

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council  
Quarterly Meeting  
October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

CHRISTI GONZALES: Good morning, everyone. The quarterly meeting of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council will now come to order. Thank you for everyone who's attending today. Virtual meeting protocol. For committee members and members in person please raise your hand to speak and wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking. To help the meeting run smoothly please keep side conversations to a minimum and comments related to the topic we are discussing as well. 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. 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 is to only be used by those needing an ADA accommodation to participate in the meeting. Public comment will not be accepted by the Q and A except for those individuals who requested the accommodation. As per 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 to keep track of all of those wanting to speak in person and virtually. We ask that you be patient. All comments and questions from committee members and the public may be limited should we run into time constraints so please keep that in mind. Also comments about a person's character will not be allowed. Finally, members of the public will have the opportunity to provide public comment before each vote and during designated public comment periods. Public

members will be given one opportunity to speak for each agenda item and will be limited to two minutes. The chair may also use their discretion to determine if comments will be accepted outside of those times.

Will Ebony please call the roll for attendance?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, ma'am. After I call your name say present. Ms. Aduli.

CHERIE ADULI: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Present.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Ennis. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Hymel. Roslyn, can you hear us? Okay. I'll keep going. Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Present.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Nguyen. Mr. Piontek. Tony, can you unmute.

TONY PIONTEK: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Thank you. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Stewart. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Webb.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Wilson. Ms. Womack.

LAUREN WOMACK: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Gonzales.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Here.

EBONY HAVEN: You have a quorum.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you. At this time we will

have Vivienne Webb read the mission statement.

VIVIENNE WEBB: To increase independence, self-determination, productivity, integration and inclusion for Louisianians with developmental disabilities by engaging in advocacy, capacity building and systems change.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Vivienne. And we will have Cherie Aduli read the ground rules.

CHERIE ADULI: Members must be recognized by the chair before speaking. Be respectful of each other's opinions. We will break for ten minutes every one and a half hours. Discuss council business in a responsible manner. Except as necessary restrict the use of electronic communication during the council and committee meetings. Silence or turn off all cell phones. Mission statement is posted at every meeting. Be on time for meetings. No alphabets and side conversations are kept to a minimum, done quietly and restricted to the subject at hand.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, ma'am. The next item of business is the approval of the meeting summary. A draft of the July 18th meeting summary was distributed to everyone. The summary will not be read unless requested by a member. Are there any corrections to be made? If there are no objections the meeting summary is approved as distributed.

EBONY HAVEN: I'm sorry. I have a correction. Mr. Tony Piontek was mistakenly put on the members that were absent and I will make that correction to put that he was here.

TONY PIONTEK: Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you. Any other corrections? Ebony will fix that. If there is no objection the meeting summary is approved as corrected. Hearing none, the meeting summary is approved.

The next item of business is the chair's report. The executive committee met yesterday and has two recommendations to present to the council. The committee discussed the council's mission statement for the new five-year plan 2027 to 2031 that the council approved at the July meeting. The council staff made a recommendation for a more accessible and easy to read mission statement since the council is working on redesigning the council website, including working on

plain language documents. The committee added more clarification to the end of the statement on full inclusion. Therefore the committee has this recommendation to offer for the council's consideration. So the motion was the executive committee recommends approval of the revised mission statement for the new 27 to 31 state plan. And it is to help Louisianians with intellectual and developmental disabilities live more independently, make their own choices, be more productive and be fully included in all aspects of community living. We now need a motion to approve.

ERICK TAYLOR: I motion.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Mr. Erick. Second?

MIKE BILLINGS: I'll second.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Mr. Mike.

EBONY HAVEN: Can I ask a question? Since it's coming from a committee, okay.

CHRISTI GONZALES: It is moved to accept the new mission statement with the revisions. Since the motion is coming from a committee it does not require a second. Is there any discussion from council members?

The committee also discussed-- is there any public comment about the new mission statement?

So here's the question and it is on us approving the revised mission statement for the new 2027-2031 mission statement. We will have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion to accept the revised mission statement when your name is called say yes. If you're opposed say no. If you're abstained say abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli.

CHERIE ADULI: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli, yes. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Billings, yes. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain, yes. Mr. Ennis.

JAMAR ENNIS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Ennis, yes. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

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

JILL HANO: Yes.

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

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

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

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan, yes. Ms. Nguyen. Mr. Piontek. You're muted, Tony. Can you unmute for us.

TONY PIONTEK: Can you hear me?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. Is your vote yes or no.

TONY PIONTEK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Piontek, yes. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

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

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

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

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Webb, yes. Dr. Wilson. Ms. Womack.

LAUREN WOMACK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Womack, yes.

BROOKE STEWART: Can I vote yes? This is Brooke Stewart. Sorry I missed roll call.

EBONY HAVEN: That's okay. Ms. Stewart, yes. That's 18 yeas, no nays and zero abstentions.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right. And the yeases have it and the motion is adopted. Thank you.

So the committee then discussed the council papers, the position papers for the new five-year plan 2027, 2031 that the council approved at the July meeting. The council develops policy and position statements and papers in our areas of emphasis and regarding current issues being considered by policymakers including community supports, self-determination, inclusion, healthcare, inclusive education and employment. These positions are based on the council's core values of independence,

self-determination, productivity, integration and inclusion for all Louisiana citizens with developmental disabilities and can be used in advocating for improved services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The council staff made updates again to make the language more accessible and easy to read for our new five-year plan. Therefore the committee has this recommendation to offer for the council's consideration.

So the motion is on the screen for the executive committee to recommend approval of the revised position papers for the new 2027-2031 state plan.

JILL HANO: Ebony, can you make it bigger?

CHRISTI GONZALES: It is moved to accept this motion-- I need a motion. I'm sorry.

EBONY HAVEN: It's coming from a committee.

ERICK TAYLOR: I motion.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I'm sorry. Because the motion is coming from a committee it does not require a second. Is there any discussion from council members? Is there any public comment? So the question is on the executive committee recommending the approval of the position papers for the 2027-2031 state plan. We have to do a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion to accept the position papers for the state plan 2027-2031 when your name is called say yes. If you're opposed say no. And if your abstain say abstain.  
Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli.

CHERIE ADULI: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli, yes. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Mike Billings, yes. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain, yes. Mr. Ennis.

JAMAR ENNIS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Ennis, yes. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

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

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Harmon, yes. Ms. Hymel. Is she back?

ROSLYN HYMEL: I'm right here if you called me.

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, Roslyn. Would you like to vote for approval of the position papers? You can say yes to vote for the approval or no not to vote for the approval.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yes, I would like to vote.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. What would you like to vote? Yes or no?

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yes, I do.

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

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan, yes. Ms. Nguyen. Mr. Piontek. You have to unmute, Tony.

TONY PIONTEK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Piontek, yes. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

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

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

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

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

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

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Webb, yes. Dr. Wilson. And Ms. Womack.

LAUREN WOMACK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Womack, yes. Nineteen yeas, zero nays and zero abstentions.

CHRISTI GONZALES: The yeases have it and the motion is adopted.

The next thing that the committee discussed was the upcoming council member retreat. At the July meeting the executive committee gave the executive director feedback during her quarterly evaluation. It included the desire to have a council member retreat. Ebony and the staff have recommended adding an extra day to the January 2025 quarterly meeting to conduct the retreat with the ultimate goal of council members getting to know each other better and working together

better as a unit. The committee discussed the desire to have both a learning and training portion and a getting to know each other better portion by having a self-introduction activity similar to Partners in Policymaking.

Lastly, the committee conducted the second quarterly evaluation for a new executive director. According to the council bylaws the executive committee has to perform an evaluation on a newly hired ED every quarter. The full council will evaluate the executive director at the April 2025 meeting which is her anniversary date. The survey results were very positive feedback on what a great job the ED has been doing since hired. There was one area of improvement that the director is currently addressing with the council retreat. There was also comments and suggestions about how the council staff can increase the council's presence of social media by collecting more pictures from contractors, getting videos from council members to create reels and maybe going live for some events and initiatives the council is funding.

The next item of business-- I'm sorry. Are there any questions from council members on the executive director? The executive director's report, Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: The executive director's report is included in the packet so I'm not going to read it to you guys. But I do want to kind of highlight some things. Just the action plan for FY2025. Your action plan was submitted to the Office for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, OIDD on August 9th and we received approval for your plan on September 24th. So that plan is approved by the feds and we are ready to rock and roll. Our program performance report or our PPR for FY24 or your FY24 action plan is due at the end of December. So after this meeting we will be in full PPR mode.

I do want to also point out some of the professional development for staff. Stephanie and I attended the 2024 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities or NACDD conference in Washington DC July 22nd through the 25th. The Information and Technical Assistance Center for Councils on Developmental Disabilities or ITAC held technical assistance sessions on the 22nd and 23rd.



And the 22nd session focused on managing key aspects throughout a project's life cycle. And this included information on how to write a solicitation of proposals or an RFP or an SOP, what to include to attract competitive bids, how to score competitive bids. Including things such as anonymous review and how to manage a grantee or a contractor once they are awarded the grant and throughout the contract period. Finally, they also gave us some technical assistance on how to collect the data that's needed for every council for our PPRs or our program performance reports.

We had a lot of in-house revamping of our processes this past quarter. The staff spent a lot of time revamping our contract process where we are-- well, I'll just give props to Stephanie because she did a lot of work on this. She created a grants manual. We took a look at some other councils who had grant manuals. Texas was one of them. They had a really great grants manual that we used as a guide for ours. So now we are giving that grants manual to our contractors now. We are also in the process of holding contractor and grantee orientations so that our contractors know how to collect the information that we need for our PPR but also how to invoice. How to do travel because some of our invoices are confusing. They get sent back because of the travel. So we're just trying to make sure that we're all on the same page. That our contractors know how to invoice. They know what we're looking for as far as our PPR data. But also the data that the council needs in order to make sure that initiative is going well.

We also spent a lot of time because at the July meeting there was a request for the council to collect their own survey data. So the council staff spent some time, I wouldn't say hours, we spent some time on creating a survey where we will send out to the participants of our initiatives directly so we can collect that information from them directly. We did send out the survey to a couple of our self-advocate council members to make sure that the questions were readable and understandable. We got positive feedback so we're going to make sure that we are collecting that information and sharing it at our quarterly meetings here on out.

Also at the NACDD conference there was a new executive director development training session where they discussed requirements included in the DD Act about the purpose and mandate of each council. Lobbying verses educating or advocating. How to manage our federal budgets and tips on how to collect information for the council's comprehensive review analysis or the CRA for the state plan development for our next five-year plan.

And there was also this great state and territory showcase that they had where each DD Council was able to showcase an initiative that they were really proud of that we are funding. And also just to kind of bring out some unique things from each state. Of course Stephanie and I did Mardi Gras because that's really unique to Louisiana and we had beads. Stephanie found beads. Our administrative assistant also donated some of her beads so we were able to give beads away at the NACDD conference. It was a big hit. They really loved it. Next we're going to have to step up our game because Virginia had a person playing colonial music at their station so that was really cool. Next time we'll have to have some Zydeco music or something like that.

Also on staff development we do have a new executive director for NACDD, Ms. Jill Jacobs. And region six had her CEO on-boarding meeting. Region six, Louisiana included Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas and I'm missing someone, Arkansas. So all of the executive directors were able to meet with Jill Jacobs our new executive director for NACDD. We were able to talk about political climates in our state. We were also able to talk about challenges and concerns, the new vision for NACDD, Jill Jacobs. But also we were able to invite some of our leaders. They wanted us to invite leadership council members. Unfortunately Christi wasn't available but Jill was able to get on and so was Brenton and we were able to highlight some of our initiatives and we highlighted LaCAN, YLF.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Partners.

EBONY HAVEN: We did Partners?

BRENTON ANDRUS: I thought so.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. We might have did Partners.

BRENTON ANDRUS: First responder training, emergency management.

EBONY HAVEN: So we highlighted all of those and that meeting was really great. I'm really excited about the new executive director for NACDD. She is going to be revamping things sort of like we are here at the council as well. I don't think that they're planning to have an NACDD conference next year because she's trying to revamp things and just kind of make sure people are getting what they need out of that conference. So that was an exciting meeting.

And then the last one I kind of wanted to mention was the executive director leadership summit I attended September 23rd through the 26th. Every ED, not all the EDs attended unfortunately, but the EDs that were there had the opportunity to share thoughts, concerns, opportunities, promising practices including how to better incorporate our self-advocates and how to better support them during our council meetings. And just ideas on how to effectively operate our DD Councils. So those are some things that I kind of wanted to highlight.

But then I also want to highlight one other thing and that's our staff changes. If you guys can join me in congratulating Ms. Rekeesha Branch. She is our new program manager. Took the vacant spot that Brenton left in that program manager position. Rekeesha has been with the council for two years and she has years of experience in the disability community in various avenues including support coordination and direct support professionals. So really happy to have her move into that position. And we have posted the monitor position that she vacated. We have gotten, I think we received maybe 85 applications. So we plan to have that position filled by the next council meeting. Christi, I'm willing to take any questions if anybody has any.

LAUREN WOMACK: Whenever like the grant policy and procedure thing is finished is that something y'all could give to the council or that y'all plan on posting online?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, it's actually online. So anybody that's interested in contracting with the council can go on that page on the website.

LAUREN WOMACK: Great. Awesome.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Anybody else? Mr. Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: Do y'all have a close on the application or is it still open? Are y'all still receiving applications? And y'all hired somebody that's disabled in that spot?

EBONY HAVEN: You're talking about for Rekeesha's position? It closed, I can't remember when it closed, but it closed in September. As with all of our spots here, our open, our vacant positions, Erick, we encourage anyone to apply. We encourage individuals with disabilities to apply for those positions. We definitely want to make sure people feel comfortable applying and we include that information in the job posting.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other questions?

REKEESHA BRANCH: We do have a hand raised, Ms. Roslyn Hymel.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah, for the budgeting that I was hearing about in that how is that going out to different places? Is that going to be still published to centers or is that going out in the communities or what? Because I am working over at Cafe La Te Da in that so is that going to be like in general for budgeting?

EBONY HAVEN: Are you talking about the budget reports that we included in the packet, Roslyn?

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yes, I am.

EBONY HAVEN: So those budget reports went out to all the council members. It's on the website so anyone can access those budget reports. If anybody requests them we can send it to them. I hope that answers the question but I'm not sure.

REKEESHA BRANCH: You also have another hand raised, Ms. Kathy Dwyer. I'm sorry, Tony had his hand raised as well.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Tony.

TONY PIONTEK: When you mentioned those positions is that really available for like anyone?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, sir.

TONY PIONTEK: Okay.

EBONY HAVEN: Anyone can apply.

TONY PIONTEK: Okay.

EBONY HAVEN: Except for council members. You have to wait for two years before you're able to be a staff member.

TONY PIONTEK: Okay.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Kathy.

KATHY DWYER: Thank you. Regarding the council positions that are open and being advertised are you sending those announcements through the DD Council newsletter and to self-advocate organizations like People First to try to help those with disabilities to be aware of the positions and be able to apply?

EBONY HAVEN: So we did share it through an LADDC news and we did also share it on our social media. No, Ms. Kathy, we didn't send it to any other organizations but that's definitely something that we can look into doing in the future for sure.

KATHY DWYER: Yeah, I would definitely include People First and any other organizations in future announcements. I think that would be helpful. Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other questions? This report requires no action and will be placed on file. Before we move onto the budget report I failed to mention something. This August in my executive committee report, chair report, this summer in August myself and Julie Hagan were asked by the Department of Labor to participate with the (inaudible) National Working Collaboration Group. And what it is for transition for students going from high school onto employment in the future. And so we were there for two days, something like that, and it was very eye opening. So in your packet we included this and it shows you all of the gaps and collaboration from different entities that are missing. And we hope to by next June have or attempt to have a one-day summit to have all our stakeholders involved so we can close these gaps for the people in Louisiana.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: She put this handout in here and I know Jill just looked at me and said what the heck. So what they tried to do is say if you think about a person with a disability in their family, and it was focused on transition age youth going into employment, but it could be about everybody. They tried to list, like these are all of the systems that you have to navigate. So they're trying to say-- and it was policymakers who were invited. So it's kind of like each of us live in our own little world but let's

kind of step back and think about a person with a disability and them having to navigate this. And so all these different lines were trying to say, you know, and a lot of us are at the table now, the folks that they were saying, but still trying to navigate each of our different worlds can definitely be overwhelming. So what they were really trying to get at and what we hope to focus on in the summit-- and we also had Courtney Phillips representing the Department of Higher Education and someone from Office of Juvenile Justice. And so what we hope to do during the summit that we'll have in June is to reach out to others that are kind of associated with all this so we can put us all together as policymakers to start to think about what are things-- like there's probably a lot of stuff that we'll duplicate. And that was the other thing they talked about was not duplicating but strategically thinking about everything that's going on to help you move into the world of employment.

And so they did kind of tell us, they didn't suggest a summit, actually they talked about this ladder and said how you collaborate on that last page is kind of like judge yourself. And we started not all with Louisiana but then the second part of the day we all got together and we decided there is no, not none, there's very limited collaboration right now focused on that. We all know who each other are, we all talk to each other, but not necessarily the collaboration we need. And so that's where the idea of a summit came from.

And the engagement, the only other thing I have, Christi, it's a two-year engagement. And so the people from Council on State Government and Office of Disability Employment Policy, ODEP, they have representatives that are willing to come to our state that are willing to help lead the discussions around collaboration and what not. They said you do a summit, we'll come, we'll help facilitate, we'll help do what we need to. If your name is on here we'll probably be reaching out to you. Jamar, even if your name's not on here we'll probably be reaching out too to try to pull together the right people to do kind of that planning summit.

CHRISTI GONZALES: And it's more to make it a

one-stop shop for families and students to get all the information from one place instead of having to go search and search and search to find everything. So if we put everything in one place from all of these agencies it would be so much more beneficial for these families and students and adults as well. That way they don't have to spend hours searching for what they need. And that's what we hope to do. That's this packet. Yes, Lauren.

LAUREN WOMACK: I was just thinking did the other states, the way that they collaborated on this did they have like a hub website where it would do like-- because this looks like a peer program or.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes, this is like from all the states I think meshed together. And I know I think one state has it. I think it's Florida has everything on one page and it's wonderful. And that's something we hope to duplicate and have in our state. And that's why we want to have a summit to where we can have all this information pooled together and that they can just click on it and then go to that department or that agency.

