

# Deaf & Hard of Hearing Stakeholder Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Educational Service Unit #6, Milford

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**Attendance:** Jackie Anderson, Mike Brummer, Teresa Coonts, Jenny Corum, Sue Czaplewski, Rhonda Fleischer, Wendy Herrold, Lindsey Hinzmann, Jill Hoffart, Shelli Janning, Bethany Koubsky, Alyse Krejdl, Diane Meyer, Donna Moss, Lona Nelson, Jessica Nickels, Sara Peterson, Mary Phillips, Colleen Richart, Mindy Roberts, Ben Sparks, Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, Anne Thomas  
Interpreters: Frances Beurivage and Kelly Brakenhoff

## Welcome & Introductions

- 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.
- Teresa Coonts announced that Rhonda Fleischer will be retiring at the end of June and thanked her for all her hard work and dedication to the Nebraska Regional Programs.

## Public Posting Information ..... **Rhonda Fleischer**

- 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 Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (NE-EHDI)..... **Brenda Coufal (written report)**

- It was reported at the last committee meeting that since NE-EHDI started a new contract with Hands & Voices on May 1, 2017, they have been collaborating more for Family Support Events. Brenda noted this collaboration not only includes Hands & Voices, but also with the Deaf Community, Nebraska Regional Programs, Jr. NAD, PTI-Nebraska, and Boys Town. Since November 1, 2017, NE-EHDI has helped support the following events:
  - Moms Night Inn (November 4-5 in Scottsbluff and February 17-18 in Lincoln): An opportunity for moms to share experiences and provide support to each other. Topics included self-advocacy, empowerment, literacy, socialization, communication, and more.
  - ASTra Training (January 12 in Omaha and January 13 in Lincoln as well as various zoom sites): A one-day training for professionals and parents to learn more about education and advocacy.
  - Roots & Wings (February 3-4 at Carol Joy Holling for families with newly identified students): The goal of this workshop was to offer an opportunity for families to learn about hearing loss, network with others, explore ways to support their child's development, and learn about educational advocacy.
  - HearU Nebraska Hearing Aid Loaner Bank: NE-EHDI supports an annual contract for this.
- NE-EHDI visited 22 hospitals from March 1, 2017-March 1, 2018. Their goal is to visit all 54 birthing facilities within the 3-year grant period. They have continued to work with hospital staff on how to communicate news with parents, data entry of results, and follow-up of services.
- The NE-EHDI Advisory Committee meets twice a year. The committee consists of many experts who provide the program with direction and guidance regarding education, tracking, follow-up, and early intervention. It also provides collaboration opportunities with members of the Deaf Community, parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, ENTs, audiologists, and early

intervention specialists. The next NE-EHDI Advisory Committee meeting will be held May 3rd at Nebraska Children's Home Society in Omaha from 12:00-4:00 pm.

- NE-EHDI currently receives federal funding from HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration), CDC, and Maternal and Child Health Title V Block Grant. NE-EHDI does not receive any state funds.
- The 2016 Annual Report is now available on the [NE-EHDI website](#) and highlights are below (*Please note, some of these numbers have changed since the 11-1-2017 D/HH Stakeholder Meeting since not all 2016 births data was finalized at that time*):
  - 100% of birthing facilities (all 54) in Nebraska conducted newborn hearing screening as a standard of care prior to discharge for 2016 births and all facilities reported the hearing screening results to NE-EHDI.
  - There were 27,116 births in Nebraska in 2016.
    - 26,743 Passed the hearing screening which is **99%** of the thriving newborns, plus *88 passed diagnostic testing*
    - 125 Expired (inpatient or outpatient)
    - 14 Pending final screening or diagnostic testing (trouble scheduling an appointment, medically fragile)
    - **62 Diagnosed as permanent deaf or hard of hearing (2.3 per thousand births)**, plus *4 Diagnosed as temporary (fluctuating) deaf or hard of hearing*
    - 5 Diagnosed as late onset deaf or hard of hearing (passed initial screening)
    - 38 Parents refused screening and/or diagnostic testing
    - 23 Parents were unresponsive (non-compliant - did not complete protocol after communication with NE-EHDI)
    - 1 Lost hospital birth (no response to NE-EHDI letters and phone calls)
    - 1 Lost home birth (no response to NE-EHDI letters and phone calls)
    - 12 Moved out of Nebraska
  - Of these 62 babies, 98% were screened within 1 month of age, 59% completed follow-up within 3 months, and 78% enrolled in EDN within 6 months of age.
  - The lost to follow-up diagnosis was at an all-time low, only 1 infant (less than 1%). 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.
- NE-EHDI is always striving to meet the 1 – 3 – 6 Goals developed by the Joint Committee on Infant Health (JCIH):
  - 98% of 2016 babies completed the hearing screening within 1 month of age.
  - 59% of 2016 babies completed a hearing evaluation within 3 months of age.
  - 78% of 2016 babies were enrolled in Early Intervention (EDN) within 6 months of age (of those interested in EDN services).
    - Audiologists/ENTs will make most referrals to EDN, but NE-EHDI also checks to make sure the referral has been made.
    - The reasons for 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).
- The Nebraska lost to follow-up/lost to documentation (LFU/LTD) rate has been drastically reduced from 193 babies for 2010 births to only 2 babies for 2016 births. Rhonda Fleischer noted that Nebraska has one of the lowest lost to follow-up percentages in the nation! This reduction is due to improving the follow-up procedures since 2010 and the hard working, persistent NE-EHDI follow-up staff.

