

REALTIME FILE

D/HH/DB Council  
The School Age Subcommittee  
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Vermont Superintendent Association Presentation

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>> Good morning, everyone, welcome to our session on “Assessing DeafBlind programs: How do we know if our programs are good enough?” This is the work of the Governor's Advisory Council on D/HH/DB. My name is Sharon Henry and I'm a parent member of the council.

For our time this morning, we're going to briefly review the history of the Council, talk about the NASDSE guidelines and what's happening here in Vermont with the Vermont NASDSE Coalition. We're going to explain to you how we developed the Vermont Quality Indicator Tool and the Checklist for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind. Then we're going to do a demonstration with our amazing Special Education team that's been assembled on how to use the Checklist for a special ed meeting, whether it be an IEP, a 504, an EST, for the range of services needed for this population, whether it's direct service, technical assistance, or consultation. Then Dr. Linda Hazard will finish up, explaining her experience in the field, beta testing the Checklist in two different school districts during this past academic year, and she'll share the logistics of our July 14th provider education meeting happening in Montpelier for further in-depth conversation on these topics.

So the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Council was formed in 2016 via legislative mandate. The members of the council are appointed by and report to the Governor annually, and in February of 2022, the School Age Subcommittee of the council, of which I am a co-share and Sherry Sousa is the other co-chair, we were charged to fulfill the legislative mandate to assess the services, resources, and opportunities available to the children of the State who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind.

And I meant to mention, you'll get a copy of this PowerPoint and all the links are live. So if you're interested in learning more after the talk, that will be made available. We had a very tall order as a subcommittee. Fortunately for us, the national association of state directors of special education published this guideline in 2018 "Optimizing outcomes for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing."

It's a very long compendium, about 120-125 pages, a very rich resource. And it is often referred to as the Purple Book. I'll talk about that a little more in a minute. In 2020, the Vermont coalition of Deaf Hard of Hearing NASDSE guidelines was formed. Michelle John is the president of the coalition. She and her board have created a really nice infographic, which you have a copy of in your handout stack, which basically is an infographic for parents that explains the ten essential principles for effective education for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing..

So it does a nice job of distilling this incredibly rich resource into a user-friendly piece of information for parents. Last fall, the Vermont NASDSE Coalition also hosted a four-part webinar series where they invited Dr. Cheryl DeConde Johnson to come and explain the NASDSE guidelines in more details. And Dr. Johnson is one of the lead co-authors of this big Purple Book.

So using that resource, plus the NASDSE guidelines for DeafBlindness, which unfortunately were last updated in 2008, we had a lot of information

to try and distill and get it into a usable format. We also engaged local, regional, and national stakeholders from a variety of areas to see if anyone had implemented such an assessment program in their state or in their program, and how were they going about it, how were they using those resources.

So we, the committee, ultimately ended up looking at the Vermont Agency For Education and using their educational quality standard model as a way to come up with an assessment framework. So school districts periodically have to submit evidence or artifacts that demonstrate they're meeting the quality indicators set forth by the AOE. We thought, aha, maybe we can use that model.

So we then created the Vermont Quality Indicator Tool. It has nine quality indicators that establish a level of service and support. It describes the evidence that's needed to demonstrate compliance with the indicators. And it's a tool that you can use to guide special ed meetings. And at the end of the tool, there's a list of resources for providers and for teams.

So if you're not familiar with this population, it is a low incidence population, there's a rich resource, resources there. I have copies of the Quality Indicator Tool up here, if you're really interested in digging in. As a committee, we're meeting again on July 10th to further revise the document.

We have received feedback from the Agency For Education from both their internal and external stakeholders. So we're continually working to refine it and finalize it. We were operating under open meeting law, so all of our meeting minutes are posted on the DAIL website if you want to find the list of stakeholders with which we're engaged.

In the meantime, we also created the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Checklist, which is even a further refinement and distillation of the

Vermont Quality Indicator Tool. That you do have a copy of in front of you. On the left hand column it talks about the essential elements. That's referencing what you would find if you read the NASDSE guidelines, all 125 pages or so.

It also references the Vermont State statute which links the Checklist to our legislative mandate which we hopefully are going to uphold. So the Checklist provides evidence of how easily the principles of standard of practice can be applied to any student in this population.

