

Education and Employment

October 21, 2020

MARILEE ANDREWS: Mary? You have four committee members, so technically you have a quorum. But we can wait a few more minutes.

MARY TARVER: Yeah, let's wait a few more minutes. I am going to run get something off the printer.

Okay, Marilee. How are we?

MARILEE ANDREWS: We are good. If you want to call the meeting to order and take roll for the record.

MARY TARVER: I am ready. We will call the meeting to order. Welcome everybody. We will let Marilee help us out by calling the roll for our committee members and then see who else is on the call.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So please turn on your cameras and I will take roll. Mary Tarver.

MARY TARVER: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Melissa Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Chris Rodriquez. Temisha Sonnier

TEMISHA SONNIER: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Brenda Cosse. Phil Wilson.

PHIL WILSON: Hello.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Bambi Polotzola

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Here.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So you have a quorum. I will give it to you.

MARY TARVER: We have at least one new member that is pending. I don't know how that works. Dr. Kelli Peterson is here from the Louisiana Department of Education.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. I don't believe she has been officially appointed by the governor. She is here and she is on the agenda. But she won't be able to vote or anything.

MARY TARVER: Welcome Dr. Peterson. I would like to welcome you to our education employment committee for the DD Council. And give you a minute just to introduce yourself if that's okay.

KELLI PETERSON: Sure. Good morning everyone. Thank

you for having me. Currently serve in the role of assistant superintendent for the department of equity, inclusion and opportunity and specifically division of diverse learners within our office. Some transition for the person who used to sit on the council with you all. I am stepping in right now. Able to be here to share updates and information. Hopefully have someone in the seat for you all for consistency purposes soon. Very nice to meet you and look forward to speaking with you all later.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Welcome. I wanted to go over our meeting protocols. Our council meeting is going to be accessible through zoom and live streamed on YouTube. We ask everybody on our committee and our council members to be considerate when they are presenting. You need to have your video on. Microphones need to be muted unless called upon by the chairperson. Electronically raise your hand or I like the little wave. If I see you waving that works too. Once recognized by the chair we will ask you to speak or if you have a comment, I know that people have been putting questions in the chat. Our guests may participate via the zoom and YouTube. The meetings are recorded, and they will be made available on the council YouTube as determined appropriate by the chairperson. Public comments submitted during the meeting shall be, we ask you to electronically raise your hand, be recognized before speaking, make sure your mike is on. Post comments in the chat box as relevant to the item under consideration. Post comments during the live stream of the meeting on the council's YouTube council. Public comments on a person's character will not be heard. If the comments continue after being asked to stop by the chairperson, the council staff may be instructed to end the meeting. The chairperson will notify the executive committee of the occurrence. The council chair will seek guidance to determine if any if it's legally appropriate to redact or share the video on the council's social media. I just wanted to share that as we are in our new age of everything being on social media and being zoom and YouTube. With that I will start with the agenda. Mr. Phil.

PHIL WILSON: It looks like we have quite a few guests. It would be nice if we can introduce them. Something.

MARY TARVER: Sure. Thank you. Marilee, can you see who the guests are.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Sure. We have Charlie Michel.

CHARLIE MICHEL: Good morning. I am the executive director of Bayou Land Families Helping Families.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Kathleen Cannino, Kelly Monroe, Jill Egle, Roslyn Hymel, Tamera Crane

TAMERA CRANE: It's Tamera Crane. Executive director with the council on aging and a parent of a son with a disability trying to get to employment.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Julie Folse. Melinda Elliot and Kelly Monroe. I think I should have gotten everybody.

KELLY MONROE: I am sorry. Was someone calling my name?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hey Christy. We were just, at the request of Dr. Wilson, calling out the names of the guests.

KELLY MONROE: No, this is Kelly. I am sorry.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I see the name switch. I was just calling out the name of guests that were at this meeting.

KELLY MONROE: Sorry, I was in another room and I heard my name. Kelly Monroe with Arc of Louisiana.

MARY TARVER: Welcome everybody. We are going to move on with the agenda. On the July 20th education and employment committee summary we need a recommendation to approve or to make changes. You have to unmute. Does anybody want to make a motion to approve the minutes of meeting summary from July 2020?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I make a motion.

MARY TARVER: Thank you Bambi. I need a second.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I will second.

MARY TARVER: Thank you Melissa. Is there any discussion or public comment? Any objections? Any abstentions? Our motion to approve the minutes has passed. Thank y'all. Next on our agenda is the education update from Louisiana Department of Education.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I am sorry I have to leave in like ten minutes.

MARY TARVER: Sorry. I was thinking that whenever I said that, but my brain is not always thinking. Melissa will go first, if y'all allow that. Thank you, Melissa.

MELISSA BAYHAM: No problem. Thank you for changing the agenda. I have to leave in about ten minutes. But Angela Montgomery will be joining y'all after that. But I just wanted to give two quick updates. I was asked to give a covid 19 update. The only really update I have on that is our offices are now open to the public. Some are open by appointment only to make sure we keep the safety

protocols and things in place. But if a consumer does need to meet with their counselor, they are able to do so. Many people are still electing to do virtual appointments and so we are definitely allowing that for individuals who don't want to come physically into the office. But we have transitioned to seeing people in the office. We are starting to also see applications increase. Definitely seeing things move in a positive direction. Cause obviously in March and April our applications completely tanked because individuals, obviously, were staying home and were fearful. But we are starting to see that increase. And the other update was on customized employment. I think the most important thing to this committee. I think, as you all may recall, we were using LSU HDC is being trained by University of South Florida to provide our customized employment training for our LRS vendors for that particular service. And at this point the LSU HDC staff has completed all the online training modules. And the next final piece the staff training of a select group of PRP staff mentoring and technical assistance from University of South Florida staff. Definitely progressing with customized employment. Exciting about that. Those are the two prepared updates that I have. But please feel free to ask any questions you have about LRS at this time.

