

# Deaf & Hard of Hearing Stakeholder Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

**Attendance:** Mike Brummer, Teresa Coonts, Brenda Coufal, Sue Czaplewski, Julie Delkamiller, Wendy Herrold, Lindsey Hinzmann, Jill Hoffart, Shelli Janning, Kristin Jolkowski, Jessica Larrison, Sarah McClure, Diane Meyer, Jessica Nickels, Sara Peterson, Mary Phillips, Melissa Prante, Colleen Richart, Anne Thomas, Heather Witte, John Wyvill

*Interpreters:* Frances Beaurivage and Kelly Brakenhoff

## Welcome & Introductions

- Introductions were made by every member of the committee.

## Public Posting Information (Sue Czaplewski)

- A reminder was given that this is an open meeting and there is a time allowed for public comments. The meeting and agenda were posted more than seven days prior to this meeting on the Nebraska Regional Program website.

## Collaboration & Discussion of Statewide Initiatives (All Committee Members)

- *Sue Czaplewski:* Today we are going to discuss the progress and opportunities related to the top 6 areas from the SPOT Analysis identified as priorities by this committee at the October 2019 meeting. Committee members are invited to share what your organization is doing in each of these priority areas which include:
  1. Educating district staff (Admin, Sped Directors, Resource Teachers, General Ed Teachers, SLPs) concerning roles/responsibilities, Rule 51, etc.
  2. Shortage of staff (interpreters, TODs, SLPs)
  3. D/HH mentors for students
  4. Self-advocacy training for students
  5. Family sign language classes
  6. Promoting social emotional skills
- **Educating District Staff**
  - *Diane Meyer (Nebraska Regional Programs):*
    - The regional coordinators have had many interactions, often on a daily basis, with administrators regarding COVID-19 related concerns such as masks, microphones, sound systems, remote learning, etc.
    - Lindsey Hinzmann created resource documents for clear mask options as well as captioning options and these documents have been shared with district administrators across Nebraska.

- The Regional Programs have also helped with recruiting new interpreters to fill vacancies, the interviewing/hiring process, and inservicing district staff who are new to working with educational interpreters.
  - Regional Program coordinators continue to participate in local Special Education and NASES meetings.
  - Teresa Coonts and Sara Peterson presented at the NSLHA State Convention about how to work with individuals who are D/HH. This convention had many SLPs and audiologists in attendance from across the state.
  - The Regional Programs have also had Linsay Darnall, Jr. present “ASL Mentoring Workshops” for staff across the state. There are three of these workshops offered each semester and attendance has been really good thus far. These virtual workshops are great for sign language receptive skill practice as there is no audio component.
- *Teresa Coonts (Nebraska Department of Education):*
  - NDE staff have worked on a lot of different tools to share information for all populations which is now posted on the Launch Nebraska Website and also on the NDE Special Education Website.
  - Several presentations for parent groups have also been offered through PTI.
  - NDE continues to provide technical assistance in a wide variety of ways.
  - One of the main things NDE is focusing on right now is monitoring indicator 13 which encompasses the post-secondary transition components and then working with those school districts who need improvement.
  - Transition and assessments continue to be areas of opportunities for improvement in the state.
  - Teresa mentioned that they have not been monitored by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) since 2011. OSEP is starting a new focus monitoring program that divides states up into cohort groups. Nebraska is not in cohort 1, but will be in cohort 2 which will start in October 2021. Some of the things OSEP will be looking at include funding provided by NDE, technical assistance, and support provided to certain populations. Teresa noted she may be calling on stakeholder committee members to be interviewed or provide input. More information to come but she noted this will provide an opportunity for learning, growing, and making improvements within our state.
- *Melissa Prante (Omaha Public Schools):* A workshop was recently held in the Omaha area to educate individuals about Rule 51.
- *Sarah McClure (National Association of Interpreters in Education):*
  - Sarah introduced herself and said she is the Nebraska state representative for NAIE.
  - NAIE is in the process of looking at feedback and trying to decide which workshops to hold this year.
  - One exciting thing she noted is that this year NAIE is offering free memberships for all educational interpreters and that membership also allows for free attendance to NAIE workshops! The workshops are taking place virtually via

Zoom and Sarah encouraged early registration as they fill up fast. The workshops have been archived and NAIE is looking into how to best offer CEUs for watching the archived presentations.

