



Education and Employment (E/E) Committee Summary

Wednesday, July 29, 2026

4354 S. Sherwood Forest Blvd.

Suite 200 Baton Rouge, La. 70816

4:15 PM – 6:00 PM

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

Streaming Live on [YouTube](#)

[View meeting transcript here.](#)

Members Present: Melissa Bayham, Ayden Blunsch, Liam Doyle, Julia Tanner, Erick Taylor, Renoda Washington (Chair)

Members Absent: Jude Boynton, Lamartine Meda, Brooke Stewart

Staff: Brenton Andrus, Taylor Barber, Rekeesha Branch, Lauren Brown, Stephanie Carmona, Ebony Haven, Bridgette Talley

Others Present: Constance Alphonse, Mylinda Elliott, Lynsey Hebert (transcriptionist), Ericka Joseph, Jacki Pierce, Susan Riehn, Robby Smith, and Lauren Wells

Call to Order & Quorum

Renoda Washington called the meeting to order at 4:16 PM. A quorum was established, meaning enough members were present to make decisions.

Meeting Summary Approval

Liam Doyle motioned to approve the April 2026 meeting summary. Erick Taylor seconded the motion. The summary was approved by unanimous consent.

Governor's Office of Disability Affairs (GODA) Update

Liam Doyle shared updates from the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs (GODA), including the upcoming GODA Conference and a summer water safety video developed with the Louisiana Department of Health.

The Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA) continued outreach across the state, with recent visits to Lafayette and Lake Charles and plans to expand to other areas. GACDA also planned to restart committees focused on accessibility, transportation, and emergency preparedness.

LSU Human Development Center Update

Constance Alphonse shared updates on the Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities (LASARD) project, including recent trainings. The committee also learned about the PAYcheck program and watched a video highlighting a participant's experience. PAYcheck helps students

with disabilities build life and employment skills through college classes, work-based learning, and Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) Update

Melissa Bayham shared updates from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), including changes to Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and a new Third-Party Cooperative Arrangement with Lincoln Parish Schools.

LRS received an additional \$2 million in state funding and plans to hire 11 rehabilitation counselors and five rehabilitation counselor associates. Committee members also requested more detailed data on how increased funding is affecting services for people with developmental disabilities.

Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) Update

Lauren Wells shared updates from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), including work by the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) to update assistive technology accommodations. LDOE was also updating education bulletins based on laws passed during the 2026 Legislative Session and continuing outreach and training for special education leaders and families.

Legislative Update

Ebony Haven provided an update on several education bills passed during the 2026 Legislative Session that affect students with disabilities, such as:

- House Bill 283 addressed student discipline. The Council raised concerns about protections for students with disabilities, and the bill was amended before becoming Act 539.
- House Bill 133 also addressed student discipline and was amended to consider students with disabilities and students who may need an evaluation. It became Act 617.
- House Bill 342 shifted the responsibility to schools to show that a student's special education program is appropriate during disputes with families.
- House Bill 352 requires schools to allow medically necessary services for students, including during instructional time. The Council supported the bill.

E/E Contractual Updates

Stephanie Carmona shared an update about Activity 3.1.5 on the Council's 5-Year Plan. The Council is partnering with Team Dynamics to give trainings across the state for people with developmental disabilities. Two trainings were completed during the reporting quarter and reached 29 participants. Additional trainings were scheduled in Baton Rouge and Shreveport. The current contract will end with the existing Five-Year State Plan and will not continue in its current form under the next plan.

Meeting Adjourned

There were no public comments. The meeting ended at 5:10PM.