

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

Full Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

1:00 PM to 3:30 PM

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Bambi called meeting to order at 1 PM A quorum was reached

2) Approval of June 2023 GACDA Minutes

Tabatha Taylor made a motion to approve, Tory Rocca and Karen Scallan seconded.

June Minutes approved.

3) Committee Reports and Discussions

Ø Legislative-Tory Rocca gave an update on the meeting. See full Legislative Committee meeting minutes below.

Ø Education-Nicole Flores gave an update on the meeting. See full Education Committee meeting minutes below.

Ø Accessibility- Jim Mitchell gave an update on the meeting. See full Accessibility Committee meeting minutes below.

Arc of LA hosted a gubernatorial forum it is posted on their Facebook page

EMDAC- GODA is currently hosting monthly lunch and learns (sept 13 housing) next is scheduled for Wednesday Oct 18 and will deal with the Risk Assessment Program (RAPT)

4) Update on Employment initiatives (including but not limited to [LRS](#), [OBH](#), [OCDD](#))

LRS:

LRS is continuing to ask for participants for STEM UP (LRS and Southern University Partnership) with info available on LWC website. Rate increases are being finalized and will be confirmed in late October. LRS is actively recruiting case managers.

OCDD:

OCDD is currently working to re-shape vocational employment services for waiver recipients. Initially the rollout was expected for Oct. 1 but is now aiming for Jan. 1.

5) [La Department of Health](#) updates (including but not limited to [OAAS](#), [OBH](#), [OCDD](#), [OPH](#))

OAAS:

OAAS has created a business plan that concluded in June.

Plan Goals:

-Increase response rate to waiver notification letters (5% target 14% reached)
OAAS simplified their letters, placed them in a blue envelope, and called recipients once a letter was sent with a follow up after 30 days.

-Decrease DSW turnover

(67.9% target 63.8% reached) OAAS

(49.3% target 46.6% reached) OCDD

Bonuses issued through American Rescue Plan Act to DSW and provider rate coverage. DSW training portal is in development (March 2025 deadline) Dental days program in development along with bolstering Mom's meals program.

An update was given on the advancing stage conference. OAAS is still active in the public health emergency unwind program.

Natalie Istre was recently named OAAS new deputy assistant secretary. Sherrilyn Sullivan is retiring.

OCDD:

Currently working on waiver unwinding due to public health emergency; information available on OCDD website. OCDD is planning another roadshow in October.

CSHS also provides medical appointment transportation assistance for eligible families.

Families may contact local representatives for additional information. OCDD is working on a report ending with compensation to support coordination agencies. Additionally, a report was commissioned to review tools that set rates of individuals living in intermediate care facilities.

SICC will give additional updates in the coming months.

6) Member Updates (up to 3 minutes per member)

Tim Delaney- MSU has an increase of students receiving ODS services. Those students have a higher GPA than those who aren't registered with ODS.

Beau Ellerbee- Beau has seen an increase in web accessibility in the past few years. Beau praised the state for the progress as he feels it's a step in the right direction.

Jamar Ennis- SILC has deaf representation on council now. SILC is currently undergoing a re-brand and is working on several awareness campaigns along with informational materials.

Nicole Flores- The LA Youth Leadership Forum returned this year with 11 participants. Nicole also brought up community projects in the near future Families Helping Families is a part of.

Sharon Hennessey- People First LA recently held a conference that was very well received. Additionally, PFL submitted a question in the recent LA Gubernatorial Forum dealing with housing.

Andrea Lowe- Andrea serves as ADA Coordinator for Saint John the Baptist Parish. She has been able to use GACDA resources and connections to bolster her work efforts and has gotten a great deal out of EMDAC in particular.

Jessica Michot- Trach Moms of LA has worked with key stakeholders to undue stigma of what it means to use a ventilator. Also worked to increase understanding of medical complexities statewide.

Jim Mitchell- Jim encouraged others to become involved in the broadband and technology initiatives being offered as well as promoting the need to attend the GOLD Awards.

Kelly Monroe- Kelly has enjoyed her time and work on the legislative committee, she feels the Gubernatorial forum was also a great success. Arc of LA has several partnerships and projects coming in the near future including the Local Host Event held at Mardi Gras World on Nov 7.

John Moran- John is raising a daughter with downs syndrome, he is working on the Saint Lillian Academy board to offer services to students and is focused on housing for those with special needs.

Pasqueal Nguyen- 2023 Partners in Policymaking graduate, Started *A Parent Impact Coalition* focused on keeping families together. Assisted on mandated reporter framework information.

Mark Raymond- Working to add Health and Human Services statewide. Gave an update on *Split Second Foundation* that helps persons with a variety of needs and disabilities after a traumatic accident, discussed his *Roll With We* campaign.

