



LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF

Board of Commissioners

October 18, 2024 9:00am-1:00pm

Minutes

I. Roll Call & Introductions

- A. Meeting called to order by Dr. Natalie Delgado 9:10am
- B. Members Present: Dr. Natalie Delgado, Dr. Ashley Argrave; Sajata Varner; Sherry Crosby; Sherry Powell proxy Aaron McGee; Denise Crochet; Dr. David Martin; Meredith Jordan, Senator Caleb Kleinpeter, Jamar Ennis, Brad Wellons, Dr. Megan Wimberly, Cammy Gaspar, Melissa Bayham proxy Gabriel McGrew, Jamar Ennis
- C. Members Absent: House Representative (vacant), Deaf Representative (vacant), LDH Representative Bethany Blackson, Marissa Ramons,
- D. LCD Staff: Jana Broussard, Jazmyne Lemar, Victoria Regueira, Brittany Welch, Charlotte Parker, Vanessa Magnon
- E. Ancillary support: Interpreters- Sylvie Sullivan, Malachi Mooney, Annette Pourciau, Lissa Gill, Walker Estes, Vanessa Magnon; Live Captioning provided by CaptionThat! Lynsey Hebert.

II. Approval of Agenda (Crosby, Jordan)

III. Approval of Minutes (Crosby, Ennis)

III. Public Comment:

- A. Jayce Romero: concerns with SSP. Contacted Lynn Blanchard, director of ABL about how certain SSPs are refusing his assignments.
- B. Carolyn Clark : her daughter lives at Pinecrest and only has an ASL interpreter 50% of the time. Her daughter needs ASL support. Jay Isch: is having issues with finding ASL support services for her because the pay isn't enough. The pay is only \$8/hr. Requesting alternative suggestions or support for pay for ASL interpreters for patient.
- C. Jay Isch: struggling with Drivers Education program. We have been trying to find a program to work with or support to provide drivers education to Deaf and hard of hearing people. Louisiana School for the Deaf does not have the funding for the program.
 - 1. Meredith Jordan: There is something called a "High cost funding source" to fund an interpreter to provide after school opportunities. I think we may be able to fund some of those things. I will go back to my team and check with that.
 - 2. Dr. Wimberly: we could perhaps look at student's IEP transition plan for independent living as driving is included in some of those plans. This may be a space for additional funding.

IV. Report from LCD Director

- A. FY21-24 Strategic Priority Review

1. Jana Broussard:
 - i. Enhance SSP Services
 1. Released a new RFP, ABL won that bid and they have historically provided that service. We had a task force and gave them feedback and new expectations of their performance. Policies have changed and work is still ongoing. New RFP is going out this year.
 2. New DB task force as well as DB representative on LCD Board of Commissioners.
 - ii. Establishing Interpreting standards and Systems
 1. Updated law now Act 128 to provide minimum standards and oversight of the ASL interpreter workforce
 2. Conducted and released a statewide interpreting needs assessment by Innvee strategies
 3. New online Interpreting Registry
 4. Developed an interpreting Mentorship program which is now an established system on going.
 - iii. Enhance Community Engagement
 1. Created and filled new communications officer position who manages our social media, website, and other social engagement. This is now part of LCD ongoing systems.
 2. Developed and released new independent website
 - iv. Address Gaps in Mental Health
 1. Office of Behavioral Health seat via legislation for the LCD Board of Commissioners.
 - v. Address Racial Disparities
 1. Partnership with New Orleans Black Deaf Advocates to better understand the needs of their community.
 2. provided funding for community trainings
 - vi. Modernize Telecommunication Equipment Program
 1. Remove d and/or updated policies and processes. Provides access to more modern equipment. This will remain a high priority.

B. FY 2025: Jana Broussard

1. Strategic Priorities- Transitional Year
 - i. Continue to focus on Our Mission
 1. Engage: We are committed to informing the community in an inclusive manner that actively draws people. We will be proactive in reaching people that we have not connected with before.
 2. Empower: We aspire for Deaf, Deafblind, hard of hearing people to confidently say that they have the information and tools they need to succeed and advocate for themselves. We define success as Deaf people being independent.
 3. Enrich: The deaf community advances from not just surviving or living, but thriving.
 - a. We want to keep the levels of Maslow's hierarchy to see how we are meeting each of those needs for DHH people to move to the next level. For example, Employment: this is an area of concern.
2. FY 25 Budget
 - i. Revenue is \$3.6 million from the telecommunication tax revenue collection. Expenditures \$3.2 million just under budget about \$500,000.

