and A and chat is to only be used by those who need an ADA accommodation. Public comment will not be

accepted via the Q and A and chat except for those individuals who requested the accommodation. As for order, committee members in person and virtually will be allowed to speak first. Public members in person will then be called on followed by public participating virtually who have their hands raised. Comments in the Q and A and chat will be addressed last. As with all hybrid meetings it can be difficult keeping track of all those wanting to speak in person and virtually so please be patient. All comments and questions from committee members and public may be limited to three minutes or less should we run into time constraints so please keep that in mind also. Also, comments about a person's character will not be allowed. Finally, members of the public will have the opportunity to provide public comment for each vote and during our designated public comment periods. The chair may also use their discretion to determine if the comments will be accepted outside of those times.

All right. So moving forward with the agenda. Everyone should have reviewed the October meeting summary which is linked in the agenda you received via email. There's also a copy in your packet. I need a motion to accept the minutes.

NICOLE BANKS: I motion to accept the minutes of the October meeting.

VIVIENNE WEBB: I second.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Due to the new regulations on open meetings law we will do a roll call vote. Stephanie, will you do the roll call vote please.

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Avera.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: And just to be clear a vote for yes is that we are accepting the minutes. A vote for no is that you do not want to accept the minutes.

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Avera. If you hit the unmute button.

MARY FRANCES AVERA: I don't know what to say. Sorry.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So we are doing a roll call vote to accept the October minutes. A vote for yes is a vote to accept them. A vote for no is to not accept.

MARY FRANCES AVERA: I'm going to say accept.

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Avera, yes. Ms. Banks.

NICOLE BANKS: Yes.

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Banks, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Bayham, yes. Ms. Gonzales.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes.

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Gonzales, yes. Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Jordan, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

HANNAH JENKINS: Mr. Taylor, yes. Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Yes.

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Webb, yes. Dr. Wilson.

PHIL WILSON: Yes.

HANNAH JENKINS: Dr. Wilson, yes. That is a unanimous vote for yes.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. The October meeting summary is passed by unanimous consent. Moving right along to the other part of the agenda. Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, LRS update. At the July and October meeting it was requested by the committee to get official documentation of the MOU (inaudible). We will now have Melissa Bayham from rehabilitation services get us started.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Hi. I'm Melissa Bayham. I'm the director of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. I believe I submitted a copy of the MOU. Did y'all receive that?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I believe it was linked in the January committee agenda but we didn't have the committee meeting because of the weather.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Okay. So I did provide that so I think if you have any questions you let me know. I just wanted to give some updates and take any questions that you may have. The Louisiana Workforce Commission right now has on its website, which is laworks.net, up for public comment our combined state plan. So for every four years in order for us to receive our federal funding we have to submit a state plan. This is the state workforce plan for Louisiana. We are a title four vocational rehabilitation but it also includes the workforce titles which are the Wagner-Peyser Adult and Dislocated Worker Program. That plan is up for public comment. You can go to laworks.net to view it and make any comments that you have. Or you can contact me if you have any questions about the vocational rehabilitation portion of that plan.

Also, on the laworks.net site there is a tab for

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and we have recently reformatted our policy manual, our procedure manual and we have a new manual called a fee schedule. Those are all on the LAworks website if you would like to go and look at them. It's a lot more user friendly than it was before. We call it the TAG manual which is the technical assistance and guidance manual. Which is basically the manual that tells you all the services that we provide and the rules regarding those particular services and they link really well. So if you click on the links it will bring you to the different sections that you want. And we've tried to make it a little bit more user friendly in terms of reading it. And so I hope that you all have a chance to view that and let me know if you have any questions.

We also, it's called chapter three, it's the LRS fee schedule. So our TAG manual, our technical assistance and guidance manual is, I don't remember how many pages, but it's lot. And all the rates are just kind of dispersed throughout the manual. The fee schedule is a much shorter document that has all of our fees in one place if you want to view that. We did make some changes to the fees which we talked about in January. But those are all on the fee schedule on the website.

