**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, March 16 2021

10:00 AM to 11:20 AM

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Committee Members** | **Present**  | **Proxy** | **Proxy Name** | **Absent** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** |
| Amber Boykin\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Andrea Lowe\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Chris Rodriguez\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Erica Wallace\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Jerrie Williams\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Jessica Michot\* |  |  |  | XX |  |
| Karen Collins\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Katie Corkern\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Kelly Monroe\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Mary Breaud\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Robert Garcia\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Tarj Hamilton\* |  |  |  | XXX |  |
| Tim Delaney\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Alice Higginbotham |  |  |  | XX | Dyslexia Assoc |
| Anne Jayes | √ |  |  |  | Lighthouse LA |
| Brenda Sharp |  | √ | Valarie Leday |  | LDH-OCDD |
| Brock Banos | √ |  |  |  | Special Olympics LA |
| Faith Boudreaux | √ |  |  |  | LDH-OPH |
| Kelli Peterson |  | √ | Chauney McElwee |  | LDE |
| Melissa Bayham | √ |  |  |  | LWC- LRS |
| *Lynette Fontenot\** | √ |  |  |  | *GACDA Chairperson* |
| *Kathy Allen\** |  |  |  | *X* | *GACDA Vice-Chair* |
| *Bambi Polotzola* | *√* |  |  |  | *GODA* |
| **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** | **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** |
| Elaine Harmon\* |  | Laureen Mayfield |  |
| Tabatha Taylor\* |  | Leslie Hill |  |
| Ashley McReynolds | Arc of LA | Michelle Guillory | GOEA |
| David Green |  | Melissa Funk |  |
| Donald Snider |  | Micah Moscovis |  |
| Erin Downing |  | Nicole Flores | FHF Acadiana |
| Ernest Garrett III | SSD | Richard Hartley | Governor's Office |
| Jana Broussard | LCD | Sarah Barnes | Lighthouse Louisiana |
| Jazmyne Lemar | Lighthouse LA | Tony Rocca | DRLA |
| Katherine Granier |  | Vanessa Magnon |  |
| Kristie Curtis | FHF Acadiana |  |  |
| **Staff** | **Agency** | **Staff** | **Agency** |
| Jamar Ennis | GODA | Melanie Washington | SICC/GODA |
| Jessica Lewis | SILC/GODA | Lilian Dejean | GODA Intern |

**1. Call to Order and Introductions**  10:00 am

The GACDA Education Committee meeting was called to order at 10:01am. The attendance was conducted on behalf of the Committee. A quorum was established.

2. **Special School District Presentation**  10:05 am

The Superintendent of the Special School District (SSD), Earnest Garret provided a presentation in regards to legislation that will be considered during the 2021 Regular Session.

Superintendent Garrett provided a brief overview of the various reports and recommendations to improve services.

The proposed legislation will combine LSDVI and the SSD to form one school district. The proposed legislation will remove SSD from the supervision of the Louisiana Department of Education.

It was mentioned that the legislation will streamline efforts to ensure the proper services are rendered to students under the SSD

From the findings of the various reports and recommendations, It was mentioned that the proposed legislation will ensure that the needs of the students under the SSD are adequately provided for.

It was mentioned that Representative Scott McKnight is the sponsor for the above referenced legislation. The representatives of the SSD will provide more details about the above legislative initiative when available.

Andrea made a motion to support the above legislation proposed by the Special School District, to be considered for the Legislative Committee’s formal recommendation for the support of GACDA. Karen Collins seconded the motion. The motion was passed without any opposition, discussion, or abstention.

3. **COVID-19 Survey Results Discussion** 10:20 am

Co-Chairperson Boykin shared a document via zoom regarding the COVID-19 Survey results.

Co-Chairperson Boykin mentioned that there were, 255 respondents for the teachers survey, and 95 respondents for the parents survey. Please see the aforementioned document for more information.

A brief discussion took place regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on service delivery. The survey monitored various open-ended topics including but not limited to the following:

* the availability of adequate PPE in the school system;
* the reduction of service minutes;
* the modification and contingency plans in lieu of the implementation of IEP’s;
* the practicing of Social Distancing;
* The availability of access to the internet;
* the use of SPED teachers in the classrooms;
* Transition Services, the lack of accommodations with regards to Asynchronous instruction;
* etc.

It was mentioned that the school districts coped with various extraordinary and unplanned events, i.e.,COVID-19, Hurricanes, etc. It was suggested that the Committee should explore recommendations of what can be improved upon in the school districts.

Co-Chairperson Boykin referenced a document, shared via Zoom, that provided greater detail of the main takeaways from the COVID-19. Please see the aforementioned document for more information.

It was mentioned that graphs will be created to better explain the survey data received.

It was suggested that the survey data and its findings should be shared with the Dr. Brumley, the Superintendent of the Louisiana Department of Education, Charter School Networks, Families Helping Families Centers, BESE Board, Louisiana Commission for the Deaf, LACAN, Louisiana School Board Association, Legislative Committees of Education, School Psychiatrist, SEAP, and other appropriate groups.

