

DAIL DHHDB School Age Subcommittee and NASDSE Coalition - 03-26-2024

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>> SHARON HENRY: Okay, so I think we'll get going. My name is Sharon Henry. I'm a parent member of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind Council and the co-chair of the School Age Subcommittee. Thank you, once again, everyone for your patience and thank you, Heather, for coming to the rescue and working under duress.

This is our third training program in less than 12 months on the work of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind School Age Subcommittee. Today we've collaborated with Vermont Hands & Voices Council, Vermont Coalition for NASDSE Guidelines, and the University of Vermont medical center Educational Services Program. Thank you for your help with this.

I'll give a brief history of the D/HH/DB Council, the NASDSE guidelines, and the work of the Vermont Coalition, talk briefly about the tool and the checklist we've developed, and we'll move right into how the checklist can be used in IEP, 504, or EST service meetings, and how it can help guide direct service, technical assistance, as well as consultation and any other services that are provided.

And then I'll invite Linda to talk a little bit about how the checklist has been used in the school district and what our plans are for moving forward. Quickly, the history of the Council, it was formed in 2016 by a legislative mandate. And the members of the of the Council are pointed by and report annually to the Governor. And most importantly, the mandate of the legislative language is to fulfill the legislative mandate, to assess the services, resources, and opportunities that are available to children in the State of Vermont who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind. That legislative mandate is what guides all of our work. And you can read the statute at that link there.

So in response to that legislative mandate, we began to look for resources. And fortunately, in 2018, the national Association of State Directors of Special Education released this book in 2018 "Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing." It basically in ten chapters outlines the ten principles that guide best practice for serving this population. Purchase fortunately for us, under the direction and effort of Michelle John, the Vermont Coalition for Deaf and Hard of Hearing was formed in 2020. Their primary goal is to help move these guidelines out into practice and bring awareness of these guidelines.

One of their first initial efforts was to develop an Infographic of the ten essential principles for effective education for students who are Hard of Hearing. You should all have a copy of this handout either by mail or here today. And that is a very helpful infographic for parents. It boils down the language to make it accessible for families to understand what these principles mean in terms of their children.

So, using the two guidelines produced by the NASDSE organization, both for Deaf/Hard of Hearing and for DeafBlindness, which was updated only in 2008, we used those two resources. And with the help of Sherry Sousa, who unfortunately couldn't be here today, she is the other co-chair of the Subcommittee, we used the framework that was put forth by the educational quality standards from the Vermont Agency For Education.

Periodically every school district has to supply evidence that demonstrates that their school district is meeting the quality standards set forth by the AOE. So we basically used that framework to create the Vermont Quality Indicator Tool and described the evidence that would be submitted or the evidence that would be obvious in support of meeting the principles set forth in the NASDSE guidelines.

The Subcommittee met for a year and a half. We interviewed local, state, regional, and national experts. All

of our meeting minutes are posted online so you can look at all of our work that was accomplished. It's all publicly available. From the indicator tool, we then boiled things down to a one-page Vermont Quality Indicator Checklist. We'll show you how this checklist can be used to prep for a meeting or used during a meeting to guide the discussion and make sure all the important elements are being covered.

So whether your student is on an IEP, a 504, or an EST, whether they're receiving direct technical service or consultation, this checklist is meant to be a snapshot of the important elements that should be addressed. It provides a model structure that addresses many of the NASDSE components and demonstrates how the checklist can be used by all team members.

It's important for us to realize that Deaf/Hard of Hearing is a very low incidence disability. And in talking with John Berliner who is our special educator today and with Sherry, there is not much exposure to Deaf/Hard of Hearing content for special educators, so this is a highly specialized, low incidence situation.

So having qualified providers is really, really important. The School Age Subcommittee recognizes that these two documents, both the tool and the checklist, are works in progress. So we are constantly looking to update them. The links can be found there, and at the bottom, the documents are dated, so as we improve them through use and feedback, we will keep them updated on the publicly available website, the DAIL website.

So I'm going to introduce Johnny, who is our student today, who is the Student for our IEP meeting. Johnny has a moderate to severe bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. He's kindergarten age, and he is mainstreamed. He utilizes hearing aids, using hearing assistive technology, a Roger DM system, and he uses a combination of American Sign Language and English and has an educational interpreter with him.

As we move into the mock IEP, you'll hear the special ed team mention the checklist. And I will be guiding you through that as we move along. You'll also hear them mention the Vermont Communication Plan for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind. This is a document created by the Agency For Education and we'll talk more about that in a little bit. Amelia Briggs will be our parent.. Our special educator is John Berliner. Licensed teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing is Jen Bostwick. Our licensed audiology is Brianna Owen. And Sarah Smith is the school based speech language pathologist. And she unfortunately couldn't be present today for our IEP, but the parent and the team was sent a written update regarding her assessment of Johnny's status.

Our licensed SLP, who is present today, is Tracy Hinck. And Tracy has additional training in working with students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and is LSL-certified, an additional training she's undergone to obtain additional expertise in this area. Our trained Deaf mentor is Darcie Matthews. Our educational interpreter is Emily Verner. Our kindergarten teacher is Michelle Rheault.

So this is our team. As they move through the IEP, I will explain how what is happening in their meeting is reflected in the checklist. So you have the checklist in front of you. And I want to point out that the checklist has eight items on it. And yet the NASDSE guidelines has ten principles and the infographic has ten principles.

And that was done very deliberately, because we wanted to keep it as a checklist, otherwise if we had included everything, it would be back up to 115 pages, and that's not the point. So in the NASDSE guidelines, item number 6 is the least restrictive environment. And that is included under element number 4 in the checklist. And the principle number 10 is related to state leadership, which is not necessarily relevant to the individual student level IEP, and that's why that was deliberately left off.

So we start with the NASDSE guidelines, 115 pages. We have the infographic and the tool. And now we have the checklist, which is short and sweet, which is the intent. The other thing that was sent to you was the agenda for an IEP annual review meeting which is what Johnny is having today. And this is a useful template for covering information that's needed on a 504 as well as an IEP.

As a parent myself, I want to emphasize to the parents in the group that it's not your responsibility to know all of this. It's up to the providers and the professionals in the team here. But as a parent, it's helpful for you to know the process, and hopefully this documentation will help you to ask the pertinent questions that are important for your student.

So the first two items that we're going to do here now are the introductions of the team members and the parental rights. So I will turn it over to John. And I will mute.

>> JON BERLINER: Good morning, everybody, thank you for coming, welcome to Johnny's annual IEP meeting. We'll try to use Johnny as the name for the students and if anybody is talking to me, they can call me John, as that conflict could be confusing.

I want to start by just reviewing a few of the norms for our meeting today. Please make sure we only have one speaker at a time. Voicing members, please wait for one of the two mics on the table there for you to take it. If you pick it up, the mic should unmute and you can speak and when you're done you can place it back down or pass it to somebody else who is speaking.

And then please state your name prior to when you begin speaking. And if somebody would like to remind me if I don't do that, I will take that feedback very well, thank you. So we can go around and make sure we're introducing ourselves so everybody knows who you are. Please just state

your name, your license or other qualifications that are relevant to our meeting today.

