

Education and Employment Committee

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

YouTube [Broadcast](#)**Summary**

Members Present: Melissa Bayham, Hyacinth McKee, Bambi Polotzola, Kristi-Jo Preston, Chris Rodriguez, Temisha Sonnier, Mary Tarver (Chair), and Phil Wilson

Members Absent: Brenda Cosse' and Robert Paddy

Attendees: Jeff Arseneaux, Karen Artus, Mike Billings, Jennifer Borne, Kathleen Cannino, Corhonda Corley, Annie Cummer, Mylinda Elliott, Halena Jones, Ashley McReynolds, Kelly Monroe, Rosemary Morales, Joann Powell, Susan Riehn, Tory Rocca

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 am.

Brenda Cosse' and Kristi-Jo Preston were announced as newly appointed members to the Education and Employment Committee.

Kristi-Jo Preston (La Department of Education/LDOE representative) provided information on BESE policy that was passed on Tuesday, July 14th regarding safety standards for reopening schools; providing flexibility to students in static groups to ensure service providers would have access to them in the classroom or that students with disabilities would have access to services through other methods; exemptions for essential workers/providers to enter schools and daycares to provide services; and exceptions for mask requirements which includes students with disabilities and those who may have medical exemptions. Ms. Preston also shared multiple working documents/resources found on the [Louisiana Believes](#) website and requested public feedback for guidance on addressing emerging needs though emailing specialeducation@la.gov and COVID19@la.gov. Ms. Preston also requested the DD Council to collaborate with LDOE on a Joint Press Release announcing these resources.

Rosemary Morales (Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities/OCDD) shared the final results of the El Sevier on-line training for supported employment providers funded by the DD Council which ended December 2019. There were 460 participants who completed these trainings consisting of employees with LGE's, Support Coordination, and provider agencies statewide. Ms. Morales also shared that OCDD is still working on the implementation of the Home and Community Based Services settings rule, and redesign of vocational or day habilitation employment service definitions, but there have been delays due to COVID-19.

Melissa Bayham (La Rehabilitation Services/LRS Director) shared information regarding the status of services implemented during the current pandemic.

- Staff is working virtually and are now allowed to utilize electronic signatures.
- At the height of COVID, participation in services drastically decreased, but has started to improve.

- The provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services will be affected if providers are not allowed to enter the schools and provide those services to students unless the providers develop the means to offer their services virtually.
- 14 Community Rehabilitation Providers reported layoffs and one provider agency had to permanently close due to COVID-19.
- Adopted an emergency rule that expanded the financial need criteria for certain services.
- On-the-job training reimbursement rates have been increased.

Committee members also received updates on Post-secondary Inclusive Education Alliance, Inclusive Child Care, and Customized Employment activities (which can be found on the Council's 3rd Quarter [Status of Planned Activities](#)).

MOTION PASSED. A motion to approve the [January 2020 EE Committee Summary](#) made by Bambi Polotzola, seconded by Temisha Sonnier, passed without objection, no abstentions.

MOTION PASSED. A motion to adjourn the Education and Employment Committee meeting made by Kristi-Jo Preston, seconded by Melissa Bayham, passed without objection, no abstentions.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.