MARY TARVER: What about how things are going, are y'all able to get do anything with the schools for the preemployment?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes. It varies school by school. Obviously because different schools are at different protocols. But we are definitely collaborating with the school districts to provide preemployment transition services.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Does anybody have any questions for Melissa or anything that we need to look at going forward for our next meeting? Anything we need to put on the agenda for Louisiana Rehab Services?

HANNAH JENKINS: You have four hands raised and a public comment.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Hannah if you see the hands raised would you mind calling them.

HANNAH JENKINS: Kelly Monroe.

KELLY MONROE: I have a quick question. So will people still be able to receive training through MGNA or you guys

are only interested in people receiving the certification through HDC?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I am going to let Angela correct me if I am wrong, but we are still allowing the MCNA training. As long as that level of certification we are going to allow it. Any other training we would have to look at on a case by case basis.

KELLY MONROE: When you say that level of training, are you meaning like competency based?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Correct. And a certification.

KELLY MONROE: Okay. Cause the council has another contract this coming year with them. And so we wouldn't want to continue with that contract, of course, if it was not going to be acceptable.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I would have to get an update. I wasn't aware. Unless Angela, are you familiar with this? Is this for the last cohort to finish?

KELLY MONROE: To start a new group too.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I was not aware of that.

ANGELA MONTGOMMERY: It wouldn't be starting with discovery though, right?

KELLY MONROE: Yes.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I was not aware of that.

ANGELA MONTGOMMERY: I thought this was going to be the job placement.

KELLY MONROE: We have the job development going through, but we also are looking to send people to Mississippi to do the MGNA training in November for both discovery and job development. It would be important for us to know whether or not this is going to be accepted.

ANGELA MONTGOMMERY: If they are going towards the certification it would be accepted.

KELLY MONROE: Okay.

MARY TARVER: Is that something we need to put on our radar for our committee or?

KELLY MONROE: The reason why I asked I'm managing the contract, so I want to make sure it's a very lengthy process. And it's like a six-month process for each one. And I don't want people to go through this big process if it's not going count. And so that is why I asked.

MARY TARVER: I agree. Didn't know if you needed anything from the DD Council or from our staff to make sure. Do we need to communicate that to somebody or need to make sure?

KELLY MONROE: I will talk to Courtney. She is the one who has that contract. I will talk to her if she is not online right now. I will talk to her and kind of let her know about the conversation. And then maybe we can meet with Angela or something and we can work things out.

ANGELA MONTGOMMERY: Kelly, we can talk about it later. As I said, it would be accepted. But I am sure you would want to make sure the vendor plans to follow through before you make the investment. You know what I am saying.

KELLY MONROE: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

ANGELA MONTGOMMERY: We can talk about it later.

MARY TARVER: Good. Thank you for your question Kelly.

HANNAH JENKINS: Tamera Crane.

TAMERA CRANE: My question was to LRS. How can we actually get LRS to the table? I am in the Bossier Parish area for my son's IEP. LRS has been invited for two years from the school, but they keep telling us we will step in and come the last year of school. I know with covid a lot of the job stuff has gone away. But just trying to figure out the best way to truly get LRS to come and get involved.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I noted that. Sorry you have experienced that, and I will find out what the issue is.

MARY TARVER: Will you be able to get in touch with Ms. Crane.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Is she a council, do I have her contact information?

MARY TARVER: She is a guest. Provide the information so y'all can follow up.

TAMERA CRANE: Melissa if you say Tamera Crane from Bossier Council on Aging, they know. I actually am an LRS partner. We actually have a working relationship with LRS on a personal level.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I will find out for you.

MARY TARVER: Thank you.

HANNAH JENKINS: Two more. Charlie Michel

CHARLIE MICHEL: Ask a follow up question with Dr. Peterson when she does her report. But are you noticing a lot of employers are starting to let people back in for training and things like that? Because I know for the school system there is community-based trainings, y'all have y'all own program. Is that opening up a little more?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I am not sure. There is no trainings that I know of recently to base that on. I am really not sure about that right now. I would have to find out for

you.

CHARLIE MICHEL: That is fine. Just trying to get a frame of reference when I ask Dr. Peterson the same question. Thank you. That's good.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I am going to have to go right now. Now Angela did not know she had to attend this meeting until ten minutes ago. She will take your questions. Sorry about this, I have to go to a management meeting. She will definitely take back anything she can't answer for me and I will answer that for you.

MARY TARVER: Thank you Melissa. Do we have another question or hand raised?

HANNAH JENKINS: Hands are all put down. So you are good.

MARY TARVER: Thank y'all. Next on our agenda is Louisiana Department of Education. Dr. Peterson.