So I am John Berliner, and I will be the special educator, the note-taker, and the LEA, which is the local education representative. We can go in a circle.

>> I'm Amelia and I'm John's mom.

>> I'm Brianna, the licensed audiologist.

>> Hi, I'm Darcie Matthews, sign language instructor following the training and mentoring curriculum.

>> I'm Jon Bostwick, a licensed teacher of the Deaf. I have worked primarily with students that are using a bilingual approach, ASL and English.

>> Hi, my name is Tracy Hinck, and I'm a speech language pathologist that is consulting with Sarah, the school-based SLP. I have my certification in listening and spoken language.

>> Good morning, I'm Michelle, I'm the classroom teacher for Johnny.

>> Hi, everyone, I'm Emily Verner, the educational interpreter working with Johnny. My qualifications were scored through the educational interpreter performance assessment.

>> Thanks, everybody. Amelia, as the parent, we want to make sure that you feel comfortable and that you can participate in this meeting as much as possible. Oftentimes I'll look to you first to share any information. Feel free to pass if you don't have anything to share, and we can always come back to you if you have something else to say.

As a parent, you have a number of rights under Vermont special education regulations. Those are the right to participate meaningfully, and if you disagree, you have a number of parental rights that you can use to share your disagreement. Would you like another copy of the Vermont parental rights?

>> If there's been no changes, I don't need another copy.

>> There haven't been since the last time we gave them to you.

They're also easily found online and I'm always happy to send you a copy if you need them. With that, Amelia, do you have any concerns or questions that you want to make sure that we discuss at our meeting today?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Just a few. I notice that the SLP services through the school have not been consistent the past few months. So I just wanted to check in around that. We would like some more time with our Deaf mentor if possible, especially since he seems to be lagging in his expressive signing.

And I would also like to know, what is the process if the educational interpreter is out, what are you doing to find a replacement for that?

>> JON BERLINER: Great, so we'll make sure we tackle those. Quickly, just to answer some of those questions for you, when a provider isn't available, our baseline is to collect some data about how much time that provider is out, and then look into how Johnny is doing with his IEP goals that that provider is providing.

If the progress doesn't seem sufficient in that time out for the provider was impacting that, then as a team we can talk about something called compensatory services. That's just a way for Johnny to make up some of that time. I just want to let you know, that's not always a one-to-one for every missed session. It's really the services are about meeting Johnny's goals.

So if Johnny is meeting those goals anyway, that's great, and we want to talk about updating the goals. If he's not, then we can talk about those compensatory services.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Great, thank you.

>> JON BERLINER: In terms of the Deaf mentor, if it's okay with you, let's put that on hold until we get to that services session of the IEP

review. And when the educational interpreter is out, we'll put a plan in place as a school. There's a wonderful organization called VANCRO that can provide remote interpreting services if we're not able to get an in-person substitute. As a team we can talk to the service providers about options such as the use of captions for Johnny.

Does that sound good?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Yes, that would be great. But I think the first goal would be to have an in-person interpreter, correct, since it's not recommended for a child to reduce remote?

>> JON BERLINER: Absolutely, and we have that option, we'll make sure to use that.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Thank you.

>> SHARON HENRY: If you pull out your checklist, you can see that what has just happened was that John had each member of the team introduce herself, and learn about what their qualifications are. And I'll speak about that in just a minute. It's absolutely critical with this low incidence disability that qualified providers are present at the meetings or at least have submitted a written statement if they can't physically be there.

And certainly if qualified providers are present, we know that student outcomes are improved. In the next slide I'll show you what those qualifications look like in terms of initials. But I want to also demonstrate here that you just heard John as the special ed director really invite the parent for parent input, so that's number 3.

So the parent should have a very large voice. That's the important part as a parent. Here is your opportunity to really bring out the unique strengths of your student and make sure that people realize the unique needs and characteristics of your student. So just in that little bit of the IEP already, we've already covered or addressed essential element

number 8, number 1, and number 3.

Okay. And as someone who might not be familiar with some of these professional titles, a speech language pathologist should be -- the name should follow with CCC-SLP. And that stands for certificate of clinical competence in speech language pathology or certificate of clinical competence in audiology AUD. The teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing is someone who is qualified at the master's level, either an MEd/MA, licensed through the Vermont Agency of Education. Correct me if I'm wrong, Emily, the recommended level is proficiency of a 4.0 for an interpreter on the EIPA.

There's also a national exam that one can take. So there are a couple of different ways to become a qualified educational interpreter. And then you heard Darcie mention that she has gone through a specific curriculum to learn how to become a trained Deaf mentor. There is no licensure per se, but it's important that there be adequate training so that the language skills are developed accordingly.

Darcie, did you want to add anything to that?

So it's important, parents, that your child is served by someone who is qualified and has experience in Deaf/Hard of Hearing. So now we're going to let the mock IEP go forward a little bit more. And you'll hear John lead the group through item number 3, which is the purpose of the meeting, to review the student's progress on the previous year's IEP, and then review the student's progress on the current IEP. So this will sort of blend together a little bit.

>> JON BERLINER: This is John. I did forget to mention that Sarah Smith, who is the school-based speech and language pathologist, was not able to make our meeting today. Amelia, you were sent an update about Sarah and she provided some recommendations about the updated IEP. Sorry about that.

So the purpose of today's meeting is to review Johnny's progress from

the previous year's IEP and then to update or develop a new plan based on the what we talk about here today. We will be using the D/HH/DB checklist to guide this process. Let's start by talking about Johnny's current progress on his IEP.

Since we have a lot of service providers here, I think we can go around and hear from everybody one at a time. Amelia, I would like to start with you from your perspective as a parent. What are -- tell us about Johnny, what are some things he likes to do, how do you feel like he's doing?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Sure. This is Amelia. Johnny loves to play with his Legos, he loves to play with his cousins and friends, read books, spends time outside riding his bike and playing in the playground. He loves to learn. He has a great curiosity in all things.

And I think one of the areas that he really kind of needs some help in is with his expressive ASL, I feel that's a little bit further behind that it should be. I just want to mention, before I forget, to ask about his hearing aids, the batteries aren't working, I was wondering if we could look at the process for checking those at school.

>> JON BERLINER: Yes, this is Jon, absolutely. Brenda, do you have anything you want to share about that process to help Amelia understand?

>> We can definitely look at options of why that hearing aid battery might be checking out by the end of the day. We can definitely get more data and do some additional hearing aid checks during the day to make sure he's not missing access to any of his education.

>> JON BERLINER: Thanks. Does that sound okay?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Yes, that would be great, thank you.

>> JON BERLINER: This is Jon. So we will work with the team and we'll give you an update once we get some more data around that and make sure that everybody is on the same page with that plan moving forward.

So as I mentioned -- sorry, Sarah is not here. [Laughs] But she did share some updated information. And I can just share that with the team really quickly. If there's more detailed questions, please feel free to ask. If anybody else at the table is able to address those, great. If not, we'll make sure we get Sarah to provide those updates.

