

# **Deaf & Hard of Hearing Stakeholder Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, April 13, 2022**

**ESU 3-Omaha and Virtual via Zoom**

**9:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**Attendance:** Amanda Adams, Jonathan Arteaga, Cathy Carotta, Sue Czaplewski, Julie Delkamiller, Wendy Herrold, Lindsey Hinzmann, Jill Hoffart, Shelli Janning, Teresa McEvoy, Diane Meyer, Darsha Pelland, Sara Peterson, Michele Rayburn, Amy Rhone, Colleen Richart, Mackenzie Savaiano, Anne Thomas, Melissa Weber-Arnold, Susan Whitaker, Heather Witte

*Interpreters:* Frances Beurivage and Kelly Brakenhoff

## **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.

## **Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) - Amy Rhone**

- Teresa Coonts retired at the end of February. Her responsibilities at NDE have been split into two positions. Darsha Pelland, a deaf educator from ESU 16, has been hired as the Low Incidence Director. She will start in July. Amy is overseeing during the interim. The other part of the position, coordinating and supporting in the area of autism, has been moved to a different division within the office since it is no longer considered low incidence.

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

- Julie noted that she has seen more students struggling so there might be a higher need for more mentoring.
- UNO does not have any students graduating this May. In the fall there will be four interpreting students doing practicum and four deaf education students who will be student teaching. She mentioned that she receives emails often from all across the country asking for graduates.
- Julie said UNO is always looking for people to teach ASL courses who meet the higher education teaching requirements.
- Heather Witte asked if students can do any of their practicum experiences outside of the metro area. Julie said that since these are undergraduate students UNO has specific requirements and would charge extra fees (must find a supervisor in the outside area, etc. - Julie will find out more information on fees and report back). So although they are open to the idea, it isn't that feasible for students at this time especially factoring in cost of living expenses/moving/etc. However, Julie said if there is a way to provide student teachers a stipend or a way for them to receive a substitute license while doing practicums that might help provide more incentive. Darsha Pelland said this is something she can help look into options.
- Julie discussed how she is also battling with the decision of whether or not to have students take a proficiency test prior to entering the interpreting program. She does not want to limit enrollment since it is already low and UNO's requirement is that there must be 10 students

enrolled in order to continue offering the program, but she also wants to make sure there is commitment and a level of entry proficiency since these students are taking courses in both educational and community interpreting.

- Colleen Richart mentioned she would like to ask UNO students to voice for some NeAD public relation videos for additional practice.

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

- The MPUP-IP grant will start its third and final cohort this summer (June 6-9th). UNL has funding for 8 scholars for the deaf education track. They received 10 applicants but after going through the application process and discussing commitments with these applicants, only 6 students have committed and the others are not yet fully committed due to various reasons. Thus, there may be 2 funding spots still available. Anne asked committee members to share the [MPUP-IP recruitment flyer](#) once again so that 2 more students can be recruited. UNL will be able to use their emergency review in order to get them admitted in time.
- Anne thanked committee members for their letters of support for the new grant called the Mid-Plains Professional Upgrade Partnership in Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology, and Deaf Education (MPUP-SPADE). This is basically an extension of the current grant with the addition of audiology. The goal is to help better train students to work on multidisciplinary teams. If funded, the grant will begin in the fall of 2023.

### **Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (Nebraska VR) - Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell and Lupe Stevens via email**

- Omaha has hired a new VR counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing who will start in early June. The announcement will be made in the near future and Vicki will introduce this staff member at the next meeting.
- Nebraska VR had a staff training last January to educate their staff about NCDHH's services including their NSTEP program.
- Vicki will be providing training for the Nebraska VR staff on how to request and set up CART and VRI services for any clients who are deaf or hard of hearing requesting those services. These training will be conducted through Zoom on April 26th and May 4th.
- Lupe Stevens, Nebraska VR's new Program Manager that oversees the Pre-Employment Transition Services shared the following updates for the Pre-ETS program:
  - They are finishing up Job Expos with four different ESUs/school districts.
  - There are around 20 short-term programs that will be offered this summer to provide career exploration, job readiness, and work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities. [Click here to view the list of programs.](#)
  - School surveys have been sent out to all the schools and ESUs. If your school has not received one, please let Lupe know ([lupe.stevens@nebraska.gov](mailto:lupe.stevens@nebraska.gov)) or staff can get in touch with their VR Pre-ETS Coordinator to obtain that survey.