4. **Credentialing Survey Results Discussion**  10:30 am

The results of the Credentialing Survey is tabled.

5. **Strategic Goal Teams Updates** 10:40 am

Co-Chairperson Boykin expressed appreciation to the participating members of the Education Committee and recognized their efforts in regards to their work on the Strategic Goals.

Co-Chairperson Boykin shared a document to further explain the following Strategic Goal Updates.

Goal 6: Teacher Training/Credentialing

Goal 8: Related Services

Goal 9: Parent Education

Goal 3: Discipline, Suspension, Expulsion

Goal 4: Assistive Technology

Robet Garcia shared that service providers often face problems with the length of communication plans. Additionally, there are concerns pertaining to the implementation of these plans and methods of accountability for service providers. A need to revise the current formatting of communication plans has been expressed to the Louisiana Department of Education.

Goal 5: Least Restrictive Environment

6. **Legislative Roundtable Recap**  11:10 am

 Members of the Education Committee participated in the Legislative Roundtable Recap coordinated by GACDA’s Education Committee. An overview of the bills related to education was provided by Co-Chairperson Boykin.

 It was mentioned that there is time for interested persons to advocate on legislation up for consideration in the 2021 Legislative Session. Please see the attached GACDA Legislative Roundtable document for more information.

7. **Public Comments**  11:15 am

Melissa Bayham of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) answered a question relative to Pre-Employment Transition Services (PRETS)

A question was asked whether or not Families Helping Families are allowed to share information without the consent of parents. It was advised that this question is of the legal variety, and will be answered at another time.

It was encouraged by the Education Committee Co-Chairs that committee members should sign up for the Strategic Team Goals if they are able.

 8. **Adjournment**  11:20 am

 The Education Committee Adjourned at 11:27 am

**HOUSING COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, March 16 2021

12:00 PM to 1:20 PM

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Committee Members** | **Present**  | **Proxy** | **Proxy Name** | **Absent** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** |
| Andrea Lowe\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Jerrie Williams\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Jim Mitchell\* | √ |  |  |  |  |
| John Moran\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Karen Collins\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Karen Scallan\* |  |   |   |   |   |
| Kelly Monroe\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Kirsten Gladen\* |  |   |   |  X |   |
| Linda Kocher\* |  |   |   |  X |   |
| Sharon Hennessey | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Tarj Hamilton\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Walter Carpenter\* |  |   |   | XX |   |
| Cecile Alexander | √ |  |  |   | DCFS |
| Cindy Obier |  |   |   | 3X | SFM |
| Gordon Levine | √ |   |   |   | LHC |
| Janae Burr | √ |   |   |   | LDH-OCDD |
| John Schweitzer |  |   |   | X  | LWC-LRS |
| Robin Wagner | √ |  |   |   | LDH-OAAS |
| Lynette Fontenot\* | √ |   |   |  | Chairperson |
| Kathy Allen |  |   |   | X  | Vice-Chair |
| Bambi Polotzola | √ |   |   |   | GODA |
| **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** | **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** |
| Ashley McReynolds | Arc of LA | Melissa Funk |  |
| Erin Downing | LDH-OCDD | Nicole Flores | FHF Acadiana |
| Kristie Curtis | FHF Acadiana | Senetra Guidry |  |
| Michelle Guillory | GOEA | Tony Rocca | DRLA |
| **Staff** | **Agency** | **Staff** | **Agency** |
| Jamar Ennis | GODA | Melanie Washington | SICC/GODA |
| Jessica Lewis | SILC/GODA | Lilian Dejean | GODA Intern |

1. **Call to Order and Introductions**  12:00 pm

 The GACDA Housing Committee meeting was called to order at 12:03 pm. The attendance was conducted on behalf of the Committee. A quorum was established.

2. **Addressing Louisiana’s housing crisis for people with disabilities** 12:10 pm

*A. Advocacy can be used to develop resources that address availability and affordability. Tools: Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP), NOFAs, consolidated plan(s), public comment*

Addressing the Affordability and Accessibility elements will be the main focus in accomplishing these goals.

It was mentioned that the Housing Committee should focus on timelines, more specifically when the advocacy actions should take place. Furthermore, the various jurisdictions within the state also may have deadlines and time restrictions that should be considered in regards to Housing.

It was also mentioned that the committee will need to determine all of the deadlines regarding the QAP.

It was suggested by Co-Chairperson Hennesey that the members of the committee share in the responsibilities of determining the deadlines and important dates for each jurisdiction. Gordon Levine of the Louisiana Housing Committee provided that he will direct his staff to make an attempt to compile the important dates and deadlines of the QAP.

Gordon Levine provided a brief overview of the QAP plan process as it relates to the public comment portion. Implementation has been a challenge because housing issues generally fall under local jurisdictions. This is a problem because Louisiana has many individual jurisdictions.

Levine provided that the prioritization policies should be an area of focus, because the priorities are easier to shift than the dollars.

Levine also provided that the QAP plan can stipulate the desire to go after new money, especially due to the new opportunities that the stimulus will provide.

