REALTIME FILE

D/HH/DB Council
The School Age Subcommittee
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>> SHARON HENRY: Yes. Good afternoon. So it is 12:00, so let's go ahead and get started with our typical business. We want to -- I'll just give Tracy a minute to sync in here. Good morning, Tracy. Good afternoon, Jen. Good afternoon, Tracy. Hi there. So we'll get started.

Are there any additions, changes, deletions to the minutes of May 25th, our last meeting? If not could I have a motion to accept them?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Motion to accept the minutes.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, Sherry. May I have a second? Okay, thank you, Laura, for the second. Okay. So let's move right into looking at the quality indicator document. And we're going to focus on items seven through ten -- or six through ten, I believe. We left off last time at one through five. We just need to finish looking at this document and then move onto our other business.

A reminder from Laura, if you're not interpreting or speaking, would you please turn your video off. I'll turn it over to Sherry to lead the discussion for the quality indicator document.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Great. Thank you, all. One of the things I did do is I went and I wonder if we should start here. Amelia did an amazing job of editing in terms of what was correct usage of Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing. So I accepted all of those corrections. I think it would be helpful to go through the other -- let's see. I'm just going to do this.

So I think it would be helpful to go through the other comments just to make sure we're not ignoring those. So Sharon, you had a comment around the communication plan, so that was directed at Jacqui. Anything else that you wanted us to consider as a full group?

>> SHARON HENRY: Not at this point. I think this will come up again when we

talk about the appendices. So we can put it off until then.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Great. Okay, thank you. The next comment was -- I just don't want to ignore these. Question from you, Sharon, regarding providers of services such as sign language interpreters are regularly evaluated. And your question was by whom. The SpEd director who hired the interpreter? To me this is around the program evaluating it because the SpEd director would not have the interpreter.

>> SHARON HENRY: So my thinking was if a SpEd director is trying to reach out and find an ASL interpreter, would that be the person who administers the ASL proficiency tests? And is that what we're seeing by evaluating?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: To me this is around the program. Remember this is around identifying program standards as opposed to a special ed director. And I go back to some of the recommendations from Tracy and Jen. They're not in the position to make -- so the supervision process includes expertise with in the areas of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind service providers. I'm concerned about making that a SpEd director. To me that's the program. But I look for other feedback.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. Actually, I can turn on my video. This is Jen. I would say -- I would also say that -- I mean, well, there are many interpreters across the state that are hired that are contracted for by our agency or through others I'm not aware of. And they would be regularly evaluated.

But perhaps we can just say -- I don't know how we could -- just trying to think. If somehow we could be responsible for giving them resources where they could have those skills evaluated if need be. But I agree that the SpEd director is not going to be qualified to do that.

>> SHARON HENRY: Right. So this is Sharon. You're saying, Jen, that normally your program would evaluate the competency of the ASL interpreter.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Who we are hiring.

>> SHARON HENRY: That's what I meant. Okay. So then I would take my question off there. And just make it clear in the wording that it's the program who's evaluating the ASL interpreter.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Right. And I think most SpEd directors are not -- their intention is not to go out and hire their own interpreters. It is way too challenging. So I added the language evaluated by the program, if that's okay. Sharon, you had a question here. Why just Deaf? Wouldn't we want this to happen with our Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind teams as well?

>> SHARON HENRY: Yeah, I wasn't sure if that was just a typo or if for some reason Deaf education team was specified there for some other reason that I'm missing. Excuse me.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: No, it's language that I took from NASDSE. I'm just scrolling up, because I know that Amelia made a number of corrections and I just want

to be consistent in the usage of how we describe -- I'm scrolling up to see if I can copy and paste it from somewhere else. Where is it? My gosh, she made so many corrections.

>> SHARON HENRY: I think she added a slash between --

>> SHERRY SOUSA: If you are it, just --

>> SHARON HENRY: I actually don't. But I think it's D-HH-DB.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: I'm just scrolling like crazy. Here we go. Here we go. Here we go. Oh. Here we go. There we go. So D/HH/DB?

>> SHARON HENRY: Yes. That's what I recall she had up above.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: All right, great. So we've got that piece. Let's keep working. Okay. Hang on one second. The next comment "and parents." So this is around children and youth need ongoing access to students and adults like them. Access to professional personnel is provided in the child's language and communication mode. And this one is around program staff directory includes professional personnel fluent in child's language and communication mode and provides students the opportunity to interact with this individual. Dates indicate when the opportunity was offered to the student. And family?

>> SHARON HENRY: Yeah. Maybe "and family." Just thinking of your kindergartner or first grader. Usually the family is involved with the care.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Great. Okay. And then Jen, you had a comment regarding appropriate tests or possibly BEI.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Well, I was just questioning because it says -- I can't see it very food. Oh, where it says results of the ASLPI interview. And that --

>> INTERPRETER: The interpreter's having a hard time hearing you, Jen.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Okay. I apologize. On the document, it just mentions the ASLPI, and if we're talking, there are other tests that might need to be used such as the EIPA or the SLPI. So I just don't want to -- I think it needs to be broader.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: So should this be a link to other tools? Or should I include licensing training results of the ASLI, ASLPI, or other structured interviews?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Or other evaluation tools used. Something like that.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Okay. Wait a second. So ASLPI interview --

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Actually the "I" in ASLPI is interview.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Okay. Or other evaluation tools used. Is that better?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Except it should just be ASLPI.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Okay. Don't put the interview then? Sorry.

