



**State of Vermont  
Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind Advisory Council  
School Age Subcommittee**

**April 4, 2022, 3 pm - 4:30 pm  
Meeting Summary**

*Present:* Co-chairs Sherry Sousa and Sharon Henry; Tracy Hinck; Jen Bostwick; Amelia Briggs; Laura Siegel; Rebecca LaLanne (new member)

*Absent:* Jacqui Kelleher;

*Invited Stakeholder;* Michelle John, President, Vermont Hands & Voices, and Chair of the Vermont NASDSE Coalition

**AGENDA**

**Welcome & Intro:**

- Rebecca LaLanne, Director of DVAS; Full DHHDB Council Member; Rebecca will be joining the School Age Subcommittee, and Sharon met with Rebecca earlier today to orient her to the subcommittee's work to date, the operations, the group norms, etc.
- Michelle John (President VT H&V; Chair, VT NASDSE Coalition) - invited stakeholder
- Accept meeting summary from 03/07/2022 (vote) – Sherry  
Note: these summaries along with the closed captioning meeting transcript are posted to: [Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Council | Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living \(vermont.gov\)](https://www.vermont.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing-deaf-blind-council-disabilities-aging-and-independent-living).

**Background/context for Working Draft of Quality Standards based on NASDSE (10 min) – Sherry**

**Our work to date has shown that:**

- ✓ There is no current assessment metric that can be disaggregated for students who qualify as deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind
- ✓ Tools reviewed thus far cannot easily be applied to programming for only D/HH/DB
- ✓ National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) Guidelines provide the most comprehensive structure for assessment

**Quality Standards provide a different framework for assessment:**

- ✓ Vermont [Education Quality Standards](https://www.vermont.gov/education-quality-standards), or EQS, describe what a high-quality education should look like for students attending Vermont's public schools.



- ✓ Proposed that Quality Standards for the programming for students who are D/HH/DB establishes the level of service and support expected, requires evidence of compliance with these standards, and is based on the NASDSE Guidelines

**Discussion of Draft (45 min) – Sherry/All**

After discussion, questions, brainstorming, clarification, all members agreed to:

1. Continue to write the quality standards for DHHDB service providers based on the NASDSE guidelines, focusing on what is the responsibility of the DHHDB service providers; draft and comments by all members due by 4/22;
2. Using the existing template at the AOE for collecting evidence from school districts on existing quality standards for schools, the AOE will require the AOE DHHDB grantee for the **upcoming funding cycle** to use the new assessment tool and submit their data to the AOE. Even though the tool will NOT be complete when the AOE Request is sent out, language **will be included in the AOE Request released in May 2022** that the successful awardee will be required to use the tool and submit their evidence of meeting the quality standards to the AOE during the funding cycle. This will allow the subcommittee to run a ‘beta test’ with the new tool and make any necessary changes.
3. The AOE would then engage ***qualified reviewers*** (clearly defined in the assessment tool) to assess the evidence submitted by the grantee and make a determination of ‘meeting the standard,’ ‘partially meeting the standard,’ or ‘not meeting the standard’ (benchmarks clearly defined in the assessment tool as well). This ‘report card’ would be made publicly available to all, including parents, Sped Ed directors, etc. so an informed choice/hiring of qualified service providers can be made by any interested party.
4. Subsequent to this trial period, all DHHDB providers across the state would be asked to complete the assessment tool and submit their data to the AOE to be evaluated and scored by ***qualified reviewers*** on a regular basis (periodicity to be determined). The AOE would require any DHHDB service provider to use the tool ***if*** they want to be on the list of qualified providers published by the AOE. This process will allow the AOE to create a state recommended list of programs/providers in Vermont that meet the quality standards set forth in the assessment tool.
5. So Special Ed Directors who are looking for services for their students would have guidance. The collection of data is the responsibility of the program. It also clearly articulates what we see as the important components of any program. In reviewing the AOE RFP that was issued in June 2021, the NASDSE Guidelines are also referred to there as well. With a certain periodicity, the AOE would hire an outside program assessor to look at all the program data. Given our legislative mandate to assess, if the AOE does not have qualified reviewers, it may be easier to get the funding for an outside review.



