

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Quarterly Meeting
January 29, 2026

RENODA WASHINGTON: Good morning everyone. The quarterly meeting of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council will come to order. Please make sure you have your cameras on. I want to thank everyone for your attendance yesterday and on today. Also the staff for getting everything ready for us today. I'm looking forward to discussions. Also I just want everyone to give themselves a handclap. As we move forward, Stephanie, please call the roll call for attendance.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Blunschi.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Chachere.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Crain. Mr. Doyle.

LIAM DOYLE: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Kelly-Aduli.

CHERIE KELLY-ADULI: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Macaluso.

FRANK MACALUSO: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Nguyen. Mr. Rocca.

TORRY ROCCA: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Smith. Robby Smith. I see

you're on but we need you to unmute and turn your camera on to be counted towards the roll. I'm going to come back in a moment. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Williams.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Xu. You have 19. You have a quorum.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Stephanie. At this time we will now have Dr. Meda read the mission statement and Ayden read the ground rules.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Increase independence, self-determination, productivity, integration and inclusion of Louisianians with developmental disabilities by engaging in advocacy, capacity building and systems change.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council ground rules. Members must be recognized by the chair before speaking. Be respectful of others' opinions. Break for ten minutes every 1.5 hours. Discuss council business in a responsible manner. Except as necessary restrict the use of electronic communication. This includes texting during 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. Side conversations are kept to a minimum, done quietly and restricted to the subject at hand.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Lamar and Ayden. To ensure the meeting runs smoothly and that we all can participate in an orderly manner please adhere to the following rules. For committee members and members of the public attending in person please raise your hand to speak and wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking. To help the meeting run smoothly please keep side conversations to a minimum and comments related to the topic we are discussing. For those committee members who are attending virtually remember you must be on camera and have your first and last name showing to be counted towards our quorum. Please keep

microphones muted unless called upon by the chair. Electronically raise your hand to request to speak and wait to be called on by the chair. For attendees electronically raise your hand to request to speak. Once recognized by the chair your microphone will be turned on. After speaking the microphone will be returned to mute.

Also the Q and A is to only be used by those needing an ADA accommodation to participate in the meeting. Public comment will not be accepted via the Q and A except for those individuals who requested the accommodation. As for order committee members in person and virtually will be allowed to speak first. Public members in person will then be called on followed by the public participating virtually who have their hands raised. Comments in the Q and A chat will be addressed last. As with all hybrid meetings it can be difficult to keep track of all those wanting to speak in person and virtually. Please be patient with us. All comments and questions from committee members and the public may be limited to three minutes or less should we run into time constraints. So please keep that in mind.

Also comments about a person's character will not be allowed. Finally, the members of the public will have the opportunity to provide public comment before each vote and during designated public comment periods. The chair may also use their discretion to determine if comments will be accepted outside of these times. The first item of business is the approval of the meeting summary. A draft of the October 30th meeting summary was distributed. The summary will not be read unless requested by a member. Are there any corrections?

JILL HANO: Weren't you the chair of the October meeting? Because this says that Christi gave the chairperson report. On the first page, Ebony.

RENODA WASHINGTON: That's a typo.

JILL HANO: I figured it was. Thank you.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Are there any other corrections? If there's no objection the meeting summary is approved as corrected.

The next item of business is the chair's report. As we begin the first meeting of 2026 I want to once again thank you for your continued service and

commitment to this council. This is my second meeting serving as chair and I definitely appreciate the dedication and leadership everyone brings to their role. On here you will be able to read, I'm not going to read the entire thing, but one thing I want to go down to is the council member expectations, communication and accountability. As we move forward into the new year as chair I want to reaffirm the expectations.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So sorry to interrupt you but we need to vote on the summary, correct?

NICOLE LEARSON: We can use unanimous consent.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I thought all things had to be voted by roll call.

NICOLE LEARSON: Not necessarily.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Okay.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you. I want to just take a moment to reaffirm expectations related to council participation and communication. I know that we're all busy. We have multiple responsibilities and deadlines. But as you can see all of this that we have in this room here today this is done by our wonderful staff. It takes a team to do these things and as the council we just need to improve in our dedication toward responding to their emails. Just making sure that we're turning in our reports in a timely manner. This is the direction that we want to go into for this new year. If you are already doing it continue. If you're not this is the chance for you to have a new time to change some things up. We want to do things in order. And our staff definitely does a lot. In yesterday's meeting Ebony spoke the least she could do is want to give us-- the least we could do is support the staff. If you like your hotel accommodations, if you like the setup, if you like things to run smoothly all I'm asking is that we just improve in our communication and support to the staff. Would everyone agree with that? Everyone would agree to that raise your hands. Let me see if you all agree with that. The least we could do to support this great staff. And that's all I have. We're going to move on to the next thing.

Next we have the executive committee report. The chair recognizes Vice Chair Angela Harmon

ANGELA HARMON: The executive committee met

yesterday and we have several items to update for the October 25 quarterly meeting. The update of the 2026 legislative advocacy agenda. Staff decided to remove the functional behavior assessment, FBA, item from the agenda. Staff had been working to identify a legislator to carry a bill for the upcoming legislative session. However, no commitments have been secured at this time. While the council continues to view this as an important issue staff recommended referring the matter to the education committee to allow for continued discussion with the department and other stakeholders. These discussions are intended to clarify the issue and determine the most appropriate path such as legislative action, BESE and other options.

Consideration of the council member retreat is the second item. The committee held an in-depth discussion regarding the council member retreat. The staff recommended holding a retreat in July as the April meeting occurs during legislative session and the October meeting already has a full agenda. Committee members discussed the possibility of combining the retreat with the April meeting with a focus on LaCAN and advocacy training followed by a visit to the capitol to meet with legislators.

The committee also discussed participating in disability awareness day on May 4th of 2026 which could provide additional opportunity for advocacy at the capitol. Another option discussed was holding the next retreat in January of 2027 with the focus on training members on the council's advocacy agenda in preparation for LaCAN activities before and during the 2027 legislative session. The committee did not reach a consensus and agreed to bring this item to the full council for guidance.

The third issue. Consideration of the new council meeting schedule. The council also discussed a proposed new council meeting schedule. Ebony presented the council meeting expenses for 2025 which totaled 18,225-dollars. Staff explained that the discussion was driven by the budget consideration. As the council's funding has remained level at 1.38-million while costs have increased including mileage, food, state rates due to inflation. To help manage these

rising costs staff recommended holding all standing committee meetings in the same month as the full council meeting. The executive committee schedule would meet prior to the full council. Under this new schedule that the council voted to adopt at the October 30th meeting committees would meet on Wednesdays throughout the month and a draft of the schedule was provided for the committee's review. After discussion the committee was unable to determine the most effective meeting dates and agreed to refer this item to the full council for a recommendation.

Fourth item. Consideration of council code of conduct. The committee also reviewed the draft of the code of conduct at the council's request to establish clear expectations for members' behavior during meetings. The draft was modeled after the New York council's code of conduct. One suggested change was made to expand the definition of serious misconduct to include unwanted behavior, touching or comments of a sexual nature. Staff will make this revision. The committee unanimously recommended that the council adopt the updated code of conduct.

Annual executive director evaluation is our last item. Finally, the committee conducted the executive director's annual evaluation. The chair distributed a survey to the full council to gather feedback for the evaluation. The committee entered executive session to complete this review. Based on the feedback received the evaluation was very positive. The committee recommends that the council give a 3 percent raise to the executive director. This concludes the executive committee report from the executive committee agenda items and discussion. There are two recommendations coming out of the executive committee for the council to consider. I will make those motions after the question.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, vice chair, for that report. We will take questions on one discussion item at a time. Are there any questions regarding the update of the 2026 legislative advocacy agenda? Consideration of council member retreat date of July for 2026 and schedule for January 2027. Is there a motion to adopt the 2026 retreat date?

ALAINA CHACHERE: I'll motion to adopt it.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Is there a second?

JILL HANO: I'll second it.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you. Okay. It is moved and seconded by Jill to consider the council dates of July 2026. Is there any discussion from committee members? Anyone else have any feedback on what Ms. Angela stated? I see a hand but I don't see the face.

ALAINA CHACHERE: I was just curious if there was a reason why we were having it in July. Was that a better time? What's the purpose?

EBONY HAVEN: I can try to answer. So you guys had a retreat in January last year. We couldn't have it in January this year because we were in the middle of the move and the staff didn't have enough time to prepare. So the other options would be April, July or October. Ms. Angela stated in her chair's report the April meeting is sort of difficult only because we're in session and session is unpredictable. We may have to be at the capitol at any time so planning could be hard. And the October meeting is really packed. You guys are voting on a lot of things including the legislative advocacy agenda. So we recommended July but the discussion within the executive committee was centered around the retreat being about advocacy, learning how to advocate, meeting LaCAN leaders and basically having a capitol day like as the second portion of that. And in the July session is out so no legislators will be there during that time. So Angela's suggestion is just to wait until after October when you guys have voted on your next advocacy agenda to have the retreat in January so you guys are ready to go once session starts in 2027. Does that answer the question?

ALAINA CHACHERE: Yep. Thank you.

ANGELA HARMON: I would like to amend the motion for the council retreat.

ERICK TAYLOR: So right now a motion is on the table, right?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes. A motion is on the table.

ERICK TAYLOR: I would like to second that motion.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you so much. It is moved and seconded to move the retreat date to January of 2027. Is there any discussion from committee members?

LAMARTINE MEDA: Actually I was trying to get some

clarification for myself. We're just not going to have it this fiscal year? We're just going to roll it over to next January 27?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Okay.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chair recognizes Ms. Constance.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So if we move it to January that focus is going to be on understanding the legislative process? Am I understanding that correctly? I do agree that's important. I wonder could it be possible if we did a retreat in July? I'm thinking back to the retreat in January 2025 where we really got some presentations that Ebony brought in and is the first time I'd been involved in the council that helped me understand a little bit more about our charge and what we were supposed to be doing. And I know we had a big influx of rotation that just happened and so there are a lot of new faces on the council. I feel like maybe the July retreat with that purpose in mind and then January 2027 might be something for the council to consider.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Ms. Constance.

BRENTON ANDRUS: It was mostly just I had a conversation yesterday about retreats. And just for clarity, I know it seems like you had one last January and oh, we're not having one this year. Historically we have not had retreats every year. This isn't something that's been a standing item. Something that is done every year. That's up to y'all if you want to have them every year. But it's not uncommon to miss this year and do one next year and do one every other year. Every few years at that. I can't remember but someone had a question about it yesterday, did it have to happen every year. It does not. That's really up to you guys. But it would not be uncommon to miss and wait until January or July or whatever to do your retreat. It's not out of the ordinary. It doesn't have to happen every single year.

EBONY HAVEN: I'll also add to that, Constance, we have switched up our orientation and so I'm doing like four lunch and learns with new members. And actually any veteran member is welcome if they're able to attend. Those are really cut up into the information

that you all received at that last retreat. Which I know that was some great information. So that first orientation session is basically the information that y'all received at the first session at the retreat last year. So I think that that will be helpful for the members. And the new members haven't been officially appointed yet so I'm still waiting to schedule the orientation. But once they are I will schedule that and I promise they will have something. They won't have to wait a year before, you know, they get orientation.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Ebony. Any further discussion? Is there any public comment?

REKEESHA BRANCH: No comment.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Sorry about the pause you guys but since there's a few changes here we're going to switch some things up. The question is on whether we accept the change of the date of the retreat to January 2027. So we will have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion to change the retreat date to January 2024 when your name is called say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Stephanie, could you please call the roll?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr.

Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Billings, yes. Mr.

Blunski.

AYDEN BLUNSKI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Ms.

Chachere.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Chachere, yes. Ms. Crain.

Mr. Doyle.

LIAM DOYLE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Doyle, yes. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Hano, yes. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms. Kelly-Aduli.

CHERIE KELLY-ADULI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Kelly-Aduli, yes. Mr. Macaluso.

FRANK MACALUSO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Macaluso, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda, yes. Ms. Nguyen. Mr. Rocca.

TORRY ROCCA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Rocca, yes. Mr. Smith.

ROBBY SMITH: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Smith, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor, yes. Mr. Williams.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Williams, yes. Ms. Xu.

KAREN XU: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Xu, yes. You have 19 yeses, zero noes and zero abstentions.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Stephanie. So now we are going to vote on having the retreat in January. That is the new vote.

EBONY HAVEN: The motion that I have on the screen says that the council retreat is changed to January. Should it have been something else?

NICOLE LEARSON: Yes. I'm so sorry. The screen is behind me. Forgive me. So the motion was made to have the retreat in July and during that discussion Vice Chair Angela amended, made a motion to amend it so that we strike out or change the date. So what we just voted on, what you all just voted on was whether or not you accept the change. Not whether or not to do it but to revise what the original motion was. And since you accepted the change now you vote on actually doing the thing now that you have the acceptance.

RENODA WASHINGTON: I'm just waiting for the

motion.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So who made the motion?

NICOLE LEARSON: Made the motion to have the retreat in July of 2026 it was that young lady.

BRENTON ANDRUS: That was Alaina to Jill.

NICOLE LEARSON: Right. And then she made a motion to change the date. That was Angela. There was the actual motion and then there was a change. We just want to change the date. Do you all agree to change the date. That's all you voted on. Do we agree to change the date. So what the motion was is to change the date. Now the amended motion, now that we have the right date, is do we want to do the thing on the new date.

LIAM DOYLE: For clarity, I was going to offer to make a new motion to completely withdraw this motion and then start again.

NICOLE LEARSON: That would really complicate it. We're almost home.

LIAM DOYLE: There's just a lot of chatter here. Just trying to clear things up. But I think we're okay.

NICOLE LEARSON: For clarity. The original motion was made to do the thing. I'm keeping it very vague. To do the thing on this date. And then vice chair said during the discussion I want to do the thing but on a different date so let us just change the date. So what you all voted on was do you agree with that change or do you prefer to keep it as the original date to do the thing. You all voted yes, we agree with the change. And the change only. So that now we have to do the thing but it is with this new date. Now do we agree to do the thing is what you need to vote on. Everybody understand? This is a two-step process. The original thing the way it was originally stated and now that there's a change do we agree with the change.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay, guys, we're moving forward. The amended motion is to have the council retreat in January 2027. Any discussion from committee members? Any public comment?