>> LAURA SIEGEL: It's ASLPI. That's it. That's the formal name of that type of exam. But I have a question as well. I'm wondering if -- is this for communication facilitator, ASL interpreter? Or is it for both individuals? These are requirements for both because they are different roles or are we putting the same -- in my mind, if you want to

get an educational interpreter, you want them to either have a BEI or EIPA. ASLPI is more of a communications facilitator or assigned support person who can sign. Right? Is that my understanding of the different evaluation tools?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Right. This is Jen. But I think that this is broader, Laura. I think that this is for all service providers. It's for teachers, educational audiologists, SLP. So we want to be broad, but you're right. That the ASLPI or the SCPI is more for communication facilitators.

>> LAURA SIEGEL: Okay. Wanted to double check on that. Thanks.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: So is that appropriate, then, based on that feedback?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: I can't get my thing to unmute. I guess I would like feedback. Should the ASLPI even be listed or should we have evaluation tools and either in parentheses or in an appendices have the appropriate evaluation tools that we're talking about such as the ASLPI, SLPI, EIPA, all those other acronyms.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. I would vote for Jen's suggestion of putting it in the appendix and here say results of evaluation tools, see appendix, or something like that.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Right. Then we can link right to the appendix. We can have a link there. Then I think as less prescriptive and giving options, that's better for this rather than getting hyperfocused. So that, Sharon. Added to clarify which staff is being referred to. Did you do that piece? I'm not sure where that comment goes to.

>> SHARON HENRY: Yes, I think I made that change.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Okay. All right. So we'll check that one. Change this to providers to distinguish from gen ed teachers and paraprofessionals. This one here. Relevant professional development is available to all Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind staff on a regular basis. Sharon, do you want to talk about that a little bit?

>> SHARON HENRY: The way I was wording it, it wasn't clear who was -- who the staff development was being geared toward. So I was just trying to clarify that. So relevant professional development is available. I think it fixed it.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Okay. Because it's providers of services must meet professional standards that include minimal qualifications and relevant professional development is available to all. Should we put providers?

>> SHARON HENRY: Yes.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: So it's in line with that goal? Oops, sorry. How's that? All services on a regular basis. Does that address your concern, Sharon?

>> SHARON HENRY: It does, thank you.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Great. And Jen had a comment on this one. We do not have a school for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind in Vermont. So various state agents and programs and schools for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind collaborate. So we should delete because at this point in time we don't have that?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: That's what I was thinking, yes.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Others' thoughts on that?

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. The other only thing I could think of was would they -- would we want them talking to other states who do have schools for the Deaf? As a way to access resources and -- like, why wouldn't you talk to Massachusetts if you were in southern Vermont, for example?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yeah, that's a good example. Sherry, can you go back the other way? I just want to see what the -- what is the indicator? I forgot. It's right there. State leadership and collaboration. Yeah. I guess it makes sense to leave it in there, actually. You're right. We do have students who attend schools for the Deaf out of state.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Right, right. Okay. Good. Glad we had that conversation. Because -- and that verifies if a situation where that's a need, that should be happening. And again, in special ed land, that better be happening.

Program provides meeting notes with dates where -- again, you want to put the --

>> SHARON HENRY: Just the full representation, yes.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Because that was a NASDSE thing. See, we're even improving the original document. All right. Okay. We're getting there.

>> SHARON HENRY: We're awesome.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: We're awesome. All right. And I just don't want to miss -- okay. Here's a couple more. So before we get to the other ones in these other comments, just for a second. I know that -- I'm just going to stop sharing because there's another point that I think is really important that Rebecca and -- I'll just put my camera back on. Rebecca and I think it was Kevin brought up regarding -- and he shared an email. An email was shared regarding those providing services.

And I don't know if Rebecca, do you want to summarize that concern? The email that was sent? And the feedback that I thought that it was later in the document and they did not feel that it was. I'd like to have that conversation before we move on, because I don't want to miss that concern.

(Silence)

Would you feel comfortable summarizing that concern and then we can kind of hit that?

>> REBECCA LALANNE: Sure. I just had to refresh myself. Kevin shared with me some concerns about -- and excited to be part of the group and wanting to offer more feedback. Let me see what else was there. Interpreting skills, ASL, importance for youth. Yeah.. someone mentioned it's already built in, but he didn't see it. So I said it's a work in progress. Also he said he felt that -- not sure there are enough quality ASL interpreters even though we do our best, they're just not there.

Reason being, he mentioned having -- without qualified interpreters is a

waste of time. And then a way to verify that there is true access in a student's native language, that every child should have instruction on par with the access to instruction for people who can hear are receiving it in their spoken language. The access should be available statewide from birth forward for those kids who have a right to in school even though parents may not have advocated.

So to summarize, I'll actually forward this so you can all read it for yourselves. But felt that this could lead to some misunderstandings by audiologists and that Deaf needs will be ignored in favor of speech training by the age of 10 and above that causes problems. The things are barely being provided for kids and that has been allowed to happen and continue, and it's caused suffering and created barriers. And there should be barrier-free access to education per the IDEA. And talks about being empowering to the schools to provide in accordance with the students' rights.

So it's a clarifications of the frustrations that have been received and developed and how to make it a little more comparable to students having equal access to education as the general public does. I hope I summarized that well for you all.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Thank you, Rebecca. So I agree with what Kevin's saying. Access free public education, IDEA. So my challenge is that there's such a lack of resources in the state of Vermont in terms of high-quality -- I mean, we've got some great people, but it's not enough to meet all the demand. How do we incorporate is that a second piece of work for this committee? Or how do we fold it into this document? Because I agree because we don't have the resources, we don't always get to deliver the kind of program we can't -- I don't know how we would recruit people.