*B. Education can effectively increase housing and rental assistance for people with disabilities by improving access to currently existing resources and opportunities.*

Levine also provided that he and his staff will schedule meeting with individuals such as the Baton Rouge Mayor’s Office

**3. Development of an “Education and Advocacy Guide”** 12:20 pm

Co-Chairperson Hennesey shared a document via Zoom to further explain the initiatives relative to the Education and Advocacy Guide.

A motion was made by Kara Collins that the Office of the Governor recommends LHC involve GACDA/GODA into the decision making and planning for the prioritization of its vouchers (Section 8) pursuant to the American Rescue Act. Tarj Hamilton seconded the motion. The motion passed, without any opposition, and one abstention by Gordon Levine.

*A. Use committee as a whole; no subcommittees*

*B. Timelines for advocacy*

· QAP – Fall (OCT?)

· NOFAs – varies

· Consolidated Plans -Entitlement areas: New Orleans, Kenner, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Alexandria, Shreveport, Bossier, Monroe

· Balance of state

**4. Develop a work plan**  12:45pm

*A. Use EBR as development model*

Co-Chairperson Hennesey proposed that Baton Rouge be the initial target and focus on the available resources. It was suggested that the key individuals and organizations in Baton Rouge be contacted.

*B. Discuss plan developed with Gordon Levine*

 It was mentioned that John Moran will volunteer on the project above, under the guidance of Gordon Levine.

It was suggested by Levine that the Committee should direct its attention to LHC’s section 8 initiative and the voucher program. In particular, the orders of prioritization and the continuum of care.

*C. Participants*

**5. Public Comment**  1:10 pm

Gordon Levine gave a brief overview of the legislation that allocates funds for Housing programs that will trickle down to Louisiana, via the American Rescue Act pursuant to the attached document.

Emergency Rental Assistance: $21.5 billion

Emergency Housing Vouchers: $5 billion

$5 billion to fund TBRA, affordable housing development, supportive services, etc.

$49.5 million to support culturally specific community based organizations

**6. Adjourn**  1:20 pm

 The housing committee adjourned the March 16, 2021 meeting at 1:06 pm.

**TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, March 16 2021

1:30 PM to 2:50 PM

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Committee Members** | **Present**  | **Proxy** | **Proxy Name** | **Absent** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** |
| Andrea Lowe\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Beau Ellerbee\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Elaine Harmon\* |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jim Mitchell | √ |  |  |  |  |
| Karen Collins\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Karen Scallan\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Kristen Gladen\* |  |   |   | X |   |
| Linda Kocher\* |  |   |   | X |   |
| Mark Raymond, Jr.\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Sharon Hennessey\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Walter Carpenter\* |  |   |   | XX |   |
| Amy Dawson | √ |   |   |  | GOHSEP |
| Jamie Ainsworth | √ |   |   |  | DOTD |
| Kevin George | √ |   |   |   | LDH-OCDD |
| Melanie Doucet |  |   |   | X  | LDH- Medicaid |
| Teresa Frank | √ |   |   |  | LDH-OCDD |
| Lynette Fontenot\* | √ |   |   |  | Chairperson |
| Kathy Allen |  |   |   | X  | Vice-Chair |
| Bambi Polotzola | √ |   |   |   | GODA |
| **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** | **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** |
| Jerrie Williams\* |  | Karen- ADA Comp |  |
| Carol Lee |  | Kristie Curtis | FHF Acadiana |
| David Green |  | Marc Keenan |  |
| Dee Budgewater | Lighthouse LA | Michelle Guillory | GOEA |
| Dinero Washington |  | Tony Rocca | DRLA |
| Erin Downing | LDH-OCDD | Wendell Voisin |  |
| Jenice Heck |  |  |  |
| **Staff** | **Agency** | **Staff** | **Agency** |
| Jamar Ennis | GODA | Melanie Washington | SICC/GODA |
| Jessica Lewis | SILC/GODA | Lilian Dejean | GODA Intern |

1.  **Call to Order and Introductions** 1:30 pm The GACDA Transportation Committee meeting was called to order at 1:32 pm. The attendance was conducted on behalf of the Committee. A quorum was established.

**2. Introduction of Jenice Heck.** 1:45 pm

Jenice Heck of Lighthouse Louisiana, a paratransit rider in the RTA system, provided a brief overview of her experiences, and answered questions from the Transportation committee. Jenice provided that the RTA’s subscription option has been beneficial. Jenice mentioned that the signage and lettering at or around bus stops are inadequate. The inconsistent locations of bus stops further make transportation systems inaccessible to individuals with visual impairments.

Co-Chairperson Mark Raymond provided that RTA is working on the aforementioned concerns shared by Jenice Heck. It was also mentioned that RTA has lifted restrictions of limited routes due to COVID-19 and has most recently decided to take riders to their desired locations (barbershops, beauty shops, etc).