REKEESHA BRANCH: No hands are raised at this time.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. The question is on the amended motion to have the council retreat in January 2027. We will have a roll call vote. If you are in

favor of the motion to have the council retreat in January 2027 when your name is called say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain.

Stephanie, could you kindly call the roll?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms.

Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr.

Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Billings, yes. Mr.

Blunschi.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Blunschi, yes. Mr.

Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Ms.

Chachere.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Chachere, yes. Ms. Crain.

Mr. Doyle.

LIAM DOYLE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Doyle, yes. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Hano, yes. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms. Kelly-

Aduli

CHERIE KELLY-ADULI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Kelly Aduli, yes. Mr.

Macaluso.

FRANK MACALUSO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Macaluso, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda, yes. Ms. Nguyen.

Mr. Rocca.

TORRY ROCCA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Rocca, yes. Mr. Smith.

Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor, yes. Mr. Williams.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Williams, yes. Ms. Xu.

KAREN XU: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Xu, yes.

ROBBY SMITH: Hi, this is Robby. My computer went into sleep mode real quick. My vote would be yes for the motion.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Thank you, Robby.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The yeses have it and the motion is adopted.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Nineteen yeses, zero noes, zero abstentions.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right. We're going back to number three, the consideration of the new council meeting dates. Is there an amendment to the proposed date or a motion to adopt the dates as presented? And those dates should be in your packet or vice chair just said them. So we're just giving you guys a minute to review. Yesterday the council only wanted the full council to make this decision in a way. We wanted to present it to you guys. So review it and we'll go from there.

ALAINA CHACHERE: What time are we thinking for the committee meetings?

EBONY HAVEN: Alaina, that would be up to the chair. The staff who are over each committee, like Stephanie is over education and employment, she will meet with Brooke, the chair, and they would decide that. Or they could even send a survey out to the committee and send out different times to see what's best and then they would go from there.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Okay. So it's not set times.

EBONY HAVEN: The only set one is the executive committee.

ALAINA CHACHERE: I guess my question is is it going to be a different set time every time we meet or are we just going to pick one?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. Just the dates. Once you guys set a time, that will be the time.

KELLY MONROE: Just something to think about. The one that's in April Wednesday is a pretty important day

at the capitol. Whether it be education, appropriations, health and welfare. That's a pretty important day and it may put some of you guys in a bind if you're due to be at the capitol. Unless you do the afternoon.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you for sharing that. Is there an amendment to the proposed date or a motion to adopt the dates as presented?

GEARRY WILLIAMS: I motion.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Is there a second?

MIKE BILLINGS: I'll second.

RENODA WASHINGTON: It is moved and seconded to adopt the dates as presented. Is there any discussion from committee members?

JILL HANO: So 8:30 for executive committee, is there a hotel option for when they meet at all? You can say no.

EBONY HAVEN: So the purpose of us doing this schedule was to kind of eliminate some of those costs and we were trying to eliminate the hotel.

JILL HANO: Okay.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Guys, let's just be mindful of the outside conversations. We're live and we can hear that and the person that has the floor cannot focus on what they're asking. So let's just keep that down please.

ERICK TAYLOR: These going to be Zoom dates?

EBONY HAVEN: This is just like now. You can either come in person or you can attend virtually. Whatever works best for you.

ERICK TAYLOR: Two days, right?

EBONY HAVEN: So it depends. Erick, you're part of the education and employment committee so you would come on April 15th and then you would come again for the full council meeting which is April 30th. Does that make sense?

LIAM DOYLE: April 15th is a BESE meeting in addition to other events at the capitol so I think it would be good if we recommended a different date. I don't have a date in mind. But I think that's going to be a conflict for a couple members of that committee to attend. I think that needs to be changed now.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. Is there an amendment for the April 15th date?

KELLY MONROE: Maybe since the legislature is not in on Friday what if y'all did Fridays instead. Wednesdays is really going to be a big deal for, like I said, education, health and welfare, appropriations. That's possibly like the worse day to have that in place instead of going to the capitol. And I know some members here are going to have to leave. Bernard is going to have to be on standby. Gearry is going to have to be on standby. I know Torry is probably going to be at the capitol. I know Lauren's going to have to be there for education. You're going to miss half of your people.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you.

LAUREN WELLS: I'm in agreement with Kelly. I like the proposal for Friday. The only hiccup is another commission, Louisiana Commission for the Deaf, is April 17th as well. Just something to be mindful of.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Dr. Wells.

JILL HANO: Could we do the Friday before because you can't have the committee be after the full council meeting. That would be counterproductive.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Jill. Ebony, what were your thoughts with the discussion that's going on with the dates?

EBONY HAVEN: I will just say that this was just a suggestion that the staff had. I know there were concerns about if you guys were going to meet so far out from the full council meeting it would be hard for you guys to recollect what you discussed during those meetings, which is why we wanted to focus on the months that the full council would meet. That was the idea behind this draft. But this isn't set. This is just a suggestion. So you guys can change it to whatever you like. This is just what we thought would work best based on the feedback we received at the last quarterly meeting.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Ebony.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Just to comment on what Jill had mentioned. So let's say we do the Fridays for the committee meetings that would just put it April 3rd, April 10th and April 17th and then we would meet April 30th on the Thursday. The committee meetings wouldn't happen after. They would still be before because we wouldn't have anything the Friday of the full council

meeting, right?

BRENTON ANDRUS: Except for executive committee.

ANGELA HARMON: Is April 3rd Good Friday?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Angela. The chair recognizes Mr. Mike.

MIKE BILLINGS: I just need some clarification. Do we currently, for folks that currently come out of town, do they currently have two nights lodging or one night lodging. One night. So they won't have that one night lodging and they will be expected to be here at 8:30 in the morning, is that correct?

EBONY HAVEN: Again, this is the draft. These are suggestions. This is not set in stone.

MIKE BILLINGS: Right. I'm looking at for people from North Louisiana. That's a four-hour drive time.

RENODA WASHINGTON: This is good discussion though.

LIAM DOYLE: The question is is this the appropriate time to do this during the full council meeting. Or should we talk to the individual, is it up to the individual committees and should we discuss this later or do we continue to do it now. Because with April 15th that's education and employment specifically. So then the question is do we then have the chair of that committee or do we do it as a full council if it's just a draft. Do we talk about this now or is it better for us as individual committee members to bring up concerns to the chair and we figure it out separately from this.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I was just going to say I think the conversation is appropriate. I don't know if it's something y'all want to continue conversation ongoing but it was discussed at the last executive committee meeting, and the last council meeting, and yesterday's executive committee meeting and now again at this council. So it has been discussed. I think it should be a decision that, as it has been, going through the executive committee and the full council rather than just each chair. Because there is something, a benefit to have set dates so we know what our schedule is as opposed to running into things like we do with our ad hoc committees where we're trying to gather all these people and you get a Doodle poll, 15 dates with 30 times we're trying to figure out your availability. If there's some consistency in these dates then that has

the opportunity to set your schedules kind of like we do now. I do think it's appropriate for the conversation here because it did spill over from our last council meeting.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I just wanted to kind of echo what Brenton said. And I just shared up at the top like we used to say like the last Wednesday and Thursday of the month or something like that. So then that kind of-- up here at the top of the actual schedule it clarifies that to kind of keep consistency. So it says SDCI would be the first Wednesday of the month, et cetera, things like that. Again, to keep that consistency. So I did just want to point that out that it is at the top of your page and then share it on the screen also.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Stephanie.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I just think we need to be considerate of the people coming out of town because I was once that person. And that ride is rough especially on somebody like me. If it's somebody with a disability that's coming in from out of town just take that into consideration too. For the people that actually want to be here but have to take that ride and need a break. So that's something to take into consideration as well.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Ayden. Alaina.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Is there a possibility, I don't know what are the requirements for the distance from here has to be in order for you to be able to stay overnight the way that we currently have it. But would it be possible for us to adjust that distance? Like if we do go with the 8:30 meeting that the people who are X amount of miles away from here and it's going to take them say four hours to get here in the morning can we adjust the mileage I guess is what I'm asking. Because I'm just coming from Lafayette. It would be inconvenient but it is manageable for me given my circumstances.

EBONY HAVEN: I do want to just say the executive committee are the only people that are meeting. So it's just those five people. But I understand what you're saying. So for somebody like Renoda who's coming from Lake Charles we can adjust that. And again, this is just a recommendation. We can have the

executive committee meeting anytime throughout the quarter. We just thought it would be, the staff and I thought it would be more helpful I guess for the executive committee to meet before the council because a lot of their decisions have to go to the full council. So again, this is just suggestions. We don't have to stick to this. We can change the executive committee to the Friday before the full council meets. And then there's a virtual option at whatever time at 2:00 in the afternoon. These are just suggestions. So you guys can change it to whatever you would like it to be.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Ebony.

MIKE BILLINGS: Is the virtual, there's not a virtual option for committee chairs, is that correct?

EBONY HAVEN: Any committee chair that is an individual with a developmental disability, yes, that virtual is an option. Anybody that is not an individual with a disability if they're chairing they have to be in person.

MIKE BILLINGS: Okay. Thank you.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I was going to say so the issue is at 1:15, the activities at the capitol. How late in the evening do activities usually (inaudible).

LAUREN WELLS: So BESE can be all day. Typically there is an agenda until about 3:30 but based on discussions it can certainly extend past that. Similar capitol days as well.

LIAM DOYLE: To follow up on that. The other question we had was potentially the 17th, which is that Friday. The Commission for the Deaf usually goes from 9 to 1. So the afternoon on the 17th. Lauren and I are both on that committee or commission. If y'all maybe wanted to amend it to the Friday the 17th of April for education and employment specifically that would work better.

SPEAKER: So I think this is pretty simple. We're complicating it and we're beating a dead horse. The question here is are you fine with the way things are working. If everybody's good with meeting on the Wednesday and the Thursday then we move that forward. The goal here is to cut money. We do that by not having to pay hotel rooms. That's not realistic for everybody that's here. I think if we moved to a

virtual meeting it's going to push people into virtual meetings. Are we going to have the same culture and community feel through Zoom meetings because that's what's going to happen here. The question is do you want to continue meeting on Wednesdays and Thursdays. If not, then do you want to push it to another date that they're proposing. Does this create a hardship for too many people to bust it up like this. That's what I want to hear from you guys. Is this too hard knowing that you need to be here in a hotel. So is it easier to continue on Wednesday and Thursday as is or do you want to chop it up.

NICOLE LEARSON: Madam chair, just to be clear, in October you voted to do it this way you just didn't have dates. It's really about the dates because you already voted in October that this is the way that you're going to do it.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Would there be any objections if we give this back to the staff and have them to reach out to committee chairs to kind of talk about these dates and then bring it back? Would there any objections to that?

EBONY HAVEN: I would have to object to that. So the next meeting is in April. We won't have time to come back to y'all to get a decision. So we're going to have to either take it to the committees and for this April meeting we just put the meetings whenever the committees can meet and then come back with another schedule for July and October if that would be better. But right now we can't come back because the April meeting will be here. Does that make sense?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Ebony, I agree with you 100 percent. I'm down with everything you said. That's a great idea.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Ayden.

JILL HANO: The only reason why we're having this big discussion is right now, correct me if I'm wrong, someone in the room that's smarter than me, right now the only issue is with the schedule in April because we're in session, correct? Because July and October it's just the Wednesdays in April that are concerning because as Kelly, Liam, Lauren and Tory, and obviously Rekeesha and y'all have to be at the capitol those

dates. July and October aren't as much of an issue, correct? The April meeting that we're mainly trying to finagle, correct?

EBONY HAVEN: I was going to turn to them because they were the ones that made those comments.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Dr. Wells.

LAUREN WELLS: I think there is a lot of discussion but it sounds like really the only kind of issue that we're hearing in terms of schedule, as Jill mentioned, is likely that April 15th date. So maybe just to clear things up and then continue the conversation forward. Just a proposal and whatever that looks like for changing that one date. And then it sounds like everyone else might be in agreement with what's already proposed. So that might just be an easier solution for that one change from April 15th to Liam mentioned April 17th by 1:00 p.m. following that Louisiana Commission for the Deaf.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Dr. Wells. We're going to move forward. The pending motion that we have to adopt the dates as shown motions a change as needed. That would be the question what I just said. Is there any public comment?

EBONY HAVEN: What I have up here is to adopt the meeting schedule as presented. That would change.

NICOLE LEARSON: With the option to, that's why she was asking is there any objection to just adding with the option to change as needed. There was no objection. If you leave it this way than any other committee that has an issue would be able to change the date as well.

BRIAN BENNETT: Can I ask a question? Who would be able to change the date if it was needed?

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chairs of the committee.

BRIAN BENNETT: Okay.

ERICK TAYLOR: I motion.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Now we'll have a roll call vote. If you're in favor of the motion to adopt the new meeting schedule and dates as presented with the option to change as needed when your name is called say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Stephanie, would you please call the roll?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Billings, yes. Mr. Blunschi.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Blunschi, yes. Mr. Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Ms. Chachere.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Chachere, yes. Ms. Crain.

Mr. Doyle.

LIAM DOYLE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Doyle, yes. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Abstain.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Hano, abstain. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms. Kelly-Aduli.

CHERIE KELLY-ADULI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Kelly-Aduli, yes. Mr. Macaluso.

FRANK MACALUSO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Macaluso, yes. Mr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Meda, yes. Ms. Nguyen.

Mr. Rocca.

TORRY ROCCA: Abstain.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Rocca, abstain. Mr. Smith.

ROBBY SMITH: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Smith, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart, yes. Mr. Taylor.

Is that a vote no? Mr. Taylor, no. Mr. Williams.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Williams, yes. And Ms. Xu.

KAREN XU: Abstain.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Xu, abstain. You have 15 yeses, one no, three abstentions.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. The yeses have it and the motion is adopted. Thank you, council members. We made it through. The chair once again recognizes Ms. Angela.