- NAIE is also looking at starting a book club to review professional books and then how to offer possible CEUs for participating in the entire book club series.
  - The “State by State Standards” project NAIE has been working on for over two years has been completed. This is an interactive map that allows someone to click on a state and then the rules that govern educational interpreting in that state will pop up. [Click here to view the State by State Standards map.](#)
  - NAIE has a new “Professional Guidelines for Interpreting in Educational Settings” booklet now available. Sarah said she will get some to each regional coordinator.
  - The organization is also in the process of creating a committee to come up with a CPC for educational interpreters. Sarah has applied to be on the committee but she is waiting to hear back about committee member selection.
- *Sue Czaplewski*: Asked committee members if there are other opportunities for improvement in this area that need to be addressed and no further suggestions were provided.

- **Shortage of Staff:**

- *Heather Witte (Nebraska Regional Programs)*:
  - Due to COVID-19, Nebraska was not able to have student interpreters from UNC come to the state as planned
  - The Regional Programs have continued to provide mentoring and ASL language development opportunities. Currently there are around 20 staff members participating in the May-Dec 2020 mentoring program. A new mentoring group will begin in November 2020. This group of around 15 staff members will participate in a 7-month intensive program with 1/1 interpreter mentoring, language labs with Deaf mentors, and self-paced modules.
  - Sue will be participating in NTID’s virtual career fair on November 13th and regional coordinators continue to reach out to interpreting programs across the nation to try to recruit new interpreters.
  - Sign language classes continue to be held across the state. CWNP is currently offering a weekly sign class for high school students to try to get youth interested in this career field.
  - The Regional Programs have actively been sharing UNL’s MPUP recruitment flyers and information with school districts administrators and staff to hopefully help gain applicants.
  - Regional PLC groups continue to take place in all the regions and some MPUP students have been attending which is a nice way to build capacity within districts.
  - Since so many workshops are taking place virtually this year, NRP has opened up registration for training to include additional staff such as language support staff who are learning sign language.

- *Anne Thomas (UNL)*: Anne said she is thrilled to hear that district staff are receiving information about the MPUP-IP grant and she encouraged members to keep sharing the information. The application deadline for the next cohort is January 15th. Applicants are no longer required to take the GRE which will hopefully reduce the 'fear barrier' of applying. UNL is trying to recruit 7 students to the speech-language pathology program and 7 to the students to the deaf education program.
- *Sue Czaplewski*: Asked committee members if there are other opportunities for improvement in this area or places to recruit staff and the following suggestions were provided:
  - Anne Thomas suggested posting on program websites as well as other avenues (i.e. Facebook, social media sites) that random people can come across (not just sharing with listservs of people who always get the information).
  - Sue said that she and Anne also plan to recruit at Concordia University soon.

- **D/HH Mentors:**

- *Jill Hoffart (Nebraska Regional Programs)*:
  - Teen Night is taking place virtually the second Monday of each month for students in grades 7-12+ from across the state. This is an opportunity for students to meet with their friends who are D/HH and also a deaf adult to talk about current events and different situations and to get advice from peers and from the adult. The Regional Programs are looking into starting the pre-teen group back up soon. Shelli Janning shared via the chat that this is "such a nice idea for these kids to network with each other especially during this time that can be more socially isolating."
  - Deaf Educators are connecting with students for social emotional support.
  - MRP also has counseling services that help with this need.
  - There have also been Zoom meet ups with deaf individuals to help serve as language models and to provide time to connect with deaf adult role models.
  - The Regional Programs always have several D/HH presenters at NRP events. Recently, deaf NASA engineer, Victoria Garcia, presented to students and deaf actor CJ Jones will be leading students at the upcoming Storytelling Festival. Additionally, some of the presenters have been past NRP students so it is neat to see them giving back.
  - CWNP also has a self-advocacy group lead by an adult who is D/HH and includes other adult presenters who are D/HH that can talk about life after high school. They also try to connect older students with younger students via Zoom.
  - NRP coordinators have also applied to be on the EHDI committee to help develop a deaf mentor program in Nebraska.
- *John Wyvill (NCDHH)*: John mentioned that Ashley Wulf is a new NCDHH staff member in the Omaha area. Ashley, Dillon, Cody, and Jessica are all willing to participate via Zoom or travel across the state for any activities. John specially mentioned these staff because they are closer in age to students so students might be more able to relate to these staff members. Jill Hoffart shared that NRP has had a lot of these staff members

at events this year and they have been phenomenal and the students do like to see role models who are closer to their own age.

- *Sue Czaplewski*: Asked committee members if there are other opportunities for improvement in this area that need to be addressed and no further suggestions were provided.
  
