

## **Governmental & Community Relations Committee Meeting Minutes**

**July 8, 2025 9:00 am @ MAIN Branch**

Members in attendance: Jennifer Dorhauer (chair), Trey Cowell, Rodlyn Hammond, Kristan Whann, & Michelle Parish (staff member)

Trey Cowell led the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kyla Robertson Webb, Head of Community Engagement, presented new business: “Discussion of the Excel High School diploma program offered by the LPL & outreach to local businesses for sponsorships for any of their employees who could benefit from this program.”

Kyla reported that there are currently 2 individuals in LPL’s sponsorship of the Excel High School diploma program. She described the process of choosing these individuals—the library took applications, the program was only open to residents of Livingston Parish, and then the library did in-person interviews to choose their final two candidates. Kyla further explained that the Excel High School diploma is self-paced where individuals can bring over any high school credits to the program. They have two years to complete the program, which will result in an actual high school diploma, not a GED and any associated stigmas. If any individual doesn’t complete all the work in two years, there is no refund, and all work is lost.

The first individual will graduate in May; the second has made insufficient progress and will likely not graduate in May although the library’s Adult Literacy Coordinator has created a plan for this individual to finish in time. This is a 50% completion rate.

Kyla recommended that we consider “Business Scholarships” because of the need of accountability with a cap of 10-15 participants. Local Livingston Parish businesses would sponsor one of their employees who needed a high school diploma in order to move into management. Scholarships would be \$1500.

After discussion, Kyla agreed to put together a list of local businesses who may be interested in sponsoring someone in the program. David Grey agreed to make the handout to give to businesses publicizing this program.

Jennifer Dorhauer presented new business: “Discussion of the LADOE’s Community Service Diploma Endorsement & utilizing this volunteer opportunity to support local high school students.” The LADOE offers a seal on any Louisiana student’s high school diploma if that student completes 80 hours of volunteer service during the four years of high school, something to set apart students when they apply to colleges, jobs, or for scholarships. She recommended contacting all local high schools’ counselors before the start of school in August in order to secure a list of service club faculty advisors and send those advisors information about library volunteer options for teens. These club faculty advisors could make their students aware of volunteer opportunities at the library where they could earn service hours for their clubs and towards the LADOE’s diploma endorsement.

After discussion about possible clubs beyond Key and Beta, Kyla agreed to create a handout for volunteering to distribute to LP schools, which David would launch on social media. Committee members then divided up the list of schools to contact with Kristan taking Doyle High, Holden School, Maurepas School; Rodlyn taking Albany High, Springfield High, and Walker High; Jennifer taking Denham Springs High, Live Oak High, & Livingston Alternative; and Trey taking French Settlement High and Livingston Virtual.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.