ANGELA HARMON: On behalf of the executive committee I move to adopt the council's code of conduct as recommended by the staff.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Since the motion is coming from a committee it does not require a second. It is moved to adopt the council's code of conduct as recommended by staff. Is there any discussion from council members? Any public comment?

REKEESHA BRANCH: No public comment.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Okay. The question is on the executive committee recommends the full council accept the proposed code of conduct as recommended by staff. We'll have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion when your name is called say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Stephanie, can you please call the roll?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Billings, yes. Mr. Blunschi.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Blunschi, yes. Mr. Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Ms. Chachere.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Chachere, yes. Ms. Crain.

Mr. Doyle.

LIAM DOYLE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Doyle, yes. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Hano, yes. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms. Kelly-Aduli.

CHERIE KELLY-ADULI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Kelly-Aduli, yes. Mr. Macaluso.

FRANK MACALUSO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Macaluso, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda, yes. Ms. Nguyen. Mr. Rocca.

TORRY ROCCA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Rocca, yes. Mr. Smith.

ROBBY SMITH: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Smith, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart, yes. Mr. Taylor. A vote for yes is a vote to accept the code of conduct that was given to y'all at the executive committee yesterday. A vote no is to not accept it.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor, yes. Mr. Williams.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Williams, yes. And Ms. Xu.

KAREN XU: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Xu, yes. You have 19 yeses, zero noes, zero abstentions.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Stephanie. The yeses have it and the motion is adopted.

The final recommendation is regarding the executive director evaluation. And due to her job performance over the evaluation period on behalf of the executive committee I move to give the executive director a 3 percent salary increase. Because the motion is coming from a committee it does not require a second. It is moved to give the executive director a 3 percent salary increase. Is there any discussion from council members? Any public comment?

REKEESHA BRANCH: No, ma'am. Not at this time.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right. The question is on the recommendation for the executive director to

receive a 3 percent raise. We will have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion when your name is called say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Stephanie, will you please call the roll?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yes. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Abstain.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio, abstain. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Abstain.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham, abstain. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr.

Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Billings, yes. Mr.

Blunski.

AYDEN BLUNSKI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Blunski, yes. Mr.

Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Ms.

Chachere.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Chachere, yes. Ms. Crain.

Mr. Doyle.

LIAM DOYLE: Abstain.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Doyle, abstain. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Hano, yes. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms.

Kelly-Aduli.

CHERIE KELLY-ADULI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Kelly-Aduli, yes. Mr.

Macaluso.

FRANK MACALUSO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Macaluso, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda, yes. Ms. Nguyen.

Mr. Rocca.

TORRY ROCCA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Rocca, yes. Mr. Smith.

ROBBY SMITH: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Smith, yes. Ms. Stewart.
Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sorry. I just didn't hear you.
Ms. Stewart, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor, yes. Mr. Williams.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Williams, yes. Ms. Xu.

KAREN XU: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Xu, yes. You have 16
yeyes, zero noes and three abstentions.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Stephanie. The
yeyes have it and the motion is adopted. Before we
move on, Ebony, Nicole brought it to my attention the
adoption of the five-year plan.

EBONY HAVEN: The five-year plan was put out for a
45-day public comment period and you all did receive a
lot of public comment. That comment was sent to you
all like two weeks prior to this meeting and we
included all of the public comment but we also gave you
a one-page summary. But because some of it was a lot
so Stephanie condensed it to a one-page summary. So if
you all want to take any of that public comment that
you received into consideration and change anything on
your five-year plan for 2027 to 2031 now would be the
time to make those amendments if you all want to make
any amendments to your five-year plan.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Is there a motion to adopt it
so we can have discussion?

JILL HANO: I'll motion.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thanks, Jill. Is there a
second?

BRIAN BENNETT: I'll second.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Brian. It is moved
and seconded to adopt the adoption of the five-year
plan. Is there any discussion from committee members?
Any public comment?

REKEESHA BRANCH: No public comment.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes, Jill.

JILL HANO: I do have a question because why are
people-- my bad. The second call. I meant to call you
Stephanie. I just couldn't.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I just wanted to answer Jill's question. She had emailed me and then something came up and we weren't able to really talk about it. So I do want to talk about the comment that she is talking about. I believe it is, like you said, the second comment by Christy Gilmore. If you look at the packet of public comments I'll tell you specifically this is what she wrote. All I did was copy and paste. She wrote in her email to me. I put this question into Google Gemini and these are the recommendations that it gave. To answer your question as to why they would do that, I don't know. But I am giving you exactly what was commented to me and then I went and I just summarized it so that you could have a quick look at what it was that all of her questions-- because there's like 20 questions. Her questions and answers of what she thought about it. But also I wanted to give you the full comment because that is what was submitted to me. Now to answer any question about like the content of what they said I will not be able to because I don't know. I just collect the comments.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Do we have any rules or regulations about (inaudible)?

EBONY HAVEN: No. There's nothing in your bylaws or your policies and procedures that says we cannot accept feedback from artificial intelligence. If you guys want to make any rules like that we would have to I guess go into policies and procedures and discuss what the council would want.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I was going to say I'm also not an attorney and don't play one but before you would put something like that we might have to run that by legal. I don't know if we can just tell people you can't submit something that they ran through AI. They could have used AI to summarize their thoughts. If that is something y'all are looking at that we aren't overstepping and suppressing any sort of comments.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Brenton. Any public comment?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yes. There is one hand raised.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Mylinda Elliot.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chair recognizes Ms. Mylinda Elliot.

MYLINDA ELLIOT: Good morning. I'm sure y'all are

tired of me but it would be a real problem for somebody like me if I couldn't use AI. I use it for my notes. I use it for organization. I use it to sometimes put words together. Again, just my two cents worth.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Ms. Elliot. The question is on to adopt the five-year plan as presented. We will have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion when your name is called say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Stephanie, can you call the roll please.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr.

Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Billings, yes. Mr.

Blunschi.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Blunschi, yes. Mr.

Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Ms.

Chachere.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Chachere, yes. Ms. Crain.

Mr. Doyle.

LIAM DOYLE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Doyle, yes. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Abstain.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Hano abstains. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms.

Kelly-Aduli.

CHERIE KELLY-ADULI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Kelly-Aduli, yes. Mr.

Macaluso.

FRANK MACALUSO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Macaluso, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda, yes. Ms. Nguyen.
Mr. Rocca.

TORRY ROCCA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Rocca, yes. Mr. Smith.

ROBBY SMITH: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Smith, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor, yes. Mr. Williams.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Williams, yes. And Ms. Xu.

KAREN XU: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Xu, yes. You have 18
yeeses, zero noes and one abstention.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Stephanie. The
yeeses have it and the motion is adopted. We were
supposed to break at 11:15. Did you guys want to power
through to lunch and let Ebony do her director's report
or do you guys want to break now? All right.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: I was just going to say could we
just break for lunch now since it's kind of lunch time
or is the food not there yet?

RENODA WASHINGTON: The food is not here yet. If
there's no objection, Ebony.

JILL HANO: I have a question. I'm trying to get
my thoughts. The reason why I abstained is was the
point of the public comment, and I don't want this to
hold our day up because I see the error of my ways, but
were we supposed to like review the public comment and
then before we adopted the plan were we supposed to
like go through the plan and then change it as we saw
fit based on the public comment?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. That was the reason why we sent
it out early. You guys should have reviewed it. And
if you wanted to make any changes you come prepared to
suggest those changes to the full council today.

JILL HANO: I'm very sorry. I didn't come prepared
and I apologize. Very out of character.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Jill. Go ahead
Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay, guys. My report is white today
because we had some issues with our printing. Normally
it's gray but it is on white paper in your packet. I'm

just going to highlight a couple of things from my report. The first thing I do want to point out is your program performance report that we have to turn in every year to the Office for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities was submitted on December 17th well before the December 30th deadline. And we should hear about approval for your PPR by at least spring of this year.

Appropriations. I kind of wanted to mention, because I think when I wrote my report the house hadn't met yet, but on January 22nd the house passed an appropriation completing FY26 appropriations and so now it's going to the senate. So all DD act programs in that budget that they approved on the 22nd, including DD Councils, were all level funded. The FY26 appropriation also avoids major cuts to the other DD act programs, education, housing and SNAP which we know are all important for individuals with disabilities. The senate and house have until Saturday January 31st to come to an agreement or we will be in another partial government shutdown.

LaCAN. I kind of want to highlight LaCAN. Right now the LaCAN leaders and Families Helping Families centers are well underway with planning their roundtables. We have released the schedule for the roundtables so I want to encourage you all as our chair did yesterday for full participation in our roundtables this year. If you look at the schedule some of them are holding them virtually and then some of them are holding them hybrid. So we'll be there in person and they'll have a virtual option. You don't have to go to your region's roundtable if their date and time don't work. You can attend any of the roundtables because we're going to be presenting the same information and it's on the council's advocacy agenda. So we'll be talking about those three items that you all have on your agenda. Just encourage you to please mark your calendars and attend those LaCAN roundtables.

I also wanted to let you all know that right now we have a vacancy for a LaCAN leader in region four. That's the Lafayette region. So if you guys know any family members or more so an individual with a disability who would want to take on the responsibility of being a LaCAN leader in region four we would love

for you guys to have them apply. We did send out information about the LaCAN leader position I think a couple weeks ago. You can find the application on that LADDC newsletter.

Technically the next thing I'm going to talk about is going to be included in my next report for April but I was really excited that the DD network really collaborated very well this past month with the Speak Up Stand Up Summit. I don't know if you guys were able to participate in that summit. But it was a three-day virtual summit specifically for self-advocates. And so the DD network got an opportunity to reintroduce ourselves. So I was able to reintroduce the council to the disability community and so was Disability Rights and our other sister agency LSUHDC. The three-day summit was amazing.

And then general information. Our new website launched on October 22nd. If you guys haven't had an opportunity to go and look at the website please do that. It's very user-friendly. It's way more organized and easier to navigate. But we'd also like for you all if there's feedback you want to give us we can always go back to Gator Works and make any adjustments on anything that you guys see that's out of place. But I encourage you if you haven't done so already to go and check out the website.

The last thing I wanted to mention was just be on the lookout. I already mentioned this but as soon as the new members are officially appointed I'll be sending out information for the orientation. Again this year I'll be doing the lunch and learns. And any member of the council is welcome to attend. Even our state DD reps. If you guys want to attend our lunch and learns please do so. I will be sending out the dates and times as soon as those members are officially appointed.

And starting in April, I know I kind of mentioned this last time. I'm going to start hosting a self-advocate training for the upcoming council meetings. And that's just basically to better support our self-advocates on our council. I want to make sure you guys are comfortable with the votes that we're doing. Except for the ones that are out of my control. But the set votes that we're going to be doing on each

agenda I want to make sure that our self-advocates, number one, understand what they're voting for. But also understand what a yes vote means, what a no vote means. I'm going to have trainings for our self-advocates. But again, any council member is welcome to attend those trainings. Just be on the lookout. That's all I have, chair, unless there are questions.

JILL HANO: My new picture is not on the website.

EBONY HAVEN: We can get that fixed Jill.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Any other questions from council members on the report? I have a question Ebony. Are you able to ensure that all (inaudible) that orientation lunch and learn? Because I want to make sure everyone goes to that because we can't hold council members accountable for things they don't know. I just want to make sure everyone goes to that.

EBONY HAVEN: Since you guys are volunteers I can't force this as mandatory because everyone's a volunteer. All I can do is try. And to me like the lunch time period is the best maybe time for everyone. That 12 to 1 time period. I try to make it convenient but I can't make it mandatory. Since you all are volunteers I can only put out the dates and whoever can show up, show up.

RENODA WASHINGTON: I just want to encourage everyone if you can just please try and join that. If we're going to move forward together united as a council it's important you know what's expected. I understand we're all volunteers but this is something we're passionate about. So just put that in the forefront to just be a part of these things so that you can really, really fulfill the role that you're in. Any other questions? All right. The report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is the budget report. The chair recognizes Ebony Haven for that report.

EBONY HAVEN: The budget report is also in your packets. It shows the expenditures for the first quarter and then each line of the second quarter. So for the second quarter there are a couple of things that I want to highlight. Operating services is one. You'll notice an increase in October and that's because we had to pay multiple Xerox machine invoices at once so that's the cause of the inflation for the month of

October. But also in December you will also notice that it's even more and that's due to the council having to pay dues to our National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities. Those dues are 11,000-dollars. Just so you all will know. That is the cause of the inflated cost for October and December.

Also I just wanted to mention in the IAT acquisitions column or row you'll notice a credit that we received. I know Erick is always looking for the red. I want to make sure I address the red for you Erick. We actually received a credit from the Office of Technology Services because we were paying for phone lines at our old office on Main Street downtown. And so we noticed they were still charging us for those lines and we got them to issue us a credit. For the full quarter you'll see that we have basically a credit of 97-dollars because they're still charging us but that credit is basically taking care of those bills. So you will still see a credit of 97-dollars at the end of the quarter. That's all I have to highlight, Renoda, unless anybody has any questions.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Ebony. Any questions? Any discussion?

SPEAKER: Ebony, so I see we went down. The salaries were actually 40,000 in October and then they dropped to 36,000 in November. Did we lose staff?

EBONY HAVEN: No. That's because we were paid three times.

RENODA WASHINGTON: All right. If there's no other questions from council members the report requires no action and will be placed on file. All right. Lunch is not here so we will start with the committee reports. The next item of business is our committee reports. Our first report is from Act 378.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Hi everyone. This is Bambi. Can you guys hear me?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Okay. The Act 378 subcommittee met yesterday and we do not have any recommendations for the council to consider. We did spend time reviewing fiscal year 26 second quarter data for the programs within the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and behavioral health as

well as the aging and adult services and the SPAS program through the Arc of Louisiana. And these reports can be found linked on our committee agenda on the council's meeting web page if you would like to review.

Looking at all of the reports I'm happy to report that all of the local governing entities are on target with their expenditures for individual and family support, the consumer care resources, the supported living and flexible family fund. Acadiana Area Human Service District, which is in region four, was allowed the opportunity to share a success story with the committee to provide a connection and a clear outlook on how the services that we talk about, that we see the numbers each meeting how they really benefit the families and the people in need.