On March the 21st we did have a vendor training for all of our vendors statewide about our recent procedural and rate changes. So that was one of the requests that we had from many of the different groups was that we have a statewide training to discuss all those changes. So we did that on March the 21st. I also wanted to note that we are restructuring some things at LRS. It's just very apparent that we're not going to get any additional state general funds anytime soon and also we don't have very many positions allocated to LRS. So we are trying to figure out basically how to serve our consumers the best way possible with the number of staff that we have. So we are in the process of making some of these changes. We are going to start invoicing at the state office level. And what that means is our rehabilitation counselor associates, those are the assistants to our (inaudible), won't have that job duty anymore. So that will free them to do more work with our consumers.

And one thing that we trained them on in March is to be able to work more in our preemployment transition services program. Which is our program for students with

disabilities in high school. And it's a great program but it's just very difficult because obviously we have so many school districts throughout the state. And within LRS I only have about 160 staff. And that includes administrative, counselors, rehabilitation counselor associates. So in order to have more staff actually being able to touch our consumers and to serve our consumers we're making those particular changes. So they have just been trained on that. And we're in the process of making these changes. So we're trying to make our services obviously more consistent statewide. So be patient with us but we are making changes to try to make our services better. Those are all my prepared statements.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I was just wondering have y'all reduced staff allocations?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I don't know if this answers your question and you can tell me. You know, within government every department has a certain number of positions that they can fill. And so we're with the Office of Workforce Development so we have a certain number of positions within the Office of Workforce Development. So even if I have the funding to fill positions if I don't have an actual what they call in state government a TO, which is a funded position, you can't fill it. So right now even though I think I have 30 vacancies I actually only have three positions available to fill. Does that make sense?

NICOLE BANKS: Even though you have 30 vacancies you only have three to fill. Is that because the funding is not there?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I have the funding but I do not have the position. You have to have position numbers that are funded by the legislature and so I only have three positions that I can fill right now even though I have funding for additional positions. It's really confusing.

CHRISTI GONZALES: You have the money but not the position.

NICOLE BANKS: Create a position?

MELISSA BAYHAM: The state legislature allocates a certain number of positions per state department. So I don't know the actual numbers but let's say the Workforce Commission has 900 positions and we have 100 vacancies. They have to determine what the needs are at the Workforce Commission on where they're going to fill the positions that they have allocated to the legislature. And if you

don't fill a position within a certain period of time I think at one point the Division of Administration if you didn't fill a position in a year you lost that position. And it sounds like why would you have a position open for a year but we've had situations where you're interviewing, it doesn't work out so you have to post again. So sometimes it does take a while to fill positions.

And with us in particular, like our supervisory positions, because we've had issues with hiring over the last ten years we have certain positions that we don't have individuals who qualify for. So that position may stay vacant for a year because you don't have a qualified candidate and that usually happens in the supervisory positions.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So you only have three TOs this year. Is that a reduction in the LRS program?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I wouldn't say it's a reduction. And this gets into a little bit of the Office of Workforce Development and not my business. But there were some situations where they had job appointments that they needed TO for essentially.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you for those updates Melissa. Any further questions before we move on?

ERICK TAYLOR: Is your waiting list full?

MELISSA BAYHAM: So technically I don't have a waiting list. So when I say technically our order of selection is all open but because of my staffing it does take us longer to see people.

CHRISTI GONZALES: One more question. I'm sorry. I know y'all had a position in I think St. Mary Parish and it was closed. I don't know if that's right.

MELISSA BAYHAM: So we wouldn't have had one specifically in St. Mary.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Or that area.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I think that would be the Lafayette region. So we did have a vacancy in Lafayette but I don't think it was filled.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay. That's what I was wondering.

NICOLE BANKS: Did y'all ever get the Houma position filled?