LAUREN WOMACK: That might be something to think about for our five-year plan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: So they had six states, six different states that they invited. So there are six states that are a part of this. They did do an iteration, something like--

CHRISTI GONZALES: A Power Point.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: But we're kind of the first group trying to tackle this. And I can't even remember all six states. New Hampshire, New Mexico, Virginia. So we'll do something working with those other states and then some things individual. The thing that I thought was really cool is they also had, I think it was about ten youth with disabilities who joined us and they had gone through some different trainings around advocacy, sounded similar probably to what they do and what not. So they sat at the table with us. So the idea is to have youth who are seeking employment. And one lady from California, she's awesome. She's already friended me on LinkedIn. She's looking for all kind of jobs. Like she's awesome. But so it's not just policymakers but people with lived experience that will

be at the table with us. And we're there for the in-person meeting that we had for the two days.

CHRISTI GONZALES: And like the students and their families were there but the families interacted but didn't have any, not have any say, but it was mostly the students who were engaging and leading some of the tables and providing feedback. So it was wonderful. It was very eye opening. Melissa.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I wanted to add I was actually invited to that but I had a scheduling conflict. But the Workforce Commission they are working on a one-door approach for workforce which a lot of the (inaudible) and also social services. So I think there's a lot of-- yeah, I think we can collaborate, absolutely.

CHRISTI GONZALES: We would love to have you.

JAMAR ENNIS: Did you say Florida had a great working example of this?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yeah, I think it's Florida. Lauren?

LAUREN WOMACK: Yes.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I forgot the website but they have everything, even like Boys and Girls Clubs. You can print it out. There's a ton of stuff. I just don't remember the exact website to go to. I remember we previously, a couple months ago, looked at it but I don't think there's any other state that has anything similar to it. But there's was very, very thorough. From the top on down to like I said Girls and Boys Clubs, rotary clubs, you know, the gamut. But this is something we hope to share with everybody. And if you would like to participate we would love to have you.

SPEAKER: So Christi, operationally who do we see owning this project? The council? Is this going to fall under Families Helping Families. Like who do we see taking the lead here?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Anybody from Louisiana. We just thought we would share the information with the Department of Labor. The four people who attended from Louisiana got together and we were sitting at the table like we need to do something. We just came together, like we need to put all this information together because it's all spread out. If you look at the pocket it's very eye opening. And we just decided that we needed to do something to bring it all closer together



so we can collaborate, not remake the wheel, but to bring everyone closer together so it's easier for our families to navigate this transition for these children. It is very hard. And you're going many different directions especially with the different waivers and such. And especially with employment and should they stay in school or should they not. So it's a lot of information for our families. We can do it since we're already on the council we can do it as a council. We can add it to our five-year plan if we choose to. So that's something we can decide later on.

SPEAKER: I'm just saying like we don't want to kick it out there and kick the can down the road. Like who's owning the project so that we can stay on it and make sure that it's done.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Me and Julie are already on the team.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: I was going to say that last page, all of the folks that are listed here have a seat. So to be honest, one of the things we talked about is I just randomly got an email from somebody at Council on State Government that I just happened to answer. And a lot of us as state agency folks get things all the time that it's like what's going on with this, are you trying to sell me something, are you trying to get me to pay money for something. So one of the things that we will be doing since it's a two year, and the Council of State Government will be leading the initiative, is one of the takeaways we had is we need to invite people from each of these things because they'll have virtual meetings I think quarterly and then they'll do another in-person meeting a year from now. But they also gave us the ability to add. So we had already added GODA and some other folks that we had an interface here. And so it's not like they're limited who can be a part of this. But they did encourage us to have more agencies at the table and so more than just the four of us who paid attention to the email that we got.

CHRISTI GONZALES: At first we didn't believe the email. We Googled it and we all said the same thing. We researched it to make sure it was credible. And after we looked at it and we're like oh, yes. I think in March you and I talked about it. Oh, I received

that email too. And then Melissa said she received that email. So it was something that we thought was very beneficial to our state. And the four of us are going to work together with whoever else would love to be a part of it we invite y'all to say yes.

JILL HANO: Okay, I'm sorry. I'm missing something here because when I heard y'all say collaboration like in my simple mind I'm like well, we have the DD network and I'm like last quarter we were told it was kind of back on track. But then I get this and I'm kind of confused. What is your end goal? And if anyone has seen the movie Philadelphia, explain it to me like I'm a four-year old.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: I think the end goal is not to reinvent the wheel or to, you know, it may be that we need some type of a tool or a resource. I think the end goal is that-- and even with the DD network, some of the people that are involved here are not even normally at the table. Like social security, but how often do you talk about somebody with a disability is scared to get a job because if they get a job then they're not going to get the support that they need to be able to work. And so we need social security at the table and they're not normally here. So how do we start to think about some of those folks in addition to. And then we know that there's things Melissa does in LRS. There's things that happen with Department of Ed. But there's not like one place where we all know what each other are doing.

JILL HANO: Are y'all creating a resource for all these entities who collaborate? Okay. Cool.

VIVIENNE WEBB: So if we were to come to the table we would also have to increase the number of self-advocates and such. And we actually discussed this in the bylaws committee but we don't have the funding to increase everything right now, I don't think, so first we would have to acquire the funding.

MEREDITH JORDAN: I just wanted to make a couple connections. Melissa and I attended a national transition conference too where this group was there. It looks like they're extending some of that work which is exciting. I would love to go as well. And one of our plans around transition with our transition grant that we got, and it's a year two or three activity, is

to create in terms of the department sort of a transition hub. I think all these things can like work together. And that is I think some of the work that we do here will help inform me or our transition hub and all the resources we want to pull together around all these. Like you said, it's a complex thing to navigate for our children and our families as they're making those next steps and transitioning. So it's really exciting to hear about.

And I was even thinking, Melissa, about, I don't know if anyone else here or if they shared it at this particular convening, and I was making a connection to our retreat about the ride along and the viewing that we had and it went through the eyes of a now adult with a disability and how he progressed through education and all of these transitional experiences and working. And it was really great for us to do at our retreat, Ebony. And I'll share with you some of that. And it was just really eye opening. And it ties into the things we were talking about earlier with our mission statement and inclusion and how cause he talks about even in his educational experience, and something I'm very interested in, are student led IEPs, right. And how we can give students more of a voice, you know, starting early on. So just a lot of connections and excitement going on for me.

CHRISTI GONZALES: In my 30 years I only had one student add something to their IEP. And it was last year. And I was like oh, my gosh. I was amazed. Lauren.

LAUREN WOMACK: So I have two ideas. One may be establish-- if y'all want to do it through this we could do like the ad hoc committee, Julie, or whatever would be easiest just to get it started. And then if it's beyond the DD Council we just hand it off just for sake of getting started. Maybe inviting someone from the Workforce, the LWC board, the LRC board, school board. Just like somebody from these different boards. Because ideally ours is easy because it's all virtual but a lot of these board meetings if you don't go in person you can't go. So it might be good to start with us in that we can have those virtual meetings.

CHRISTI GONZALES: We can speak more about this.

LAUREN WOMACK: If you want to do like an ad hoc

committee that might be something.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay. Thank y'all for letting us stick that in. I just wanted to let you know what those papers were in reference to. Like I said, it was very eye opening. Thank y'all for allowing us to go over that.

REKEESHA BRANCH: We have some hands raised. Mr. Tony had his hand raised and also Ms. Kathy Dwyer.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Tony.

TONY PIONTEK: I would like to be a part of that.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes, I will have your name down Tony.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Roslyn has her hand raised. Ms. Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah, you can give me a little bit more information on for what you was just talking about because, you know.

CHRISTI GONZALES: We can email it to you, Roslyn, the packet. I just gave it to them last night. I'm sorry. We can email it to you.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Can you? I would like to read up on it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes, ma'am. Anybody else?

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Kathy Dwyer.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Kathy.

KATHY DWYER: Thank you. I apologize. I missed part of the conversation in the beginning but definitely heard about collaborating. So I'm not sure how far you want to reach with collaborating with other agencies but if it's appropriate given I missed the first part of the discussion I think it would be beneficial to have Health Standards involved as well. It seems like they operate in a silo when it comes to disability issues.

CHRISTI GONZALES: And we can email this to you as well, Ms. Kathy.

KATHY DWYER: Okay. Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: You're welcome. Anybody else?

REKEESHA BRANCH: That's it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you. The next item of business is the budget report. The chair recognizes Ebony Haven for the report.

EBONY HAVEN: So there are two budget reports that are included in your packet. One is the end of year

for FY24. Whenever I presented the budget in July we hadn't received all of our invoices and all of our bills hadn't been all paid yet so I did kind of want to go over closing costs. Just closing, there's a column on the end of the year budget report that says closing and so those were some additional invoices that came through. It wasn't much. You can kind of look at the total at the bottom was about 166,000-dollars.

Just kind of keep in mind whenever you're looking at the totals. We were short-staffed because a lot of the balance is from personal services. We were short staffed after the previous executive director resigned. I wasn't officially hired on until April as the executive director. So we were without a deputy director so that kind of cleared up that budget balance. But also just remember we are saving lots of money in our total travel costs because we're having the meetings in our building and we're not renting a hotel or anything like that. I know that we have several council members that are interested in attending more conferences so that kind of frees up some money for individuals to do that. But also I think that was the only two things I kind of wanted to point out.

As you can see some of the money was contractual. If you look at total contracts we did have a balance of about 68,000. All of our contractors weren't able to spend all of their funding and that's one thing that as we move forward at the Executive Director Leadership Summit I was able to connect with the Missouri Council and I really liked the way that they presented their budget. I kind of want the council to take a more active role in kind of keeping track of how our contractors, our grantees are using their funding. If they're spending their funding. I kind of just want you all to take a more active role in that. So we'll be presenting the budget just a little bit differently sort of moving forward.

LAUREN WOMACK: Do you think that will help us when we're trying to allocate money? Because that was really hard.

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, absolutely, Lauren. So I will just say this, the ITAC training that Stephanie and I attended at the NACCD conference they gave us a lot of

information about how to put out our SOPs. And one of the things was to make sure that the people that are applying for your grants include information about how they are going to spend the funding. And so I guess the revamping that we're doing in-house is to make sure that we're managing and monitoring our contractors just a little bit better. If we see they're falling behind on spending that funding we need to come up with contingency plans and make sure they spend all of the funding that you guys allocate.

LAUREN WOMACK: Okay, great. Also, do we have any council training or anything in the budget?

EBONY HAVEN: That travel will help us with our council retreat too. The council retreat that you guys are requesting that we're going to probably have at the January meeting, a lot of that will come from that travel.

LAUREN WOMACK: But do we have a line for like, or what comes out like if we wanted to do some more council trainings?

EBONY HAVEN: There's no specific line for that but I'm sure it would fall in there. I'm pretty sure it would probably still fall under travel. Even though it doesn't seem like it would, it probably would.

JILL HANO: I do have a recommendation for the retreat but I don't know if right now is appropriate.

EBONY HAVEN: So Christi included it with her chairperson's report. But Jill, I'm willing to accept any recommendations you guys have any time including now.

JILL HANO: And I don't know that this can't be like a mandate, or mandatory, or whatever. But like when you think of retreat and like part of getting to know your fellow council members like I think it would be better to have a retreat that is 100 percent in-person because I don't know how I can get to know you when you're just a square on a computer screen.

REKEESHA BRANCH: We do have a hand raised. Ms. Roslyn Hymel.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah, for one I am really concerned about second quarter and the third quarter is like 113. Like 552 and that's in the red and that really concerns me about it. So what happened with the second and the

third quarter of the budgeting for this year?

EBONY HAVEN: Okay, so Roslyn, that red, that 552 in red, since it's in parenthesis, that means they refunded us. So I think it was a travel ticket that one of our council members didn't end up needing and so the airline refunded us money so we actually got that 552-dollars back.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Oh, okay. I was wondering why it was in red like that.

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, that's why.

JILL HANO: Why are there two reports?

EBONY HAVEN: So in July whenever I presented the budget we hadn't received all of our bills and all of our invoices yet so I did want to give you all a closeout of fiscal year 24 budget just to show you the rest of the invoices that we received. So if you look at that closing column those are the additional invoices that we received sort of like after the fiscal year, after that June 30th deadline.

JILL HANO: Perfect.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Are there any other questions from council members on the report? The report requires no action and will be placed in the file. The next item of business is the committee reports. Our first report is the Act 378 subcommittee. The chair recognizes Bambi Polotzola for the report.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Hi, everyone. So the Act 378 committee met yesterday and we do not have any recommendations for the council to consider. We did spend some time reviewing fiscal year 24 yearend data and fiscal year 25 1st quarter data for programs within the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral Health. And the Aging and Adult Services through the Arc of Louisiana. These reports can be found linked on our committee agenda on the council's meetings web page if you would like to review.

Now looking at all of the reports I'm happy to report that no LGE will need to submit a corrective action plan for fiscal year 24 as they have all expended the necessary funding to serve families in their area. OCDD provided us with an end of the year individual and family support program priority request and expenditure report. That is a lengthy report

that's linked on the council's page, meeting page. This is a really great report. It shows what requests are being received and funded in each region. And there were nearly 4,000 contracts completed with over seven and half million dollars spent on this program.

And if y'all see Brenton twitching that's because I'm deviating from the report that he gave us. I just wanted to really highlight this seven and a half million dollars were spent and this provides our local governing entities really the opportunity to be really responsive to our community and that exist because of advocacy. And Act 378 was passed in 1989 which was 35 years ago. So I say all that to say is that advocacy matters and to make sure that we follow up and we're consistent in making sure that what we advocate for what continues to be. And also thinking about the vision that those people had 35 years ago. And realize that 35 years from now what will we leave for people. This is something that's great that even, you know, sometimes somebody only needs 100-dollars or maybe 1,000-dollars for something that they really need and it can really change the trajectory of the family, the quality of their life so this is really important. So I just wanted to press upon that point to you guys today.

We did spend some time discussing some of the things that they had in that report like incontinent supplies. And requests for these supplies were down from previous years likely due to incontinent supplies being added as a service in the waiver. However, there's been many complaints from waiver recipients and families about the quality of those supplies. So Julie Foster Hagan with OCDD stated that the department was aware of the issue and working to find a resolution to ensure individuals get the supplies that meet their needs.

As in previous years there are a lot of individuals that utilize vocational supports through the individual and family support program. We asked the department to find out how many LGEs are trying to emphasize integrated employment as an option rather than day hab or sheltered workshops. We also noticed an increase in startup funding in the IFS program. This funding is used to help individuals purchase



things that they need to move into their own home. This is a positive thing as it suggest that individuals are receiving the supports they need to live independently and help move them into residential settings. We also asked the department to share information at future meetings regarding the amount of individuals that transition out of residential placement with a waiver and opt to return to the residential placement.

We also had a few questions for the Office of Behavioral Health that they followed up on regarding the consumer care resources and the supported living programs. These questions centered on funds being used for school credit recovery and driver education courses. There was also a discussion about having the LGEs present their application process for the community care resources at future meetings. And finally, there were a couple of the LGEs that expended all of their supported living funds in the first quarter of this fiscal year. We asked OBH to follow up for an explanation. And that's the end of my report. Any questions?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Bambi. The report requires no action and will be placed on file.

The next item of business is the report from the self-determination committee, inclusion committee, community inclusion committee. The chair recognizes Angela Harmon for the report.

ANGELA HARMON: The self-determination and community inclusion committee met yesterday and does not have any recommendations to present to the council. We received a lot of great updates during the meeting from our state agency representatives and staff. During our meeting Ms. July Foster Hagan with the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities shared multiple updates about the department. Many of these updates can be found on her agency report. A couple things I wanted to mention. They are hosting roadshows again to discuss OCDD's initiatives. An LADDC news was sent out sharing dates and times so I encourage you to try to participate either in person or at the virtual sessions. The rate of methodology study we have been talking about in the committee is underway with an anticipated date of June to receive the

results. There will be an informational session about the process held on October 28th from 2:30 to 3:30. This is a free virtual session but you must register to attend. An LACDD news was sent out earlier this morning with details so please check your inbox or the council's website.

We also discussed the predicted fiscal cliff our state will be facing next year. If revenue is not identified it is possible that LDH will sustain massive cuts to many services and programs that support our DD population. If you would like to see the potential cuts they are linked in our committee agenda on the council meeting page.

The committee received an update on Families Helping Families of NOLA. As you may recall last year Families Helping Families of NOLA was placed on a probationary status due to ongoing concerns noted in multiple audits. The council decided in April to restore partial funding to the center in fiscal year 25 with full restoration of funding depending on successful fiscal year 24 legislative audit. Prior to processing Families Helping Families NOLA fiscal year 25 contract the council staff was informed of possible misappropriation or misuse of funds by leadership. The director abruptly resigned and it was also reported that the center was unable to pay it's staff. All staff was either terminated, quit or laid off for an unspecified amount of time. This information was confirmed in a meeting between council staff and the former Families Helping Families NOLA interim director and the former board president. Based on the information provided to the council staff it was apparent the center would be unable to fulfill any contractual requirements and the center was notified the center will not be issuing a contract for fiscal year 25.

We also discussed the contractual activity goals. Activities under goals one and two in our plan. I encourage you to review the status of planned activities document in your meeting packet for updates on those initiatives.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Angela. Is there any questions from the council members on the report?  
Jill.

JILL HANO: I'm just curious just on record how is it considered that she resigned abruptly when in April she told us that, or a year ago she told us that she was going to resign and just that didn't happen? That's it. Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Is there any public comment?

REKEESHA BRANCH: No.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right. The report requires no action--

REKEESHA BRANCH: I'm sorry. Ms. Kathy Dwyer just raised her hand.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Kathy, go ahead.

KATHY DWYER: Sorry. Regarding the report on FHF NOLA is anything being done to reach out to families that were using them as a resource to let them know they could reach out elsewhere such as Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans? Because I've received emails from two former employees who were very concerned about the families in their area. And I'm just wondering if there's anybody that has access to their mailing list or something to at least do some kind of outreach. I don't even know if they still have a social media page. But families need to know where else they can go if they're not operating anymore.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah, we don't have access to their list serve to be able to send any information to folks that have signed up to receive newsletters from them. That's not something we have access to. And we haven't been able to reach any supposed staff that might still be there to see if they have been notifying anyone or what their plan is to continue services. We mentioned in committee yesterday there was an update on the secretary of state's website that suggested they may have hired a new director and had a new board president. So I'm not certain at this time if they are continuing operations or what their plan is. Without a contract in place on our part we can't require them to submit any sort of information to us or provide any details about their status to us. But the families that are reaching out to our office directly we do try to direct them to other resources out in the Greater New Orleans area to make sure that they have whatever supports that they need.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Brenton.

LAUREN WOMACK: So with the funding that will not be going out to them, the extra funding will just be distributed to the other Families Helping Families or we haven't decided yet?

