

# Deaf & Hard of Hearing Stakeholder Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 7, 2018

Educational Service Unit #3, Omaha

9:00 am - 12:30 pm

**Attendance:** Mike Brummer, Teresa Coonts, Brenda Coufal, Sue Czaplewski, Kim Davis, Julie Delkamiller, Heath Focken, Brigid Griffin, Brooke Harrie, Wendy Herrold, Lindsey Hinzmann, Jill Hoffart, Meribeth Jackson, Shelli Janning, Kristin Jolkowski, Bethany Koubsky, Mary Luhr, Diane Meyer, Donna Moss, Jessica Nickels, Sara Peterson, Kaylene Randall, Amy Rhone, Colleen Richart, Lindsey Schubert, Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, Missy Stolley, Carly Weyers, Heather Witte, Tina Work  
*Interpreters:* Frances Beaurivage and Kelly Brakenhoff

## Welcome & Introductions (Sue Czaplewski)

- Introductions were made by every member of the committee. A sign-in sheet was available to mark attendance and to update committee members' contact information.

## 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.

## Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) (Brooke Harrie)

- Brooke Harrie, coordinator of the Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership, gave a presentation about iCanConnect which is the Nebraska Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program ([a handout is attached that includes Brooke's contact information for further questions](#)). Teresa Coonts asked committee members to please pass this information along to teachers, parents, administrators, and any other related service provider.
- The following questions were asked by committee members:
  - *Does a child have to be a certain age to receive equipment?* Brooke said there is not an age criteria but that the child must be able to operate the equipment on their own, which is generally around age 3.
  - *How much funding does the program receive from the FCC?* Brooke said \$10 million is allocated to this program throughout the entire nation and that Nebraska receives about \$89,000 annually.
  - *How often can a person apply to receive equipment if they already have received equipment in the past?* Brooke noted there is no specific time limit. Instead, it is based on need and function. There needs to be a reason why the person is requesting new technology (i.e. something essential that the new technology can accomplish that is not able to be done with their current technology).

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

- NE-EHDI strives to meet the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) 1-3-6 Guidelines:
  - Complete the hearing screen by 1 month of age: NE-EHDI works with all 54 birthing facilities in Nebraska to ensure the newborn hearing screen is being conducted before discharge when possible and that those results are being reported to NE-EHDI.
  - Diagnostic evaluation completed by 3 months of age: NE-EHDI encourages the PCP to set up an appointment if the infant refers or doesn't pass the newborn hearing screen.
  - Enrolled in EDN services by 6 months of age: NE-EHDI works to ensure infants identified as Deaf/HH are referred to EDN by 3 months of age (or as soon as possible) so that the infant can be enrolled in services by 6 months of age.
- The 2017 Annual Report for the legislature was published in June and is now available on the [NE-EHDI website](#) and highlights are below (Brenda said to keep in mind this is a point in time report and to please contact her if more current information is needed):
  - In 2017, 100% of birthing facilities (all 54) in Nebraska conducted newborn hearing screening prior to discharge as a standard of care
  - 97.6% of infants were screened within 1 month of age (same as 2016 births)
  - 62.8% completed the diagnostic evaluation within 3 months (higher than 2016 births of 58.7%)
  - 77.5% were enrolled in EDN within 6 months of age for those families wanting EDN services (about the same as 2016 births). Audiologists/ENTs will make most referrals to EDN, but NE-EHDI also checks to make sure the referral has been made. The reasons of the percent of infants not enrolling include parents declining services, unable to contact the family, family moved out of state, and no indication of developmental delay (diagnosed with mild hearing loss).
  - Only 2 families were lost to follow-up (unable to contact or no response to letters/phone calls). Brenda said this amazing accomplishment is achieved through efficient follow-up by the NE-EHDI staff utilizing an electronic database system with complete and accurate data.
- Out of the 26,266 births in Nebraska in 2017:
  - 54 were diagnosed as permanent deaf or hard of hearing (2.1 per thousand births)
  - 5 identified as late onset deaf or hard of hearing after passing the initial screening
  - 31 parents refused screening and/or diagnostic testing
  - 23 parents were unresponsive (non-compliant, did not complete protocol after communication with NE-EHDI)
- NE-EHDI reports data to their Advisory Committee twice a year and challenges are discussed at that time. Their next Advisory Committee meeting will be held November 8th. The Quality Assurance annual report for hospitals was emailed in March 2018 and data was also submitted to the CDC in March 2018.
- In order to improve the timeliness of diagnostic evaluations & reporting and the timeliness into EI services, NE-EHDI has taken the following steps:
  - Emailed an online survey in spring of 2018 to all audiologists who see pediatric patients. (received 32 responses out of 72 recipients). This survey asked questions about the services offered, how long they have worked in collaboration with EHDI, their familiarity

with EHDI, the reporting process to EHDI, the referral process to EDN and any barriers they face, or ideas for EHDI program Improvement.