So from a language baseline at the start in kindergarten, Johnny was using one to two -word phrases in spoken English to express his wants and needs, with a mean length utterance of 1.9. Now Johnny is using two to three words of spoken English phrases to express wants and needs with a mean length utterance of 2.5, so increases in both those areas.

Sarah has also been working with Johnny on increasing spoken English vocabulary development. At the start of kindergarten, Johnny could create a word map picture with a description from two classroom themes. We've had more progress in that area. And then they're working on carrying over listening development in collaboration with the SLP listening and spoken language specialist, Tracy.

Any question that you have about that off the top of my head, Amelia?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: No, that sounds great, thank you.

>> JON BERLINER: Wonderful. Tracy, would you like to give your update, please.

>> TRACY HINCK: Sure. This is Tracy, and I have really been enjoying working with Johnny and the school-based SLP. When we started working together, his baseline, he could detect just three of the six sounds at 3 feet and now he can identify all three of them at 3 and 6 feet. When we first started working together at the beginning of kindergarten, he could identify out of four words, he could find them just basic words from categories like farm animals and foods.

And now he can discriminate 20 words that sound similar, we call those minimal pairs, like fan and man. He can do that with 90% accuracy in a

field of 8. So he's made a lot of progress. His teacher mentioned he's still struggling with classroom discussions. I did want to share that we've left the team know about some professional development opportunities from Hands & Voices.

There's an online academy. The Move Center has parent workshops in June. I wanted to let you know we had shared that information.

>> JON BERLINER: Thanks. Would you like to provide your update, Brianna?

>> We have had staff training in the school to make sure they had full understanding of the technology that Johnny uses with his hearing aids and verification was completed with his DM system and we met target for transparency. So currently the technology 2009 classroom is working, but we will be doing the troubleshooting regarding the battery use.

>> JON BERLINER: Thanks. Jen?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Hi, this is Jen. Like others have noted, Johnny is super fun to work with. He always comes to our sessions eager and ready to work and tries his best. He's got a great sense of humor, which is fun. We have been working on some self advocacy skills, like you mentioned, recognized if his hearing aid battery isn't functioning and what do you do in that situation, who can you go to, those are some things we're working on and will continue to work on.

Also just talking a little bit about his interpreter and Emily may jump in on this more later, but, you know, sort of how does that work and what should you do if you have questions during the day about the use of the interpreter. We've also been working on the foundations for literacy program, which is an evidence-based early literacy program for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, primarily geared for ages 3 through 6.

We started on unit 3. We're currently on unit 7. So he's made some nice progress. Some of the skills we're working on are letter-sound

identification through both listening and spoken language as well as the finger spelling, incorporating finger spelling, introducing new vocabulary, story, recall and retell, as well as answering some basic comprehension questions.

Also part of foundations for literacy is really working on storytelling and narratives. And so he's now able to sequence a four-part story. So if there were four cards, whether it's making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, he's not only able to put that in order but sort of tell the story of what the steps are, which is nice progress.

>> JON BERLINER: Thanks, Jen. Michelle, as the classroom teacher, would you like to share your update, please?

>> MICHELLE JOHN: Good morning, it's Michelle. Johnny is coming to school every day excited to learn, he's very motivated. He just has a great personality. I have been observing him interacting more with his peers. Of course he's accessing his interpreter more by interacting with his peers. So that's been really nice to see. Thank you.

>> JON BERLINER: Does anybody else have an update they want to share?

>> This is Emily, I can go before Darcie. I'm the interpret and her I'm pleased to announce Johnny has been attending for longer periods of time before the morning meeting. There's an a lot of quick turnover in conversation, those meetings can be tricky, but I've worked with Michelle to slow things down a little bit. Kindergarteners have got a lot to say and they want to say it whenever they want.

But Johnny is starting to understand my role as the interpreter. So when I give an interpretation, he's recognizing, oh, that's not Emily saying that, that's my teacher or that's my friend, so that's showing some theory of mind development, which is great.

He's also becoming more interested in what his peers are talking about. So it's providing him opportunity for incidental learning. We've

been building interaction with building staff and kids in the classroom. If he's working at a table with a buddy, and he wants the purple marker, instead of asking me, they can ask each other, which is great to see him more involved.

>> JON BERLINER: Thanks, Emily. Darcie?

>> Hello, I'm Darcie, again. Johnny is wonderful. He's bright, he's curious. He's always on an adventure. So it's been interesting and fun to work with him. And he always wants to learn new signs. He's very curious about learning new signs. So we've been working on vocabulary, related to class, working on signs about himself, about us, about seasons, winter, spring, summer, and fall, about insects and so forth, and signs related to home and family, mealtimes, sports activities such as basketball and soccer.

And also we talk about his morning routine, what he does after he wakes up in the morning, how does he get ready for school. And soon we'll be talking about, you know, facial expressions, emotions, making sure when you're talking about feelings, that your facial expressions match that. So working on that congruence.

And he's starting to learn classifier. Just simple classifiers in American Sign Language. For example, the index finger, or the hand shape which is the number 3, and how you use that in the language, and working with yes/no questions. I'll ask him simple yes/no questions, and he'll answer them.

And Amelia, I don't know if you had any questions at this point.

Okay.

>> JON BERLINER: This is Jon. Thank you, Darcie, thank you, everybody. Amelia, anything that you wanted to add or anything that popped up that you wanted to talk about?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: No, it sounds great, I'm happy to hear about all the

progress he's making.

>> JON BERLINER: Excellent.

>> SHARON HENRY: So you just heard the team go through the current progress. And that addresses essential element number 4. You heard the team talk about his baseline status which came about through a comprehensive assessment of the student's language. It is important to do that at each transition in order to identify any gaps that are developing. Because Johnny has access to a Deaf mentor and his ASL interpreter, he's having opportunities for direct communication and instruction with the appropriate professional personnel.

And you heard Bri talk about his hearing assistive technology and going into the classroom to teach the teachers and the other people in the school system that Johnny will interact with. So it's important that the acoustics in the classroom are also assessed. That's all covered under number 4.

You heard under essential item number 5, you heard Amelia, the parent, bring up the issue of, hey, Johnny's batteries are not lasting through the day or he's coming home, telling me his hearing aids aren't working. So essential element number 5 talks about a monitoring plan that ensures a student's hearing aids or whatever assistive technology he's using is being checked regularly and being monitored appropriately.

And this might come up in a bit, but sometimes a functional listening evaluation also needs to be done in the classroom by an audiologist. Essential element number 6 is very important because the educational plan that they've talked about that was in place for last year has to be based on the need of the student rather than the available services. This is where you as a parent, it's really important to be able to advocate.

And then the other one that's covered here is the fact that the student's disability category is documented as Deaf/Hard of Hearing or

DeafBlind on their educational plan. I'll explain why that's important in just a minute.

Essential element number 7 was reflected in the discussion that just happened. Because you see that Johnny has access to peers, and personnel in the same language and communication that he is using. He has access to a Deaf mentor and an ASL interpreter. What we didn't hear about but what will come up in a little bit, I think, will be access to peers who are using the same language that he's using.