The Checklist also provides a model structure that addresses many of the NASDSE components. And most importantly, it demonstrates that the Checklist can be utilized by all team members, based on feedback that you get -- that we get from you today, based on Linda's beta test in the field, and other stakeholder input, we will constantly refine and update the Checklist and will be posting it here at this link again at the DAIL website.

So what we want to do now is demonstrate to you how we can use the Checklist during a mock IEP meeting. So I want to introduce you to our student, John, who has a moderate to severe bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. He's kindergarten aged, he's mainstreamed. He utilizes hearing aids. He uses hearing assistive technology, specifically a Roger DM system.

And he uses a combination of American Sign Language and English and has an educational interpreter. Now, during our special ed meeting that will run about 30 - 35 minutes, you'll hear the team mention the Checklist, again, which you have a copy of. As we move through the meeting, Sherry, our LEA today, will indicate which essential element on the Checklist is being addressed during the meeting, so that you can see how it's a check and balance for you.

Also, you can make sure that -- you can hold us accountable and make sure we cover all the essential elements and we do what we say we're doing.

You'll also hear the team mention the Vermont Communication Plan for students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind. This is a tool that was just recently released by the AOE back in February, I think.

A task force was put together. And using the New Jersey State communicate plan, it was adapted to the Vermont context, submitted to the AOE for stakeholder feedback, and then released this past springtime. Again, you can find it here at this link.

So right now, I will turn it over to Sherry, who is going to be our LEA today. And the members of the team are listed here on the slide. But they'll also introduce themselves as part of the mock IEP.

>> Good morning, everyone. Thank you for being here. The purpose of today's meeting is to complete the annual review of John's IEP. I would like to begin by introductions of each of the team members. I'm Sherry Sousa, I'm the special education case manager. And for the purposes of this meeting, I will be the LEA.

I would like to start with our parent first, Amelia.

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

>> Can you guys hear me? So we want the captioner to hear too.

>> I'm Jen Bostwick, a licensed teacher of the Deaf, specializing and working with kids that are using a bilingual approach, ASL and English.

>> I'm Tracy Hinck, I'm a licensed audiologist, and I have specialized training in education through a teacher credentialing program in California.

>> I'm Tracy, and I'm also a speech language pathologist on the team. And I'm certified in listening and spoken language.

>> I am Rebecca LaLanne, and I am the Deaf mentor.

>> My name is Emily Verner, the interpreter. Vermont doesn't have licensing for interpreters but we've determined a score of 4.0 or greater on the educational interpreters performance assessment is what is

considered highly qualified. When I was assessed, I received a 4.4.

>> And I'm Sharon Henry, I am the general education teacher today, which scares me to death, to be in a classroom with kindergarteners.

[Laughter]

>> Thank you, team. Refer to your Checklist, those are Essential Elements 3 and 8 on your Checklist. As your special ed case manager, I just want to review your parental rights for the purposes of this meeting. Your child has the right to a free and appropriate public education at no cost to you, the parent.

You have the right to be informed to consent, which means you, the parent, understand and agree in writing to educational placement. Consent is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. You have the right to participate in the development of your child's IEP and participate in all IEP decisions and any other decision regarding your child. The school must make every possible effort to notify you of the meeting and then arrange at a time and place that is convenient for you and the school.

The school is responsible for reviewing the plan once per year. But the parent has the right to request an IEP meeting at any time during the school year. You have the right to be informed about your child's progress by means such as report cards or IEP progress notes. Your child has the right to be educated in the least restrictive environment, that is the maximum extent possible, so your child should be educated in regular education classes with his or her nondisabled peers.

You have the right to all information regarding your student's referral, evaluation, or individual education plan, and is only accessible to the student's team and teachers, others with your permission. You have the right to participate in any and all decisions regarding your child's individual IEP plan. You have access to all records and release of any and all information needs to be in written form.

You have the right to revoke consent for special education services and placement with written notice. Those are your parental rights. Would you like a copy?

>> I'm all set, thank you.

>> Okay. Thank you.

>> So that is evidence in Essential Element 3. The purpose of today's meeting is to review John's progress on the previous year's education plan and to develop a new plan based on John's progress. We will be using the D/HH/DB Checklist from to guide us in that process. Those are Essential Elements 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

So let's begin by reviewing John's progress on the current IEP. And I would like to start with you, Amelia, and your perspective of John over the course of the year. What does he love, what are his interests, and any concerns that you might have.