- **Self-Advocacy Training for Students:**
  - *Sara Peterson (Nebraska Regional Programs)*:
    - A Transition Summit for Students who are D/HH was held virtually in June. Even though there was a small turnout, great connections were still made. Topics focused on included:
      - Surviving the Quarantine
      - Believing in Yourself
      - Holding High Expectations for Yourself
      - Is College for Me?
    - TODs write IEP goals that are directly related to self-advocacy. A variety of resources are used for this, including but not limited to The National Deaf Center, Supporting Success for Students with Hearing Loss, and Hand and Voices materials.
    - CWNP holds monthly Self Advocacy Zoom Groups for middle and high school students.
    - SNRP hosted a statewide workshop for professionals and a separate statewide workshop for families focusing on self-advocacy. Carrie Spangler, an audiologist who is D/HH, presented both workshops.
    - The regions have purchased new materials, curriculums, and technology to work with students in the ever-changing school locations and hybrid classrooms. Due to masks, some students who have not previously used equipment are now needing FM systems so this is giving students the opportunity to self-advocate. Students are also learning how to use CART and other live transcription services.
  - *John Wyvill (NCDHH)*:
    - Thanked Sara Peterson for her help at the Deaf/HH Awareness outreach activity held at the Scottsbluff Zoo. He said there was a tremendous turnout and that student/parent engagement was outstanding.
    - John suggested one opportunity for growth is to teach students how to speak up in the classroom when there is a need (i.e. teacher chewing gum and how that is distracting) so that students can gain those skills now which can be transferred to the workplace when older.
  - *Jessica Nickels (Nebraska VR)*: VR is still meeting monthly with students virtually and they do spend a lot of time talking about self-advocacy and how to self-advocate in the workplace.
  - *Shelli Janning (Hands & Voices)*: Moms Night Inn events include a lot of conversations about how important self-advocacy is for students and how that is a life-long skill.

- *Teresa Coonts (NDE)*: An opportunity Teresa noted is to teach teachers how to promote student-led IEPs (especially once a child is age 14). She noted that student-led IEPs tend to be a lot stronger and include post-secondary goals and transition plans.
- *Sue Czaplewski*: Asked committee members if there are other opportunities for improvement in this area that need to be addressed and no further suggestions were provided.

- **Family Sign Language Classes:**

- *Lindsey Hinzmann (Nebraska Regional Programs)*:
  - SEE Skillshop was held virtually October 2-4th. Three families from across the state participated and 17 interpreters participated in the interpreter strand.
  - Family Weekend to Sign will be held virtually November 13-15th. There are 8 families statewide registered to participate. The weekend will include 5 sessions (1 Friday night, 3 throughout the day Saturday, and 1 Sunday morning) and will focus on expanding sign language vocabulary, learning conversational phrases that can be used in family routines, incorporating ASL features, and understanding sign language receptively. Two adults who are D/HH will be leading the sessions. NRP is hopeful the weekend will also provide families the opportunity to network and build relationships.
  - There are many virtual sign language classes taking place in the regions. SNRP is hosting a monthly sign language classes for families and professionals that focuses on conversational skills as well as offering individual sign language classes for families. MRP has weekly ASL and SEE sign language classes. Their fall session was held September 14-November 17 and spring session will be offered January 25-March 16. CWNP provides family sign language classes, a weekly beginning class for professionals, parents, and community members, and also holds a weekly class specific for high school students to help generate interest in the area as a possible career field. NERP offers family sign language classes and also offered a class for daycare providers over the summer. The Regional Programs also share information about online programs/classes and any other classes that they become aware of.
- *Sue Czaplewski*: Asked committee members if there are other opportunities for improvement in this area that need to be addressed and no further suggestions were provided.

- **Promoting Social Emotional Skills:**

- *Mike Brummer (Nebraska Regional Programs)*:
  - Mike used the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation to help create monthly Social-Emotional Learning Challenges for September, October, November, and December. He incorporated the use of FlipGrid to have students submit short videos. The monthly topics focus around integrity, resilience, gratitude, and celebration.

- Personal hygiene and mental health were the topics for the secondary Fall Outing event that was held virtually October 29 & 30th. Cody McEvoy led the personal hygiene & mental health sessions and Meeghan Bently led the session focused on hair care.
  - The Regional Programs have also been adding on some social time to online student events including virtual Yahtzee, Escape Room Challenges, Scattergories, etc.
  - Megan Frowick Morgan (an NERP alum) will be presented to students from across the state on November 12th with a focus on “Celebrating YOUR History.”
  - CWNP provides a monthly Zoom get together, open to all ages, that focuses on social/emotional skills.
- *Sue Czaplewski*: Asked committee members if there are other opportunities for improvement in this area that need to be addressed and no further suggestions were provided.

