



LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF

Board of Commissioners

October 20, 2023 9:00am-1:00pm

Minutes

I. Roll Call & Introductions

- A. Meeting called to order by Chair Dr. Delgado 9:03 am
- B. Members Present: Dr. Ashley Argrave; Melissa Bayham; Sajata Varne; Sherry Crosby; Jason Isch; Sherry Powell proxy, Aaron McGee; LDH proxy, Mia Orr; Denise Crochet, Marissa Ramos; Cammy Gaspar; Bambi Polotzola; Dr. Megan Wimberly; Dr. David Martin; Meredith Jordan; Dr. Natalie Delgado; Senator Hewitt proxy, Senator C. Kleinpeter
- C. Members Absent: Representative Scott McKnight, Senator Sharon Hewitt, Brad Wellons, Sherry Powell,
- D. LCD Staff: Jana Broussard, Jazmyne Lemar, Victoria Reguiera, Brittany Welch
- E. Ancillary support: Interpreters- Malachi Mooney, Sylvie Sullivan, Annette Pourciau, Lissa Gill; Remote Captionist provided by CC Group

II. Approval of Agenda (Isch, Polotzola)

MOTION: add item for the DeafBlind advisory committee list of names. None opposed

III. Approval of Minutes (Martin, Crosby). None opposed.

III. Public Comment:

- A. Jimmy Gore: Personal narrative. He was in the Dr. visit with a VRI interpreter and it was not a clear message. The nurse was aware of the communication breakdown. The Emergency Room is a life and death situation, we need to have live interpreters.
 - 1. Comm. Isch: We have had this conversation before. We do need to look more into this.
 - 2. Comm. Caspar: This also affects other situations other than ER. Everyone was talking at the same time and it was confusing and overwhelming.
 - 3. Comm. Dr. Wimberly: We need to work closely with LDH so that these situations are not an issue.
 - 4. Comm. Isch: Best practices are established but not yet shared. We are working on that.
- B. Dan Arabie: (video message) I sent a spreadsheet to the commission comparing the roles for SSP and interpreting. We also need to respect and pay Deaf Interpreters the same as hearing interpreters. We may need to create another town hall to address some of these issues.

IV. Reports

- A. Board Reports
 - 1. Comm. Isch: Celebrating the Life of Candi Latino at LSD Auditorium
 - 2. Comm. Orr: Department of Health: I am proxy for LDH and a new commissioner will be next here for the next meeting once named.

3. Comm. Jordan: Department for Education: 1st ever Deaf education program to be approved by the state of Louisiana with Texas Womens University. Hoping one day, our own state will have their own program.
 4. Comm.Polotzola:Governor's office for Disabilities. Reminder: Annual GOLD awards November 13, 2023 at the Old State Capitol. Also included is the inclusive art “ Nothing with us, without us”. All information is on the Governor's Office of Disabilities website. This will also be my last meeting as a new governor and administration will take over. We need to continue to work forward for accessibility in the capital.
 5. Comm. Dr.Martin: Louisiana School for the Deaf: Next Saturday 10/28/23 is LSD's homecoming.
 6. Comm.Crosby: Louisiana Association for the Deaf: We had a recent training for wills and trust and we will continue to share workshops across the state. If you think of a need for training, please let us know.
 7. Comm.Crochet: LRID: 1. LRID Fall Conference OOctober 27-28,2023 in Lafayette. 2. I just want to honor Janie Powell as she has just passed away. She was a pillar in our community and influence on my personal career. We all will miss you.
- B. Director's Report:
1. Budget Report: Revenue: Just started the new fiscal year July 2023 so we will not see all of it so far which is \$1,157. Last year, we received \$3.9 million. Currently, we have \$5.6 million in reserves.
 2. Budgeted Expenses: \$3.7 million. We expect to meet our budgeted amount.
 - a. Comm.Isch: last year, we spent a large lump sum to decrease the hearing aid wait. What does that look like?
 - b. Director Broussard: Previous year allocation was \$3million to hearing aids. That was completed. This year will be back to the original \$1.5 million budget for hearing aids
 - c. Comm.Dr.Argrave: Want to ensure the public is aware there are other ways to get hearing aids besides LCD. Medicaid and private insurance, for one. Only one MCO out of five provides hearing aids for Medicaid, though. Need to spread awareness about which MCO people should use for aids. Also need to convince other MCOs they too need to provide hearing aids.
 - d. Comm. Varner: Question about if Ex Director salary is budgeted in for this fiscal year. Director Broussard mentioned yes it is, it is under the professional services line.
 - e. Comm. Polotzola: LCD should focus advocacy on expanding medicaid to cover hearing aids, and also to advocate on the federal level to get medicare to cover them.
 3. The Interpreting Adhoc Committee has met bi-weekly to establish standards for interpreters in K-12 education settings.
 - a. Committee members: Chair Lynne Gomez, Denise Crochet, Leslie Knoles, Milissa Welch, Earl Harden, Natasha Aymani, Walker Estes
 4. Redesign and Structure of LCD- committee met twice since last meeting to research and determine proposed revisions to LCD organization structure
 - a. Committee members: Chair Brad Wellons, Bambi Polotzola (acted Chair), Jay Isch, Dr.Ashley Argrave, Cammy Gaspar
 5. Development of new Interpreting Mentoring Program
 - a. Using the Nevada program as a model. More information will be shared

as it becomes available.