- Currently we have about \$6 million in the account.
- ii. Discussed project differences and clarified some questions about staff salaries and professional services contracts.

3. Motion to Approve the 2024 Strategic Review (Ennis, Crosby)

- i. Dr. David Martin would like to highlight that we have a \$6 million “fun” balance that I think we could find something to spend some of that on.
- ii. Dr. Brad Wellons also thinks we need to spend money that is just sitting there especially when this year the state will be looking for any money they can.

VI. Old Business

- A. Proposed Rules for LCD Administrative Code for American Sign Language Sign Language Interpreters Working in Education Settings- receive recommendations from board workgroup regarding educational minimum standard and timeline for existing Louisiana Department of Education interpreters.
 - 1. Jana Broussard: The work group met in May but it was still not agreed upon the new standards. It seems that it was agreed upon for new upcoming interpreters but not for existing interpreters.
 - a. Dr. David Martin: Has issues with taking away current licensure of interpreters who are currently licensed through LDOE.
 - b. Jana Broussard: This situation is unprecedented. Currency certification given from LDOE is now actually giving authority to LCD to establish certification.
 - c. Meredith Jordan: The department will still issue a certification based on the standards given by LCD.
 - d. **MOTION send form back to adhoc committee and establish a transition plan (Wimberly, Crosby)**
 - 1. **All voted Yes, motion carries**
 - e. **MOTION approves the proposed recommendation based on feedback (Se. Kleinpeter, no second) Withdrawn**

VII. New Business

- A. 2025 Meeting Dates: January 17, 2025, April 18, 2025, July 11, 2025, October 17, 2025
 - a. Change April 18 to April 25, 2025 (Crosby, Ennis)
- B. Deaf Blind Advisory Group: approval of new members: Heather O’Brein, Peter James Broussard
 - a. **MOTION to approve new members of DB advisory members (Crosby, Gaspar) motion passed.**
- C. Health Equity in the d/Deaf, Deafblind, and hard of hearing communities: Sajata Varner
 - a. Mental Health Workgroup: met with Jana Broussard and Marissa Ramos to improve services, identify gaps, and consider action steps and solutions. Meet 1x/month for 6 months with a TBD start date. If you want to join this group you can email LCD@la.gov.
- D. Consistency in Employment Related Supports- i.e. vocational rehabilitation
 - a. Public Comment via email:
 - i. Someone wrote Dr. Delgado talking about herself and her husband. I was kept without notice 2 times and was kept waiting without response. I have

had to wait up to 6 months at one time and was not informed. Because of the delay, I was left without services. I asked if we needed to start over again to order hearing aids, etc. but I have received no information. This has been going on for 3 years for 1 hearing aid.

ii. Letter was written to Dr.Delgado that discussed someone who wanted to work in Lab technology . I had to find odd jobs to make ends meet. I moved to Louisiana for better career options. I did get a VR counselor but it was difficult to communicate with her due to her caseload. The communication is non existent and I tried to reach out at least 1x/week. I reached out to the Director and the VR counselor both were not there anymore. I wanted to go back to school, but due to time lapse they closed my case. I wished I stayed in my home state to seek employment.

- b. Dr.Delgado: A third person did reach out to me with those concerns. They have lots of turnover and lack of education. I suggest that VR workers receive some Deaf sensitivity training. I personally struggled with getting an interpreter or say things that were offensive.
- c. LRS Assistant Director for Vocational Rehab: proxy Gabriel McGrew: We are having staff shortages and we are working hard to improve those things. It is disheartening to hear about these experiences. I would like to reach out to those people.
- d. Jana Broussard: LCD has had discussions with LRS but I want to highlight that we should rediscuss this issue. We look forward to continuing to partner with LRS in the future.

E. Interpreter Registration Committee- approval of membership criteria

- a. Jana Broussard: recc. Postponing agenda item
- b. MOTION to move discussion to January (Crochet, Argrave)
- c. Jana Broussard: informed yesterday that our Notice of Intent for our K-12 educational standards must include our community standards.

F. MOTION to postpone items d and e under New Business and d under Old Business to January (Crosby, Martin) no opposed, motion carries

VIII. Reports:

- A. LRID:Conference date as LSD you can register at Irid.org
- B. SSD: Invitation to Homecoming next week October 26, 2024

IX. Announcements:

- A. LCD Board has vacancies for Def and hard of hearing representative
- B. La Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (LRID) COPY FROM AGENDA

X. Adjourn – 1:02 pm pm by Chair Dr.Natalie Delgado (Martin, Jordan)