BRENTON ANDRUS: It depends. So we're trying to find out what's going on with that particular center because that would determine what might be a viable path. Lots of folks have mentioned there is another center in the New Orleans area. We have not heard anything if they would be interested in a contract. We have not had those discussions yet so that is a possibility. Our funding alone can't sustain a new center. We've gotten calls from people that asked why don't you start another center. Our funding alone is not going to be able to sustain a center so we're also trying to find out what other funders of that center were planning to do. Some have already moved onto other organizations. Some are still trying to figure out what's going on in NOLA to see if they can contract with them. So there's a lot of uncertainties at the moment that we need clarification on before we can make a determination of how we best proceed. But if for some reason we get to a point in the fiscal year where it's unlikely that we're going to have someone to contract with then we would disperse that to the other centers to make sure that we are able to utilize that funding and then figure out what funding we get for Families Helping Families next year.

LAUREN WOMACK: As a council could we, and this might be something that we need to vote on or I need to make a motion, do a formal (inaudible) to reach out to the other New Orleans or that areas Families Helping Families and just ask for a meeting with them with our council to get their feedback or something? Because I feel for urgency sake, if nothing else, if they would agree just for to agree to take referrals or even feedback if they would agree so we're sure those needs are being met.

EBONY HAVEN: I would-- we don't need a formal motion, Lauren. We can, as the leadership team here, we can go ahead and reach out to the FHF director.

LAUREN WOMACK: As soon as possible. Or what I was saying like if it's not a viable option maybe offer it to the other centers. If they would agree they could

get extra funding or split that funding if they would take on those referrals and, you know, provide the same service. I mean, it won't be the same but outside of their region until the next fiscal year and we're able to buy ourselves some time. Instead of just dispersing it to everyone at least the funding would be going towards the people in that community that would need it and they would be getting the services hopefully, ideally. So I don't know if that's an option as well that we can reach out to the other Families Helping Families either the next step and see if that would be something that they would be interested in. Which ones would have the staff enough or with the extra funding be able to hire part-time staff or something to be able to provide the referrals.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Mr. Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: Would y'all let the board know what the next step would be?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, I can send out something once we talk to the FHF director in Greater New Orleans and we just discuss like our contractual deliverables and see if he would be interested. We can let the council know what his decision was.

ERICK TAYLOR: Would y'all let us have a say, an input in whatever y'all decide to do or y'all would just do?

EBONY HAVEN: I guess we're taking direction from you all. So we'll reach out to the Greater New Orleans Families Helping Families director to see if he's interested in taking the additional funding that was left on the table by NOLA. And if not we can move forward to contacting the FHF centers who will be interested in taking the referrals for New Orleans.

ERICK TAYLOR: Because my concern is I just don't want nobody to take it and say oh, got it. We're going to take it and not handle the load and just not do what they say is my concern. Okay, yeah, we'll take it but yet we don't get the thing that needs to be done for the people that's in the disability community.

LAUREN WOMACK: They would have to keep the reports. Like we get the other reports. So for that region you would need the number of people they serve, you know.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah, every quarter you get, in

our self-determination committee, you get updates about all the FHF centers. So whomever would be taking over for FHF NOLA that would also be reported what they're doing. Generally our FHF contracts are not individualized per region. They are all doing the same thing. It's a level playing field. Now this scenario, that contract may have to be tweaked a little bit because this, whoever would contract for that particular area they're not going to get the same amount of funding all the other centers are getting because remember all we have left is that probationary amount that you gave the center. So they would have to understand that there's a certain amount of funding this year and if we move forward in FY26 then they would get more level funding with the other centers depending on what the legislature gives us. Because right now we don't have those additional dollars in the budget for fiscal year 26 so all the centers essentially are going to be losing out on money next year if that's not added back in. But y'all will definitely get updates. Self-determination committee, if you don't sit on it and you're interested that would be the committee we talk about FHF.

ERICK TAYLOR: So basically they going to work with the leftovers until.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah, I mean, whoever whether it's the center that already exist in that area, whether there's an RFP or something to try create a new center the funding that they would get is going to be what was going to be going to FHF NOLA this year which I think was 80,000ish dollars, somewhere in there.

LAUREN WOMACK: Nobody may even want it.

BRENTON ANDRUS: That's what makes it interesting is that amount of funding will not support a center. You have to have other sources of revenue. There might be other entities out there who are interested in contracting but they would have to be under the Families Helping Families monitor.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Anyone else?

REKEESHA BRANCH: We have three hands raised. The council members, the first hand was Mr. Tony.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Mr. Tony, go ahead.

TONY PIONTEK: I personally know the whole group and I have been in touch with them forever. Not just

national convention and my beautiful other family here. I can easily do that. I can connect with them. Craig and Heather, they have been a big part of the National Down Syndrome Congress. Left their hometown. I can easily do that for you. I can find out all the questions, anything, answers. I can be your voice. I can do that.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Tony.

REKEESHA BRANCH: And Roslyn is the other hand.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Roslyn, go ahead.

ROSLYN HYMEL: I am trying to see how many centers are there who needs help in that kind of funds or anything needs some kind of help in that. And I would like to really kind of speak out in that for them in that. So like for me and the Russell Family would like to really kind of step in on that.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you. Anybody else?

REKEESHA BRANCH: That's it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right. The report requires no action and will be placed on file. If there is no objection the meeting will recess for 15 minutes. Hearing none, the meeting is at recess. It is now 10:05. We will reconvene at 10:20.

(Break)

CHRISTI GONZALES: It is now 10:25. The meeting will come to order. The next item of business is the report of the education employment committee. The chair recognizes Renoda Washington for the report.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, chair. The education and employment committee met yesterday and does not have any recommendations to present to the council. We received a lot of great updates from the Louisiana Rehabilitative Services and Louisiana Department of Education. Melissa gave the update on LRS. LRS left 29 million on the table because of the lack of state funding match. They are continuing to provide the best resources with the money they have available. Melissa also gave an update on preemployment transition services. There are currently 19 school districts that have third-party cooperative arrangements with two school districts entering cooperative arrangements in August 2025. There is also a vocational rehab (inaudible) with an in-depth training from start to finish of the voc rehab journey.

These trainings are happening statewide.

We then received an LDOE update from Meredith Jordan. LDOE created many policy changes due to past legislation. Dyslexia core assessment, this is a policy to reimburse parents for additional dyslexia screenings funded through legislative created funds. New (inaudible) report. All (inaudible) reports must now include IDEA finance information. Academic performance data for students with disabilities. IDEA compliance issues. Procedural safeguard, this was updated with law and policy changes as well as recommendations from SEAP. Also LEAP Connect, according to 2023 data 1.7 percent of students are taking the LEAP Connect which is above the federal cap of one percent. Eligibility criteria in Bulletin 1530 was changed to remove adaptative behavior and made changes to the standard deviations. These changes come from research on what other states are doing to get at or under the 1 percent. The current high school students will be kept on the pathway that they are on but it will be phased out for new upcoming students. SEAP has endorsed all of these changes and will go to BESE in December.

We also received updates on contractual activities in goal three of the council's fiscal year 24 action plan. I encourage you all to review the status update document that we receive quarterly for specific updates on each activity and any of the documents linked in our committee agenda. That's all I have.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Renoda. Are there any questions from council members on the report? Is there any public comment? The report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is the report of the bylaws committee. Vice Chair Jill Hano to give the report.

JILL HANO: So as y'all know in July I gave y'all a report for the bylaws that we met one day, August 28th, to make recommendations for the full council to consider changes made to our current policies and procedures. And then staff as well as our Parliamentarian Nicole Learson made recommendations for changes to the policies and procedures and the committee made changes as well for each section. Staff made the changes to each section and the final draft of



the recommendation. And our major changes include add to the council member responsibilities on section six we added three bullet points. The board of ethics timeline would include due dates for our financial disclosure and our ethics training. Then apparently a senate questionnaire to send to boards and commissions office and have returns for the past five years. Failure to return the notarized and witnessed questionnaire or not resolving tax issues will result in denial of senate confirmation. And then we added a section five. Selection process for the executive director. Then the same for the evaluation process for the executive director. Do we have a rule for self-advocates that can't talk this much. I'm sorry.

EBONY HAVEN: That's okay, Jill. I'll make it shorter.

JILL HANO: I'm sorry.

EBONY HAVEN: That's okay. It's fine.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Okay. So I think we're on...

EBONY HAVEN: Evaluation.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Okay. So the bylaws committee revamped section six the evaluation process for the executive director. All those updates and changes are included in the changes that were sent and included in the council packet. They added the calendar. They added the calendar will be maintained on the website and shared at quarterly council meetings to section eight calendar. And it removed all monthly dates with the committee. And the committee is recommending a new timeframe to meet for quarterly council meetings which was sent and included in your council packet. So just to show y'all it looked like this. It said tentative schedule of quarterly council meeting. This is kind of what was agreed upon. Just showing y'all. In section ten council funding there were a few changes. We condensed paragraph one to bring more clarity. We added in writing the number one of expenditure approvals and we will now have a form that the executive director will utilize for budgetary line adjustment more than 5,000-dollars. We increased the executive director's authority to obligate funds on nonoperating expenditures from 500 to 1,000-dollars in number two due to inflation. Therefore the bylaws committee has one recommendation for the council's

consideration.

JILL HANO: So therefore the committee has one recommendation for y'all to consider. We recommend that changes, the bylaws committee recommends changes, the recommended changes to the council's policy and procedures.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Jill. Because this motion is coming from a committee it does not require a second. Is there any discussion from council members? Lauren.

LAUREN WOMACK: We got some more clarity, well, our committee, which isn't the bylaws, but I wanted to share with the council. If y'all want to look at your tentative schedule. When the bylaws committee was initially discussing changing the dates we were trying to decide that if it would give us more information and give us more accurate reports. We discussed with different agencies and they said it wouldn't give us any more time. We talked to staff which said it wouldn't give us any more time. So for efforts we may just want to keep it the same.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Just for clarity, that was in reference to the Act 378 reports. So at least internally as far as our contractual things that the council is doing I would think if we were deciding to have your meetings later that you would get a lot more accurate information from our contractors because we get that on the tenth. And so we should be able to have that updated information for you in time for a meeting if it was later. Just that may not work for the Act 378 committee specifically, that data may not be up to date. But your data as far as council initiatives should be much more accurate.

LAUREN WOMACK: Great. Thank you.

JILL HANO: I don't remember. This might have been the bylaws we approved in July. But so they only put in the bylaws, for lack of a better term, procedures for missing multiple meetings. Like when does that go into effect? Because I notice council members don't come to meetings and I was just curious as to when that went into effect.

EBONY HAVEN: So Jill, you all voted on the bylaws at the July meeting. It passed. So those bylaws are on the website. They are effective as of July 18th.

JILL HANO: Okay.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other questions?

REKEESHA BRANCH: We have one hand raised, Ms.

Roslyn.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah, it's about what next year's meetings and that. Are they still going to resume in January through October for both years like that? In like 2025 and 2026 as well like this? So it's going to be, are they going to be the same or are they going to be different in that kind of perspective from what I'm understanding and what I'm seeing?

EBONY HAVEN: Roslyn, so these are the proposed dates that the bylaws committee came up with when they met on August 28th. The council has to take a vote. So you guys can vote to accept these tentative dates that they have recommended or you can keep the dates the same or you all can make other recommendations as far as dates go for our quarterly council meetings. So until you guys take a vote I won't have the answer, but the bylaws committee is recommending the dates that you see on the screen.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Right. That's what I'm trying to follow with you on it. January the 9th and the 30th there was nothing there so that's going to stay blank for both years?

EBONY HAVEN: That's just because you guys don't have anything like specific that has to be on your agenda for January. Which is why we thought the council retreat would be a great time to have that. So there's nothing specific for the January meeting that you guys have to decide on as far as like federal requirements or things that we have in-house like the nominating committee. But we can always plan things for January to have on that agenda. That's just the quarterly meeting dates.

ROSLYN HYMEL: All right. I was just trying to follow along with you up on that until I get my packet and all.

ERICK TAYLOR: The new dates?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Suggested, I think. Right, Ebony?

EBONY HAVEN: Yeah, suggested dates from the bylaws committee.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So the question we have is on accepting the proposed policies and the procedures from the bylaws committee. We will have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion to accept these policies--

REKEESHA BRANCH: Tony just raised his hand.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes, go ahead Tony. You have to unmute.

TONY PIONTEK: That is stupendous for one. And whoever the groups are are making it totally real and making it acceptable because not knowing what you all do is fantastic. Just whatever y'all do is really awesome. But we talked about the council retreat. Let me know ahead of time so I can plan that on my side with my family.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes.

TONY PIONTEK: When that comes.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay. Thank you, Tony.

TONY PIONTEK: You're welcome.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Anyone else?

REKEESHA BRANCH: That's it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right. So the question is on accepting from the bylaws committee to adopt the proposed policies and procedures. We will have a roll call vote. If you're in favor of the motion to accept these new policies and procedures when your name is called say yes. If you're opposed say no. And if you abstain say abstain. Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli.

CHERIE ADULI: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli, yes. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Billings, yes. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain, yes. Mr. Ennis.

JAMAR ENNIS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Ennis, yes. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

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

JILL HANO: Yes.

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

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

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

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Roslyn, you have to show your screen in order to be counted towards the vote.

ROSLYN HYMEL: It's not allowing me to.

EBONY HAVEN: There you go. All right. Ms. Hymel, yes. Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan, yes. Ms. Nguyen. Mr. Piontek.

TONY PIONTEK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Piontek, yes. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

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

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

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

ERICK TAYLOR: No.

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

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb.

VIVIENNE WEBB: No.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Webb, no. Dr. Wilson. And Ms. Womack.

LAUREN WOMACK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Womack, yes. I have 17 yeas and 2 nays.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right. So the yeases have it and the motion is adopted.

JILL HANO: Okay. On the bylaws committee I do have one more motion. So I move that the executive director be authorized to correct article and section designations, punctuations, cross references and to make other technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to reflect the intent of the council.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay. Is there a second? So all she's asking is that we allow Ebony to correct punctuation, articles to that nature, grammar.

VIVIENNE WEBB: I second.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Vivienne, thank you. It is moved and seconded. Are there any discussion from

committee members?

TONY PIONTEK: I was going to second it, but that's okay.

SPEAKER: I was going to do the same.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay. Thank y'all. The question is on we allowing the executive director-- is there any objection to this? All right. There are no objections. And we move onto the next membership committee, Jill.

JILL HANO: Hi, y'all. So the membership committee met on October 11th to choose applicants to recommend to the full council for council membership. We currently have six open seats which include four that were not senate...

EBONY HAVEN: Four seats that weren't senate confirmed?

JILL HANO: The vacancy that opened.

EBONY HAVEN: After Nicole, yeah, due to Nicole Banks' resignation.

JILL HANO: Oh, I read it wrong. The vacancy opened due to Nicole Banks resigning in the institutional facility seat. The seat has to be filled by someone who is currently living in an institution, or has in the past, or by a parent of someone that lives in an institutional facility. The committee reviewed the council's demographics compared to the State of Louisiana's demographics and discussed areas where improvements can be made in council membership in regards to demographics. And based on the information presented the council as always needs more guys. The committee considered six self-applicants and nine parent applicants for the five seats available for self-advocates and parent seats. And again, as a reminder-- oh, never mind. The committee only had one applicant to consider in the institutional facility seat and she's a parent.

Okay. So as per our governor the current boards governor's office, boards and commission has requested renomination per available seats. However, the committee has decided it was to submit the name of all the applicants that weighted highly and had a great interview. They allowed the governor's office to make the final decisions. It's also important to note that a few of the applicants that the committee has

recommended that will meet the location requirements for central and northeast regions. Additionally there are several male applicants-- sorry, y'all. There are several male applicants the committee is recommending which brings us closer to the state demographic. One parent was not contacted by the committee and the committee agreed to interview him after meeting especially since the applicant's very interested and he not be penalized due to the mistake of the committee. Most applicants sent in a short bio that was included in your packet to consider including the parent applicant that interviewed. And there were two parent applicants that do not have bios. Therefore the committee has three recommendations to present to the council to consider. The committee recommended Karen Xu to fill the institutional facility seat on the council.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Because this motion is coming from a committee it does not require a second. Is there any discussion from council members? Cherie.

CHERIE ADULI: Has anybody interviewed these people?

LAUREN WOMACK: Yes. Like you were interviewed, the same thing.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Do we have more details on her? Like how old is her son?

LAUREN WOMACK: I spoke with her at length and she's a really, really great candidate. Her son is actually in an institution. He is of age now. He was doing great before Katrina. Finally getting the services he needs. She's of the Asian community. She spoke about cultural barriers that she felt with her own family and in the community of coming to grips with coming forward and having a child with a disability of really wanting to advocate. She's actually struggling with having him in an institution, getting the services he needs. You know, I'm really glad that she's-- she would be an asset. Let alone an institutional seat. Which it's hard to find just as a parent of a child with a disability. She came from China and so she also had to overcome the speech barrier. I think that could speak to some of the things that we're going to start facing more and more. You know not Asian maybe, but with the Hispanic community. Does that answer your

question? Do you have anything more specific?

VIVIENNE WEBB: What is her attitude towards her son because in our biographical sketch it seems like she sees him as more of a burden or a mistake. And when he faced some struggles because he's autistic and things happened he was put in Pine Crest and we don't want to advocate to improve institutions. We want to improve supports outside institutions.

EBONY HAVEN: Before we start to go into anything like that if you guys want to ask those types of questions I would recommend that the council go into executive session. I don't think this is appropriate to have in an open meeting. And she is also on. And so I think if you guys want to have a discussion about this we need to go into executive session.

LAUREN WOMACK: And I would just like to make the comment anybody is welcome to join the membership committee. So if this was a concern to some of these council members, no blame or anything, but just maybe make the effort. If it's important to you to make sure you're available to participate next time because we needed that.

VIVIENNE WEBB: I was not in the country.

CHRISTI GONZALES: We're going to go ahead and go into executive session. We need a motion to go into executive session.

MIKE BILLINGS: I move we go into executive session.

JILL HANO: I move we don't.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Are there any objections?

LAUREN WOMACK: I object.

JAMAR ENNIS: For executive session one, there has to be a statute, it's Louisiana statute kind of comes into play here to dictate the reasons there of the procedures so I'm not sure if it's implied.

CHERI CRAIN: There's certain things that requires you to go into executive session and if it doesn't meet that criteria you cannot go into executive session. And I don't think that this meets that is what Jamar's saying.

JAMAR ENNIS: I just don't want this body to be fined or subjected to legislative auditors. It's not worth the trouble.

EBONY HAVEN: So we got legal advice, and this was



a while back, I think during Covid the council requested legal advice from LDH legal about when the council should go into executive session about when they're going to discuss applicants. And if you're going to discuss an applicant's disability or their child's disability that is warrant for you to go into executive session.