- EHDI then took the feedback they received from the surveys and scheduled meetings with the five main audiology clinics in Nebraska who see pediatric patients.
- EHDI then analyzed the results from the survey and clinic meetings to:
  - Revise the NE-EHDI Audiologic Screening & Diagnostic Report Form
  - Revise the Audiologists page & Families page on the NE-EHDI website
  - Develop a NE-EHDI Summary & Reporting Guidelines as a document for audiologists
  - Send a bi-annual email as a refresher to audiologists regarding reporting procedures to EHDI & ask for program improvement feedback (Started Sept 2018)
  - Develop a document with a list of birthing facilities who use ABR or OAE for screening
  - Offer in-service trainings for new audiologists & refreshers for experienced audiologists (held 3 meetings/trainings with Boys Town audiologists October 26 and October 29)
  - Develop a risk factor document & emailed the document with the CDC poster link to birthing facilities
  - Mail risk factor document & CDC poster to primary care physicians
  - Develop an Audiology QA report (EHDI is receiving feedback before the template is finalized)
- To improve family engagement and partnerships, NE-EHDI is contracting with the following agencies:
  - *Nebraska Hands & Voices*: Collaborate to offer family support events and work with Shelli Janning to assist NE-EHDI in the follow-up process with both families and medical professionals and connecting families with support quicker
  - *HearU Nebraska*: To support the hearing aid loaner bank program
  - Boys Town: Working to support the Roots & Wings Workshop that will be offered in February
  - *NCDHH*: Provide data to NCDHH for the legislation proposal for insurance coverage of children's hearing aids
- The next National EHDI Meeting will be held in Chicago March 3-5, 2019. NE-EHDI will again be offering a parent scholarship to pay the registration and travel expenses for one Nebraska parent to attend (who has not attended in years past). Brenda noted NE-EHDI will select the parent by the end of November in order to start the contract process. Thus, if you know of a parent who may be interested in applying for the scholarship, please have them email Brenda ([brenda.coufal@nebraska.gov](mailto:brenda.coufal@nebraska.gov)). The [scholarship material](#) is attached to the minutes. All attendees at the National Meeting are welcome to attend the Nebraska Stakeholder Meeting.
- NE-EHDI is working to improve access to pediatric audiology services in western Nebraska through the Tele-Audiology Project. Currently, there is only one audiologist who serves an area of almost 300 miles and who doesn't specialize in pediatrics. Thus, NE-EHDI is excited that ESU 13 has agreed to be the site in western Nebraska that will use tele-audiology to connect

infants from the areas of Scottsbluff, Chadron, and Sidney to pediatric audiologists for diagnostic testing. UNL will be the main site where the audiologists will be located. NE-EHDI is hoping to receive \$50,000 in funding by the end of December to support the purchase of audiology equipment for the ESU 13 site.

- NE-EHDI is working on developing the “Hospital Training Project” to create a script and training protocol for hospital staff to help them understand the best way to communicate results of the newborn hearing screen to families. NE-EHDI is guiding this workgroup, but the work is being completed by parents and medical professionals. A draft of the video has been filmed and Brenda thanked Hands & Voices for their funding to pay for the video. The video draft is in the process of being shared and reviewed for feedback and once the feedback has been received, NE-EHDI plans to refilm the video in December.
- NE-EHDI presented at the Nebraska Nurses Association Conference on October 3, 2018, in Omaha and also exhibited at the following events:
  - Nebraska Young Child Institute (June 26-27, 2018, Kearney)
  - “What’s New in the NICU” Conference (August 23-24, 2018, Bellevue)
  - March of Dimes Prematurity Summit (September 20, 2018, Omaha)
  - Boys Town Newborn Expo (September 22, 2018, Omaha)
  - NSLHA Conference (September 27-28, 2018, Kearney)
  - Nebraska AWHONN (Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses) Conference (September 27-28, 2018, Omaha)

### **Hands & Voices (H&V)** (Shelli Janning)

- Hands & Voices is a volunteer organization. Shelli noted there are a lot of new parents on the H&V board and that they have recently hired an outreach coordinator who lives in the Kearney area. The organization is also in the process of hiring an executive assistant to help with the day-to-day processes ([see attached job description](#)). Several great applicants have applied. Shelli welcomed committee members to still share the job posting as she noted they are hoping this position posting information gets distributed statewide.
- The H&V Back to School event did not have the best turnout so Shelli discussed how the organization has made a decision to try using Zoom for future events hoping to increase participation.
- The organization held a “Dads Night Out” in October. Six dads registered and five showed up. Shelli’s husband helped lead the event and he commented on how awesome the conversations were throughout the entire evening and how great it was to connect with other dads! Shelli said H&V is hoping to hold another Dads Night Out event in March.
- November 3-4, 2018, H&V held a “Moms Night Inn” event in Grand Island. They had eight moms register (which included some of the Guide By Your Side guides). One mom was a no show and one mom got sick in the middle of the event. Since the number of moms in attendance turned out to be low, H&V decided to offer the student panel live via Facebook. Shelli said that although this is kind of a risk, it turned out to be great and they hope to continue to offer livestream panels in the future. The next Moms Night Inn event will be held in Lincoln February 16-17, 2019.