MELISSA BAYHAM: For the rehabilitation employment development specialist? I try not to use acronyms. Our REDS position. We've never had a qualified applicant for that position. And so that's one of those positions that

were vacant over a year. So at some point like I have to make these difficult decisions on where we fill positions and I would rather fill a counselor position than a REDS position because technically I can send a consumer to a vendor and pay a fee for service for them to be placed into employment whereas a rehabilitation counselor they're the only ones who do that.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Next on the agenda is update from Louisiana Department of Education. There was a motion at the October meeting that Louisiana Department of Education state ombudsman will be added to the agenda for January. Since there was no committee in January it was added to April's agenda. Meredith Jordan with LDOE is here to provide an update on state ombudsman, cameras in the classroom and other LDOE updates. Meredith, you have the floor.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Thank you so much. Good afternoon. So I'll start with introducing Chassidy and that particular item if that's okay. So as you all know in response to our contracted review of our dispute resolution process, and then also the state auditors review, performance review of our dispute resolution process one amazing thing that came out of that, and a recommendation that we work really closely with the auditors on, was to hire a state specific special education ombudsman for the first time ever in Louisiana. And so we're very excited. I was absolutely happy to invite her and bring her here to introduce you all. So Chassidy is our state special education ombudsman.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Nice to meet you.

MEREDITH JORDAN: It has been so amazing. So just coming over here I'm telling her hey, this is where the building is and I see her walking in and she's on the phone with a parent. And she says I'm on the phone with a parent, I'll come up. And I'm like yes ma'am. And so she's literally there constantly during the day this is her soul responsibility to help and assist our parents of students with disabilities to navigate what are often complex processes. And so we're very excited to have her.

As you all know, I'll talk a little bit more about other policy shifts, but we made a policy shift alongside SEAP this year that actually requires us as a department to help parents when they do file a state complaint that is deficient per federal rule, not per anything state or that we're making these judgment calls, but there are a lot of

required things that have to go in a state complaint. And we placed in policy that we would now begin to help parents when their complaint is deficient what is happening with it and how they can better resubmit that complaint to meet all of those requirements. And so literally that is what Chassidy is helping do. So we've made a lot of improvements. Both including policy. Both including process. And of course bringing Chassidy on board with her experience in special education and pupil appraisal. And so knowing and understanding and having that deep knowledge of the process and this complex process that is going through evaluation and potentially qualifying for special education and being served by an IEP. And so I'm really excited that she's here. I know she brought some information. If anyone wants that information she's happy to share. She wanted to do that. I thought it was a great idea. We have this information, if you want to just let her know yeah, I want to know about your information.

CHASSIDY: I can start and y'all can just pass around. It's just a one-page informational flier that just explains what my role is, what I'm there to help with and then contact information.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

MEREDITH JORDAN: And we can certainly give those as well to members of the public. I'll say we've updated our-- we have this one-pager as well on our website. We have also included this information directly on our dispute resolution page. So when families and stakeholders go to our dispute resolution page there is also a section about our special education ombudsman, how to get in contact with her. And so, which is great and is why she is constantly helping parents and on the phone which is what we want is to be accessible to our families. So thank you for coming, Chassidy. I know she's going to hang around for a while. We've introduced her to our BESE board members as well. They also have this information. They are sharing this information in their regions. And so, you know, that's certainly something that everyone here is also more than happy to have people helping us get that information out and being accessible for our parents and our families. Do y'all want to take questions about this specifically or do you want me to keep going, chairperson?

RENODA WASHINGTON: We can take questions.

VIVIENNE WEBB: So how's the ombudsman supposed to be

neutral if they're hired by LDOE?

MEREDITH JORDAN: I can't make anyone else hire an ombudsman and so when the auditor made that recommendation we can only hire within our agency. And so that really isn't something-- I know this council mentioned that before but we have no jurisdiction to tell agencies or anyone that they should hire this position. And so because the auditor recommended it for us we did it.

VIVIENNE WEBB: What if we got an independent contractor?

MEREDITH JORDAN: We would not-- so we now have a full-time position and person so we wouldn't change that position. So even if LDOE contracted it wouldn't be, we would still own the contract. Does that make sense? I can't make anybody else--

VIVIENNE WEBB: Can we contract another one?

MEREDITH JORDAN: Contract another?

VIVIENNE WEBB: An independent contractor instead of under LDOE. That way there's one that's neutral.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. Like you mean the DD Council contract?

VIVIENNE WEBB: I don't know. It depends on if we can find an independent contractor to do it instead of being hired by LDOE. That way it can actually be neutral because I'm worried that it won't be able to be neutral because it's hired by LDOE.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Right. No. I totally understand. We did what we were charged to do and so we have a person who is our responsibility for now.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right. One more question.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Is one person enough?

