

Council Members

Present

Mary Durham, *Council
Chair*

Ronnie Browning

Debbie Carlisle

Kyle Cox

Maverick Crawford

Andrew Crim

Ivy Goldstien, *DSHS*

Sean Jackson, *DRTX*

Katherine Layman,
HHSC Title XIX/Medicaid

Scott McAvoy

Amanda Miles

Meagan Orsag, *A&M
CDD*

Angie Panzica

Justin Porter, *TEA*

Holly Riley, *HHSC/Older
Americans Act of 1965*

Robert Schier III

Jonas Schwartz, *TWC*

Eric Shahid

Meridith Silcox

Lora Taylor

Jamie Thomas

Kim Torres

Nina Zuna, *TCDS*

Council Members

Absent

Bill Coorsh

Gladys Cortez

Juan Carlos Lopez

Michael Peace

Guests Present

Devender Banda

Floyd Browning

Christina Bryant

David Butler

Stefan Cole

Crysta Colmer

Dan Graves

Linda Litzinger

Rosita Moore

Wayne Moore

John Nicks

Christa Stevens

Jennifer Toon

Regional

Coordinators Present

Erin Fogarty

Moran Foster

Rosa Guel

Canen Melton

Alexandra Venegas

Staff Present

Beth Stalvey, *Executive
Director*

Kai Brewer

Scott Daigle

Lauren Gerken

Sabrina Gonzalez

Crystal Goodwin

Mitchel Griffin

Richard Rendon

Genessee Klemm

Linda Logan

Evan Marczynski

Mary Rochford

Cass Schnautz

Melanie Teague

Brianna TenBrink

Rey Valldejuli

Koren Vogel

Call to Order

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities convened on Friday, August 4, 2023, at the Royal Sonesta Houston Galleria, 2222 West Loop South, Houston, TX 77207 as well as virtually using the Zoom platform. Mary Durham called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. A quorum was present.

1. Introductions

Council members, staff and guests were introduced.

2. Public Comments

Linda Litzinger, Texas Parent to Parent, discussed her participation in an employment assistance course for individuals with disabilities and highlights its failure to address the specific needs of disabled adult children (DACs) who rely on Social Security benefits through their parents. These DACs, despite achieving educational and employment milestones, face challenges in maintaining essential services and attendants when their parents pass away. Litzinger emphasized the urgent need for a specialized course tailored to DACs' unique requirements to help them secure their waivers and retain support services. She also raised concerns about the potential impact of additional benefits on SSDI and the difficulties DACs encounter in finding reliable attendants, calling for greater state and legislative support to address these pressing issues.

Stefan Cole, a board member from Texas Parent to Parent, expressed concerns about the lack of support and resources for individuals with developmental disabilities in rural communities, specifically in Upshur County. Cole emphasized the challenges of accessing essential services, including attendants, in rural areas, as many providers are unavailable or located far away. He highlighted the need for improved availability and accessibility of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) and mentioned his personal experience as someone on the autism spectrum who relies on clear and specific rules.

Written public comments from a parent advocate regarding diagnosis for people with developmental disabilities and services in the DeafBlind Multiple Disabilities program were emailed to members.

3. Consent Items

Chair Durham reviewed consent items including the minutes from the May 4, 2023, Council of the Whole meeting, the May 5, 2023, Council meeting as well as the expected absences of Gladys Cortez, Bill Coorsh,

Michael Peace, and Juan Carlos Lopez.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the May 4, 2023, Committee of the Whole meeting, the May 5, 2023, Council Meeting, and the excused absences of Gladys Cortez, Bill Coorsh, Michael Peace, Juan Carlos Lopez.

MADE BY: Maverick Crawford

SECOND: Andrew Crim

The motion **passed**. Scott McAvoy abstained from the Vote. (August 2023 Meeting Materials, Tab 15)

4. Chair's and Executive Director's Report

TCDD Executive Director Beth Stalvey introduced two new staff members, Mitchel Griffin, and Cass Schnautz, sharing their roles and backgrounds and emphasized their importance in supporting the Council's work.

Stalvey then provided insights into various ongoing projects, including one focused on alternatives to guardianship and collaborations with public health departments. She highlighted the formation of advisory groups to collect input on grantee needs and leadership and advocacy training, emphasizing the commitment to engaging stakeholders and improving programs. She also discussed the appointment of Robert Haley as the new Governor's Office Appointments Officer, ensuring smooth communication with the Governor's office for Council members.

Stalvey reported on the progress of the Partners in Policy Making alumni program, emphasizing the crucial role it plays in supporting individuals with disabilities in advocacy efforts. The program has formed a structured leadership team, initiated community engagement activities, and recognized outstanding contributors in their community.

TCDD Community Engagement Director Genessee Klemm noted her satisfaction with the progress made in the Partners in Policy Making Alumni Program, highlighting its significance in maintaining momentum and supporting the abilities of program graduates. She thanked TCDD staff member, Brianna TenBrink, for her effective internal framework, ensuring the program's sustainability and success. Klemm also provided insights into the program's current structure, as well as the formation of an official board comprising eleven new members responsible for various committees, including communication, policy, and engagement. She mentioned the election of a new president and plans for a community event to foster collaboration among board members.