JAMAR ENNIS: Okay. So I know this from experience. The item has to be placed on the agenda. There has to be due process. So I just want, you know, I guess we can take a break. We can maybe look at the statute together or decide whether or not this council wants to move forward.

EBONY HAVEN: We have the Parliamentarian here. Can you give any advice, Nicole?

NICOLE LEARSON: I'm not an attorney so I won't speak to the legal issue. I do know that if the discussion is germane simply to the motion to approve then the discussion should remain there and germane to that and not go into the merits of this individual's situation, their circumstances and/or their disability. So your comments should remain germane to just simply the process that was used, the information that was gathered and whether or not it's enough information for you all to vote your conscience. And then if there are other matters that need to follow that statute that need to be on the agenda then you can postpone the approval of this individual until the next time that this can come up on the agenda in the appropriate manner to go into executive session.

MIKE BILLINGS: I withdraw my motion.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So do we move to adopt this person in this facility seat?

REKEESHA BRANCH: You have two hands raised. Three hands. We have Mr. Tony, Ms. Roslyn and Ms. Brenda Cosse. Mr. Tony was first.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Go ahead, Tony.

TONY PIONTEK: Yes, we've dealt with this the same type of background checking and what not and we have had the same description. And I'm the type that does not want to go through that but through the youth led programs through the catholic church we do the same system as we do here. So just tell yourselves inside of your heart that everything goes well with God with

his plan because we may not know everything. We totally don't. But I do know whatever the conscience is in that person's heart that's what really counts.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Tony. Ms. Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah, this is, you know, I do agree with Tony because sometimes you have to follow your heart and that. So is there a leader into what's right there? What you're saying into this situation what's on the board in that. And I want to know it. I'm hoping her heart's in the right place in her mind as well into knowing that it's there and I want to really welcome her into it as well.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you. Who's next?

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Brenda Cosse.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Brenda.

BRENDA COSSE: Good morning.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Good morning.

BRENDA COSSE: I was on at the membership committee meeting. Am I still allowed to ask questions?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes.

BRENDA COSSE: So I'm understanding that this is an institutional facility seat and we're replacing, is it turned self-advocate or person with a disability with a parent?

CHRISTI GONZALES: This is an institutional facility seat and she is a parent. Lauren, can you give her some demographics.

LAUREN WOMACK: And there was no other applicant for this position either. She was the only applicant for that position.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Her child is in a facility. Did you hear us, Ms. Brenda?

BRENDA COSSE: Yes, but my question was are we replacing a self-advocate or person with a disability with a parent?

EBONY HAVEN: Her seat expired in 2022. The current person that holds that seat, Ms. Roslyn Hymel. For that particular seat, Ms. Brenda, according to the DD Act it can either be a person with a disability who has lived in an institution, or currently living in one or a parent of an individual who has lived in an institution or currently lives in one. So she is eligible to fill that seat.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Thank you for that clarification.

So it has taken us two years to find another applicant that qualifies?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, ma'am.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Vivienne.

VIVIENNE WEBB: So I wasn't attacking her or anything. I was just trying to figure out her intentions because we do need to be careful and keep that in mind. But after learning her intentions are good and pure I think she's an excellent candidate.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other questions or comments?

REKEESHA BRANCH: Tony has his hand raised again.

TONY PIONTEK: How old is she if that's okay to ask?

CHRISTI GONZALES: I don't have that information.

LAUREN WOMACK: We didn't address that in the interview.

CHRISTI GONZALES: That's not one of the questions that we ask.

TONY PIONTEK: That's all right. I was just wondering.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay. So the question is from the membership committee that we recommend Karen Xu to fill the institutional facility seat on the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council. We will have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion to accept Ms. Karen Xu to fill the institutional facility seat on the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli.

CHERIE ADULI: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli, yes. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Barovechio, abstain. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Billings, yes. Ms. Crain. Mr. Ennis.

JAMAR ENNIS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Ennis, yes. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

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

JILL HANO: Yes.

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

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms. Hymel. Roslyn, can you unmute your phone. I'll come back to Roslyn. Ms. Jordan.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan, yes. Ms. Nguyen. Mr. Piontek.

TONY PIONTEK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Piontek, yes. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

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

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

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

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Webb, yes. Dr. Wilson. Ms. Womack.

LAUREN WOMACK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Womack, yes. Sixteen yeas and one abstention.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay, the yeases have it and the motion is adopted.

JILL HANO: Okay, so now we are going to four self-advocates. The membership committee recommends Ayden Blunschi, Jude Boynton and Frank Macaluso to fill individuals with disabilities seats on the DD Council with Gwen Hillard as an alternate.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Jill. Because this motion is coming from a committee it does not require a second. Any discussion from council members? So the question is that we accept the recommendation.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Brenda just raised her hand.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Brenda.

BRENDA COSSE: That would bring the self-advocates count to three more self-advocates. Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So the question is on accepting the recommendation from the membership committee for Ayden Blunschi, Jude Boynton and Frank Macaluso to fill

the individuals with developmental disabilities seats on Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council with alternate of Gwen Hillard. We will have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion to accept these people for their seats when your name is called say yes. If you're opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli.

CHERIE ADULI: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli, yes. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Billings, yes. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain, yes. Mr. Ennis.

JAMAR ENNIS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Ennis, yes. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

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

JILL HANO: Yes.

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

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

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

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yes.

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

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan yes. Ms. Nguyen. Mr.

Piontek.

TONY PIONTEK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Piontek, yes. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

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

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

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

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

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

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb.

VIVIANNE WEBB: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Webb, yes. Dr. Wilson. And Ms. Womack.

LAUREN WOMACK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Womack, yes. Nineteen yeas, zero nays.

CHRISTI GONZALES: The yeases have it and the motion is adopted.

JILL HANO: So then lastly we recommend three parents or immediate relatives to fill seats on the council. Latoya Citizen, Lamartine Meda and Danielle Poret to fill the parent seats. And Alaina Chachere as an alternative.

LAUREN WOMACK: I would like to propose an amendment. As an additional alternate to have Robert.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I need a second to add him to the list.

MIKE BILLINGS: I'll second.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Mr. Mike.

TONY PIONTEK: I was going to second it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right. Thank you, Tony. Because this motion is coming from a committee it does not require a second. Are there any discussions from council members? So the change, because we're adding an amendment, was to add Robbie Smith, Robert C Smith Jr. We're just adding him as an alternate. We stated in our reports that we had to interview him at a later date because he thought our number was spam because I'm not from Baton Rouge. And I understand that so we had to email him and let him know that it wasn't spam so we did contact him and get his information to interview him. And we didn't want to penalize him because he wasn't interviewed. So due to that. So we did want to add him as an alternate?

MEREDITH JORDAN: You said some of them we don't have a bio?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, for Ms. Latoya Citizen and Ms. Danielle, I think Poret, we didn't get bios from them unfortunately.

LAUREN WOMACK: We have the application.

EBONY HAVEN: And, I mean, the membership committee is here if you guys have questions about their interviews. They can answer those questions, the members that interviewed those two parents.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right. So we have a second

on adding Mr. Robert Smith as an alternate. Is there any discussion?

JILL HANO: So now we have two alternates?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes.

JILL HANO: Is that protocol? Like I've never had more than one alternate.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I think it's appropriate now based on the information we received from the governor's office that they want a slate of people.

JILL HANO: Oh, that's right. I forgot.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes, Jamar.

JAMAR ENNIS: Just for clarification, I think it's good policy to have alternates because during the due course of getting people appointed sometimes they change their minds. And I know very well this board wants to become compliant with the federal regulations. So having some alternates for potential members in place just in case something does happen like that this council will be prepared.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Lauren.

LAUREN WOMACK: I would just like to speak to Meredith. And if I'm not mistaken, Brenton, correct me. One of the people we didn't have a bio for her eligibility was in question of if she was receiving services.

EBONY HAVEN: No, that was one of the self-advocate applicants, not a parent applicant.

LAUREN WOMACK: Okay.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other questions?

REKEESHA BRANCH: We have one hand raised, Ms. Brenda Cosse.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Brenda.

BRENDA COSSE: I asked it in the Q and A. Can somebody read it. I can't click back.

HANNAH JENKINS: She asked if three self-advocates would increase self-advocates to how many if approved by the governor.

EBONY HAVEN: So currently with Roslyn still in that seat we have six self-advocates. And she's asking what's the question, Hannah?

HANNAH JENKINS: Would the three self-advocates increase the number of self-advocates if approved by the governor. How many self-advocates would we have, I guess, is the question.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Six?

EBONY HAVEN: It will be nine. If he were to accept all the self-advocate nominations it would be nine.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Nine total. Thank you. Any other comments or questions?

REKEESHA BRANCH: I think Tony might be raising his hand.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Tony, do you have a question?

TONY PIONTEK: Well, it's truly an incredible moment for us because I'm pretty sure when I was on this some years ago we had the same situation of the need of the protection and enrichment of acceptance is truly off of the wall that we would do anything to do this. And that's just how I feel of this whole situation. I just think it's truly an incredible group of us that have made tons of changes throughout the years and this is the epitome of what we all stand for.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you. Appreciate it.

TONY PIONTEK: You're welcome.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So the question is on whether we're accepting the alternate, Robert Smith, and adding him to our alternate list. So we will have a roll call vote. Ebony, if you are in favor of the motion--

VIVIENNE WEBB: Part of the motion is covered. And who is Latoya? I have no information on her.

EBONY HAVEN: She was one of the parent advocates that didn't get her bio submitted. Neither did Danielle Poret.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Do we have the information on them?

CHRISTI GONZALES: We have to finish the motion. So if you are in favor of the motion to add the alternate Robbie Smith say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli.

CHERIE ADULI: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli, yes. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.



EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Billings, yes. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain, yes. Mr. Ennis.

JAMAR ENNIS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Ennis, yes. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

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

Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

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

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yes.

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

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan, yes. Ms. Nguyen. Mr.

Piontek.

TONY PIONTEK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Piontek, yes. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

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

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

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

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

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

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb.

VIVIENNE WEBB: How am I supposed to vote on something if I don't have the information?

CHRISTI GONZALES: We're just voting on the amendment to add Robert.

VIVIENNE WEBB: But that's not what's on there.

CHRISTI GONZALES: That's after we vote on the amendment.

EBONY HAVEN: So this wasn't the original motion. This is like the amended motion just to add Robert. So you're saying yes you want to add him or no you don't want to add him.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Webb, yes. Dr. Wilson. And Ms. Womack.

LAUREN WOMACK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Womack, yes. Eighteen yeas, zero nays, zero abstentions.

CHRISTI GONZALES: The yeases have it and the motion is adopted.

EBONY HAVEN: Is that better, Vivienne? That's the amended motion. Now we're going to the full motion and you can ask the question.

TONY PIONTEK: I'll second it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So now we just added the amendment. Now we're voting on the amended motion.

TONY PIONTEK: I'll second it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay. Is there any discussion from council members about the amended motion?  
Vivienne.

VIVIENNE WEBB: I already asked.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I know but we just have to go through the process.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Okay. Do y'all want to answer the previously asked question?

CHRISTI GONZALES: About Angela?

ANGELA HARMON: Brooke and I interviewed Ms. Citizen. She met the criteria for a parent and she had a couple kids who had a disability. Plus she was in a region that never had really any input so she met all those qualifications first or requirements. So with her being a voice in the community with LaCAN and works with Constance. She's been with that LaCAN leader before. She does a lot of outreach. And so we felt like she would be an asset to our council. And plus she met that region that we haven't had any input or representation from.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Thank you.

ANGELA HARMON: You're welcome.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other comments? All right. So the question is on the recommendations from the membership committee for Latoya Citizen, Lamartine Meda, Danielle Poret to fill the parent and immediate relatives seats on the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council with alternates of Alaina Chachere and Robert Smith. And it was motioned by Lauren Womack and seconded by Mr. Mike Billings. This will be a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion-- oh, I am so sorry.

REBECCA: I'm a parent from region four. My name's Rebecca. I'm also Partners in Policymaking (inaudible). And just noticed in Dr. Meda's bio there's no mention of being a parent or a family member. I just wanted to make sure criteria was met

there.

EBONY HAVEN: He is a parent.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So we will have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion to accept these people to these seats say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli.

CHERIE ADULI: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Billings, yes. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain, yes. Mr. Ennis.

JAMAR ENNIS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Ennis, yes. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

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

Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

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

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yes.

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

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan, yes. Ms. Nguyen. Mr.

Piontek.

TONY PIONTEK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Piontek, yes. Mr. Rocca.

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

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

Brooke, can you hear us?

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

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

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

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

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb.

VIVIANNE WEBB: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Webb, yes. Dr. Wilson. And Ms.

Womack.

LAUREN WOMACK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Womack, yes. Eighteen yeas, zero nays.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you. The yeases have it and the motion is adopted. Thanks, everyone.

So the next item up for business is the report of the legislative advocacy committee. The chair recognizes Lauren Womack for the report.

LAUREN WOMACK: The newly formed legislative advocacy ad hoc committee met on September 27th to review community input received regarding the council's 2025 legislative advocacy agenda. There were only six individuals that volunteered to be on this committee so I want to thank all of them for participating. I also want to thank our council agency representatives who participated in the meeting. So received feedback and answer to our questions. Lastly, I would also like to thank the public members who participated and shared their thoughts. The purpose of this committee was to review all community input received at the meetings held by the LaCAN leaders throughout the state and develop a recommendation for the advocacy agenda. It would be considered by the full council.

As many of you may recall the council sets its advocacy agenda in October. We typically receive all the input and recommendations during the executive committee meeting and full council meeting but we usually run out of time to have questions answered about the topics and allow for robust member and public input. This led to subsequent changes in the agenda at later meetings and delayed our advocacy efforts. This committee was formed to try to address those issues by allowing the members to review all input, review the recommendations from LaCAN leaders and FHF directors, listen to public comment, (inaudible) from partner agencies and in efforts to provide another opportunity for the public and council to participate. This is all in an effort to streamline the public's, the council's decision and development of its agenda. We spent quite a few hours discussing all of these issues, soliciting great feedback and input from the public and our agency partners and used all that information to develop our recommendation. Any questions or clarifications I'll

be happy to do my best to answer or staff.

The motion is on behalf of the legislative committee. I move to adopt the legislative ad hoc committee, the full council for inclusion in its 2025 legislative advocacy agenda funding for Families Helping Families regional resource centers and addressing the impending fiscal cliff and potential cuts to the Louisiana Department of Health. And we offer this motion to you for consideration.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Lauren. Because this motion is coming from a committee it does not require a second. Are there any discussions from council members? Any questions, Rekeesha, from the public?

REKEESHA BRANCH: No hands raised.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So the question is on behalf the legislative committee to recommend the issues to be considered by the full council for inclusion in its 2025 legislative advocacy agenda is the funding for Families Helping Families regional resource centers and to address the impending fiscal cliff and potential cuts in the Louisiana Department of Health. We will have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion to address these concerns when your name is called say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli.

CHERIE ADULI: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Aduli, yes. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Dr. Barovechio, abstain. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Bennett, abstain. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Billings, yes. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Crain abstains. Mr. Ennis.

JAMAR ENNIS: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Ennis abstains. Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Hagan abstains. Ms. Hano. Ms.

Hymel.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yes, you called for me?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, Roslyn. Would you like to approve the legislative advocacy agenda for 2025 for those two titles?

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yes.

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

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

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

MEREDITH JORDAN: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Jordan abstains. Ms. Nguyen.

Mr. Piontek.

TONY PIONTEK: Yes.

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

TORY ROCCA: Yes.

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

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

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

ERICK TAYLOR: Abstain.

EBONY HAVEN: Mr. Taylor abstains. Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Washington, yes. Ms. Webb.

VIVIENNE WEBB: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Webb, yes. Dr. Wilson. And Ms.

Womack.

LAUREN WOMACK: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Womack, yes. Eleven yeas and seven abstentions.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So the yeases have it and the motion is adopted. Thank you.

The next item of business is our standing council member reports. Please refer to the reports in your packet. Our first report is from Disability Rights Louisiana. The purple one. The chair recognizes Tory Rocca for the report.

TORY ROCCA: Thank you. Just some highlights and program updates. For the client assistance program people with disabilities who are receiving or applying for services from LRS and American Indian Rehabilitation Services. We are currently assisting 34 people (inaudible). Community-living ombudsman program. That program we have advocates as ombudsmen for people with developmental disabilities who live in state licensed publicly run group homes in the state.

And in the fiscal year, and I apologize for the dates on this. This is based on our last fiscal year. Our most recent fiscal year closeout. So we served 4,306 people with developmental disabilities living in group homes. 1,637 visits from our ombudsmen. 9,035 residential contacts. 1,495 documented complaints including 96 allegations of abuse, 792 allegations of neglect, 344 rights violations and 127 quality of life concerns raised. And as a result of the 1495 complaints Health Standards investigated and found 162 complaints to be valid. Twelve responsible staff were fired. Inappropriate treatment or medication was terminated in five instances. 28 clients received appropriate medical or psychological treatment and/or related services. 65 staff shortages were corrected. 122 clients received appropriate personal care services. Group homes made 158 changes to enhance safety. 23 clients received appropriate written treatment plans. Sixty staff were educated regarding resident rights. Twelve clients gained access to their financial records and/or personal funds. And five clients were provided the service in a less restricted environment. And six clients gained employment. That was for fiscal year.

In our independent living advocacy program serving individuals with developmental disabilities who are receiving OCDD waiver services and supports. We offer free services to people residing in supported living environments and basically Louisiana Human Services Districts in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Who we have funding for. And the fiscal year ending June 30th we served 53 individuals in the Baton Rouge and New Orleans area are helping through their departments obtain necessary healthcare, develop self-advocacy skills and (inaudible). In our rep payee program protections for social security beneficiaries. We provide oversight representing the payee regarding their services to beneficiaries. People are managing social security benefits for other people. And provide oversight (inaudible). We had a target number of 50 cases for our current grant year and it's 59 I believe so we exceeded the number of cases we were supposed to handle. Some legal work we did and I discussed at a previous meeting. And anybody have any questions

please feel free to ask.

LAUREN WOMACK: You were on our legislative advocacy committee and you were discussing one of the things we were really wanting to advocate for was to have the information amended with like the institutional, there was some audit that said the institutions were not being fined enough or something. Do you recall that at all?

TORY ROCCA: I recall that in a meeting although not in detail.

LAUREN WOMACK: Okay. I was just wondering do you think, like are you in touch with like the ombudsman program where they could maybe give us some more statistics or something or maybe help us with ways that we could advocate?

TORY ROCCA: Would have to jog my memory. The issue was wanting stronger or harsher penalties for people. (Inaudible).

LAUREN WOMACK: And then we were like well we don't even know what it is.