>> So John, he loves to play with Legos. He loves to play with his cousins and friends. He loves to read books, spending time outside riding his bike and playing on the play structure. He has a great curiosity. He loves to learn. I think some of his areas of need would be working on his expressive ASL and advocating for himself when his technology breaks down.

>> Thank you, ma'am. Speech language pathologist, Tracy.

>> John, he really loves coming to Speech. He's a happy little guy. We started since the last year, he has really made a lot of progress so he started out just using one or two-word phrases to communicate in listening and spoken language, and his length of utterance was a 1.9 which is an average of one to two-word phrases.

He's made a lot of progress and he's now using two and three-word phrases in English and has an utterance of 2.5, which is great progress. We've been working on his vocabulary development, where we use the classroom content to improve his vocabulary, receptive and expressive.

And he is making a lot of progress. He could only, when we started,

use one word map per theme in the kindergarten class and preschool class, and now he's doing two and three word maps from different themes. So he's doing really great with that. In terms of his auditory skill development, when we started out working together, he could just kind of detect the link sounds, at three feet. And now he can identify them, all six, at three and six feet.

So he continues to struggle a little bit following classroom discussions. So we're going to work on that, moving forward. Then the following opportunities for professional development were shared with the team. The center, parent workshop, Foundations For Literacy, training teachers, and workshop through Hands and Voices.

>> Thank you, Tracy. Teacher of the Deaf.

>> Okay, I'm on. I agree with Tracy, he's a really fun kid, he comes to our sessions engaged and seems to really enjoy the work that we're doing, so that's fun. He's shown some nice work on his self-advocacy. It does sound like it's still a work in progress that Amelia would like to work on.

He's starting to recognize if his hearing aids are dead, if the battery isn't working, he's starting to either ask for a battery from somebody or just knows where they are in his backpack, so that's great. He's also really using the interpreter more, and I'm sure that Emily will probably talk more about this, but he is kind of understanding how they work and when and where to use them, so that's nice.

Our work has focused primarily on literacy. And we're using the Foundations For Literacy program which is an early literacy program, specifically designed for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. When we started working together, he was on unit 3, now we're on unit 7 so we're moving through pretty quickly.

Some of the skills we're working on are letters, sound identification,



whether that's through listening and spoken language or he's doing them through finger spelling, either is perfectly acceptable. Working on vocabulary, story retell, some simple comprehension questions, like WH questions, and he's now able to sequence a four-part story in the Foundations For Literacy, they have story cards they're asked to put in order to tell the story. That was really hard for him in the beginning. He's come a long way, he's now able to do up to four cards, so that's great.

And, you know, hearing that classroom discussions can be a challenge, that might be something that we just need to keep an eye on and maybe Emily and/or I could work on some of the concepts that are going to be taught to make sure he has as much background knowledge and is ready for those as much as we can.

>> Amelia, do you have any questions for Tracy or Jen? Sharon, as the classroom teacher, any of this that you're seeing?

>> So John comes to the class real excited. He has a happy disposition. And I'm observing him interacting more with his peers. But certainly during the circle time, he struggles, because with kindergarteners, they all don't take turns very well. I'm wondering if you have any strategies to help me encourage him to interact more with his peers, because kindergarten is really a time of socialization and learning how to get along, and that does seem to be a little bit of a struggle for John.

>> Audiology.

>> So I think this is perfect timing. His audiology services this year, we actually have been talking about implementing a pass microphone in kindergarten. This is a great time to do that, to give him better auditory access. And so for his audiology services this year, I've provided an in-service to the team and follow up in-services as new providers come onto

the team. Sometimes they change from music to art and special. So I made sure that the additional staff have an in-service about his -- the implications of his hearing difference, his technology, accommodations that would be helpful for him.

And then also, I have completed the verification of the equipment. So when we have equipment at school that is paired to equipment from home, we want to make sure that it's compatible. And we also make sure it's important that we listen to the devices so we can hear what the child is hearing, that there isn't distortion, or that it's not intermittent. I've also worked with Emily, she is great at also checking the equipment.

So I think adding a pass mic would be a good next step to help with peer access.

>> I'll just add too, sometimes we can come in and do what we call a peer in-service, where we talk about everybody has things that make it easier to hear or listen or be involved in the discussion. So sometimes we can do that, even just talking to the kids about, this is the magic talking mic. That kind of helps them realize that it can help.