### **Transition Summit Team (Lindsey Hinzmann)**

- The Transition Summit will take place June 23-25th at Central Community College in Hastings. There are currently 12 students working on the application process. They can accept up to 20

students so the application will remain open for a little while longer. To apply, students must be Nebraska residents who receive special education services and entering grades 9-12 or enrolled in a transition program. Activities will focus on budgeting, planning, organizing, health and wellness, job readiness, etc. This is practical for all students (those planning to work after high school, attend a 2 year college, or attend a 4 year college). They have also received a great list of interested adult mentors who are Deaf/HH to help with the event.

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

- No report provided.

### **Nebraska Regional Program Updates**

- **Central Western Nebraska Partnership (CWNP)** - Sara Peterson and Heather Witte
  - The Central Western region hosted the statewide Storytelling Festival for students in grades K-4 grade at the Stuhr Museum. Activities revolved around the “Polar Express” book.
  - Camp Anderson for students statewide in grades post 5-high school graduation will be held at Camp Comeca July 17-22 this summer. The registration deadline is May 1st.
  - CWNP has been holding virtual sign language classes for professionals, parents, and family members on Tuesday evenings. These have been very well received and participants have asked for them to keep going. They have had three breakout rooms for the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels and all levels are taught by deaf adults.
  - A family Dr. Seuss activity was held recently at ESU 9. Aaron from NCDHH and Jessica from GBYS joined the activity so it was great to have other agencies join.
  - The western region of the state recently held a family game night.
  - CWNP has been hosting monthly Language Workshops with Linsay Darnall, Jr. These are presented statewide in ASL and are live and also recorded. Around 50 participants have been joining and CWNP is hoping to continue these statewide next year.
  - CWNP has supported professionals to attend several conferences lately including the ACRES, ADARA, ITDHH, EHDI, and EIPA Video Conferences. Upcoming conferences that staff will be attending include NDEC/NAD/NAIE, Colorado School for the Deaf Interpreter Workshop, and Deaf Expo in Nevada.
  - Heather mentioned they are very thankful for the MPUP program as they have several professionals from their area who are participating!
  - There are 29 students from across the state registered for the Nebraska Regional Programs’ Deaf Culture in Washington D.C. Experience that will be held in October of 2022. To be eligible to attend, students must be in 10-12th grade, receive a recommendation from his or her school district, and be active with NRP. Jonathan Arteaga will be joining the group for this trip!
- **Metro Regional Program (MRP)** - Diane Meyer
  - MRP hosted the statewide “All the Colors of the Rainbow” Arts Festival activity in February for students in grades 3-6. A deaf artist, Carol Flemming, led the students in teaching them about clay art and diversity. Students created 320 clay feathers and

learned about the 6 different types of feathers and their purpose. These feathers will be fired and glazed and assembled into a work of art for display. There were 39 students who participated and Carol's message to the students was "SOAR"

- Smile, a good-natured face makes life more pleasant.  
Observe closely around you to learn more about life.  
Attitude turns to positive actions.  
Reach for your best results.

- Two virtual ASL classes are taking place in the MRP area as well as one session of SEE.
- Diane has partnered with Ralston and OPS (Western Hills Elementary, Washington Elementary, Beveridge Middle School, and Burke High School) to provide on-site collaboration activities once every five weeks. Each activity takes around 90 minutes and she has been able to reach about 50 students per month. Some of these students are now starting to join statewide activities which was a goal of this collaboration!