So during OCDD's report a committee member requested a follow up from the last quarterly meeting of the excess use of the other category. We have a category that was listed as other in our individual and family support expenditure report that we get every year annually. And the potential for inaccuracies. So OCDD stated that they will provide a follow up in the next quarterly meeting after getting with the LGEs to come up with more appropriate categories to add to their list to avoid the over usage of the other category. And that concludes my report.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you so much, Bambi. Are there any questions from council members on the report? Any public comment?

REKEESHA BRANCH: No public comment.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is our report from the self-determination community inclusion committee. The chair recognizes Jill Hano.

JILL HANO: Because this is a lot Alaina is going to read my report.

ALAINA CHACHERE: The self-determination and community inclusion committee met yesterday and there was one recommendation for the council's consideration. The committee discussed activities to recommend to the planning ad hoc committee for inclusion in the council's FY2027 action plan under goals one and two. This plan will begin October 2026. The

self-determination and community inclusion committee recommends the planning ad hoc committee consider the following activities in the fiscal year 27 action plan and offers this recommendation to the full council for consideration. Increase the funding for Youth Leadership Forum in the amount of 15,000. Training to focus on talking to children and adults with IDD, individuals with developmental disabilities, on health and exercise. Create a resource guide by compiling emergency plans for parishes especially as it relates to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Partner with other organizations to distribute the parish plans and work with families on how to create their own plans. Create a curriculum on disability history to share with schools and families. And continue funding for People First trainings.

We were unable to discuss contractual activities under goals one and two in our plan due to time constraints. You can find information on these activities in your status report included in your meeting packet. However, there is a very important update I would like to bring to the attention of the council. The council's contract for the activity on sexual education and women's preventative health has not been signed by LSU and they have not started any work on this initiative. LSU expressed concerns for the HIPPA language in the contract and requested a change. LDH legal informed council staff that language needed to remain in the contract. At this time we are waiting on LSU's legal team to make a decision on moving forward with the contract.

We also received a few updates from Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities or Medicaid or OCDD Medicaid Office of Aging and Adult Services OAAS. Office of Aging and Adult Services provided the committee with an update on their community choice waiver wait list contract which will look at how to move the waiver towards a needs-based direction. They also discussed a possible update to the community options waiver to ensure flexibilities on spending those dollars. Medicaid provided updates on Act 421 and the need for additional administrative dollars to complete the assessment. OCDD discussed a potential name change, funding being allocated for the state and

regional advisory committees and the rate study. The rate study has not been released but they are projecting the release of this information before the start of the legislative session on March 9th. If the study has not been released to the public by the council's next meeting the committee discussed asking the LDH secretary to attend and provide information on the delay of information that was listed in the study.

JILL HANO: Thank you, Alaina. On behalf of self-determination I move the council recommend these five items for the FY27 action plan. And there was already a motion from our committee.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The motion does not require a second. Any discussion from council members?

JILL HANO: I don't know if this is the right time but after I talked about this last night I want to add something for consideration for the FY27 plan. Do I do that now Nicole?

NICOLE LEARSON: Yes.

JILL HANO: Okay. So can I add that in our FY27 plan some kind of voting training for people with disabilities? I know that would go along with goal one I believe. Would that be a motion? Unofficially I want to add something. I want to add another item to this. Can I motion to amend the motion from the self-determination committee? Okay. To add an activity to goal one. And off the top of my head some sort of voting training for people with developmental disabilities.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Is there a second?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I'll second.

RENODA WASHINGTON: It is moved and seconded to make a change. To make a change to an activity on goal one on voting training for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Is there any discussion from council members? Only on the change.

REKEESHA BRANCH: No public comment.

RENODA WASHINGTON: And there's no public comment. All right. The question is to make a change to include an activity for goal one on voting training for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We will have a roll call vote only for the change. If you are in favor of the motion when your name is called say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say

abstain. Stephanie, would you please call the role?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms.

Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr.

Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Billings, yes. Mr.

Blunski.

AYDEN BLUNSKI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Blunski, yes. Mr.

Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Ms.

Chachere.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Chachere, yes. Ms. Crain.

Mr. Doyle.

LIAM DOYLE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Doyle, yes. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Hano, yes. Ms. Harmon.

JILL HANO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms.

Kelly-Aduli.

CHERIE KELLY-ADULI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Kelly-Aduli, yes. Mr.

Macaluso.

FRANK MACALUSO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Macaluso, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda, yes. Ms. Nguyen.

Mr. Rocca.

TORRY ROCCA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Rocca, yes. Mr. Smith.

ROBBY SMITH: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Smith, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor, yes. Mr. Williams.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Williams, yes. And Ms. Xu.

KAREN XU: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Xu, yes. Nineteen yeses, zero noes, zero abstentions.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Stephanie. The yeses have it and the motion is adopted. Now we will move back to adopt the full amended motion. Is there any discussion from council members? Any public comment?

REKEESHA BRANCH: No public comment.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The question is on the amended motion. We will now have a roll call vote. If you are in favor of the motion when your name is called say yes. If you are opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Stephanie, please call the roll.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Billings, yes. Mr. Blunschi.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Blunschi, yes. Mr. Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Ms. Chachere.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Chachere, yes. Ms. Crain. Mr. Doyle.

LIAM DOYLE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Doyle, yes. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Hano, yes. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms.

Kelly-Aduli.

CHERIE KELLY-ADULI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Kelly-Aduli, yes. Mr.

Macaluso.

FRANK MACALUSO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Macaluso, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda, yes. Ms. Nguyen.

Mr. Rocca.

TORRY ROCCA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Rocca, yes. Mr. Smith.

ROBBY SMITH: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Smith, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor, yes. Mr. Williams.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Williams, yes. And Ms. Xu.

KAREN XU: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Xu, yes. Nineteen yeses,
zero noes and zero abstentions.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The yeses have it and the
motion is adopted. If there is no objection the
meeting will recess for lunch.

{Break}

RENODA WASHINGTON: Now it is 1:13. The meeting
will come to order. Hope everybody enjoyed lunch. The
next item of business is the report from the education
and employment committee. The chair recognizes Brooke
Stewart for the report.

BROOKE STEWART: Hello everyone. Can you hear me
okay?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Hi Brooke.

BROOKE STEWART: Hi. I just wanted to make sure.
I switched my speakers because it's been a little low
all morning. The education and employment committee
met yesterday and has one recommendation to recommend
to the full council. The education and employment
committee would like to recommend the planning ad hoc
committee consider the following activities for
inclusion in the federal year 27 action plan and offers
this recommendation to the council for consideration.
Create information/training on how social security

works so that people with disabilities can work and be compensated fairly. Business highlight of vendors and employment. Trainings and seminars for vendors on employment and how to support people with developmental disabilities. Including business highlights of vendors and employers and benefits of hiring people with disabilities. Pipeline for recipients of SSDI and SSI that want to work full time and transition from those services. A job fair sponsorship/funding. Training on benefits planning which includes who to contact, etc. Providing support and trainings for early childhood for children with disabilities. Transition into K through 12 space building in the supports specifically for the moderate to significant needs starting in middle school grades.

We also received important updates from LRS, the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. The state fiscal year 27 budget has been set and LRS will be receiving 12 million in state general funds. Initially it was not expected that the temporary funds of 4 million-dollars would be included but it was. The committee also got updates on contracts for goal three of the fiscal year 26 action plan. Members are encouraged to check the quarterly status update and linked documents in the agenda for details on each activity.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Brooke. The motion doesn't need a second. Is there any discussion from council members? Any public comment? The question is on the motion. We will now have a roll call vote. If you're in favor of the motion that is on the screen when your name is called say yes. If you're opposed say no. If you abstain say abstain. Stephanie, can you call the roll please?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. Dr. Barovechio.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Barovechio, yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Abstain.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham, abstain. Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Bennett, yes. Mr. Billings.

MIKE BILLINGS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Billings, yes. Mr. Blunschi.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Blunschi, yes. Mr. Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Ms. Chachere.

ALAINA CHACHERE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Chachere, yes. Ms. Crain. Mr. Doyle.

LIAM DOYLE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Doyle, yes. Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Hano, yes. Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Harmon, yes. Ms.

Kelly-Aduli. Mr. Macaluso.

FRANK MACALUSO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Macaluso, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda, yes. Ms. Nguyen.

Mr. Rocca.

TORRY ROCCA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Rocca, yes. Mr. Smith.

ROBBY SMITH: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Smith, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor, yes. Mr. Williams.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Williams, yes. Ms. Xu.

KAREN XU: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: You have 17 yeses, zero noes and one abstention.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Stephanie. The yeses have it and the motion is adopted. Also thank you, again, Brooke. Are there any questions from council members on that report? Further questions? Any public comment? The report requires no action and will be placed on file.

The next item of business is a report from

Disability Rights Louisiana. The chair recognizes Tory Rocca

TORRY ROCCA: Thank you. The report is in your packet. I'll give you some brief updates from my report. Our client assistance program which helps people with disabilities who are receiving or applying for services from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and American Indian Rehabilitation Services. It helps them understand their rights and benefits from the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It's currently assisting 31 people in obtaining and maintaining and advocating for appropriate (inaudible).

Our community living ombudsman program where we have ombudsmen advocate for people with developmental disabilities in ICFDD across the state. In the second quarter, which was July 1st of 25 (inaudible) our ombudsmen made 421 visits to the ICFDDs, received 279 requests for assistance and they took action on all the 279 requests for assistance. The grant year is July 1st, 2025. (Inaudible) the second quarter.

Our SILAP, supported independent living advocacy program which serves people with developmental disabilities who are receiving OCDD waiver services and supports. As of December 25 that program is assisting (inaudible) maintaining appropriate and necessary supports.

Finally our financial access resources program which provides financial coaching and case management services to assist formally incarcerated people with disabilities to overcome employment and resource barriers. That program (inaudible) provided financial coaching and case management to (Inaudible). If you have any questions I'm happy to answer them.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Tory. Any questions from council members on the report? Ayden.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I have a question about social security and being able to work. Who is responsible for our pay and our increase of wages when we do work? Our decrease, excuse me.

TORRY ROCCA: We have some people in our office who do social security work. I am not knowledgeable enough to answer the question of who's responsible for that. But we may have people in our office who can actually answer that. I will give you our number and you can

call the office and we'll see if we can help you sort that out. We do have some people who do social security work but I don't know the answer.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Thank you.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chair recognizes Mr. Bennett.

BRIAN BENNETT: Tory, the FAIR program, does that serve individuals statewide?

TORRY ROCCA: I should have been more clear about that. It is a New Orleans area program (inaudible). In the past it was funded with grants (inaudible) and other private grants so it's not statewide. It is New Orleans and also Jefferson Parish. (Inaudible) we would like to have statewide but funding wise (inaudible).

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

TORRY ROCCA: The program where we monitor their facilities and make sure the people in the facilities aren't being abused?

KAREN XU: Does only the disability guys work around this area, like oversee and monitor?

TORRY ROCCA: That's us. I don't know if anybody else is monitoring. We have a fairly unique authority to do that. Our system's created by federal law. We have the ability to go into facilities and monitor them if we think something wrong is happening. There's nobody else I know of that has the authority we have. So yeah, if the state isn't running an ombudsmen program to do this that's just us.

BERNARD BROWN: You have APS (inaudible) to extend the rights as well as the licensing agency which is Health Standards. (Inaudible) from an oversight perspective that's not the only avenue. But to Tory's point, they are the only ones that (inaudible).

TORRY ROCCA: And enforcing things because I know our attorneys file a lawsuit or our ombudsmen reporting something to Health Standards. We don't have enforcement authority. We can monitor and things like that. We're the agency that does that but in terms of enforcement it's either we bring a lawsuit with our attorneys or we call Health Standards.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Any further questions from council members? Any public comment? Hearing none. The report requires no action and will be placed on

file. The next item of business is the report of the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs. The chair recognizes Liam.

LIAM DOYLE: So the first thing that we want to go over from GODA for 2025 to 26 is last December we held our annual GOLD awards. This annual award ceremony recognizes the disability community around the state. We had 13 individuals who received GOLD awards and 43 artists who submitted in the inclusive art contest. Our theme this year was creativity meets advocacy. It's always a great event. It's held at the Old State Capitol hopefully every December. We try to make it every December and it's always a great event.

The big update that I have for y'all is the state capitol will be under construction for the next five years. Starting in December it's going through 2030. Technically a five-year window. If you are planning on coming to the capitol with a group or as individuals who have disabilities, aides or anything like that we ask you please let our office know in advance so that we can make sure we have additional staff from the capitol that are there to offer any assistance needed. The information is on there but just to let you know the east breezeway is now serving as the public entrance. Everything is clearly labeled. This will be through the duration of construction. And the east breezeway is located on the east side of the building and there is an automatic door opener that will remain operational for those who need it. There is a map on the back and my information is on the back. Again, if you have any additional questions or if you know certainly for yellow shirt days, anything like that during session, especially with a large group and you feel like you may need additional support while you're there, please let us know in advance so we can make those arrangements. I sit on the construction committee meetings and so it's a very easy ask for me to say hey, we have a yellow shirt day coming up. Let's get some additional capitol staff ready to receive y'all. So just let me know as soon as you can. Obviously those pop up relatively quickly during session. Every public meeting I go to now until session starts that's my spiel for that. Please let us know as soon as you can so I can make those

arrangements.

We have the 2026 GACDA dates. The next one is Wednesday, February 25th. That's going to be at the senate AP room on the first floor of the capitol. There's some additional information there.

That statewide accessibility update. GODA continues to work with Rikki David and other state agencies to make sure that we are complying with all of your metrics. From my understanding in speaking with the state ADA coordinator as a state we are doing very well to meet our deadlines. I don't think there have been any major hiccups here and there, so I don't want to over speak, but I believe we're still on track to be fully compliant by April of this year with accessibility standards that relate to the executive order from 2025.

