



LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF

Board of Commissioners

October 17, 2025 9:00am-1:00pm

Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call & Introductions

- a. Meeting called to order by Dr. Natalie Delgado 9:10am
- b. Members Present: Dr. Natalie Delgado, Dr. Ashley Argrave; Aaron McGee proxy for Sherry Powell; Denise Crochet proxy for Leslie Knowles; Jamar Ennis, Dr. Megan Wimberly, Cammy Gaspar, Melissa Bayham, Marissa Ramos, Brad Wellons, Ty Manieri, proxy for Dr. Shirley Lewis, Dr. Lauren Wells, Sherry Crosby, 14 present, quorum was established

Not Present Bethany Jackson, Louisiana Department of Health; Senator Caleb Kleinpeter; Rosalind Dotson, Office of Behavioral Health.

Special thank you to Meredith Jordan with Department of Education who is no longer serving on the Commission. Her interim replacement is Dr Lauren Wells. Dr. David Martin with Special School District is also no longer serving on the Commission. Board thanks him for his contributions. His interim replacement is Dr Shirley Lewis.

Two vacant positions: Hard of Hearing and Deaf Representative

Commissioner Wellons expressed concern for the vacant deaf and hard of hearing seat. He addressed Jamar Ennis with the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs to emphasize the importance of appropriate and timely representation on the board.

- c. Members Absent: HOH Representative (vacant position), Deaf Representative (vacant position), Office of Behavioral Health Rosalind Dotson
- d. Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD)Staff: Jana Broussard, Jazmyne Lemar, Brittany Welch, Charlotte Parker, Victoria Regueira, Dr. Shanna Williams
- e. Ancillary support: Interpreters- Sylvie Sullivan, Jennifer Kuyrkendall-Watts, Annette Pourciau, Jennifer Guerrieri, Live Captioning provided by Lynsey Hebert with CaptionThat!.

III. Mandate Review: Overview of RS 46:2352 and Title 67 by Dr Delgado

IV. Public Comment:

- a. Dan Arabie: Concerns with the Request for Proposals (RFP) in regards with Support Service Providers (SSPs). Asked LCD to eliminate lapse in services. We should not be left without services. It does harm to our Deafblind community.
 1. Director Broussard: Response to Mr. Arabie: Awards to RFPs are outside of our department and in another state office. There has not been nor will there be a

lapse in service. All services are continuing while we await the final award.

- b. Peter “PJ” Broussard : Concerned with the unprofessionalism of the wording of “protest” in the award email for the RFP to Affiliated Blind of Louisiana “Any person aggrieved by the proposed award has the right to submit a protest in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute 39:1671”
 1. Brad Wellons: This statement is required by law. It is not intended to be negative or provoking.

V: Approval of Agenda (Crosby, Wellons) approved

MOTION: (Crosby, Knowles) Defer July 11, 2025 minutes approval to the next meeting

VI. Approval of Minutes

- a. January 17, 2025 MOTION (Crosby, Ennis) none opposed, approved
 - i. Leslie Knowles: One, Numbers issues two. There is no reference to the Option1 and Option 2 mentioned in the notes?
 - ii. Dr. Argrave: I can add
- b. February 21, 2025 Special Meeting MOTION (Crosby, Ennis) none opposed, approved
 - i. Leslie Knowles: Can we add a slide as reference to the “Slide 7” on the last page?
 - ii. MOTION: (Crosby, Knowles) Approval of minutes with the corrections. None opposed. Approved.
- c. July 11, 2025: deferred

VII. Old Business

- a. Notices of Intent
 - i. Proposed Rules for Sign Language Interpreters
 1. Department Response to Public Hearing
 - a. Director Broussard provided an update that the Louisiana Department of Health published their response to comments received during the public comment period for rulemaking. The official response was posted and made public on August 18, 2025. The Department’s published response indicates they will not make any changes to the standards as proposed.
 2. Status Update on Rulemaking Timeline
 - a. Director Broussard reported that the commission and board are now part of the Occupational Licensing Review Panel Program, which oversees rules and action related to professional workforces. The current rule was sent to them for review. Once approved, it will go to the Second oversight committee at the state legislature.
 - ii. Proposed Repeal for Former Sign Language Interpreter Certification Program
 1. Director Broussard reported that the final repeal was published in the State Register as of September 20, 2025
 - iii. Proposed Revised Board of Commissioner Duties
 1. Director Broussard reported that the final revised duties of the board were published in the State Register as of September 20,2025
- b. Commission Sub-Committee update
 - i. Interpreter Ad hoc Committee update
 1. Sherry Crosby: Ad hoc members include: Sherry Crosby, Leslie Knowles,

Stefanie Nadeau, Annette Pourciau, Jennifer Kuyrkendall-Watts, Damien Parfait, Shannah Arceneaux, Shelly McAllister, and Cammy Gaspar. The first meeting date is TBD.

- ii. Bylaws Committee Update
 - 1. Report by Dr. Delgado- This committee has yet to convene and will have the initial after the first of the year, due to competing priorities among members.
- iii. Executive Committee update
 - 1. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the chair, Dr. Delgado-, shared information about the proposed salary and minimum qualification requirements for the LCD Executive Director position.