TORY ROCCA: What I can do is I can ask our director of community advocacy programs and see if she has insight into this and get back to you. I can see what our director of that organization knows about this and what are her thoughts and if she has context.

LAUREN WOMACK: But, I mean, like personally I can't speak for the other council members, but this is an issue I don't know hardly anything about. And I think that this is really, really important because as a self-advocate who is an adult that's aging too like if something happens and I can't keep staff, you know, I could wind up at a group home or something like that. Looking at these numbers no one would say these are remotely where they need to be. So if we could help advocate for a change, especially in our five-year plan on things that we can be doing as a deliverable for the OCDD population as a council member, I would like to.

TORY ROCCA: Sounds good. I will ask the director of that organization.

LAUREN WOMACK: If they wanted to give a presentation or give you something that you could bring to us.

TORY ROCCA: And she might not have all the information herself. And this is sort of subjective.



(inaudible).

LAUREN WOMACK: Or just more about what her office does or can do.

TORY ROCCA: Okay. I will see if she is available to do that.

LAUREN WOMACK: Or even ways that we can refer family members or inform our Families Helping Families about if their loved ones wind up in a supported living environment.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: I just wanted to also do a point of clarification. During that conversation there was discussion in the report that the Louisiana Department of Health was not in favor of higher fines and sanctions. And so I did follow up with our Health Standards section so I just wanted to clarify. When we do have an audit finding there are recommendations that are given that we then, when we say agree or disagree first off it's in terms of looking at the data they used and what not. And then second off it is around can we then implement that. And when I followed up with Health Standards they asked me to make sure it was clear that the Department of Health was not saying that they were against higher fines and sanctions, but we do have legislation and statutes that there's a max amount that can be paid. So the comment was only that the fines and sanctions can only be up to a certain amount and so we would need legislative action to change that in order to do higher fines and sanctions. So just wanted to get that clarification on the record as well. It wasn't that LDH was saying that they were against higher fines and sanctions. Just not able to do it within the authorities that we have right now.

LAUREN WOMACK: And obviously that's not going to solve the problem.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any public comment?

REKEESHA BRANCH: We have a hand raised. Ms. Kathy Dwyer.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Kathy.

KATHY DWYER: Thank you. And to kind of piggyback on what Julie just said and what the DD Council has some interested in terms of, or at least some people expressed interest in increasing the fines, this is where you would do your research to see exactly what the law says, what the maximum fines can be for each

kind of offense and then somehow review and decide whether or not that maximum amount should be increased and propose the law be changed to reflect those increases. And that's where the advocacy would come in is to change the law.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you. Is that it Rekeesha?

REKEESHA BRANCH: That's it. Thank you Tory.

TORY ROCCA: Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Hearing no other, that we have no other public comments the report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item for business is the report of the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs. The chair recognizes Jamar Ennis for his report.

JAMAR ENNIS: Good morning, everyone. Jamar Ennis on behalf of the governor's office. So in similar fashion I don't want to read directly from the report. I'm just going to give some high points and add a few things. One of the most important things that we've done I guess over the past month, it seemed like a month ago, whenever Hurricane Francine decided to visit our state we did a lot of activities in terms of activating EMDAC, a special release of our newsletter to get timely information out to our public. Considering what's happening and could happen anytime the Governor's Advisory Council of Disability Affairs decided to make emergency preparedness a standing committee so that every quarter emergency preparedness is being actively discussed. So the general consensus is staying ready so we don't have to get ready when bad things happen. So with this and the other committees within GACDA there will be some form of solicitation of interested parties who would like to join the committees within GACDA. Right now we have eight members of GACDA. Anyone with experience, especially with a board that size, knows a membership of that size is going to need more resources to be successful if there's any ad hoc (inaudible) to get things done. So with that being said, there will be ongoing efforts to keep emergency preparedness no matter what the emergency is kind of at the forefront just to keep things going. So we're monitoring kind of what's happening, what happened to Florida, what happened in other states. So that's the kind of thing.

So I do want to talk about some of the programs that we want to have next year. We're in the midst of kind of seeing where we're going to host these events. One is the mayor's initiative. So we want to build around the current committees, commissions, the councils set around local disabilities issues. Bring those committees to the table and also invite other mayors and local entities statewide to learn, get empowered, get enabled on how to build systems, structure and something of their own to the extent that they can. So we intend to invite L.A.B.E. We intend to invite an emergency preparedness element to enable local entities how to build and sustain a local parish level if they don't have it already. Which we know some entities, some parishes don't have them. Some communities don't have them. Don't know the first thing about emergency preparedness. So we want to bring those inputs to make local entities successful. Empowered to address certain things on a local level. So we want to bring in mayors, ombudsmen. Pretty much anybody who wants to learn or has something to share to this space. And we may have it around the session. But we want to, whether it's a small event, whether it's large we need to have something of this caliber. And that's kind of similar to what this group mentioned with the national coalition. It's something on more of a state, local level aimed at targeting local entities. From my experience a lot most action happens on a very, very local level so we want to do what we can at least set the table for that.

Also we're going to have a full application for a (inaudible) task force council initiative that's happening in 2025. For some reason October just seems to be a very busy month for us so we're still working on getting the process of how we want to accept and receive applications out so we can get access to all of the interested parties there. The programs that we had. Everyone knew about our conference. This year we had six presentations. There is an active Survey Monkey requesting information for feedback because we want to see how we can build and meet demands next year. What the interested topics are. So if there's anybody who wants to offer up suggestions on what we can do better. Our intention is to have a virtual and

hybrid component of in person. So we're looking to expand to multiple days, just not one. So if there's anybody who just wants to present or have some good suggestions we're open to them.

Another thing I want to mention is that I will be reaching out to most if not all of the organizations, some sitting at this table, to identify certain issues that you may care about, your organization cares about ahead of next year's session. Next regular session that is. It's my belief that understanding the issues early could work towards meaningful solutions or I explain to the administration, to my bosses why something works, why something doesn't work. I just need you to tell me kind of what the issues are, what you recommend, so on and so forth. So I'll be reaching out to a lot of y'all formerly to get a better understanding of some of the issues that you may face. What it is that you want. What the concerns are.

So we do know that a special session is likely imminent next month. From what I understand it's probably going to be around the 4th or 5th regarding the various tax credits that are up for discussion. So I don't have information more specifically. And there's a lot of stuff that's out there. So I just don't have enough information to I guess form an opinion of what the official stance is for the governor. In due course when information does become available I will gladly share it. So we're going to probably, I don't know how vested or how I will be participating in the legislative session. I guess I'll just be available if they have any questions or to the extent that they need me. Once we find out more about the package and once that becomes public I will be able to be with anybody who wants to discuss or has issues, concerns that I need to bring to the administration.

Everyone knows about the GOLD awards. The GOLD awards are-- so this is a good time of the year (inaudible) program. We love putting this program on. It's the 2024 Governor's Outstanding Leadership and Disability awards. So it's a typical slate of awards. We can't wait to have it. It's going to be December 3rd at the Old State Capitol this year. The nominations are due on November 1st. So if there's anyone who's interested in applying or nominating other

people please do so as soon as possible.

JILL HANO: I'm open for people nominating me. Just kidding.

JAMAR ENNIS: We accept self-nominating applications. So I will transmit the paperwork to you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I'll fill it out for you.

JILL HANO: No.

JAMAR ENNIS: You got a willing nominator. Another is our inclusive art contest. We graciously received this from the DD Council back in 2009. Very excited to carry this program upward and onward. This year's thing is radiate your color. It's one of those esoteric open ended, you don't know what you're going to get until you get it kind of themes. So we've already received some submissions so we look to get more. All people of all ages can submit artwork. We have various categories. We just want to get as many as we can to celebrate the achievements and to bolster the whole movement of advocacy and awareness through art. It's one of the best times of year for us. We need everybody's participation to get the word out for anybody who is interested.

Outreach. So if there's anything that you want our office to participate in please let me know. We'll be happy to do it. We'll be happy to present. We've been hitting the road a lot to issue proclamations, issue recognitions, celebrate people and events. I haven't told anybody no and I don't intend on telling anybody no as long as I'm here. Anybody who wants to have us please let me know as soon as possible. And also if there's anything that your organization or group is supporting in terms of seeking funding or applying for grants please let us know as well. We'll be happy to sit down and discuss how we can support you. Write letters of support. With that I'll close if there is not anymore questions or concerns from anybody.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: I want to know what are y'all doing for the disability community with the floods and everything? I know back then they didn't have people with disabilities with outreach. Have they looked at that anymore?

JAMAR ENNIS: When you say the floods, what do you

mean?

ERICK TAYLOR: Like evacuations, they didn't have places where they can put people with breathing machines.

JAMAR ENNIS: I can say this, Hurricane Francine this administration was pretty responsive. We had a whole slate of shelters statewide and impacted areas. So I'm glad to say there were no fatalities. But it does open up our eyes, our awareness to where we need to stay ready and be ready all times of the year. So that's why we're linking our business to have this topic open every quarter at least for us to host discussion and taking actions to always be improving, making sure that systems are ready. So again, I think that we were prepared. And luckily nothing tremendously bad has happened. And your federal partners have seemed more interested in strengthening the relationships in our state. FEMA, public health, I think they've been really strong in wanting to continue to ensure (inaudible) to make sure that we just stay ready.

ERICK TAYLOR: Are y'all looking more at the nursing homes too? How to evacuate them in and out the nursing.

JAMAR ENNIS: We look at everything, Erick. I think there needs to be more buy-in from a lot of our state agencies. Not to name names, but we're going to take whatever we see as deficiencies from Francine and just build and just do what we can on the front end.

ERICK TAYLOR: The reason why I'm asking is because I had two families had transport as a concern with people with disabilities. That they not trained to handle the people with machines. Medical people, if you're not medical people is scared to touch you if you not medical, if you not doctors, if you not ambulance people. Because they're afraid of the transport and getting sued if you touching that person. That's why I was asking that question. Not looking at some of the mobility when you transfer people.

JAMAR ENNIS: Yes. And I'm sorry, was this in the 2016 flood?

ERICK TAYLOR: Yeah.

JAMAR ENNIS: Yeah, so definitely with things like EMDAC and our meeting a lot of these issues can come up

in that space and we want to make sure that we have all the notes to address everything that comes up from our advocates and interested parties.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Do we have any public comment?

JILL HANO: You said the GOLD awards are in December. Didn't you just have GOLD awards? I thought they were annual. I thought y'all just had the GOLD awards.

JAMAR ENNIS: We just had them last year. I wasn't with the department last year but I was fortunate enough to be invited to participate. It happened so fast. Every year around December, November, December is the typical time we have the GOLD awards.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other questions? All right. Hearing no other comments the report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item for business is lunch. If there is no objection?

CHERI CRAIN: There is. I'm sorry. I have to do my report and I need to leave right after I eat lunch. So can I do mine really quick? It's Elderly Affairs. I'm next before lunch.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So you want to go first after lunch or now?

CHERI CRAIN: Now. It's really quick. I promise. I'm Cheri Crain with the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs. My report is yellow. It gives the fiscal information. That's basically for the new people, the new faces I see. It kind of describes our program just a little bit. If you look on the second page under the ombudsman at the very top it just gives information on the month of October which is residents' rights month. And then it also (inaudible) the anniversary of the Capital Area Agency on Aging which we'll celebrate during the senior fair on October 17th, which is today. And then kind of gives a consumer voice link for more information on all of that that you can go to. You go to the next session it's about our elderly protective services. But those people that have been in this room for the last year know that we had an audit and we requested more positions for our investigators and we were granted that last session. So we are in the process of filling those 16 positions. And I think as of today we have either 12 or 13 that have actually been filled and the rest have been advertised. So

hopefully by next year we will have a good idea of how those positions were able to decrease the caseload on our current investigators.

I do have one typographical error. When it breaks down the number of reports of abuse it says as of end of June. It should actually be September because it's the end of the quarter, not the end of the year. And then on the next page at the top it talks about our resource centers that we have. And then MIPPA which is our yearly grant that we submit a proposal for is actually three separate little grants to help with low-income subsidy and medical savings plans as well as helping applicants apply for Medicare Part D counseling and Part D enrollment. That enrollment opens every year on October 15th. So that just two days ago so of course we don't have any data on that yet of how far that's going.

Recent news, we kind of just a little burb that we always like to include until the end of November or first of November because of hurricane season. So getagameplan.org has a lot of information on it. Also talk about our collaborative efforts with EMDAC. And Erick I wanted to touch base on what you were just discussing about your two friends that passed away. I know how you feel. I had one too. But I also want to urge you to have them contact a local emergency preparedness because most parishes have in their local emergency office a list of those constituents that have a need for evacuation. And you can get on that list and they will put them as a priority. If you need any more information you can call me or text me and I'll give you some more information on that.

ERICK TAYLOR: Okay.

CHERI CRAIN: That is it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Are there any comments? Questions? Hearing none, the report requires no action and will be placed on file. Thank you, Ms. Crain. If there is no objection the meeting will recess for lunch. It is now 12:10. We will reconvene at 1:10.

(Break)

CHRISTI GONZALES: It is now 1:14. The meeting will come to order. The next item of business is HDC. The chair recognizes Ms. Constance for the report.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Good afternoon. I'm filling



in for Dr. Wilson today to provide the update from the Human Development Center. So you guys all received the report. We're on the blue paper. I'm going to go through some highlights I wanted to point out from the report. The first one from our early childhood initiatives. The Early Head Start provides professional development to childcare partners. On May 22nd there were 72 teachers that participated from seven different centers. And they covered topics in that (inaudible) learning executive functioning in toddlers as well as in the classroom. They also did professional development on May 17th with 19 teachers on site that covered those topics for an additional center. And then they also hosted a meeting at our HDC building for over 60 childcare centers in July and August. They also have a parent training series going on which are ten, they're supporting ten families in cognitive discipline parenting to really help parents understand how to help their children manage their emotions and their thoughts and feelings and behaviors.

Under our Louisiana Deaf-Blind project. Some highlights. They actually hosted an OSEP leadership (inaudible). And so OSEP leaders came to our Human Development Center building and did a site visit and had discussions with the project staff. One of our interveners received, attended a national training to get her national certification. And interveners are highly trained peer professionals who specialize in Deaf-Blindness and really support helping that individual with Deaf-Blindness integrate and be able to work. And then work one-on-one with individuals with Deaf-Blindness. And then the Deaf-Blind project has also entered into a data sharing agreement with early hearing detection and intervention to help improve early identification of infants and toddlers who may have Deaf-Blindness.

On our LASARD project we currently have 50 contracts with 38 school districts and charter networks throughout the state. And then finally under our community health initiatives we have a collaboration with the Split-Second Foundation which we hosted a multiple sclerosis support group. And then we're continuing to provide educational and vocational support to treatment (inaudible) clinics. And then as

we were in the process of opening up our FASD clinic those staff members went and observed different clinics at the University of Washington and the University of Mexico to give us some ideas of what we can do to implement as we look to open up our clinic. And then we continued to provide some developmental screenings with We Play Training Grounds Childcare. And then we also provided technical assistance for the American Muslims for Accessibility Advocacy (inaudible) which is a local support agency in the Greater New Orleans area.

Finally, we are doing FASD talks with DCFS and they're going to be in regional centers willing to provide parents with information on FASD home supports and information about FASD in general. The sessions are going to be scheduled across the state. They are still finalizing those dates but the sessions are tentatively scheduled to be held in New Orleans, Lafayette, Alexandria, Shreveport, Baton Rouge, Covington, Monroe and Thibodaux. And they are going to offer two different timeframes just so they can reach a wider audience. So one will be a daytime mid-10 to 12-1 session and then they'll have a later evening session 5 or 6. Any questions?

LAUREN WOMACK: You were speaking to the one about parents, the discipline. Has that already happened?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: That has already happened.

LAUREN WOMACK: Is that recorded?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I do not know if it's recorded but I can find out.

LAUREN WOMACK: Okay. And I noticed the training on the leadership education and neuro developmental and related disabilities. Is that going to be something that's ongoing?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Yes. We have a different cohort every year. And so the applications generally open I guess in February or March. And so the cohort goes through the training from the first week of August all the way through June. I'm actually in training myself.

LAUREN WOMACK: Awesome. Okay.

CHRISTI GONZALES: And Lauren, if you Google conscience discipline there's a ton of information that teachers use in their classrooms.

LAUREN WOMACK: Okay.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other questions? Any questions from the public? No. Okay. Hearing none, the report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is a report from the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. The chair recognizes Melissa Bayham for her report.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Hey, everybody. My report is on this bright blue paper. So with every quarterly report there are some statistics on the number of consumers served in preemployment transition services and vocational rehabilitation. We did add at the end of the first page y'all had requested the percentages for compliance for what we call our 60/90. We have 60 days to determine eligibility and 90 days to determine or to develop new individualized plans for employment. So as you can see last quarter we were at 85 percent and 86 percent and we need to get to 90 percent for compliance. The second page is just, again, more data that y'all have requested on open cases in vocational rehabilitation, rehabilitated closures and services provided by our rehabilitation employment development specialists. Our Louisiana Rehabilitation Council does, we actually usually meet the week after this meeting but I will be out of town for our national conference. So that meeting is actually going to be on November the 7th at the Hampton Inn and Suites. So you can find more information about that meeting on the boards and commissions website or the Louisiana Workforce Commission's website.

We also have information on benefits planning. (Inaudible) LRS participants were directly assisted with their SSI and SSDI benefits planning since July the 1st by our LRS in-house community work incentives counselor or CWICs. And our consumers also have the opportunity to also continue to receive services through Lighthouse for the Blind and LSU Human Development Center for those services. The Disability Innovation Fund project that we had with Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Southern University in Baton Rouge has ended but we do continue to serve those participants through the vocational rehabilitation program.

We also, I reported this yesterday. We are in the midst of doing a statewide training for all of our

counselors and supervisors. We entitled it the VR journey. This is just we have a lot of new staff and we also had a lot of changes this year. And so this is just to kind of help reset some things and just provide more consistency statewide of LRS services because it's really important to me that no matter what regional office you go to you get the same services. So we are in the process this quarter of training all of our district supervisors and our rehabilitation counselors.

I also wanted to thank the DD Council for promoting our comprehensive statewide needs assessment. This is a needs assessment that we have to do every three years as part of our state planning. So we just finished, that survey has just closed and we are in the process of contracting with LSU Shreveport who will be analyzing that data and provide the assessment report for us for our next state plan. So that's something, an assessment that we use as a planning tool for the next three years.