Legislative session update. The big dates obviously to know, Monday March 9th is when they convene and they will close on Monday June 1st. We will continue to work with all of our state agency partners including the DD Council to offer any assistance that we can during that process. In terms of disability awareness day 2026 in this report I wrote a couple weeks ago it says we are in the very early planning stages. We do have a date for that. It's going to be Monday, May 4th and it's going to be an all-day event both at the capitol and the museum. I do not have that in this report but I will send out a full update via our newsletter. And also by the April meeting we will have a full agenda that I can share with y'all that will be finalized, ready to go for both the panel discussion like we did last year and the day's events at the capitol. (Inaudible) discussion and the welcome in the morning and then shift to the capitol in the afternoon to meet with legislators. And to have that whole process a little bit different than we did last year to where it was one after the other. We're going to have a little bit more space in between to make things run a little smoother. Like I said, with that more information will come. And if y'all as an agency, as an organization want to participate please let me know because we can make sure to get you tables and table space as soon as possible because that is a hot commodity during session. Other than that let

me know. Reach out if you need anything.

MIKE BILLINGS: What's the scope of the construction for?

LIAM DOYLE: It is internal. Essentially they're doing floor by floor for the next several years. They had changes in terms of their schedule but my understanding it's primarily internal and they're going floor by floor. Right now they're roughly in the-- they haven't gotten to floor ten yet. So the (inaudible) first floors and they're doing improvements on a needs base, whatever. And it's just through the next couple of years they're going to knock it out.

MIKE BILLINGS: Any changes for accommodating people with disabilities?

LIAM DOYLE: I cannot speak to that. That's part of the reason why I sit on that committee. Not necessarily to make changes to the construction plan. That's not my role. My role is to make sure while the construction is happening these considerations are made. I can't really speak to any plans because I don't know the architects and I don't have a seat on that.

ERICK TAYLOR: The thing is you just answered the question a little bit. Have y'all ever looked at that wheelchair ramp, that big steep one that you can slide down by 20 feet?

LIAM DOYLE: Which one?

ERICK TAYLOR: It's on the side when you go to the state capitol, that steep one.

LIAM DOYLE: I can make a note of that and I'll look into it for you Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: Please do.

RENODA WASHINGTON: 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 report of the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs. Ms. Cheri Crain is absent but her report is in yellow. You can read it at your leisure.

We'll move on to the next item of business which is the report from LSU Human Development Center. The chair recognizes Ms. Constance for the report.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I'm just going to go through and highlight some things just related to some things I

heard the council talking about. And if you have any questions about things I don't highlight I'll try to answer them if I can. In our early childhood initiatives they have been providing childcare services for over 200 infants and toddlers. Forty-four have disabilities and then 18 of those are experiencing homelessness.

When we look at our education, transition and community initiatives area I just wanted to highlight last year y'all may remember the discussion about the change in testing requirements and there was a new (inaudible) would no longer qualify to take LEAP Connect. And so we are in the partnership, working on a partnership with LDOE to complete some training and coaching in order to support teachers in supporting those students who are making that transition from LEAP Connect to regular LEAP assessments.

Within our paycheck program they are working with 19 transition students. They're supporting job coaching for six students in a work-based learning experience. Some of the places that they're actually being able to support these children in businesses like (inaudible) Theater, the Royal Sonesta in New Orleans, Louisiana Children's Museum and St. Bernard's government offices.

And then as it relates to WIPA, which is the west south central work incentives planning. I don't know what the agency is right now. But it's related to social security. So they have a total of 86 active caseloads of social security beneficiaries that they've put (inaudible). Thirty-nine of those were eligible for those services. They have 12 that are pending verification. Fourteen that they engaged in those individualized services with. And 15 that they've done intensive benefits planning. That's pretty much it for my updates. If anyone has any questions.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you. Any questions from council members? The chair recognizes Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: You said y'all deal with kids.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: The one about the early childhood?

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes. What does that say?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So our early childhood project area, they have partnerships with children in different

daycares in the New Orleans public school area. And so they go into the daycares and they provide coaching, they provide trainings for teachers really to support inclusive practices and being able to support those teachers with supporting the children being able (inaudible). And they'll offer different trainings as well for family members that they can participate in as well. So it's kind of family as well as child.

ERICK TAYLOR: The child that's got a disability?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: It's overall but we do have a focus on disability. So in the update I mentioned they have 44 that are enrolled in all the childcare centers that they support, 44 are identified as having a disability.

ERICK TAYLOR: Thank you. Chair, if you don't mind me asking a question real quick.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

ERICK TAYLOR: Does anyone on here deals with adults that have disabilities?

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Office of Aging and Adult Services. We have some programming for adults with disabilities that are homeless.

ERICK TAYLOR: What do y'all do to basically get them started?

GEARRY WILLIAMS: There's a process with Louisiana Housing Corporation. We have programs called money follows the person (inaudible) another program that we have called permanent supportive housing. Each one of those programs address individuals with adult-onset disabilities and provide housing. Not only housing but permanent supportive housing. Connecting those individuals with affordable rental properties but also wraparound services to help them maintain housing whether that be financial literacy, whether that be-- it's an array of different services individualized for the person to not only again, find housing but remain housed.

ERICK TAYLOR: Okay. And I'm not going to hold y'all up. If they don't have a disability or nothing like that do y'all have something in place? What would they have to do to have something in place?

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Without a disability--

ERICK TAYLOR: No. I'm saying with a disability but you don't have no income or nothing.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: That's part of the process as well. We gather information and determine Medicaid eligibility.

ERICK TAYLOR: Okay. Thank you.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I just wanted some clarification on the children and infants. Eighteen of them experiencing homelessness. These children, they are homeless?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: The families are.

LAMARTINE MEDA: The families are. Okay.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Are there any further 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 report from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. The chair recognizes Ms. Bayham for her report.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Hi everybody. My report is on the bright pink paper. I'll start with budget performance. I have a lot of numbers in the report but the bottom line is our expenditures or our payments are increasing, which means that we're providing more services to individuals and our applications are up from this time last year. So we're doing a great job in terms of increasing the number of participants that we're serving.

In terms of our federal budget they have not approved the final federal budget but Louisiana is set at this point to receive approximately \$73.5-million in vocational rehabilitation. Last year we kept about 71 or 72-million of that so we're waiting to see what our federal allocation will be this year. And hopefully with the additional state general funds that we've been receiving we'll continue to be able to increase the amount that we're able to pull down from the federal government. And we also received a 300,000-dollar grant specifically for supported employment.

In terms of performance given our staffing situation and our budget situation I'm very proud of our staff in terms of our performance. In terms of the whole country we were in the second quartile for all of our performance indicators. We also were able to resolve both of our federal corrective action plans. So we are no longer on any federal corrective action plan. The last one that we resolved was for

timeliness. So we are required to determine eligibility within 60 days, write a plan within 90 days and we have to be at 90 percent to be considered compliant and we had fell below that. But for the first quarter, because that's the data that we have at this point, we were at 94.4 percent for eligibility and 95.9 percent for writing plans. So we're very excited that we are no longer on any federal corrective action plans.

In terms of Sara. I talked about Sara in several of our meetings. It's our communication software that we've been trying to procure. We have gone through the whole procurement process and so now we're in the implementation phase. And so we're very excited about this communication software which will allow our staff to be able to better communicate with our participants and send out messages and reminders and get documents signed. It will be able to do a whole bunch of things for us. And hopefully reduce the administrative burden for some of our rehabilitation counselors because this software also puts all the communications directly into the case management system so we don't have to manually put in those things.

We are in a state plan modification year. So our state plan, which your state plan is basically how you request funds from the federal government. It's a four-year cycle but every two years we have to do an update. And so this year we are doing an update. And they just actually this week have extended the day for that to April the 30th. But basically Louisiana Works has to complete their updates and then it will go out for public comment. So we will definitely identify everyone when that plan is up for public comment.

In terms of preemployment transition services the major update I wanted to give on that we do have our preemployment transition services staffing contract in the Shreveport area with Easterseals. That one is up and running. We've hired three rehabilitation counselors who are responsible for all of the coordination activities for preETS in the Shreveport area. We also have contracted with Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans for the New Orleans area or the New Orleans region for us which is region one. They are still in the hiring process but we've

gotten through the contracting process and now we're at the hiring process for that. And we're currently trying to look for a contractor for our Baton Rouge area. So those are my major updates but happy to take any questions or talk about anything.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Melissa. Are there any questions from council members on the report? Any public comment?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm sorry. I just have a question. For LRC, the council, the meeting was I think last week on January 22nd. Do you know when the next meeting is going to be?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I can find out for you. This meeting used to be after the LRC and so when we do this report that's the next--

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Right. I was just curious and I figured this was set before that meeting happened.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Our meetings fall the same. It's the Thursday before this one.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Got you. Perfect.

KAREN XU: I just wonder I saw you have an independent living program (inaudible).

MELISSA BAYHAM: The independent living program. So that is a program that we actually subgrant to the independent living centers throughout the state. But they provide referrals, resources, things like that to keep people in their homes.

KAREN XU: They just provide reference, information?

MELISSA BAYHAM: For the most part. But they do provide some instruction and things like that. Now we also have two independent living programs. The other program is older blind for individuals over the age of 55 who have experienced blindness. That particular independent living program we actually provide assistive technology with that program. If someone needs assistive technology to stay in their home they receive it.

LIAM DOYLE: Melissa, the next meeting is April 23rd is the next LRC meeting.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you. Any other comments? Hearing none. The report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is the report of the Office of Public Health. The chair

recognizes Dr. Patti Barovechio for the report.

PATTI BAROVECHIO: Good afternoon everybody. The Bureau of Family Health sits within the Office of Public Health and we administer the state's title five program which is a state and federal partnership. These funds are designed to ensure the welfare and health of mothers, infants, children and children and youth with special healthcare needs. Our OPH report outlines many of the programs that support children and youth with special healthcare needs in our state. And in areas of the state where subspecialty services are needed we still have some children special health services, pediatric subspecialty clinics. If you want to scroll down. I'm not going to hit every point because we do a lot of programming. We do a transportation stipend for families. These have to be eligible families. So they have to apply through-- Medicaid eligible families who've already applied through Medicaid and for whatever reason that transportation support is not adequate to meet the needs. And they can apply for a children special health services transportation stipend.

We also have a family resource center that supports children and youth with special healthcare needs and their families. They work in collaboration with our birth defects monitoring network which is our birth defects surveillance for the state. And we do outreach to every family that has a child that was identified through surveillance with a birth defects or extreme prematurity even though they may not have a birth defect. This is a really proactive way to reach families when they need linkage to these services and supports during that early developmental period.

We also work with Families Helping Families to build provider capacity, to support families in the community. They work in tandem with our family resource center. They are kind of our mainstay referral for families to get that peer support and that resource and referral service at the community level. We also administer the state's newborn hearing screening program as well as genetic screening. And so we touch almost every newborn in the state. There is a Louisiana Hands and Voices. That's a peer support group for families that have a child who's Deaf or Hard

of Hearing. So if you're interested in that you can reach out to that contact. So you can see the statistics for children identified through birth defects surveillance. So they do a lot of work so we can proactively address these trends that we see through surveillance.

We do administer the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf. And you can see where if you need an ALS translator there is information there to contact and access that resource. We do home visiting. And these are for eligible families. We have a parents as teachers program as well as nurse family partnership. And if you want more information about that, really good programs to support families during that early development period.

And I think kind of last but not least we have the provider-to-provider consultation line which is a support for healthcare providers, especially those in primary care, who are facing or dealing with behavioral health and mental health issues. It is a support line to where providers can contact the PPCL group and they will talk immediately to a licensed clinical social worker. And if they need further assistance with a diagnosis or medication management they can be connected to a psychiatrist. And this is for pediatric and perinatal populations.

And then I think probably the last part of it is our block grant title five that kind of explains there kind of like the over teen. That keeps all of these programs in compliance and reporting and keeps our work plans up to date. So that is a little bit about what the title five block grant is.

And then last but not least I think is the project SOAR which is Screen Often and Accurately Refer. That has been a grant administered by the bureau to improve the well child visit screenings in the state. And we've partnered with healthcare providers as well as families to strengthen the system of services that includes screening and timely referral when risk is identified through those services. If there's any questions all the details to what I just quickly overviewed should be in that report.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Dr. Patti. Are there questions from council members on the report?

Any public comment? 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 Bernard Brown for the report.

BERNARD BROWN: All right. We'll jump right in. I'll start with a couple of things that unfortunately are not on the agenda. Sorry about that. But they are hot topics. The first is to give you guys an update about the OCDD summit that happened last Tuesday. Just some background on attendance. We had over 300 people in attendance. We had vendors, advocates and provider associations. We actually had a virtual stream and we had about 1,000 people all in all tuning into the live stream. At one particular time I think we averaged 500 at the same time. I will mention to say that was a pretty good success for our first time out. There was a survey that was attached that we asked everyone to complete with a QR code for it. You can access the agenda from offline. Please complete the survey because we're looking on ways to improve it or modify for next year because the intent is to have it again. Just wanted to give that little plug.

The other thing there's legislation that's going to be proposed out of the department for a name change to OCDD. We're looking for stakeholder engagement on that. The way we're going to roll that out right now is we're soliciting options for names and once we get a couple of names we'll put out a survey where everyone in the community can vote on the name change or the suggested name options for the department. If you have any suggestions for name changes please shoot that to OCDDinfo@la.gov. We'll collect those and mull them around and talk to some of our stakeholder groups.

A couple of caveats. One, it has to start with the office. The office of this. The office of that. Just from a naming standpoint we have to have that as part of the department. And also be mindful of acronyms. We don't want to have a six-letter acronym because OCDD is a lot and I would hate to have OCDMBGLGSH. Just be mindful of that. Other than that I'm excited to see what we get. And I'm just excited to see what we land on.

Next, down to the agenda. Just wanted to give a

couple updates. Our value-based payment initiative that was associated with the American Rescue Plan Act dollars has been underway. Just wanted to give y'all a quick update. We paid out 600,000-dollars to support coordination agencies to help with person-centered planning. We're slated to put out another 5.5-million to providers for value-based incentives around staff retention as well as technology improvements into the provision of services. If I put that in laymen's terms basically we're looking at incentivizing providers who can keep their staff. Whatever they're doing they're doing it well enough to keep their staff for an identified period of time. But then we're also looking for providers who are innovative, right. Not necessarily innovative from the standpoint of having cool things that the waiver recipients can use but incorporating technology into how they operate services to make it easier for them to document or for them to actually provide services for the people in the waiver. Those two are out.