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

- In June of 2017, Shelli was hired by NE-EDHI to provide follow-up. Shelli said this collaboration between NE-EHDI, Hands & Voices, and GBYS has made it a smoother transition for families.
- As part of Hands & Voices three-year strategic plan to strengthen support provided to families across the state, Hands & Voices would like to hold an annual workshop for parents and professionals. This year, in January, they helped sponsor the ASTra training for parents, which Shelli noted had more professionals in attendance than parents. She is hoping to increase parental attendance for future workshops.
- Hands & Voices and GBYS are working collaboratively with the Regional Programs to help provide tele-pediatric audiologist services in the western part of the state.
- There were around 20 moms in attendance at the Lincoln Moms Night Inn event in February. There were 4 moms registered to attend the event in Scottsbluff in November but only 2 were able to attend. Thus, a decision has been made to move the Scottsbluff Moms Night Inn to Kearney next year and hopefully increase attendance.
- There are 13 GBYS Parent Guide across the state. GBYS is currently serving 132 families. GBYS's goal is to continue to grow the number of families served, as well as look for ways to improve the quality of services provided to families.

**Amplify..... Missy Stithem**

- No report provided.

**Boys Town..... Bethany Koubsky**

- The current turnaround time to receive EIPA testing results is 120 days, which Bethany noted has decreased quite a bit from the beginning of the school year.
- The [EIPA/ASL Immersion Summer Intensive Workshop](#) will be held June 18-21 at the Best Western in York. The first two days are designed to be interactive and to enhance participants' ASL sign language skills. The last two days will focus on interpreting complex academic subject matter. Currently 9 people are registered. The maximum number of participants is 18-20. Anne Thomas asked if UNL scholars would be able to attend. Rhonda Fleischer said that preference would be given to interpreters and deaf educators currently employed in a Nebraska K-12 school district/ESU because NDE is funding the workshop. However, Rhonda noted that it would be okay for in-state college students who are planning to work in a Nebraska school district to register if there is still space available. She said they could attend at no charge as a collaborative effort to try to improve sign language skills for teachers. Out-of-state college students may register, but they will need to pay the \$415 registration fee, which includes housing and food. Bethany noted that it might only be appropriate for UNL students to attend the first two days and that Zoom would not be a possibility due to group work and hands-on activities. Teresa told Bethany to email her regarding a possible increase in funds provided for this workshop to allow more students to be able to attend.
- The 2018-2019 EIPA Video Conferences have been scheduled and have the following planned topics/presenters:
  - October 6, 2018: "How Do I Interpret Math Class?" with Paul Glaser, MSE, CDI, Professional Development Specialist at Sorenson Communication
  - December 1, 2018: "Developing Effective Interpreting Skills for Using Fingerspelling and Numbers" with Gina Grabher, AAS, EIPA Evaluator, ASL Professor and Bethany Koubsky, BA, RID CI/CT, EIPA Program Coordinator
  - February 16, 2019: "Understanding Prosody" with Dr. Deborah Cates, PhD, Sign Language Program Coordinator, Iowa School for the Deaf
  - April 6, 2019: "The EIPA Report: A Tool for Professional Development" with Bethany Koubsky, BA, RID CI/CT, EIPA Program Coordinator

This past school year, the EIPA Video Conferences were offered via Zoom. Rhonda noted each region has also received DVDs of this year's EIPA Video Conferences, as well as those of past years, that can be loaned for professional development opportunities. Bethany also mentioned it is still a goal to make these EIPA Video Conferences into e-learning opportunities.