And just want to mention I talked in depth about this yesterday. But when you see like in terms of like the performance for our eligibility (inaudible) and the deficiencies there. We do have, we are understaffed at this point and we are underfunded. And just to reiterate, the vocational rehabilitation program in Louisiana sent back 29 million-dollars in federal funding this year because we don't have the state funds to draw down our federal drawdown. But the good thing that I want to point out, and it's under preemployment transition services, the easiest way to generate match for federal funding is through state appropriations. But we also can use third-party cooperative arrangements. And these arrangements have to be done with public entities. So we have 19 right now and they're all with school districts. And we use those third-party cooperative arrangements to pull down the federal funding for transition specialists in those schools. And so Department of Education has a Disability Innovation Fund grant where they're helping to I guess provide models for that. So that hopefully more school districts will want to participate in this.

We have two new ones coming up in Lafayette and Lincoln and we are in discussion with Beinville, St. Charles, Morris Jeff School and Algiers Charter. So we

continue to have interest in this. And it really is, in my opinion, one of the best ways to provide preemployment transition services to students with disabilities. Because these contracts allow school districts to have their own transition specialist within their districts under the supervision of our program. But they are employees of the school district and they are with the students full time. So we continue to advocate for more school districts to participate in those because last year I think we were able to generate 1.5-million dollars in match from third parties and this year we're anticipating 2 million. So that is a way for us to generate match without state general funds. So very appreciative of that. So that's the end of the report.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Ms. Bayham. Any questions from council members on the report? Lauren.

LAUREN WOMACK: This is just a suggestion for future meetings. In the future if y'all have time or even getting it from LWC if either you or one of your staff could do presentations to the workforce, the one-stops on how LRS works. Because there's a lot of information on those levels. Just getting the coordinators and directors of those regions might be a great way, whoever's doing this training, to roll out some training to them.

MELISSA BAYHAM: And you made me think of something, Lauren. So October 31st there is a board of directors' meeting. This is Office of Workforce Development administrators with the local Workforce Development board directors. And I am doing a presentation on LRS at that meeting.

LAUREN WOMACK: Awesome.

MELISSA BAYHAM: And so at that meeting not only am I going to be discussing what LRS services are available to their participants but I'm also going to be talking to them about accessibility in the job centers and the need for not only physical accessibility but accessibility to all workforce programs for individuals with disabilities in the job centers.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Jill.

JILL HANO: What did you mean when you said funds were left on the table?

MELISSA BAYHAM: So every year there's an appropriation for each state. Technically there's 78 VR agencies because some states have a general agency and a blind agency. In Louisiana we have one agency and that's LRS. And so every year the federal government allocates a certain number of funds to each state agency. For LRS last year I believe our allocation was around 64 million. This year our allocation, so far federal government hasn't finalized their budget yet, but it's anticipated to be 70 million-dollars. But in order for us to draw all of those federal funds down we have to have the state funds to draw the match. So last year we were only able to generate state general funds or local funds through those third parties to draw down 34 million so we sent 29 million back. Which means-- we say we send it back but we never really had it because we never got to draw it down.

And so what happens with those funds is that gets put back in that VR pool and other state agencies if they have additional match they actually get our money. So this year all state agencies who returned money other state agencies were able to draw down their funds. Because for several years VR agencies were not able to draw down all of the federal funds and that's where the Disability Innovation Fund grants, like the one Department of Education has, that's where that comes from. But this year all the VR agencies were able to draw down all that money but we weren't able to draw down all of our funds. For example, I say we gave our money to California because California was able to generate 29 extra million dollars from what we call reallocation because they were able to draw down additional federal funds.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: So is it safe to say other states have places like (inaudible) Baton Rouge the only one in Louisiana?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Explain that.

ERICK TAYLOR: Is y'all the only one able to support people?

MELISSA BAYHAM: So in each state we've had at least one if not two vocational rehabilitation agencies.

ERICK TAYLOR: So y'all the only one?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Correct. We're the only public vocational rehabilitation program. Correct.

ERICK TAYLOR: So if we had two they can draw down?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Right. But the only time states have two is when they have a separate blind agency. We used to have a separate blind agency but most, not most, but the majority of VR agencies combined-- and when I go to national places we're called Louisiana combined because we don't have a general agency and a blind agency. We have a combined agency. So I have a blind services executive director but we technically are only one agency. So they don't get extra money. Their money is just split a little bit differently.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Melissa, I was just wondering. Since y'all have been shorthanded for so long are they in the process of allowing y'all to go ahead and hire to help with the shortages?

MELISSA BAYHAM: So part of the challenge with my hiring is getting them. That has gotten better recently. But also I did just get approval to hire ten job appointments. So in the state government world like you have what we call TO which is your table of organizations. And there are certain amount of funded positions that you have and you can't go over that amount. So in order to hire more people then what your TO is you can hire what's called job appointments but job appointments they can only go up to four years. And then either you have to find a funded position for them or (inaudible) separate.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other questions?

HANNAH JENKINS: Roslyn has her hand raised.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah, the way you said with the funds in that if they don't use it in that what would happen with the funds that y'all use if you are not using it to be placed in the job?

MELISSA BAYHAM: So all the funds that we're able to draw down we do use to support individuals with disabilities. The funds that we're not able to draw down goes to other states.

ROSLYN HYMEL: So what happens with that kind of money if the state don't use it?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I don't know because we use all of our-- all the funds that we're able to secure we do

use.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Is that like for schools or is that going to be for like to use for jobs specifically?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Okay. So when we receive funds for vocational rehabilitation we can use those funds for any of the services that are in the federal regulations. So that could be anything from training to job placement, supported employment, assistive technology, home modifications, vehicle modifications. The whole gamut of what we're able to provide in vocational rehabilitation.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Well, that's what I was thinking but I wasn't sure. That's what made me ask a question to prepare for what I was thinking on that kind of page.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you. Tony.

TONY PIONTEK: How rare is this when this happens yearly?

MELISSA BAYHAM: For Louisiana?

TONY PIONTEK: Yes.

MELISSA BAYHAM: We have not been able to match our funds since I think 2008. So we've sent back funds since I believe 2008.

TONY PIONTEK: And since of that 08 until now has it somewhat changed, maybe?

MELISSA BAYHAM: For the last, I would say, eight years we have been receiving approximately the same amount of state funds which is about 80 million we get through direct appropriation.

TONY PIONTEK: I see. Now I'm just putting myself if I did that and you wanted me to come in or something or whatever, whatever that progression might be. Can that be a possibility for me per se?

MELISSA BAYHAM: You're saying if you need services? I'm sorry. I'm not understanding.

TONY PIONTEK: No, not so much services but one-on-one trainings per se that way.

MELISSA BAYHAM: So trainings for? I'm not quite understanding. You're talking about getting training?

TONY PIONTEK: Yes, get trainings.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes, we provide training. Yes, sir.

TONY PIONTEK: Okay. And how often would that be possibly?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Are you talking about training in



vocational rehabilitation or training for a job?

TONY PIONTEK: Yes, training for a job.

MELISSA BAYHAM: So when you come into the vocational rehabilitation program we develop what's called your individualized plan for employment and you would discuss with your rehabilitation counselor what kind of training you need and then that would be on your plan. And it would last until however long it takes for you to get the training that you need for work.

TONY PIONTEK: And I see 16 to 21 of age, right?

MELISSA BAYHAM: That's just the employment transition services. So vocational rehabilitation is for if you are eligible to work, if you're able to work then you can be eligible for the VR program.

TONY PIONTEK: Okay.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other public comments?

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Roslyn has her hand raised.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Like he was saying I was going to answer his kind of question on it. If I'm not correct because I went through it you have like 90 days to be coached in the fields that I chose in that to keep the job, if I'm not correct, on that with the services from y'all from the LRS.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Job coaching is one of the services that we do provide. That is correct, Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: All right. Because I was going to use myself for that because I went through LRS in that and that's what I kind of did. I had went through 90 days to do what I am doing now.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Okay. Good.

TONY PIONTEK: Before I go, Ms. Roslyn, when we see you you're like upside down.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Well, for me I did succeed and my thanks goes to LRS actually because I wouldn't be here and I succeeded in my job at Cafe La Te Da for two years. So my thanks goes to LRS.

MELISSA BAYHAM: That's awesome. Thank you, Roslyn.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Hearing no other comments the report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is the report of the Office of Aging and Adult Services. The chair recognizes Mr.

Gary Williams to present the report.

GARY WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, everyone. Gary Williams with Aging and Adult Services. Just want to hit you with some high points. At the very top under the current recipients of services when we talk about to the right there the community choices waiver. And looking at the registry and how many are on the waiting list, CCW registry without HCBS services, 4839. The registry is a total 5886. As it relates to the wait times, the CCW wait time of 13 years. Those that have that longer wait time of 13 years those participants are receiving services. However, they are receiving the long-term personal care services. And in some cases a combination of anywhere from the long-term personal care services or the adult day healthcare services are being provided. Others that are on the list and not receiving any services that's where we see the average of 46 weeks. Of course this is related to staffing issues. Staffing issues with direct support workers as well as the support coordinating agencies.

With the traumatic head and spinal cord injury program we have 271 on the wait list due to funding being available. That program provides for a 50,000-dollar lifetime amount and up to 15,000-dollars per year with a total max of 50,00-dollars as I mentioned.

I would like to highlight the adult protective services. We continue to see pretty large caseloads within adult protective services for abuse and neglect cases. We anticipate that increasing even further because we are in the process of doing a public awareness campaign. We found that a lot of citizens don't know how to report abuse and neglect. They really don't know what abuse and neglect looks like. Abuse, neglect, financial exploitation. All of that are a part of a public awareness campaign. Roll out billboards, brochures, probably some radio spots as well and some information on social media to advise the public of what exploitation and abuse and neglect looks like. So we, of course, considered the number of staff that we have. And again, anticipating a spike in the number of claims that will be filed related to abuse and neglect so additional investigators that is a part of our budget request for this year 26.

As it relates to the cases for FY24 that you see a large amount of them are caregiver neglect. And then of those cases 40 percent, almost 41 percent of those have been substantiated. Self-neglect is also a part of that. We looked at the OAAS population and total program participants. The difference between the bar graph and the population by region. The population by region those numbers are off just a little bit because there are some differences due to some errors in ZIP codes.

Of course as an agency we are aware of the nationwide labor and workforce difficulties. The shortages that I just kind of mentioned. So we are using some of the American Rescue Plan Act funds to hopefully make a difference in that area. In 2023 there was some bonus payments as outlined here that were made to direct support workers and support coordinators of the bonus payments. We made sure the bulk of that went to the direct service workers. And this year we are doing a gap analysis that we are in the midst of to look at areas related to workforce and how can we attract more folks to that, to the workforce to provide direct services to participants. As well as we looked at different areas of the state that lacked coverage for support coordination agencies.

And in 24-25 we will be offering some trainings as outlined here in hopes that providing additional training will not only help with attracting additional staff for these agencies but giving them the training that they need to be more effective as it relates to providing services to participants. That's all I have.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Mr. Williams. Are there any questions from council members on the report? Lauren.

LAUREN WOMACK: Under caregiver neglect do we know how many of the caregivers is like family or in-house caregiver verses?

GARY WILLIAMS: I don't have a breakdown of that.

LAUREN WOMACK: I didn't know if y'all even take that measure. I know sometimes that comes up.

GARY WILLIAMS: If it's family or other. I can find out.

LAUREN WOMACK: And one good thing, because I work with the community, I know y'all are doing brochures

but if y'all do have something that I can print out like a PDF fact sheet just to hand out. Or like we have information at the front. It doesn't have to be anything fancy, but just with your big statistics, this is the website process, easy to read for somebody who may be concerned that they are being neglected or abused.

GARY WILLIAMS: Okay.

LAUREN WOMACK: Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Mr. Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: I see you spoke about neglect and you say y'all trying to work on that. I see y'all pretty high numbers on that. Well, the thing is with the abuse and neglect is a lot of people they can't get away from wherever, you understand what I'm saying, to report it. And some of them can't read to get to where they need to get to what they need to get to to even report.

GARY WILLIAMS: I agree. And hopefully by virtue of doing this public awareness campaign sometimes it could be a neighbor. Sometimes it could be someone else that's visiting the home. So what they're focusing on by doing this public awareness campaign we can help people understand what abuse, neglect, financial exploitation looks like. So even if it's not the participant making the claim. It could be another family member. It could be a neighbor. It could be someone that's a delivery person. So that's the reason for the public awareness campaign is to help others have an idea of what abuse and neglect looks like and identify different ways that that can be reported.

ERICK TAYLOR: I'm trying to put it out there on both signs. If you don't catch it they still wrapped up around that person or they could be in a home with a family and some of the workers scared to report it because their hands is tied and if you see anything going on in the family you not supposed to do. The only thing you're supposed to do is your job. It's a losing situation. All they supposed to do is write it down, do their job.

GARY WILLIAMS: We'll have several different ways for those to be reported.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other comments?

PATTI BAROVECHIO: I just wanted to know is there

an option for say someone from the community to make a report anonymously or do you have to disclose who's making the report? Like if it was a worker that was in fear of losing their job or that type of thing.

GARY WILLIAMS: I'll find out for sure. I'm not quite sure, but almost positive it can be done anonymously.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Cheri.

CHERIE ADULI: I was a little bit surprised when I brought my daughter to Children's Hospital to see a neurologist during the triage process they asked her if she was scared, if she was being abused at home. And I thought to myself like even if she was she's not going to say it because I'm standing right here. So maybe if there's an opportunity for physicians while they're meeting with the patients while the caregivers or family members can maybe step out to ask so they don't feel threatened. Maybe that might be a good place is when they're receiving healthcare through their dentist or physician or whoever. Again, I was surprised that they would ask that question in front of me. I mean, she said yes because she wanted to see me laugh at her. But it makes me sad for the kids that actually are in a bad situation because they're not going to say that in front of their mom or their dad or whoever is abusing them. Maybe educate providers, physicians, dentists, whoever has that one-on-one with patients.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other comments? Lauren.

LAUREN WOMACK: I have a question too and I don't even know if it's a way to resolve this or anything. But I know with children if they're in an abuse or neglect there's the foster system. If it's an adult or an adult with a disability and we take them out of that situation where do they go.

GARY WILLIAMS: We as a standard even with cases as it stands now with cases of abuse or neglect of a child then we get other entities involved such as Department of Children and Family Services.

LAUREN WOMACK: Okay. So for adults too you don't have to have like a backup plan?

GARY WILLIAMS: Yes.

LAUREN WOMACK: Maybe putting that in there that way, you know, if you report it you're not stuck in that situation.

GARY WILLIAMS: They have to address it.

LAUREN WOMACK: Yep. There's a solution.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other public comments? All right. Hearing none, the report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is the report from the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities. The chair recognizes Julie Foster Hagan for the report.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: This is my report, the book in there. I won't read it to you guys. It's really got lots of data points that the council's asked for in the past followed by some updates. I'll really just point out a couple of highlights. And Angela mentioned it, but did just want to make sure everybody is aware, we are doing a roadshow throughout. We've been to Monroe, Shreveport and New Orleans but we still have six more roadshows left. We'll also have a virtual option where we're providing more information about what we've been working on in the last year, what we have coming up in the upcoming year. For folks who need it translated we'll record the virtual option with closed captionings that will go on the website so that folks will be able to have those closed captioning translated if they need that. And I can't remember exactly when that virtual roadshow is but it's on our website. I believe the council did also share the flier of when those dates are including our virtual roadshows.

Also mentioned the rate study. I did just want to share a little bit more. The flier went out for that as well. But we do have two rate studies going on. One rate study will look at people receiving services in the intermediate care facilities. The other through home and community-based waiver services. In both instances both provider networks as well as people with disabilities who use those services and their families will be invited to attend and participate in some focus group sessions that we have to make sure that we are considering all the things that we need to that go into it. We have contracted that out with two vendors who have experience in other states with rate setting. And so we hope to have that completed by June or July so that we then have some objective information around the rates and the considerations, all considerations that need to go into the rate. So do encourage folks to

listen in if that's something of interest to you.

Another thing that we're working on that I hope to kick off in January, and I don't know exactly what it will look like but have heard from a lot of people who are self-advocates that our office needs to figure out a way to hear from them in more of a safe space. That sometimes, and you guys do an awesome job, but sometimes self-advocates say if there's family members and providers and a whole bunch of state staff it's not always a safe space. And I think Erick you've mentioned that safe space in here before. So we're going to be putting together, it will be virtual, but it will be an opportunity for us to hear from self-advocates around our developmental disabilities system and we're looking to kick that off in January. So if you are a self-advocate and are interested please do shoot me an email. And if I don't hear from you I might reach out to you anyway to say hey, do you want to be a part. So but we hope to start kicking those off in January. And again, I really think I want to talk with that group about what they think it should look like without going in with some real specific ideas about where we want to go with that.

We did also just share, and this is in our roadshow, but I've talked to you guys a lot about the National Center for (inaudible) Services. That does a lot of studies with folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities and serious mental illness. We did get their report. We did a quick one-pager that we sent so I imagine DD Council can be sending that out shortly. I think the report itself is about 50 pages. But there's a lot of really interesting information in there about what they found from doing surveys and talking with folks. We talked with a lot of people that are on the council, talked with Meredith and some of her staff at Department of Ed. We did talk with some of the folks at Children's Hospital was just mentioned. They talked with some of the police force and also sent some surveys out. So it's a nice kind of view of what that gap analysis I guess did. And then there are some recommendations. So our next steps will be looking at how we partner and how we continue to work with them on some of the recommendations they have.

Also we've been doing a lot of work. A lot of you may be familiar with OCDD resource centers. They've been partnering with some other state agencies as well as the Administration on Community Living. And there's now a website, it's fairly new, called the Link Center and there are all kinds of resources there that are available on the Link Center. There's trainings. There's informational material. All of it for people with IDD and behavioral health concerns. We've actually got some things on there from Louisiana. We did a lot of work around wellness and so, you know, there's a lot of research out there that the things that we used to call behaviors, this behavior or that behavior. It's really not a behavior. It's that they're board or they're not really having a great life. And so let's quit talking about behaviors and let's talk more about wellness for all of us and how you help people have a good life. And so there's some different training materials that they've done.

We also worked in conjunction with the Arc of Louisiana to develop sort of a clinician guide. And that clinician's guide for supporting people with IDD and serious mental illness can be found on the Arc of Louisiana's website as well. And again, that's not geared for like our direct support professionals, but more if you are a psychologist or a doctor and supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in your practice what are some considerations or things you might need to have. Those materials are all out as well. I think those are my highlights but I don't know if there's other-- we talked a lot about things in the self-determination committee so if there's other questions I'm happy to take them.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Julie. Any other questions from council members? Is there any public comment? Hearing none, the report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is the Office of Public Health. The chair recognizes Ms. Patti Barovechio for her report.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Thank you. The Bureau of Family Health administers the Title Five program for the state and that's what funds our children and youth with special needs program. So this year or this quarter I



asked the Title Five block grant team to just give you a little Snidbit of what goes into the block grant because that is really the source of all of these different programs that are funded. So in our report you'll find about we have still some direct services provided for subspecialty pediatric clinics in parts of the state where these are needed. We also have a safety net transportation assistance program. Often times sometimes there's issues with families utilizing Medicaid transportation. And so they have to apply first through Medicaid and then if they have a denial or a reason why it is not appropriate. For instance, if a family is traveling with the child that's a patient and a sibling, you know, that may not work with Medicaid transportation. But there is a transportation program and that's what the stipends are. They provide support for families needing help with special need transportation.