- **Parent Involvement:**

- *Sue Czaplewski*: Since the top 6 priority areas seem to be well-addressed, Sue decided to ask committee members for input on the next priority area - parent involvement. Teresa Coonts noted that parent involvement is a struggle across all disability areas. Parents are involved with IEP meetings but as far as other supports, activities, and trainings they are not actively participating. Teresa and Sue asked committee members for ideas to increase parent involvement and to also address/include all cultural backgrounds since it is often the same parents participating.
- *Melissa Prante (Omaha Public Schools)*: OPS has a Facebook page and has found it is a less-threatening avenue for parents to communicate. She noted that in-person events are not “threatening” per se but parents sometimes feel uncomfortable around others so this provides a barrier-free environment for parents to express their feelings and not feel uncomfortable. It is also helpful to bridge the gap between higher and lower socioeconomic classes and different cultural backgrounds.
- *Jessica Larrison (NCDHH)*: Some parents have told her they would be involved but they don’t have the best relationship with their school district so it becomes awkward. Thus, Jessica suggested holding activities at a non-school location and to have the event flyer/information sent out by non-school staff. Jessica also noted taking into consideration different cultural things such as event times, days of the week, platform of activity (in-person or virtual setting), etc.
- *Anne Thomas (UNL)*:
  - Try to find a platform that is designed just for parents and to find avenues for sharing that platform with parents.
  - Use different proactive ways to promote events such as short video clips to give parents exposure to other parents involved and why it is important.
  - Ask parents what they want and to try to cater to their needs based on survey results.

- *Colleen Richart (Parent):*
  - Noted that several parents have recently initiated conversations on the Hands & Voices Facebook page regarding concerns about masks and communication as well as hybrid/remote school options so it is good to see those conversations taking place.
  - Some parents are just not confident enough to talk to other parents but there are a lot of different online resources available to them that they might read through.
  - Suggested offering informal Zoom chats for parents (similar to Hands & Voices' Coffee Club) that would have different themes.
- *Shelli Janning (Hands & Voices/GBYS):*
  - Noted that today's parents want information when it is convenient for them (i.e. while waiting in the carpool lane or sitting in the parking lot during dance lessons, etc.) as opposed to a specific time like a workshop.
  - H&V put together 4 recordings in August and Shelli noted that these videos have received 495 views. They are posted on the H&V Facebook page and website.
  - Shelli suggested offering short video clips instead of long presentations as parents might be more apt to watch short clips here and there. She noted that Noah Z is a student in Aurora. He puts together short podcasts (around 7 minutes) that are great for parents and students.
    - [https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/can-you-hear-me-because-sometim-es-i-cant-AFVDNc1nBgC/?fbclid=IwAR2o9vWaBUDUvNkNh8ra46jtZfCy3PQW0Onb\\_ZGiSNnPOPHnHZ-7nnMy1Zk](https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/can-you-hear-me-because-sometim-es-i-cant-AFVDNc1nBgC/?fbclid=IwAR2o9vWaBUDUvNkNh8ra46jtZfCy3PQW0Onb_ZGiSNnPOPHnHZ-7nnMy1Zk)
- *Lindsey Hinzmann (Nebraska Regional Programs):* SNRP created a Needs Assessment survey that was sent to around 200 families. There were 28 families who responded and Lindsey noted that one thing parents mentioned was the challenge of finding childcare so that they can really focus on the information provided at the workshop.
- *Sarah McClure (NAIE):* Suggested making mini commercials for events to help promote as those might catch more parents' attention than a flyer in the mail or email and also help to build excitement for student events.

### **Additional Reports** (All Committee Members)

#### **Amplify** (*Missy Stithem*)

- No report provided.

#### **Boys Town National Research Hospital** (*Frances Beurivage*)

- The number of people taking the EIPA performance assessment has greatly reduced due to COVID-19 so the raters have been able to rate the tapes as they come in. Frances anticipates that once COVID restrictions release, there will be an influx in the number of tapes to evaluate. Frances also noted that there has been a decrease in the number of EIPA written tests taken.
- Sue Czaplewski asked if Boys Town will be hosting a Roots & Wings this school year. Frances said she has not heard anything about that event. Brenda Coufal noted that she has had a conversation with Cathy Carrota who said they are not planning on holding one.

### **Deaf-Blind Project** (*Teresa Coonts*)

- Deaf-Blind Summer Institute was held virtually in July. It was reduced from 3 to 2 days. One day focused on communication and the other day focused on assistive technology and access. There were 97 people in attendance which is more than past years when held in-person (typically around 70-75).
- Next summer's Deaf-Blind Institute will also be held virtually in July 2021 (exact date not yet announced).
- The ASD State Conference will be held virtually in April 2021.
- The Midwest Transition Institute (10-state collaboration) that was scheduled to take place last June 2020 in Michigan was canceled. They are planning to move forward with having Iowa's Deaf-Blind Project and Nebraska's Deaf-Blind Project coordinate the June 2021 conference, but it will look different than originally planned as it will have to be a virtual event(s). This is specifically for students who are deaf-blind.
- Teresa noted that she and Tanya Armstrong are part of the interagency workgroup which also includes representative from the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, NCDHH, iCAnConnect, Helen Keller National Center, NCECBVI, Department of Health and Human Services, and Nebraska VR. This workgroup is focusing on developing an SSP program. They are trying to come up with other agencies that might be able to provide support or that would be willing to be the interim agency for any money that would flow through to pay for the SSP program.