3. **Update on Committee Objectives:**  1:55 pm

  *I. Establish contacts with Uber and Lyft*

It was discussed the importance of bringing rideshare companies to the table to present to the Transportation Committee to discuss how they are meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The committee expressed a desire to create a program for the paratransit committee via partnerships of rideshare companies. It was provided that there are several challenges to compel rideshare companies to provide more inclusive policies outside of the requirements provided by Louisiana Law. It was suggested that a proposal be created and submitted to the Louisiana Legislature to address inclusive services of rideshare companies. It was suggested that these concerns regarding the rideshare companies should also be addressed on the federal level.

  *II. Paratransit Peer Group Update and open discussion for paratransit providers*

Co-Chairperson Ellerbee solicited updates from the members of the Transportation Committee.

Mike Mitchell, a paratransit coordinator for Lafayette was introduced.

  *III. Determine which government agencies should be invited to participate in quarterly meetings*

It was suggested that the following agencies be invited to participate:

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

DOTD and STARS (funded by DOTD)

GOSHEP

4.  **Additional objectives for consideration**: 2:10 pm  *Rental car companies do not currently have enough wheelchair accessible vans.*

Co-Chairperson Raymond shared concerns with the rental car companies providing accessible vehicles. Raymond entertained suggestions on engaging the rental car companies in an effort to compel them to provide accessible options for individuals. It was suggested that a letter be drafted to each company. Long term, it was suggested that this issue be addressed via change in federal law and or policy. This could possibly be achieved through an amendment to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Jim Mitchell shared a concern relative to rental car companies and their policies relative to the prohibition of renting a vehicle to non-drivers.

Elaine Harmon made a motion to compel for profit rental car companies to add accessible transportation to their fleet, and allow non-drivers to rent vehicles when accompanied by a duly licensed driver.

·  *Invite Slidell city leadership to discuss paratransit options*

·  *Regional Connectivity Issues*

The possibility of advocating for Paratransit options between Jefferson Parish and Orleans Parish was discussed. It was mentioned that under the RTA, the options are currently limited. It was recommended by members in the community that there be an exception granted to afford paratransit riders to receive services between these two parishes.

· *Discuss options for paratransit entities to make exceptions for riders just outside of coverage area.*

The committee discussed the policies relative to allowing exceptions for riders who fall outside of coverage areas.

 5. **Public comments**  2:45 pm

 No public comment was provided

6. **Adjournment**  2:50 pm

The March 16, 2021 Transportation Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:53 pm.

**ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, March 16 2021

3:00 PM to 4:20 PM

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Committee Members** | **Present**  | **Proxy** | **Proxy Name** | **Absent** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** |
| Andrea Lowe\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Andrew Kuyoro\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Beau Ellerbee\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Erica Wallace\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Jerrie Williams\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Jessica Michot\* |  |   |   | X |   |
| Karen Collins\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Karen Scallan\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Sharon Hennessey\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Tim Delaney\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Amy Dawson | √ |   |   |  | GOHSEP |
| Brett Domangue | √ |   |   |  | LDH-OCDD |
| Celia Alexander | √ |   |   |  | DCFS |
| Cindy Obier |  |   |   | XXX | State Fire Marshall |
| Erin Downing | √ |   |   |  | LDH-OCDD |
| Lynette Fontenot\* | √ |   |   |  | Chairperson |
| Kathy Allen |  |   |   | X | Vice-Chair |
| Bambi Polotzola | √ |   |   |  | GODA |
| **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** | **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** |
| Anne Jayes | Lighthouse LA | Kristie Curtis | FHF Acadiana |
| Carol Lee | LDH- OCDD | Michelle Guillory | GOEA |
| Dee Budgewater | Lighthouse LA | Senetra Guidry |  |
| Harlon Cowsar | FHF Acadiana | Tony Rocca | DRLA |
| **Staff** | **Agency** | **Staff** | **Agency** |
| Jamar Ennis | GODA | Melanie Washington | SICC/GODA |
| Jessica Lewis | SILC/GODA | Lilian Dejean | GODA Intern |

1. **Call to Order and Introductions**  3:00 pm

 The GACDA Accessibility Committee meeting was called to order. The attendance was conducted on behalf of the Committee. A quorum was established.

2.  **Introduction of Co-Chair Dr. Jim Mitchell**  3:05 pm

 Dr. Jim Mitchell provided a brief overview of his biography, background, and experiences as an advocate for individuals with disabilities and as a public servant.

3.  **Update: Statewide ADA Coordinator** 3:15 pm

Governor John Bel Edwards will support the position of an ADA coordinator in his legislative package. The legislation will be carried forward in the 2021 Regular Session via Representative Wanda Butler. It was mentioned that the position will be housed in the Division of Administration. It was provided that the individual recommended for the position be a disability advocate who has experience with the ADA.

It was mentioned that there will be a need for individuals to testify on this legislation at the appropriate time during the upcoming session.

4. **Discuss Plan for Virtual Participation in Open Meetings** 3:30 pm

 Due to the restriction of non-fiscal related bills, it has been difficult to find a legislator to carry forth an instrument for the consideration of extending the allowances for electronic participation in meetings for the purposes of satisfying quorum. The importance of making this exception a part of state law was discussed.