KELLI PETERSON: Good morning again everyone. Wanted to provide updates for things that are also overlaying related to covid 19. Couple of things, we have put out several different components of guidance over the summer months as well as continuation of updates. One is special education guidance and reopening guidance for special education leaders. Builds up our school reopening guidance and resources to help educators prepare for successful reopening. And this one had documents included guiding principles and consideration for supporting students with disabilities related to facility reopening plan, staffing plan, and academic plans, and delivery of direct services across the virtual, traditional and hybrid scenario. We also had released guidance for direct service providers as well. This specifically offered information for and consideration for planning and implementation of direct services. Again, thinking across virtual, traditional and hybrid scenarios. As well as incorporating the technology and remote learning strategies alongside in person services. We also released a family toolbox related to supporting students for students with disabilities. And making sure that we had a guide for families to one know their rights in the IDEA, promote health and safety, and collaborate with the IEP team. Prepare students for the academic year. Create a supportive home-based environment as well as accommodation accessibility and the instruction direct service component. Additionally also guidance put out for English

language learners. Providing making sure educators are providing the students with language support services across the learning scenarios. Including preparation, delivery of supportive instruction and accommodation as well as frequently asked questions. Many other things going on in the division right now. High cost services grant to support school system and schools that serve students with the most challenging needs. This grant provides additional funding for high cost special education students with disabilities and funded through state IDEA allocation and minimum foundation MFP formula. Those are happening now for school systems. And lastly alternate assessment participation. Each year school systems that exceed 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment must take action. Those are outlined in the review incorporate requirements and the every student succeeds act. All students school systems must review participating data. And any school that exceeds that 1 percent participation must also participate in student level review conducted by the department. Complete alternate assessment review request document. Describe how the system will address disproportionately. Provides evidence of the IEP team follow the state guidelines for participation and providing assurance IEP teams receive the training on participation guidelines. And under the requirements we must submit the number of students who are assessed. Statewide alternate assessments to the one percent of total number of students required to participate in statewide assessment. We intend to seek a waiver extension for the 2020-21 school year of the federal requirement that would limit the number of the students in that state to participate in alternate assessment. We had a notice of intent to submit a waiver available for public comment until October 24th found on the website. Submitted via email to the [specialeducation@la.gov](mailto:specialeducation@la.gov) Include full names and organization contact information. And that concludes the updates at this time.

MARY TARVER: I did look at the alternate assessment request. And I wondered, I know this information showed the 18-19 school year and then of course the 19-20, I guess the tests weren't given at all. So I wondered even before, is this related to the covid and we needed this? Or this was something that was already happening with the higher



percent of the 1.0 percent of the eligible students that were taking the assessment?

KELLI PETERSON: Good question. So this was something that was even prior to the covid 19 impact on assessment. I believe at that time we were around 1.6 percent. We saw go down to 1.5. We have to get to that 1 percent. There was no covid 19 per say like reasoning for this waiver specifically. Just still higher than we need to be as a state.

MARY TARVER: So then have the school systems that were at that level, did y'all already go through these processes with them on the things they needed to be doing as part of the alternate assessment?

KELLI PETERSON: Yeah. So I guess giving context, I have been in this seat for two months now. One of the things we wanted to make sure we did was if we consistently see this percentage not be at the 1 percent, we have to ask a couple questions. What is the reason. And so the previous approach here was basically for compliance component. Noncompliance if they were exceeding that level. The approach we are taking now and also building capacity and skill behind that. Also asking a question, did we make sure, did we provide the guidance, have we had the discussion and training to make sure they are readily prepared to be able to decrease that number. And so this year what we are doing is creating regional office hours for each of those schools. I believe the review is 30 more to do. But from that the school superintendent and special education leader will receive results. And also providing regional office hour date to be able to go over that information with them. School specific information and strategize on how and building skills in terms of making sure they have not only the guidance of the technical support to decrease that number.

MARY TARVER: Wonderful. Thank you for that update.

HANNAH JENKINS: You have a few hands raise and a question in the chat box.

MARY TARVER: Who has their hand raised.

HANNAH JENKINS: Roslyn Hymel. She put it back down. I guess we will go to Charlie Michel

CHARLIE MICHEL: Dr. Peterson, I know you have only been in that position for a couple months. I was a special ed director for 11 years. As you are looking at all this stuff with the 1 percent, if you look at the historical

prospective I argued adamantly a few years ago when the state department of ed made a recommendation to lighten up the requirements to qualify for laone at the time for the connector test. Because it felt like it was going to open it up and we were already working on that 1 percent. Then they opened it up it did two things. It created a scenario that was going to ensure noncompliance in some districts and with the state. We tried to get them to do that. And in my opinion, it also showed a lack of expectations for students. I understand the humane issue trying to give them something that will work, it also gave permission for some school systems not to address the need in a vigorous manner as they maybe should have or could have. As y'all are looking at that maybe you might want to consider looking at the historical prospective of those districts and see if there is any correlation when BESE took that action that was so opposed back when it happened. Just wanted to give you that historical prospective because you do not have an easy job. I appreciate it. I am glad it's you.

KELLI PETERSON: Quick question. Can you give me a little bit of context or date around the time you mentioned BESE opened that back up?

CHARLIE MICHEL: I have been retired for two years. I want to say it was about two or three years before that. So may be 15-16 or 16-17. If you call any special ed director I bet you, they can tell you exactly when that was.

KELLI PETERSON: Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Did you say we had a chat?

HANNAH JENKINS: Two more hands raised and chat question.

MARY TARVER: Let's go with hands raised.

HANNAH JENKINS: Kathleen Cannino.

