



Education and Employment (E/E) Committee Summary

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

The Bluebonnet Library, Rm #2

9200 Bluebonnet Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA.

4:15 PM – 6:00 PM

Virtual via Zoom ([Register](#)) / [Virtual Meeting Protocols](#)

Streaming Live on [YouTube](#)

View meeting transcript [here](#).

Members Present: Melissa Bayham, Meredith Jordan, Lamartine Meda, Tony Piontek, Erick Taylor, Vivienne Webb (Chair)

Members Absent: Christi Gonzales, Jamar Ennis, Renoda Washington, Phil Wilson

Staff: Brenton Andrus, Rekeesha Branch, Lauren Brown, Stephanie Carmona, Ebony Haven, Hannah Jenkins, Bridgette Talley

Others Present: Constance Alphonse, Ayden Blunski, Jude Boynton, Alaina Chachere, Kristie Curtis, Brenda Cossé, Mylinda Elliott, Nicole Flores, April Hampton, Jill Hano, Lynsey Hebert (transcriptionist), Kelly Monroe, Pasqueal Nguyen, Susan Riehn, Robby Smith, Mimi Webb, and Karen Xu

Call to Order & Quorum

Vivienne Webb called the meeting to order at 4:24 PM. A quorum was established, meaning enough members were present to make decisions.

Meeting Summary Approval

Erick Taylor motioned to approve the [January 2025 meeting summary](#). Tony Piontek seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: 5 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions. The summary was approved.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) Update

Melissa Bayham gave updates on pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), which help students with disabilities prepare for jobs:

- LRS is working with some school districts through special contracts to provide Pre-ETS.
- LRS also works with fee-for-service vendors. Vendors had to apply again this year. So far:
 - 27 were approved
 - 2 are still waiting
 - 5 chose not to reapply
- Vendors must use a program curriculum approved by LRS to make sure students get similar lessons.
- LRS is still waiting on its state budget to know how much money will be available.
- They are currently spending more than 15% of their federal funds on Pre-ETS, which may lead to offering fewer services next year.

Melissa also explained that federal changes may move LRS from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor. No final decisions have been made yet.

Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) Update

Meredith Jordan gave updates about LDOE:

- The Teacher Leader Summit will happen in June. It will have many sessions about teaching and supporting students with disabilities.
- LDOE is still waiting to hear how much IDEA funding (federal special education money) it will get, but they do not expect any major changes this year.

Meredith also shared important policy changes:

Bulletin 1530 (IEP Handbook)

- Changes were made to who can take the LEAP Connect alternate assessment.
- Louisiana has been above the 1% federal limit, so the rules are changing.
- Starting in 2025–2026, only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will qualify.
- Students already on this path in high school can still graduate using it.
- Others may be able to graduate using the April Dunn Act.

Bulletin 1508 (Pupil Appraisal Handbook)

- Updates were made to improve how schools find and evaluate students who may need special education.
- Response to Intervention (RTI) was clearly defined, and schools cannot delay evaluations just because they are trying interventions.
- Two new pupil appraisal team roles were added:
 - Licensed psychologists (with school specialties)
 - Speech-language pathologist assistants
- Autism evaluation rules now follow the most up-to-date practices.
- Schools now must accept medical records from any state, not just Louisiana.

Legislative Update – House Bill 237

Ebony Haven shared updates on House Bill 237, which addresses restraint and seclusion in schools. This bill was created after a state audit found serious problems.

If passed, this bill would:

- Ban seclusion (locking students in rooms alone).
- Clearly define what physical restraint is and how it can be used.
- Require that:
 - Students be watched and checked by a nurse after being restrained.
 - Parents get an incident report within 24 hours.
 - Any video footage be reviewed to check if rules were followed.
- Lower the number of incidents needed for a behavior plan review from 5 to 3 per year
- Require schools to post their restraint policies online.
- Require LDOE to review policies and post data quarterly.
- Require cameras in all self-contained special education classrooms (no parent request

needed).

This bill is still being discussed, and changes (called amendments) may be made. Some groups want seclusion added back in, but the Council and partners are working to keep it out.

Other Legislative Updates – House Bill 589

Meredith also talked about House Bill 589. This bill would make the legislature decide every two years if they still want certain education reports. But even if lawmakers say no, LDOE will still collect and share the data. This includes things like seclusion/restraint and dyslexia reports.

E/E Contractual Updates

Stephanie Carmona gave a short update about [Activity 3.1.5](#) on the Council's 5-Year Plan. The Council is partnering with Team Dynamics to give trainings across the state for people with developmental disabilities.

Topics include:

- Health and wellbeing
- Money skills
- Job preparation
- Civic engagement
- Navigating waivers

Meeting Adjourned

There were no public comments. The meeting ended at 5:49 PM.