CHASSIDY: So to go back to the first question about being neutral. I don't investigate any of the complaints. So my role is to field calls from parents or from districts or from advocates that have questions about those dispute resolution processes. So I am just giving information. If a parent calls in and says hey, I have this concern with my district. We discuss the scope of the concerns and then I'll say well, you could do this, you could do this, you could do this. If you go this route this may be what is the outcome. If you go this route this would be the outcome. So I am not giving any kind of legal advice. I am not telling them what they should or should not do. I'm just providing information on the process of special

education whether or not if districts have to do specific things as it relates to the law. And like I said, giving them information on the specific dispute resolution processes. I don't do any complaints. That's a separate person within the agency.

And then to answer your question about one person being enough. I think so for now. It's a pretty heavy call load but it's manageable. Parents are calling through the call center and we're able to track that and set up emails and follow-up calls. So for right now I feel like we're making good gains and seeing good things.

NICOLE BANKS: Before we decide to try to get something else can we at least see if this works first. Like can we give the opportunity to fester and let her do what she came on to do so we can at least just see instead of trying to like go get something else.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I know it's a big scope. So like that's why I was like is it enough for one person.

MEREDITH JORDAN: So this is paired with our other family support partnerships. So you still have other agencies out there that we can't do this without, right. So we still have other folks who are also helping to support parents as well that we partner with.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right. Any other questions before Meredith continues? Phil, you're recognized.

PHIL WILSON: I was trying to raise my hand electronically but it doesn't seem to be working or I'm not doing something right. So thank you for recognizing me. So I understand what the defined role that the Department of Ed has given for this ombudsman position. But I just did a quick definition search and that is not really what an ombudsman's role is. An ombudsman is quote unquote usually an official usually appointed by the government who investigates complaints against, in this case, this is discussing financial ombudsman. But so I'm not sure that what the role that the department has-- maybe using the term ombudsman should be changed if that's not in fact the definition of the role of an ombudsman just so everyone's clear. Because this doesn't really eliminate the need for an ombudsman if all you're doing is telling people who to call to file their complaint or to get information about how to proceed.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Jill.

JILL HANO: I'm a member of the public but it seems

like-- I'm not on this committee to talk about vocabulary, but I thought an ombudsman was also a liaison. I thought when Vivienne proposed about the LDOE ombudsman it would be a liaison. Everything I heard from-- and I forgot your name already.

CHASSIDY: Chassidy.

JILL HANO: It seems like in my head I had that this person would serve more as a liaison role. And from what I've heard you say you've been up to you are doing what was expected of you.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes. She is absolutely a liaison for our parents and families, to LDOE, to other agencies in navigating that process. A liaison is an excellent word.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Phil, you're recognized.

PHIL WILSON: So maybe the person should be named a liaison since they are not doing ombudsman duties. I'm looking at LDEQ's website information and it says the ombudsman's goal is to be impartial and neutral as possible in determining whether or not, in this case, the agency or individual's actions were fair and reasonable. That's a whole lot different than just telling people well, you should call this person or go to Families Helping Families or go talk to your superintendent or whatever that is. That's really not getting to any sort of is this a valid issue or not. That's just making the parent do more work that may or may not result in a reasonable outcome.

VIVIENNE WEBB: So essentially what I'm hearing is, Meredith, we did not get an ombudsman at all, but you were tasked with giving us one. Is that correct?

MEREDITH JORDAN: So when you say you want an ombudsman to make a decision on whether the district did something right or wrong?

VIVIENNE WEBB: No. I'm saying what we currently have is not an ombudsman. It is just labeled as an ombudsman.

MEREDITH JORDAN: I think states have a lot of different-- I think to what Phil looked up is a particular ombudsman description that has been developed. So we also took a look at other state's special education ombudsman where the Department of Education is charged with housing that special education ombudsman. So there are a couple other states that have very similar positions. And that is how we framed that particular. So but if you're talking about complaint decisions and filing or giving official decisions to a school system, that comes from our legal

team, right. So that is not part of what we tasked her to do. She's helping families navigate the process, know their options, connecting them, talking with them. She'll get on the phone with them, talk with their SPED directors with them. So there's kind of we have two different roles. So we have the neutral piece that she's doing, the liaison work that she's doing and then we have that official, our legal team who will cite school districts and require corrective action in those particular situations as well.