- Roots & Wings is tentatively scheduled for February 2-3, 2019, at Camp Carol Joy Holling near Ashland.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) ..... Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell and Jessica Nickels**

- Nebraska VR started Order of Selection (OOS) on December 12, 2017. The agency is currently serving Priority Group 1 (individuals who have two severe functional limitations). Other individuals who are in Groups 2 or 3 remain on the waiting list. Nebraska VR is continuing to monitor funding and if there are available funds in the future, it is possible that service will open to Priority Group 2. Vicki noted Nebraska VR is still able to provide job retention services to all clients to help them maintain their job regardless of what priority group they are in.
- VR is also continuing to provide Pre-Employment Transition Service (Pre-ETS), as VR is required to use 15 percent of their funding toward transition services for students. Students can apply for adult services and if they are on the waiting list, they can still get Pre-ETS service until the age of 22. The Pre-ETS services include: Self-Advocacy, Career/Postsecondary Exploration, Independent Living, Job Readiness, and Work Based Learning.
  - Vicki clarified that Pre-ETS services are to help students “prepare” to find a job (i.e. interview skills, resume building, etc.), but does not provide services to find a job. A person would need to apply for adult VR services for this service.
  - VR pays students minimum wage for the Work Based Learning Program. However, this program cannot take place during school time. It must take place on nights and weekends. Students do not need to be Priority Group 1 to participate in the Work Based Learning Program. They only need to apply for Pre-ETS. If a student is entering college, VR may continue to work with this student, but must he or she must be in Pre-ETS. If a student graduated and is not going to college and has more involved needs, the student would need to apply for VR services and would be placed in a priority group.
- Mark Schultz has accepted a new position as the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services under the U.S. Department of Education. Lindy Foley, who was the assistant director, will now take over as Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Service. Lindy has worked under Mark for several years before taking on this role.
- Vicki is also currently looking for a job coach who has knowledge of using sign language. Please email Vicki ([vicki.steinhauer-campbell@nebraska.gov](mailto:vicki.steinhauer-campbell@nebraska.gov)) if you are interested or know anyone who may be interested, especially in rural areas. Vicki said there is no specific time limit a person can have a job coach as it is based on individual needs. However, VR does consider other assistive technology to help successfully transition individuals from having a job coach to more independent work.
- Nebraska VR will host a [Pre-Employment Transition Service Job Fair](#) on Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at the LaVista Conference Center in LaVista, NE. This is a great opportunity for all students with disabilities for job exploration, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy. For more information, see the attached flyer.
- Donna Moss asked what VR can do for Project Search students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and if VR can continue to support students if they are offered employment through Project Search. Jessica said the student would need to apply for VR services and be placed in Priority Group 1 to receive VR services.
- Teresa Coonts asked which service comes first DD or VR? Vicki said students are sent to VR first and then to DD if a competitive work environment is not appropriate for the student and DD services would be better. There are agreements in place between VR and DD and referrals are made in both directions. However, generally students contact VR, VR talks with student and

parents, and together they decide if a competitive work environment is the correct placement. Vicki noted that some parents do not want their child in a competitive work environment, so they refuse VR services. VR requires a parental signature on a form stating refusal of services. Lona Nelson said to always encourage students to apply for both DD and VR services because funding sources and requirements are different.

- A question was asked if VR can work with employers to be able to customize jobs for clients. Vicki said VR has Business Account Managers (BAMs) who speak with employers about the ability to customize and community work assessments.

**Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD).....Jonathan Scherling & Pete Seiler**

- No report provided.

**Central Western Nebraska Partnership (CWNP) .....Sue Czaplewski & Sara Peterson**

- CWNP hosted the statewide “Weekend to Sign” January 20-21. Sixteen families and 9 professionals attended, which was a great turnout, even with inclement weather that weekend. Participants participated in sign language skill building, games, and group work and the feedback received was very positive.
- The statewide “Extravaganza” event for students in grades 3-6 was hosted by CWNP and held March 2-3 at the Crane Trust Nature Center and Camp Comeca. There were 57 students who attended and themes for the event were perseverance and teamwork. An article was written in the Kearney Hub highlighting the event ([click here to read](#)).
- CWNP has continued to offer two sign language classes. One class is specifically for school employees and the other is for families. There are also family sign language classes taking place across the region.
- There was great CWNP representation on the Nebraska Regional Programs Academic Bowl Teams this year. On the Western Team, five team members were from CWNP and there was also one CWNP team member on the Eastern Team. Both teams competed at the Midwest Regional Competition that was held at the Iowa School for the Deaf in February.
- Training Update: Four CWNP professionals have taken the EIPA Written test this year. Interpreters have been participating in the Boys Town EIPA Video Conferences via Zoom. CWNP has interpreters participating in the TIPS program. Interpreters also recently attended a PLC that focused on investigating the EIPA Written Standards. CWNP had five professionals attend the National EHDI Conference. Professionals also attended the ISD Deaf Cultural Celebration event. Staff members participate in the Region 4 and Region 5 NASES meetings regularly. Professionals in the CWNP area are planning to attend the Mainstream Conference, EIPA/ASL Immersion Skillshop, and the Statewide Sign Language Skills Development Workshop.
- There is no access to pediatric audiology services in western Nebraska. Thus, CWNP has been collaborating with Nebraska EHDI, Boys Town, and Children’s Hospital to start a tele-audiology learning community which can provide screening, testing, and follow-up visits.
- In collaboration with NCDHH and Hands & Voices, CWNP held a deaf awareness event at the Scottsbluff Zoo in September.
- ESU 13 collaborated with GBYS to offer a “Games and Get to Know You” event for a family networking opportunity. Six families participated.
- CWNP Students in the News: One student was selected to the Epic Football’s 6 Man Shootout Team. One student accepted into Gallaudet’s “Explore Your Future” summer program (Gallaudet accepted 23 students nationally this year). One former student participated in the ESU 9 Special Education Cadre and presented with the Nebraska Youth Council.
- NDE SPOT Analysis Next Steps: CWNP has started offering PLC groups for interpreters this year. There are also CWNP PLC group meetings for teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing scheduled for next year focusing on assessment, data-driven services, and transition skills.