KATHLEEN CANNINO: So I just had a couple things or questions, I guess. So I know in St. Tammany, the parish where I am from, out of 55 schools 30 of them are failing children, I think 27 of the 30 were failing children with disabilities. And we tried to bring it up and address it, but the school board said we don't have any disparities. So interested to look at that. When I suggested they look at the improvement plan they said it doesn't really matter, they were just a box to check. Year after year it's getting worse and worse. And these children are getting left behind. They are sticking them in self-contained classrooms automatically instead of least restrictive

environment. They are making them earn their way out. But in the meantime, these kids are getting left behind because they are not getting quality teachers, or not being taught because there is only one teacher and one para and too many students. And there seems to be no accountability no matter what direction you go. And as a parent it's really frustrating. And I am not sure what the answer is. We have reached out to Louisiana Department of Education and doesn't seem to go anywhere. I didn't know if you had a prospective or a suggestion.

KELLI PETERSON: Just so I make sure I am understanding what you are saying, are you talking about when you look at end of year school performance, academically.

KATHLEEN CANNINO: Correct, yes.

KELLI PETERSON: I think one is as parents we do have the process related to if you would like to file a grievance. We have that process to come through to LDOE for us to do that. I think what you are doing is trying to push into, obviously at the school level for them to do that. But if you feel you are not getting anywhere on that place, I think the next step is to look at going through the grievance process so we can push it.

KATHLEEN CANNINO: Thank you.

MARY TARVER: Do we have another hand.

HANNAH JENKINS: Yes. A few more. And Ms. Sonnier on the committee also has her hand raised.

MARY TARVER: Let's start with Temisha.

TEMISHA SONNIER: It's okay to go last so I can hear other attendees. It's going to help with my question.

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Roslyn.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Can y'all hear me? I have been trying to hit the microphone. I couldn't get it. But the question is for you is for me today. I have an ISP where I am. I really want to find out how can I go about going into my meeting in the parish that I am in. The parish I am in is Jefferson Parish. I know I got myself into a little, how can I say it, trouble for what I did wrong.

MARY TARVER: Let's see if somebody from the DD Council can help and we will reach out to you.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Because when I am saying that what I am trying to say with other schools do they have other IEPs, is that like ISP meetings or is it the same way? What I am trying to ask.

MARY TARVER: IEPs are only for students that are still

in school. Once you are out of school.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Like Magnolia Community. Magnolia was a school at one time. They just had changed the name over to Magnolia Community Services.

MARY TARVER: I don't know that answer to help you. I want to make sure that we help you get the answer you need, but I don't want you to go into great detail about what is going on with you personally.

ROSLYN HYMEL: That is why I am trying to leave out some details on it. The question I was really ask is about the IEP. Is that with different other states having the same high schools or college as well? Do they have to go through the same process is what I am asking?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Can I have permission to speak.

MARY TARVER: Yes, ma'am.

MARILEE ANDREWS: You know what I think we should do, I can get Courtney Ryland, she is the acting executive director, but she is also kind of our education expert. I can have her email or call you and she will be able to talk through that with you and be able to help you more. And then that way in this setting we can stay on the agenda.

ROSLYN HYMEL: That's fine with me. I don't know if the agenda has to do something with the paperwork I am reading. Is this coming from the packet that I have.

MARILEE ANDREWS: The packet, the council packet that was mailed out, I don't think anything about this committee meeting is in it. That's for the full council meeting which is tomorrow. I will have Courtney reach out to you.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Okay, then. That's what I wanted to know. I wanted to see how.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Thank you Roslyn.

MARY TARVER: We will follow up with you. Are we ready to go to the chats now?

HANNAH JENKINS: Two more hands raised. Ms. Corhonda Corley.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Great morning madam chair and committee. Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to speak. And I apologize for the noise you hear in the background. I am in my car with my child for therapy services. I want to first start off cause my questions and comments are to Dr. Peterson. By you being one of the chairs for the inequity disparity task force that LDOE recently created, it hardens my heart, sickens me that is not something you actually spoke to today. Because

Representative Carter has spoken time and time again at the education committee hearing in regards to Orleans Parish directly failing our children with disabilities. More particularly our children that are English language learners and our children with disabilities that are black and brown children. Being one of the chairs of that task force, I really thought you would bring some light on that issue. Secondly, our LDOE has been making changes to the bulletin every single day. Every single day they have a different change to the guidance. Every single day a different change to the bulletin. Every single day more and more conflict. That conflict that does not help our children with disabilities. We have Jefferson Parish School System that has been in the light four times now for having children, indigenous black and brown children being expelled and represented for expulsion for things that are happening on the virtual schools. Yet that is not being addressed right now in this committee from LDOE. And so I am looking at how EBR school system just had a child take a bus, according to the news media, stole the bus, but they failed to mention this was a child in our developmental disabilities community. When I talk about these school system failures, I am talking about that I don't see anything LDOE is doing how to address. None of our children are being found by child find. None of these assessments are being done correctly and adequately. Nothing LDOE is putting in place are addressing these issues. Another failure by LDOE. I want to see some things you can tell me, Dr. Peterson, is going to make me have some confidence in that LDOE is not forgetting our children with disabilities. Because too many times children with disabilities that are being abused and neglected in the school system. Yet that is wasn't something you spoke about. They are put in seclusion and restraints. You are not saying anything about that. I just want something to be said even with basic minimum requirements that we have nothing is addressed about these accommodations and modifications that are not being provided by these school systems. When I think that LDOE is supposed to come to a committee based on education and employment I want to hear something about how Louisiana Department of Education is not only addressing these constant problems reflected in the numbers from the data that LDOE has. I also want to hear how LDOE is trying to