- H&V also offered an “Extended Family Workshop” on November 4th for parents, grandparents, caretakers, and other relatives of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Nine people registered to attend but nobody showed up for the workshop which was extremely disappointing. They are hoping for better attendance at the next Extended Family Workshop which will be held in Omaha at ESU 3 on November 17th (they currently have 12 people registered to attend).
- The Annual H&V Parent Workshop will be held at ESU 3 in Omaha January 19-20, 2019. The workshop will be presented by Dr. Hale and Shelli noted that it will be more of a discussion-based workshop.
- The next “Coffee Event” for parents will be held at Chick-fil-A in Omaha on Saturday, December 1st from 9:00-11:00 am.
- H&V has started a “Rising Star Recognition” program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing ages 0-21. This program is designed to recognize student achievements and deaf/hard of hearing role models. The student selected has his/her information posted on the Hands & Voices website and Facebook page and he/she receives an award certificate as well as a \$10 gift card. The \$10 gift card is awarded by NE-EDHI through their collaboration funds with H&V. Students can be nominated by anyone for the award. The first student selected to receive this award was Brooke Janning.
- Shelli was excited to announce that Hands & Voices has been given 20 tickets to distribute to H&V members for the December 9th shadowed interpreted performance of “A Christmas Carol.”
- Shelli recently attended the Leadership Conference held in Cheyenne, Wyoming, in September. Five Guide By Your Side guides also attended. Shelli said it provided a nice opportunity to network with other states.
- Shelli also recently attended the CMV Conference. She said she knew some information about CMV prior to the conference but that she learned so much more by attending and she plans to share information about CMV to help raise public awareness about the CMV infection.

#### **Guide By Your Side (GBYS)** (Shelli Janning)

- Guide By Your Side is a NDE grant-funded program that is currently serving 125 families across the state. The program now has 15 parent guides, 2 of whom are bilingual.
- Shelli noted how vital the collaboration with NE-EHDI has been as GBYS is now receiving about 60-70% of new referrals from NE-EHDI.

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

- No report provided.

## **Boys Town** (Bethany Koubsky)

- The Roots & Wings conference for parents of children who have been recently identified as deaf or hard of hearing will be held at the Carol Joy Holling Conference Center in Ashland February 2-3, 2019. Bethany mentioned that Boys Town is in the process of fundraising for this workshop and that the registration flyer will be available soon ([now available and attached to the minutes](#)).
- Boys Town will be holding an informational session on January 18th from 10 am - 2 pm. This session will discuss the new Boys Town program, "Developmental Language Disorders," and is open to anyone to attend at no charge. It will also be recorded and offered via distance.
- The next EIPA Video Conference will be held Saturday, December 1st and the topic is "Developing Effective Interpreting Skills for Using Fingerspelling & Numbers." [A flyer is attached](#) with more details as well as information on the other two video conferences that will be held on February 16th and April 6th.
- Boys Town is in the process of changing the EIPA test to an all online format. They are currently on phase two which is registering applicants online. Once this entire process is complete, there will be no more DVDs. This will eventually include the EIPA Pre-Hire screen as well. In order to create the next generation of the EIPA test, Boys Town is needing to recruit students in grades 4-7 who use sign language (MCE/PSE). Please contact Bethany if you have any students who may be interested ([bethany.koubsky@boystown.org](mailto:bethany.koubsky@boystown.org)).

## **Vocational Rehabilitation** (Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, Jessica Nickels, & Brigid Griffin)

- Vicki provided an update on Nebraska VR's Order of Selection process. She said that since April, Nebraska VR has been able to take 100 people off the waiting list. Brigid noted that 50 percent of these individuals were "students" with significant disabilities. Nebraska VR will be reviewing their budget again in January and is hopeful more individuals will be able to be taken off the waiting list at that time.
- From June 2017-July 2018 the Pre-Employment Transition Services program had 638 students participate in a work-based program. VR had 799 programs for students to try this year so some students had the opportunity to participate in more than 1 program. It was noted that as of now, VR cannot provide one-to-one support (between one student and one adult) in the Pre-Employment Transition Services area so this can be an additional challenge. However, they are hoping that will change when WIOA opens up again.
- Nebraska VR and Project Search will be sponsoring a job fair on April 30, 2019, at the Lancaster County Events Center in Lincoln.
- NDE and Nebraska VR will also be sponsoring a transition conference February 26-27, 2019. This conference will be held in Kearney and focus on assessments and developing transition-related IEP goals.
- The RFP for the summer transition programming will be announced soon. Brigid said 25 awards were awarded last summer and that she anticipates there will also be awards given this summer. However, she mentioned the process may be changing a little to make it more competitive and distributed throughout the entire state.

- Nebraska VR has developed a training called “Best Practices when Working with Clients who are Deaf/HH” to show newly hired Nebraska VR staff. They are excited to add this training to the other medical trainings VR staff participate in that focus on different disabilities.
- A committee member asked what services a student who graduates before the age 21 can receive. Brigid said the student can receive DD services but would likely be placed on the VR waiting list. She said that unfortunately, there are not a lot of services available for those students. Thus, it is essential to have conversations early on with the IEP team including the student, parents, and a VR representative.
- Missy Stolley expressed her sincere appreciation and thanks for all Nebraska VR does to partner with school districts. She said this partnership is essential and has made a tremendous difference in students’ lives.

### **Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) (Heath Focken)**

- Heath is the current president of NeAD.
- NeAD helped sponsor the Deaf Awareness Day at the Henry Doorly Zoo in September in collaboration with Hands & Voices and NCDHH.
- The NeAD Conference will be held in Lincoln June 21-22, 2019, and will include workshops for parents. More information to come.