Tory Rocca- DRLA is expanding its programing to advocate for those receiving HCBS. DRLA Policy Analyst, Dr. Ashley Volion has been conducting 1-1 interviews with Gubernatorial candidates as well as local policymakers; recordings available on DRLA website.

Karen Scallan- Open enrollment for Medicaid begins Oct. 15. Karen is dealing with a shortage of formulas such as ensure and other institutional brands manufactured by Abbot Labs.

Jerri Reeves- Spoke about support coordinator information dissemination. Bambi advised that LDH has that information and families should reach out to support coordinators with any issues.

8) GOLD Awards and Inclusive Arts Contest

Bambi gave an update The 2023 theme is “Nothing About Us Without Us”.

Award ceremony will be held at the old state capitol on Monday, November 13th. Deadline for nominations is October 31.

The award ceremony will be recorded and streamed after the event. Additionally the recording will be made available to public access channels statewide.

9) No Public Comment

10) Adjournment Jim Moved to adjourn, Tim seconded the motion.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Friday, September 15, 2023
9:30 AM to 10:30 AM

1. Call to Order and Roll Call 9:30 am
2. Discuss [Local Special Education Advisory Councils](#) Report 9:35 am
Nicole Flores

-Special Education Advisory Council met three times last year and submitted a report to the superintendent that would go to LDOE; this report is posted on LDOE's website.

-Dr. Beckers noted that there is no set format for the reports and suggested minimum requirements be created.

- Mylinda Elliot informed the committee that the Calcasieu Parish's link on the website doesn't work.

- Jodi asked the committee to suggest requesting a report on how the meetings are advertised and the format. Jodi brought up the need for virtual meetings to ensure accessibility.

-Jodi questioned what happened to districts that did not submit; where are the missing reports. LDOE guidance on increasing parental participation. Brenda echoed the need for standardization. Bambi suggested including best practices and having questions for a LDOE representative.

- Dr. Beckers suggested making a recommendation on the following:

- Time availability
- Recorded Meetings
- Centralized locations
- Meeting Accessibility

Bambi recommended reviewing the reports available and reaching out to corresponding SPED directors and having a group of them involved in the standardization process. This will also aid in overall engagement.

3. [Related Services Advisory Council](#) 10:15 am
Alishia Vallien

- Had a meeting on Wednesday; Sending our survey to gather data to present to SEAP and the superintendent council to bring before the BESE board. They're coming up with recommendations to increase related service.
- They are considering parent friendly language ; they are also doing a one pager to inform the parents of what all is available to them and explain who does what. (who to call/ any questions, etc...,) on Oct. 1st.

- Ms. Dwyer suggested the committee have a representative from any part of the state and the council should have a representative from other parts of the state and not solely from north Louisiana.

4. [Postsecondary Inclusive Education Fund](#)
Dr. Beckers

10:20am

Additional \$1 million was put in the fund by the legislature and \$350,000 left.

New SUNO, ULM and LSU all put in for initial programs. This program will be represented throughout the state.

Meeting again in Oct.; met with the LAPIE committee to get suggestions on how the monies that are left are now generated; Questionnaire went out to LAPIE members for suggestions and dates.

-BAMBI: advised that the Governor's Fellow (Amina Mitchell) had a proposal regarding higher ed disability. JBE asked the Board of Regents and GODA to bring people together with disability services directors before Dec. 1st; share best practices and issues and knowledge. Institutions will meet initially on Nov. 17.

-Tim Delaney stated that they meet once a year, but they no longer meet with universities.

5. No Public Comment

6. Adjournment

10:35 am

Tim Delaney made a motion to adjourn Dr. Mary Breaud seconded. Passed.

ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE
Monday, September 18, 2023
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

1. Call to Order and Roll Call Jim called meeting to order Bambi called roll.
2. [Granting Unserved Municipalities Broadband Opportunities](#) (GUMBO)
3. Updates from the Statewide Independent Living Council - Jamar Ennis
 - Gave an update regarding their interpreting and captioning at public meetings locally.
 - The council is in the process of creating advocacy tools and guidance to be disseminated statewide and have a representative to aid as needed.
 - SILC recently rebranded and has a new website.
 - Jamar wants the website to undergo an audit for web accessibility.
4. Updates from the [LA Commission of Deaf](#) - Jazmyne Lemar
 - Act 128 - LCD has est. an interpreter at committee to heavily focus on drafting administrative codes for challenge. Aug. 23 (first mtg)
 - Committee working to have it done by Nov. 10th; will draft new rules and submit a notice of intent.
 - Statewide Mentorship- defining new rules/qualifications; will have a resource for availability.
 - Interpreter registry- still a growing list and committee is encouraged to utilize their services if needed (link provided in chat).
 - LCD has Guidance manual for community members on how to have best practices relevant to interpreting services on the following topics:
 - Scheduling Accommodations
 - How to Work with a Sign Language Interpreter
 - How to Ensure a Virtual Meeting is Accessible
 - There still is a shortage in interpreters statewide.
5. Updates on Voting Accessibility [\(Act 277 of 2023\)](#)
Bambi gave update