Members of the Accessibility Committee brainstormed ideas relative to creating alternate means to make this exception permanent.

It was mentioned that there are two bills pending in the 2021 legislative sessions.

5. **Discuss Plan for Voting Accessibility**  3:45 pm

 Lillian DeJean provided a brief overview of GODA’s objectives for improving voting accessibility.

6. **GODA Annual Conference**  4:00 pm

 Jamar Ennis solicited input from the committee for conference topic recommendations. He mentioned how, last year, two popular sessions were Voting Accessibility and Accessible Housing.

The following Accessibility topics were suggested for the 2021 GODA Conference:

Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits Planning and Dual Eligibility.

7. **Public Comment** 4:15 pm

 Co-Chairperson Ellerbee discussed the importance of screen readers and possibility of including a session during the GODA Conference.

It was mentioned that ideas relative to the 2021 GODA Conference should be made to GODA.

It was mentioned that the 2021 GODA Conference may be virtual and in-person.

 8. A**djournment**  4:20 pm

The March 16, 2021 Accessibility Committee meeting at 4:12 pm.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

10:00 AM to 11:20 AM

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Committee Members** | **Present**  | **Proxy** | **Proxy Name** | **Absent** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** |
| Amber Boykin\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Andrea Lowe\* | √ |   |   |  |   |
| Chris Rodriguez\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Elaine Harmon\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Erica Wallace\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Jerrie Williams\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Jessica Michot\* |  |   |   | X |   |
| Karen Collins\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Karen Scallan\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Katie Corkern\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Kelly Monroe\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Sharon Hennessey | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Tabatha Taylor\* | √ |   |   |   |   |
| Tarj Hamilton\* |  |   |  | XXX |   |
| Allison Vuljoin | √ |   |   |   | LDH - OAAS |
| Anne Jayes | √ |   |   |   | Lighthouse LA |
| Brenton Andrus |  |   |   | X | DD Council |
| Carol Lee | √ |   |   |   | LDH-OCDD |
| Lacey Gero | √ |   |   |   | LDH-OPH |
| Lynette Fontenot\* | √ |   |   |  | Chairperson |
| Kathy Allen | √ |   |   |  | Vice-Chair |
| Bambi Polotzola | √ |   |   |  | GODA |
| **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** | **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate/ Representing** |
| Jim Mitchell\* |  | Kristie Curtis | FHF Acadiana |
| Rep. Malinda White\* |  | Leslie Hill |  |
| Sharon Delvisco\* |  | Melissa Funk |  |
| Celia Alexander |  | Michelle Guillory | GOEA |
| Emma Douglas |  | Michelle Johnson |  |
| Harlon Cowsar | FHF Acadiana | Nicole Flores | FHF Acadiana |
| Katherine Granier |  | Tory Rocca | DRLA |
| Kathy Dwyer | SAC for OCDD | Tamia Dixon |  |
| **Staff** | **Agency** | **Staff** | **Agency** |
| Jamar Ennis | GODA | Melanie Washington | SICC/GODA |
| Jessica Lewis | SILC/GODA | Lilian Dejean | GODA Intern |

**1. Call to Order and Introductions**  10:00 am

 The GACDA Legislative Committee meeting was called to order at 10:03 am. The attendance was conducted on behalf of the Committee. A quorum was established.

**2. Discussion the following legislation:** 10:05 am

*a. Special School District*

Earnest Garrett, the Superintendent of the Special School District (SSD), provided a brief overview or the legislation that will remove the SSD from the supervision of LDOE, and become one school district. This proposal will better coordinate the system of service more efficiently. It was also mentioned that this proposal will reflect what other states are doing.

It was mentioned that there is support from alumni of the LSDVI. There will be a stakeholder meeting on March 23, 2021 to discuss this legislation further.

*b. Human Trafficking*

Mary Kate Andrews and Leslie Chambers representing the Office of the Governor provided a summary on the Human Trafficking legislation. These efforts are supported by the First Lady’s Initiative (Office of the Governor) This legislation includes:

1. An increase in criminal penalty for human trafficking when it involves individuals with disabilities.
2. A new definition of sexual exploitation for individuals with disabilities. The purpose of this legislation is also to further insure that individuals are a defined class under Louisiana Law.

Michelle Johnson provided testimony regarding an individual with disability within a court proceeding regarding the above topic.

Jim Mitchell inquired about which individuals would qualify as disabled. Mary Kate Andrews shared that this will ultimately be defined by the legislature; Leslie Chambers emphasized that it will likely adhere to what is already written in the criminal code.

*c. Community Choices Waiver*

Andrew Muhl (AARP) and (Live at Home Louisiana Coalition) provided an overview of the legislation that will create a Community Choices Waiver fund, and a line item in HB1 to allocate funding for 500 new waiver slots.

It was mentioned that there are over 11,000 individuals who are on the waiting list for the Community Choice Waiver with an average wait time of 7 ½ years. A bill has yet to be filed.