### **Regional Program Updates**

#### **Nebraska Regional Programs State Liaison (NRP) (Sue Czaplewski)**

- The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) has revised its educational service guidelines for the deaf or hard of hearing. The new guidelines document entitled, [“Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Educational Service Guidelines”](#) is attached to the minutes. Sue noted these updated guidelines might provide direction in some areas that may need improvement.
- The NRP coordinators are working to develop a webinar for training related to the Technical Assistance (TA) Document for educational sign language interpreters.
- Review of statewide workshops sponsored by NRP:
  - [Foundations for Literacy \(June 2-3\)](#): Foundations for Literacy is a research-based toolkit designed to improve literacy in children who are deaf or hard of hearing. NRP sponsored a workshop for professionals to learn about the curriculum and has also purchased a toolkit for each region to use. There were 20 teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing from across the state in attendance. Sara Peterson reported that one student in her region who has tried several resources in the past is now learning to read through the use of this curriculum! Diane Meyer mentioned that MRP is in the second year of using this program and has seen huge gains in decoding (a group of kindergartners are in the process of reading 4-5 word sentences). Although this program is specifically designed for students who are Deaf/HH (all modalities: sign and auditory verbal), Diane noted it would meet the needs of every preschool classroom. Kaylene Randall said she is in the process of adjusting the curriculum so it can be used as more of an itinerant

resource (not just center-based). Committee members asked Kaylene to share the adjusted curriculum when completed. Teresa Coonts asked committee members who are utilizing the curriculum to keep data on student development so that it can be promoted throughout the state and Diane mentioned that a lot of that data is also documented on the Foundations for Literacy website.

- Statewide Skill Development Workshop (July 30-31): NRP had contracted with Kevin Williams to present this workshop. Unfortunately, due to health issues Kevin was unable to make it to Nebraska. Thus, Jamy Elker, Traci Patzner, and Deb Cates filled in at the last minute and did an awesome job. Jamy and Traci presented on “Interpreting Music” and Deb’s topic was “Take Your Voicing Skills to the Next Level.” There were 59 interpreters in attendance which included both educational and community interpreters. NRP is hoping Kevin will be able to come to Nebraska later this school year to present (*update post meeting*: Kevin will be presenting in Nebraska January 19-20th and the [registration flyer](#) is attached to the minutes).

### **Central Western Nebraska Partnership (CWNP) (Sara Peterson and Heather Witte)**

- Student celebrations:
  - CWNP has several recent graduates attending college at UNL and Doane.
- Staff development:
  - CWNP has re-established a regional teacher of the deaf PLC group. Options were given to meet face-to-face or via Zoom and all teachers agreed they would like to continue these meetings face-to-face in order to stay better connected. A recent PLC meeting focused on assessments and the group created an online google drive specific to assessments. The next PLC meeting is called the “Ls: Littles, Literacy, and the Law”.
  - There is also a CWNP PLC group for interpreters. This group is working on curriculum changes and tactile signs.
  - Several CWNP staff attended conferences over the summer including the Best Practices Conference at RIT and the AG Bell Convention in Arizona. Sara said it was powerful to see Gallaudet’s president and the director of Moog stand together on the same stage at AG Bell and say “we need to come together.”
- Review of activities that have taken place since last April:
  - Camp Anderson (July 15-20): CWNP coordinated Camp Anderson for students in grades post 5-high school graduation. Camp was held at Camp Comeca in Cozad and 50 students attended. Sara noted that some of the high school students who have attended in previous years said they were unable to go this year because they now have a job! Students were able to select which clubs they wanted to participate in. Some clubs were led by staff and some clubs were led by students which was a different and neat dynamic. Camp also included whole-group activities and a highlight was when seniors shared special moments and memories of their time with the regional programs. Camp Comeca will be the site location again next summer and then other camp locations will be explored for possible use in future years.

- Deaf Awareness Day at the Scottsbluff Zoo (September 8): CWNP collaborated with NCDHH to host this event and there were over 60 people in attendance. Activities included storytime, booths, fossil digs, and petting animals. It was nice to have some adult members of the Deaf Community attend and connect with students.
- Young Americans (October 25-27): Young Americans is a group of touring young adults who put together workshops for students (like a giant show choir). The regional programs sponsored this three-day event for students in grades 5-12 and had 89 students from across the state attend. This was an empowering event where students gained a lot of self-confidence and self-esteem. Teresa Coonts said one great thing about the Young Americans is that they truly believe every single student can participate no matter how severe a person's disability is and they find a way to make it work for everyone! Colleen Richart noted how amazing it was to see not only her child but all the students come together to perform a show. Sara shared a few comments from the evaluations:
  - "I didn't know I could dance and people would not look at me and laugh."
  - "I didn't know I could inspire someone."
  - "My child used to be so angry about his hearing loss and now he knows there is an entire community out there supporting him."
- **Upcoming Activities:**
  - Drive-In Movie Theater Event: CWNP is planning to host this activity at ESU 13 in February. Sara noted they would like to collaborate again with GBYS, NeAD and NCDHH.
  - Academic Bowl: The Western AB team competed 11/6/18. They should find out soon if their team will advance to the top 20 to compete at the Midwest Regionals in February at the Kansas School for the Deaf.
  - Weekend to Sign (January 19-20): The family Weekend to Sign event will be held in Hastings. Pending final contractual details, there will also be a two-day interpreter workshop happening simultaneously presented by Kevin Williams.

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

- **Student celebrations:**
  - Both scholarships awarded at the Optimist Communication Contest last April were awarded to NERP students.
  - Two NERP students are running in state cross country.
  - A NERP high school student is enrolled in Northeast Community College and by the time he finishes high school, he will be half down with his EMT cohort.
  - NERP had 7 students who graduated last May who are now enrolled in several different colleges.
  - One NERP student was awarded "best actor" at a One Acts competition.
  - Two NERP students attended the Explore Your Future program in New York over the summer.