### **Hands & Voices and Guide By Your Side** (*Shelli Janning*)

- H&V held their Fall Bash in October and despite the pandemic they still had a good turnout.
- H&V has provided clear masks to families.
- There will be officer elections next month so some shifting on the H&V board will take place.
- GBYS is currently serving 190 families. There are 14 parent guides located across the state.
- Parent Cafes are still taking place every month. These are 2-hour events for parents to have deep conversations with other parents.
- There are 5 moms registered for the Moms Night Inn event taking place in Scottsbluff here in November. Cody McEvoy will be talking about social-emotional wellness. Jessica Hoss, parent guide, will be talking about how "you're the perfect mom for your kid." There is also a lot of discussion about self-advocacy. The next Moms Night Inn is scheduled to be held in Lincoln February 6-7th and Shelli said she is not yet sure what that will look like (virtual or in-person).
- The annual GBYS training will be held in Lincoln November 21-22 and some people are planning to attend in-person and others will attend virtually. This training is always a nice time to plan for the next year and to discuss ways to better help and connect families.
- The Rising Star program is still taking nominations for any individual who is D/HH ages birth-21 who has done something that sets them apart from other people. The winner receives a \$15 gift card to Target, Amazon, or Starbucks. Shelli mentioned they have had a hard time getting nominations so she encouraged committee members to continue to spread the word.

- H&V/GBYS collaborated with NCDHH during the Zoo Days in Omaha and Scottsbluff. In Omaha, Kelly Brakenhoff read her books Never Mind and Farts Make Noise and with NE-EHDI sponsorship they were able to give the books to families. A parent luncheon was held afterwards and 12 families attended (total of 55 people) - scattered out at the zoo.
- Shelli noted that H&V has a national page for Spanish-speaking families which can be a great resource for that population.

**Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership** (*Brian Wojcik*)

- No report provided.

**National Association of Interpreters in Education (NAIE)** (*Sarah McClure*)

- No further report - all mentioned previously in the Educating District Staff section.

**Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD)** (*Mark Andersen*)

- No report provided.

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH)** (*John Wyvill & Jessica Larrison*)

- NCDHH is working collaboratively with NDE on the LEAD-K LB 965 that Governor Ricketts signed into law. This bill establishes a language assessment program for young children who are Deaf or hard of hearing. NCDHH is currently accepting applications to join the volunteer LEAD-K advisory committee. The deadline to apply is December 1st. Please contact Jessica Larrison if interested in joining the committee ([jessica.larrison@nebraska.gov](mailto:jessica.larrison@nebraska.gov)). After the application deadline, NCDHH will review the applicants with NDE and then the NCDHH full board will vote on the applicants to determine who will serve on the advisory committee. Due to NCDHH being governed by the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, the first December meeting is set in stone. However the selected advisory committee members will establish meetings moving forward in 2021 which will not be limited by meeting time so some meetings can be held in the evening/lunch hour/weekends as needed.
- A NCDHH Town Hall meeting is scheduled for tonight, November 4th. NCDHH will be sharing their strategic planning process their board is embarking on for 2021.
- The NCDHH board will be reviewing and considering an apprenticeship license for interpreters at their December board meeting. The only interpreters allowed to apply for this license would be recent graduates from an interpreter training program. The idea behind this license is to help bridge the gap research is showing as interpreters need time to practice their skills between graduating and obtaining certification. The license would be good for a two or three year period and applicants would only be allowed to receive the license one time. Please feel free to reach out to Sharon Sinkler for more information ([sharon.sinkler@nebraska.gov](mailto:sharon.sinkler@nebraska.gov)).
- John expressed concern about school districts adding additional inservice days which will reduce the number of days staff will be able to see students. He said NCDHH is not questioning the need for additional professional development time for staff; however, they are concerned about how this will impact IEPs and potential lost minutes.

- NCDHH will be touching base with NDE and some school districts in the Omaha area as they have received multiple reports from parents indicating that at IEP meetings school districts are not offering Iowa School for the Deaf as an option. He recognized that ISD may not be the appropriate placement for some students but their concern is that it is not being discussed with anyone as a viable option.