We actually have another couple that are about to roll out. One of those is a support coordination survey. So it's an engagement survey that we're going to be engaging our advocacy group to develop. The way we're going to roll that one out is that each waiver recipient we'll ask them to complete this survey. Just kind of an overall performance evaluation on the support coordination agency. Depending on those results we will consider payouts. All of this is on the website for the fine-tune details of how the incentives work. They've been on there for about the last year. But we're finally getting to implement them so we're excited about that.

Another big thing that's near and dear to me is oversight. We are increasing our oversight of providers in terms of compliance with our policies and manuals and regs. I know you guys heard me talk about this before with the legislative auditor and (inaudible) control over the waiver. We're concerned that if we continue to get these type of findings we're jeopardizing our ability to provide waiver services, right. So what we're doing at OCDD is we're actually going out to provider agencies and evaluating and monitoring them to assure they're following OCDD and

federal guidelines in terms of documentation and other things.

Give you a quick update. We've done almost 300 providers. Half of those providers have been in compliance. What we're reviewing on, just to give you the insight into how simple the review is right now, we're just seeing if they have adequate progress notes. And only half of our providers have been in compliance in terms of having the appropriate type of progress note. Not even quality related. Just having it. Do you have the progress note or not. Does the progress note match with the hours of services provided. A little more than half to this point are in compliance. So for this year we've been doing a lot of training with our providers. Our goal is to get that compliance rate up to 75 percent but we'll keep you guys updated on the progress.

SUN screenings. We're catching up. From the time you request a SUN takes about two weeks to get that scheduled. Now a little less on the initials. We've actually done last quarter, we've talked about this again, we've done 2800, well, for last year we've done 2800 initial screenings. So what that means is 2800 individuals new to the DD services, meaning either they just got a statement of approval or they just became in need of waiver services. We screened 2800 of those. We screened 4,000 people total in 2025. That's major work from the small section of people that's run from a state office. About 11 people that do this work. And as you know (inaudible) wait list. So 4,000 people a year. We're looking to build that out. Continue to provide opportunities for efficiencies in the hopes of being able to shorten that two-week window to where we can have that to not just having a screening scheduled. To actually have that screening completed. So that's my long-term goal. We're not there yet but we're getting them scheduled faster.

Independence through technology is here. You can read it. I'm not ready to talk about it yet in detail. But we are going to be rolling out some regional tech hubs. Those will be pretty cool. We probably won't be ready to stand those up until next DD Council so I'll have a ton more information on what those will look like. What they will entail and how they will look as

far as outcomes.

Early Steps is going through a lot of restructuring. I just got off the call with the federal government and got the results about monitoring that took place last December. Wasn't great. As a result we're going to have a lot of policy changes that are required from the feds in 2026. I will definitely keep everybody on this council in the loop on what those changes are. Some have already been implemented. Some require a request for proposal so those might be a little stretched out. But needless to say we have a lot of work to do around our early intervention program in terms of federal compliance.

This is something that we need to talk about. Behavioral or medical intervention. That's our resource center. This is the work that OCDD does to keep people out of crisis from having to be institutionalized because of that crisis. We're not always successful. If you look at the numbers we're pretty close to being almost successful. Of the people we touch 95 percent were able to remain in the community. We were able to catch those folks in time to intervene and provide the needed resources to keep them in the community. And 98 percent of those 95 percent of people were satisfied with what they got. There's 1700 nurse consults. (Inaudible) but I got an update about nurse consult. But anyway, this just gives a breakdown of the work that the resource center does. They actually conduct this work not just for waiver recipients. It's for anyone with a developmental disability. If you know someone who may not receive services that may be in a crisis situation with behavioral health, or mental health, or even medical crisis please have them reach out to the regional LGEs and they can connect them with a resource center professional to help out there.

(Inaudible) waiver recipients. We continue to add more people. If you look we're at 14,500 people. That's phenomenal considering in 2018 you had about 9,000 people on waiver. And so in the last what, seven years, we've added 5,000 people to the waiver roll. So that's fantastic. And that's an account to the work you guys did to get us the necessary resources to eliminate the waiting list.

The next pie chart has as a breakout of where everybody is. As you see those residential option and the ROW numbers they're increasing as well as children choice numbers continually increase. It shows that our most appropriate waiver policy process works.

Annual expenditures. Especially coming up with session and with some of the legislative agenda with DD Council around wage increase or rate increase. We finished fiscal year 25 at 691 million-dollars. That's just in OCDD. Just waiver services. I did some analytics on the back end. That's not in this document. The good news is that the most appropriate waiver, tiered waiver, is working. If you look at the last five years it's about a 21 percent increase which sounds crazy but the chunk of that is tied to the rate increases that we implemented in that same time period. But when you back out the rate increases and just increasing units of services we're only seeing about a 3 percent increase. So we're able to add those people that we talked about and actually make sure they get the most appropriate services from the most appropriate waiver. So in my mind that looks like sustainability considering (inaudible) updated waivers. I'm going to stop because we have SUN stuff on the back. Talked about the SUN. I kind of gave you insight into the SUN. We talked about how many screenings we've done. So that is it. Early Steps, we talked about that's the report. I'm sure there's a ton of questions. Madam chair, I'll turn it over to you.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Bernard. Are there any questions from council members on the report?

ERICK TAYLOR: I got a question. What is y'all doing for these companies that y'all saying y'all putting funds out for these companies to do what they need to do? How are y'all holding the companies or pushing that out?

BERNARD BROWN: Value-based payment stuff? So folks in the room that remember we developed these incentives with the help of y'all. Like these were the things y'all identified as value. About two years ago we had about eight months where we took various stakeholder groups to discuss what incentives we want to put in place for providers to meet those measures. So everything that you see that we're paying out was

developed by the (inaudible).

ERICK TAYLOR: Okay. When we get to the providers and then the providers tell us we can't do this and we can't do that and we ain't got this and we can't do this because OCDD waiver says this and that. Where do we go?

BERNAND BROWN: You go to the LGE, the local governing entity. The rules in the policy are available for everybody. It's not hidden. It's on the website. It's in the Louisiana administrative code. Everything you need to know about waivers is available for you as well. So basically I'm saying in the most polite way part of being a strong advocate, right, is being able to find this information and understand this information for yourself, right. So it's there for you to use and go get it. If you have questions you can call me. Call Ebony or Brenton as well.

ERICK TAYLOR: If I ask you this and I go ask another person it's this way. Where is the OCDD waiver book?

BERNAND BROWN: It's on the LDH website. It's actually under the Medicaid section laid out. If you want to get down in the weeds. It's a lot of reading. At a basic level the information is available for you. At a high level there are fact sheets that are available right now that I would encourage everyone to read.

ERICK TAYLOR: Another question as long as I'm not going to hold y'all. How can we get somebody that needs emergency service ASAP? Down in the dirt to get service. Say if they need it ASAP and they need service and we go through a company and we go here how can we get it?

BERNAND BROWN: Start with your LGE. If you live in Baton Rouge that's Capital Area. There are Act 378 dollars. We just sat in that meeting yesterday. Part of the reason that those dollars are there are for those emergency situations. Where unfortunately for state agencies there's processes that takes time. When there's emergent issues that's kind of what the intent of what that money's for. If you need something quick for the short term go to the LGEs.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: So if somebody needs emergency services and those emergency services aren't adequate

to the person's needs and the person has no natural supports what are they supposed to do? And don't say contact Capital Area Resource Services.

BERNARD BROWN: Give me an example of what adequate means.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: If a person does not have natural supports. The person is by themselves and say oh, well, you only qualify for 32 hours a week. What the heck is that person supposed to do if they can't even get out of the bed?

BERNARD BROWN: And they don't have waiver services and they have just Medicaid I'm assuming?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Right.

BERNARD BROWN: So first thing you would do, you're not going to like this, you have to go to the LGE because you have to get on the wait list, right. But those Act 378 dollars will fill that gap until you get the waiver services you need to cover the other, what's that, 60 something hours potentially a week to cover 24/7 if that's what's needed. That's what that money is there for in part.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I understand that but it's time.

BERNARD BROWN: And that's why it's there. This is all state general fund. The reason it's all state general fund is because it's able to be plugged in. Like on our end we have several steps that take months and everybody here knows it takes a long time. It's not just the state that's driving that. It's the federal government. That part takes time. That's the reason why those Act 378 dollars are there. That's exactly why they're there for those instances. And from what I understand and what y'all see on the report there's state law that requires they have to use that money in the year, by the end of the year. And that's what we monitor every quarter at the DD Council for folks that make sure they get it. So it shouldn't happen that often but I understand that it does but that's a resource.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: So my next question is what do y'all consider emergency?

BERNARD BROWN: It's outlined in the policy. The flexible family fund IFS. They have several priorities. The policy is there. The priorities are based on the immediacy or the need. How fast you need

it in terms of what the priority is. And it's already in policy and those LGEs do it with their eyes closed. I'm not saying they do it well, but they do it with their eyes closed and they know how to implement those funds.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Because I feel like the emergency isn't separated from the nonemergency. Does that make any sense?

BRENTON ANDRUS: I understand.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Somebody needs to fix that. And yesterday.

BERNARD BROWN: There's priorities that are in policy that they're supposed to follow. I don't know if you were here yesterday?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I was.

BERNARD BROWN: And we were having a conversation with Alaina about these funds and there are some LGEs that hold money back to later in the year to make sure they can cover emergencies. It's structured like that and this is part of the reason why. I'm not saying it's perfect, it's a perfect process but there is a process in place for those instances.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Thank you.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chair recognizes Liam.

LIAM DOYLE: Bernard, when someone calls you rate things one to five, correct. And then that intake is what your immediate need is. So like if Ayden were to call you'd say he's a level four, I don't know exactly what that is, but that would determine how quickly he got the funds. Again, we all deal with the same thing. You have to call the intake number first and give us an idea where you are, what level you are and then we can provide AT. That's the biggest thing as state agencies, all of us here that are state agencies we hate to say you have to go through the process but you have to go through the process. It gives us an idea of how to best help you. But without understanding what level someone like Ayden is at we can't then properly administer the need that you require. I think it's worth mentioning. I just wanted to throw it out. But that's the process. When you say what's emergent, what's not emergent it's based on the rate that you get when you call OCDD. And then they say you're one through five. Again, that's how they determine what is

emergent to kind of answer your question. Because I've been where you are. I understand where you're coming from. But I also understand where Bernard's coming from. I just wanted to help bridge that gap if that makes sense.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Is the main issue there they have more demands, you guys don't have enough money for the emergencies or do you guys always have money left (inaudible)?

BERNAND BROWN: Well, the money is managed by the LGEs. We set the policy. What Liam was talking about we set the policy about the funds being dispersed. But how the money is managed is a region-by-region type of thing. And to answer your question it's not a demand verses what's available. It's more or less managing that money appropriately to be sure if there's someone that's in crisis that they can respond, right. It's just like budgeting money. I got to make sure I have money to catch those type of instances that Ayden's talking about. But it's like there's some regions that may have 10,000-dollars left. This fiscal year is ending in two months and you only got 10,000 and there's a person that needs 24 hour around the clock supports that's going to cost way more than 10,000 just in one month. So they only can fund a month and then there's no more resources, right. So it's like hopefully we can get that person in the waiver in a month so they can stay in the community otherwise unfortunately if you can't that person will have to go into an institution until we can work out the details.

LAMARTINE MEDA: So if one region have more money and money left do you guys have the power to switch that money to another region that needs it?

BERNAND BROWN: Not that I'm aware of.

LAMARTINE MEDA: If a region like Southeast Louisiana needs more money than other regions.

BERNAND BROWN: It depends on the population.

KAREN XU: Just one more question. (Inaudible) I just wonder if you also take care of the institution. We talk about institutional care. Usually the funding for institutional is it the same funding like for Medicaid?

BERNAND BROWN: So when you're talking about ICFs those are managed by the federal Title 19. So it's not

OCDD per se in that ICFs is a state plan service. So technically it falls under Medicaid. We have programmatic oversight over DD folks with statement of approvals. This is a weird analogy. And Brian shoot me if I miss the mark on this. Like OCDD is responsible for the person, right. The federal regs, which is Title 19, is responsible for our ICFs. Does that make sense? And how they get paid, yes. We can make recommendations in terms of how ICF provides active treatment but we can't, as is written now, like mandate anything to happen. Does that make sense?

KAREN XU: So who is managing, still OCDD?

BERNARD BROWN: No. Actually the providers are managed through Health Standards, the licensing body, and they ensure compliance with all the federal and state regulations to operate ICFs. But if there's quality related issues the complaint process is still tied to Health Standards. And the way they review it, from my understanding is, they're looking at if there's a violation of those federal regs. If there's a question on how the overall treatment is from a programmatic standpoint those usually come to OCDD. We only make recommendations if there's a programmatic issue. Like if there's day services provided in an ICF ensuring that those comply with like settings rules or some other programmatic concept. We're responsible for that in terms of ensuring that they are (inaudible). Can we enforce it per se. Not the way the rules are set up now. Does that make sense?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Any further questions from council members? Any public comment? Hearing none. The report requires no action and will be placed on file.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm sorry. I just had someone raise right after. Mylinda Elliot.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chair recognizes Mylinda Elliot.

MYLINDA ELLIOT: Good afternoon. Maybe I misunderstood. I misunderstand things all the time. I understood in the committee meeting yesterday that there might be some discussion about the full council requesting the rate study. We had a significant amount of time in the committee meeting yesterday where we discussed it, and maybe I misunderstood, y'all correct

me if I'm wrong, but I'm still advocating for that rate study.

BERNAND BROWN: That's directed to me?

MYLINDA ELLIOT: That's directed to everybody.

