



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION
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DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Name of Organization: Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Education Subcommittee

Date and Time of Meeting: Tuesday, April 5, 2022
9:00AM

Place of Meeting: Virtual: Zoom

Meeting Materials can be found here: [Home \(nv.gov\)](https://www.nv.gov)

NOTE: Items on this agenda may be taken in a different order than listed. Two or more agenda items may be combined for consideration. An item may be removed from this agenda or discussion relating to an item on this agenda may be delayed at any time.

Minutes of this meeting will be produced in summary format. Please provide the Commission administrative support with electronic or written copies of testimony and visual presentations if you wish to have complete versions included as exhibits with the minutes.

1. Roll Call & Opening Statement:
Eric Wilcox, Chair

- Members: Eric Wilcox, Maureen Fradianni, Felicia Rutledge, Shawna Goldhammer, Megan Johnson
- Guests: Laura Fink, Sandra LaPalm, Lora Turner, Casey McCullough, Lance Ledet, Dawn Duran-Interpreter, Jamie Jaramillo-Interpreter, Becky Van Auken-Captioner
- Staff: Obioma Officer, Cheyenne Pasquale, Lorraine Belt-Dolan, Lisa Torres
- To facilitate communication access, we ask that as the interpreters change from time to time that we pause to allow the interpreters and attendees using them to adjust to the transition and that if you want to speak, please signal with the raised hand tool, or raise your hand visually. You will then be called on to speak, also remember to announce your name each time you speak for clarity in the transcript.

2. Public Comment: (No action may be taken upon a matter raised under public comment period unless the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an action item. Comments will be limited to five minutes per person. Persons making comment will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record and to spell their last name and provide the secretary with written comments.)

- No public comment

3. Approval of Minutes of the August 19, 2020, meeting: (For Possible Action)
Eric Wilcox, Chair

- Maureen Fradianni moved to approve the minutes as written, Megan Johnson seconded, motion passed.

4. Follow-Up to Public Comment made during Interim Session Committee Meeting on Education:

Eric Wilcox, Chair

- As found in the meeting materials Eric made public comment to the Interim Session Committee Meeting on Education in January 2022. He highlighted three elements from the state plan for the Deaf and hard of hearing that relate to education.
- We are hearing from school administrators and teachers that there is a severe shortage of teachers of the deaf, shortages of speech and language pathologists with expertise in Deaf and hard of hearing, and difficulty in retaining high-quality well-trained interpreters for the schools. One of the contributing factors is a lack of clarity among teachers and administrators about how to achieve appropriate licensure for work as a teacher of the Deaf. Currently the State of Nevada has no program for teachers of the Deaf and those that are interested and want to work in Deaf Education must go outside of the state for that education. We'd like to brainstorm around ways to increase the exposure of young people or students that are interested in teaching or education for the Deaf can get exposure to the target population, so they begin to understand the needs and the culture.
- Megan stated that we don't have enough interpreters in the first place, and many are leaving the profession or state because the administration at the schools feels that interpreters are what is equal to appropriate deaf education, and it is not this needs to change at the administration and state level. This leads to the whole issue of language deprivation for these Deaf students and the research calls this literal brain damage. Might we be able to provide a presentation to the legislators or the Department of Education, where we can show this language deprivation is happening and the impacts it can have. If we could make a change to the policy, then hopefully we could attract more people to our community to serve in those positions.
- It is recognized that we aren't going to solve the problem in a 30-minute discussion in this meeting but that we can work toward defining what that policy change is. One thing we could advocate for is somebody with a role at the state department of Education who has expertise in Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- It is very clear that it goes back to the leadership, and we need representation oversight for the state department in knowing what the needs of the students are and getting them the proper accommodations.
- There is an equity gap between the families that know how to advocate for the services they need versus the families that are doing their best to survive and don't know.
- Maureen commented that she is volunteering at a local school in the pre-K class to help with language development at that age, due to lack of staffing.
- There are a lot of misconceptions in the difference between Deaf education and the special education umbrella, that it gets labeled as special education and boxed into that label, systematic change needs to occur.
- One of the biggest changes that we can advocate for is sign language interpreters are not to be classified as aides. Right now, in many school districts the interpreters job descriptions, it says they are aides, and they must change diapers and tutor the students, and these are responsibilities that are outside of being an interpreter. Interpreters need to be classified as professionals not aides.
- The administration is very frustrating, and they say they know what is best for the deaf, but they are wrong. They are hiring teachers of the Deaf that don't know sign language and are using interpreters to talk to the children and the children are being deprived. And it is exhausting in the classroom as the teachers must have specialized knowledge that is not required in other classrooms. The suggestion was made that we could ask to create a position for an ASL master or consultant that can give information and report back what is going on.
- We had some good news the transition team within Vocational Rehabilitation has double and in the past five years they've been encouraging more of the Deaf and

hard of hearing students to go into postsecondary education and there are five students halfway through to becoming Deaf educators.