have a solution, a real workable solution. That is not something that was presented today from you. I also did not hear anything as far as what kind of collaboration LDOE is doing with organizations within these communities to try to resolve these issues. We have entirely too many issues where LDOE continues to come to this committee and they say some pretty words and actually fail to do anything. And so when Dr. Charlie mentioned things that he has actually spoken on and try to get resolved by LDOE and yet that went nowhere. It still has not been resolved. I would like to hear LDOE is going to make some real, real progress as far as having a real workable group from this community reflective of different parishes. So that not only are our voices heard, but there is a real resolution. So I would really like for Dr. Peterson to speak on how we can actually have some real resolutions to all the problems that have been spoken on on this committee thus far. Thank you so much madam chair.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. I want to say as the chairperson for the committee, before I ask if Dr. Peterson has some comments, but we have had some new leadership in Louisiana Department of Education. We have had new, today is the first day and Dr. Peterson is filling in for a person who has been on the committee for I think one or two meetings. So we definitely have had some changes. And I know Department of Education has made, has been working on lots of different changes. And today was on the agenda to kind of give an update and a starting point. Some of the points you brought up are certainly not going to be quickly resolved or solved. But certainly things I am sure Louisiana Department of Education will be working on. I would ask if Dr. Peterson has anything you would like to address?

KELLI PETERSON: Thank you. I think first I will start with I am not sure of the task force that we are referring to. I would love to follow up with you offline to figure out what we are talking about there. Secondly, as it relates to where we are with LDOE and specifically one of the things is coming in was really trying to see what and how the department was currently set up and structured. We have special education policy and intervention strategy. Let me also say I am a special educator by trade. Educator, yes, not special education. What we needed to do, and Dr. Brumley did this as well, having various stakeholder

engagements and conversations with parents and advocacy groups to understand the special education services that were or were not happening be in the system as well as what was left to be desired related to teachers and practitioners. What we are doing right now is really trying to inventory all that. Make a huge shift how we work within the department as it relates to serving practitioners, also building capacity. Previously operating with special education policy and intervention strategy. There are other elements to special education and supporting our students' exceptionalities that are not necessarily defined in those two categories. Right now about building a team and restructuring and reorganizing to make sure we are building capacity at the systems level. The LDOE very clearly recognizes we are not interacting on a day to day basis. But what we do is create this condition for our school and our system to be successful. In order to that we have to make sure we are set up and strategically set up in order to intentionally provide the support our practitioners need and all the data making sure they can support students with exceptionalities outside of just intervention strategy and sped policy. That right there for us, and me and this team, and building the team. I am sitting here because we have had several transitions and turnover within this department. Is trying get educators and expertise in this office specifically to do that and be able to reach out and reach down to our practitioners and be able to support them. So there is a lot of work to do. I acknowledge that. I recognize that. Trying to do that. The first step is restructuring in a way that makes the most sense. I will send my email address to you. I just received your information in the chat.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. I know this is a building time and rebuilding time. And we appreciate that you have come here today for our committee meeting and look forward to working with y'all on different projects. And to pass that information along and certainly be part of the stakeholder group for the Louisiana Department of Education. Especially when it comes to our developmental disabilities' community. Thank you. Ms. Sonnier

TEMISHA SONNIER: Thank you, madam chair. I have a quick question, not my question I had initially. Dr. Peterson mentioned the restructuring and regrouping of Louisiana Department of Education, which I am excited about

and thank you. Is there a target date or idea of when you think y'all, the department, will have the people you mentioned in place? I like the idea that we are working towards it, but I would like to see, I guess I am looking for, as well as other parents probably be looking for, like a general idea of when the department thinks they will have those directors, leaders, the new bodies in place to be able to have these transitions go on. Are we looking at six-month process? I know you don't have an exact date. More or less what is the timeframe. So parents can kind of know what we are looking at end of next year. That type of thing. Thank you.

KELLI PETERSON: If I could say tomorrow, I would tell you tomorrow to make sure that we have people in place. But I think because we are trying to make such a systemic shift in the way it was to where we are going, I don't want us to rush and hire to just to hire people either. Really trying to do a lot more conversations and alignment with like what is it that we actually are looking for in terms of those areas of expertise. We are only working with a certain number of human capital that we can replace when we have these transitions to happen. Taking us not to just repost the job. Really trying to calibrate what is the right role. Since a one for one kind of trade out, I would say. Hesitant to tell you a timeframe because I don't necessarily know based on how long it takes us to post, to repost, to find, to interview and all those pieces. So ideally sooner than later, honestly. But I would say, definitely a couple of months. As it relates to anything with families, I don't want to say families need to be on hold from being able to have expectations for us. Like we will still figure that out and make sure we support families. This is more restructuring to support practitioners in the field and how we can do that. If families have concerns, issues, grievances and all those pieces they can continue to follow the process and we will make sure those answers get to them in a timely manner.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Do we have any other hands raised or comments?

HANNAH JENKINS: Yes. Mr. Charlie Michel has his hand raised and we have a few chat comments.