But I wonder if those concerns are something we should put in our parking lot to address with some of the other concerns we've had. Or can these concerns be folded into this evaluation? And I just want to honor what Kevin shared. But my wonder is how do we fold that concern into this document? And Rebecca, if you have any feedback or if there's other ideas that I'm missing on, I'd love to hear.

(Silence).

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. I wonder if including these evaluation tools to evaluate the ASL proficiency is a first step. But if you only have five highly qualified interpreters, that's not enough. So I think this really gets to the workforce issue that -- you know, how do programs recruit and retain and develop their workforce? I think that's a much larger question that's outside the scope of this particular document.

But I think it's an item that this subcommittee or some other committee should begin to take on, because it isn't good enough to say, oh, we don't have the workforce. We need to be doing something about it.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Yes, thank you, Sharon. As someone who's hiring as fast as I can and in general special ed teachers are a premium. Right now I don't have a special ed director and I can't hire one. And the going rate in the state South of us is

$160,000 to $190,000 a year. And I can't compete with that. In terms of highly trained and competent interpreters, the same challenge is there. I think if we can create a parking lot of some of these topics. I know we've had some others that either this committee or another committee on the governor's counsel can address. But recruiting -- and Jacqui, you can offer this. It's absolutely brutal finding highly trained, competent individuals. And for those of us who have to provide programming and we can't find the right people, it's tough.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: If I may, too, I know that the agency and other stakeholder representatives have been working really hard around the critical shortage area with respect to special education and related services. There's a state task force that is working with a national technical assistance provider called Cedar. You know, this is a group made up of not only licensing and special ed, but also school leaders and higher education and other folks too.

If anything, a recommendation from this group is to ensure that that work that's going on around special education recruitment and retention, attraction, recruitment, and retention includes these specific positions. It's something that I bring to the table, but to also hear from the council as a recommendation, please make sure that you are considering these professionals as you're working to develop the state-wide plan. Does that make sense?

>> SHARON HENRY: It does, thank you, Jacqui. And to whom should we target that recommendation, Jacqui? Who specifically?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: I mean, as a subcommittee, if you're recommending to the council, you know, what Spencer's working out. Are we recommending to the general assembly, recommending it to the governor, to the agency? That will get to Dan French. I think this is outside the report that's done. But this is a critical need. And it would be like an important reminder as we're recruiting for these specialized positions, what else -- how are we investing resources to make sure we are tracking, recruiting, and training those with Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlindness.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Great. Thank you, group. And thank you -- and Rebecca, if you feel comfortable representing this conversation to Kevin, I want to make sure he knows that we value his input and that we want to continue to advocate for those positions, because it's incredibly challenging to staff.

All right. So I think we've got all our comments. I think we're now back to our document. Let me make this just a little bit bigger. So we can all see we are now at -- okay. So page nine which was the leadership and collaboration. Strong state and local leadership and effective collaboration among key stakeholders. Various state agencies, let meic that that -- change that. To provide a seamless continuum of placements, services, and supports for children and families through age 21 and

Evidence provides program meeting notes with education leaders and

parents convene to discuss educational services and systems issues that reflect the needs of a student. Jacqui, do you want to give feedback?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: I'm just wondering if this group thinks this might be a spot where we're also talking about not just collaborating on this continuum of placements and reports, but also around the recruitment and retention of qualified providers. Since that takes these groups coming together to ensure the highly qualified personnel. I'm just asking maybe it doesn't belong there, but I would want that as part of the collaboration piece. This is a statewide effort.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Others thoughts? Is this a good place to add it in here? Key to programs and services. So maybe up on top. So collaboration -- I'm sorry. Among key stakeholders? Delivery of programs and recruitment.

>> SHARON HENRY: I would say recruitment retention.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Delivery of programs, services, recruitment, and retention?

>> SHARON HENRY: Of the workforce, yeah. That way it would -- workforce would encompass all of the professionals that we're talking about.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Great. Thank you, Jacqui. Good feedback. I'll go over to the comments here. Jen, do you want to -- there's a core group of strong, Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind leaders and parents in the state. Jen, do you want to talk about your comments here?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Sure. I just wasn't sure how this was any different than the one right above it. And actually, several of these seemed very similar. So I think it would just -- and I'm going to be totally transparent. I did this as I was racing out the door this morning. And so if we sort of review it together, if we look through all of them. I felt like especially the one -- that one we just -- that second one. Very similar to the first one. I didn't really see a lot of difference between those two.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Great. So first starts with various state agents and schools for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind. Collaborate to have continual supports for their families. So we want to see meeting notes. There's a core group of strong DeafBlind education leaders. I would agree that's redundant.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Is parents included in the one above?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Families and schools? And then we could remove that line? Anyone have an issue with that? It's the same evidence.