5. FY 2023 Annual Internal Audit Report

Dan Graves, Weaver and Tidwell, reviewed the FY 2023 Internal Audit Report which is due to the State Auditor's Office, the Legislative Budget Board, and the Governor's Office by November 1, 2023.

MOTION: To approve the FY 2023 Internal Audit Report for submission to the State Auditor's Office.

MADE BY: Kim Torres for the Audit Committee (motions from Committee do not need a second)

The motion **Passed** unanimously.

6. FY 2024 Annual Internal Audit Plan

Audit Committee Chair Kim Torres reported that the Committee discussed with Graves the focus areas of audit activities in previous years. It was noted that TCDD external communications / advocacy and public policy have a higher risk rating and was recommended to be the focus of FY 2024 audit activities.

MOTION: To approve external communications/advocacy and public policy as the focus of FY 2024 audit.

MADE BY: Kim Torres for the Audit Committee (motions from

Committee do not need a second)

The motion **passed** unanimously.

7. FY 2024 Operating Expense Budget

Finance and Grants Director Rey Valldejuli presented the proposed FY 2024 Operating Expense budget that was discussed by the Executive Committee. Valldejuli reviewed the proposed increase from FY 2023 to FY 2024 in the amount of \$147,000 due to the 5% state-approved increase for salaries and benefits for staff members. He also noted an expected increase in travel costs, energy costs and other expenditures. Valldejuli noted that TCDD has remained below the allotted percentages for administrative expenses vs. expenses related to state plan activities.

MOTION: To approve the FY 2024 operating expense budget.

MADE BY: Mary Durham for the Executive committee (motions from Committee do not need a second)

The motion **passed** unanimously. (August 2023 Meeting Materials, Tab 3)

8. Committee Chair Designations

Chair Durham thanked Lora Taylor and Gladys Cortez for their many years of leadership as Chairs of the Public Policy and Project Development Committees. She noted that she recommended Angie Panzica as the new Chair of the Public Policy Committee and Meridith Silcox as the new Chair of the Project Development Committee.

MOTION: To approve Angie Panzica as the Public Policy Committee chair and Meridith Silcox as the Project Development Committee chair.

MADE BY: Mary Durham for the Executive Committee (motions from the Committee do not need a second)

The motion **passed** unanimously.

9. Legislative Champions

Public Policy Director Scott Daigle presented recommendations of 15 lawmakers from the 88th Texas Legislature that the Public Policy

Committee nominated to be recognized as TCDD's Legislative Champions. Committee members recognized:

- Rep. Alma Allen
- Rep. Liz Campos
- Rep. Mary González
- Rep. Lacey Hull
- Rep. Julie Johnson
- Rep. Jeff Leach
- Rep. Mihaela Plesa
- Rep. John Raney
- Rep. Toni Rose
- Rep. Senfronia Thompson
- Sen. Morgan LaMantia
- Sen. José Menéndez
- Sen. Drew Springer
- Sen. Royce West
- Se. Judith Zaffirini

MOTION: To recognize 15 lawmakers from the 88th Texas Legislature as TCDD's Legislative Champions.

MADE BY: Angie Panzica for the Public Policy Committee (motions from Committee do not need a second)

The motion **passed**. Holly Riley abstained from voting. (August Meeting Materials, Tab 12)

Daigle presented seven legislative staff members and the work they did to support TCDD initiatives during the 88th Texas Legislature. The following staff members were nominated by the Public Policy Committee to be recognized as TCDD Legislative Champions:

- Daniel Akeroyd (Rep. Swanson)
- Clay Cortez (Rep. Garcia)
- Adoneca Fortier (Rep. Allen)
- Ted Raab (Rep. González)
- Karrol Rimal (Rep. Plesa)
- Amanda Rodriguez (Rep. Johnson)
- Cade Treadway (Rep. Rose)

MOTION: To recognize the seven Legislative Staffers as TCDD Legislative Champions.

MADE BY: Angie Panzica for the Public Policy committee (Motions from Committee do not need a second)

The motion **passed**. Holly Riley, Justin Porter, and Ivy Goldstien abstained from voting. (August Meeting Materials, Tab 12)

10. Future Activities for State Plan Implementation

Meridith Silcox reported Project Development Committee discussion of a new state plan project on Capacity Building for Statewide Self-Advocacy Networks. Funding is recommended at a staggered rate over three years. The first year would be funded at up to \$175,000, the second year at up to \$125,000 and the third year at up to \$75,000.

MOTION: To approve a new state plan project on Capacity Building for Statewide Self-Advocacy Networks with funding for year 1 at up to \$175,000, for year 2 at up to \$125,000 and year 3 at up to \$75,000.