6. Tracy linked the respective NASDSE Guideline with the corresponding Statute in ensure that these Quality Standards fulfill the legislative mandate under Vermont Statutes (33 V.S.A, § 1602)
  
7. Concerns were raised about:
  - ✓ the longevity of these data being handled at the AOE, versus, say, an outside group
  - ✓ the access to the services and the schools; it's a barrier (work force issue)
  - ✓ there's no cap or guideline on how much funds can be spent on administrative costs, and that allows private practice vendors to pay themselves large salaries and use funds that really should be designed for providing direct services to kids. It shouldn't all be about technical assistance.
  
8. As we continue working on the draft, the members agreed that we need to also include the following:
  - ✓ provide examples of what the evidence might look like
  - ✓ create an evaluation scale to judge the quality and merit of the evidence submitted
  - ✓ defined who a **qualified reviewer** for reviewing the evidence that is submitted
  - ✓ possible list of suggested clinical tools that service providers should be using when evaluating/monitoring a child's status/progress.
  - ✓ include nationally agreed upon definitions of professional qualifications for each service provider category, (eg TOD, Educational audiologist etc.). Providers are being hired who do not have licensure in one of those fields and this affects the credibility of the services. It creates a lot of confusion when people who are not licensed TODs or licensed audiologists are out there fitting equipment. And it affects student services and the clarity to parents and other service providers
  - ✓ definitions on the IEP for disability category (getting the IEP check lists changed is further down the road)

We continue to engage stakeholders for feedback on the draft as well as the direction of the committee. We hosted Michelle John and she was very supportive of our draft and our direction, and had excellent questions about process, validity and sustainability which will guide our current work. She raised a number of questions:

- Who is doing this assessing? We need to ensure they have a background in Deaf education, Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing education.
  
- to encourage this information to become public for parents and Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing adults
  
- create some of the data that needs to be followed on IEPs, Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, DeafBlind, are not options
  
- Who was going to be in charge of the standards? How will the standards be assessed, what are you going to use to assess them, and who is going to do the assessing. So, if



you pick, say, one person from the AOE, when that person decides they no longer want to be employed, or are terminated from their employment, you know, gosh forbid, what then? Because you don't want then the next person to come in and say, well, I was not trained, what am I doing, and your information, again, roller coaster. And, you know, generally speaking, how often do we want them to be assessed.

- I think if you're to choose a few guidelines to start with, I would really implore you to start with 7, 8, 9, and 10, which are really kind of when you scan through Chapter 9, are the ones that, on my perspective, really hit on the main points you want from a service provider.

Tracy Luiselli-Evans has been confirmed to attend 4/25 meeting as it is critical that the NASDSE Guidelines be expanded to include DeafBlind, Deaf+.

**ACTION PLAN:** All members will use Chapter 9 of the NASDSE Guidelines and add content as needed by 4/22/2022. Please add what you think is needed, draft some ideas, and review the existing content for any additional components. Comments can be added on content but please do not respond to other's comments. The addition of your content/comments by 4/22 will allow committee members time to review other's comments/content prior to the 4/25 meeting.

We will discuss the draft on 4/25/2022 and we can begin to vet together what is in place and what is next based on our discussion.

**Update: Additional assessment tools/resources (10 mins) – Sharon/ All**

All documents received from national contacts/resources have been posted to the Google doc shared space (under the folder "Assessment Rubrics from Other States"); please review them prior to our next meeting (4/25).

- Jen – Rick Huan – Washington Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth (CDHY), Washington School for the Deaf
  - Rick sent along 2 sets documents:
    - 2021.9.1 Tacoma Public Schools Program Review and the Tacoma Program Review Process.
    - Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Program Review Check List.
    - Both documents are based on the NASDSE Guidelines, and the group should review these. A quick review shows that they did not indicate HOW a determination would be made with regard to the whether or not the guideline was being met.
  - Jen will follow up with Rick to schedule a meeting
- Tracy – NH ATN and NH DOE;



- just before the meeting Tracy received the All Together Now 2-year report from the NH DOE.
- The group should review this document as well before 4/25, if possible
- Tracy also shared a copy of the Request for Grant applications that the AOE issued last June 2021; note that in the Request, the NASDSE Guidelines are referred to as an assessment tool.
- Jacqui still needs to send achievement data disaggregated by disability.
- Laura - Scott Falcone (SC), Laurent Clerc Deaf Education Center, Montana; the information that was sent described their service delivery and funding model but no information that was helpful regarding how the quality of services are assessed.
- Sharon - ODDACCE (Allison Sedey) and Sarah Honigfeld (Education Policy at NAD); both contacts pointed to the NASDSE Guidelines and Cheryl DeConde Johnson.

**Other dates for stakeholders? (10 mins) – All**

- Amelia - Tracy Luiselli-Evans – confirmed for 4/25/2022 meeting
- Jen - Deaf Person – John Pirone – will ask him for 5/4 or 5/9 meeting
- Sharon – college student who went through the VT program; Sharon will share the feedback via email
- Tracy/Jen – students in high school; still working on a list of questions and identifying students
- Jacqui – still needs to send email from the “Field Notes” in order to solicit an interested stakeholder from the Case Manager/Spec Ed, Admin community; please send Sharon the email for the records
- Rebecca – other Deaf adult who is not a DHHDB Council member. Rebecca will reach out to Kevin Smith and Stuart Soboleski; once we have a date for John Pirone, Rebecca can offer dates to Kevin and Stuart in later May.
- In the chat, there was also a suggestion for a DeafBlind adult, an audiologist, a Sign Language Instructor; does anyone has a particular person in mind, and could you contact that person? Also, there was a suggestion of Patti Hodgson Dickenson who is a deaf psychologist. Does anyone know her?

**Housekeeping: remaining meeting dates for May/June (5 mins) – Sharon**

Shortly before the subcommittee met, Sharon received an email indicating that Jacqui **will not be able** to be in attendance for 4 of the remaining 7 meetings on the following dates, and a request to change the meeting times, if possible:

Wed May 4, 12-1:30  
Tues May 17, 12-1:30  
Wed, June 1, 12-1:30



Tues, June 7, 12-1:30

The doodle poll for the May/June meetings was sent out ~5-6 weeks ago. Given the efforts at advanced planning to ensure the broadest participation possible, everyone agreed that at this very late date (and knowing how crazy the end of the year gets for educators), the meeting dates/times can't be changed, and the request needed to be declined. A suggestion was made to have Jacqui send a proxy; On 4/5, Sharon emailed Jacqui that request/suggestion and her email response is below.

**From:** Kelleher, Jacqui <Jacqui.Kelleher@vermont.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 6, 2022 6:10 PM  
**To:** Henry, Sharon M <Sharon.Henry@med.uvm.edu>  
**Cc:** Sousa-EXT, Sherry <ssousa@wcsu.net>  
**Subject:** Re: DHHDB School Age Subcommittee participation /proxy

No need to change anything. These are times that I am not able to attend. There is a lot going on in preparation for the rule changes and other timelines. Please just keep me in the loop.

*Sent from my iPhone*

Thus, the remaining meeting dates/times are unchanged:

- Mon, April 25, 3-4:30
- Wed May 4, 12-1:30
- Mon May 9, 1-2:30
- Tues May 17, 12-1:30
- Wed, May 25, 10-11:30
- Wed, June 1, 12-1:30
- Tues, June 7, 12-1:30

**Reflection** on group process (5 mins) – This is a productive and progressive thinking group. The subcommittee members are excited about the progress and the work that is being done. Adherence to the Group Norms received ratings of 4 and 5s.

Meeting transcript also available.