VIVIENNE WEBB: So can you find me a dictionary with your definition of ombudsman in it?

MEREDITH JORDAN: I'm sorry that's not--

VIVIENNE WEBB: Because as far as the committee is concerned if it's not in the dictionary then it's probably not a factual definition.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Okay.

SAMANTHA SINGLETARY: All right. My name is Samantha. I serve on the council but I'm not on this committee. I'm just saying from my perspective in healthcare whenever I did have an ombudsman situation in my job that was somebody that you went to that would be your middle ground. Almost like the person that goes back and forth and gives the message here and there and does resolve the conflict. So I think it's misleading for parents that are already in a frustrated situation. I know for me when I went through the complaint process I didn't-- the way the legal team talked to me was (inaudible). So I needed somebody to be the middle ground for me even in that moment. And probably be directed to just well, that's the legal team. Well, I just went to them and they were very abrasive. So I just think it could be a misguided situation where parents think that this is the person that's going to solve my problem. When all actuality it's not the person that's going to solve it. I'm going to have to get more steps to get to where I need to get and it just may cause some frustration or some inability to understand what exactly the role is.

MEREDITH JORDAN: I want to be clear that she's not just a passthrough. She's not just passing parents off to the next step. If parents want to file a complaint there is a next step. So I want to make it really clear that she doesn't just pass parents off to another step. That would be a very much waste of her expertise and the role. So I think there's just maybe a little bit of confusion about what she does verses what our dispute resolution does. And

actually like what I'm hearing the questions about like holding districts accountable and citing districts for violations. That would come through a state complaint. That type of thing. But she is helping parents navigate their decisions and what to do. And their options. Not telling them what to do.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Ms. Banks, you're recognized.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. I hear everybody's clarity about her role and the position. Because if you Google this, and that is what everyone's going to do because that's what everyone did, if you Google it that is the first thing that comes up is she is an investigator of the complaints. So this is in every single last one of the Google things. Every single last one that I pulled up. So my thing is I know that y'all have a legal team but just like-- I forgot your name. Just like Samantha was saying, that's another process they're going to have to go through.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. She's not investigating complaints. That's super clear. She's not investigating complaints and let me tell you why. If she was investigating complaints she couldn't also be a third-party helping parents understand their options. So those things have to be more separate. If she's going to advise parents potentially she can't also then go and investigate. That's a conflict of interest. Go investigate, right, and then make the decision about who's right or who's wrong. So we have two complaint investigators that take on that role verses her role being more of that liaison and helping them understand the processes and understand their options.

NICOLE BANKS: So maybe it's a suggestion moving forward to not put out this information because people are going to Google and they're like wait, that's not really an ombudsman. What is this. Maybe y'all can put on there extra hey, we do have a complaint person and this is their contact information. Or we do have a legal team that also is supported by this that goes with our policies and procedures and here's the information for that. Because if you just put it for her everybody's going to be like no, she's the one that's supposed to be investigating this for us. That's what an ombudsman is. So it is going to create some confusion for parents just knowing okay, she's probably our contact person but then she's not. She is and she's not. So I'm just saying just moving forward so that

y'all can nip that part in the bud with the questions. Y'all should have all of that in the same document, information, so that a person can look oh, okay. This is how they do it. This is the process. I'm not as confused as I was before.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Got you.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay, Meredith. Thank you all for your concerns. I feel like we can move forward with what else we have on here. If we have more time before we will come back to it but I just kind of want to move on from this particular part. Meredith, you have the floor.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Absolutely. So just another update on our cameras in classrooms that I told you all last time that our school systems have spent just over a million dollars of that funding. We also provided that to the legislature several weeks ago. They asked for an update so I know that's really important to them and the folks who advocated for that to be put in place. We're going to be launching our second year of data collection for that. The month of May. I typically provide an update to BESE in August on what are the current numbers. How have they spent down that funding in this school year. How many cameras have they purchased. So that same cut of data we'll launch that in May and have that report for August BESE. So I just wanted to provide that update.