- Review of activities that have taken place since last April:
  - Fall Outing (September 21-22): NERP hosted the Fall Outing for students in grades 7-12 in Kearney. There were 50 students in attendance. This activity celebrated Deaf Culture/awareness and provided students the opportunity to learn more about technology. Carly Weyers from NCDHH and Tina Childress were the presenters. “TechyTina” is an educational audiologist who wears CIs. She shared over 300 apps listed by category with students. Students were divided into groups to research the apps. Then they were asked to present their findings to the large group. Jill noted it was empowering for them and neat to see. One app that was a favorite is called “CLIPS” and it adds captioning as a person is making a video.
- Upcoming activities:
  - Communication Contest (April 27): NERP will host this contest in Norfolk. The topic is, “Is There a Fine Line Between Optimism and Reality?” Two \$2,500 scholarships will be awarded again this year. Everyone is welcome to come and watch/support the students.
  - Family Fun Night: NERP will hold an activity for little ones and their families next semester. Jill noted that Heath Focken from NeAD has agreed to come help.
- Staff development:
  - The NDE Spot Analysis for the NERP area indicated requests for more deaf ed time with students and more time with adults who are Deaf/HH. In order to help fulfil this need, NERP has hired an itinerant teacher who is Deaf/HH.
  - The Midwest Conference on Deaf Education has a theme this year of “Together We Can”. The regional programs have sent in a proposal to have a booth there and are waiting to see if the proposal is accepted.

### **Southeast Nebraska Regional Program (SNRP) (Lindsey Hinzmann)**

- Student celebrations:
  - A Lincoln Southeast high school student who is Deaf/hard of hearing started a “kindness awareness” initiative and was featured in the Lincoln Journal Star. The week consisted of sharing quotes about kindness during morning announcements, giving kind grams to others, a pep rally, and a showing of the movie “Wonder.”
  - Deaf Awareness Week: Several LPS schools shared information about hearing loss and Deaf culture by making daily announcements and posting information throughout schools. Beattie Elementary hosted Artie Mack. Additionally, the whole school learned how to sign the Pledge of Allegiance.
  - One SNRP student was recognized at the Young Americans activity and awarded a scholarship to attend the Young Americans’ summer camp.
  - SNRP recent graduates are attending Gallaudet, RIT, Southeast Community College, and UNL.
- Staff development:
  - Jane Madell Professional Workshop (June 4): SNRP contracted with Dr. Madell who presented to 52 statewide professionals including teachers of the Deaf, audiologists, speech language pathologists, graduate students, and administrators. Feedback overall

was positive regarding the workshop and the evaluations noted that participants gathered a new perspective on some auditory ideas for students, resources to use for advocating for students in the classroom, and using questionnaires to elicit thoughts from parents and other staff who work with the students. This was a helpful workshop for parents and staff working with students whose parents have chosen listening and spoken language as their child's mode of communication.

- AG Bell Convention (June 27-30): The AG Bell Convention was held in Scottsdale, Arizona, and SNRP sponsored 4 teachers of the Deaf and hard of hearing and 2 sets of parents to attend. Professionals also attended short courses before the conference began to delve deeper into learning. SNRP-sponsored participants have been asked to write an article for the SNRP newsletter about something they took away from attending the convention. A few of these articles were in Issue One of the SNRP newsletter distributed in August. More will be in upcoming newsletters.
- Theory of Mind (September 17): Beth Walker from the University of Iowa presented this workshop via zoom. She discussed the findings of the "Outcomes of Children with Hearing Loss" study, the importance of Theory of Mind, and factors that support the development of Theory of Mind.
- PLC Meetings: PLC meetings for teachers and interpreters are taking place on a monthly basis.
- Mentoring Support: Mentoring support for sign language interpreters is also occurring within the region.
- Family Sign Language Classes: SNRP has continued to offer family sign language classes. There are 3 currently taking place in the region.
- Advisory Committee: SNRP held an Advisory Committee meeting in October and will hold another meeting in March. Lindsey presented information and charts at the October meeting on the number of students identified as Deaf/HH in the SNRP area. Currently, SNRP has 324 students who are verified as Deaf/HH in the region (34 in ESU 4, 30 in ESU 5, 50 in ESU 6, and 210 in LPS). These numbers have stayed steady over the last year; however, over the last five years, SNRP has grown quite a bit (280 students identified in the region in 2014-2015).
- Review of activities that have taken place since last April:
  - "The Illusionists" at the Lied Center (April 21): SNRP had 22 students in grades 5-12 attend this event. Students had the opportunity to socialize with their peers beforehand during dinner at Misty's. Then the group walked to the Lied Center for the show which was great and highlighted a variety of talents including stunts, magic, and comedy.
  - Jane Madell Parent Workshop (June 3): SNRP contracted with international presenter, Jane Madell, to present a workshop entitled, "Maximizing Auditory Performance of Children with Hearing Loss." There were 9 parents from the SNRP and MRP regions who attended the parent workshop. The evaluations noted all parents felt this workshop met their expectations and parents commented that they found the following things beneficial from the workshop: how they can help their child in the classroom, questions to ask their child's audiologist, and learning about "string bean" hearing. One parent

mentioned how it was a different perspective than they had received before and that was beneficial to them.