**3.**  **Recommendations on the legislative proposals**  10:25 am

(Watch Legislative Roundtable at<https://youtu.be/yur8cLbK9sc> for explanation of following)

The Co-chairs of the Legislative Committee provided an overview of the February Legislative Roundtable Meeting, and provided comments on the legislative topics below. A document was shared via zoom that summarizes the position statements of GACDA as it relates to legislation that will be considered during the 2021 Regular Legislative Session.

**Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation**

· *Human Trafficking*

**Criminal Justice**

· *Ending solitary confinement of inmates with serious mental illness*

**Economic Empowerment (Employment and Financial Literacy)**

· *Remove Exemption for unemployment insurance for people with disabilities*

**Education** (Discussed during education committee meeting)

·  *Cameras in Special Education Classrooms*

*· Special School District*

**Healthcare and Long-Term Supports/Services**

· *Requirements for Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services*: It was mentioned that there is a lack of providers to meet the needs of individuals who require these services. It was mentioned that this legislation will widen services by decreasing the requirements of providers.

It has been argued whether or not lessening the requirements is a proper approach.

Amber Boykin shared concerns with the current law, and is cautious about lessening the standard of requirements. She also shared concerns with how the providers/counselors interact with parents. It was suggested that further damage can be done to this vulnerable group of students by individuals who have a lack of training.

Katie Corkern shared support for the proposed legislation. It was mentioned that there are initiatives taking place behind the scenes to address the concerns of consumer protection.

Co-Chairperson Christopher Rodriguez suggested that the council should take a neutral position on this issue. There was no opposition to this comment.

**Home & Community Based Services**

*· Increase Provider Rates & Direct Service Worker Pay:* It was mentioned that there is a possible division of whether there should be an increase to the DSW’s, or give DSW’s 70 cents on the dollar. It was suggested that the council should advocate for the $27.9 million, which will translate into about $50 million once the federal matching funds kick in.

Karen Collins- supports the concept of DSW’s making as much money as possible. She expressed concerns of giving money to just Home and Community Based DSW’s. She expressed that this is divisive amongst the workers in her agency.

Co-Chairperson Monroe suggested that the proposed ask includes increases in other areas.

Council Chairperson Lynette Fontenot expressed her support for the increase, referencing her personal experience. She said this is the only way to receive quality care.

Co-Chairperson Rodriguez suggested that the council should not support issues that are controversial amongst the members. It was suggested that the council monitor the bill as it moves through the legislature, but ultimately remain neutral on this legislative item.

Amber Boykin suggested that the council support the concept of the proposed legislation, while the council derives a solution to satisfy the concerns that are raised in today’s committee meeting discussion.

Karen Collins- supported the idea of one group getting some benefit at this point.

It was suggested that the council conduct research on what other states are doing.

· *Dental services for adults with developmental disabilities*

*· Autism screening requirements*

*· Medicinal Cannabis*

*· Community Choices Waiver*

**Community-Based Inclusion**

*· Increase Funding for Families Helping Families*

*· State ADA Coordinator (Discussed during accessibility committee meeting)*

*· Virtual participation in open meetings (Discussed during accessibility committee meeting)*

Ultimately, Co-Chairperson Rodriguez suggested that the entire slate of legislation-- excluding the Human Trafficking legislation, Increase of Provider Rates & Direct Support Workers, and Decrease of Psychosocial Rehabilitiation Service Training-- be presented to the full council. There was no opposition. Co-Chairperson Rodriguez emphasized that this does not mean the committee is opposed to the three excluded pieces of legislation-- rather, they’re choosing to simply monitor them as they pass through the legislature.

**4. Public Comment** 11:15am **5. Adjournment**  11:20 am

**Full Council Meeting**

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

12:00 PM to 3:30 PM

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **GACDA MEMBER** | **PRESENT** | **PROXY** | **PROXY NAME** | **ABSENT** |
| Kathy | Allen | √ |  |  |  |
| Amber | Boykin | √ |  |  |  |
| Mary | Breaud |  |  |  | X |
| Walter | Carpenter |  |  |  | XX |
| Karen | Collins | √ |  |  |  |
| Katie | Corkern |  |  |  | XX |
| Timothy | Delaney | √ |  |  |  |
| Sharon | Delvisco | √ |  |  |  |
| Beau | Ellerbee | √ |  |  |  |
| Lynette | Fontenot | √ |  |  |  |
| Robert | Garcia | √ |  |  |  |
| Kirsten | Gladen |  |  |  | XX |
| Tarj | Hamilton | √ |  |  |  |
| Elaine | Harmon | √ |  |  |  |
| Sharon | Hennessey | √ |  |  |  |
| Linda | Kocher |  |  |  | X |
| Andrew | Kuyoro | √ |  |  |  |
| Andrea | Lowe | √ |  |  |  |
| Jessica | Michot |  |  |  | XX |
| Kelly | Monroe | √ |  |  |  |
| John | Moran | √ |  |  |  |
| Mark | Raymond, Jr. | √ |  |  |  |
| Christopher | Rodriguez | √ |  |  |  |
| Karen | Scallan | √ |  |  |  |
| Tabatha | Taylor | √ |  |  |  |
| Erica | Wallace | √ |  |  |  |
| Jerrie | Williams | √ |  |  |  |
| Nicole | Williams | √ |  |  |  |
| Gerald | Boudreaux | √ |  |  |  |
| Malinda | White |  |  |  | X |
| **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate** | **Attendees** | **Agency/Affiliate** |
| Melissa Bayham | LWC-LRS | Celia Alexander | DCFS |
| Michelle Guillory | GOEA | Carolyn Dragseth | DCFS |
| Dr. Fernando Lopez | LDH- OAAS | Harlon Cowsar | People First |
| Robin Wagner | LDH- OAAS | Kristie Curtis | LaCAN |
| Karen Stubbs | LDH- OBH | John Schweitzer | LWC-LRS |
| Julie Foster-Hagan | LDH- OCDD | Ashley McReynolds | Arc of LA |
| Erin K. Downing | LDH- OCDD | Tory Rocca | Disability Rights LA |
| Kevin George | LDH- OCDD | Senetra Guidry |  |
| Carol Lee | LDH- OCDD |  |  |
| Patti Barovechio | LDH- OPH |  |  |
| **Staff** | **Title** | **Staff** | **Title** |
| Bambi Polotzola | GODA Director | Jamar Ennis | GODA Asst. Dir. |
| Jessica Lewis | SILC Director | Lillian Dejean | GODA Intern |