>> SHARON HENRY: No, I think that's a good catch, Jen. Thank you.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Hang on one second. Okay. The next one is groups of leaders consider the context and performance in other key indicators when addressing issues and providing guidance to the state, local school districts, teachers and families? Program faculties -- program facilitates that the school district maintain connections with the State Department of Education, schools for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind and entities that provide in Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind associated areas. Program

facilitates -- it does sound like pretty repetitive to me. Is this is a place where we can trim back and really make sure this is -- we have one indicator under this?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yeah, that's what I was wondering. I wasn't sure if it would be too much in one indicator. So that's what I thought would be important to discuss as a group. Because it is -- I mean, it's pretty hefty. I just didn't know -- it also seems very repetitive. And I think it is difficult for the program to facilitate the school district, you know, maintaining connections with the State, Department of Education, and things like that. I just -- I -- that worries me a little bit what that's going to look like and how does that happen.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: And again, if we're evaluating programs, it seems like we really want to put our emphasis on the quality of the actual program delivered rather than this collaboration. And if this is a place where we can kind of really hyperfocus on the program offerings, this would be a good place to trim. Other feedback?

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. I think the program facilitating the school district connections could be deleted. That seems way out of their purview, but I think the third one where the program facilitates the collaboration with advocacy and other support groups, that -- I think that's helpful, because that's sharing information about Vermont Hands and Voices and other things like that. That are very important to connect families with.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: I think high above, the program has to offer the calendar and other systems. But I hear what Jen's saying is that facilitating that. So I think the facilitation was from above. I'll see if I can find it. I think there's the sharing of the calendar. Sorry. Calendar for updated trainings --

>> SHARON HENRY: I think you went up too high, Sherry.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Sorry. Maybe I'm wrong. Oh. A list of community members and organizations available to meet this need, dates that they participate, and to share the events that are happening. Social interactions. Do you think that addresses what is down below? Or no? I think it's Jen. We can't hear you.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: All right. Can you hear me now?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Yes.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Okay. Yeah I think there is another one where it talks about family support and sharing resources. And I think that that encompasses especially that one about advocacy and other family support organization. That one right there. Facilitates the school district collaborations with advocacy and other supports. I think that a included. I believe it was number three, but I can't remember. I looked it up earlier.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. So Jen, I think you're right. If that's the case, then we could delete this row as well.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: I'm going to make a recommendation we remove these

three rows. Is there anyone who is not supportive of that?

>> SHARON HENRY: Before you delete them, you want to make sure we grab the appropriate text from that first column there to put up above. Is there anything that we want to -- that isn't represented up above that we would want to copy and paste.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: I think something about reviewing evaluation or assessment data is included in the second one. And I -- assessment performance and other key indicators. I think there should be language about that in the one above if possible.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Sorry. Got to do it this way. Collaborate to provide a continuous services. It's not doing -- my laptop is not behaving. Hang on one second. Let's see. Various state agencies. Provide a continuous placement services and support for children and their families through age 21. And student assessment and performance when addressing issue and providing guidance. Is that where the piece is you want to save?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: What do others think? Something about reviewing state data about student performance would be nice to have just so we're reviewing that. And that can hopefully help driver services. And if there are needs that are not being met across the state which -- and I think looking through a state level lens would be nice. Because we know that there are areas that it's almost impossible to find qualified providers. Just putting everybody at the table to see how to meet that need better would be great.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Other key indicators are reviewed in providing guidance to the state, local school districts, teachers, professionals, and families.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: I think that looks good.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. I think it looks good too. But I think some of the artifacts need to be kept. The three things highlighted in yellow could be deleted, but the three pieces of evidence that are corresponding to them could be copied and moved up above.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Sorry. It's not doing what I want it to do. All right. There's more than one way to copy and paste. All right. Now I'm going to delete these. And there we go. Give me just one second. So now it moves over there. And I think we have all the comments addressed. I just don't know why this is that way. There we go.

I think we have completed our task. We have a document. Sharon, what would you like us to pivot to next?

>> SHARON HENRY: So this is Sharon. So I think let's just take a minute to breathe and pat ourselves on the back for getting through all of that. Before we move to the rest of the agenda, I want to take a minute to talk about I think the process going forward. Obviously we have a report to write that will go both to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Council. And to the Agency For Education. And while we have Jacqui on the call, Jacqui, can you talk to the group about to whom we should address

this report? Is it you? Is it Chris Case? Is it Dan French? And then talk about the email you shared with Sherry and me with internal/external shareholder review and also the timeline.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Sure. I will do my best. So -- you know, discussing a course with the full council, the best way to do a letter of recommendation to the agency, it's typical that it can go to the secretary with Chris Case and myself. Or talking with Spencer about whether this should go to general assembly.

I mean, I can speak to the process and we do have experts from the field who will recommend some best practice tools or resources or guidelines that we can be using to share with providers and with districts and what typically happens is that it will -- it goes through a review process of internal stakeholders. In this case it would not only be our special education team. It would involve our early education team. It would involve our legal counsel to see if there are things we can and can't say. There's a fine line between what goes out as a best practice or a guidance document or a strong recommendations document versus if you're in an area where something is going to be prescribed. And absence of legislation statewide or prescribed in federal language that takes a legal review as well.

Also where we have a lot of students that meet these profiles on 504 plans. We have a team that does 504 guidelines. It would require their review. And in some cases, it would also include finance. We have a lot of our districts that are -- and folks that are able -- that are billing for Medicaid and Medicaid looks at, you know, proposals of this nature as well. So that's the internal process. And that timeline depends. Typically I can get a two to three-week turnaround.

From there the other stakeholder groups that would be involved, you know, are folks that would be -- are working with this population, our students with disabilities. The Vermont Council for Special Ed Directors. The advisory group is another group that would review and weigh in. And then also the special education advisory panel. Which is the group on unmet needs of the state. That's another group that would also review. And then those folks would typically give their recommendations or feedback in the form of a letter back to the agency.