CWNP is continuing to work on a “NRP Promotional Video” with ESU 10. The area is establishing a pool of skilled professionals to lead family sign language classes. CWNP is also working on distributing information and promoting available lending library materials to families and professionals.

**Northeast Regional Program (NERP)..... Jill Hoffart**

- NERP held a Family Fun Day on November 3. Families went to Columbus for roller skating and 50 people were in attendance. Another Family Fun Day was held April 7 at Norfolk Extreme Bowling and 80 people attended! The goals of the Family Fun Days are to provide students the opportunity to socialize and communicate with peers and role models who are Deaf/HH and to also provide parents the opportunity to meet and network with other parents of children who are Deaf/HH.
- NERP has continued to offer monthly audiology clinics. There are typically 4-12 participants at each clinic and the day includes testing and suggestions (no distribution of hearing aids).
- NERP staff have participated in the Boys Town EIPA Video Conferences via Zoom this year and have noted how awesome they have been, especially the conference that took place on April 7<sup>th</sup> with Jonathan Scherling presenting. NERP also has some interpreters participating in the TIPS program.
- NERP has continued to hold teacher of the Deaf/HH meetings and had participants attend the ASTra training.
- Family sign language classes are occurring on an individual basis throughout the NERP region.
- NERP is hosting the Communication Contest in Norfolk on April 21 for students in grades 7-12. There are nine students competing and two \$2,500 scholarships will be awarded. The topic this year is, “Where are My Roots of Optimism.” A former NERP student who is now a teacher at the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf, Megan Frowick Morgan, will be the guest speaker. Jill encouraged committee members to come and watch the competition as it really provides an opportunity to see these students shine.
- The Nebraska Regional Programs have 59 students statewide registered to attend Camp Anderson this summer. It will be held at Camp Comeca in Cozad. The Regional Programs are in the process of planning the week-long overnight camp activities and hiring staff for the event. There were quite a few staff applicants this year, including past students, which Jill noted is pretty awesome.
- NERP Students in the News: NERP had several students compete in the State Speech Contest and one was selected for the National Speech Competition. NERP students have recently participated in District Music Contest and one NERP student was awarded outstanding trumpet soloist at the NECC Jazz Festival.
- NDE SPOT Analysis Next Steps: NERP will be exploring different ways to offer ASL classes to all the students who participate in NERP activities (not just those who use a sign language interpreter in the classroom). The region is looking into possible role models or mentors for students as well. Jill also noted she would like to offer a “Deaf Ed 101” training for regular education classroom teachers this summer.

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

- SNRP hosted the statewide Arts Festival for grades 3-6 on December 1-2 and 57 students attended. The theme was *The Art of Skating* and students went ice skating and learned how to play broomball at the John Breslow Ice Hockey Center, toured the National Museum of Roller Skating and participated in a fact find to learn about the history of skating, and also got to watch a UNL hockey game. On Saturday, the group went to the Rolla-Rena skating rink in Beatrice. There they got to watch an artistic roller skating demonstration by a SNRP student who is hard of hearing, her dad and her brother and also had free skate time. Throughout the activity,



students completed a learning booklet that they could take home with them and share with their parents and teachers.