### **Nebraska Department of Education (*Teresa Coonts*)**

- Tri-State Law Conference for Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas will be held virtually November 5-6th.
- NDE is currently in the phase of updating technical assistance documents, specific to verification, which is now being moved to the eligibility criteria section. They are heading to managers to review and Teresa is hopeful the updated documents will be available in early 2021.
- There was an OCEP guidance change in the blindness area so Teresa is pulling in teachers of the visually impaired and university personnel to give input.
- The statewide Para Conference is November 10th.

### **Nebraska Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (NE-EHDI) (Brenda Coufal)**

- As of April 2020, NE-EHDI received funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for a new 4-year grant. NE-EHDI receives the majority of their funding from HRSA (which Brenda noted was sadly reduced by \$15,000 annually from what they have received the past several years - all EHDI programs in the U.S. received reduced funding) but they also receive funds from CDC and from the MCH Title V Block grant. HRSA wants EHDI Programs to expand capacity to support hearing screening, diagnosis, and enrollment into EI for those infants who pass a newborn hearing screen but later develop hearing loss up to 3 years of age (required to develop a plan by 3/31/2022).
  - NE-EHDI presented to the Nebraska Head Start Association (April 2020) and will resume discussion in November. The Early Head Start Programs are interested in partnering.
  - Brenda asked if any ESUs provide hearing screenings for children 1-3 years of age as EHDI can provide training to help staff learn how to complete OAEs to make sure children are not getting lost in the system.
    - Kristin Jolkowski noted there is a large gap in screening for hearing loss within that age range but that she and another SNRP/LPS audiologist do provide this screening.
    - Diane Meyer said that OPS has 2 audiologists that provide hearing screenings.
    - Heather Witte said ESU 9 refers to local audiologists.
    - Jill Hoffart mentioned via chat that NERP refers students to local audiologists or contacts ESU 1 audiologists for their OAE screenings.
    - Teresa Coonts recommended talking to EDN network via Cole Johnson as he oversees planning region teams in the state.
  - If you have other ideas of programs or agencies who are providing early childhood hearing screens, please email Brenda ([Brenda.Coufal@nebraska.gov](mailto:Brenda.Coufal@nebraska.gov)).

- *NE-EHDI is facilitating the planning of a formal D/HH Role Model/Mentor Program in Nebraska.* HRSA is asking EHDI Programs to increase by 10% the number of families enrolled in D/HH adult-to-family support services by the time the child is 9 months of age by 3/31/2024. HRSA requires EHDI to use data collected from year 1 as baseline data. Since Nebraska doesn't have a formal statewide D/HH role model or mentor program established at this time that connects families with a child who is D/HH by age required, it will be stated the Nebraska baseline is zero.
  - *Timeline for D/HH Role Model or Mentor Program:*
    - Fall 2019 – Started discussing with a variety of partners to see what services are currently being provided in Nebraska for D/HH Role Models or Mentors.
    - April 2020 – Received HRSA funding.
    - July-August 2020 – Developed a parent survey with input from the EHDI Advisory Committee & other parents.
    - August 31, 2020 – Emailed survey to parents statewide to find out needs and wants for a statewide D/HH Role Model or Mentor Program. THANK YOU to Hands & Voices, Regional Programs/Deaf Educators, Audiologists, and Nebraska Speech Language Hearing Association for disseminating the survey!! THANK YOU to the parents who took the survey!! The response has been amazing. There have been 90 parents so far who have taken the survey.
    - August-September 2020 – NE Hands & Voices and NE-EHDI partnered to interview individuals who are D/HH with a variety of experiences and communication choices. Interviews can be viewed on the Hands & Voices website and the link to the interviews are available on the NE-EHDI website.
    - October 23, 2020 – Organizational Meeting
    - Nov 16, 2020 - Brenda & Shelli Janning are meeting with Karen Putz and Setphanie Olsen as they have helped several states set up similar programs.
    - Jan-Feb-March 2021 – A parent work group will meet once each month to review the results of the parent survey and prioritize areas of importance (16 interested in this work group at this time).
    - April 2021-March 2022 – The stakeholder work group will meet for planning of this program. We understand that not everyone is going to be able to attend all the meetings. Notes from meetings will be emailed to everyone initially contacted about their interest and to everyone who has expressed interest, unless Brenda is informed they no longer want to receive the information. Surveys will be provided throughout April 2021-March 2022 for those who can't attend meetings and for those who don't feel comfortable sharing their ideas in a large group.
    - April 2022-March 2023/2024 – Identify the organization/program/ agency or if several need to be involved to implement (hire coordinator(s), D/HH role models/mentors, interpreters, and ensure training is completed), manage, and maintain the program.
  - *Committees:* NE-EHDI has 67 individuals interested in joining the committee to develop this project, which include parents, individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH), advocates of individuals who are D/HH, family support professionals, deaf

educators, and audiologists. Brenda noted that although it is great to have so many interested in helping, it is hard to get anything accomplished with so many people so she is hoping to form a committee with no more than 20 individuals and then possibly form subcommittees for the other interested individuals. Brenda is hoping to have one parent and one individual who is D/HH on each subcommittee to facilitate and help guide discussions.