- Celebrate Nebraska Day Camp (June 11-15): There were 18 students in grades Post K-Post 6 who attended Day Camp for 1 or more days (new this year, students did not have to register for the entire week as SNRP allowed them to choose which days they would like to attend). Students received an activity book that they used to write and draw pictures about their day and what they learned. SNRP also had 3 Deaf/Hard of Hearing role models help throughout the week.
  - Monday: The group traveled to Beatrice and visited the Homestead National Monument of America. There they watched a video about homesteading, participated in a scavenger hunt in the museum to learn more about homesteading, and got to see a homesteader cabin. Students then walked on a trail to the education center where they received a demonstration about buffalo. Students got to see and touch different parts of the buffalo and learned what each part was used for. Students also made cornhusk dolls, toured an exhibit that included farm machinery of years past, and visited a one-room schoolhouse.
  - Tuesday: Nebraska foods and crafts day was the theme and it turned out to be the day the most students registered to attend. In the morning, students learned how to make Runzas, homemade applesauce, popcorn, and put together a salad to eat with Dorothy Lynch dressing. In the afternoon, the group went to Makit Takit art studio where they created their own Nebraska string art, Nebraska shrinky dink, and got to try out the splatter room for a canvas art project!
  - Wednesday: The group traveled to Gifford Farm in Bellevue. There they participated in a Living History Program. This introduced students to Native American and pioneer life. Students went inside a tipi and learned fascinating facts about them, loaded a wagon with necessary items for a trip, and partook in common chores a pioneer child would do like shucking corn, washing clothes and the dishes, gathering eggs, and stacking wood. Students then learned about the underground railroad and what it was like to travel as part of it. They visited another one-room schoolhouse before playing in the outdoor nature classroom. To finish the day, students got to participate in a farm program and exotic animals program where they got to see, touch, and learn about a variety of animals.
  - Thursday: Touring Prairieland Dairy in Firth was the morning activity. Students viewed the milking station and cattle barns to learn all about what it takes to get milk from a cow to your table. Students were excited to pet a two-day old baby calf before leaving the dairy farm! In the afternoon, the group went to the Nebraska History Museum in downtown Lincoln and learned about sod houses, pioneers, and settlers in Nebraska. Students enjoyed creating their own model sod house out of clay.
  - Friday: The week ended at the Arbor Day Farm in Nebraska City. Students participated in a tree tour and ecosystems tour to learn about trees and plants native to Nebraska and got to dig for insects to put under a microscope for

close-up viewing. They loved playing in the Outdoor Nature Explore Classroom where there were musical instruments, blocks for building, a waterfall, hammocks and more. They ended the week with a wagon ride through the orchard enjoying apple and cherry slushies!

- Family Festival (August 26): SNRP was excited to have 30 families (136 people) attend the Family Festival held at Camp Sonshine this year. SNRP provided lunch and then families participated in camp activities which included train rides, archery, nine square in the air, gaga ball, human foosball, a petting zoo, playground, and archery tag. This event was extended to include all ages (birth-high school graduation) and family members per the suggestion of some SNRP parents on the feedback form from last year. A parent at our SNRP advisory meeting noted how nice it was to meet and talk with other parents in the region and said everyone really seemed to enjoy themselves.
- Wellness Weekend with Janna Luksha (September 8): This event was sponsored by NCDHH. One SNRP student along with her family attended. Janna Luksha, a personal trainer from New York who is Deaf, presented about living a healthy lifestyle by eating right and exercising. The event ended with playing basketball in the gym.
- **Upcoming Activities:**
  - BOTB Preliminary (November 27): 2 students from SNRP and 1 student from MRP are on the Nebraska South team.
  - Astronomy Extravaganza (November 30-December 1): SNRP will be hosting the statewide Extravaganza for grades 3-6 on November 30-December 1. The theme for this activity is Astronomy. The goals of this activity are for students to identify and name different phases of the moon, describe constellations, meteors, meteoroids, meteorites, and asteroids, explain how rotation and revolution impact our calendar system, and to recall names and facts of planets and their location to each other. In addition, students will socialize and communicate with peers and adult role models who are deaf or hard of hearing.
  - My Gym Family Activity (January 13, 2019): Networking and socializing opportunity for parents and children ages birth-2nd grade and their families
  - Art Reach (February 1, 2019): For grades Kindergarten-5th grade
  - Rockwall Climbing (February 23, 2019): For grades 6-12
  - Dance/Transition (March 22-23, 2019): Statewide activity for grades 7-12 to be held in the Lincoln vicinity

### **Metro Regional Program (MRP)** (Diane Meyer and Mike Brummer)

- **Student celebrations:**
  - One student from Ralston attended the Youth Leadership Conference in Oregon. This is a four-week program. Nebraska VR provided funding for the student to be able to attend. This student has also been accepted into UNL and Gallaudet and would like to become a certified deaf interpreter.
- **Review of activities that have taken place since last April:**
  - Deaf Pride: A Deaf pride event was held in Bellevue and 26 students attended.