- i. Comm.Jordan: will the mentorship program cover educational interpreting?
 - ii. Director Broussard: Yes, our first year, pilot year, educational interpreting is our top priority.
6. Formal partnerships via MOU with three state organizations- La Association of the Deaf, La Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and New Orleans Black Deaf Advocates to provide funding for community training and professional development opportunities.
 7. Update on Chamberlain University partnership- LCD to provide Deaf sensitivity on-site training to their Louisiana locations, and to partner with them to develop an online curriculum training which can be used at all 35 locations nationwide. Further, hope would be to establish this training as a required continued educational unit for all nursing students in partnering hospitals.

VI. Old Business

- A. Consideration of Actions by the LCD board to elevate community concerns to the SSD board- update on letter send October 26,2022 and response letter received SSD June 13, 2023
 1. Comm. Dr.Martin: Discussed results of the Legislative Audit.
 - a. Climate and Culture: We are addressing internally and externally stakeholders and meeting with those people. A lot of information is consistent and we are using that to implement changes in policy, practice, and procedure. There will also be a Climate and Culture survey to receive some additional information.
 - b. Staffing Difficulties: Difficult to recruit and retain staff. We have hired leadership and other recruitment of staff. Focus on leading through relationships.
 - c. Policies and Procedures: New Grievance policy that is timely. Policy and procedure development. Many policies are outdated and reflect the LDOE instead of SSD.
 - d. SSA provided Board training to our board members
 - e. Weekly Updates
 - f. Language Policy: committee has been formed at LSD and revising the language policy. We have adopted a bilingual approach at LSD. She is developing a comprehensive approach.
 - g. Speech Language Pathologist: We are working on trying to provide compensatory services and regular services for SLP services. We are monitoring and documenting those services.
 - h. Unspent Federal Funds: Increased collaboration between the schools, programs, and business office; Director of Federal programs has been working to apply for the money, spend the money, and meets with leadership on ways to spend that money as more of collaborative process
- MOTION: to remove this item from Old Business as resolved (Isch, Crosby) No comments, no discussion, none opposed, motions carried.
- B. Impact of SB98: Decisions regarding Act 128 on the LCD program and Board Structure
 1. The recommendation of the LCD subcommittee was to move forward with

Option C with support for LCD to explore an independent structure with administrative support from a department to provide fiscal management, human resources training, and budget support.

2. Innivee Strategies: Shane Feldman. Shared a visual and description of Option C.
3. Next steps to work with Senator Kleinpeter on the appropriate language of the law to support this structure

MOTION (Isch, Argrave) to approve the recommendation

ROLL CALL: all yes, none opposed, motion carries

V. New Business

- A. Interpreting Anywhere: Presented by Jay Isch. ASL Anywhere is an app that has a ready to go interpreter. For example, bank visits, getting stopped by the police, etc. Video provided.

1. Discussion included questions: How do we ensure the interpreters are qualified or certified? How to make sure that people are using the app appropriately? What are the costs? How will LCD be able to monitor usage? Is this app available on large screens? What does the background look like for those with low vision? How do we educate organizations so they don't try to take advantage of deaf people and rely on this app instead of hiring an interpreter?

MOTION to establish committee the best way to use this app in the state of Louisiana (Isch, Crosby) none opposed, motion carries,

- B. Proposed Rules for LCD Administrative Code for interpreters working in Educational settings; Interpreter AdHoc Committee:

1. Lynne Gomez: Presented draft of interpreter qualifications for K-12 educational settings.

MOTION: adopt new Educational interpreter standards (Crosby, Isch). Roll call vote-

JAY ISCH: Yes. CAMMY GASPAR: Yes. SHERRY CROSBY: Yes. DR. MEGAN WIMBERLY: Yes. DR. ASHLEY ARGRAVE: yes. DR. DAVID MARTIN: Yes. BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yes. DENISE CROCHET: Yes. AARON MCGEE (proxy for Sherry Powell): Yes. SAJATA VARNER: yes. MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes. MIA ORR: Yes. SENATOR KLEINPETER: Yes. MEREDITH JORDAN: I'm going to abstain, but I support this movement. Motion passes.

- C. Adhoc Committee on Administrative Code for Interpreters Working in Court Settings-Approval of names

MOTION: (Crochet, Isch) for agenda item C- Names of Ad Hoc committee on administrative code for interpreters working in court settings- to be moved to the executive board for approval of the names and for ratification at the next LCD meeting. None opposed. Motion Carries.

- D. DeafBlind Advisory Committee Approval of list of names: Marie Annis, Chad Cormier, Walker Estes, Cathay Miller, Jackie Broussard, Amy Shamburger, Philomena Wolf

MOTION to approve this committee (Isch, Gaspar) None opposed.

Motion to adjourn meeting (Isch, Crosby)

VIII. Adjournment – 12:59 pm by Chair Dr. Delgado