- *Funding*: NE-EHDI has some funding for this, but definitely not enough to sustain the program long term. Thus, they are looking for other agencies and programs that could help provide funding.
- Brenda thanked everyone for their collaboration with NE-EHDI and asked committee members if there were any questions.
  - Teresa Coonts: Are Part C staff involved in this?
    - Brenda: Yes, they have been invited to be part of it and Cole has asked some questions. Even if they cannot be on the committee or a subcommittee, they are still able to receive the meeting notes to stay updated on a regular basis (unless they have been asked to be removed from email updates). Surveys will also be sent out periodically to those that cannot participate in workgroups regularly.
    - Teresa stressed the importance of making sure this does not interfere with early intervention services. Brenda said they will work with a Part C representative and be extra diligent to ensure nothing gets overlooked.
- After the meeting, via a written report, Brenda also shared the following additional NE-EHDI updates that were not discussed during the meeting due to time constraints:
  - *NE-EHDI is developing a plan to address diversity and inclusion in the EHDI system by 3/31/2022*:
    - Ensure NE-EHDI system activities are inclusive of and address the needs of the populations it serves including geography, race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, family structure, and socio-economic status.
    - NE-EHDI will make a list of all procedures, forms, letters, brochures, videos, social media, and website to evaluate by December 31, 2020.
    - A workgroup will be established to evaluate each item NE-EHDI has identified to ensure information and procedures are inclusive. The workgroup will meet virtually every other month from March-Sept 2021 or less if all the meetings are not needed. Please let Brenda know if you are interested in participating in this workgroup or if you know of other individuals to invite.
    - Timeline for the plan:
      - Any changes will be written into a plan from October 2021-December 2021.
      - The workgroup will review and revise the plan January 2022-February 2022.
      - The plan will be finalized by March 31, 2022.
      - The plan will be evaluated and revised as needed April 1, 2022-March 31, 2024.

- *NE-EHDI received \$10,000 HRSA COVID Funds in September 2020.* This funding is being used to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) that includes clear masks, face shields, and other items to be distributed to families of children birth-3 years of age who are D/HH. If there is funding left then there will be an opportunity to provide these items to professionals who serve this population. This has been added to the Hands & Voices sub-award agreement to purchase and distribute. Funding needs to be spent by 3/31/2021.
- *Tele-Audiology Update:* UNL Barkley offers both screenings & diagnostic evaluations via tele-audiology. Sara Peterson is the trained facilitator at the remote sites. New remote sites have been added so locations where tele-audiology is now available include Scottsbluff, Chadron, Sidney, Ogallala, and North Platte. Promotional documents have been developed by UNL for families and professionals and are located on the NE-EHDI website and linked below. Additionally, Dr. Hannah Ditmars with UNL Barkley Speech Language and Hearing Clinic is serving on a national Tele-Audiology Steering Committee to help other states.
  - [Families Promotional Tele-Audiology Document](#)
  - [Professional Promotional Tele-Audiology Document](#)
- *NE-EHDI has created an EHDI Family Support Page on their website with all their partners.* There are a wealth of family support resources available to parents and caregivers of children who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) who reside in Nebraska. However, finding all the resources can sometimes be confusing and overwhelming, especially early after identification. To make it easier for families, NE-EHDI has launched a web page specific to family support resources so families can quickly identify what supports are available. Since family support plays such a critical role in positive outcomes for children who are D/HH, NE-EHDI and our Family Support Partners want to make sure that families can easily find the support they need. Please direct families to our web page for more information (<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/EHDI-Family-Support.aspx>). Additionally, with the leadership of Dr. Stacie Ray, NE-EHDI is also collaborating with UNL Barkley, Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Nebraska Hands and Voices, Early Development Network (EDN), and Regional Programs to produce a “Resources for children who are D/HH” YouTube Video for families and for those who provide services to the families and children. The video will be added to the NE-EHDI Family Support page on our website once finished.
- *Nebraska Newborn Hearing Hospital Champion Program:* NE-EHDI and NE Hands & Voices – Guide By Your Side (GBYS) partnered with Nebraska families to develop a Parent Perspectives video and incorporate a new training curriculum for the newborn nursery staff on how to effectively communicate newborn hearing screening results to families. To incentivize hospitals to watch the video and update their protocols, NE-EHDI launched the Newborn Hearing Hospital Champion Program in December 2019. For details about the Hospital Champion program, visit the Campaign home page: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Nebraska-Newborn-Hearing-Hospital-Champion-Campaign.aspx>