CHARLIE MICHEL: Kelli, I have one question for you, but before I do want to make a statement. I have to say, and this is coming out of my mouth and surprising to me as



anybody else, I have to say since Cayde has gotten the job some of the decisions he has made to fill positions like you have, I think is very encouraging. For the first time in a long time I feel like the Department of Education is actually working in a direction that is right for the State of Louisiana. It took John White nine years to disassemble special education in the Department of Ed. That you can't commit to a timeframe I think is reasonable. Because we don't want to hire people who know the political process and don't understand the education process. It is encouraging. And Cayde has earned that with his work in Desoto and Jefferson. He has earned that trust and faith. I believe if y'all take the time you need to do it right. I am not exactly sure what direction y'all want to go in, but I have faith the direction is a good one. Wanted to tell you your job is not going to be easy, but slow and steady wins the race. Take a while to earn people's trust back, but y'all will get there. If there is anything I can do to help, I will be more than happy to do that. My question is because of covid, and I had asked this of LRS earlier, because of covid a lot of employers have really stopped allowing training sessions in their businesses. Is the state department able to give some sort of guidance to school systems who need to provide that community-based training experience for students, especially with significant disabilities? Is there something that y'all can do to provide them with alternatives or meaningful activities that will replace that until businesses are really more willing to allow extra people in? That is my question, I will just listen. I will mute myself, which is not fun either cause I like to talk.

KELLI PETERSON: Thank you for your comment previously. And I think that is a question I don't know the answer to right now. But can definitely circle back and see if guidance was put out previously and if not provide guidance.

MARY TARVER: Thank you Dr. Peterson and Charlie for your comment. Hannah, where are we?

HANNAH JENKINS: We have a hand raised from Tiffany Rainwater.

TIFFANY RAINWATER: How are y'all today. I kind of got in on the last 20 minutes and then I had some phone calls come in. But I have a daughter that is 11 years old from Ragland Louisiana. She is diagnosed with Angelman

syndrome and Prader Willi syndrome. I am still every day is a learning process for me. But we were completely whipped out by Laura and she had a communication device that helped her speak and everything. I was just wondering if y'all knew what I could do, cause I have contacted FEMA. We have not gotten no help. With her being special needs and losing our whole house you would think somebody would step up. But I have contacted everybody. I keep getting dead ends.

PHIL WILSON: Have you checked with LaCAN yet?

TIFFANY RAINWATER: I think we did. I was just on the website for the Department of Health for Medicaid and stuff like that. They had said something on there and it's just been a constant. I am so overwhelmed. My head hurts constantly.

PHIL WILSON: I would recommend, Tiffany, you contact LaCAN. Sorry, I can't remember what the C stands for Louisiana Assistive Technology Network. I am sure one of us can forward you their contact information. In the meantime if you want to send me [pwilso2@lsuhsc.EDU](mailto:pwilso2@lsuhsc.EDU). If you have a record of what the specific technology is or was that your daughter used, if you can send that to me, I work with a number of people who do things with assistive tech. They have a way to identify somebody's old machine they have outgrown.

TIFFANY RAINWATER: This was just, we just brought this not this past income tax 16, 19 or 19-20 income tax. Me and my ex-husband we got together and everything. We purchased it and Medicaid didn't cover anything. And we had a home based one and then we had a carry one. I think the total was like 3,600-dollars, something like that. FEMA stated if I could put it in deemed necessary for her to have it from her doctor stating her disability, she needs it for everyday communication and everyday living it's a necessity, that they would reimburse me. I do not see FEMA reimburse anything.

MARY TARVER: We will work, I think Mr. Wilson has offered to help. There was some information from Mr. Phil that will help you. And I see in the chat Southwest Louisiana Families Helping Families, Ms. Susan put the phone number there. You can reach out to them to make sure you can get the help that you need.

TIFFANY RAINWATER: Sure do appreciate it very much y'all.

MARILEE ANDREWS: I am just going to remind you, because we switched the agenda and LRS and LDO representatives were so kind to be flexible with that, Dr. Peterson has to leave at 11:10. Only have about four more minutes with her.

MARY TARVER: Where there any other chats? I think some of the chats we have already covered.

HANNAH JENKINS: Susan Reem has her hand raised and I believe Kathleen Cannino has something in the chat.

SUSAN REEM: I just had my hand raised to make sure Ms. Rainwater knew to contact us, Families Helping Families Southwest.

MARY TARVER: Thank you Ms. Susan. Anything else in the chat that we mead to talk about?

HANNAH JENKINS: Ms. Kathleen Cannino said St. Tammany has a tremendous backlog and those children are being left behind and suffering because of it. I appreciate the suggestion for filing complaints or due process, but that goes nowhere and there is no follow up and it requires lawyers which cost parents money they don't have.

KELLI PETERSON: The grievance policy I was referring to earlier was specifically between LDOE. No cost to the parents, nor does it require any attorneys. Actually, through our attorney process, our education attorney. That is a way that we can support that. But it's not a cost to the parent, what I was referring to specifically.

MARY TARVER: I think there's a link on the LDOE page about that specifically, that process.

TEMISHA SONNIER: I don't want Ms. Cannino's idea what she is stating, but I believe what she is referring to Dr. Peterson is whenever parents use the Louisiana Department of Education grievance process, and I know this is before you came. So I think on your radar going forward. That once the grievance process was done with parents that there was no resolve. And then anything that had to be done beyond that they had to get attorneys to push the issues to get some resolution. I guess what Ms. Cannino trying to say, cause that is what I have gotten from several parents, that once they tried the process and there was no resolve, they had to take it further to get things done. Looking at it from systemic with new administration, if I am understanding right, she wanting to see if anything will be done. At that point parents are not able to go any further than that grievance process without getting a personal attorney when nothing is done at the school level.

KELLI PETERSON: Thank you for clarifying that. When you said no resolve, is it a situation where there is no finding at the end of the grievance process on our end or no communication to loop back to say what did happen?