BREAK 10:15-10:42am IT issues

VIII: New Business

- a. Strategic Plan- FY27-29
 - i. Innivee Strategies: Presented by Davin Searls and Melissa Yingst. Provided the board with a progress update on the new strategic plan, and requested to receive any feedback thus far. Plan to provide final report prior to meeting January 2026.
 - 1. Vision, Mission, and Purpose included slides of the original and proposed statements.
 - a. Board held discussion on the word “Empowerment”. The sign for it seems like someone is giving the Deaf person power, but really they are empowering themselves.
 - 2. Priorities:
 - a. Priority 1:Community Communication & Outreach , Priority 2: Community, Leadership & Governance, Priority 3: Inclusive Service Delivery, Priority 4: Generational Care and Advocacy, Priority 5: Educational Excellence and Leadership
 - 3. General consensus was the board is supportive of the new Vision, Mission and Purpose statements, and all five priorities, noting that the work supports and recognizes the engagement and needs of the Deaf community.

IX. Old Business Continued (due to technical issues)

- iii. Executive Committee update continued
 - MOTION:** (Ramos, Crosby) Approve minimum qualification. Motion Approved.
 - MOTION:** (Crosby, Knowles) Approve Preferred Qualifications
 - Dr.Manieri change the language of Master’s degree to advanced degree.
 - Substitution MOTION:** (Manieri, Gaspar) Approve preferred qualifications with substituting Master’s degree with an advanced degree including Masters or Doctorate level degrees. None opposed. Approved.
 - MOTION:** (Crosby, Ramos) Approve to accept salary qualifications
 - MOTION:** (Wellons, Wimberly) Approve substitutions with changes of PhD to Doctorate.

Discussion: Dr. Delgado discussed the title of the current "Interim Executive

Director” for Ms. Broussard. Based on definition and historical work, she proposed changing the title to “Acting Executive Director.”

MOTION: (Ramos, Argrave) To change the title from “Interim Executive Director” to “Acting Executive Director, to be inclusive of all historical work under her purview. None opposed. Approved.

- iv. Mental Health Workgroup: (Ms. Ramos.) The workgroup is looking for people who are interested in joining the subcommittee for this workgroup. Possibly having meetings 1x/month during lunchtime.
- v. Deafblind Advisory Committee update: (Dr. Wimberly) Provided update related to the discussions and planning for training of SSPs and Deafblind consumers in the areas of DeafBlind awareness, self-advocacy, and conflict resolution are ongoing. Group has proposed a Vocational Access Service Provider (VASP) program in partnership with LCD and Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. This would help clients so they would not have to use SSP hours for career searches and provide vocational training and employment support. Proposed that LCD conduct a survey on SSP vs Co-navigator, and other roles and their terminology.
 - 1. Melissa Bayham: LRS did meet with LCD to discuss this service and we have begun initial discussions.

X. New Business (again)

- a. 2026 Meeting Dates: January 16, 2026, April 17, 2026, July 17, 2026, October 16, 2026
 - i. **MOTION** (Wimberly, Crosby) to approve dates. None opposed. Motion carries.
- b. Deaf Leadership Development Program (LD2) Cohort 2 Closing Ceremony
 - i. Video will be posted and made publically available, once approved.
 - ii. PJ Broussard: Shared his experience of the LD2 program. After this program, I am able to organize, lead, and speak in public. I was able to work with the youth and I want to encourage people to participate in this program.
- c. Organizational Requests for Information (Acting Director Broussard)
 - i. LCD contracts with many agencies who provide services across the state. We will be releasing Requests for Information from organizations that provide these services, and we encourage organizations to apply. First is the Regional Support Center contracts. These support centers are based in regions of the state and provide support and services for individuals across the state. They are responsible for intake or screenings to determine needs for the d/Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing persons and then provide or refer to services. Please note: Regional Service Centers will be changed to Regional Support Centers for the Deaf. The other contract is for interpreting and other effective communication services under “Communication Access Services”. The last contract will be for a contractor to administer the Statewide Interpreting Mentorship Program. Please be on the lookout for more information.
 - 1. Interpreter Mentorship Program
 - 2. Regional Support Centers for the Deaf
 - 3. Communication Access Services

XI. Reports from LCD Director: Acting Executive Director Jana Broussard

- a. In interest of time: reminder the budget has been emailed. Any questions and concerns please call or email.
- b. The state has announced that the Affiliated Blind of Louisiana received an intent to

award from their Request for Proposal to provide SSP services. Any protests can be sent to the Office of State Procurement until October 22, 2025.

- c. Interpreting Mentorship Program update- 20 mentees are currently participating in this year's cohort. LCD has begun providing facilitated study groups for interpreters needing to prepare for Center for Assessment of Sign Language Interpreters, and the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment knowledge/written certification exams.

XII. Reports from LCD Board Members

- a. Commissioner Ramos: There is a program called REAL South for early intervention for children 0-3 years old who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. They want to further support families in our state.
- b. Commissioner Knowles: on October 22, 2025, the Louisiana Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf will be hosting an open forum with Acting Director Broussard, and our fall conference will be held November 7-8, 2025 in Mandeville.
- c. Commissioner Crosby: Louisiana Association of the Deaf is hosting a town hall meeting at the Liberty Deaf Church located near the Louisiana School for the Deaf regarding the Special School District. Interpreters will be provided.

XIII. Announcements

XV. Adjourn 1:02pm by Chair. Dr. Natalie Delgado (seconded or motioned by Gaspar, Wellons)

DRAFT