So that takes a little bit -- that takes a little bit more time. So for us, that's probably a six to eight-week process. And then it goes to our -- when it's finalized and justified that there has been representative stakeholder feedback. And here's the recommendation. It's a quick process. It's a thorough process. And people very thoughtfully and meaningfully pose questions that maybe we were not even thinking about. Somebody else has a different lens. But it's generally not people going through it looking for formatting and branding semantics. They're really looking at can we do this? Who's it going to impact? And how does the line with the -- either the 504 civil rights laws or the IDEA laws.

That's typically the process we have for a major document that we would be rolling out. This is strongly recommended. Whether you're a provider, whether you are educating children and youth, Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing. We're strongly recommending this is what you are using in the design implementation and evaluation of your programs. So that's the nature of folks that typically need to weigh in on a major document.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. Thank you so much, Jacqui, for that overview. So what I'll like to propose is that I share a draft of the report for you -- with all of you which simply summarizes our process to date. And let me know if I've forgotten important details or if you think I'm being too detailed. We just want to be able to describe what we've done and how we got here. And then, of course, we have our quality indicator tool that we actually need to come up with a good name for.

And then we'll include the appendices which we'll talk about next. Any questions or comments about the process going forward? I can't see everybody on my screen, so if you're raising your hand, I can't see you. Well, we'll talk about it again next week. And I'll share the document with you later this week. So let's turn our attention now to what Sherry has up on the screen. Sherry did a great job reformatting. Scroll up. Reformatting the quality indicator document. I have drafted a report that I'll share with you later this week.

And now we just need to talk about the appendices. And so one of the first items that we talked about including was the communication plan. Again, Jacqui, I'll ask you to update us on where the communication plan is. I think your team is reviewing it. I might have -- (went on mute).

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Sure. Thank you for the opportunity. I was hoping we could talk about the communication and language plan. We've done a lot of digging about this. And this is also the power of -- we currently do not have state language that requires providers or districts to implement the council authored communication plan or the AOE authored communication plan that covers not only special ed students but students with 504 plans. We've had this conversation before. Yes, there are other states that have communication plans that are mandated and required.

I lived in a state that had communication plan for the longest time. This was in Connecticut, as a best practice. This tool is going to help you meet the IDEA. The IDEA doesn't say communication plan. It says the IEP team considers these four bullets. And whether they're documenting it through email or on post-it notes or whatever, there aren't parameters around that. What Connecticut did was they put it into law. Their general assembly. And it wasn't through a state board. Their general assembly got language together that says students with this profile who have IEPs or 504s will utilize the State Department's communication plan as part of the student's file or the IEP review.

So I'm getting to the point that the plan is great. The communication plan is -- it aligns absolutely with what we would expect to see, but it's difficult to enforce without rules. And my hope with some of our governor-appointed councils is that could be part of their role to advocate for some of those roles with House or Senate Committee to be put in place.

And so as a State of Vermont Agency of Ed employee, my job is to enforce the rules. I don't have my agency in making them. So that was this point about the communication plan. That states that do have one that is required and it's part of that student's file and it's implemented and it's monitored as part of accountability, they have laws. They have regulations. So that's one.

So the communication and language plan is fantastic. And it's absolutely a best practice review. But I don't currently have the authority to go in and ensure that that communication plan that we have here which is great is what is being implemented for kids without the teeth of a mandate. Does that make sense? I hope I'm not discouraging, because I'm optimistic. I think it can happen. But for now it is definitely an important resource that we can strongly recommend and that folks will be in compliance if this follow this plan for what the IDEA expects. And then 504 is slightly different. I'm kind of putting out my opinion but also my hope.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, Jacqui. So what I hear you recommending is we have something else in our parking lot that we have business -- more business that we could attend to. And I think I also hear you saying that the communication plan that your team is reviewing now looks very good in terms of the quality of the work and you would feel comfortable having it included here as a recommendation.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yes. I could have just answered your question. I had to go into my monologue. But I see the potential of this council is to, yes, make these things happen. Give me a law. And I can implement it. (Laughs).

>> SHARON HENRY: I see Sherry has a hand up and I think Jen might have a comment as well.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: I think -- so again, the purpose of this document is to allow programs -- for us to evaluate programs. And if we feel that one method of evaluation is whether they're supporting the inclusion -- I mean, we're not requiring it, but we are saying this is important and we want programs to facilitate the use of this. And I think, again, we don't have to have full compliance, and that's part of the evaluation tool we're going to be looking at. But this is way to support what Jacqui is looking at.

We're not mandating that it's included, but we recommend if you're a high-quality program, this is some tool you should be using.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. Thank you, Sherry. Jen, did you have a comment?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: No. I think that Sherry -- what Sherry said basically covered

it. That even if it's not mandated, just -- if the program providers are bringing it to the table, that's the first step.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. Thank you, both, for your comments. So the next thing we talked about including is the American Audiological Association, the guidelines they recommend for implementation and validation procedures for new audiological equipment. So I have received that from Tracy. And I can include those links in the appendices. Were there any other comments about this particular item? Okay. Hearing none, I'll move to the next one.

The template for classroom observation. Jen provided me with some links to a website that includes the key elements for classroom observation. I just received that yesterday, so I will upload that to our Google Drive so that by next Wednesday when we meet again, all of these resources that are just rolling in to me in the last 24 hours will be there for you to review.