- Arts Festival (October 16): MRP hosted the statewide Arts Festival for students in grades K-4. Because there were 58 students in attendance, the activity had to be held at two locations in Kearney (MONA and the Kearney Public Library). At MONA, students toured the museum and participated in an art project. At the library, students participated in two art projects which included a colored drawing to ask students how they feel when they see a particular color and Deaf View Image Art (DVIA).
- Family Event at Vala's Pumpkin Patch: This activity was sponsored by ISD. ISD invited Nebraska families to join and 7 MRP families attended. Mike noted it was nice to collaborate with ISD.
- Sign Language Classes: There are currently about 20 people in the MRP area enrolled in the ASL class and 12 people enrolled in the SEE class.
- Audiology Support: Jill Townsend, MRP audiologist, recently attended a MRP activity to help explain her role and how she can help students.
- Upcoming activities:
  - Art Project: This event will be held in Bellevue in November.
  - Signing Santa Holiday Party (December 8): MRP and Boys Town are once again collaborating to offer this event. Activities will include face painting, cookie decorating, and holiday ornament making.
  - Event in collaboration with ISD (January): More information to come.
  - Academic Bowl: Nebraska has two AB teams this year (East and West). Sara Peterson and Cindy Koch are the coaches of the West team. Mike and Abbey Buettgenbach are the coaches of the East team. Preliminary screenings are currently taking place and the top 20 teams will advance to the Regional Competition that will be held February 14-17th at the Kansas School for the Deaf.
  - Battle of the Books: Nebraska has two BOTB teams this year (South and North). Mike is the chaperone for the North team. Lindsey Hinzmann is the chaperone for the South team. The first battle date is November 27th. Both teams will compete in three matches that day. The first two matches will be with other schools and then the last match will be against each other.
- Staff development:
  - Advisory Committee: MRP held an Advisory Committee meeting in September and will hold another one at the end November.
  - PLC Meetings: PLC meetings are being held for both deaf educators and interpreters. At the deaf educator meetings, audiologists and SLPs are also joining their group.
  - Functional Listening Evaluation Training: A FLE training will be held November 15th.
  - Supporting Success Virtual Conference: MRP has registered professionals for this conference. Professionals will be required to watch each session individually and then they will come together to discuss the information presented.
  - Language Deprivation Workshop (January 12th): Deb Cates will be presenting this workshop for interpreters.
  - Statewide SEE Skillshop (December 7-9): There are currently 20 people registered for this statewide workshop and it will be held at Ralston Public Schools. There will be strands for both beginning professionals/parents as well as educational interpreters at

this skillshop. The interpreter strand will not be just solely focused on SEE. Diane noted that Dr. James Kilpatrick (presenter) can address topics in both SEE and ASL.

- Visual Phonics Workshop: MRP has had 7 people request a VP workshop. Diane plans to contact Carre Klein to scheduled this workshop.

### **Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) (Carly Weyers & Kim Davis)**

- NCDHH has helped sponsor/collaborate for several Deaf Awareness Events recently including the Saltdogs game in July, Zoo Days in Scottsbluff and in Omaha in September, and several Hands and Voices and Omaha Association for the Deaf events.
- The Hearing Aid Insurance Task Force has been working with HearU to work on legislation to be able to provide hearing aids to children.
- The NCDHH Education Summit was held October 26-27th at UNO. Dr. Beth Benedict presented a workshop entitled, "Families, Schools & Communities." Corey Axelrod presented "A Framework to Accommodate the Distinctive Needs of Hard of Hearing Students" and "Don't Be Mad if I Don't Look: Accommodating Hard of Hearing Students."
- Jenny Corum, NCDHH Education Advocate has recently moved out of state. Thus NCDHH is advertising to fill this position. The organization is also advertising to fill the Interpreter Coordinator and Advocacy Specialist vacancies.
- The Education Task Force is in the process of analyzing the results gathered from the surveys and more information will be available soon.
- Open captioned movies are continuing to be offered in Lincoln on Saturdays at noon.
- Carly noted that John Wyvill will be working with legislators to try to get the "Hearing Impaired" label changed to "Deaf or Hard of Hearing."
- Kim shared that NCDHH has been providing sign language training to the Omaha Police Department. They had 75-90 people register for the first session (level 1) and 11 officers have continued on to level 2. Kim noted it has been really neat to see how much the 11 officers retained and improved. To further the impact, she would like to partner with other agencies such as OAD, NeAD, and MRP to offer more trainings as Omaha has over 800 police officers.

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

- Teresa was excited to announce that the Deaf-Blind Project is funded for another five years. The program will receive around \$85,000 per year.
- The Deaf-Blind Summer Institute will now be held for three days instead of four and will be held July 15-17, 2019. It will focus on communication and literacy. More details will be available next semester.
- To help build capacity, Teresa is working to develop a "community of practice" that will follow what the Deaf-Blind Project piloted in Lincoln.
- The Project is continuing to work with paras on the Open Hands Open Access trainings. Two LPS professionals are now trained to be hosts and are training all paras within LPS.
- To improve transition efforts, the Project is going to partner with nine other midwest states to hold a Midwest Transition Institute for students ages 14 and older who have a combined

hearing and vision loss, their families, and professionals. The first Midwest Transition Institute will be held in Minnesota. The second year it will be held in Michigan. Nebraska and Iowa will collaborate to host the third year institute at ISD. Teresa noted how great it is to be able to partner with surrounding states since the Nebraska deaf-blind population is fairly low. More information to come.

- Iowa and Nebraska are partnering to hire a family engagement coordinator who will be responsible for coordinating family activities for students who are deaf-blind.
- Maria Lindquist, a parent from Lincoln, has been hired as the CHARGE liaison for the program.
- An online training module called “The Sooner, the Better” has been developed.
- A mobile app is also in the process of being developed that will be specific to issues that can impact individuals who have a combined vision and hearing loss.