**1) Call to Order, Reading of Meeting Protocols and Introductions**  12:00

 The GACDA Council meeting was called to order at 12:03 pm by the GACDA Chairperson, Lynette Fontenot. The attendance was conducted on behalf of the Committee. A quorum was established.

The members of GACDA used

Kathy Allen provided a motion to approve the December 2020 minutes, Jerrie Williams Seconded the motion to approve the December 2020 GACDA minutes. The motion passed unanimously, without any objections, abstention, or discussion.

**2) Committee Reports and Discussions**

 *Executive* 12:05 pm

GACDA Co-chairperson Kathy Allen provided a brief overview of the Executive Committee report. Please see the attached document to view the minutes pertaining to the Executive Committee report.

It was stated that the executive committee met on January 27, 2021. It was mentioned that there is a need for a consideration time allotted on each agenda item to allow anyone with questions or concerns to contribute. It was also suggested that the committee co-chairs should continue to work together to further their objectives. It was mentioned that the council should mandate that all participants use their video cameras during the council meetings held via Zoom. It was also mentioned that all members of GACDA should be reminded of the policy of attendance. Any member who misses three meetings without prior notification will be asked to evaluate whether or not their membership should continue on the council.

 *Education* 12:15 pm

Co-chairperson Amber Boykin, provided a brief overview of the March 16, 2021, Education Committee Meeting report. Please see the attached minutes relative to the March 16, 2021 Education Committee Minutes.

*Housing* 12:30 pm

Co-chairperson Sharon Hennessey, provided an overview of the March 16, 2021, Housing Committee Meeting report. Please see the attached March 16, 2021, Housing Committee Minutes for more information.

Co-chairperson Sharon Hennessey made a motion that request that the Governor’s Office to recommend to the LHC that GACDA be involved in the decision making and planning and prioritization of the funds that will be provided to the State of Louisiana as a result of the American Rescues Act, and also in the planning, authorization, prioritization and involvement of the section 8 vouchers received from the aforementioned source funds.

The motion was passed by the council unanimously, without any objections, abstentions, or discussion.

*Transportation*  12:45 pm

Co-chairperson Beau Ellierbee, provided an overview of the March 16, 2021, Transportation Committee Meeting. Please see the attached minutes from the March 16, 2021 GACDA Transportation Committee meeting for more information.

*Accessibility*  1:00 pm

Co-chairpersons Andrew Kuyoro, and Dr. Jim Mitchell , provided a brief overview of the March 16, 2021, Accessibility Committee Meeting. Please see the attached minutes from the March 16, 2021 GACDA Accessibility Committee meeting for more information.

*Legislative*  1:15 pm

Co-chairpersons Christopher Rodreguez and Kelly Monroe provided an overview of the March 17, 2021, Legislative Committee Meeting. Please see the attached minutes from the March 17, 2021 GACDA Legislative Committee meeting for more information.

The co-chairs presented a slate of legislative acts and proposals for the members of GACDA to support. Please see the attached document for more information.

The GACDA Committee unanimously voted to support the legislative acts and proposals presented during the GACDA full-body meeting; without any opposition, abstentions, or discussion.

It was discussed that GACDA will support the concept of the following instruments of legislation, but will ultimately preserve a neutral position on the actual instruments: *Human Trafficking, Psycho-social services, and rate increases*

It was mentioned that GACDA may change its position(s) on the above legislative concepts moving forward.