And then of course his unique needs are constantly coming up. So let me just briefly explain why it's important that the Deaf/Hard of Hearing disability be documented. For the data that's available here in Vermont, we have, from '22-'23, the last academic year, it was reported to be 220 students on IEPs, and 151 students on 504s.

And this is not all of Vermont. This is a subset of students that were reported to the AOE from the two major vendors who were funded last year by the AOE. The Federal Government requires that the State of Vermont report on the number of students who are on IEPs, and for last academic year, Vermont Agency For Education reported 73 students on IEPs.

So the point here is that there's a big discrepancy. And the reason why the data are incomplete is because the State does not have an organized system for data collection. And there's a lack of State oversight to ensure the accurate student count for Federal reporting. There is no Federal requirement for reporting of students on 504s.

So it's very important that we as stakeholders and professionals in this area come together and try to address the issue. So our action steps have been, as a Council, through the work of the Subcommittee, is we're making a recommendation to the AOE on what a minimum data set should be that should be collected annually and then shared with the Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind Council on an annual basis, and we will work across the

state to develop a collaboration so we can direct this data and collate the information so we have an accurate picture across the state.

It does affect resource allocation, so we want accurate numbers, who we're helping and how they're doing. Jon will review the cover page to ensure all the information is accurate and review the present levels of performance. This is where your input as a parent is critical because you're making the plan for next year.

>> JON BERLINER: This is Jon. So thanks, everybody, for sharing your current updates. We're going to use that information around those present levels and how Johnny is doing right now to review the rest of the IEP to see what if any updates, changes, or additions will need to be made.

The first page is the cover page. This is just sort of the basic information on the team. As you look this over, Amelia, has anything changed in terms of address or phone number or anything like that?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: No.

>> JON BERLINER: Great. I'll make sure all of the team members are updated there as needed. Next we're going to move on to use that information about where Johnny is right now to talk about goals and objectives. Sorry, Jen. Go ahead.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. I was just going to jump in and talk a little bit about a couple of assessments I did with Johnny, is now an okay time?

>> JON BERLINER: Perfect.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: So we did two standardized assessments with Johnny to assess his ASL. The receptive skills test, which is appropriate for students 3 through 13, so Johnny is certainly in there, he received a standard score of 85. An average score is between 85 and 115. We always say 100 is sort of the average. He received a standard score of 85, so he was on the low end of average, but still within the average range for his

receptive skills, so what he's understanding.

We also did the ASL expressive skills test, which is a test that looks more at the student's ability to tell a story, to narrate a story. They watch a short video, it's about three to five minutes, and there's no, you know, talking or signing in it, it's just all action. Then they're supposed to sign what happened in the story.

He received -- he was in the 10th percentile overall in his expressive. So that means that, you know, 90% of the students his age are performing better. We do know Johnny uses spoken English primarily as his expressive mode, so that is just I think sort of food for thought. But we do have an idea of where he is performing, and like you said, you do notice his expressive ASL seems to be sort of behind his receptive skills, which is kind of what we do notice in the assessments as well.

>> JON BERLINER: Thanks, Jen. Amelia, any questions on what Jen shared?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: No, that makes sense, we're seeing it at home as well with his language.

>> JON BERLINER: Great. Do you have anything you want to add to the present levels?

>> Yes, so I think that at this point in time it would be a good time for us to do a functional listening evaluation to get a better understanding of how he is doing across modalities for receiving information while in the classroom. And I think that that would give us a better picture of what components are contributing mostly to his understanding and education. So I think that's something that could be a next step for us.

>> JON BERLINER: That makes sense to me. Amelia, how do you feel about moving forward with that?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: That would be great. I think the more data we have,

the better.

>> JON BERLINER: Anybody else on the team have anything they want to share or any questions or concerns around that?

>> I just have a question. I'm Bri. Is the functional listening something the audiologist does? Are there other team members who might participate or contribute to that?

>> To do a functioning and listening eval, you don't have to be an audiologist. It is important that someone that understands it and has the tools handy to do it and feel comfortable doing it are the ones that do it.

>> Great, thank you.

>> JON BERLINER: Bri, how long will that take?

>> For planning, ideally we would have Johnny in his own classroom. If there's a special where all the kids are out of the room or time that would work, what best in Johnny's schedule, to be pulled from another activity for probably no more than 15 minutes, as long as I can kind of hop in there and get set up ahead of time, that would be perfect.

>> JON BERLINER: Thanks. Michelle will be able to work with you to make sure that schedule works for everybody?

>> MICHELLE JOHN: Yes, absolutely.

>> JON BERLINER: Great, thanks. Michelle, would you like to add any more information about Johnny's present levels for the team?

>> MICHELLE JOHN: Yes, this is Michelle. I want to first let you know how much I'm enjoying having your son in the classroom, it's been a great experience, as well as the interpreter, Emily, in the classroom. I do notice he has some challenges with his periods. He seems to access his interpreter, but during circle time it seems more challenging because he's getting lost in the peer discussions, even though we're trying to have one person speak at the time and have the best practices available.

Sometimes he's also not responding to the questions appropriately.

And I don't know how to move forward or what we can do to best support him.

>> JON BERLINER: Thanks, Michelle. Tracy?

>> TRACY HINCK: For children that are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, oftentimes they do have social communication challenges. When we think about best practices, what that means, I think to me is we look at research, we also that our professional judgment and experience, and also kind of what our team thinks.

And so the American Academy of Pediatrics put out research on children with hearing loss and it is an area of challenge. I'm glad we're addressing this today and moving forward, how we can support Johnny in that way.

>> JON BERLINER: This is Jon. Thanks, Tracy. Anybody else have anything that they would like to share right now?

Amelia?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: No ary think the only other thing we might want to think about is access to peers that have the same communication mod as Johnny for next year.

>> JON BERLINER: Great, thank you for sharing that. So the way that this will work is I've been taking notes on the information. There's a few different sections in the present levels of performance which you'll see right after the cover page as the next part of Johnny's IEP. You'll have the chance to review that, as will the whole team, as I'm not perfect at taking notes all the time.

If I misinterpret or forget something, it's no big deal to add that, so that we have an accurate representation of Johnny's strength and challenges right now.

>> SHARON HENRY: I'll interject and address a question that came through the virtual chat room. Is it typically to propose a functional listening evaluation or a similar test at the IEP to be documented later?

I've been doing as many tests as possible before the IEP so I can present all of the data. And is there a benefit to either way? Which would be considered best practice?

>> It's a little bit hard to say in this case, given this child is fictitious, and he is in kindergarten. If he's just gotten settled into his classroom and with his interpreters, it may be the appropriate time. I'm also not sure what month we're having this IEP meeting for this student.

And then to address your question, I think it's really good, especially for an older student that's not just starting the school process and getting set up with a team and language development, that yes, ideally I do think that we would have a functional listening eval on every student every three years to look at how they're accessing. You know, it helps guide recommendations and the plan for best support for access in the classroom.

But just keeping in mind, especially with the littles, who are still developing language, that they would be comfortable and set up in the classroom prior to that happening. I do agree that having the data to review when looking at the accommodations is ideal. The IEP is always a --

>> JON BERLINER: Living document.