#### **NDE Update/Low Incidence Team** (Teresa Coonts)

- The ASD conference will be held April 4-5, 2019, in Kearney.
- NDE is working to develop a clearer understanding between the roles/services provided by NDE and the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

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

- UNO currently has two students majoring in deaf education and quite a few students in the interpreting strand. There are eight interpreting students in practicum areas and Julie said it is always a challenge to find community opportunities. She is continually looking for ways to have interpreting students help interpret in situations where maybe an interpreter would not be hired (i.e. Boy Scouts meetings). Additionally, Circle Theater is having UNO interpreting students interpret at least one show of each of their productions. UNO is also having interpreted performances and “The Wolves” is an upcoming show that will be interpreted. The Rose Theater in Omaha is also having student interpreters interpret their classes.
- Julie discussed a study that she and Deb Cates have been working on regarding the influence of a sign language interpreter’s skill on student outcomes ([see attached handout](#)).
- February 6-9, 2019, the Association for College Educators for Deaf/HH Administrators will gather in Chicago. UNO will be hosting the 2021 gathering.

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

- Dr. Thomas, the coordinator of UNL’s Deaf Education program, in collaboration with Dr. Mackenzie Savaiano, the coordinator of UNL’s Visual Impairments program, are currently in year three of their five-year MPUP-SD project. MPUP-SD is a federal grant that supports the training of Teachers of the Deaf (TODs) and Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) through their corresponding UNL endorsement programs with the goal of addressing the critical shortage of highly qualified teachers who serve children and youth with sensory disabilities in Nebraska and the surrounding Mid-Plains states. This year, Dr. Thomas and Dr. Savaiano recruited their third and final cohort for the grant to bring the total of scholars funded by the

MPUP-SD grant to 41. Of these scholars, 21 were or are currently enrolled in the Deaf Ed program and 20 in the VI. This past summer, two of the four DHH scholars in Cohort 1 graduated the program after attending the Deaf-Blind Summer Institute and the MPUP-SD summer seminar. Approximately six DHH scholars are scheduled to attend the Deaf-Blind Institute and MPUP-SD seminar this summer.

- Dr. Thomas is preparing to apply for the next iteration of MPUP funding this winter (assuming OSEP releases the call on time). The focus of the grant will be on interdisciplinary training between the Deaf Education and Speech-Language Pathology programs. Dr. Thomas is seeking input on this grant from the regional coordinators and the TODs within their regions. Specifically, she would like ideas for interdisciplinary training activities, assignments, and field experiences between the future TODs and SLPs enrolled in the programs that would better prepare them for collaboration in the real world. Dr. Thomas is currently in the process of setting up meetings with the regional coordinators. However, she invites any committee members to contact her with any ideas regarding interdisciplinary training activities.
- Dr. Thomas is also exploring additional funding opportunities at the state level to help support scholars in the program as well as the development of some online professional development training modules for TODs. Discussions are in their infancy. She will keep the group posted if any funding is secured.
- Dr. Thomas is continuously looking for ways to expand and improve the Deaf Education program and asks committee members to email her ([athomas16@unl.edu](mailto:athomas16@unl.edu)) or set up a meeting with her to discuss any ideas for areas of training that should be considered or included in the curriculum. A few areas of expansion that Dr. Thomas is currently working to embed into the program are coursework in early intervention and home visiting, assessment, interdisciplinary collaboration, and telepractice.

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

- neRID is collaborating with the Department of Health and Human Services to help bring up the level of interpreters the department hires.
- neRID has sent a letter to UNO trying to emphasize how the UNO interpreter program should be a stand alone program.
- The neRID board has recently added two K-12 representatives. Melissa Keith is representing the Omaha area and Arica Carlson is representing the Lincoln area. A committee member asked what the qualifications are to serve as a K-12 representative. Tina said the interpreter would need to be a member of neRID and be working in the education field (does not need to hold state licensure).
- The neRID Fall Conference held at the end of September had a 50/50 split between community interpreters and educational interpreters in attendance so Tina noted neRID was excited to have so many educational interpreters attend.
- neRID will be reviewing their organization's bylaws soon.
- neRID will be helping sponsor the NeAD conference in June.
- Tina also shared an LPS interpreter update: LPS interpreters are working to try to improve IEP forms and also working on peer-to-peer mentoring which has been awesome.

### **Transition Summit Team** (Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, Sue Czaplewski, Kim Davis)

- In June, the Nebraska Transition Summit Team attended the National Deaf Center conference in Texas that focused on transition. Unlike many states who only have two representatives (one from their state's department of education and one from VR) who often don't know each other, Nebraska's team is comprised of parents and personnel from NDE, the Nebraska Regional Programs, UNL, Nebraska VR, and NCDHH. Kim noted how wonderful it is to have such a variety of stakeholders who all know each other and collaborate together on a regular basis. At the conference, the Nebraska team gave their state report and presented information about the NDE spot analysis and resulting goals. The common goal among many states is to, "Promote higher expectations for students who are Deaf/HH." It was mentioned that many students who are Deaf/HH are graduating high school but then are not doing well in college. Thus, the Nebraska team is in the beginning phase of planning a transition workshop to better help students prepare for college. Continuing Person Centered Planning meetings is also a Nebraska team goal.

### **Additional Topics**

- No further additional topics were discussed.

### **Public Comments**

- Colleen Richart, a mom of a child with hearing loss, expressed her appreciation to all the different organizations that work together to improve the lives of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Colleen also shared that on Sunday, December 2nd, a group of students will be signing and singing the national anthem at Baxter Arena in Omaha at the UNO game (start time approximately 1:30 pm).

### **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**

- The next meeting will be held Wednesday, April 10, 2019, at ESU 6 in Milford from 9:00 am- 12:30 pm.