On-site collaboration activities have included the following:

- Jack-o-lantern language barrier activity
- Following Directions and Hypothesis Testing: CO<sub>2</sub> Gasses and Catapult
- Fall Scavenger Hunt
- Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination
- Gingerbread Houses
- ADA Rights & NCDHH Resources
- Cookie Decorating for Rainbow House
- Snowperson activity: 2+ critical element directions, collaboration
- Snowperson vocabulary and following directions (K-1)
- Snowperson building: following directions (PK)
- The Lost Mummy Escape Room: Problem Solving and Collaboration
- February Inferencing and Attributes Hunt
- February Letter Identification, Following Directions, and Sight Words
- The Cursed Treasure Escape Room: Problem Solving, Math, Inferencing, Collaboration
- Superheroes versus Dr. Villain: Inference, Problem Solving, Math, and Collaboration
- March Letter and Number Identification

- Professional development in the MRP area has included participating in the "Linking Executive Functioning Skills to Success in Transition" virtual workshops, the EIPA Video Conference series, and the IMET Modules (Interpreter, Mentorship, Education & Training). Professionals have also taken part in workshops focusing on Using Processing Time, City and State Signs, and Self-Care and Self-Awareness to help prevent injury.

- **Northeast Nebraska Regional Program (NERP) - Jill Hoffart**

- NERP hosted the statewide Family Weekend to Sign event March 19-20 at the Aurora Leadership Center. There were 15 families who attended including 41 children. Both the parent and student workshops were Deaf led with Candance Arteaga instructing parents

and Cindy Koch teaching students. There were also 6 former NRP students who helped provide childcare. NRP is going to try to hold another Weekend to Sign event next fall.

- Virtual Teen Night held once per month for students in grades 7-12 from across the state is led by former NERP student Abbey Andress who is also a TOD. She picks a different theme each month and focuses on building self-esteem. Attendance has varied between 5-10 students each month.
- NERP hosted the statewide Fall Outing activity for grades 7-12 at Camp Kitaki this past November. Students worked on social and team building skills and participated in fun activities such as archery, climbing wall, games, crafts, etc. Deaf adults helped lead these activities.
- Jill is coordinating the statewide Battle of the Books (BOTB) teams this year. This is for students in grades 5-8. Nebraska had 3 teams compete and the Nebraska South team has advanced to the national competition (1 of 6 teams nationally)! This competition will be held May 17-18th. Abbey Andress is chaperoning the teams to help advise students and make sure they are prepared.
- NERP ASL courses have all been online this year except for family classes in the home. Hannah Springer, a former NERP student who is now a student at RIT, has created curriculum material for the sign language courses. NERP also offered a Spanish sign language course and each session was recorded.
- The NERP Spring Family Fun Day will be held on May 20th. Jill has asked Kelly Brakenhoff to come read some of her books. Dillon Curren will sign all the books and there will be related book activities for the children.
- **Southeast Nebraska Regional Program (SNRP) - Lindsey Hinzmann**
  - SNRP hosted a Winter Wonderland event for families with children ages birth-2nd grade on February 26th. There were a variety of activity stations including literacy reading, sign language learning, sensory exploration bins, a photo booth, gross motor activities, and arts and crafts. Families mentioned it was a wonderful opportunity to chat with other parents and for the kids to socialize and play together. A GBYS parent guide also attended and some middle and high school SNRP students volunteered at the event so it was fun to get them involved as well. SNRP had 14 families participate.
  - A SNRP event for students in grades 6-12 was held at Prehistoric Putt in Lincoln on April 3rd. SNRP had 19 students from 8 school districts participate. Students spent time mini golfing and talking with D/HH mentors.
  - SNRP is hosting the 2021-2022 Gab & Grow monthly virtual sessions. These are similar to Teen Night but for students in grades 5-8. They are being led by Will Parker, a D/HH college student who is also a former NRP student. Sessions focus on problem-solving and self-advocacy. They also allow time to play games and talk about student-led topics. Usually there are between 5-10 students who attend.
  - Lindsey and Elizabeth Trausch (a former NRP student and Academic Bowl player) are coaching the NRP Academic Bowl Team this year. The team has 4 students (1 from Omaha, 2 from Columbus, and 1 from Lincoln) who competed in the ranking competition and the regional competition. The team did not qualify for the national competition this year but did show a lot of improvement and growth throughout the year.