>> -- living document, thank you, Jon, that can always be adjusted.

Does that answer the online question?

>> JON BERLINER: I just want to emphasize what you said, Bri, which is we're required to do an IEP update once a year but that in no way limits the IEP from being updated other times when additional information is brought to the table.

>> SHARON HENRY: Just another comment in the chat here, and I'm just going to read it. Listening checks are an accommodation not specially designed instruction, as they are adult provided support to ensure the

equipment is working properly. So we're not teaching the student something there, but ensuring their access.

So I don't know if anyone wants to respond to that comment.

>> I think the only comment I have is it is listed as a requirement in IDEA, so it's not a chosen accommodation, it's actually a code and a requirement, that routine check-in is required for a child that uses technology, and they're on an IEP.

So I think what may be variable is it depends on what technology a child has and what their need is. Johnny is young, we would probably have a more specific use plan in place where check-in is specified twice a day rather than once a day, as his hearing aid is dying. I don't know if the comment implies its choice. My understanding is it's an IEP requirement.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, Tracy. We'll have time for discussion and questions at the end as well. So getting back to the checklist, what we just heard the group go through was talking about the student opportunities for specialized instruction that's unique to deafness. You heard Jen talk about the expanded core curriculum, what's the right word you just used, additional -- expanded core curriculum, is that the correct terminology? For self-determination and self-advocacy and those sort of things.

You also heard Jen talk about, under essential element number 4, doing an age-appropriate assessment in his language. And that's absolutely critical, that students have a comprehensive assessment at each transition, and also the opportunity to have direct communication and instruction with peers, and Amelia addressed that as a parent, and with the functional listening evaluation that Bri mentioned under number 5, it's important that that be done so that in the student's native environment in the classroom, we understand what's happening for him at an audiological level, and address any issues or any barriers that are getting in their way.

So the other element that came up here for me as a parent was, I keep on hearing the team coming back to Amelia and saying, does that meet your needs, do you think this is going to meet Johnny's needs, so incorporating the parental input is absolutely very, very critical there.

And then we've already sort of touched upon this, but the importance of the opportunity to communicate in the same language. And again, the child's unique needs are at the forefront, as I listen to this team, of what he's needing to succeed. We'll let the mock IEP go forward again, to address item number 5, C, the review of goals and objectives, review the proposed services by qualified providers. You'll hear mention of the Communication Plan again, and maybe Jen can elaborate on that a little bit, review the least restrictive environment, the placement and determination and accommodations, and any accommodations that are needed.

>> JON BERLINER: This is Jon. Great. So next we're going to review the goals and objectives in Johnny's IEP. We're going to use all the information we had and all the expertise here at the table, both about those specific things and about Johnny as an individual, to talk about it.

The way we monitor and review the goals is based on the trimester schedules that students receive report cards to. Within those larger goals there can be smaller objectives to make sure for the team that Johnny is moving in the right direction, and if not, adjust as needed.

We're going to use a few different ways to assess those goals. Some of them will be observation, when Johnny is in the classroom or other places in school. Other times, we'll have ongoing data collection sheets that are used and scored quantitatively. Sometimes there may be assessments, specific assessments that are used to determine whether Johnny met those goals or objectives or not.

So currently in Johnny's IEP, he has a goal around auditory comprehension. He has another goal around self-advocacy, really getting at

the management of his hearing aid. There is a vocabulary goal, a syntax and morphology goal that was mean length of utterance I was talking about earlier in terms of his progress.

There's academic goals. There's a goal around the use of interpreter, and that was focused on appropriate attention-getting techniques, use of the interpreter during nonacademic times as well. A self-determination goal that focuses on culture awareness and identity. And then an ASL acquisition goal with beginning classifiers and context of finding meaning of unknown sign than Darcie talked about before.

So my question to the team right now is, are there any other areas the team members want to address through IEP goals?

>> TRACY HINCK: This is Tracy. I just want to ask the team if we think we should add a social communication goal, since we talked about that earlier as an area of need.

>> JON BERLINER: Do any team members have any thoughts or feelings? Amelia, starting with you.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: I think it's a great idea, I would love some more information on what exactly that would look like and what would the goal look like.

>> JON BERLINER: Tracy, is this something you can answer or is this something we would want to include Sarah Smith in when she's available to provide her input?

>> TRACY HINCK: Yeah, I think it would be great to consult with Sarah around pragmatics.

>> JON BERLINER: So then what we will do is, I will connect with Sarah the next time that she's available to connect, come up with the proposed goal in that area, and then share that information with the team, and if everybody agrees, we can add that goal to Johnny's IEP.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Great, thank you. We were talking about observing

and assessing. Would everybody on the team be assessing him at different points throughout the week or is it one particular person that would be gathering that data?

>> JON BERLINER: That's a great question. Overtimes the person working on the goal with Johnny is the one doing the observation. In specific situations sometimes it may be a different person. We always want to be as noninvasive as possible. So if there's an opportunity for Michelle as the classroom teacher who is already there to do some of that without interrupting the flow of the classroom, that may be something that we do.

Otherwise, some of that may be happening through other team members. And like I said, the least intrusive way as possible. Does that help answer your question? Great. For everybody in the audience, we're not going to go through the specific language of every goal, as we would be here for a very long time right now. But in an actual IEP meeting we would actually look over the language. If there were any changes or updates to any of the goals, which often happens, in this case probably would, given the progress that Johnny's talked about, we would go through those in detail.

I just wanted to let you know why we're not doing that, that was a conscious decision from all of us [laughs]. So the next part of the IEP are the services. Amelia, the idea of the services is who, which adult, is going to be working with Johnny on the goals we just talked about. And what we're going to talk about around services is who is the most qualified person to provide that, and then how much time do they need to work on those goals.

This is always a bit of a delicate balancing act when we're talking about specific goals for Johnny that are happening outside of some of the other things that are happening within the classroom. So we want to take

consideration of both meeting Johnny's needs and making sure he's participating in the general education classroom just as much as possible.

If you're feeling like the balancing act is going a little too far one way or the other, please let us know. We'll be really honest with you about what that looks like and what that time may be. Just keep that in mind as we're talking through this. So I think the most effective way to do this is to go around and get recommendations from those service providers who are working with Johnny, if they believe there's any changes to their services that are needed.

Does that sound like a good plan for everybody? Great. Bri, can we start with you?

>> Hi, Brianna here. I think we'll move forward with monthly 60-minute consultation and technical assistance with the school team, and just checking to make sure that things are working well. Team meetings. And then annual verification of Johnny's equipment in the school. And we will do that functional listening evaluation.

>> JON BERLINER: Thanks, Bri. Sarah's not here, but in what she sent to you, and I'll just let the whole team know what her recommendation is, so as the school-based speech and language pathologist, Sarah is recommending twice a week for 30 minutes, sometimes one to one with Johnny and sometimes in a small group, plus another 30 minutes where Sarah will be pushing in to Michelle's classroom to work in that setting as well.

And then an hour a month of consultation. And that is looking like Sarah connecting with Michelle and other team members around the best ways to support Johnny's needs in the classroom. Tracy?