The next item was a template for educational sessions of general ed teachers. And Jen, I might have missed an email, but I don't know if you have sent that to me yet or not.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: No. I actually -- I apologize, I didn't. I was going to include it in the email. I don't really -- as I was looking through the resources that I have, I don't feel that what I have is a great -- it's -- I don't think that I would want to include it in the appendices. It's sort of a template similar to what we send to you for the classroom observation that our program has sort of developed internally.

You know, what should be included when you're meeting with a team of teachers in the beginning of the year or if the student gets new equipment or something. Reviewing their hearing loss equipment needs, accommodations. There's general things. But I don't know -- and other people, Tracy weigh in, I don't have something that is developed on the national scale, I will say. Like the tool I sent you for the classroom observation.

>> SHARON HENRY: Right. Okay.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: That's really used more widely. Tracy, I don't know if you have other thoughts about that?

>> TRACY HINCK: This is Tracy. You know, I don't if you're thinking about how you would run a meeting. I think I would defer to typically there are sample agents in special education that you go through a certain process. So I think this is related to if we're doing an in-service with the teachers. Is there a template for what to address during those meetings?

>> SHARON HENRY: That's correct, Tracy, yes.

>> TRACY HINCK: I don't know of a standard or even anything in the Educational Audiology Handbook where that's outlined.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. So I think what we can do is we can just strike

D -- the letter D -- from the appendices. I'll just take that one off our list. And then for E, a template for functional evaluation in the classroom, I have that material, Tracy, that you sent me. So thank you so much. Go ahead.

>> TRACY HINCK: That's a standard functional evaluation that is really best practice. And it's implemented across the country. So that's been well peer reviewed and encouraged and should be done routinely.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. Sorry. This is Jen. I don't know if -- and I'm sort of putting you on the spot, Jacqui. Sorry. I know with the special ed changes that are coming, I believe they were pushed off to next year. I don't know if there are any other -- since functional skills are now going to be part of the criteria that can be used for students qualifying for special education. I don't know if you have any other resources that might -- we might want to think about there?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Are you talking about just functional skills or any of the special ed rule changes?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: No, the functional skills.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yeah, we definitely do. We have a series of webinars and guide and documents, tools and checklists that we are strongly encouraging. Our districts and providers to use. So we could use that as a resource. I can put that link in the chat.

>> SHARON HENRY: Actually, Jacqui, would you mind emailing the link to the group as well? It's hard to capture the links in the chat when you're facilitating. Okay. So the next item was -- is definitions of qualified providers/professionals for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind services. And the first one is a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. And the state document that's available is the transcript review work sheet from the AOE. So in the absence of a master's degree in this area, there is a way to have your coursework evaluated, I guess, and determine that you are qualified to be a TODHH.

Do I have that correct, Jen?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yeah. But I guess as I'm seeing it here written this way, I don't think that is necessarily the best way to show that a person is qualified. We should probably have a link to the teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing endorsement, not just this transcript review which is probably -- is going to be pretty similar. But the endorsement for teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is -- probably makes more sense.

The transcript review is a way to get a license. As is the provisional. There is such thing as a provisional license. If there is sort of an emergency need for a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing or something. That is, I think, even a less rigorous process to get a license.

>> SHARON HENRY: So could you email me a link for the endorsement. Then a

link for the provisional license?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yeah. I can send a link to the process. I'm not super familiar with how to get a provisional license.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: So provisional is you're operating under someone else's license. And then you have two years to complete the necessary paperwork. I think the endorsement is fine. I wouldn't put the provisional piece in.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. Thank you, Sherry. The next category for professional provider is the audiologist. So there's a link there for the OPR's qualifications in Vermont for the audiologist. And Tracy, I believe you might have sent me one additional one. Or maybe that was for the speech language pathologist.

>> TRACY HINCK: I just added that ASHA certification. People complain about it a lot, but the it really is good because it requires to maintain CEUs, you know, indefinitely so you're staying current. These fields, these related services fields change and it's important to stay updated. And so I think also if you move to Vermont as a related service speech path or audiologist, if you have your ASHA certification, you'll comply with most of the laws in Vermont with licensure.

>> SHARON HENRY: So this is Sharon. So I will add that link in here as well for both the audiologist and the SLP, Tracy.

>> TRACY HINCK: Great. ASHA is for both.

>> SHARON HENRY: Right. So under other qualified providers, what other categories should be here? One of them I think is, perhaps, sign language -- an ASL interpreter. And do we break that out into educational interpreter versus communication facilitator? I just want to capture all of the -- I think it's important to capture all of the language that's being used out there in the field so they're clearly defined here

So are there other categories?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: I agree that educational interpreter should definitely be added. And I think for now communication facilitator should be added as well. Then we would have to add what the -- again, there are no state standards for either of these, but we could ad what we are currently -- and I say "we." There was a committee that worked on this a couple years ago that developed some standards that criteria that we're going to be using or moving towards in Vermont. So I could include that. We can include those -- what those are.

>> SHARON HENRY: That would be great. And I know that last time Jacqui sent us a link to the Agency For Education. The document that outlines all the licensure. On page 154, I found the requirements for ASL interpreters under modern romance languages. So I think having these more specific things would be really helpful.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yeah. That is for people that are teaching ASL in high school. That's what that is, I think, referring to.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay, okay, okay. All right. So I think under educational

interpreter and communication facilitator, we could include the links to the ASL proficiency tests that we discussed today, the three different ones. And I think I have some emails in my inbox where I can add those. And Jen, would you recommend that we say in Vermont -- the recommended score is 4.0? Or should we not be that prescriptive. I'm just thinking of Kevin Smith's comments and trying to honor that feedback. It was certainly feedback that came through very loudly when I spoke to my stakeholder.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: I mean, this was -- the 4.0 is what the committee agreed upon. If we want to add that to our very long list in the parking lot, we can certainly do that. Many, many states have a 3.5 score requirement on the EIPA. And this group that worked, many of them felt that a 4.0 was really the standard that we should be working for. But I should say there are currently, I think, two, one that has that -- that has had that score. I also want to preface it that this summer the majority of our staff are being assessed.