We also have a family resource center that supports all families that touch the Bureau of Family Health programs. And through this the bureau also does the Louisiana birth defects monitoring network surveillance. And when we reach out to all families to offer them access to resource and referral services and ensure that children that have been identified with birth defects are linked to the services and supports they need. We also work very closely with our Families Helping Families project. We do right now we're coming into our provider education series. There's one on October 29th addressing the behavioral health needs of children and youth with special healthcare needs. You can find more information about that on the region three website, Families Helping Families. So that's coming up at the end of this month.

We do the early care detection and intervention program which also has a parent support component which is our Hands and Voices. If you know anyone who can utilize the peer support for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing that might be a service that they might want to participate in. And then we administer the state genetic screening program with the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf and (inaudible). A lot of little Snidbits about the different programs that are under the Bureau of Family Health that work to support

children and youth with special healthcare needs.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Ms. Patti. Are there any questions from council members on her report? Tony.

TONY PIONTEK: Yes, who was that that just talked with us?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Dr. Barovechio?

TONY PIONTEK: The one before.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Julie Hagan?

TONY PIONTEK: Yes. She was talking about having self-advocates to help her.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

TONY PIONTEK: I would like to be one of those.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Okay.

TONY PIONTEK: To help her.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Jill.

TONY PIONTEK: The one that just talked. I'm sorry.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Barovechio? Patti?

TONY PIONTEK: Yes, that was her.

CHRISTI GONZALES: What's your question. I'm sorry.

TONY PIONTEK: She mentioned needing advocates to help her.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes, she has it. She has you down Tony.

HANNAH JENKINS: Roslyn has her hand raised.

ROSLYN HYMEL: If you could scroll up where you had it before because it's with the BFH was.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: The family resource center?

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah. That's where my question was because what it was for that question how many families are in that center that you have in that.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: It's a virtual resource center so families call us or we do outreach to families that are identified with a child with a birth defect.

ROSLYN HYMEL: I don't think it was this one. But it you go up a little bit. No, it was with parenthesis around it with BFH was with the parenthesis. You know what I'm talking about?

TONY PIONTEK: The resource center?

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah, that's the one.

TONY PIONTEK: BFH family resource center.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Is that one with the parenthesis

around it?

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yeah, that's the email address. If you need assistance in looking for resources you can email that email address and a resource specialist will contact you.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Oh, okay. Because how many did contact y'all on that one with the families and everything?

PATTI BAROVECHIO: From July to September the total number of families engaged were 316.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah, because I see something with that. I couldn't glance at it because you scrolled it up in that with it.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: The total number of families engaged are 326. And through those encounters there were over 660 needs identified. So meaning that some families had more than one need.

ROSLYN HYMEL: So how many needs are in that count that you have?

PATTI BAROVECHIO: 666 needs were met during the last quarter.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Oh, okay. So what is this one with the 660?

PATTI BAROVECHIO: That's the total resource needs identified and addressed.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Oh, okay. That's what caught my eye in that. That's what made me ask even with the network that the family's needs. Is that what the blind people in it?

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Anyone can contact the family resource center for any need. They can be part of the community that reaches out to the family resource center.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Oh, okay. That was my question where it is.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other questions? Thank you. Any other public comments?

REKEESHA BRANCH: No, ma'am.

JAMES SPRINKLE: I'm James Sprinkle. We have the Families Helping Families in region six. We have the contract with the transportation assistance program and I'm kind of greatly disturbed because over the past two or three years seeing the amount of money that was spent in that third quarter we have like 60,000 that we

never received. And I'm trying to figure out how to publicize it. But the money's there if anybody has any ideas. They do have to qualify.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yeah, meet eligibility.

JAMES SPRINKLE: It will help with food, transportation, hotel rooms. But the money is there.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Just a comment. If it would be helpful for us to get that information and share it say with local governing entities in our support coordination agencies we would be happy to do that.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yeah, there's a flier I believe online I can get over to you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you. Anybody else? All right. Thank you, ma'am. Hearing none. If no other comments the report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is Bureau of Health Services Financing Medicaid. The chair recognizes Brian Bennett for the report.

BRIAN BENNETT: Hey. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm going to be giving Medicaid's update. So if you turn to the second page in the news and update section I'm going to review a few things. So first one of the big things that we're trying to promote with our Medicaid members right now is the open enrollment period. Medicaid's annual open enrollment period began this week on October the 15th and will close December the 2nd. During this period there's an opportunity every year for Medicaid members if they would like to to change their Healthy Louisiana MCO plan or their dental plan. Letters were sent out to members back in August that included information on how to change if they wanted to or how to get, where to locate additional information about plans if they wanted to research that.

If a member is happy with their current plan or plans they don't need to do anything. If they don't do anything they'll just maintain their plans that they have. They only need to take action if they're interested in switching their plans. And if they do make a switch their new plans will go into effect on January the 1st.

The website that's in the report, I think it's at the end of the second paragraph, it's the

myplan.healthy.la.gov site. That's a website to go to, it's a good resource for anybody wanting more information on the various health plans or dental plans. On that site there's a comparison chart which gives information on additional services that each plan offers. So aside from your Medicaid benefits each plan offers a few extra services to members. So people can go and kind of compare those. And then also they can, on that site, search for their provider. So if you're interested or if you're considering switching plans you can search for your doctor or any other provider that you're currently using to make sure they're contracted with that other plan before you switch if that's important to you.

On the next page regarding the website. And I think I might have touched on this in my last update. But the LDH website, including all of the Medicaid content, we are in the process of redesigning that and the new website is scheduled to launch next month in November. I believe it's sometime in the middle of the month. So I just wanted to let everybody know about that. When that launches it will look a little bit different and hopefully the new design will make it easier to find content and easier to navigate. That's the goal of the redesign. Every couple of years we take a look at all of the content and try to clean it up, redesign it and make it more user friendly. So next month when we launch that there will be, the website will just look differently. And it will be more oriented for the public or the visitor on how to find information resources.

And then to wrap up the news and updates I will review two big initiatives that Medicaid has been working on in partnership with other LDH agencies. The first one is the transforming maternal mental health grant. Or you might hear it referred to as the TMMH grant. This is a competitive grant and the Centers for Medicare or Medicaid Services or CMS will award grants to up to 15 states. So the department, LDH, submitted a grant application and if selected this will provide Louisiana with funding over the next ten years to focus on initiatives to improve maternal health outcomes while also addressing physical, mental health and social needs of the mother. And we hope to have a

decision on whether or not we're selected by the end of the calendar year. And at the end of that I included the website so if anybody's interested in getting more information or staying up to date on that program I linked the website at the bottom.

And another big project that we're working on is a demonstration waiver to provide Medicaid coverage to incarcerated individuals up to 90 days prior to their release. And we're calling this our reentry demonstration waiver. And the primary intent of this is to improve the continuity of healthcare and care transitions and for those that are transitioning back into the community to get them established with services before they get out. So Medicaid is working with the Office of Behavioral Health and the Department of Corrections on this program. And we submitted our application for this program to CMS on September the 27th. So this is something we've been working on for the past few months and we are very excited to get this submitted.

There are several other states that have programs similar to this that are already approved and probably another 10 to 15 states that are kind of in the same situation as Louisiana. They submitted applications and they're working with CMS to get those approved. We are currently in the federal comment period right now and that goes into next month into November. So again, if anybody would like more information on this program just like the TMMH grant I included the website you can go to get more information on that program.

So the second half of the report, the program and services section, it contains a brief overview and snapshots of a few of our programs and services. Generally what it includes is the number of individuals served or enrolled for each of these programs and or the number that are participating and receiving services. I won't go through all of these but I'll highlight the Act 421 program or the TEFRA program. That starts on the bottom of page five. So that program launched at the the beginning of 2022 so we've almost had that program in place for three years. Since the launch of that program we've approved and enrolled more than 2600 children and there are currently more than 2100 enrolled as of today or as of

yesterday. I checked yesterday for an updated count. But specific to the Act 421 program one thing that we're doing right now we're working with OCDD and Medicaid eligibility staff to take a look at the application and renewal process for this program. Now that it's been in place for a few years we're really looking at the various steps to see if there are any opportunities for improvements, any systems or process enhancements that we can make that are ultimately aimed at making the application or the renewal process smoother and faster for families. So we're going to be, we're going to continue to work on that over the next few months to see if we can improve that process for TEFRA or Act 421.

I think that concludes my report but I did want to mention I've been looking at this report over the past few quarters and making some tweaks and changes here and there but if there's any particular information that the council would like to see in the report please let me know and I'll check to see if we can get that incorporated into one of our future reports.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Brian. Are there any other questions? Mr. Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: I have a question. Do y'all to talk about a medical plan for you and do y'all have people to call about your medical plan and change it and tweak it and make it (inaudible)?

BRIAN BENNETT: Mr. Erick, are you talking about what I covered at the very beginning about the enrollment period? About if you would like to switch your plan, getting information on that?

ERICK TAYLOR: Yeah, do y'all give the information for somebody just to call and make appointment to come out on your own?

BRIAN BENNETT: I'm not sure if they do home visits, but at the end of that second paragraph there are a few resources. There's a 1-800 number that you can call. That goes to our enrollment broker where they have people that can review the various plans with you and give you information and answer questions if you have any.

ERICK TAYLOR: Thank you for that. But what I have where I can come out at this time and sit down and talk to you about your Medicaid plan and tweak your plan and

all this. And I was wondering do y'all do that because the complaints I'm seeing it's nothing but elderly people and if you have people randomly calling you that's to get people.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yeah, I'll check on that. I'm not aware that they do that, but I could be wrong. So I'll check on that for you and I can follow up with that information on if they do home visits for that.

ERICK TAYLOR: Cause I'm very concerned about that because the complex that I stay in some of these elderly people just be like oh, come in and let me sit down and talk to you. And that's an open door for the information to get out.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yeah. I'll check on that. I'm not aware that they're going and doing home visits. But like I said, I'll follow up and make sure for you Mr. Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: Can you do that and send it back to the board because that's a concern. I need to know so if they rolling around the property doing that that needs to be reported.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes, I will send that back and share it with everybody, share what I find out.

ERICK TAYLOR: Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Lauren.

LAUREN WOMACK: There's a program called SHIP. It's an advocacy service, Senior Health Insurance Information program that's not affiliated with Medicare. But they will go through the plan with you and do all those services and can set up those appointments. I don't know if there is one specifically for Medicaid. That was going to be my question. And if not in the future if y'all could maybe look into having trainings for people with intellectual disabilities or parents that are in open enrollment to where they can compare the plans and things like that. Because our needs or the needs of children or the elderly are different and often conglomerated into one. That might be something in the future. Y'all said you were redoing the website. Do you know if the website is accessible?

BRIAN BENNETT: So it should have all the current functionalities that the LDH website has now. It should be, oh, gosh, is it 508 compliant. So is there



a particular, something that you're wondering about, Lauren, or?

LAUREN WOMACK: No, I just wanted to make sure.

BRIAN BENNETT: It should be. That was definitely something that they worked at when they were building this with the vendor. So it should be but once it launches if there's something that's not available or missing we can definitely look into that so we can get it added.

LAUREN WOMACK: Thank you.

ERICK TAYLOR: My concern is if it's being done it need to be on black and white on paper so we know and can better understand okay, this is what's going on so even if there's no backdoor open. Say okay, this is this and this is what's going on. We need to know this so nobody back door won't be open.

CHRISTI GONZALES: So you want to know if they're going to do home visits so they don't steal information.

ERICK TAYLOR: That's my main concern.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I have a question Brian. In regards to the dental plans we have children that it takes them a long time, especially if they have to be put to sleep, like sometimes a year or more to be seen from dentists. So how do parents, you know, especially for something severe, how do they go about and expedite that process?

BRIAN BENNETT: I'm going to have to check on that. I'll have to check on that. I do know they have, especially in some areas, shortages with dental providers. That's been something that they've struggled with for a while now. But separate and apart from that I will check to see if there's a process for submitting a request to expedite a certain procedure.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions?

SPEAKER: I just wanted to maybe for next time you asked what could be added. So I would like clarification for the criteria for special programs Medicaid for a person who is over 19 which overlaps with neglect and abuse. If it could be clear of who is approved, not approved and does it include behavioral and also their dental care. The payee. So for example the payee (inaudible).

BRIAN BENNETT: So was the question kind of just providing clarification, or the ask, providing clarification for which a child ages out of their children's Medicaid benefits kind of like what are the differences when they go into the adult Medicaid benefit program?

SPEAKER: Correct. Or if it was a special qualification which a family (inaudible) was put onto Medicaid there is not clear criteria and it's very challenging when trying to find providers.

BRIAN BENNETT: Okay.

SPEAKER: So if it could just be really clear who can and cannot be a provider. And that's for everything. Primarily behavioral and dental.

BRIAN BENNETT: So what was the second part related to the providers?

SPEAKER: So I think someone touched on that, a lack of providers for special circumstances. The length of time especially for behavioral. Sometimes if you have a crisis situation and there's over a year waiting for support to begin so by then you have a blazing fire. And the same applies for dental and that overlap with-- so I don't know where the gap would be. (Inaudible) neglect so it involves dental. You have to wait many, many years and what is available is not what the patient needs. I can be really specific in a private email if that helps.

BRIAN BENNETT: If you wouldn't mind. If you want to you can email me and maybe we could set up some time to talk about that just so that I make sure I get everything or address everything that you're looking for.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Public comments?

REKEESHA BRANCH: Kathy Dwyer she had her had raised first.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Kathy.

KATHY DWYER: Thank you. Regarding, I don't know who asked the question about Medicaid, additional time adults with developmental disabilities need at the dentist. I'm the cochair of the Louisiana Dental Task Force for Adults with Developmental Disabilities and along with the task force helped with getting Act 450 passed that provides comprehensive dental care for

adults with developmental disabilities who are waiver recipients there is a code, D9997 that allows dentists to bill for extra time including up to four visits a year. I can email that to anyone that may need it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you.

BRIAN BENNETT: Thank you for that Kathy.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Jill.

JILL HANO: Ms. Kathy, can you email me that because I think I go to the dentist-- well, I don't think, I go to the dentist four times a year but I think, and I'm probably wrong, I think once a year I pay out of pocket.

KATHY DWYER: Is that Jill speaking?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes.

KATHY DWYER: Yeah, Jill, if the dentist feels you need more visits than the two that's what this code would pay for, additional visits. So let's say you need extensive work more than a general checkup and cleaning, you know, and maybe just a filling here and there. It allows for four visits a year as opposed to just one or two.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you.

KATHY DWYER: You're welcome.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other public comments?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes, we have Ms. Mylinda Elliot.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Mylinda.

MYLINDA ELLIOT: Mr. Bennett, you're from Medicaid, right?

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

MYLINDA ELLIOT: So my daughter has a waiver and has Medicaid. I want to share how much of a mess Medicaid is. I have talked to Medicaid on and off since June. I got everything finally seemed to be settled in August because I had to go through some kind of determination twice. Once because of her Medicaid and once because of her SSI or something. And anyway, so August, August 24th talked to people at Medicaid and they tell me everything's fine. It's all hunky-dory. They don't need anything else from me. Apparently there was a letter sent that I didn't get August 28th telling me that they needed more stuff. I didn't find out about it until they emailed somebody, emailed the case manager. It might have been EMCAL Human Services

Authority and told her that I couldn't use anymore waiver hours because my daughter's Medicaid had ended.

So I have worked it out, that's not the problem. The letter that EMCAL got was based on information that everything was going to end November 1st which should have given me till October 31st but they didn't have that letter at the time. Now they have that letter. Now I'm using the hours. I'm busy getting them the paystubs. I sent it last Friday so I'm not positive I'm good but I think I'm good. But again, this is three different times that everything was supposed to be good since over the summer and three different times that I suddenly get a letter from somebody or calls from somebody saying nope, it's not good. You have to contact Medicaid again. And I know what I'm doing. I'm a seasoned advocate. I've been doing this for 30 years I think and this is a mess. And you get to hear about it because you're the person that's here. Thank you.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Brian. Any other questions? Hearing none, the report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is the report of the Department of Education. The chair recognizes Meredith Jordan for her report.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Thank you. So I've heard a theme as we talked today about roadshows and going out into our communities and to our stakeholders and to the people that we provide service for. And so that's certainly also something that many of you know my team is doing right now. I think right now there's no one on my team sitting behind a computer and a desk today. And I think that is so important as we think about purpose and the children that we serve and their families that we serve and something that's super important to me. So that's been really interesting today to hear about all of the agencies and all of us and the work that we are pulling out and the support that we're trying to provide all of our children and our families.

Just to provide you guys really quickly my first update is a SEAP one. Shows you our upcoming dates. We recently met in September. We had a host of topics on our agenda that we worked with SEAP on updating our parent handbook that will roll out in the coming winter

months. We've had a lot of legislative and resulting policy shift that requires us to also update our parent procedures and safeguards manual that it goes out at least annually, during every IEP meeting there are also certain circumstances where you give that out even more often to parents. So you'll see that update come out. And I've taken a lot of the feedback that I hear here from stakeholders and of course from our SEAP in terms of how to make that really parent friendly and to make sure that the resources, supports, contact information for helpful resources are in the forefront of all those documents.

We also released our 2023, 2024 local SEAP report. This year we collected more than we ever have. So you can see that it's posted publicly. We shared it at our last SEAP meeting. We also addressed and they endorsed revisions to Bulletin 1530 regarding alternate assessment participation criteria which will go to BESE in December. And so just a little bit about the work that SEAP has and continues to do. I think we have updated and addressed more policy in the past couple of years that has ever been addressed. And we seem to be moving quickly, which I like because I want things to happen and change quickly for the better for our children and for our families. So I'm really proud of the work that they're doing and the work that they'll continue to do.

So our next meeting is November the 12th. So coming up pretty quickly. Again, I linked for you that annual report in that next section as well. And we've already updated both policy and guidance around the new legislative and now state policy required reporting components within those local SEAP reports. So our LEAs have to add three specific reporting components in there. So they have to report on their IDEA funding and spending in their local agency in the school district. They have to report on any compliance issues that we have issued to that LEA within that report to their local stakeholders. Financial information. I said that, finance. Academic performance. So they have to also report the academic performance. A subgroup for their students with disabilities performing and their LEA. I think I worked with SEAP about a year ago and we created and provide a reporting

template to districts. That is not provided by law but something that we thought would be helpful for LEAs to have something to go from. What would our stakeholders want to see in these reports in terms of what you're doing and what their local special education councils are meeting on. And so we've already updated that template and shared that well in advance this year to special education supervisors so they know about that change and what those additional reporting components are.