>> TRACY HINCK: This is Tracy. I will also be working with Johnny one on one for 45 minutes a week, and then I meet with Sarah for 30 minutes a week so she can carry over some of the listening and spoken language goals we've been working on together. And I support her and the team with those

goals throughout the week.

>> JON BERLINER: Jen?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: I recommend we keep the five times a week at 60 minutes each, which is sort of the recommended level of service for foundations for literacy. Because we're doing it one to one, we also have some additional time to work on some of those self-advocacy skills we were talking about. I also recommend one hour a week of consultation with other team members as needed.

>> JON BERLINER: Thanks, Jen. Darcie?

>> So current services that we've been providing this year is one hour a week with the family. And during school time, we've been providing a half hour a week with in-classroom support, working together with Johnny and his peers. I hear that you would like to increase the time around ASL mentoring, and I've been thinking about potentially increasing it to a half hour of time.

Perhaps a pull-out of the classroom and working one on one in the school with Johnny. That's one idea, I'm not sure how you would feel about that. I heard Jen share the results of the testing and that he definitely needs more exposure to ASL to help him improve his expressive skills and hopefully that will help him with social skills both in-school with his peers and at home.

>> I think that's great if we can have 30 minutes to work on the expressive piece of his language. Having him have access to peers with the same communication mode will hopefully help with his express communication as well.

>> JON BERLINER: Does anybody on the team have any concerns or anything else they want to share around the addition of that 30-minute service? Great, then I'll make sure to add that to the IEP. Emily, you're next.

>> This is Emily. For interpreting services, I correct me keeping the five times, 420 minutes a day, which works out to just a school day with 30 minutes for lunch. Afterschool activities, be in touch with me and we can work something out.

>> JON BERLINER: Last but not least for me as the special educator, I have some case management time, and that time is sort of all-inclusive. It's to make sure all the paperwork and updating the IEP is done, any conversations, Amelia, that we're going to have, checking email, checking in with Teams, doing any coordination as a fairly large team with a lot of service providers, sometimes that coordination piece can take a little bit of extra time.

So I will continue -- I will propose to continue about an hour a week of that. Obviously I'm not keeping track of my time minute by minute, but that's how it evens out at the end of the day. Does that sound okay to you? Great. Do you have any questions, Amelia? I mean, I think as a team, what we're really looking to do is to support Johnny. What we know is that intervening earlier is the way to go and is going to hopefully help him gain the skills that he needs.

So while it is a bit of time out of the classroom throughout the week, I think as a team, we were hoping that that works for him and works for you. Is that okay?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Yes, for sure.

>> JON BERLINER: Great, thanks. One thing that we've been talking about is the monitoring plan. Did we talk about the monitoring plan yet? Listening checks, yes. Right, thanks [laughs]. Just in terms of where that goes, there's just a few different section of the IEP. We want to make sure that you have that understanding. One of them is the narrative section. That's a place that can house some things that don't sort of fit neatly into the goal services or accommodations.

All right. So the next piece as a team that we're going to talk about is the placement for Johnny, right? So we as a state, in Vermont, we want to make sure students are in what we call the least restrictive environment, what is the place that is most like same age peers, also ensuring that Johnny has access to everything that he needs.

After that, then we can talk about some of the accommodations. Accommodations are the things that basically speaking are what adults can do to help support Johnny to make sure that he's accessing his education as much as possible. Jen, do you want to start with this part?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: Sure. I know we mentioned, I think we mentioned earlier the Communication Plan. I think when we think about the least restrictive environment and placement, currently Johnny is placed in his home school, and it seems that's going to continue next year, so I think that it's important to take into consideration what are called the special factors, which is a part of IDEA specific to students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

And the Vermont Communication Plan is one tool that we can use, the team can, I think should use, to sort of go through all of those special considerations, including getting input from home around his communication needs, are there -- does he communicate differently in different situations, I'm sure he probably does, if it's one on one versus sporting events versus an assembly or whatever.

It walks you through what are his communication needs in general and kind of some specific situations to make sure we're meeting his needs, communication needs in all areas, as well as, you know, direct communication with peers and staff. And I'm a signer, and Darcie is working with him, Emily, there are certainly some staff that he can communicate with directly.

And he does receive direct instruction from me, which is great. I

think that peers is something that we can talk about in a bit, I think that should be a discussion about, you know, because he is in this home school, there are obviously other students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing using ASL right now. Even though Darcie is coming in weekly, I think that's accident we want to think about, how can we give him more exposure to peers.

Also are there other supports that are needed to make sure that he is continuing to make progress in his communication. He currently has sign instruction for the family. So, you know, is there anything else? If he were to use an AAC device, as we think about his communication needs. Also just looking throughout his full day. You know, Emily mentioned afterschool activities. That's something the team is also responsible for, making sure that his communication needs are met across not just academic settings but also nonacademic settings.

And then finally, assistive technology. Are we -- does he have what he needs in terms of assistive technology to meet his communication needs? So the Vermont Communication Plan is something that takes a bit of time to complete. So typically that would be a separate meeting that we all would need to reconvene to do that. So I recommend that be done.

>> JON BERLINER: Amelia, would you like to move forward with the Communication Plan Jen spoke about?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Yes, I think it would give us some great information.

>> JON BERLINER: Wonderful. So I'll work with the team after this meeting to set up a time, and it will certainly be at a convenient time for you, and we'll let you know if there's any information we'll be asking so you can have time to think about it and come prepared to work with the team to set that plan up. Thanks, Jen.

As Jen mentioned social interaction with peers, I want to reach out to

the team to see, I know Tracy talked about a few things at the beginning of the meeting, some were opportunities, but just ideas the team has around providing any other social interactions with peers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Anybody have anything they want to share?

Amelia, is this something that's important to you?

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Yes. Yes, I would love to get him engaged and involved with more Deaf/Hard of Hearing peers.

>> JON BERLINER: Wonderful.

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen, I can jump in. It can be a challenge to set up peer interactions. So I think that we have to be creative. There are some ongoing Zoom social outings, social gatherings that do go on throughout the year. So we'll certainly try to include Johnny in those.

There are -- Hands & Voices is a local group, I can't think of the word, that offers a lot of family events, social events. So we'll be sure to make sure you are aware of those if you're not already. And I will be certainly try to notify you of any event that I hear about going on around the State of Vermont, because there are a few that are organized that I'll try to share with you.

>> AMELIA BRIGGS: Thank you.

>> JON BERLINER: If team members want to share that information with me or Jen, we'll make sure Amelia gets access to that information as well. Okay. Next is the conversation about placement. As I said, the default assumption with students is they're placed in their home schools with the supports that they need. That's where Johnny is right now.

And I just want to put it out there, does anybody on the team think there's any different placement need for Johnny right now? Amelia, are you happy with Johnny's placement? Does anybody else have any other thoughts? No? Great, I like to hear that. I'm glad that he's in his home school in a general education classroom.

Anything else anybody wants to add in this section before we move on to the accommodations piece? Not seeing or hearing anything, as always, if something pops up, please let me know. So sort of the last big section of the IEP is the accommodations piece. Audience members, quick pause, sort of like the goals, we're not going to go through every single one but just hit a couple of highlights here.