In the past they haven't because of COVID. This was something that came about before COVID and COVID sort of put a halt to a lot of this. So I -- I mean, that is what was agreed upon by the committee that was working on it. I don't know if you have any input, Laura. I believe you maybe had a group that was also looking into this. And I know that you were looking at the BEI which currently is only available to take in Texas. That's my understanding. And so that's why the EIPA was an online assessment tool. And I was just recently approved as a local test administrator. I'm going to be doing that this summer.

>> LAURA SIEGEL: And just to let you know, I'm still in the investigative stage regarding the BEI. Because the State of Texas gave us three options with that. And Dale wanted to meet with the ETRID to see which of those three options was the best solution for the state, because it's not a cheap endeavor. It's a very expensive endeavor to have the BEI brought in.

But for now, we're trying to convince BGS to change -- to make an amendment to the state contract to include the BEI. Along with the RID certification and increase all of the interpreter rates. So if anyone wants to contract with them, they can. And they have an internal screening that will help determine their interpreter rate along with their years of experience.

And I know right now Vencro right now has a contract with four states -- not states. Four schools. Four school districts. To provide interpreter services for them. So the BEI, though, if we decide we're not going to have that as an internal testing structure, but if you want to take the BEI, you have to negotiate that directly with the State of Texas. And then the State of Texas will evaluate and test you. And they have three different levels. Beginner, intermediate, and advanced. As potential certifications.

And that could provide you certification for a community and provisional as

well. I believe. So it's an additional aspect.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thanks, Laura.

>> LAURA SIEGEL: And I want you to remember last year there was a huge problem at RIE. I just heard that RID has suspend ed testing. So any interpreter who wants to take exams, they can't. They have to go through the beta process of testing. So they haven't released the full exam yet. They're still trying to figure out how to do that, so hopefully the BEI is another assessment tool we can use. Is that clear?

>> SHARON HENRY: Great. Yes. Thank you, Laura. And then, Rebecca, you had shared a resource with me by email as well. About interpreter and information on what Massachusetts is doing. You want to briefly share that with the group?

>> REBECCA LALANNE: Sure. Happy to. So I just saw the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has that kind of screener who does that. A coordinator who does the screening for state provisional interpreting to be able to interpret in that state. I've emailed them, but they haven't answered me back. But that coordinator goes through and meets with each individual to make sure they are qualified to interpret within the state.

So they contact each interpreter. So they don't have to be from Massachusetts. So you can be from out of state. I do believe it's a provisional type of testing or exam type of thing. So somebody from Vermont could go to Massachusetts and be evaluated and be part of the screening. You could also have an individual from Vermont be on the screening team for Massachusetts as well. So I'm waiting to get more information from that person to see how that screening would go and to see how that process really does work out.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, Rebecca.

>> REBECCA LALANNE: And that screening process also relies on Deaf people to be part of that process. The screening.

>> INTERPRETER: Thank you for clarifying. Laura would like to add something as well.

>> LAURA SIEGEL: It's not just MCDHH that has that. New Hampshire also has that part of the state as well too. So Vermont interpreters could be screened through New Hampshire as well. Or MCDHH. They could gain the screening from either of those states as provisional proficiencies.

So we don't have any type of screening system in Vermont. So they do have options. They could go to other states to have that assessment done. Vencro has an internal screening that they use. So that's another option as well.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. Thank you, Laura and Rebecca. Sounds like we have some more parking lot work to do in terms of streamlining some of these resources and services going forward. So question for the group: Are there other qualified professionals that should be on this list here? Are we missing anyone who

touches the student or touches the family? Okay. Sounds like we've got everybody then.

So I think the next thing on our discussion for the group input is to think about once this tool is vetted and once the implementation plan is developed and it's rolled out and programs and providers are self-assessing and submitting this evidence, who is qualified to review this evidence? Who would we want to have on that panel reviewing this kind of data? So if you just want to either call out the professional or the qualities and I'll just try to quickly log them down. And we'll brainstorm this together for a few minutes.

(Silence).

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. I wonder if this is a place where we could say maybe what we could do is recommend a committee and include who would be included on that committee and whether they are a community group. Who is servicing this tool. Not more than five people who should include X, Y, and Z, is that a strategy to address this question?

>> SHARON HENRY: Yeah. I think when we don't quite know yet where the evidence will be submitted, that aspect of the process is a little bit hard to begin to think about how to go about refining the reviewers. However, it was clear with Michele John and those that came after that, if you don't have qualified people at the table with this evidence, it's moving forward very quickly.

So Sherry, I heard you say maybe a committee of five or so who would include the following.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: That's what I was thinking. I think five is a good number. I think you are again going back to who are our key people. So the licensed teacher of the Deaf, a parent, a service provider not in the grouping assessed. An audiologist, who else are individual who is could make this adjustment?

>> SHARON HENRY: Some things are being put into the chat, but I'm having a hard time seeing the chat. Tracy, can you just say?