BERNAND BROWN: Okay. What Mylinda is asking about is the rate study. And you're right, Mylinda, we didn't touch on that yet. I know there's a growing tension with the fact that the rate study hasn't come out yet. I'm advocating every day to get that rate study published. Just like I told the smaller group yesterday there's nothing in the rate study that is of concern to me or there's nothing in terms of massaging or anything suspect going on with it. It's literally just an approval delayed. And I hate to make it sound that simplistic but in terms of like any issues with the report, there aren't any. It's literally just trying to package it to get it out the door. I know that's frustrating. I know I promised it to y'all. But just know the delay has nothing to do with the report itself. I don't know if that helps any. Just being honest.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chair recognizes Ebony.

EBONY HAVEN: Mylinda, I will also say that the committee did discuss inviting the LDH secretary to the next meeting if the rate study has not been released by the April meeting. Now they didn't make a motion for that but I think it's understood from the conversation yesterday that they will want staff to reach out to the LDH secretary to request him to personally come to the DD Council.

MYLINDA ELLIOT: I always think I know nothing about nothing. Especially now that I'm in my 60s I know less than I ever did before, right. But isn't April too late?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes.

MYLINDA ELLIOT: Okay.

BERNAND BROWN: That's not what I'm promising you all. I'm trying to get it out today, tomorrow. Every day I'm pushing to get it out. Like get it ready to go. I can't promise you a date because I don't want to promise another date but what I can promise you is that every day I'm reaching out asking for an update. Every day. I just text before we came back from lunch asking if there was an update. I'm pushing to get it out. I

just can't give you a date.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Ms. Elliot. And thank you, Bernard. Any other public comments? Hearing none. The report requires no action and will be placed on file.

We're five minutes away from a break. Would you guys like to take the break or push through? Anybody? Push through? All right. The next item of business is the report from the Office of Aging and Adult Services. The chair recognizes Gearry Williams to present the report.

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Good afternoon everyone. The Office of Aging and Adult Services is this peach report. (Inaudible) our current recipients both of our waiver programs as well as our state plan services to the right at the top the waiver registry. We continue to experience a wait list with our community choices waiver. I will touch on that a little bit more on some things we're working on to address the wait list surrounding the community choices waiver.

Also skip down to adult protective services. In previous meetings I mentioned that we did a public awareness campaign surrounding adult protective services that include a social media campaign, billboards as well as printed material on getting information out to the general public as to what adult protective services does and what abuse, neglect and exploitation looks like. The second phase of that plan which is what we call rebuilding law enforcement engagement plan. We are going around the state. Our supervisors within adult protective services are meeting with local law enforcement as well as sheriffs' offices across the state in hopes that this will do two things. One, it will inform local law enforcement and those sheriffs' offices of what we do, who we are and how we do it. Who they can reach out to when they are concerned about instances of abuse, neglect and exploitation. The second piece to that it gives our staff a comfort level because they've expressed concern that we want to serve the areas within these communities, go to certain households within these communities and the safety concern for staff. Also the second part is that by staff conducting these trainings and having these face-to-face visits with law

enforcement it gives them ability to have some kind of comfort level if they're walking into an area that they're not comfortable in they can reach out to those law enforcement entities to seek out accompaniment to certain homes or certain neighborhoods. So again, hoping to address that issue two-fold.

(Inaudible) outlines the number of cases that are accepted or ultimately accepted by adult protective services. As usual we provide the breakdown of the population we're serving by demographic, by region. When we go to the last page of the report I'm going to start with the third bullet or third paragraph. We have mentioned before with our adult healthcare centers across the state that we use the American Rescue Plan Act dollars to conduct trainings and technical assistance for the adult day healthcare. Since those ARPA dollars were extended we are going to repeat the trainings through June of 2026. Also in 2024 we began training for direct service workers where they can access a portal for trainings. Again, that was done through the ARPA funding. Again, since it's extended we're extending that through December of 2026.

I will go down to the launch of the awareness campaign for both PACE and ADHC centers. Again, since the ARPA dollars were extended we're going to do some advertising. Kind of following in the same vein we did with adult protective services in hopes of doing some printed material, social media as well as possibly billboards surrounding PACE and ADHC. We're hoping that will assist us with reducing the wait list for community choices waiver. We ultimately find that some of those individuals that are on the wait list for community choices waivers can be better served quicker by accessing services through adult day healthcare center or the PACE center. We're going to move forward on advertising campaigns surrounding those.

Also toward the end of 2025 we announced a modified request for information related to opening an additional PACE center. PACE centers, we only have four across the state right now. New Orleans, Lafayette, Baton Rouge and most recently toward the end of 2024 we opened a PACE center in Alexandria. PACE is the Program for All-Inclusive Care of the Elderly. PACE Alexandria is our most recent center. We continue

to see growth at that location. But we announced the request for information to open a PACE center in North Louisiana because we have the Shreveport area to open a PACE center. We received five respondings to that request for information and we're going through those and we're going to make a recommendation to the secretary for a company that we select to open a PACE center in the Shreveport area.

In 2026 we're going to be moving forward also (inaudible). It is out there now in the streets already, a request for information related to support coordination agencies. And again, just as outlined, a request for information. Some support coordination agencies have expressed concerns, have expressed ideas about changes they would like to see. Direct service workers have expressed concerns and making recommendations of things that they want to see when it comes to support coordination. All the way down to the participant has expressed concern and made recommendations. This request for information went out to all stakeholders, support coordination providers as well as participants for feedback related to support coordination. We will take any and all suggestions as it relates to how we may improve support coordination. What does that look like. And that was a joint effort between Office of Aging and Adult Services as well as Bernard's team with Citizens with Developmental Disabilities.

During the previous legislative session, 2025 legislative session, there was a line item added to the budget for payment to support coordination agencies. They were not receiving payment for the work that they do between being linked to a support coordination agency and actually being linked with a direct service worker for a service. Now we're going to campaign the support coordination agency for that work that they do before certification.

Again, in the vein of in the community choices waiver. We contracted with a company called HCBS Strategies, Home and Community-Based Service Strategies to help us identify ways to address the wait list. We want to prioritize the wait list. Right now the community choices waiver is first come first serve and we feel that the citizens at large would be better or

more justice by either changing the way we prioritize the wait list and doing it based upon need rather than just first come first serve.

We are also looking at our community options waiver, the COW fund. It's linked to all things home and community-based services. We're looking at ways to develop a continuum of care. What services best fit the individual. As I mentioned before some folks on the community choices waiver get better served by other programs whether that's long-term personal care services, PACE or ADHC.

And then as far as our budget we don't have any projected cuts within the Office of Aging and Adult Services at this point. We did request some additional positions, some additional TO. That did not make it into the budget. As of now it is out of the budget. The budget process as we all know is a long process so we will continue to advocate and try to get some additional TO at some point during the process. But again, no projected cuts to the budget. Pretty much a standstill budget at this point. That's all I have.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Williams. Are there any questions from council members regarding the report? Any public comment?

KAREN XU: The case numbers (inaudible).

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yeah. And then we have some that are referred to us but they never become an accepted case. Some of them are preliminarily received by the agency as a case of abuse, neglect or exploitation. But once we have an adult protective services worker look at it some cases do not lead to an actual case. So some of them are calls that are suspensions that don't lead to abuse, neglect or exploitation (inaudible).

KAREN XU: Do you have the number of cases (inaudible)?

GEARRY WILLIAMS: We have elderly protective services. Elderly protective services is not within the Office of Aging and Adult Services. Adult protective services is 18 to 59. Any cases 59 and over are with the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs with elderly protective services. I don't know if I'm answering the question.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible) cases compared to the older

population?

GEARRY WILLIAMS: The number of substantiated verses those that are just?

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

GEARRY WILLIAMS: Yeah. It's really hard. The chart really outlines it. It really does vary with those that are substantiated verses those that are received and rise to the level of being investigated as an actual case. The percentages here are which ones that are substantiated. The substantiated allegations and those that are a percentage of substantiated.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

GEARRY WILLIAMS: No. We don't break them out that way. These are all 18 to 59 considered adult. They're an adult when they're 18 years old. We don't break it down a difference between if you're 18 to 30 and it's substantiated verses 30 to 59 and it's substantiated. It all falls into adult protective services.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

GEARRY WILLIAMS: No. I don't have that breakdown. That's a good question. I see what you're saying. Those that are actually on a waiver or our state plan services verses those in the community that call in. That's a good question. I'll find out about that. I see what you're saying. I'm sorry.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Williams. Any further comment? Okay. Hearing none. The report requires no action and will be placed on file. The next item of business is the report from the Bureau of Health Services Financing Medicaid. The chair recognizes Brian for that report.

BRIAN BENNETT: Good afternoon everybody. My report is on the blue paper. I apologize some of the things I'm going to give updates on I did not include in the report. I'm going to try to reformat this a little bit going forward. I've been playing with the content of the report because I really want to try to focus on things that are new. So one of the things I'm going to start going forward we have some rulemaking in Medicaid and that kind of gives a good barometer of the major changes that are happening to the Medicaid program. Because we have to file every time we make a major change. One of the things I'm going to highlight major rules that we have every quarter or any in

particular that impact home and community-based services.

So first I'm going to highlight three roles that were published recently. One is doula services are now covered by Medicaid. Act 228 of the 2025 legislative session required us to create coverage for doula services in Louisiana for Medicaid beneficiaries. What a doula is it's basically an individual that is trained to provide supports to moms before they give birth and after they give birth. They're not really providing medical services. It's just supports and education during that pre and post birth time for the mom. So that's a new service that is available for Medicaid.

Another rule that we recently published targeting case management ventilator care coordination. This is not really a new service. We just published the rule to the service. It was previously something that we contracted with. So we worked over the last almost a year and moved this service out of a contract and into Medicaid. A formal Medicaid service that we can claim Medicaid service funding or match funding on. And basically what this does it provides specialized case management and care coordination for children and youth that are on a ventilator.

And the third one we will soon be having some changes to our enrollment process. Not really the enrollment process but how people on Medicaid can switch their MCOs or their dental plans. So historically what we've done is we've had an open enrollment period. So once a year around October letters go out and that's the opportunity if you want to change your MCO or your dental plan that would be the opportunity that you would have. What we are doing going forward is we're changing it so that we're eliminating the open enrollment period so that Medicaid, individuals enrolled in Medicaid they can switch plans anytime at any point of the year without cause. They can do that up to two times per calendar year. So this really provides a little bit more flexibility. They don't have to wait until that open enrollment period in October. So that's a big change if you have an MCO or dental plan and you want to change going forward you can do that at any time during that open enrollment period in the fall.

Next I want to talk about one thing that we're going to be working on really heavily over the next probably few years we're getting ready to re-procure or establish new contracts with two of our big systems that support home and community-based services and waivers. One is our HCBS data management contractor. This is a contractor that issues all the prior authorizations for our waiver services. They have our case management or our support coordinator system they log all of their data into. They have a lot of the business rules programmed in for all the waiver services. All of our waiver services OAAS, OCDD, they're very highly tailored to Louisiana. We're going to be working really closely with Gearry and Bernard's team when we do standup that contract to make sure we're able to properly capture all of the business roles and transfer them over to our next contract if we have to switch vendors.

The other system or contract that we'll be working to standup is our electronic visit verification vendor. So almost everybody that receives in-home services it's a federal requirement now that the worker that goes into the home has to report the service using visitor verification. So when they go into the home they will most of the time use a phone to clock in, electronically clock in when they start the shift. And when they leave they'll clock out. We have a contractor or vendor that host our EVV system so we'll be putting that out for bid. We're re-procuring that contract also and see if we'll get a new system.

I do want to mention that we're not doing this because we're unhappy with our current contractor or vendor. It's just that state and federal laws require us to rebid them every few years just to see what's out there. Is there somebody that can do it better. Is there somebody that can do it more cost effective to the state. That's why we're doing this. We're putting out requests for procurements fairly soon.

One other thing I wanted to go over in the report on the first page the Beneficiary Advisory Council. We did have our quarterly meeting scheduled for this week but we decided to reschedule it because we had a few technical difficulties. It was right after the ice storm and we have a few members that are in North

Louisiana so they weren't able to call in and participate because they were having trouble connecting.

One other thing I want to highlight is, and I'll have more to share on this in April, regarding the new community engagement and work requirements. Those will be put into effect starting January 2027 next year. So we're still kind of developing how we'll work with those. And the main thing that I want to stress to this group though is I don't imagine that any of the individuals that are served and supported by home and community-based services will be affected by this. The federal legislation that mandated the work requirements exempts anyone with a disability from those so they would not have to report on those for eligibility. One of the things that we're working on is how we can easily identify all those individuals so that they will indeed be exempted so they won't get anything (inaudible). I'll have a little bit more details at our next council meeting. We plan to start doing initial outreach in May just to kind of introduce it to everybody. That's another big thing that we'll be working on through the remainder of the calendar year 2026 to make sure that's ready and in place by next January.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Brian. Are there any questions from council members on the report? The chair recognizes Mr. Mike.

MIKE BILLINGS: Just general question. I have two kids on children's choice waiver and self-direction. So our worker uses EVV. Is there ever going to be a way to put the progress notes into the EVV system?

BRIAN BENNETT: That might be possible with our new system. We're bidding that out right now. So we look at different vendors who can do this and if that's something that we want to have as a feature. We might not necessarily mandate it, we could mandate it, but we can definitely look and see what vendor might have that as a feature so the worker can directly input the notes into the system.

MIKE BILLINGS: (Inaudible) but it also goes to where like I have a foster child Medicaid provides nursing for in my house. The nurse comes and in clocks in on her EVV, does all her notes on her end and then

clocks out at the end of the day and we sign off.

BRIAN BENNETT: In Louisiana we do have what's called a hybrid system. So we have both a state sponsored system. That's what I was talking about. That's what the state pays for and we offer providers to use it at no cost to them. But we do also allow the providers to contract for their own home health system and then they submit their data to us. So for home health I know that a large portion of home health companies do have their own system so that's probably what that is. That's one of the main reasons or one of the reasons that providers elect to pay for their own systems because they have the different features that their agency can use for progress notes or track mileage that their workers or staff are driving. Yeah, our state sponsored system we don't have that additional functionality at this point but it's possible (inaudible).