- Principals have the ability to hire as they see fit and with an educator shortage they will pick an applicant with a license according to human resource from the state department of Ed in hearing impaired and they may not have sign experience and they will put them in a specialized classroom even if they have no experience because they are not looking at background and there is no requirement at the state department of Education for the sign language part. In other states like California, they will graduate with fluency in sign and there is an agency in California that would vet those employees and place them appropriately and we do not have that in Nevada.
- Would this be acceptable in any other situation, for example a teacher for Spanish speakers that only spoke Spanish we would not put them in a classroom for English speaking students that would not be acceptable but our students don't have that same standard and they are not graduating and they get amended diplomas and then maybe they end up in a group home or stay living with their parents as a result of the langue deprivation. And we are saying that principals are just putting warm bodies in classrooms, and we have classrooms full of kids who are signing and have no teacher and people need to be made aware.

5. Presentation, Discussion on SB203 (development of language benchmarks and guide documents for parents and educators.), and Pipeline of school district staff i.e., teachers, interpreters, and speech pathologist needs:

Cathleen Rexing, Part B 619 Coordinator for the Nevada Department of Education

Eric Wilcox, Chair

- In the 2019 legislative session SB203 was passed. This law included several provisions on a range of things, but a substantial section of it is based on the lead K model. First step required the convening of a subcommittee that included representatives specified in the law and was established under the special education advisory committee. They met and were charged with creating a document to advise the Department of Education and the state board of education. Candace Emerson the chair of that committee provided the full commission that document and made a report to us at a meeting in 2021. As far as I'm aware the work stopped after that but that was the first step in what should be many steps. We have been in touch with the state department of Education to let them know we would like to see an effort to move this work along. Cathleen Rexing for the State Department of Education's office of inclusive education has responded to us but was unable to attend this meeting.
- We have invited her and the members of the public to the next full commission meeting to discuss this.
- What we would like to do is provide them with resources in case there is information or resources that they don't have and that might be an obstacle to making progress on this.
- Megan had a question of how will they analyze language? No one in the state has the skill set or qualifications to analyze if a student is skilled in American Sign Language, if they are on level? Who is going to do the assessment of the benchmarks?
- We have an enormous glitch in our Nevada scope that we don't have teachers of the Deaf that support Nevada Early Intervention. In the state of California, we had early intervention teachers who would provide mentorship and center-based learning, in home instruction until the kids turned three and then they would transition to the IEP process. We will not be able to collect data from birth to age three without teaches of the Deaf in early intervention that are skilled singers to be able to monitor language development either oral or manual communication. In California it was easy to explain to parents where their language pieces should be and to provide

parents singing support so they could learn those skills in the home and I'm not seeing that in Nevada.

- The report that the SB203 subcommittee provided may not have made a concrete recommendation only listed a bunch of resource and tools and we may need to help the Department of Education sort that out and let them know some resources are better than others we should use this one.

6. Review and Discussion of By Laws applicable to Subcommittees and Subcommittees recruitment:

Eric Wilcox, Chair

- Obioma just wanted all members of the subcommittee to be aware of the bylaws regarding the subcommittee and what they are allowed to do.

7. Approval of Roster, and contact information updates: (For Possible Action)

Eric Wilcox, Chair

- Currently the subcommittee term is three years, but we are working to change the bylaws to a one-year term for subcommittee members to give more access to the community.
- Shawna Goldhammer makes the motion to approve the five individuals for the subcommittee, Meagan Johnson seconded, motion carried.

8. Discussion and Approval of any recommendations related to Agenda item 5 SB203 and pipeline of school district staff: (For Possible Action)

Eric Wilcox, Chair

- No items to bring to the full commission currently.

9. Review, Discuss Tentative Agenda Items for October 4, 2022, meeting:

Eric Wilcox, Chair

- It was suggested that we make the meeting later in the day to get participation from educators and interpreters in the school as they are in session during the morning hours.
- Return to the item of transition – report from Lora Turner on post-secondary education.
- Advocacy steps and policy changes that we want to see.
- SB203
- Steps to help advance the pipeline of teachers, etc.

10. Public Comment:(No action may be taken upon a matter raised under public comment period unless the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an action item. Comments will be limited to five minutes per person. Persons making comment will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record and to spell their last name and provide the secretary with written comments.)

- No public comment

11. Adjournment: 10:32 am

Eric Wilcox, Chair

Accommodation Requests and Meeting Materials:

We are pleased to make reasonable accommodations for members of the public who are disabled and wish to attend the meeting. If special arrangements for the meeting are necessary, please notify Lorraine Belt-Dolan in writing at 3320 W. Sahara, Suite 100, Las Vegas, Nevada 89102, email lorrainebelt@adsd.nv.gov or call at (702) 486-4307 as soon as possible.

Notice of this meeting was posted at the following Aging and Disability Services Office at 3208 Goni Road, Building I, Suite 181, Carson City, NV. 89706. Notice of this meeting was posted on the Internet

through the Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division website at www.adsd.nv.gov and Nevada Public Notices website at www.notice.nv.gov

Supporting public material provided to Commission members for this meeting may be requested from Lorraine Belt-Dolan, Commission Administrative Support, ADSD at (702)486-4307 and is/will be available at the meeting locations and ADSD website at [Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired \(nv.gov\)](http://Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired (nv.gov))