TEMISHA SONNIER: What I found, and what I do know personally, is that when a finding is found I think they have cap requirements. There is no accountability. And then the school gives some information, or I guess you could say cap or whatever they need with the cap. And it's dropped and the families continue to have issues. No follow through after that. The requirement the cap report was done and then nothing is really done. For example, the school had to evaluate kids or a certain child. They do the evaluation, thrown together, just giving example, and then it's dropped, nothing else happens. Because the school has done the quote unquote evaluation, they feel like they have met the burden of cap. Do you get what I am saying? And the child is really not helped. There is no follow through with that process. What I am seeing pattern wise that parents are stating is happening. I think that is where the frustration comes in. I am quick to get an attorney because the process I tried statewide is not really getting any results. We are not moving. Thank you.

KELLI PETERSON: Thank you for bringing this up. Another place to continue to push on and to look into. I will say the other part I know also frustrating to families, just the general email box. We are working on that so that is there is actually interaction of a person. I know personally I hate calling those automated numbers and having to constantly press zero. You are not getting to a human being to be able to walk you through the process. So we are working on that too.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Peterson, for being here today. We look forward to work withing you and for the staff that will be permanently assigned to us. Happy for that. And so if there is anything for DD Council when we have our education and employment committee meetings, we want to hear those hot topic things, the things y'all want to hear back from and get input from families. The agenda really is set for you to help us understand what is going on too. We certainly want to make sure that we are able to give you the opportunity to talk about things, present information, data, whatever you feel would be able

to help us. I know we are always going to have a lot of questions for you. That just tends to be how our group goes. Like to try to put those in categories and make where it's comfortable for you and you don't feel like we are bombarding you with lots of information and questions. That you have an opportunity to be prepared and answer. So we appreciate you very much.

KELLI PETERSON: No problem. Thank you. I will just say, I would appreciate just for those of you in terms of even putting together what we are reporting today more so looking what had been prepared before you all. Try to get an idea of what that was. Seems like a lot of updates provided to you. I will say I think it is useful to be in this space to hear all of this. I appreciate the feedback. I don't shy away from it. However, continue to make sure we are sharing the relevant information to this conversation. I want to be helpful. So I do apologize it was just like a run of the mill update. It was literally I appreciate you all sharing with me the reports that have been provided to you previously. Cause I didn't have anything to work from. Wanting to make sure we got that out. Moving forward, even if you all have items that were discussed today that we can prepare for next time. I have no problem with doing that as well as I know I am getting ready to jump off, as well as other things that come that fall within LDOE's scope. If I can just get an email that way, we can work on that. Definitely want to utilize and inform you all, but also to make sure it's relevant to the topic and things you all want to hear as well. Thank you for having me today.

MARY TARVER: Thank you.

MARILEE ANDREWS: Thank you Dr. Peterson.

MARY TARVER: Do we have any other hands up or any other comments that we will need to talk about?

HANNAH JENKINS: No, ma'am. Bambi has her hand raised actually. Or maybe not.

ROSLYN HYMEL: I know I look different with my mask on. Sorry about that. This is the first time me being with y'all and just learning what y'all are about. I wanted to learn more. I feel a little lost, so you have to excuse me about it.

MARY TARVER: Glad to have you and hope you will come to all our meetings. We have fun every time.

ROSLYN HYMEL: I do. But the question is how can I get

y'all's packet to join in with y'all besides the one I am on. What I want to really find out coming from you.

MARY TARVER: We can make sure you get the agenda and the packet information. I think the council staff has that information as we were getting ready for meetings in the past. I have seen the question come. But if they know you want paper copies of stuff, they can send it.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Yeah. That's what I wanted to ask you about. How can I go about that because I have the other packets from my group? Kind of find out what can I do going with y'all.

MARY TARVER: We will ask Marilee to see if she can put you on the list and make sure you get paper.

ROSLYN HYMEL: From both groups I am getting good input. Does that make any sense?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Yes. What I will do I will get with Hannah. Hannah is the person who does all that work printing and organizing and making packets. And I will make sure that is in your packet next time you also have the education ask employment committee information.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Would it really be a conflict if I do both? Should I just do one.

MARILEE ANDREWS: No. I don't think it's a conflict. You can sit in on any council meeting, for sure.

MARY TARVER: We will send you the education employment stuff.

ROSLYN HYMEL: Please.

MARY TARVER: All right. Hannah or Marilee, anything else?

HANNAH JENKINS: You have a chat from Tamera. She said please let Dr. Peterson know regression in the job support area of education is not being addressed in the state quote strong start covid response for schools. Specifically students with special needs that lost employment support due to covid and regressed in job placement are not identified as quote regression. Only academic issues were part of the regression look back.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. I think the comments that are being put in the chat box, are y'all able to capture those and then we will have those moving forward to share if we need to organize them to get feedback.

MARILEE ANDREWS: The comments that are typed into the chat, I am copying and pasting them in our meeting summary.

MARY TARVER: Perfect. Thank you. The next thing on

our agenda if there was any announcements? Marilee, do we have any new people that are going to be on the education employment committee?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Right now I don't believe any new ones that are on. Hannah is the one that would know that because she deals with the appointments from the governor. Can you speak on that Hannah?

HANNAH JENKINS: Yes, I can. What Randall suggested for the new members was that they come to the different meetings this week to try them out before they made a decision on which committee they would like to join. So I am not sure if any are on today to this meeting. But I know that was what they were suggested was take this week, figure out which committees you would like to join and let him know. Might possibly have new members for the next one.

MARY TARVER: Do you know who the three new people are?

HANNAH JENKINS: Yes. Let me put them back up. I know one is Rashad Bristo. One of them, Nicole Banks. And the other is Ms. Jill Egle.