- Nebraska Regional Programs high school students were invited to attend the Saturday events of the National Jr. NAD Convention held at Carol Joy Holling on November 11th. NRP had 12 students and 5 adults attend. In the morning, participants listened to one presentation focused on Audism and Linguicism and another presentation focused on “Deafhood.” Both workshops provided students the opportunity to consider how they can advocate for themselves. In the afternoon students participated in a Town Hall meeting and that evening students had the opportunity to meet with Deaf leaders from Nebraska and watch a talent show that was put on by many of the students who had attended all week.
- A “Games and Grub” night was held for students in the SNRP area on January 26. This activity was for grades 4-7 and six SNRP students participated. Students enjoyed dinner, a variety of games, and sharing about their hearing loss. Topic-led discussions took place focusing on advocacy, communication breakdowns, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Also, per a suggestion made at the SNRP Advisory Committee meeting, SNRP advertised that a prize would be awarded and at the end of the evening students put their names in a drawing and the winner chose a game to take home. SNRP received positive feedback about the event including one student who said, “This was the best ‘overall’ event ever put on by SNRP.”
- A Visual Phonics workshop was held in Lincoln last November and had seven participants representing a variety of school districts and roles including parents, teachers of the deaf/hh, SLPs, classroom teachers, special education teachers, and future teachers of the deaf/hh.
- The annual [Outdoor Family Camp](#) will be held May 5-6 at Platte River State Park. This camp is open to 10 families statewide for students ages 8-high school graduation and their family members. Preference is given to first-time participants. Currently, all 10 spots have been filled and there are also 5 families on the waiting list.
- SNRP has several upcoming activities and workshops including the following:
  - [“The Illusionists” at the Lied Center](#) (April 21: Grades 5-12): SNRP had originally purchased 17 student tickets to this show and all 17 were reserved very quickly via our online registration form. In order to accommodate the increased interest, SNRP purchased 6 additional tickets. There are currently 21 students registered and dinner will take place beforehand at Misty’s.
  - [Celebrate Nebraska Day Camp](#) (June 11-15: Grades Post K-Post 6): SNRP will be offering a week-long day camp this summer for SNRP students. Students will learn more about Nebraska through hands-on activities, arts and crafts, and field trips throughout southeast Nebraska. Students can register for the entire week or pick and choose which days to attend. There are currently 12 students registered and SNRP is hoping to receive more by the May 15th deadline.
  - [Parent Workshop](#) (June 3): SNRP is bringing in Dr. Jane Madell, an international presenter who is a certified pediatric audiologist, speech-language pathologist, and LSLS auditory verbal therapist, to present a workshop titled, “Maximizing Auditory Performance for Children with Hearing Loss.” This workshop will be held in Lincoln on Sunday, June 3rd and is offered to parents across the state at no cost.
  - [Professional Workshop](#) (June 4: Classroom teachers, teachers of the Deaf/HH, audiologists, SLPs, Administrators): SNRP has also contracted with Dr. Jane Madell to present to professionals from across the state for a full-day workshop. Community professionals have been invited to register as well.
- SNRP’s regional teachers of the Deaf/HH have continued to meet for monthly PLCs. This is a great time for the teachers to collaborate, share resources, and problem solve together. LPS interpreters also meet monthly for PLCs and the focus of their PLCs is currently on revising an input form that can be used for IEP meetings. Additionally, SNRP audiologists are meeting with

community audiologists to educate them about educational audiology and develop a more collaborative partnership.

- SNRP is supporting four professionals and two families to attend the AG Bell Conference in Arizona this summer.
- There were two SNRP Advisory Committee meetings held this year. Both meetings allowed for committee input, suggestions, and feedback.
- SNRP has continued to provide individual family sign language classes as needed.
- NDE SPOT Analysis Next Steps: SNRP has started to include the goals of each activity on activity flyers so parents, students, and professionals have a better understanding of the event. Additionally, after an event SNRP sends an online feedback form to help gather input on how well the goals of the activity were met as well as provide an opportunity for suggestions and comments. SNRP would like to film a video with students sharing feedback about their experiences attending NRP events that could be shared with students/families that are unfamiliar with NRP to help encourage more involvement. Activity flyers have also been translated into Spanish and Arabic this year. SNRP also started a Facebook page to help reach more parents and students via social media. Lindsey has created a google community to post resources for teachers of the Deaf/HH in the SNRP area. NRP is looking at expanding this community in the future to include staff statewide as well as expanding the audience to include interpreters, audiologists, SLPs, and other staff with a vested interest. SNRP is exploring opportunities for teachers of the D/HH and audiologists to collaborate on a regular basis and Lindsey would also like to reach out to ESU special education directors and superintendents in the SNRP school districts to provide more information about SNRP. Additionally, the region is looking at how to incorporate more opportunities for educational sign language interpreter mentoring. SNRP will continue to offer staff development opportunities for professionals and parents both locally and nationally.