***The GACDA Council recessed at 1:12 pm. The GACDA Council meeting was called to order at 1:22 pm***

**3)**  **Update on Employment initiatives** (including but not limited to LRS, GODA, OBH, OCDD) 1:30 pm

*Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS)-*

*Melissa Bayham-* Baton Rouge location continues to see clients both in person and via Zoom. It was mentioned that LRS is working on the VOICE Grant with the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH). The purpose of the VOICE Grant is to strengthen and streamline services to better serve consumers with Behavioral Health concerns. LRS is currently working with Southern University relative to an Integrated Resource Teams Program. There are currently pilot programs going with the aforementioned programs and initiatives.

*Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs (GODA)-*

*Bambi-* GODA updated the disability employment webpage. The SAME Taskforce has been going over the SAME report that recommends best practices. Presentations relative to PRETS and Accommodations have taken place this year.

*Office of Behavioral Health (OBH)-*

*Karen Stubbs-* OBH had a meeting with the creators of the Individual Placement Support (IPS) Model. The IPS Model is an evidence-based model of supported employment for people with mental illness. 24 states have currently adopted this model in varying ways. OBH has started to enroll employees in the (virtual) IPS Leadership Training, which trains states on how to utilize the IPS Model. The intention is to use this knowledge to support and expand the pilot programs LRS is hosting.

*Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)-*

*Julie Foster Hagan-* It was mentioned that OCDD is on the verge of making changes to the waiver programs, especially to the adult programs. Update their service definitions to their programs for better service navigation.

**4) La Department of Health updates** (including but not limited to OAAS, OBH, OCDD, OPH) 2:00 pm

*Office of Behavioral Health (OBH)-*

*Karen Stubbs-* It was mentioned that there are a few trainings involving peer support. The training is approximately two-weeks long, and the next opportunity will be on April 12, 2021. The deadline for registering is March 22, 2021.

As it relates to the Rescue Act, there will be funds available, but it is unclear if it will be through OBH. It was mentioned that the department has not received guidance on the funding at this time.

*Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS)-*

*Robin Wagner-* It was mentioned that OAAS and OCDD have worked closely together on vaccinations and logistics relative to. It was important that Home and Community Based and Residential Settings received a higher priority in the vaccination line. There were ongoing efforts to collect data, disseminate resources regarding vaccinations, and produce information and guidance regarding vaccine hesitancy and other barriers.

There have been consistent messages to providers and consumers of the importance of receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations.

The department is currently seeking resources to increase the hands on navigation and enrollment of scheduling. There have been efforts directed to community based settings and churches. There will be more information that will be geared toward reaching other important populations. There will be ongoing efforts to address hesitancy with the Office of Public Health (OPH).

Furthermore, the department is monitoring the American Rescue Act at this time. The department is currently focusing on the specific federal directives that will have to be followed.

There are plans to offer 500 new waiver slots this year.

Jim Mitchell- is someone tracking the municipal vaccination efforts? This is a question for OPH

*Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)-*

*Julie Foster Hagan-* There are joint efforts relative to vaccinations between OAAS and OCDD. The Department is taking a look at the American Rescue Act, and expects CMS to issue guidance. OCDD will explore options for stakeholder input for suggestions. There will likely be assistance provided that will focus on improving infrastructure.

OCDD is currently recommending what should be implemented long term and or discontinue pursuant to the appendix K (1135), the waiver exceptions provided during COVID-19 response

There will be two listening sessions in the month of April that will target providers and consumers.

When the information is available, there will be listening sessions regarding the funding that may flow through OCDD.

*Office of Public Health (OPH)-*

*Becky Majdoch-*

LCD- clients are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Bureau of Family Health- A brick and mortar resource center was shifted into a virtual resource center (via phone and email).

Since July 2020, there has been a partnership with Families Helping Families to help bolster resources and training.

**5) State Agency/ Member Updates**  2:30 pm

*Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs (GOEA)-*

*Michelle Guillory-* A report was shared via zoom.

GOEA is in the midst of transitioning services to in person. Some of the centers in the state remain due to concerns surrounding COVID-19.

Will add the report provided.

**6) 2021 GODA Conference**  3:00 pm

Jamar Lanier Ennis of GODA solicited ideas and suggestions for topics, paneled sessions, and speakers for the impending 2021 GODA Conference.

It was mentioned that last year’s virtual conference provided a broader appeal for individuals to participate in GODA’s Annual Conference. I was mentioned that there are ongoing efforts to coordinate both an in-person and virtual conference.

Amber Boykin suggested “Access for Everyone” as a theme for the 2021 GODA Conference.

Beau Ellerbee suggested that the GODA conference be focused on employment.

Elaine Harmon suggested that if an in-person event is coordinated, there should be a requirement to show proof of vaccination.

7) **Public Comment**  3:25 pm

Sharon Hennesseystated that People First will host a seminar relative to advocacy training on March 24, 2021.

Tabatha Taylorreminded everyone that World Autism Day is April 2.

Kathy Allen reminded everyone that World Down Syndrome Day is March 21. Right to Life’s FaceBook page will be hosting a FaceBook Live at 5PM in honor of the event, featuring Liz Gary and her son Dustin.

8) **Adjournment**  3:30pm

Kathy Allen motions to adjourn at 2:45PM. Karen Collins seconds the motion. There are no objections or abstentions. The motion carries.