MARY TARVER: Perfect. Good. Thank you. Any other announcements?

MARILEE ANDREWS: Do you want me to share the announcement about activities for federal fiscal year 2022.

MARY TARVER: Yes.

MARILEE ANDREWS: So before we adjourn this is usually the meeting historically in October where we start, we remind you all to start thinking of ideas and activities that you would want the council to consider including in the federal fiscal year 20-22 action plan. That plan would start October 1, 2021. And as I understand it historically at the January education employment committee meeting, which is our next meeting, we will discuss ideas that you all bring, and we will have the opportunity to make recommendations for the council to consider sending to the planning committee. And then in April we usually come back with research. And July the council votes on a draft of the plan and the plan is ratified and begins October 1. So that is the process that is usually taken historically as I understand it. This is kind of a reminder for everybody to start thinking of that. Maybe doing some research. When we have our next education employment committee meeting that will be on the agenda, if Ms. Mary is okay with

it, and we will go through ideas that you all bring.

MARY TARVER: And yesterday in our executive committee meeting we talked about our 20-21 legislative advocacy kickoff recommendation. In the end we did vote, which will be presented tomorrow to the full council, but the Families Helping Families and LaCAN leaders have recommended three things. And it was cameras in special education classrooms and parent access to school videos. An additional 500,000-dollars state funding to the DD Council budget for Families Helping Families centers. And funding for direct support worker wage increases. And so those three things were discussed, and the executive committee did finally make a decision and was going to move forward with the recommendation. That will be presented tomorrow in the full council meeting. Just wanted to let y'all know one of the advocacy agenda items was about the cameras in special education. I am sure our committee will be following.

PHIL WILSON: I have a comment about that. I made these comments before when these first came up. I am not opposed to having cameras in special ed classrooms. Not opposed to having them in general ed classrooms. I am concerned that people think putting a camera in a classroom is actually getting at solving the problem. The problem is we don't have properly trained and paid teachers in our state, particularly in special ed. The number of special ed teachers, certified special ed teachers is embarrassing and sort of just unconscionable. Our state has systematically, starting a few administrations back, taken away higher ed programs to prepare personnel. No severe disabilities program. I guess UNO is trying to restart a small program now. Nowhere to get certified in our state for programs that serve kids with very significant disabilities. Whether Deaf, Blind, Deaf Blind, severe intellectual disabilities, so on. It leads to people being in charge of classrooms and programs that really are not prepared to do that. If we are going to invest in cameras, okay. But I don't know what that investment turns out to be. But if we don't invest in training, and continuing ed, personnel preparation, college degree programs then we are just putting band aides on the problem. I hope that made some sense. Hopefully, some consideration of okay, if we do this all the legislators think we heard you, we checked your box, we bought you



cameras.

MARY TARVER: Yeah, thank you for that comment. We did have a lot of discussion yesterday. One of the things mentioned about the action plan. Some things we can take from the Families Helping Families and LaCAN meetings they had with parents. And a whole section about education and one of those was about not having enough teachers and those kinds of things. We will be looking at things that we can put on our action plan to help us with some of those things. Thank you for saying that. Temisha.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Just want to chime in real quick. I agree with you Dr. Phil and I appreciate that. But I also want to consider looking at it two-fold with the cameras. I kind of compare it to the situation at times, I completely agree with the fact we don't have trained teachers in the classroom, especially special education teachers. And I don't believe the cameras will correct that. We all know they won't correct that. What it does give us is concrete data to go by. We all know a lot of times we have to show what impact, we are monitoring things, but having those cameras also show what triggered some behaviors in situation with the students. Used also as a tool amongst the educator and the system to help address some of those issues that are happening. I don't want to always, I think at times people attach the cameras to something bad. Or as a fix all. We know it won't. To some parents and some people it is also a tool that can be used. They have people that advocated for how it helps the teacher. Help them see what triggered the student to go off into certain behavior patterns or how the teacher addressed it or what changes need to be made. Compare it to sports, when you play sports and had you sit down and review the tape. Same scenario. You can only make those corrective actions. Sometimes some people are visual people, and they need to see what is happening. I am in favor of it, personally. I know everyone isn't. I am in favor for the right reason if you get what I am saying. I agree completely with you. Not going to be a fix all. And we can't let legislators believe just giving the camera is going to be sufficient. We need to incorporate it with training and allow that to work in the favor of doing what is in the best interest of the student completely.

PHIL WILSON: Well stated. Right on. I also wanted to, a senior moment earlier when I was talking with Ms.

Tiffany trying to think of latan. I do know what LaCAN stands for or used to stand for. Louisiana Citizens for Action Now. Latan, Louisiana Assistive Technology Network. My embarrassment. At least I remembered it before I went home.

TEMISHA SONNIER: Thank you so much. We all got to get together to come up with something to help move us forward. And I appreciate your input on that. Thank you, madam chair.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Anything else for announcements? I see the chats agreeing with your comments. Kind of paraphrasing everybody's comments. Hope they don't mind. Training teachers. Okay. Then I think if we don't have any other comments that need to be discussed today or any other announcements, I would like to entertain a motion to adjourn if y'all agree?

TEMISHA SONNIER: I make a motion to adjourn today's meeting.

MARY TARVER: Thank you. Do I have a second?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I second.

MARY TARVER: Thank you Melissa. All right. Well, then we will see everybody tomorrow. Tomorrow is our council meeting during the day so we will see y'all then. Thank y'all.