So Johnny already has a number of accommodations in his plan which seem to be working well. Some of the ones I just want to highlight are in-service and opportunities for the folks working with Johnny to have learning around working with and supporting students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. We'll make sure there's an interpreter available for any of the times he needs it there.

Another piece is a safety plan to put in place. And those would include visual and touch cues for Johnny. This is just wanting to make sure that in all the circumstances, Johnny is able to access all the information, and that, you know, as a school, the priority is making sure all the students in the building are safe, we want to make sure all of those are in place to support Johnny's unique needs.

Another teammates have any additional information they want to talk about, on the accommodations? Or Amelia, if you have any questions or comments. Wonderful.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, team. That was a long discussion, but pretty much all of the essential elements of the checklist were covered. You heard about a monitoring plan done by qualified providers, number 8, use the appropriate assessment tools that are age and language appropriate, number 4.

And baseline current research, number 5. And Jon as the LEA solicited family input, because families are important. Number 1, considering the unique needs of Johnny, and based on the student needs and not the

resources available, and in his current language, that's number 4.

We had a little discussion around the monitoring plan, number 5, that ensures that his hearing aids and assistive technology are functioning properly. We heard essential element number 7 addressed because we have plans for the Deaf mentor to work with Johnny an additional 30 minutes per week and an opportunity to increase his peer interaction through the day and the other things that Jen mentioned.

And you heard Jen talk about placement opportunities. I think as a parent, the safety plan is really critical. And I would encourage all parents to make sure that there is a very clear safety plan. Fire drill, all the other things that happen in schools these days, you want to be prepared for that, and ask your students, what is your safety plan, do you know what to do.

Sometimes they say no, because it really hasn't been reviewed with them. I've had that experience with several families now. So again, I just encourage you to review that and make sure that that is in place. And of course Jen also mentioned some professional development opportunities that are available to the team.

And the in-services that are provided to the teachers in the classroom, in the school, the gen ed teacher and the others, the art teacher, who need in-service training around the needs relevant to Johnny, that absolutely is critical, and making sure that Johnny's disability is documented on the paperwork is that we have that information going forward.

The last three steps of the IEP are the team's decision regarding acceptance of the proposal, and this is really where it's important as parents to make sure that you understand what is being documented, what is being written down, is it really meeting your needs, do you feel like all of the issues that Amelia brought up at the very beginning, have they been addressed.

So here is your opportunity to do that. And then review the next steps.

>> JON BERLINER: This is Jon. So Amelia, I just want to make sure you're understanding sort of what the next steps are going to be after this meeting. So first of all, my goal today was to try to make sure everybody provided their input and any questions they had were answered to the best of our ability. There are a few things I'm going to review with Sarah Smith and get back to you about as she wasn't able to make it here today.

Do any team members disagree with sort of the proposals we've put on the table today? I'll take silence as a good thing here. So Amelia, what I will do is I will take all the information that I took notes on based on our conversation today. I'll type it into our wonderful special ed software program, and I will send it to you and the rest of the team to review.

Once you have the chance to review it, I'll give you some timelines in email if that's okay with you, then we'll be putting it in place and the new services will take place as soon as everybody gets a chance to review it and are in agreement. If anything changes, if anybody sees something, especially typos, please correct my typos, I do my best, please let me know.

And then that new IEP will be in place. I do want to remind everybody, if any new information comes up, if anything changes, we're always able to come back as a team and update the IEP as needed. If something needs to happen quickly, there's a few ways we can do it without having everybody at the table as well.

I'm going to pretend it's right now that we're doing this IEP meeting. As we're sort of nearing the end of the school year, one of the things I'll start working on is making sure there's in-service scheduled during the teacher in-service days before the beginning of next year. We'll try to

make sure we have everybody's schedule in place and that it works with the rest of the in-service schedule for all those folks in the school who need to be there and the service providers who may be providing that in-service time.

One last go-round here. Questions, comments, anything I may have missed before we can call the meeting to an end?

>> JEN BOSTWICK: This is Jen. I just want to ensure that we will be setting up another meeting for the Communication Plan.

>> JON BERLINER: Yes, thank you, Jen, we'll be doing that too.

>> SHARON HENRY: Congratulations, team, that was a great IEP meeting, thank you very much. We'll now take questions from the online and the in-person audience here, but recognizing that we're at time, I wanted to make two quick announcements. Michelle will send out my PowerPoint so that you have all the live links that are there.

And two quick announcements, if you're just dying to know more information about the NASDSE guidelines, next Tuesday, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. mountain standard time, which is 12:00 to 1:00 Eastern Standard Time, Dr. Cheryl DeConde Johnson will be providing a webinar on the NASDSE guidelines and going into more detail.

She is one of the co-authors of the NASDSE guidelines and is a phenomenal resource and has been very good to us here in Vermont. The registration link is right there. Then the other association you may or may not be aware of is the Hearing Loss Association of America. We do have a Vermont chapter. They have some webinars that are coming up, again, as a parent I have found this association to be much more helpful as my child got older, into high school and into college, just in terms of navigating life more as an adult.

So they have a lot of resources and a variety of topics. And these are just a few of them that are coming up in the next month or two to three

months. Okay. So let's take some questions. Let's do the online forum first. And Michelle, maybe if we give Michelle a microphone, she could read the question from the chat and we'll take it from there.

>> MICHELLE JOHN: My bad, sorry. So one of the participants in the chat has asked, does the student ever have time during the day without the ASL interpreter to self the effectiveness of that support and see how he's able to access different environments without the interpreter available? It might also help determine next steps in some of his self-advocacy skill development.

>> This is Emily. It depends. I feel like that's the famous answer to all questions relating to interpreters. With this particular student, being that they're kindergarten and not quite autonomous, I would say the interpreter is pretty much with them all the time unless there is a circumstance where the interpreter isn't available.

As they get a bit older and more independent in the classroom, I suppose there could be times when the interpreter steps aside and we can observe how they're doing without the interpreter. But typically the interpreter is with them all the time. That's what we're there for. And it's really necessary to have access at all hours of the day.

>> Michelle, did you want to add anything to that?

>> MICHELLE JOHN: I also just wanted to add that there are times that they do have a little bit of time alone with the interpreter, giving them space, within the classroom, observing from afar. And also giving them an opportunity to socially develop from afar. The interpreter often will feed some visual cues or something of how to continue playing with a classmate.

So there is some time. But the interpreter is always there. Yeah, not a one-on-one.

>> SHARON HENRY: Questions from the audience, anyone have questions in person? Okay, we'll go back to the online community.

>> MICHELLE JOHN: So far, that's the last comment we have not covered. In essence, good information, people regret they have to go, and they're looking forward to having the recording.

>> SHARON HENRY: All right. If there are no other questions -- oh, yes, go ahead, please. Can you just wait for the microphone?

>> During the meeting when they kept talking about like what are things we can do to address socioemotional needs of Johnny, I personally, now I'm adult who is Hard of Hearing, but growing up, there was not anything like that for me in the classroom. One of the things I definitely dealt with was the shame and guilt, feeling like the outside looking in kind of feeling.