>> TRACY HINCK: Sure, sorry. I was just thinking thinking because we are encouraging qualified providers, we should have qualified providers reviewing the evidence. They will be best able to determine if there's a licensed staff. So I guess I would say an administrator maybe special ed administrator related service provider, teacher of the Deaf, audiologist, parent, and SLP.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. Okay, great. Are there any other suggestions?

>> LAURA SIEGEL: Yeah. This is Laura. I'd like to make a suggestion. But first are you planning to appoint the same people to be on this panel? Are you planning to replace, rotate them as a way to keep -- avoid conflicts of interest?

>> SHARON HENRY: Well, I think that's much further down the road, Laura. This is at a higher level of conceptually who should be on the committee. Who is available to review this data. Whether they rotate on or off the committee. Clearly if they are a

service provider of the program that's being evaluated, they shouldn't be on the committee at that point in time. So those details are more in the weeds. This is at a higher level.

>> LAURA SIEGEL: So well then I'm thinking of other suggestions. Would you consider limiting it to people who work in Vermont? Or would you, perhaps, utilize outside of the state expertise.

>> SHARON HENRY: Was does the committee think?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. I agree that I think looking outside of the state could be beneficial, because we are such a teeny tiny state. Because it's going to be difficult to find anybody that isn't providing services in some way, shape, or form. I think we definitely need to include a Deaf -- someone from the Deaf community and possibly DeafBlind community if that's feasible.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay.

>> TRACY HINCK: This is Tracy. I was thinking about that too. If we were able to find a teacher of the Deaf that also either was Deaf and Hard of Hearing or used ASL. To make sure there's someone included from the Deaf community in that list. So I agree, Jen.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. Let me draft this list and I'll share it with you. Then we can improve upon it and hone it. It's too early to talk about any process issues in terms of who appoints them, how long their term is, and those kinds of things. Just more at the conceptual level. We have just ten minutes left. What I'd like to do is have Sherry bring up the scoring rubric that I shared with you. And before I forget, Jacqui, is your other LEA providing written feedback? Is it Lisa Comeau?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: It's Dan Comeau that we had the comments. Then we had Lisa and Dawn. We'll have them again next week. And I have Cassie's pulled up but we haven't transmitted it in a way for y'all to see her comments. So I'm not quite sure.

>> SHARON HENRY: If you could summarize that for us next week, I don't want to miss anything that she has provided for us. I sent you a draft. Again, I emphasize the word draft. And this is a scale that would be used to score the evidence that is submitted and is evaluated by this panel of qualified reviewers as we talked about. It's important in the statistical world that you have an even number of points on your scale so that it doesn't allow the reviewer to regress to the mean.

So I proposed 0, 1, 2, 3. We could do 1, 2, 3, 4. I think it's important when you think about the terminology of the anchor points, you could think of the zero as representing zero to 25% of the evidence. The one is 26% to 50%. And then 51% to 75%. And then 76% to 100%. That conceptually might help you come up with the words that are meaningful and would really help us to discriminate high quality programs, programs that are almost there, programs that really have to address their issues and

programs not meeting the bar at all.

I think we just lost Sherry, so now I can't scroll down.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: I'm still here for a few more minutes. But I'll scroll it where you want it.

>> SHARON HENRY: What I did is I took this tool. And so the reviewer, it would look like this for the reviewer. And then he or she would check the box for that particular set of evidence. Move down to the next set of evidence and so forth and so on. If you scroll to the third page, Sherry, just very quickly. A little bit more. What the document did that I was reviewing over the weekend, they had a last column where the reviewer could check priority.

The evidence is lacking here and this is such a key element to quality -- to program quality that this has to be addressed first. So my questions to the group are let's brainstorm the language and then do we want this priority column or not? So I will turn off my microphone and video and people can just -- (went on mute).

What do people think about this? Can you envision the process working?
(Silence)

Any comments, suggestions?

>> TRACY HINCK: This is Tracy. You know, Sharon, I think that is great. I love the concept. I like the simplicity of it and how it can be formatted right on the document. Thank you for putting that together.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, Tracy.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. I agree. And I like the priority. Although I just worry that everything will be a priority. That's one concern that everybody's going to say priority, priority, priority. But I like it even if we do it the first try. And then see what we have it from that.

>> SHARON HENRY: Yeah. Ideally when you deploy a tool, you get the reviewers together and you spend one meeting calibrating everyone. So so you show them sample evidence from the entire spectrum. Then you say okay. Would everyone agree this is 1 or 2 or 3 and then you define what priority means? We may not have that luxury, but you're right, Jen. It might get overused. In which case we might want to think about taking it -- (went on mute). Jacqui, Laura, Rebecca. Comments?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yeah. No comments. I think it just warrants a little more conversation with the full subcommittee.

>> SHARON HENRY: Yes. I think we're just about out of time in a minute, so I think this will be the top of the agenda for our next meeting on the 7th. Think about the wording, because language is obviously very powerful. Words carry connotations. So we want to make sure we're clear, succinct, and sharp in our language.

Rebecca, did you have any comments? Oh, maybe she had to step away as well. Okay. So what we've done today is finished our quality indicator document. We will

discuss the wording of the scoring tool at the top of our agenda next meeting time. And review the appendices one more time. That will be our last meeting. And we'll also discuss the draft of report. I'll share that with you later this week.

So thank you, all, very much. Have a great week.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Thank you.

>> SHARON HENRY: Laura, can you stay on? I just want to copy some of these links? I want to save the chat. Okay? Because there are links that are there that -- okay. Got it. Okay. Thank you very much. Have a great day.