And then I wanted to talk just a little bit because in March BESE approved updates to bulletin 1706 that won't go into effect, so it stays on notice of intent and won't come off until June 30th. So over the summer July 1st is when our new timelines that SEAP endorsed, we had superintendents endorse, and it passed BESE in March. And so we added very specific response timelines for parent requests for evaluations and parent requests for independent education evaluations along with some other themes in that bulletin. But I think the more that I can share those updates with stakeholders and specifically with parents around those changes that will impact them the better, right, to get those out. And so we actually had all SPED directors in yesterday. They've been aware of those changes. We went back over those updates with them yesterday. And also began to tell them you've got to start changing your processes and procedures around this for next school year just so they have a heads up if for some reason they haven't been watching that policy get approved. And

so we're really excited about it. It's going to bring consistency, clarity across our state around when a parent requests an evaluation, when a parent requests an independent evaluation and when they should expect a response from the school system. And so we're excited about that.

And what that also means, Chassidy and I have been working with this and also working with our legal team. That also means that update to our parent handbook, our procedural safeguards notice, right. So all of those timelines are also in there so that parents are aware when they get that handbook annually, and some other times, but at least at that annual IEP meeting they're getting that handbook and this means that we are going to have to update that with those new timelines. So we're in the process of that so we can provide that to our school systems to update and get to families.

We are watching, as you all know, there are additional proposed legislation moves that will also impact special education and some other compliance type things that could also require us to do another update. But I can't wait so we're going to do an update based on the policy shifts that we've made. So we have an updated handbook for next year. And then based on what happens as a result of legislative session we may be required to update both policy again and potentially our procedural safeguards handbook again. So just wanted to provide kind of what's on the horizon, what's happened most recently. And really, I mean, it was great. I credit a lot of the stakeholders we worked with to draft that policy. The superintendents for endorsing that policy and moving that through to benefit our kids. And I think that is most of what I wanted to talk about.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Brooke had a question for you.

BROOKE STEWART: I had a question for clarification. They need to be requested at the start of each school year for the child. The camera doesn't follow the child through school, right? Once I put in that request with the child.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. So you can request it anytime but I would definitely have conversations to make sure that it is following the student. And just so it doesn't fall through the cracks, right, with school starting and a lot going on in schools and with administration that the student doesn't move grade levels, move classrooms and oh,

no. The camera is still over here. Now check your local school system policy. Some of them may require the parents to request it annually. Probably for maybe for that reason just to alert them. Hey, I need it to move with my student. But that's probably going to be addressed in that LEA's SPED camera policy. But I would definitely put it annually on my kiddo's principal's radar that hey, don't forget we have a camera. I need it to move with them. Really good question.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I was wondering were we able to move the phone numbers, like Families Helping Families' phone numbers, from page 12 to the front?

MEREDITH JORDAN: We talked about that at SEAP and we're bringing all of those recommendations to our procedural handbook update. So we can probably, yeah.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Ms. Banks.

NICOLE BANKS: We haven't really talked about this, but you know the program that Dr. Beckers was over, the college education one.

SPEAKER: LAPIE.

NICOLE BANKS: Where do we get information for that? Because I have a contact at Grambling State University and I have been reaching out to Dr. Beckers for like the last six months I have left her messages and emails.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Sabbatical.

NICOLE BANKS: I didn't know she was on a sabbatical. I'm sorry. Because I have a contact person that's interested in starting up that program at Grambling State University. I don't have any information to give.

MEREDITH JORDAN: They have a council that's probably the best contact.

EBONY HAVEN: They do have an advisory council, but Dr. Breaud who is over Nicholls, the Bridge to Independence Program. She probably could give you information for Grambling if they're interested. And Bridge to Independence also has a new director, Julie Foss, so she can give you information too.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I think Dr. Breaud's been taking over Dr. Becker's responsibilities.

NICOLE BANKS: Oh, that's why. Okay. Did we get emails about that?