And also that there was in representation or any sort of normalizing assistive technology, especially because this was when it was kind of -- early 2000s when it first became available. And as I've gotten older I've been able to see a little bit more of like books and there's a Barbie with a hearing aid, certain toys and media. Especially in preschool or kindergarten, having books and having, you know, available media and available toys that not only like represent children who are Hard of Hearing but maybe having ASL books or having a video for a movement break that involves like a song when someone is also signing, to have bilingual content as part of the curriculum, not only for that student but also for the rest of the room and the rest of the kids to become like comfortable with it, because I think a lot of kids, you know, if there's social tension, it's because they don't understand, and it's a foreign concept to them, so especially in the early years making inclusion sort of the priority in terms of socioemotional development, and then, you know, that kid will feel more confident in the room.

So just like something to keep in mind, if you're a schoolteacher, to have that stuff around. Thank you.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, that's a wonderful comment, thank you so much.

>> This is Emily, to respond to that, I love that you mentioned books and media. A lot of the kids that I've worked with and I imagine Michelle has worked with, the classrooms will have books with Deaf characters or books with sign in them. We also will sometimes do lunch bunches as the interpreter, we'll grab kids who are interested in having a silent lunch, they'll learn how to sign all the foods in their lunchboxes.

It really normalizes ASL in the classroom and gets kids involved with communicating with the Deaf students in their class and by middle or high school, they're just like, oh, this is my buddy so and so, I know how to talk to them from across the room, I want to partner with them because I want to sign with them. It's great getting all of the kids in the class involved.

>> SHARON HENRY: An online question.

>> Michelle who is playing the kindergarten teacher, did you have an added comment?

>> That's a great question that you asked, a lot of us on this team do make materials available, we work in coordination with the school, the teachers, the SLPs, and we do provide a lot of literature. But we also try to push more of a signing community within a school system, if schools are definitely in support of that.

So a Deaf mentor will come in and teach the kids a sign based on a unit they're doing. And then the interpreter oftentimes will continue doing that during circle time, building a signing community, if the child is accessing ASL, it's a very vital part, because we talk about community and inclusion, and it's just we have to practice what we're preaching.

So by actively doing that, it has been successful. It's teaching other children a different language, and also accessing it. And it's also

benefiting children that are struggling with spelling, that don't have a hearing loss. And I notice kids are finger spelling their spelling words, and then they can write them down.

So it's been a very powerful movement. And we are getting better at doing that. Thank you.

>> There's a comment in the chat. They were inquiring where the educational interpreter is from. In this case for the mock IEP it's Emily, and she noted that in this particular mock IEP, Emily is from the educational services program. They noted that VANCRO's interpreter do not discuss student behaviors but the ESP program does.

>> I would love some clarification, discussing student behaviors with the educational team?

>> Yes, I believe so.

>> So interpreters on IEPs are related service providers, so we're an integrated member of the IEP team. I often will have conversations with classroom teachers regarding behaviors, if the teacher is questioning why a student might be behaving a certain way, it could be because of their access to communication.

They might not know how to express how they're feeling. Of course as an interpreter, I'm always following, you know, a code of ethics, but the environment in a school is very different than working with fully autonomous Deaf individuals out in the community. So there has to be a balance there. I hope I answered your question.

>> Other comments or questions in the chat, Michelle, that we would want to address?

>> MICHELLE JOHN: Not at this time, thank you.

>> SHARON HENRY: Linda, could you just say a word about how you have begun to deploy the checklist out in the school systems and what your plan is going forward? I know we have a meeting next Monday, I think it is, April 1st,

to discuss a little bit more, if you could just say a few comments now.

>> LINDA HAZARD: Absolutely, thank you, Sharon. This is Linda Hazard. We began about a year ago with the checklist in a couple of school districts, just trialing it. We have expanded it this year to other teams. So far we've received some really good feedback on the checklist. However we're in the process right now of preparing a survey to the districts that we're serving in to see what their experiences are, if there are any changes that they would like to see to the checklist, and just any information that would be helpful.

So once we finish this part of the process, then we will actually begin reviewing the evaluation tool and implementing that in a very strategic way. So, starting with a couple of districts. Thank you.

>> SHARON HENRY: I also want to invite Jon to comment, he's been one of our brave souls out in front. As a special ed director, what has been your experience as you've deployed it in your district?

>> JON BERLINER: Linda contacted me about trying to be one of the districts to pilot a little bit. And I was more than happy to do that. I think from a school district perspective, as we've talked about a little bit, there is a pretty low incidence of Deaf/Hard of Hearing disabilities. And so many wonderful special educators and general educators and teams don't have the amount of background knowledge and information that they do working with some of the other students on their caseloads.

And so having the information about what we can do to best support students is incredibly valuable, and really the first piece of being able to implement programs to meet those students' needs. So having an accessible document like this to use has been an amazing step to get started with the students' families of students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you, Jon. As Linda indicated, this has been a

stepwise progression. We've implemented a checklist, we're going to try to get it out into more school districts. And by having an easily accessible document that guides best practice, then the documentation in the IEP will be better. So then when we go to use the tool to evaluate was best practice implemented by evaluating ten or so IEPs, we can expect to see the documentation to be where it needs to be.

That is where the evidence is that best practice is being implemented. So that is our thinking. We're a wave on the shore [laughs], it's a little bit at a time. And there's a lot of work to be done. We're going to keep at it. Michelle, any comments? Michelle is the chair of the Vermont Hands & Voices and the president of the Vermont Coalition for NASDSE Guidelines. They are very much interested in seeing the NASDSE guidelines brought to the State of Vermont and implemented.

She was one of our first stakeholders who came to speak to the Subcommittee. And she's very interested in the data piece as well. Any comments, Michelle?

>> MICHELLE JOHN: This is Michelle speaking. I guess I would say on behalf of families and certainly the Hands & Voices board, that we're really interested in ensuring that families are included, that they are considered a critical partner, and that they are able to access this checklist specifically as a gateway to ensuring their children's education is best practice and it is inclusive and really meets the individualized needs of their child.

Oftentimes as families we can be very overwhelmed at IEP meetings, we're getting a lot of opinions, sometimes they differ. And it can be difficult to know what is best. So it's really our hope that this is a great first step into really ensuring that each team, no matter what district a family may be in, are all working cohesively towards the student's best interest and representative of both the student and the

family's opinions.

So long term goals for us is just ensuring that every district starts to use this and that every family understands it and is able to utilize it, even if their team is a bit unwilling, because sometimes we certainly hit that pushback. But it gives us the tool. And it's really critical that we get this out to all families, not just the families attending this particular session.

So you'll hear more from us as time goes on, because we're not going to let up on this. It's a great tool, and I think it gives families a lot of firm foundation to stand on and feel empowered in advocating for their child.

>> SHARON HENRY: We're not going away, are we, Michelle?

>> MICHELLE JOHN: We are not. We're only just beginning.

>> SHARON HENRY: Thank you all for attending today, thank you to the online community, thank you for staying with us through the technological glitches. We'll look forward to engaging again at a future session. Thank you all so much.