- SNRP is hosting the statewide Dance/Transition event titled, “Behind Your Mask: Who Do You Want to Be” for students in grades 7-12. This will be held at Camp Solaris in Firth April 30-May 1st. It will include student workshops that teach how to use the power of positivity to be successful along with an evening masquerade dance. This will also be held in conjunction with the Optimist Communication Contest. Everyone will watch and cheer on students who are competing in the Communication Contest for a chance to win one of two \$2500 scholarships that can be used for any post secondary education. NRP is hoping this will increase Communication Contest participation in future years.
- SNRP has partnered with WhyArts to offer a “Stop Motion Animation” day camp experience for SNRP students in grades K-6 the week of June 13-17th. SNRP is really looking forward to this fun and educational activity and to seeing the campers creations by the end of the week!
- SNRP continues to offer a variety of in-person and virtual sign language classes to meet the needs of families and professionals. A virtual group class is currently taking place twice a month. Lindsey has created a Google classroom to provide additional resources and videos to help participants practice what they were taught that week of class and to help grow their skills and confidence.
- SNRP has supported professionals to attend the EIPA Video Conferences, ITDHH and EHDI conferences, and to the Moog Conference this summer.
- The Nebraska Statewide Sign Language Skill Development Workshop will be held July 11-12th. A registration flyer will be available soon. Presenters and topics include:
  - David Davenport: “Language Acquisition of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children”
  - Amy Drewek: “Accessing the Big Picture through Discourse Mapping”
  - Dustin Bassett: “Supporting Student Social and Emotional Wellness in Education Environments”
  - Michelle Draper: “Discussing the Work: A Framework for Peer Interpreter Support”
- Lindsey has been working with SNRP districts to help recruit TODs and sign language interpreters. She has reached out to several national programs to meet with students and classrooms throughout the country to talk about SNRP.
- The Outdoor Family Camp with Nebraska Game and Parks and the Regional Programs will be held April 29-May 1st at Ponca State Park.

### **Nebraska Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (NE-EHDI) - Amanda Adams**

- Amanda Adams introduced herself and said she took over in January for Brenda Coufal.
- The National EHDI conference was held virtually in March and NE-EHDI was able to sponsor two parents to participate.
- NE-EHDI is working on its diversity and inclusion plan. Stakeholder committee members reviewed it in February. The final plan is due at the end of this month and then it will be shared publicly.
- The goal to create a plan to expand capacity for 0-3 hearing screenings has been extended to next year. Early Head Start Programs are willing to work with NE-EHDI so just need to develop a process. More information will be shared at a later date.

- NE-EHDI selected the Nebraska Association of the Deaf as the agency to run the Deaf/HH Program Mentorship. They are hoping to have training completed by the end of the year so that families can enroll next year. The goal is to have families connected with a mentor by the time their child is 9 months old.
- NE-EHDI is working with Nebraska birthing hospitals emphasizing the importance of family support resources and giving this information to families whether or not they are ready for it so that they at least have the information and can proceed when they are ready.

### **Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) - Susan Whitaker**

- Susan has been working as a NCDHH advocacy specialist in the western part of the state and in January she also took on the role of the educational specialist for the entire state taking over for Jessica Larrison. In this role she will help parents advocate for their children and know their rights.
- Upcoming NCDHH events:
  - April 24, 2022- Deaf/HH Awareness Day, Lincoln Children's Zoo
  - June 8, 2022 - Deaf/HH Awareness Day, Omaha Storm Chasers Baseball Game, Papillion
  - June 17, 2022 - Deaf/HH Awareness Day, Western NE Pioneers Baseball Game, Gering
  - July 20, 2022 - Deaf/HH Awareness Day, Saltdogs Baseball Game, Lincoln
  - August 2, 2022 - National Night Out, Scottsbluff
  - August 27, 2022 - Deaf/HH Awareness Day, Riverside Discovery Center, Scottsbluff Zoo
  - September 25, 2022 - Deaf/HH Awareness Day, Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo
  - October 6, 2022 - Disability Disaster Preparedness Workshop, Scottsbluff