This next piece I wanted to share this work is led by our early childhood office. We had a coordinator in that office that my team works very closely with who leads our young children with disabilities work. We secured, that team secured a professional development grant to do some young children with disabilities work around early identification and making sure that across our state we're using the same developmental screener. And our agency is providing a lot of professional development and support around that screener so that we're being consistent and that we are identifying students early and accurately. I say those things together because they're both important. So that we get students those early intervening services as young people so that they can be successful and get those interventions starting at a very young age when we know that they need them. So I wanted to share that work. If you have very specific detailed questions I may have to bring those back to you but wanted to share that work with you because I think it's important.

Our high-cost service initiative is one that we are moving right now. This is of course an annual initiative that we provide funds, additional funds to support our school systems and schools that serve our students with some of the most significant needs. And it funds those real high-cost education services. Interpreters for students who are Deaf, for example. Very expensive medical devices or assistive technologies. Equipment that students may need. One-on-one assistance. It can fund salaries for individualized supports for students. As long as those things are documented within their IEP. And so this is an initiative that we run annually. We have more than half of our LEAs apply for this fund. They have to

submit a lot of documentation to us. We have to do a lot of verifying and looking at IEPs to verify those expenses and those requests for those high-service costs.

There is a portion of this that is also funded through our minimum foundation program. And the idea here is that the LEA is responsible for certain costs, as they should, to support these students. And then the state can then also add some additional funding and support there through this grant award. And we set aside about 4 million-dollars for this because we do know that for some of our students it's much more costly to provide these services and to provide the supports that they need. So this application we run two rounds. The first round opens this month. And of course it's also based on counts and enrollment because the student has the money follows the student. So if by February 1 that student has changed to a different school that money for that service, that piece of equipment, that assistive technology follows that student, right. And so we run an application now to capture any of those students enrolled on October 1st and then we'll run another round on February 1. This also goes the other way. So if I'm in a school system and I received that student and maybe their previous school system didn't apply for some of those funds that second round is to capture any new students that we may have missed or the LEAs may have missed across the state. So it's something that our LEAs really rely on this additional funding from us to help them pay for some of these services.

We work with the Accessible Educational Materials Center. We have two annual fall conferences that they're hosting with us this year. And this is all about providing professional development really anchored in those evidence-based practices, inclusive practices and ensuring that our students who use AAC and communication devices that their educators and the professionals have the capacity and the professional learning to know how to give our students their voice. And so this is something that always fills up. We actually have two. Last year we did one location. This year they're doing two. What we are finding, and I think also the reason that we as a department go on

these regional roadshows, is because we find we have to go to our LEAs. We're just a really, we just cover milage in our state. And so when we host everything in Baton Rouge I always miss people from North Louisiana because it's a five-hour drive for some of them or more. So we're trying to do these regional events where we can increase attendance and get out to folks. And so that's the reason we have two of these this year.

We also just launched our SPED Fellows Academy. This is our fourth cohort. Something that I'm really passionate about. I don't tell people no. We currently have 22 individuals who are in our fourth cohort. This networking and professional learning opportunity is intended to build capacity of our special education directors in our state. We cover law. We cover how to use the data. We collect a lot of data around these students. How do we make the best data informed decisions to provide the best instructional opportunities for our students with disabilities in our schools. They are assigned a mentor. They also have to complete an executive learning project over the year where they are identifying a challenge or a need within their LEA that as the special education leader are expected to make a change on, right. And work with their stakeholders in their communities to address whatever that issue. So they have to pick some sort of challenge, something they want to address, a need within their LEA and pitch that project to a panel of experts from across the state. And so it's a really rigorous yearlong project and we just launched this particular cohort so we're really excited about this.

I know we talked a little bit yesterday and today and throughout our conversations about transition. And I got really excited earlier about some of the work that we were talking about with the youth forum. So I won't talk a whole lot here. I know we talked a lot about transition. But just we are moving forward with our DIF grant with our activities and bringing together-- we've had a couple of meetings, Melissa's been there, with quite a few stakeholders. I'm excited about some of these other opportunities and how we can really pull all of this together and make sure we have



a successful framework in our state for supporting transition. Supporting some of that next day after school for our kids with disabilities. What do you need to be successful. What is the plan there. And so we're working with community independent living centers. I don't think that was something we talked about earlier. But how do we support independence for our students once they leave, enter the workforce or whether they're going to college. This is a body of work that our team is really excited about.

And last but not least, I gave you guys two additional supports that's happening for students right now and is also available for our students with disabilities. We have our Steve Carter Tutoring program which the legislature expanded. It initially started as a literacy tutor voucher program for parents. That has been expanded to also address numeracy. So it can support tutoring for literacy and numeracy. I put the website there to learn more about that. We also just began, and this is a result of Act 771 from the last legislative session, year two of Steve Carter Tutoring. But last year, Act 771 now requires what we call high-dose tutoring for eligible students in grades K through five. So parents should be seeing-- this is brand new. Our school systems had to submit an extensive plan to receive the additional funding to support this. I know this is happening. I've got the (inaudible) for my own children who can benefit from this tutoring. And so school systems will choose from approved providers. It could be teachers within their school system. It could be retired teachers that they're using to provide this tutoring. And some of that is laid out within the legislation. It is to be school-day embedded. It is, should be, some of our students with disabilities are the ones who need this additional support the most. We have gotten that question and are fielding questions about students with disabilities in high-dose tutoring and can I use certain minutes that are built into my IEP. This is in addition to that, right. Extra support for students means just that, extra support.

And so again, K through five low performing students. They have to score below mastery on LEAP in either reading and math. They also if they scored

below level on their literacy screener or numeracy screener to start the year all of those students are eligible for this high-dose tutoring. It has been a heavy lift for our school systems but if you look at some of the data, just two snapshots that I showed you, this is not all the data that we collect on our kids. We collect a lot. But I believe that some of these additional supports that our legislature has worked on and that we are implementing are the reasons that we are seeing growth for our kids with disabilities.

So I'm going to end by saying this. If you look at this data I show the first one is our LEAP mastery in grades three through eight. And you'll see I have total population, and this is over several years, right. Total population, our regular ed population and our students with disabilities. For the first time ever, and I shared this with SEAP and I think that we shared a press release about this, because this isn't happening across the country, for the first time ever in a year where all students maintained their level of proficiency. We knew it was going to get harder, right. We've been recovering learning loss from pandemic impacts. Last year for all students that level of mastery we got to a maintenance level. They stayed the same, right. Thirty-seven percent. And the first year ever our students with disabilities continued to grow in mastery in a year where all students maintained their learning. That is huge. We should be proud of the work that we're doing in our state. And I'm saying all of us. All of this work. The work on inclusion and inclusive practices that we've done. Am I satisfied at 13 percent, absolutely not. I believe more of our kids can score mastery. And I know that's the highest level because I have really high expectations, right.

When you look at our students with disabilities who are scoring even at a basic, which is great for some of them, we see this same sort of incremental sort of growth. And again, I think that is grounds for celebration and I think it is also a call to action for us, right. And we're not going to stop here. So I just wanted to share that. And then you see the three through eight and the high school also. And I put a little caveat here. We didn't have a social studies

assessment. I took the social studies out so we're capturing apples to apples for all of those years. But when we add social studies back in since 2021 it was 9 percent, 10 percent, 11 and then 12. So even for three through eight and high school we're seeing growth for our kids. And I think it's a lot of these additional opportunities, a focus on literacy, our inclusive practices focus as well. And again, we have a lot more to go. We have a lot more work to do. And I just wanted to share this here because I think that there's a collective responsibility as well. There's a lot of work happening in our communities that help. So I'll stop there. We have national training on child passenger safety on the school bus. That's really important for us. We don't talk about that enough. That's coming up as well. I'll take any questions.

VIVIENNE WEBB: First, mastery is not the highest you can score. Advanced is.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Right.

VIVIENNE WEBB: And second, if you truly want to help identify and accommodate students in schools you should help me amend Bulletin 1508 to where schools have to accept a doctor's diagnosis as true so students can be identified and accommodated. Because schools will reject a doctor's diagnosis or plain out ignore it and then the student won't get accommodated and it's not good.

MEREDITH JORDAN: We're working on 150 right now. That's next on our policy to update. We've been working on it for a couple of months. I appreciate that.

CHRISTI GONZALES: And just to let you know my son was one of them who always scored-- he's on the potential failure list every year because he has issues with writing and processing. But come LEAP time he scores mastery. So I don't know care (inaudible). As a teacher it kills me to say that but I know it's because he has trouble processing. He has trouble getting it out, you know, that kind of stuff. But thankfully his teachers work with him and give him extra time and he's able to make mastery and show that--he's in honors class and he's in ninth grade. He is progressing more and more even though his grades don't actually show what he can provide his teachers.

LAUREN WOMACK: Is he able to participate Christi (inaudible)?

CHRISTI GONZALES: At the end of the day he's so tired. It takes all he has. He's ADHD and sensory and it's just too much. I learned when he was little he can't focus anymore. He gets done when he gets done at school. And as a teacher I know I should, but it's a fighting process. If I can get him to do his work at school I'll take that in a heartbeat. Any other questions? Jill.

JILL HANO: This came out a few months ago but why do people with disabilities tear each other down so much? Like why do people do that? I didn't think me having a high school diploma was a question. Like so why do people assume that everyone with a disability has a certificate of achievement?

MEREDITH JORDAN: Oh, I'm going to get on my soapbox. We should not be giving certificates of achievement anymore. We have too many opportunities. And I think what you just voiced, Jill, is like my mission because they can. I believe that.

JILL HANO: Because people just assume people have certificates of achievement and not high school diplomas from where was that, the (inaudible) high school. It's a picture of the school.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Angela.

ANGELA HARMON: Question. Is the Steve Carter Tutoring program, how do you receive a voucher or apply?

MEREDITH JORDAN: You go on that portal that I have linked and it will give you all the information that you need. And you'll have to get with the school to get the literacy screener score or your LEAP score. And so the school should help with the parent getting the information they need to apply for that tutoring voucher. There's a couple other states that attempted to do this and couldn't get it to parents and we've had an overwhelming response from parents who say yes, you pay for free tutoring, please. So it's been awesome.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Has the increase, since the first year it's rolled out, I know we questioned it, but has it increased dramatically since the first roll out? And then it was so much funds that were, the amount of funds available were just not being used.

MEREDITH JORDAN: Yes. So if you get our press releases we actually just released a press release that we now have to put parents on a waiting list. Which is like a double-edge sword. You don't want a waiting list either but we have a lot of folks who are taking advantage and using the funds. I can get any specifics that you might want to see.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I know we had a lot of money just sitting there. Any other questions?

SPEAKER: I have a few questions. (Inaudible) I don't know, but clarification on the criteria for behavioral or developmental IEP. And does it fall on an IEP or does it fall under Department of Health when there's a social worker assigned (inaudible) for children with developmental disabilities or special circumstances. Just as supports require a certified person to be an interpreter for a person that is Deaf, Hard of Hearing in the courts and something be created that's equivalent (inaudible) for a process because often time parents are the most educated on their child's disability. So a neutral or mediation type of service or (inaudible) to support in determining what is and isn't correct information. And there's custody hearings and they're nasty and that doesn't fall right back into the education department. It's a domino. Start at the top. I was saying that publicly to see. (Inaudible).

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other comments? Hearing none, the report requires no action and will be placed on file. If there is no objection the meeting will recess for ten minutes.

JILL HANO: I object.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Do y'all want to keep going?

VIVIENNE WEBB: Yeah.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay. We were objected and now we're going to keep going. We will now have public comments. The public comments can be on any area of concern or question. Each person will be recognized by the chair and will have three minutes to speak. Any comments?

JILL HANO: I do have a question. This is maybe for Ebony, maybe for Nicole. Like I don't know. So there was a member that an interview didn't get conducted until the literal last minute. I wouldn't

have objected but I thought that you had to make a decision, like I thought the chair of that committee had to like either allow or not allow it. I didn't understand what was going on. And I thought like decisions like that were kind of run by the chair or like final say was run by the chair. And I didn't even know what was going on.

EBONY HAVEN: I'm sorry you didn't know Jill. I thought after we left executive session on Friday I thought Lauren came back and took into the full committee and she said she had spoken to Christi and he was mistakenly not interviewed. So she said it in front of the committee. I didn't know that you didn't know. So I thought the committee agreed as a whole that it wasn't his fault and he had emailed--

JILL HANO: I'm sorry.

EBONY HAVEN: Do you remember?

JILL HANO: Yes.

LAUREN WOMACK: And it might not have been on camera. I apologize.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other comments?

LAUREN WOMACK: I have one.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Lauren.

LAUREN WOMACK: I'm not sure if we'll get feedback but what is the name of the agency, is it Public Health Standards. I would like to maybe ask staff to reach out to Public Health Standards. It seems like we have a lot of questions regarding (inaudible) if maybe not till next meeting or to have them come and just on issues like enforcement of different abuse and things like that. If they can explain to us or provide more clarity. And to have that for how they work with the agencies and what agencies have the power to enforce things and which ones don't.

EBONY HAVEN: So there is an initiative in y'all's FY25 action plan where we are collaborating with OCDD on that abuse and neglect initiative that you guys added to your plan. So we have 50,000-dollars. We were still trying to collaborate with OCDD on how we can spend that funding. That's something that we can maybe look into. We can definitely invite them to our meetings but also they can maybe get involved in that collaboration with OCDD. And we could maybe come up with a training. Because that's what we really wanted

but we're still trying to work, like work out the details and everything.

LAUREN WOMACK: Right. Because I don't even know anyone to ask but (inaudible) to know what they enforce, how they enforce it and where an agency stops and they pick up the complaints.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Any other questions? Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah, this is what I want to know for the next meetings. Is it going to be like for next year in that or how is that going to work again?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, Roslyn. They're going to be next year. Our next meeting is January. You guys just voted. It's the last Wednesday, the 29th and 30th.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Because I lost track how we used to do it and that so is it like every third Tuesday and Wednesday?

EBONY HAVEN: No, it's going to be now the last Wednesday and the following Thursday.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Okay. I'm off track so I need y'all's help to get me back on track again.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. I sure will. We'll make sure we send out the announcements to you, Roslyn, so you'll have the dates.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Thanks. I would appreciate that so much.

EBONY HAVEN: You're welcome.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Kathy.

KATHY DWYER: Thank you. I have two questions. Well, a statement and then a question. Just to distinguish where Health Standards differs from OCDD. Health Standards is responsible for receiving all the reports on abuse and neglect. OCDD does not. So they have no purview over handling any reports on abuse and neglect. They'll work with Health Standards. Like if a client needs to be relocated or something to get the client the services they need or the resident, for that matter, if it's like a residential facility that Health Standards handles all the complaints.

Brian, regarding you made a note of the shortage of physicians, particularly dentists. I was wondering does Medicaid do anything to reach out to dentists and other providers to join Medicaid? But dentists in particular to join the program. Do y'all do any kind

of outreach?

BRIAN BENNETT: I can double check on that for you, Kathy. But I think both of the plans they do extensive outreach to dental providers, especially in the areas where they have shortages, and they really try to get contracts with dentists. But I can get more information on like specifically what they do.

KATHY DWYER: And I'm really interested in knowing whether or not they do a lot of outreach particularly for the adult waiver dental program. And making sure dentists understand, because this is one provision we made sure we had put in place when the dental task force was working on the laws and what rules and so forth needed to be changed or updated. A lot of dentists expressed concern of having to serve the entire Medicaid population as opposed to just those with intellectual, developmental disabilities. So those that enroll in the adult waiver dental program will only have to serve adults with intellectual, developmental disabilities. They don't have to open up their practice to the entire Medicaid population. And I think that might help if they could mention that to providers that might be interested in serving the developmental disability community that they have that option. I believe from what DentaQuest and MCA Dental told us, because they were on our task force too, representatives from both those providers. That yes, they have somewhere on their form that dentists can note that. That they just want to work with adults with developmental disabilities.

BRIAN BENNETT: So Kathy, just making, with that outreach, just making sure that the providers are aware of that they can..

KATHY DWYER: They can select just to be a provider of the adult dental waiver program, not the whole Medicaid state plan.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes, okay.

KATHY DWYER: Right. And we still need-- this probably is way beyond what you're responsible for but--

CHRISTI GONZALES: Ms. Kathy?

KATHY DWYER: Yeah.

CHRISTI GONZALES: I'm sorry. Your time's up. Is there any way you can email Brian to finish speaking



with him? Anyone else? Tony.

TONY PIONTEK: I'm trying to recall who was helping out. Can't think now. I know I was helping one of the representatives or somebody in that.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Tony, are you talking about the self-advocate group?

TONY PIONTEK: Yes, I believe so. Yes. Something of that nature.

CHRISTI GONZALES: To be added to that group? Is that what you're asking?

TONY PIONTEK: Well, I can't recall right now.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Okay.

TONY PIONTEK: But I know I was going to help somebody out. Can't think who it is now.

CHRISTI GONZALES: All right.

TONY PIONTEK: Jog my memory.

CHRISTI GONZALES: That's okay. Anybody else? Kelly.

KELLY MONROE: I think he was talking about when, Tony, are you talking about when Julie was giving a report and you said you would like to help?

TONY PIONTEK: Yes, that's who it was.

KELLY MONROE: I think he's talking about when Julie was talking about a committee or a workgroup.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes, she has you down Tony.

TONY PIONTEK: Okay.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Anybody else?

REKEESHA BRANCH: That's it.

CHRISTI GONZALES: That's it. All right. Thank you for your comments, questions and concerns. Also, I want to remind you that everyone has a meeting evaluation in their packet. If you can please fill that out and at this time we will have announcements. Ms. Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. We just found out the dates for the next meeting, January 29th and 30th. But just keep in mind that the council staff will be working to get your council retreat for the day before, the Tuesday the 28th. So I'll send more information out about that once we have that planned. But the actual quarterly meeting dates are the 29th and 30th. And please don't forget if you're a part, and you should be, of either one of our standing committees, self-determination community inclusion or education and

employment, we really need you all to please think about concepts for our five-year plan. And you have to think about activities for our FY26 action plan. So just keep it in mind. We're going to be looking for those concepts and those ideas for the action plan at the next meeting. And that's all I have.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Thank you, Ebony. Is there any further business? We already talked about the next meeting and everything. Hearing none we will adjourn the meeting. Hearing no objection this meeting is now adjourned. Thank you, everyone, for participating. Y'all have a great day.