NAACP Legal defense fund initiated a letter to the SOS just asking for implementation. (training updates, ADA Compliance officer appointment) sent a month ago; no response
6. OTS Accessibility Team Presentation - Matt Vince
 - CDC: 1 in 3 Louisianians has a disability
 - Kathy Dwyer asked if contractors/content creators that receive state funds comply with web accessibility standards for their business websites. Matt confirmed that WAC is one of the areas the accessibility team looks at when they are fielding partners.

- Beau and Matt spoke about assistive technology implementation.-Stressed its importance and impact to the disabled community. Additionally Beau asked if the team has a website accessibility auditor, Matt stated that they only provide advice and information and at this time do not have the capacity for a dedicated auditor.
- Beau offered to assist the team as needed.
- Marsha spoke with Matt about the process of prioritizing issues, awareness, and program availability for the general public. Matt stressed that a plan is in the works and priorities will be identified through partnership with different departments and state agencies.
- Dr. Lowe reiterated the need for a solid plan and statewide partnership.
- Kathy Dwyer suggested adding contact information for web accessibility issues for the web accessibility team as well as a “seal” of approval to show that a website meets WAC standards.

7. Update on DOJ Web Accessibility Regulations

- Jim Mitchell shared a presentation on WA regulations.
- Advised the committee that the public comment/input deadline is 10/3.
- Rikki David informed the committee that there are no set standards for ADA web accessibility. The DOJ project would create a unified version.

8. Updates from the [State ADA Coordinator Office](#) - Rikki David

Rikki has been able to present on the following topics since June: Building DEI in the Workplace, Overcoming Ableism, and Interplay for ADA and FMLA
She continues to be contacted by organizations to speak and continues to grow her network.

Act 393-Amended open meeting law to include electronic offerings and accommodate needs of disabled community via virtual offerings) She attempted to create an emergency rule to create action, but had to withdraw and create partnering guidance templates.

9. State Fire Marshall Presentation - Laura Patterson

Laura shared information on the complaint process

Stated how their office is involved in making sure locations are ada accessible and taking complaints. Lasfm.org top right - complaints option

10. Updates from [EMDAC](#) - Bambi Polotzola

Posted link for info and resources

Notified committee of the upcoming Lunch ‘N Learn on Oct. 18th

11. Public Comments

Jim - CATS in BR has a service survey on if the disabled community is having their needs met. He also stated that the majority of the website is not compliant with WAC.

12. Adjournment. Jamar motion to adjourn. Beau seconded motion

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
Tuesday, September 19, 2023
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

1. Call to Order and Roll Call Tory called meeting to order. Bambi called roll.
2. Status of the implementation of HB449 - Tory Rocca
 - No major updates are available at this time. The committee has previously sent letters requesting an update on the State Voting Accessibility Coordinator and Voting Accessibility bill. No response has been received as of 9/19.
 - Jim advised inviting the legislators to the next meeting committee meeting (which will be held in December) in order to hold them accountable for not responding to the committee's letter.
3. New senior HCBS fund (SB 39)- Tory Rocca

Tory informed the committee that the bill passed and gave an in-depth review of the bill.

4. Legislative Auditor's report about EPS - Tory Rocca
 - Will have follow up meetings
 - EPS - not receiving all reports of elder abuse and neglect, and not answering calls outside of business hours; the auditors did recommend expanding their ability of intake options.
 - Kathy Dwyer encourages the committee to push for the legislative auditor to audit health standards; families are feeling like the complaints are not being heard or investigated. Families are not receiving information on how and/or if their concern is being handled.
5. Public Comment
 - Kelly Monroe gave an account of the Arc of Louisiana's experience during the recent gubernatorial debate. Kelly noted that some questions had satisfactory answers and some were lackluster; she attributes that to a lack of understanding of disability issues and experiences.
 - Tory reminded the committee to be vigilant in awareness and advocacy efforts.
 - The debate questions and link to YouTube recording were sent to Bambi.
 - Jim asked when the next session is slated (April 2024)
 - Kelly brought up that Arc and LDH are attempting to bring back the previous medicaid buy-in which is a policy change. Kelly is hopeful for its return.
 - Bambi stressed the need to involve those with late onset disabilities, Jim agreed and the committee will take steps to include.
6. Adjournment Tory made a motion to adjourn with no objections