### **Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) - Jonathan Arteaga and Colleen Richart**

- NeAD has made a lot of changes recently and has had a lot of success. There is a NeAD Facebook page that lists all of their upcoming events.
- Upcoming NeAD board meetings are scheduled for May 7th, August 6th, and October 1st.
- The Nebraska Parent CODA stakeholder group will meet on August 24th.
- A community partnership event will be held on May 14th for all community stakeholders (NCDHH, Hands & Voices, OAD, LAD, etc.) to come together and give a 5-10 minute organization update report.
- NeAD will hold a one-day Kids Camp on July 30th.
- August 27th will be the 120th Anniversary Celebration of NeAD.
- A Fall Blaze event will be held next fall with the exact date yet to be determined.
- Jonathan thanked NE-EHDI for partnering with NeAD for the Deaf Program Mentorship. NeAD is excited to get this started. Colleen Richart, NeAD Public Relations Specialist, is actively involved in the implementation. Amanda Adams thanked NeAD and Colleen for working really hard to get this up and running.
- Jonathan asked committee members to send him their email address so he can add everyone to the NeAD listserv to receive updated information. Sue Czaplowski said Wendy can email that information with the meeting notes.

### **Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP)**

- No report provided.

## **National Association of Interpreters in Education (NAIE)**

- No report provided.

## **Hands & Voices (H&V) and Guide By Your Side (GBYS) - Shelli Janning**

- H&V is going through a transitional period and presently working with an interim board. They are focusing on increasing parent membership on the board. They are reviewing their strategic plan and discussing where they want to be.
- A Fall Bash for families was held last fall and was a successful event.
- GBYS currently has 15 parent guides serving 185 families.
- The Moms Night Inn event held in Scottsbluff in November had 10 moms participate and the Moms Night Inn event in Lincoln in February had 23 moms participate. Both of these focused on self-advocacy, executive functioning, and encouraging parents to help their child be independent. Shelli mentioned that the student panel is always a highlight of the event as well.
- Last weekend they held an Easter Egg Hunt at the Papillion LaVista library. There were 75 people in attendance with children ranging in age from 4 months to 16 years old. This activity also included a book reading of Kelly Brakenhoff's new book. They hid over 300 eggs and inside some of the eggs were tickets for free books. Shelli mentioned that Kelly's book "Farts Make Noise" was the most popular book selection.
- GBYS distributes a Parent Survey every February and Parent Guide Evaluations every March. The information they have received back has been beneficial. GBYS is going to focus more on trying to get parents involved earlier on in their child's journey and will include parent testimonials as to why it is so important.
- Monthly newsletters are sent to current GBYS families. Information in the newsletter includes helpful websites, apps, tips, the Rising Star award, technology explanations, D/HH related articles, and a "not so proud parent moment" shared by a parent of a time that was frustrating or embarrassing in the moment but has often become funny later on - which all parents can relate to at times!
- Shelli also shared how blessed she feels to have a close working relationship with NE-EHDI to help parents through those initial appointments and all the questions.

## **Deaf-Blind Project - Mackenzie Savaiano**

- Mackenzie Savaiano introduced herself to the committee. She is the new Deaf-Blind Project Coordinator. Amy Rhone is currently the Deaf-Blind Project Director.
- The Deaf-Blind Project is working on a new website.
- The Deaf-Blind Summer Institute will be held July 18-19th on UNL's East Campus. It will be a hybrid format with both in-person and virtual attendance options. It is free to register. Attendees can also select to pay a fee and receive credits for attending. Dr. Chelsey Laurito who specializes in mental health will be the featured presenter. [Click here for a save the date flyer with more information.](#)
- The Illinois Deaf-Blind Services is planning and leading the Midwest Transition Institute this summer. This is for children who are deaf-blind ages 16-22 and their parent/guardian. [Click here for a save the date flyer with more information.](#)



- Mackenzie also coordinates UNL's blind and visual impairment training programs. She has submitted a grant this year similar in nature to the MPUP grants where the teachers for the blind and visually impaired are combining with early intervention programs. They have also started an orientation and mobility program and have hired Sara Reuss who currently works at NCECBVI to be the new faculty lecturer in orientation and mobility.
- Mackenzie is currently taking an ASL 1 course from Gallaudet University and is excited to learn more about the 'deaf' part of this job.