**Metro Regional Program (MRP)..... Diane Meyer & Mike Brummer**

- The Spring Fling statewide activity for students in grades 7-12 was hosted by MRP on February 2-3 and 46 students attended. Activities focused on diversity, soft skills, and Multiple Sclerosis. Students watched the play “*The Meaning of Maggie*” at the Rose Theater and the lead character’s father has MS. Some students and staff also had the opportunity to try out The Rose’s new captioning service where you read the caption on your phone via Twitter.
- MRP holds quarterly Advisory Committee meetings. Mike noted that the last meeting had to be canceled due to inclement weather but that the next one is scheduled in a couple of weeks.
- MRP had students participate in the Saturday Jr. NAD event on November 11 as well as students who volunteered or served as delegates the whole week.
- In collaboration with Boys Town, MRP offered the annual Holiday Party and Mike got to be Santa Claus.
- Community and family sign language classes are occurring throughout the MRP region in both SEE and ASL.
- MRP has continued to offer monthly regional activities for MRP students including a paper plane challenge, balloon car challenge, ice skating with ISD students at Baxter Arena, a kite activity, community clean-up projects, diversity activity, physical fitness and team games.
- The Midwest Regional Academic Bowl was held February 15-18 at the Iowa School for the Deaf. This competition is sponsored by Gallaudet University. The Nebraska Regional Programs have been participating in the competition for the past four years, and this year there was enough interest from students to create two teams! The Nebraska East team consisted of four players from Hastings, Omaha Westside, Pender, and Ralston. The Nebraska West team consisted of four players from Broken Bow, Hastings, Superior, Silver Lake, and an alternate from Scottsbluff. There were 20 teams who made it to the regional tournament from across the United States and Canada. Both NRP teams competed in five matches on Friday and Saturday morning for pool play. Each match consisted of three rounds of multiple questions. The questions and



answers are projected on screens to give all students equal visual access. Students are expected to write their answers with correct spelling or it doesn't count. Unfortunately, neither NRP team advanced past Round 16 on Saturday afternoon so they will not be advancing to the national competition this year, but one of the students from the Nebraska East team was selected as one of the six All-Star Players for the competition! It was still fun to watch them in action and be proud of their accomplishments. Next year's regional competition will be held at the Kansas School for the Deaf February 15-18, 2019.

- There were three Battle of the Books (BOTB) teams this year with students from across the state. Each team is grouped together based on a student's reading level (Buff, Blue, and Green). The Buff team advanced to the playoffs but missed the Nationals cutoff by two points. All the students did a great job though and it was great to see them motivated to read and want to do even better next year.
- MRP will offer a Summer Enrichment program. Contact Diane or Mike for more information.
- Two SEE Weekend Workshops were held in Omaha this school year (open to parents and professionals statewide). The November weekend had 32 attendees and the February weekend had 34 attendees.
- The February Boys Town Roots & Wings workshop consisted of all MRP families except for one Lincoln family. Parents really enjoyed the opportunity to interact with other families.
- Diane attends the monthly NASES regional meeting and set up a CART demonstration for the last meeting. It was beneficial for the special education directors to see CART in action.
- Diane and Mike attend the NCDHH Mental Health Advisory Committee meetings. They have also been participating in the Best Practices In and Out of the Classroom Education Task Force committee as well as collaborating with NCDHH to help offer the Self-Defense Workshop for Women at Ralston.
- MRP interpreters have attended the EIPA Video Conferences at Boys Town. MRP is also piloting PLCs for interpreters this year 2 times each month for 30 minutes each at Ralston. Interpreters have been asked to identify two group goals and one personal goal and complete reflection questions. Diane noted that one of the group goals is to develop consistency in signs.
- MRP contracts with Millard Public Schools for audiology referrals since they have an audiology booth. The MRP educational audiologist also works closely with Children's Hospital and Boys Town as well as other community audiologists.
- A Deaf/HH online resource is being piloted with Ralston teachers and may be expanded to include other professionals across the state.
- NDE SPOT Analysis Next Steps: MRP is going to put together a training related to FM equipment. The region is also working on increasing connections among teachers of the Deaf/HH, interpreters, parents, and students and sharing of NRP and MRP information.

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) ..... Jenny Corum**

- The Deaf/HH Awareness Night with the Lincoln Saltdogs will be held Wednesday, July 18, 2018. A flyer with ticket information should be available soon.
- The Deaf/HH Awareness Day at the Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo will be held Sunday, September 30 and a flyer for this event will also be available soon.
- October 26-27 (Friday/Saturday) are the tentative dates for next year's NCDHH Education Summit. Location is yet TBD. The Nebraska Regional Programs have a three-day student activity that weekend (Young Americans). Feedback from last year's Education Summit indicated participants would like more than one presenter for more variety and also breakout sessions. Thus, NCDHH is looking into bringing in three presenters this year as well as adding breakout sessions. A save the date announcement will be out next month.
- The "Creating Connections" interpreter workshop was held March 17-18 and had a great turnout. Pam Duncan is planning a Continuing Education workshop this fall and is welcoming suggestions and ideas for what educational interpreters would like for training.