EBONY HAVEN: That Dr. Becker's was on sabbatical?

NICOLE BANKS: I don't think so.

BRENTON ANDRUS: She let some of us know as a courtesy.

NICOLE BANKS: Okay. Because I was just wondering. For her not to get back with a council member.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay.

ERICK TAYLOR: Ask a question. When kids transferring over to college do y'all have things in place like cameras in certain study areas?

MEREDITH JORDAN: So we could only fund-- and the cameras are legislatively funded so I guess potentially there could be legislative funding for post-secondary cameras in areas. But that wouldn't be something that would fall under the department. That's not to say that couldn't be a legislative directive to put cameras in those post-secondary places. Good question.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Any other questions for Meredith? Phil, you have your hand up.

PHIL WILSON: I don't feel like I really understood what follow up, Meredith, you plan to take based on the questions you got about the incorrect use of the term ombudsman and how that might be misperceived by-- to me it sounds like as you describe it it sounds pretty much like what any parent would do if they walked into a Families Helping Families office or called them or reached out in some fashion. When you use the word ombudsman there's a very clear meaning to that word and just because Idaho or some other state uses that term doesn't mean we should use that term if that's not in fact what it means. So I would hope that there would be some concrete action on your part to take that back to the department and say hey, we're Department of Education, we probably should understand what the English language means. It's kind of insulting to use that term and really have no intention of that being the person's work scope.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yeah. I can definitely bring it back to, that concern back to our legal team as well. And I know that was terminology that was brought to us by the auditors as well. So yeah. No, I understand.

PHIL WILSON: Thank you.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Any other question for Meredith? Thank you, Meredith. Now we'll move onto our contractual activities. Ebony, will you update us?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. This is activity 3.1.5. So for this quarter the Arc watched the MFP task force meeting, BESE retreat and sent an email regarding the dismissal of the SEAP members. They met with several legislators and

helped develop a concurrent resolution to urge Louisiana Department of Health to update its policies in the Medicaid buy-in programs and increase the amount of income individuals can earn when working. They also shared the Medicaid buy-in program, that sheet with LRS, OCDD, legislators, self-advocates, provider agencies and families. The Arc sent language to staff to share and LaCAN action alerts.

They also, and this will be, they're will be more information on the next status report for the next quarter, for quarter three. But they did do their first round of trainings for education and employment. I believe it was, I want to say April 2nd, but for some reason that doesn't seem right to me. But anyway, we sent out an LADDC news advertising that. We had registration links on our website and it was pushed out on social media. It was a virtual, there was a virtual, virtual webinar, sorry. It was a virtual webinar. There were two in that day. The first one was for education. The second one was for employment. They are going to be getting me a schedule within the next, I don't know, about a week or so of where they are planning on having their next meetings. Those meetings will be in person. Their next trainings that will be in person. And they are supposed to be getting that to me. So I will have those updates definitely for the next quarter. And once I get that, and the next trainings are scheduled, I will push that out on social media and to the list serve. That is all I have for that.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Stephanie. Any questions for Stephanie before we move on? All right. Hearing no additional questions we will move onto announcements. Tomorrow is the full council meeting which will begin at 8:30 a.m. Does anyone on the committee have any announcements to make?

VIVIENNE WEBB: I got my statement of approval of 504 and my mom like has to call the guys, has to call someone to talk about my waiver services but I've gotten the offer.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right. I did have to say something. Meredith, I do want to say tomorrow I did hear the concerns of everyone about the ombudsman. I do think the council, we do want to recognize everyone's concerns and consider them. So tomorrow I would probably have more information because there may be more questioning behind it. Just a little bit more information. I also want to

thank you for the information that you did provide. And I also want to thank Ms. Chassidy for coming. We definitely are rooting for you. We are a council. We are parents. We are educators. And so I know this is your first time meeting us so it may have been little heavy in here. But this is who we are. No disrespect to you or your position that you now hold. We do wish you the best. And I thank you for coming. I know that took a lot and I thank you for staying through it all.

Hearing none, if there are no objections we can adjourn by unanimous consent. Any objections? Okay. I hereby adjourn the meeting at 4:15.