### **Boys Town National Research Hospital (BTNRH) - Cathy Carotta and Frances Beurivage**

- Boys Town recently hosted the Beeping Egg Hunt and had 18 families (70 people) in attendance.
- Camp Abilities, a camp for children with visual impairments, will be a one-day family event this year. It will be held on July 16th from 9:00-2:30 and will include a lot of different sport activities.
- Boys Town has a May meeting scheduled to discuss the possibility of holding a Roots & Wings conference in the fall of 2022 or spring of 2023. Since they are in a hospital setting they have not been able to return to overnight events but they are hopeful this will be lifted soon.
- Teresa McEvoy is the new EIPA supervisor. Cathy thanked Frances Beurivage for coming out of retirement to help and noted that Frances will continue to be an EIPA rater.
- Boys Town will be going through a lot of transitions over the next few months as several staff members are retiring. Debbie Smith is retiring in July. Maureen Mann is also retiring in July and Cody McEvoy will be taking over her role. Cathy Carotta will be retiring September 1st and Amy Tyler Krings has been appointed to take over this position as the new Director of Clinical and Educational Programs.
- Boys Town may be moving to a full-day preschool program. They are hoping to have a decision about this soon.
- EIPA performance assessment continues to be quite busy. The current turnaround time to receive an EIPA performance assessment score is about 110 days. However, they are hopeful this will decrease soon as they have hired five new raters who are currently in training.
- The 2021-2022 EIPA Video Conference series just wrapped up for the year with the last conference being held April 9th. The April session focused on teaching interpreters strategies to better understand why teachers say things in the manner that they do. It was a great conference and there were over 300 attendees. Groups can register or there is also an individual pay option available. Boys Town will continue to offer these video conferences next year with the following presenters, topics, and dates:
  - [10/1/2022](#) - Topic: Values Based Framework, Presenter: Amber Tucker
  - [12/3/2022](#) - Topic: ASL literature focusing on literary devices, Presenter: Casey Analco
  - [2/4/2023](#) - Topic: Patterns in EIPA Test Scores and Implications for Interpreter Education, Presenter: Deborah Cates
  - [4/1/2023](#) - Topic: Mastery Over Meaning, Presenter: William Ross
- Individuals are able to subscribe to Boys Town's online resources for training materials. The subscription costs \$15/month or \$100/year for unlimited access to online training resources and Boys Town is constantly adding new materials. New release updates are being shared on their Facebook page. Frances mentioned that they recently added a new material with

“Country Signs” that outlines countries, includes a picture of their flag, and also has a deaf individual present the sign for that country.

- Boys Town has streamlined the EIPA registration process and has also revised their classroom interpreting website.
- NAIE and Boys Town will be partnering for the Written EIPA. Deb Cates will serve as the Boys Town consultant as Dr. Brenda Schick will also be retiring in the near future.

### **Amplify**

- No report provided.

### **Additional Topics**

- No further topics or comments were shared.

### **Public Comments**

- Sue mentioned these individuals who will be retiring/leaving this year and thanked them for serving on the committee: Cathy Carotta (retiring), Frances Beurivage (retiring), Sarah McClure (moving to New Mexico), Tina Work (moving to Florida), and Carol Helleberg (retiring from ESU 9 and moving to Sioux Falls, SD).
- Kelly Brakenhoff mentioned she has a new book in her Duke the Deaf Dog series called, “My Dawg Koa.” This book will be released at the end of April in paperback and eBook. Kelly also has hardcover copies at her house that she can sell directly to schools or individuals as needed. The workbooks are all downloadable PDFs. [Click here for a flyer with more information](#) or contact Kelly directly ([kelly@kellybrakenhoff.com](mailto:kelly@kellybrakenhoff.com)).

### **Future Agenda Items**

- Please email Sue Czapski ([sue.czapski@esu9.us](mailto:sue.czapski@esu9.us)) if you have any future agenda items you would like to discuss.

### **2022-2023 Meeting Dates**

- Wednesday, November 2, 2022, Virtual via Zoom or In-Person at ESU 3 in Omaha
- Wednesday, March 22, 2023, Virtual via Zoom or In-Person at ESU 9 in Hastings