- Heartland Deaf Advocacy Service (HDAS) will have a free [self-defense training](#) that will be taught by a deaf instructor, Keri Darling. This training will take place at Ralston High School on Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-9:00 pm and Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup> from 8:30 am-5:00 pm. It is open to all women who know sign language and participants must be able to attend both days. See flyer for more details and [click here to register online](#).
- May 31<sup>st</sup> will be the last day interpreters can take the QAST test. There will be a Town Hall meeting QA session on April 20<sup>th</sup> in Lincoln and on April 21 in Omaha for changes related with the QAST.
- There will be a Town Hall meeting in Kearney on May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10-12 to serve as a meet and greet to get to know the new NCDHH Advocacy Specialist in that area, Aaron Rothenberger, and learn more about NCDHH services.
- NCDHH will be bringing in Janna Luksha, a personal training who is deaf and works at the YMCA in Rochester, NY, to present a workshop next fall. NCDHH is going to collaborate with the Nebraska Regional Programs to tie this into a student activity as well. More details will be available in the fall.
- The Education Task Force has completed the creation of survey questions and is in the process of determining how best to distribute the survey. The Employment/Transition subcommittee is putting together their own survey and it will be geared for students. The Social/Emotional subcommittee has discussed recommendations to develop another task force to focus specifically on social/emotional/identity areas, as there was not enough time to work on this area to its fullest capacity.

**Deaf-Blind Project/Low Incidence ..... Teresa Coonts**

- The Deaf-Blind Summer Institute will be held July 16-19, 2018, at Sheridan Lutheran Church in Lincoln. This training opportunity focuses on children with significant disabilities, including those with or without sensory disabilities. The first two days of the Institute will be presented by Dr. Deborah Chen focusing on early childhood students with multiple disabilities ages birth-8. The last two days of the Institute will continue training in Touch Signals (as Teresa noted the evaluations from last year’s Touch Signals Workshop indicated participants wanted more training in this area). It will be presented by Beth Jordan and Ryan Odland from the Helen Keller National Center. There is no cost to attend the Deaf-Blind Institute and Teresa mentioned that for the first time it will also be open to adult community members to register this year. Registration will be available soon on the DB Project website: [www.nebraskadeafblindproject.org](http://www.nebraskadeafblindproject.org).
- This is the last year of the Deaf-Blind five-year grant, which will end September 30, 2018. Teresa said she plans to write another grant by July and letters of support are always greatly appreciated. Additionally, a couple weeks ago Teresa emailed a needs assessment survey. She encouraged everyone to complete this survey as it is a necessary requirement for the grant. Teresa noted one goal for the next grant period is to expand collaboration across states. She asked for committee members to email her ([teresa.coonts@nebraska.gov](mailto:teresa.coonts@nebraska.gov)) if there are specific types of training requests or support needs.
- The National Deaf-Blind Summit and International Conference will be held the week of April 19<sup>th</sup>. Both Teresa and Tanya will be attending this conference in Cape Cod. Some of the information presented will focus on transition, quality of personnel, interveners, etc. Teresa is excited to be able to connect at the national and international levels.
- Tanya Armstrong has continued to meet with teachers of the visually impaired for staff development opportunities called “Regional Conversations” which has been a great way to network.

**NDE Update/Low Incidence Team..... Teresa Coonts**

- NDE has seen quite a few changes over the last year with new managers in place. The Omaha office will be closing July 31 and all NDE employees who work there will be moving to the Lincoln office effective August 1. The plan is also to close the Scottsbluff office by August of 2019.
- Teresa announced she is now on the Special Ed Leadership Team. She is excited to take on this role and that there will be someone on the Leadership team representing Autism/Low Incidence.
- There was a letter sent out to districts from the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI). Teresa said she is working with NCBVI and with Nebraska VR to make sure the language is correct. Lona Nelson expressed the need to have this letter sent to ESU Special Education Directors so they are aware of the information when districts call.
- Nebraska’s state ASD Conference will be held April 19-20th and there are currently 850 people registered.
- The ASD Networks in Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado have collaborated to develop 70 webinars. Teresa noted she would like to see this modeled in other areas. There are two people retiring from the ASD Network; one from the central region and one from the southeast region. Jamie Lewis has been hired to fill the central region position. The southeast region is in the process of hiring a candidate (board pending).
- Rhonda Fleischer, Nebraska Regional Program’s state liaison, will be retiring July 1. NDE reviewed the contract for this position and decided to keep it at ESU 9 so that it remains centrally located. There were three great applicants interviewed and a variety of stakeholders were on the interview committee. Sue Czaplowski, current CWNP coordinator, was selected for this position. Interviews to fill the CWNP coordinator position will take place soon.

**UNO..... Julie Delkamiller**

- No report provided.