RENODA WASHINGTON: Any other comments from council members?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: You have a hand raised from Frank Macaluso online.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chair recognizes Frank.

FRANK MACALUSO: The state system, would that be the Acumen system or am I thinking of something else?

BRIAN BENNETT: So the state system right now is Lasers. For those enrolled in self-direction Acumen is one of our self-direction providers. They each have their own EVV system just because of how in self-direction the workers have to report their time to the self-direction providers who are Acumen and Morning Sun in order for payroll to be processed. They have their own EVV systems that they use that are integrated within their system. Simply to answer your question is no. The Acumen EVV system that's one of our third party EVV systems that we use and they send their data to us.

FRANK MACALUSO: Thank you.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Ms. Constance, the chair recognizes you.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I have a question. In the last two weeks (inaudible) received a notice that they went to the doctor and they no longer had Medicaid. And this came up (inaudible) particular region where

these are not kind of like one all. They're seeing something going on where people are losing their Medicaid coverage for their children.

BRIAN BENNETT: I have not heard. What regions were they in?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: (Inaudible) these two regions definitely have more.

BRIAN BENNETT: Do you know if they were on waivers? Okay. I wouldn't expect those to be targeted towards a region.

BERNARD BROWN: It may be instances like we talked about (inaudible) information updated. They may have moved and all of the documentation went to their old address and they never got the request. Every complaint we've gotten in OCDD about disenrolling was all tied to (inaudible). I'm assuming that's what it is.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: It was an uptick more than what they normally got. More than just a normal like I didn't check my mail.

BRIAN BENNETT: I haven't heard of anything. If y'all have any additional details that you can send to me we can look into it. But I haven't heard of anything that's coming to mind. I just want to piggyback off of that. And I do also, I said it before, keep your information updated. But if you do find that your coverage has ended please call immediately because sometimes they can what we call revert to open. They can open the case back up. So I just want to say that if somebody lost coverage and if they're still eligible they can sometimes revert those cases back to open.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Brian. Any other comments? Okay. Hearing none. The report requires no action and will be placed on file. Final item of business is the report from the Department of Education. The chair recognizes Dr. Lauren Wells.

LAUREN WELLS: Thank you. Hi everyone. I'll just simply start by saying hello. I don't think I've had the opportunity to talk with everyone and introduce myself. Lauren Wells. I have the privilege (inaudible) for the division of diverse learners at LDOE. First official meeting and I'm excited to share the report with you all. My colleague Caroline was here in

October and shared just an update from our division with you. So I think I'm the last report of the today. I have a brief update for you. I think Erick you mentioned you're getting sleepy so I promise to be brief. Similar I think Brian it was you that mentioned the quorum difficulties this week and we had the same thing. So that first update that you see on our report, which is on this light pink paper, SEAP did not take place. Our Special Education Advisory Panel. We had several members that were impacted by the wintry weather in the northern part of our state. A lot of those districts are actually still closed this week. So because of that we did cancel our January 28th meeting. And the agenda items that you can see that were scheduled for that meeting those will all be carried over to that March meeting. March 18th we'll have those same agenda items. Just updates about dyslexia core assessment, dyslexia resources. A supplemental list that our literacy team is creating. Those updates will all be carried over to that March meeting. So just a slight change from what you see here on this report.

Some other key items just to point out since our last update with you all. Act 517. So this is a really exciting act for us. If you follow us with our office hours this is probably redundant, some information that you've already heard. But I just wanted to bring it to you today because it is impacting our parents. This act now establishes a statewide pathway for a dyslexia core assessment. We're really excited about the launch of this. The parent portal is now open. So the links that you see here, and this is all available on LDOE's website, it links to this dyslexia core assessment. So basically if a student has been identified as at risk through the dyslexia screener at the school system that parent now has the choice to go kind of a step further in requesting a formal diagnosis of dyslexia. With this Act 517 came some funding so that was exciting for our parents that are choosing this process. And so up to a 500-dollar reimbursement is now available through this. So again, the reimbursement process and the portal are now open for our parents who are interested in that formal diagnosis of dyslexia. So that's just a quick 517

update.

The next item you see here this is Bulletin 1508. This was updated and became final rule in December. So last month it finally went through that final rule process. We had some public comments. It's now available on our website as well. There weren't a lot of changes around evaluation, some similar procedures. We've updated some terminology, updated some individuals who can be involved in that evaluation process. I know y'all likely hear special education sometimes has a revolving door of folks, right. And sometimes capacity can be limited. So this update really helps with that evaluation process. And again, it's linked online for those that are interested.

The other update I have for you is around 479. A lot of legislative updates obviously. But Act 479. So this was for crisis prevention. Talking about behavior in our school systems. Talking about seclusion and restraint. And so Act 479 really updated what seclusion and restraint means in our schools. Making it very clear the definitions for seclusion. Really clarifying the definition on restraints. And so is LDOE because of that update has partnered with a vendor to just provide additional guidance to our districts, additional support around crisis prevention, right. So CPI, Crisis Prevention Institute is one of the vendors that we partnered with and they simply have resources for our districts with implementing those safe restraints. So training folks on what that truly means. And then eventually a learning management system for asynchronous learning opportunities. So really just to kind of go a step further training our educators on de-escalation techniques, what it means to be in a crisis for a student with a disability and how to truly support that student. I heard mentioned earlier (inaudible). So really thinking about behavior. And so some of these asynchronous learning models will really just make sure that behavior is continued and supported in our classrooms.

All right, Erick. I promised to be brief so this is my last update on my report. It's simply to further support our educators in the district. This is an IEP writing workshop series. This is intended for anybody on that IEP team that supports diverse learners. So

thinking even about general education teachers, special education teachers how they're working in collaboration. And so this is an IEP writing series both for elementary as well as secondary educators really just to go a step further of what supports can be added to that student's IEP to ensure some best practices overall. That was my brief update. Anybody have any questions?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Dr. Wells.

ANGELA HARMON: Is the IEP writing workshop mandatory?

LAUREN WELLS: It is not. It is not mandatory. Just an additional resource for those interested educators. But we would encourage members of that IEP team to attend. Even that OBR. We often see that sometimes our principals might not have as much special education experience and so this is just a good opportunity for them to increase learning. But not a requirement.

ANGELA HARMON: So if I bring this to the principal at my son's school they know where to access this?

LAUREN WELLS: Yes. All of this information too, like if your child's principal or whomever isn't subscribed, our newsletter contains updates like this. And then we also have the second Tuesday of every month is our office hours. So we also share just additional learning opportunities and resources. But yes, they should be able to access this.

ANGELA HARMON: I think this would be beneficial for a lot of them because I know my child's IEP I have to come in there with goals (inaudible) and help them write the goals. It's not my job but.

LAUREN WELLS: Right. And we'll have some teacher leader workshops as well. Last year it was one of our very highly attended workshops. It was simply like an IEP 101. What it means to write a measurable goal. What it truly means to collaborate with all individuals on that team. We'll offer that again this year. I'm not sure if they're participating in teacher leader but it would be a good opportunity.

ANGELA HARMON: Thank you.

LAUREN WELLS: You're welcome.

RENODA WASHINGTON: (Inaudible). One thing I noticed from district to district everyone seems to do

things differently. (Inaudible) and for students, teachers if everyone is doing something different. While we're at it could you explain April Dunn?

LAUREN WELLS: Just as a whole?

RENODA WASHINGTON: Just what does that look like. I'm asking that question because from district to district everyone has their own idea of April Dunn. I'm aware of what it is.

LAUREN WELLS: We're actually in the process of updating our April Dunn guidance and I can send you that updated link for it. And then we have April Dunn specific support. We can kind of talk about what that looks like for that specific district and that actual guidance. April Dunn is usually the topic of conversation and so I'm glad you kind of brought that up. We have a self-assessment guide, I'm pulling it up now, we've been advertising recently to our school districts just of what that looks like for that self-assessment. Making sure they're aware of kind of the process and components. So that's all on our website as well.

RENODA WASHINGTON: For clarity would it look different from--

LAUREN WELLS: It really shouldn't. There should be some alignment. You're not alone in what you're seeing though. And so we're kind of hearing that statewide of district to district does change with what some of their goal writing even looks like, some expectations. So it's certainly something that our team is aware of and trying to internally just create guidance and some learning opportunities to make sure that everybody is very much in alignment.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you.

LAUREN WELLS: Absolutely.

LAMARTINE MEDA: (Inaudible) about having those IEPs and administrators. I'm from Jefferson Parish and I don't know what happened the past 7, 8 years but I can tell you prior to that a lot of them claim ignorance, you know, not knowing. It's up to us to come and my wife she (inaudible).

LAUREN WELLS: She's got her binder.

LAMARTINE MEDA: They should be the one educating us, putting fliers in our children's binders verses us trying to.

LAUREN WELLS: You're absolutely right on that. We want to make sure that everybody at that IEP table is aware of what that process looks like. Even just best practices and focusing on that child's strengths verses weaknesses. And as a parent it can be hard to digest and hear. You're not alone. And appreciate what you're doing with advocating and bringing those binders. We hope to get to a point that that's not necessary and that those teams can really work collaboratively with our families.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Dr. Wells. Are there any questions from council members on the report? Any public comment?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Adrienne Burns.

RENODA WASHINGTON: The chair recognizes Adrienne Burns.

ADRIENNE BURNS: Hello.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Hi.

ADRIENNE BURNS: I was just wondering would the IEP classes, like the workshop, be available for parents to take since they're supposed to be like an active part of the construction of the IEP or would it just be for educators? I'm a substitute teacher so I was wondering. But I have two autistic children. I was just wondering if that would be open and available for parents to possibly supplement their knowledge?

LAUREN WELLS: Yeah. You're absolutely welcome to attend those. They will be available for all that are interested in participating. I will be transparent in saying the information is geared towards educators simply as they are constructing those IEPs thinking about our special education playbook and those best practices for implementing those procedures. However, as a parent, especially as you continue to advocate for your child, you're certainly welcome to attend those. We also will have additional learning opportunities in this summer geared specifically to our parents so that might just be an additional opportunity for your engagement. But yes, to answer your question, those that are coming up next month and then in the month of March you're absolutely welcome to engage in them but they are, again, geared towards our educators. Some of the language used or some of the examples referenced might not be as parent specific but would just be a

good learning opportunity as a whole.

ADRIENNE BURNS: Awesome. Thank you so much. Where would those be available to sign up for?

LAUREN WELLS: We will likely have them in our newsletter entry but just for that information you're welcome to reach out to our division which is diverselearnersupports@la.gov. Again, diverselearnersupports@la.gov. And we can certainly email those directly to you.

ADRIENNE BURNS: Thank you so much.

LAUREN WELLS: You're welcome. That's just our email for our division. So anytime anyone has questions emailing that is the easiest (inaudible). Diverselearnersupport@la.gov. And I always jokingly say if you don't get a response please ping us again. Sometimes the email gets to be overwhelming but we're certainly there and want to support our community so don't hesitate to email.

RENODA WASHINGTON: What are some more supports that you guys may have in place or thinking of getting in place for those self-contained students that are now in general ed?

LAUREN WELLS: I see she had to leave for the day. Constance referenced earlier just briefly. So we're starting a partnership soon with LASARD because some of those self-contained students are now on a different pathway as she mentioned with alternate assessment standards. So those supports are currently being developed and underway. But right now before those supports are released our team is happy to go and just work one-on-one with those teachers. If behavior becomes a struggle we can think of some creative approaches for using technology to make sure those students are still in that core instruction class but behavior is being supported. If they need the sensory environment. If they need the one-on-one with a para. Whatever that student's needs look like based on the IEP team's decision. But we would suggest our team working, coming in and working just collaboratively with those teachers for those events to really determine student by student what that solution might look like.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you.

LAUREN WELLS: You're welcome.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Any other comments? Public comments? Hearing none. The report requires no action and will be placed on file. At this time we will have public comments. The public comments can be on any area of concern or question. Each person will be recognized by the chair and have three minutes to speak. Are there any comments? At this time we will have announcements. We will need volunteers for the year 27 planning committee. If you are interested contact Ebony after the meeting. The chair recognizes Ebony for any other announcements.

EBONY HAVEN: You guys will notice in your folders we have updated our survey. It's more accessible and plain language but we also added a QR code. For those of you who don't want to do it on paper you can scan the code and fill out the survey. It will be sent straight to us. And we love getting feedback. I know we're in a new office. I hope guys like the new office, the new space. I hope everything was accommodating but please let us know if something wasn't so we can make those adjustments for next time.

Also I know on the agenda it says the next quarterly meeting is April 29th and 30th. That is a typo. It is the next full council meeting is April 30th and we'll be getting with the chairs to determine times for the standing committees that are on the new schedule. We'll be sending out information.

I do want to mention financial disclosure. Because our April meeting is so far into April financial disclosures are due May 15th and I will send out information about financial disclosures. Every appointed member on the council if you are on the council for 2025 and you are an appointed member you have to fill out a financial discloser. I will make sure that I send a link where you can go and fill it out for this type of board and commission. Don't forget about that because you will be fined if you don't complete your financial disclosure. And for anyone that didn't complete the ethics training try to get that done if you haven't already because they will fine you. That's all I have.

Oh, and for the code of conduct I'm going to make the change that was suggested in the executive committee. I have to make a change to the serious

behavior section. We'll email it out to you guys. If you feel comfortable signing it and sending it back electronically we'll accept it that way. Or Bridgette and I can mail it to you and put a return envelope stamped and then you guys can mail it back.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Thank you, Ebony. Is there any further business? Thank you, everyone, for attending our council meeting. Your dedication and commitment and your work is never unnoticed. I do want to thank staff. Thank you so much. Give our staff a handclap. Every last one of you. Even the ones that are not visible right now. Just thank you guys. Just remember, even though we are volunteering our services we still have a responsibility. So just keep in mind of (inaudible). Let's support the staff because they support us. So keep that in mind. If you need anything the staff is always available. Me and the Vice Chair, Ms. Angela, we're always available. Just to be there for one another. Safe travels to everyone here. Since there's no further business with no objections we will adjourn the meeting. Thank you, guys. The time is 3:19.