

Julie Bowers
Director
Office of Comprehensive Student Services Nevada Department of Education

Dear Ms. Bowers,

The Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing appreciates the opportunity to engage with the Nevada Department of Education on the implementation of NRS 388.5155 to 388.5195, which outlines critical steps to support language development in children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired (not to exclude DeafBlind).

We recognize and value the Department's initial efforts, particularly the convening of a committee to recommend language benchmarks and assessment tools. The resulting report from December 2020 laid a strong foundation, and we are grateful for that work.

However, several key components of the law appear to remain unaddressed, and we would appreciate clarification on their status:

- **Resource Document:** We have not seen a publicly available resource for families and providers that outlines language acquisition milestones and intervention strategies, as called for in the statute.
- **Regulations for Educators:** To our knowledge, the Department has not yet prescribed regulations for educators to assess language and literacy development in the target population.
- **Data Publication:** The law requires anonymized, aggregated data comparing language acquisition outcomes for children with and without disabilities. The data currently available—limited to a single intake assessment from NEIS for children aged 0–3—does not meet this obligation. There is no data available for children aged 3–5, and the placeholder for ages 5–6 references MAP testing disruptions without offering alternative data.

Additionally, it is unclear whether the assessments currently used or planned align with the committee's recommendations, particularly regarding sensitivity to the child's mode of communication (e.g., ASL benchmarks for children whose primary language is ASL).

The Commission is eager to support the Department in addressing these gaps. Access to accurate and comprehensive data is essential to understanding where we stand, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring that families and educators have the tools they need to support language development.

To that end, we invite a representative from the Department to attend an upcoming meeting of our education subcommittee or the full Commission. We believe a collaborative discussion would help clarify next steps and identify opportunities for partnership.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Nevada's children. We look forward to working together to advance this important work.

Warm regards, Eric Wilcox Chair, Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing