

REALTIME FILE

D/HH/DB Council
The School Age Subcommittee
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>> SHARON HENRY: Good morning and good afternoon, everyone. We'll start at noontime. Tracy is going to be 20 minutes late because of the driving conditions today. And Jen Bostwick may or may not be able to join us because she was feeling quite ill this morning. Yeah. Just headache and stuff. And one other request. When you're speaking or asking a question, say your name first. That's for the captioner. Thank you, Christine. And when you are not speaking or interpreting, please turn off your video. That will just make it easier rather than people having to spotlight and so forth and so on.

So, given Jen is not here, I would like to start the meeting and welcome John Pirone, the stakeholder invited today. I would like to ask you to briefly introduce yourself, which Jen was going to do. I apologize. I don't have her notes available. She wasn't feeling well enough this morning to send them to me. I will ask you, John, to turn on your video and introduce yourself. Oops. Jen just showed up. Are you feeling well enough to introduce Dr. Pirone?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Sure. I'm happy to. Is he here? Everyone is video is off. Oh, because of the interpreter. Yeah. Yeah.

>> SHARON HENRY: Yeah, that's the request for today.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: That's totally fine. I understand. Dr. John Pirone is an ASL instructor at UVM and researcher as well. He is just sort of learning more and more about deaf ed in Vermont. We're super excited to have your feedback. And, yeah, look forward to collaborating with you.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, John, for making the time to join us today. I know it's a very busy time in the semester. As a retired UVM professor, I know it's a bad time. I would like to take a vote on the minutes from May 4th. If everyone could has everyone had a chance to read them? And then if you would like to accept them, please briefly turn on your video and give me a thumbs up. I'm just waiting for Amelia, Rebecca, and Laura. Okay, great. Thank you, everyone.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: I wasn't present at the last meeting. That's why I didn't approve or disapprove. I don't know. I wasn't at the meeting.

>> SHARON HENRY: Did you read the draft of the minutes I sent out?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Yes, but as far as whether they reflected the meeting

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, Amelia. I don't have a Power Point to share today. Again, I'm trying to minimize my screen time with my post nasal surgery. You all have a copy of the agenda. The next item on the agenda is to review the revisions of Quality Standards number 1 through 5. I'm going to turn this over to Sherry and ask her to bring up the document or lead us in the way she sees most appropriate.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. Give me one minute to pull it up. Because I didn't have it queued. One piece that I think we need to talk about is the name of the document. We've had some pushback on standards as a terminology for this assessment tool. There we go. Give me just one minute. Because I know how all this works. And I would like to recommend that we think about the term quality benchmarks. That was one of the first concerns. Let me do one other thing. Can I have some feedback of changing the title from Quality Standards to Quality Benchmarks?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Sherry, this is Jen. Could you talk about the pushback on that a little bit more?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Sharon, do you want to talk about that a little bit?

>> SHARON HENRY: Yes. This is Sharon. So, I was going to talk about this a little later on in the meeting. So, maybe it's under a later agenda item. But, in essence, the term and all the connotations associated with the word "standard" at the Agency for Education carries a different level of review and approval, and so forth. And so in order to be most efficient and effective to get the AOE to be more amenable in adopting and deploying this tool, the suggestion has been made to not use the word standard, but a different word.

So, Sherry and I were brainstorming. We want the one that has the highest level of accountability that is, what would you say, Sherry, the least sticky or offensive? I'm not sure. I don't float in the education world. But I understand that terminology language is very important. So, we thought guidelines, principles. But I like benchmarks. Because I am looking for that high quality standard for our children here in Vermont. So that's the two second history. And my vote for benchmark.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. Thank you, Sharon. I think standards have some legal connotation. Whereas benchmarks are something that educators are very common to use in terms of, here's the identified goal. We can go over that. But this is the minimum standard. Any other feedback around changing "standards" for "benchmark"?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. I would be in favor of that if we can't keep standards.

>> JOHN PIRONE: This is Dr. John Pirone. I'm not so sure about the word benchmark. I'm reading the five elements here. And they're all very different. Some are related to language, communication. Some are related to their needs, academic needs, social within the environment. So, benchmarks, you know, would it be benchmarks for each one? That's going to be very different. If it was benchmarks for the program for deaf and

hard of hearing hard of hearing, deaf children, however you want to phrase that. You know, I don't think it really captures all five classifications. That's just my opinion. I do agree standards isn't the most appropriate term either. But benchmark, I'm not 100% on that one either.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. Any suggestions? I also had

>> Hold on, Sherry. He's still talking. Sorry.

>> JOHN PIRONE: I know it makes the agency accountable for that, changing the verbiage. Go ahead, Sherry.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Hi. This is Sherry. Right now, it's around whether we have the authority to hold the Agency of Education accountable. That's part of the tension that I think Sharon was alluding to. Would practices or principles be more appropriate than benchmarks then?

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. There's a comment in the chat from Jacqui. Jacqui, can you unmute and turn your video on and explain your comment in the chat?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: I think that, you know, guiding principles are like certainly an appropriate way, too. But I you know, we mentioned benchmark. What is that benchmark? That's the standard or point of reference against which things may be compared or assessed. And I believe that was the aim. Is having this tool that programs could use to make such a comparison. So, with that in mind, I think benchmark is fine. But also quality program indicators is also an effective term for this tool as well.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Someone has turned off my video. Okay. Sorry. Tried to negotiate all the buttons. So here we indicator. Quality program indicators. Jacqui, I like that recommendation. Is that a place that people could land?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. I would say quality indicators is would also be acceptable.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Any other feedback? I made the change in the document. Anyone feel that this is not a good reflection of the work we're doing?

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. I agree with the change

in verbiage, as long as those within the education realm fully support the connotation and the implication of what this might these words might bring in the education world. Particularly you, Jacqui, from the Agency of Education. We don't want any less accountability or yeah. So, as long as you're supportive of that, then I would agree.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Other feedback, so we can move on? We're moving to quality program indicators for deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind school age students. All right. So, we can move forward. Jen, Tracy and I worked on indicators, elements 1 and 2. What we tried to do, you can see, we started with the old language. I noted in the original document what was removed. And then we had recommendations following of how do we move from the NASDSE language to a more indicator language? We want to use indicator. So what we want to do is form it in a way that evidence should be existing and not new evidence created.

So, for example, we said the program advocates for and documents that the goals of the students and/or family are considered. So, it could be a meeting invitation where the student is invited. An agenda that includes in it that parent input is requested. And that minutes show where that happened. Of course, it's redacted but those pieces should be part of a programs practice. And so providing that evidence should be systematic.

The same is true in how we move from education services support individual language, communication modes and hearing status to ensure that we're including all students' plans, an IEP plan. Those are students whose disability is evidenced. Adverse affect is in place. Could be 504 students where disability is evidenced but not adverse effect. Every student in a public school district has a right to an educational support team plan, which is at the request of a teacher, parent, even sometimes students. So by making it IEP/504, EST plan, we can ask for documentation. The program is advocating for it and documents that evaluation and progress data are included in the plan.

Tracy and I had a conversation. How do we make sure we

have participation of a licensed teacher of the deaf or audiologist involved? That would be meeting invitation or agenda.

>> JOHN PIRONE: This is John. I would like to ask something real quick.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Absolutely.

>> JOHN PIRONE: Quick question for you. The bullet point says goal of the student and/or family under consideration. I have a question about that. The word consideration. That has a lot of potential there. I know there's goals related to that. That can be connotated as positive or negative. Is that going to help or not help? You want to be able to have that back and forth with each goal. So, the word consideration, you know, the way that that is worded I just want to make sure that you're actually considering it from that perspective.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Thank you, John. We selected that verb from the original language. The impact hearing status, goals of students and family the original language was represented and integrated. John, would you prefer that we keep that language of representation and integration as opposed to considered?

>> JOHN PIRONE: I'm sorry. Would you mind repeating that real quick for me?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: So I went back to the original NASDSE document. That element, the original language was represented and integrated. Would you prefer that language instead of considered?

>> JOHN PIRONE: I'm curious about what Amelia and Rebecca's comments about this. What do you think about this, of using those words instead of?

>> REBECCA LALANNE: This is Rebecca. Amelia, do you have any thoughts?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Yes, this is Amelia. I agree. I like the represented and integrated much better. Considered, to me, means parents are at the table saying this is what we would like. And the school is just thinking about maybe doing it or not. Whereas integrated says the parents', family's voice, student's voice is going to be integrated into the goals.

>> REBECCA LALANNE: I second that. Absolutely. Everything you just said I agree with. This is Rebecca.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. Thank you. That's the level of detail we're at now. So, thank you, Dr. Pirone. We made revisions. And we really want to make sure that we continue the essence of the elements. And find what are the key verbs and adjectives to really reflect the need. So, thank you for that revision. So, I made that change in our document.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: This is Amelia. Before we scroll down to the next page, it says Vermont state licensed teacher of the deaf, hard of hearing, the licensed audiologist. We need to make sure that we have DeafBlind on there as well, a DeafBlind professional.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. So, Vermont licensed teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing. Should that also what would be that professional licensure that would reflect I mean again would be reflected in our state of Vermont?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: I'm not sure exactly what maybe Jacqui has that answer as to what that professional is. If they have a license or what. I just know that is incredibly important, to make sure that that DeafBlind professional is at the table. Because accommodations and goals, everything is different when it's a DeafBlind student.

>> SHARON HENRY: Hi. This is Sharon. While Jacqui is thinking about that, is this a question that we could pose to Tracy Evans Luiselli? Would you be willing to do that? And then go into the document and replace where it needs to be added. Just please add it, okay? Jacqui, could you please address Amelia's question?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yeah. I think reaching out to get clarification is something that we need to do. When it comes to licensing, I refer to my licensing team on those issues. I had just raised my hand in response to the bullet about the goal of students and family represented and integrated. I just wanted to remind folks that as of July 1st, 2022, there is a new special education role around parent input. This is for students with IEPs. That students have from the meeting up to

ten days to provide written input that goes either directly into the IEP itself or as an attachment that gets attached to the IEP. So it would just be great to tap into this new rule that was designed to make sure that the family is represented and is a partner in the process. So the evidence may be parent input or attached within the IEP.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. I want to make sure that we I can put minutes and/or other parent documentation. Because we want to make sure this is not just for special education students, but all students. So, we can put it that way. There are other documents and ways for parents to offer their contribution to the goals and objectives. Other thoughts around these elements before we move forward? Does this structure again, the question is, does the structure make sense for indicators and evidence? So this was Tracy and my take on it. Wonder what people's thoughts are.

>> SHARON HENRY: Hi, this is go ahead, Jen. Then I'll follow up.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Sorry. This is Jen. Sherry, I was just saying that I like this setup. I like the formatting.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. What we can maybe do is go through here and say, indicator of evidence. Just to keep using that word indicator, to reinforce that we're now looking at that we've changed our language. And I also think Sherry, correct me if I'm wrong the idea is that this, once completed, would be set up with live links. Where the provider, who was going through this process of evaluation to report the data to the AOE, would simply click on the link and then upload respective documents. Because, as Sherry stressed, we're looking for existing evidence. We're not looking to make this process onerous. But this is exactly what school districts do now when they have to complete their quality standards. They click on a link and they upload their documents. And it goes to the AOE automatically. So, we're using their existing template and their existing structure. Sherry, do you have anything to add to that?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. Thank you, Sharon.

Absolutely. This tool will not be effective if it's so cumbersome that existing programs need to hire additional people to do the work. So, I think we're starting with what's our tool. Then we develop the ease of submission to provide that information. Whether it's to AOE or others. We really want to make it a tool that demonstrates or indicates this is a quality program. And that the tool is something that's useable, easy. That's why when with we've looked across all the states in this country, no one has been able to do this. If we can find ways to make sure we have high quality programming and ease of assessment and ease of information production, then we have a higher likelihood of a tool that will be effective. So, yes. Thank you, Sharon.

Other feedback before I move off to Element 2? All right. Okay. Element 2 is around expectations for education programming and future employment. And here is the old language. It's a very long one. And then Tracy and I came up with these recommendations. I'll read through. Then we'll get feedback. What is the language? What are the words? Is this meeting our needs? So programmatic opportunities provide access to high quality learning, which will impact future career plans. And that's the language from NASDSE. We added program staff advocates for and documents that students are actively engaged in transition planning. Evidence, meeting invitation, including Voc Rehab, agenda and/or minutes redacted. Student programs reflect learning profiles, are modified based on student's progress and instruction meets student's needs. Evidence, licensed teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing participation in team meeting as evidenced by meeting invitation, agenda and/or minutes.

This may be the place, Amelia, where we have the expertise of a DeafBlind expert. We may need to add that there. Data driven instruction and evidence based practices are in place. Evidence, rationale for instruction programs are documented in the team meeting minutes. Opportunities for socialized programming in areas unique to deafness and reduced hearing. Evidence, consideration of including expanded core curriculum as

documented by meeting minutes. Ensure accessible assessment, instruction, activities for all students regardless of their communication mode or learning style. Evidence, accommodations listed in the IEP, 504 or EST. Plan should be there.

And then assessment of language and communication development, signed, spoken, or both. And strategies for developing skills in the areas to address gaps in language, listening, communication and learning skills. We kind of combined a couple there. Evidence, documentation of assessment of developmental milestones at regular intervals to include receptive expressive language measures for semantics, syntax, pragmatic, morphology, and phonology. And provide professional development regarding the variety of needs and appropriate practices for students who are deaf, DeafBlind and hard of hearing, including students with co occurring disabilities.

Some groups may not be able to do that. But if we really expect that that's offered, show us what you could provide and when that would occur.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Sherry?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Go ahead, Jen.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: I saw that Dr. Pirone had a question about what does accessible assessment mean, which is one in the ensure accessible assessment.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Thank you. I wish Tracy was is Tracy here?

>> SHARON HENRY: Not yet. I think she's still stuck on the road.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: So, accessible assessment, to me it would be great to have Tracy is that tools are provided or accommodations to the assessment, which could be modality. Could be structure. It could be length of time. So there are accommodations around assessments that need to be in place. That we see all the time in IEPs. So, for me, ensure if I need to translate, to me that's a problem. I will highlight it and say we need to look at the language for that. But I can understand the confusion. It's a world I live in. But not everybody.

>> SHARON HENRY: Hi, this is Sharon. Is there a way to strengthen of course, you all know this is my beef that providers are using evidence based tools that have strong properties? So when these assessments are done at the respective milestones, that there's documentation that the clinician is using the appropriate tool again. That is capable of showing or not showing progress or lack thereof. So, I think it's is it bullet number three? Does it fit there? Or under the bullet we were just talking about that's highlighted in red?

That not only is it accessible, but also the tools are employed that are appropriate. I've seen this as a clinician where they try to assess the progress. And the tool they're using is worthless in giving the information that the clinician is looking for.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Thank you, Sharon. This is Sherry. I think it would be helpful I did data driven instruction and evidence based practices. That eventually we put in links with what has demonstrated that kind of efficacy you're talking about, Sharon. At this time I'm going to just note those spaces where we want to have links. And we can do that after we've got our language down. How does that sound? All right. So, Sharon, if you see others, can you highlight in yellow? And then when we go back, we really want to see if we can drop some links in. Jacqui, you've got your hand raised. Go ahead.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Thank you. Under the slightly above where it talks about the student piece, I was just wondering, Sherry, to what extent personalized learning plans for secondary students, if that was considered as an evidence under, like, student programs reflecting learning profiles. I was just curious. Since, you know, all of our students are required to have a PLP. And a good PLP is going to reflect that learning profile, abilities, aptitude, et cetera. I was just curious.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Thank you, Jacqui. And I want to be honest. The number of districts that have PLPs in place I took a survey of superintendents from the southeast. And none of us really have strong PLPs. So, while I think there's an expectation that those are in place, there are very few

districts that really have something more than, here are the courses you're going to take over the next four years. So I can add PLPs. I know AOE really wants those. There are very few districts that I'm aware of, and I'm one of them, that really have a strong document that has all those elements in it. I can add that in the hope that we're all going to grow in that. I just have not seen many districts do that well.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. For those of us outside of the education world, what is a PLP? And why is it important? How would it change practice?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: I mean, I could speak. But Sherry could as well. Personalized learning plans. It's providing by the time that the student is a secondary student, this is for all students. Part of my concern is this is a requirement for our state. As I want to make sure that, you know, every student students with and without disabilities have access to this personalized learning plan. It's a plan that's supposed to identify the student's emerging abilities, aptitude, disposition. It includes the parents and families in this process. It does guide decisions around course offerings and other high quality educational experience.

It's this documented PLP that should be developmentally appropriate and define, like, the scope and rigor of academic opportunities that should lead them to graduation and post secondary readiness. That was part of I believe it was Act 77, I think, way before I got here. So, I appreciate Sherry's candid share. But I would want to see if this should be happening for everybody. It should give insight into that particular indicator of the element. But I understand that is going to be an inconsistent data result in reviewing programs.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. Hopefully it's captured in the IEP or 504 anyway. So if those data points are missing, it's captured in another way.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. I spoke to five superintendents yesterday. And none of them are doing it. So, I appreciate the want. But it's an unfunded mandate. It requires a full time person to make that happen. Most districts

have not been able to do that. I know we're trying to do better. But I can add it in the hope that at some point but I think we have many so it could be a meeting invitation, agenda, PLP, if it's a good one, and/or minutes. Whether that student program reflects their learning profile. Other feedback?

>> So the PLP, that's very nice to include that. Only if, of course, they have full access. You know, for language and other opportunities, of course. And then they can go ahead and have the PLP. But if they're struggling with other things, then they're also going to be struggling with PLP. And also down, my point, to the third bullet. The data driven instruction and evidence based practices, I have a question about that. The evidence based practices, is that what's really included in the evidence? And what's in the decision making? Like studies, other studies that have indicators that are shown? Or, like, showing the student's success? Is it including the data only? I mean, I think that's where we have to see whether or not the evidence is there or not.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. Great question. So, there are rubrics that allow whether or not a program is evidence based. And there are websites that will list different programs and rate them in terms of their level of evidence. So, it is how many studies were done. What is the evidence in the studies? So, there are tools. I know we need to use those websites and those determinations when we write federal grants. Such as the title grant. We have to demonstrate what evidence supports those practices and how well do they score. So again, that's the cross reference. If we are listing them and creating a link to those practices and instructional practices as well, we will need to go back and make sure. And it's usually rated on a scale of one to four how strongly the evidence supports these practices and levels of instruction.

All right. So, I'm going to move on to the three, four, and five. Sharon, do you want to talk about the work that you all did with this?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Sherry, this is Amelia. Can I add one

quick thing under the second one? The opportunities for specialized programming and areas unique to deafness and reduced hearing. You need to add deaf blindness to that.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. Thank you. Amelia, is it deaf/blindness? I want to make sure I do that correctly.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: This is Amelia. I was just thinking that. Is it deaf/blindness or DeafBlind? I can ask Tracy that one, too. Unless someone else on the call

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. Tracy Evans Luiselli has said in the past that it's capital D and capital B but put together. D E A F, and B L I N D but the D and the B are capitalized. That's how they do that in their literature.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Great. Thank you. You tell me where to toggle up or down.

>> SHARON HENRY: You can toggle down, Sherry. Thank you. So, Jen and I met the other day. Basically did the same thing that Tracy and Sherry did. We modeled our efforts after their Elements 1 and 2. Keep on scrolling down, Sherry. So, right there. Possible revision for essential number three. Language from the NASDSE guidelines. High levels of family involvement contribute to positive student outcomes. Program advocates for and documents that parents are included in all levels of planning and decision making for their children. The evidence would be parent input either via meeting minutes, 504 educational service plans, obviously redacted.

We thought the second bullet point was embedded above. So, again, we're trying to reduce and be succinct. So we eliminated the second bullet from the original NASDSE guideline. Specialized activities and programs are shared with parents. Such as those choices there. The meetings with other parents, social events. Transition support. And the evidence is via emails redacting the sharing information. And the transition planning is evidenced toward progress toward goals on student educational attainment. So, let's just take comments on those two bullets first. Does anyone have any additions or corrections, or comments? Please unmute.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Thanks, Sharon. With the parent

counseling and training, another source of evidence for students on IEP is that would be written as a related service on the service page of the IEP. I'm just pointing that out as another data point.

>> SHARON HENRY: Sherry, could you please make that edit?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: One more time, Jacqui. Related service on the IEP?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yeah. Next bullet. The parent counseling and training services.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Oh.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yes.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Down there.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: So, for evidence for students with IEPs, this would be found on the service page of the IEP. It would be called the related service on the service page. Nice.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. I'm a little having a hard time with this language here. So, going from so you have specialized activities and programs shared with parents. So, you're doing meetings with other families. You're doing some social events. And then you have a jump to transition support. I'm not sure if that should that be a different element?

>> SHARON HENRY: I don't think it should be a different it should be a black bullet. I think it got stuck in the formatting, yeah. My apologies. Google doesn't always do what I want it to do. So, sometimes I give up.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: I'm trying to let's see if I can I'll try to fix it.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. Okay. So, the evidence listed under transitions report should really go above. Yes.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Doesn't want to do it. I'll make it work. Go ahead.

>> SHARON HENRY: So then the evidence listed there should go up above. There we go.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: It doesn't look pretty. But we know what it means.

>> SHARON HENRY: Right. We can fix it later.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yeah. Sharon, this is Jen. We mentioned when we were doing it, it doesn't seem it fits under there. But even in the original document, it's listed there. I agree that it seems like a mismatch. It doesn't seem like it fits there. Transition is pretty important. It seems like that should be a

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Right but

>> JEN BOSTWICK: It doesn't fit with the opportunity to meet with other families and peers, and things like that.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. I think the intent of the NASDSE guidelines are to make sure that parents are involved in every step of the way. That's why transition shows up here. This whole bullet is about including the family in decision making. So, that's how I interpreted as to why it was here. So the evidence for the transition support is basically what is listed there. And later on I'll go back and figure out how to make the evidence, that same evidence show up under the social events bullet as well. Okay.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. I think we just need to have something about now I understand thank you, Jen. So, special activities and programs are shared with parents. Meetings, social events. Transition instead of support transition, training. This word is what's confusing me. I'll play with it a little bit.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. If we can move on then, training support, the goals are routinely provided to support parents and their children. The meeting minutes would be evidence. And also, as Jacqui mentioned, the related service listed on the service page of an IEP. And lastly, the last bullet here that is struck out, Jen and I weren't exactly sure what it meant. And we thought that how we interpreted the spirit of that bullet was subsumed in the bullets above. Does anyone read that last bullet differently? In our mind, the specific strategy listed above are the strategies that you would use to include parents in all of these activities. Does anyone read it differently?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. Yeah, the only thing that we sort of when we were just talking about what exactly does

this mean, are there specific things that they're doing to ensure that parents who have kids are aware that they are also available excuse me. That they're also able to join in activities, maybe theater, sports, you know, after school clubs? Things like that? That maybe there's specific things, strategies to make sure those were accessible to their children? But I don't know. Like Sharon said, we're definitely open to any feedback. That's one we weren't totally understanding what they meant. When it said specific strategies are used to include parents.

>> SHARON HENRY: So, Laura has a comment in the chat. Maybe it means to choose a certain pathway to ensure that parents are also aware of the activities. But up above, there's a bullet that talks about emails to parents, letting them know about these activities, et cetera, et cetera. So, that's why this bullet seemed redundant to me.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: This is Amelia. To me, when I see activities, it's the school letting us know about, you know, the picnic, the DeafBlind picnic. Sorry. My brain is fried right now. The adventure.

>> SHARON HENRY: Adventure day.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Exactly. There's a DeafBlind gathering for a walk. That means activities. I'm wondering if this is for school activities, like Jen said. The extracurricular activities. Like your child has every single right to go to a school dance, to a concert, to a play, to participate in a sports team. To me, that's the difference.

>> SHARON HENRY: So maybe one way to address this our other goal is to keep this succinct. Is to include school based extracurricular activities. Sherry, can you make a note of that? And I'll fix it later.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. I would say school calendars. What is the gen ed education tool? In that, I can be specific enough. Sometimes when the student is not included in other aspects, the parent may not be included on the email address or communication address that all kids' parents have. So I'll add that. Thank you.

>> SHARON HENRY: I think John has a comment.

>> JOHN PIRONE: This is John. I have been involved with IEPs before as an advocate for the parents. I've been with different families. One similarity is that the parents themselves don't have the support to be involved in that process. The IEP meeting, the team is making the decisions. And maybe the parent not always has that support that is necessary to kind of figure out what their child needs. When they talked about the parent counseling, that's also helpful as well. But, you know, being an advocate for the child is very important. But for the parent as well. You know, I don't know if they're fully involved and invested in it. You know, do they really know what the educational goals are? Do they really know what that access really means? And when you're talking about the school based activities, do they know what is included in that? You know, I think it's really important to kind of add that into it. And I think that's really valid for elementary all the way through high school.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you. Thank you, John. So, maybe, Sherry, make a note that we could rethink this. Because I think the language may not be specific strategies to include the parents but specific strategies that are used to support the parents. And also including Laura's comment about making sure the information is interpreted for the parents. So, Jen and I, maybe you and I can take another run at that, okay?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Sure.

>> SHARON HENRY: Any other comments on essential element number three with these revisions? Okay. Hearing none, let's go to number four. So, this was all about language communication needs and thinking about it in the context of a learning environment. So, language and communication needs are considered. The program advocates for and documents that student language is comprehensively assessed at each transition to identify gaps that may occur. And I wanted to advocate for licensed providers using evidence based assessment tools that are age appropriate. And that these qualified providers are involved in the planning process and the interpretation of the

test results as appropriate.

Second bullet, opportunities for direct communication with the child's peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode is considered. The key evidence here would be communication plans.

>> JOHN PIRONE: Pardon me, Sharon. This is Dr. Pirone. I just want to add something real quick. Hold on one second. Sorry. The interpreters need to make the screen bigger. So, the first bullet that you were talking about there. The licensed teacher of the deaf, so one potential problem is we don't know, you know, what their skill what their ASL skills are. What their fluency is. You kind of have to assess that. You know, if you're having the teacher assess the child, you know, here in Vermont, there's not that many licensed, if you will, that are fluent in ASL. So perhaps, you know, a licensed teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing, you know, maybe have an evaluator. We did use an evaluator for Maine before. And they kind of assess the ASL skills. Laura, you know what I'm talking about, right?

>> LAURA SIEGEL: Yeah. This is Laura. I know, Jen, she's one person who shared the name I'm trying to remember the name. Jen, do you know the name of that person?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Sorry. Yes, it's Emily Blachly from Maine. That's a good point. B L A C H L Y. That's a good point to add about an ASL specialist as one of the providers.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. Thank you for raising that point, John. This has been a topic at the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Council. So, thank you for reminding us of that. Amelia?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Evidence based tools that are age appropriate? Are we talking about developmental age or chronological age?

>> SHARON HENRY: I would defer to the professional who is making that decision.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: I was curious. If this is a 12 year old, we're using an evaluation but their language level is much lower, then it should be a different evaluation.

>> SHARON HENRY: I think it's worth making that point. I would hope that the professional would know that.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Me, too, but

>> SHARON HENRY: But, exactly. Exactly. Yes. Yes. Any comments on bullet number two, direct communication with the child's peers? I think the interpreters switched. Okay.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: I was going to say, I think you can still pull some more words out of there to make it even more refined. And we're trying to get for example, get rid of these and qualified. There's still some more wordsmithing. We can keep squeezing it tighter and tighter. That, we can do after.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. I just wanted to add communication plans are something I don't know if everybody is familiar with them. But they're something that we are working to implement in Vermont. And it's something across all service providers. They will hopefully be involved. Well, they're starting to be implemented now. And it really looks at the special considerations. So, opportunities for direct communication with peers. Direct instruction. You know, those things that we're going to be touching on are the plan is that they will be sort of an addendum to the IEP. Or added. So, if there is going to be a guided discussion that happens is what the hope is. That's why you'll see communication plan listed here a lot. I wanted to make sure that people knew what those were. Those are new.

>> SHARON HENRY: This is Sharon. We can put an example of it in our appendix or link it electronically here. So that we can get it more widely adopted. Because it is based on national on standards that have been accepted nationally. And so we want our state to adopt it as well. Okay. So, let me do the next two bullets and then I'll take comments. Okay? The child's academic level and full range of needs are considered. The notes, redacted from the IEP, 504, EST, or the communication plan. And the other piece of evidence we thought was important to retain was the staff employed principles of Universal Design for Learning and/or specific strategies for these students.

The next bullet was the opportunity for direct instruction

in the child's language and communication mode is considered and implemented. And the evidence are meeting notes, communication plans, and to show whether or not there is support for direct instruction of any language or communication mode. So, let's take comments on those two bullets. Anything missing? Anything need to be added?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Sorry, this is Jen again. John, Dr. Pirone, when you say add language plan, are you saying it should be communication slash or language plan? Because in the communication plan, it does say what languages or modalities the child is using. I just want to make sure I'm understanding your question.

>> SHARON HENRY: So if I'm understanding John correctly, you would like us to add communication/language plan? Is that correct, John?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: I see a note that he just said as long as that that it's included, the language is included in the plan, that it's good. But, John, go ahead. Sorry. Didn't know if you were busy.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Can we provide other feedback now? Have we resolved that question?

>> SHARON HENRY: I think John's responding.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Okay.

>> JOHN PIRONE: My interpretation of communication and language are very different. So, communication means you can communicate and doesn't mean language skills are very strong. Right? So the meaning is very different. So, language skills and communication communication can be very basic. Right? So, for me, they're very different things. So, just, you know, my suggestion would be a language plan if that's, you know, something that what does that include? Reading, writing, signing? You know, what does that mean as far as that and how to assess that language plan and increase or strengthen that language.

>> SHARON HENRY: So, I think go ahead, Jen. You're on the work group, right?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yeah. So, John, I can see there has been a working group that this was definitely a priority for all of the providers. So, our program, the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind and the Vermont Cares are also working as individual providers. I can share that. I'm trying to think. I can't remember Sharon, I shared it with you. Were you going to add it to the Google drive? I can't remember now. My head is a little foggy.

>> SHARON HENRY: I will, yeah.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yeah. I can get that. I can share that with you, John, so you can see. Then you'll have, I think, a better idea of what exactly it entails. Because it does have a range of ways that a child might communicate, as well as their language. So I think I'll just share it with you all. Sorry. I'm not talking very good today.

>> SHARON HENRY: To resolve the issue here with reference to this document, we could call this document that Jen is referring to a communication/language plan. And that way, anyone else who is reading this document, who might have the same questions as Dr. Pirone, would be assured that it covers both. I think it's a very important point. And we can make all those edits later on, Sherry, if you just highlight them in yellow. Yeah. Just highlight one. That will key me to fix it. Okay. So, I think now we're on

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry.

>> SHARON HENRY: Go ahead, Sherry.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: In terms of child's academic level and full range of needs considered, I think you can just put IEP, 504 plan or EST. Because I'm not comfortable just with notes. I think it really needs to be part of a core document. Is that okay?

>> SHARON HENRY: That's fine with me. We lost the document. Or at least I did on my screen. Can everyone else still see it? Or no? There it is. Okay. Sorry. My bad.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: So, to me, to be a legal document in the IEP and 504 and even a solid EST plan, based on what our standards of practice are, academic level and range of needs

must be I wouldn't say considered. They need to be included. Again, considered, to me, is a pretty weak word. Again, we're talking about I'm going to go up to language and communication needs are included. So the documents that make sure that happens how did we say? Integrated and considered are included in. Can I change that?

>> SHARON HENRY: Yep.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: And I would add minimum. They have to be included in all three. Are included in plan document. Something like that. In student's plan. How about that?

>> SHARON HENRY: Uh huh.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: And then we would need to see an IEP, a 504 plan or EST plan that directly references their academic level and range of needs.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. Thank you, Sherry.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Thank you.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. If you scroll down, I think there's one or two more bullets left in this element. Oh, no, more than that. So, we're right at the end of the page. Did we catch the last one on the previous page, Sherry? Opportunities for direct instruction in child's language and communication mode are considered an implemented. So, I would change that to integrated and implemented. Again, try to use stronger language that's more precise. So is this a place we should also include the IEP, the 504, and the EST?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. I think the more opportunities for direct instruction. 3504 or EST, you are not mandated to provide direct instruction. If there is direct instruction required, it would mean that a student needs an IEP. So I think you're fine, if you're talking about opportunities, that that would be meeting notes. It wouldn't necessarily be in a 504/EST plan.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Direct instruction is that mark.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. Let me just defer to the chat for a minute. Jacqui, can you unmute and explain this to us, what your question is?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Sure. I'm sorry. It went too fast. We jumped too fast before I said it. There was a bullet about the staff implementing UDL. And I think it's in strategies. I assume that's instructional strategies. I'm just wondering, what evidence would be uploaded in that case? I didn't know if that was discussed, you know, for

>> SHARON HENRY: It's under bullet number four, I believe. I'm sorry, bullet number three. Yeah. There you go.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. I would agree with Jacqui. I think UDL is a very specific practice that you're identifying one over others. There are other I mean, those of us who are current often use UDL. I wonder if staff employed principles so, that's UDL is about access. We address access other places. Child's academic level of full range of needs to include student's plan. So, if it's in my world, access can be in terms of accommodations in an IEP. Access can be part of a 504 plan. Access can be part of an EST plan. I don't know if you need if those are done well, it would be included in those pieces. That's where the tension is for me, Jacqui. I don't know if the tension is the same for you.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yeah. In cases of monitoring, when we do an audit of the IEP, you know, we do check to see, you know, the accommodations, the needs. And then we verify and validate by observation in the gen ed classroom with our checklist about practices and ensuring that those accommodations and modifications are in place. So, I was just struck by that like that evidence. And I'm not suggesting that we shouldn't be looking that the instructional strategies are being delivered with fidelity and all of that. I'm just saying, what would they upload? If I were working with a district, is it their curriculum? Is it, you know, the you know, it's one thing to say if a student has appropriate accommodations and modifications in their IEP. But implementing them, like how could we get at that as something they would upload?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: I would agree. To me, this is very prescriptive as opposed to the quality of the academic you know, the other parts of this. I would agree with Jacqui.

That's pretty prescriptive to me.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. That was language directly out of the NASDSE guidelines. Thank you for that perspective. I think Jen has a comment.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: I agree, Jacqui, that these principles should just be included in their accommodations. The only thing I think we talked about this at another bullet, Sherry Sharon, sorry. In terms of evidence, if you were to do a classroom observation. And did you see, you know, are you documenting? Yes, the teacher is repeating other students. Is providing, I don't know, real life objects when needed. You know, like some of those sort of strategies that might be implemented. That's the only sort of in terms of evidence. And I'm not sure that that's how can the provider is that the provider's responsibility versus the instructor? So, that's difficult to get actual evidence, I think.

>> SHARON HENRY: Is it possible to have a piece of evidence be the classroom observation that the qualified provider actually does? And says

>> SHERRY SOUSA: I think that's tricky. Because we can all it's like when I do teacher evaluations. They know I'm coming. They'll do what I want them to do. You're going to get the straight story from me. How about we include that in the student's plan? We need their academic level, the range of their needs and access to program. So, access to programs is around accommodations. So, if we put it up here and take it out of the evidence, then we would look at their EST, 504 or IEP plan and make sure their accommodations are included.

>> SHARON HENRY: That sounds like a great compromise.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yep. I agree.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. So, where are we? I think we're down to the next page.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Oops.

>> SHARON HENRY: That's okay. Delete that whole thing. So, I think we did we talk about this bullet? I'm losing track here. Opportunities for direct instruction. And the data to support that are the communication plan and meeting notes.

And the next bullet was student's needs for assistive technology devices and services are considered and provided where appropriate. And the evidence would be the communication plan. So, any comments on those two bullets?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: This is Sherry. And, again, Jen, this is a new opportunity for me. Does everyone have a communication plan, who would fit into the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind group? Is that the attention? No matter what, you're always going to have a communication plan? Or are you saying assistive technology would only be considered if a student has a communication plan?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: No, no, no. No. That should be considered regardless. The hope is that all students eventually will have a communication plan. But they certainly don't now. It's a work in progress.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Should we then include the IEP, 504, EST as well?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yep.

>> SHERRY SOUSA: Thank you. I'll do that.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. While Sherry is doing that, I want to move us along to the next bullet. We have some other business to attend to. The next two bullets, the student's communication needs are tailored based upon the classroom activity or environment, or activity environment. The evidence is the communication plan and evidence that clearly describes how the communication needs will be met in these different circumstances. The next bullet go ahead, John.

>> JOHN PIRONE: Yes, I have yes. So, the first one, the communication needs is based on okay. So, that that's a red flag for me. Because I'm not sure what that means. But I think in any deaf environment, it depends on, you know, if the student is signing, or speaking, or the language modalities are being addressed and, you know, translated. So, I think we may need to switch that. And the concept of LRE, the minimum learning environment.

>> The least restrictive environment.

>> JOHN PIRONE: The least restrictive environment. We need

to maybe change that to LRE.

>> SHARON HENRY: So, John, I'm not sure exactly what you're suggesting it be switched. What in this bullet?

>> JOHN PIRONE: Just that bullet, I feel, may need to be switched depending on the environment. And really matching that environment and the student's needs. So, it's just it has to accommodate that environment that the student is in at that time. Depending on if they're using a listening system device or what they're using for their communication needs.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you. Jen?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Yeah. I think that was the intent. Is that we're saying that communication needs for a student may depend on the environment. So, if they're in a one to one setting, they may need this. If they're in a social situation, they may need this. If they're in a sporting event, they may need this. I think that's what we were trying to get at. Is that what the child's needs, the student's needs may differ, depending on where they are. And we need to make sure that we're looking at all of the different environments that that child may be encountering through their day, in making sure that they have access. Certainly not just this access. Any access that they need. If that makes sense.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you. So the next bullet, placement opportunities available for a student whose language and/or communication modes cannot be met with available school services. So the evidence would be that the meeting notes reflect a discussion about other placements available within and outside of Vermont. Any comments?

Okay, thank you. Tracy, I made a note under number four we'll add a licensed audiologist as one of the qualified providers. Thank you. So, given that we're at 1:20, I would like to save number five for our discussion on May 9th. And with all of this input, I think Jen and I can tighten up the language on three, four, and five. So, on Monday when we meet, we can start with number five and go from there. I just quickly want to jump ahead to the stakeholder. Thank you for setting up meetings with Kevin. And people who can't come because of time

constraints, you can download the document from the Google space and send that to them. Please don't give them access to the Google drive. Ask them to give us their feedback by May 15th or May 20th. But there was one other person who you listed in the chat who could come to our meeting. So, please confirm that with her and let me know. Are you there, Jacqui?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yes, sorry. I am.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay, awesome.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yep.

>> SHARON HENRY: You'll solicit the feedback by email for the two people who can't come. And then set up the person to actually attend in person who is available?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Right. So, I can send her the link to this meeting and that's fine with the committee that she attends? Is that

>> SHARON HENRY: The Zoom link, absolutely. Yeah.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yep.

>> SHARON HENRY: Then what I would suggest you do is three or four days before the meeting, download the document. Just the document. And send that to her for comment. Because, obviously, the document is evolving and improving all the time. So, we want her to comment on the most recent version. And the same thing for the other two people who are not available. I can't think of their names right now. It's up here in the chat somewhere. So, thank you for doing that, Jacqui.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yep.

>> SHARON HENRY: And so a quick so, I think what we need to do is decide how to approach guidelines 6 through 10. And maybe what would be most what would be most efficient? And what are people willing to do? I think on Monday we could review number 5, 6, 7 maybe, or 8. If there was someone willing to work on those. And then the following meeting, we could tackle 9 and 10. I think we're getting better with each iteration. So, I'll give you a minute to think about that. And I just want to give you an update about the AOE. So, Chris Case, I don't know his exact title. He reached out to Spenser Weppler, Chair of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Council.

Apparently he was confused, thinking that the assessment tool we were developing was for assessing the RFPs that are going to be coming in soon to the AOE for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind grant. As you know, that's not the case. I asked Spenser to send Chris the minutes from the April meeting, which we all accepted last Monday. Which details the intent of the tool, the extensive national search we've done, et cetera, et cetera.

And that we are leveraging, we hope, the existing framework that the AOE already uses. And Chris expressed an interest to Spenser he's very much interested in being collaborative. He expressed the issue about terminology. That's why we're hopefully landing on alternative terminology. So it makes it easier for the AOE to adopt the tool. The intent and the hope, through a collaborative effort, is that the vendor selected would use the assessment tool as maybe one of the tools that are used or deployed by the AOE to assess the quality of the services. Right now, there has been no monitoring plan. And so the choices before the AOE is that AOE develops their own tool. So, we've already done the work for them. They ask the vendor to develop the tool, which you can see how much work this is. And the vendor is supposed to be busy providing the services. Or to hire an outside consultant, which is very expensive, in order to develop the tool.

So, we're hoping that this tool will be used by the vendor this year through a voluntary process, through a collaborative effort. And then eventually, as explained in the April 4th meeting minutes, the eventual goal is for every service provider to be encouraged, supported and asked to complete this tool. So that the AOE then has a list of qualified providers who are reaching these benchmarks or these indicators that we're laying out here. And so Chris, Spenser, Sherry and I are meeting on Monday to look at process and timeline. So, I would like us to continue to focus on developing the best tool that we can. And then we will work with the AOE to provide the best and easiest, and most effective and efficient way to deploy the tool. Sherry. Did you have anything to add?

>> SHERRY SOUSA: I have to be faster with my clicks. I'm willing to do indicators 6 through 8 and draft them for that piece. And I want to say I really appreciate the dynamic nature of the conversation today. I think that went really well. And I think there are some strategies we can that would encourage special ed directors to use this tool as well. And I think NASDSE would be wonderful to make that happen. I'm impressed with what we did. Now that Tracy and I worked together on the first two, I am confident at giving it a try. And I know the group will hold me accountable if I'm missing something. I'm willing to take 6 through 8 and have it ready for our next meeting.

>> SHARON HENRY: I'm willing to take 9 through 10. If anyone is willing to join me, I welcome the input. Jacqui, did you have anything to add to the meeting with Spenser and Chris? I don't know if you were even there.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: No. I wasn't there. I put in the chat who Chris Case is so they know his title. He reports directly to Dan French and Heather Bouchay.

>> SHARON HENRY: And you report to Chris Case.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: That's the lineage for all the tools that we do.

>> SHARON HENRY: Awesome. Are you sharing with Chris the meeting minutes? Are you also keeping him apprised?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yep. He has been following. And we've been discussing the tool. We know that we're also currently getting feedback on the RFP process and scoring criteria. So, if this is a group that wants to make that recommendation that it like everything you just expressed. This is the group that takes the feedback and considers what can be done, what may need to happen later or what might not fit. Which I shared with Spenser. I'm happy to report back to the council the feedback.

>> SHARON HENRY: Great. Thanks. I think this will come in the form of a report, in the form of white paper, backed up by all the literature we reviewed, et cetera, et cetera. Then we'll work with the AOE to work on an implementation plan. Again, because you have the template set up in terms of

collecting these types of data, we're hoping we can leverage that. Two questions, is it Chris Case or Chris Cane?

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: It's Chris Case, who is the division director for student support services. Chris Cane you have met before. He is one of the managers, one of my reports with the agency. So, he does all the technical assistance and professional development work. You might have interacted with him this past fall.

>> SHARON HENRY: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you for that clarification. Sometimes it's hard to hear on the Zoom call the difference in the vowel and consonants. So, thank you.

>> JACQUI KELLEHER: Yep.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, John, for coming. Our action plan is to meet on Monday. Sherry, and whoever is working with Sherry, will do 6, 7 and 8. And I will do 9 and 10. I think I'm seeing a commitment in the chat from Jen Bostwick to help me. Is that correct, Jen? Okay. All right. Anyone else is happy to help, too. But we'll go from there. I look forward to seeing you all on Monday. Thank you so much. Bye bye now. Jen, do you have a minute to stay on?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Sure. Hi, Nicole. Laura is saying if we need to continue, she needs to make one of us the cohost.

Who would like to be the cohost? You?

>> SHARON HENRY: Sure. Send it to me.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Thanks, Laura.

>> SHARON HENRY: Bye.

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