- The goal of the campaign is to provide evidence-based education to birthing hospital staff who work directly with families and recognize Nebraska birth hospitals that incorporate the changes into their policies and procedures. The success of meeting the 1-3-6 benchmarks depends on professionals being well trained on educating parents about the importance of early hearing detection and intervention. This campaign is aligned with the NE DHHS Nebraska Safe Babies Hospital campaigns.
- Currently 3 of the 54 birthing facilities have completed the training. A framed certificate is presented to the hospital to display and they are recognized as a Hospital Champion on the NE-EHDI website. There are 19 other hospitals that have taken the pledge and are in the process of completing the training.

### **Nebraska Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (neRID) (*neRID Representatives*)**

- No report provided.

### **Transition Summit Team (*Sue Czaplewski*)**

- The Transition Summit Team has a few members of their team leave and a few new members join. They will be meeting again soon to discuss the possibility of holding a summer transition event.

### **Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (*Jessica Nickels*)**

- At this time, Nebraska VR is still working with clients remotely via Zoom. However, each office will determine when it is safe to meet in person based on the number of COVID-19 cases in their specific area.
- Nebraska VR is hoping to have all priority one clients off the waitlist by the end of this year. Jessica noted that when a person comes off the waitlist, Nebraska VR works with the individual to come up with a specific career goal.
- Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) is in the process of finishing up all the virtual partnership planning agreements to best determine which virtual methods to use when meeting with students.
- Nebraska VR will be releasing an RFP for Summer Transition Programs with an anticipated release date of December 1st and due date for proposals of January 15th. It will be similar to RFPs released in the past for the summer programs.

### **University of Nebraska - Lincoln (*Anne Thomas*)**

- Anne discussed the MPUP-IP grant that is specifically focused on interdisciplinary work between teachers of the deaf and speech-language pathologists. It is more in depth than previous grants and scholars in both domains are taking classes together, practicum experiences together, and teaming to better prepare these scholars to work collaboratively out in the field. Anne mentioned UNL is actively recruiting for the next cohort to begin this summer. Only students who have an undergraduate degree as an SLP can apply for the speech language pathology track (a general educator would not qualify). Any student who has a valid

teaching certificate may apply for the deaf education track as it is an endorsement that is obtained. The first cohort recruited 10 scholars (5 in each program). The goal for the next cohort is to recruit 14 scholars (7 in each program). Anne shared the [recruitment flyer](#) and asked everyone to please share wherever they see fit (i.e. Facebook, instagram, email, websites, etc.). She also noted that the number of tuition credit hours covered by the grant has increased from 37 to 40 which for some scholars might cover all their coursework! She encouraged everyone to visit the website that is on the top of the flyer for more in-depth information and also noted that this program is open to anyone (even international students). In addition, students will receive coaching from a TOD or SLP. UNL is currently looking for SLPs who would be willing to be mentors (they have secured TOD mentors). Mentors receive compensation of \$200 once all requirements have been fulfilled. [Anne asked committee members to please share the mentor recruitment flyer linked here.](#)

- As part of the MPUP-IP grant, the Barkley Speech Language and Hearing Clinic is offering specialized interdisciplinary services for school-age children who are Deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). Their approach focuses on teaming between pre-service speech-language pathologists and teachers of the Deaf and hard of hearing to provide individualized services to meet the speech and language needs of students who are DHH. These services can be provided in-person or via telepractice which means they are available to any DHH children/families across the state of Nebraska. [Click here for a flyer with more information](#) and please share with individuals across the state.

#### **University of Nebraska - Omaha** (*Julie Delkamiller*)

- TOD classes and interpreting classes are small in numbers so can be held in-person. There are five students completing the educational practicum right now and one more person will be completing this in the spring.
- The Association of College Educators for the Deaf/HH (ACE-D/HH) postponed their conference that was going to be held in Omaha in February. The new date for this conference has been scheduled for February 10-12, 2022, still in Omaha.
- UNO is trying to find places for observation hours (even via Zoom) for undergraduate TOD students since they will likely not be able to be in buildings. Julie said she may be reaching out to committee members for help. It might require a new way of doing things and collaborating with TODs who are teaching remotely.

#### **Public Comments** (All Committee Members)

- No further public comments were shared.

#### **Future Agenda Items**

- If you have agenda items you would like to add to the next meeting, please email Sue Czaplewski ([sue.czaplewski@esu9.us](mailto:sue.czaplewski@esu9.us)).

#### **Next Meeting**

- Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at Don Clifton Professional Learning Center in Lincoln if possible or virtually via Zoom.