MADE BY: Meridith Silcox for the Project Development Committee (Motion from committee does not need a second)

The motion **passed** unanimously. (August 2023 Meeting Materials, Tab 9)

Silcox then reported on the Committee's recommended revisions of the Future Project Funding Priorities list.

MOTION: To approve the future Funding Priorities List as follows:

1. Culturally Competent Family Supports
2. Capacity Building for Statewide Self-Advocacy Groups
3. TCDD Story Telling
4. Medical Self-Advocacy
5. Prevention and Response to Sexual Offenses – Medical and Therapeutic
6. Prevention and Response to Sexual Offenses – Criminal Justice Response

MADE BY: Meridith Silcox for the Project Development Committee
(motions from committee do not need a second)

The motion **passed** unanimously. (August 2023 Meeting Materials, Tab 10)

11. Presentation: Texas Tech University

Dr. Devender Banda discussed the Project TEDD (Training Educators in Dual Diagnosis). Banda shared that the project's primary objective is to enhance the knowledge and skills of educators specializing in teaching students with dual diagnoses, including intellectual and developmental disabilities combined with mental health needs. The project team includes Dr. Stacy Carter, Dr. Griffin-Shirley, Dr. Wayne Moore, Dr. Rosita Moore, and Shakeba Joseph.

Banda reported that over five years, Project TEDD aims to provide 400 Texas special education teachers and other professionals with free training workshops. These workshops equip participants with the skills to recognize, understand, and support students with dual diagnoses. The goal is for the initial 400 professionals to train at least five others, impacting over 2,000 individuals across Texas.

Banda noted Project TEDD's training modules cover various aspects, including identification, screening, behavior supports, academic support, crisis intervention, and working with families and professionals. Banda reported that to date, Project TEDD has trained hundreds of teachers and professionals in various education service centers. The project received positive feedback for its innovative approach and the importance of addressing mental health needs in special education.

Banda mentioned challenges faced, lessons learned, and observations made throughout the project's implementation. It emphasizes the importance of extending the training to general educators and parents and suggests ways to improve recruitment and engagement.

12. Agency Reports

The Council received updates from Kate Layman from Texas Health and Human Services Title XIX/Medicaid, Holly Riley from Texas Health and Human Services Older Americans Act of 1965, Sean Jackson from Disability Rights Texas, Nina Zuna from The Texas Center for Disability Studies UT Austin, and Ivy Goldstien from Department of State Health Services Maternal & Child Health Services.

13. Executive Committee Report

Chair Durham reported the Executive Committee's approval of continuation grant funding for seven projects. Durham also reported that eleven stipends were requested and approved for this quarter including four events stipends, five speakers stipends and two translation stipends.

Finance and Grants Director Valldejuli reviewed the quarterly financial report, current grantee projects report, and the stipend expenditure report.

Council Business Director Koren Vogel discussed updates to the Conflict of Interest report, and the forms needed to be signed for the Council Code of Conduct for all Council members and support persons as passed at the May 2023 Council meeting.

14. Project Development Committee Report

Silcox reported that the Committee received a presentation from Texas Advocates regarding their strategic planning process. The presentation highlighted key results, including the need for support in developing chapters, training, and a focus on young adult self-advocates.

Additionally, Texas Advocates adopted a new value statement during their annual state conference, indicating progress in their efforts.

The Committee also discussed employment challenges in South Texas, particularly for young adults with disabilities following a presentation from Regional Coordinator, Rosa Guel. They identified barriers such as transportation, family and cultural issues, and language barriers. The committee plans to target this region as a disparity area in their state plan and will collect additional data for future updates. The Committee also discussed topics of inclusive childcare to continue implementation of the state plan.

15. Public Policy Committee Report

Angie Panzica reported that the Public Policy Committee received public comment from Linda Litzinger, Texas Parent to Parent, who reported instances of school districts threatening parents with guardianship over their children. These issues were tied to legislative efforts such as HB166, which passed in the House but did not receive a Senate hearing. Litzinger sought support from organizations to request a special session on education to address these concerns with the governor.

The Committee also received updates from its members, including Kyle Cox, who attended a disability conference. Panzica noted that the Committee heard a presentation from the Arc of Greater Beaumont, highlighting the organization's legislative activities and had the opportunity to hear from their peer support advocates, one of whom was named a TCDD youth ambassador for the alternatives to guardianship project. They discussed recognizing legislative champions and received a presentation on session strategies from TCDD Public Policy Director Scott Daigle. Additionally, they addressed future agenda items, including the complexities faced by individuals who transition from Social Security to Medicare prematurely due to issues with long-term support services like the waivers program.

16. Audit Committee Report

Audit Committee Chair Kim Torres had no further updates from the Audit committee.

17.Future Agenda Items

Council members were encouraged to contact Chair Durham or Executive Director Stalvey with suggestions for future agenda items.

18. Announcements and Updates

Council members discussed the date of the next meeting on November 1-3, 2023.

Adjourn

Chair Mary Durham adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Beth Stalvey, *Secretary to the Council* Date