**UNL.....Anne Thomas**

- UNL is currently in year two of the MPUP-SD grant program (three-year grant). This two-year online program is designed to address the critical shortage of highly qualified teachers who serve children and youth with sensory disabilities, including those who are visually impaired or deaf / hard of hearing, in Nebraska and the surrounding Mid-Plains states. The program has continued to grow. The first review deadline for applicants for the third year was January 15th and eight more students have been accepted into the program. They will start this fall. Either five or six of these eight new students are from Nebraska! This brings the number of students to 25 total in the program and Anne noted how crucial the grant funds are, as about 20 of these students are funded through the grant. The students who entered the program in year one of the grant will be completing classes soon and will attend the Deaf-Blind Summer Institute and a summer seminar to help collect program data information.
- Anne is currently helping UNL seek funding for future grants (OSEP has not released the call for the next grant opportunity). She has also spoken with the dean of the college to see if there might be possible state funding options. Anne has also contacted NCDHH to see if they would be able to fund a couple of students as well.
- Anne mentioned she is continuously looking for ways to expand and improve the program and asked committee members to email her ([athomas16@unl.edu](mailto:athomas16@unl.edu)) or set up a meeting with her to discuss any ideas. A few areas of expansion Anne would like to explore more include early childhood, ways to embed interdisciplinary training and practicum opportunities (which Anne noted is a little more challenging with out-of-state students), and telepractice services and intervention.

- Shelli Janning mentioned to Anne she would be happy to come and present information about the parents' perspective for any of these college courses.
- Anne has been in contact with Amy Willman, ASL instructor for UNL on-campus sign language courses. Amy said she is willing to explore options for distance/remote access to these courses.
- UNL has officially interviewed three candidates for the Assistant Professor of Practice in Deaf Education. This is the position Anne has been serving as the interim coordinator. Anne announced she had to formally apply for this position, she was one of the three candidates interviewed, and she has been selected to fill this position.

**NeRID.....Ben Sparks**

- Ben is serving as the southeast Nebraska area representative for NeRID. Crystal Pierce has been selected as the new NeRID president starting January 1, 2018. Past president, Thomas Beyer, will remain on the NeRID board. Additionally, two educational interpreters, Sarah McClure and Melissa Newburn, have been invited to serve as ambassadors to the NeRID board to provide information about educational interpreting.
- NeRID participated in Deaf Day at the Nebraska State Capitol. This day was designed to help enhance awareness of deafness and Ben noted it was nice to be able to speak directly to several state senators.
- Sarah McClure is planning the 2018 NeRID Fall Conference. The conference date and topic has not been selected at this time. NeRID is open to suggestions, which can be emailed to [conferences@nebraskarid.org](mailto:conferences@nebraskarid.org). (A save the date was emailed after the meeting scheduling the NeRID Fall Conference for September 28-30, 2018).
- The Propp Family Legacy Scholarship is an annual scholarship awarded to one interpreter each year that pays for up to \$500 for the recipient to take the RID test. The 2018 recipient will be selected at the NeRID Fall Conference. More information about the scholarship is posted on the NeRID website.

**Transition Summit Team ..... Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, Jenny Corum, Rhonda Fleischer**

- The National Deaf Center (NDC) will be holding the next Engage for Change meeting in Austin, TX, June 5-6. The conference focus is on the what, why, and how to measure data. States will be grouped together to compare and discuss what they are currently doing, possible gaps they have found, and generating ideas for improvement. The Nebraska team is planning a meeting in May to help gather input, highlight possible gaps that may be occurring, and brainstorm ideas prior to attending the national conference in June. Rhonda noted how well Nebraska does at collaborating among schools and outside agencies as some states had team members who did not know each other.

**Additional Topics**

- The Nebraska Regional Programs is offering the TIPS training for interpreters. This is a five-month online training program. The initial face-to-face was held in Hastings on January 20th. There are 12 Nebraska interpreters participating in this training.
- There will be a [Foundations for Literacy Training](#) in Lincoln June 2-3 sponsored by the Nebraska Regional Programs. This is a research-based toolkit designed to improve literacy in children who are deaf or hard of hearing. For more information, contact a NRP coordinator.
- The [Statewide Sign Language Skill Development Workshop](#), sponsored by the Nebraska Regional Programs will be held in Lincoln July 30-31. Kevin Williams will be presenting both days and his topic is "All About Applied Interpreting in K-12 Settings." Community interpreters may also register. A registration flyer with more details can be found on the [NRP website](#) and [registration can be completed online here](#).

- Rhonda Fleischer and Sue Czaplewski attended the ISD Deaf Cultural Celebration. At the celebration, they were reacquainted with CD Jones, a deaf actor and storyteller. Sue is going to contact him in hope of having him come to Nebraska in the spring of 2019.

### **Public Comments**

- No additional public comments.

### **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)).

### **2018-2019 Meeting Dates**

- Wednesday, November 7, 2018, in the Calamus/Platte rooms at ESU 3 in Omaha (Zoom will be limited this day) 9:00 am-12:30 pm
- Wednesday, April 10, 2019, at ESU 6 in Milford from 9:00 am-12:30 pm (Zoom will be available)