>> Amelia, any questions for --

>> I know a couple of times equipment has broken down at school this year, and it seemed to take a little bit to get it fixed or replaced. I was just wondering if we can have a better plan for that.

>> That's really important input. We do have a system in place of checking, routine checking. And we have a document that we follow. And typically when something isn't working, you know, Emily notifies me if she can't figure it out. We'll try to be a little faster about making sure that you know right that day.

And we now have an loaner program that we can use so John can have a device while the original device goes to the manufacturer for repair.

>> Thank you. Rebecca.

>> John is a really fun kid. We have been working together throughout the year, developing vocabulary in American Sign Language pertaining to the content of the classroom. So he knows the spoken language, the written language, and now the sign language to accompany that.

We've been working on how to describe yourself, how to describe others. We've talked about the seasons, different insects and what it's like for every season. Again, vocab building in American Sign Language. The daily routine, how to express that in ASL, how to describe family dynamics. We're working on turn-taking, how to describe the sports and foods he likes, and facial grammar for questions and statements, he loves that part. We're making sure he understands questions in ASL.

>> Any questions for Rebecca?

>> No.

>> Okay. And then our educational interpreter.

>> Hey, everyone. Good to see you again, Amelia. It's been so fun working with John so far this year, he's such a Goober. I'm so excited that he's been working really hard on attending during morning meetings and during academic lessons which can be hard for any kindergartener body but he seems a lot more open to learning, so that's great, because that means he's accessing his education more frequently.

He's starting to understand the role of the interpreter. So he's starting to look to me more often when he seems confused or if there is some breakdown in communication. He's also been using me a lot more during social interactions. So during recess time.

In addition to focusing on language acquisition in the classroom, we've been focusing a lot more on his theory of mind development. When I'm interpreting, where is the message coming from, is it me giving him the message or somebody else talking through me? I'm seeing some more moments in his day when he's recognizing, oh, that's not Emily talking to me,

that's so and so, which is awesome.

We've also been providing a lot more access to incidental learning in the classroom. He's more interested in what his peers are talking about when they're having conversations around him. And something that's really exciting is that the staff in the school has been taking more interest in wanting to communicate directly with him.

So I'm able to provide them just quick utterances in sign language so they can say, good morning, or what do you want to eat today. And not just the smile on his face when people are signing to him other than me is just the icing on the cake.

>> Any other thoughts or questions?

>> No.

>> Any other team members have questions for the other team? So we are about to propose an IEP for next year. We're going to -- we're making this a very efficient meeting. We've reviewed the cover page. Are there any concerns about the dates? Evaluation, days of service, who is on the IEP team?

We'll now move through the present levels of performance. So we will first, Amelia, we would love for you to share with us any additional strengths and concerns that you have, that you want to make sure are included on the present levels page.

>> I think one of his strengths for sure is his curiosity to learn and willing to learn. One of my biggest concerns is expressive ASL language, and then also quite often he'll use his hands instead of his voice or signs to get what he wants, if he wants to manipulate a situation or get a kid to play with him, he'll grab their hand instead of using language. I would like to work on that as well.

>> Thank you. In terms of his skills, does someone want to speak to his current ASL skills?

>> Sure, I can talk about that. We assessed his -- we used two normed tests called the ASL receptive skills test and the ASL expressive skills test. Sort of as you were mentioning, Amelia, his receptive skills are low-average. So he had a score of 85. That's in the average range. His expressive skills were in the 10th percentile comparing him to other kids the same age as him.

You know, I think that what we have seen so far is John primarily uses ASL receptively and has chosen so far to speak mostly for himself. That's certainly something we'll continue to work on, that's a goal.

>> Review of the Peabody picture vocabulary scores.

>> In order to monitor John's progress with vocabulary, we've been monitoring him with the Peabody picture vocabulary test annually. Right now his scores are consistent or commensurate with his ASL scores, where his understanding is better than his expression.

And so his score was an 85 for the receptive and a 70 for the expressive. So I think we'll continue working on that. I was going to propose that maybe Emily join me for the speech and language sessions, so that not only can we work in English in there with the concepts in class but perhaps she can provide support in ASL since that's an important goal for you.

So that's something we can talk about for services. And then we'll want to work on his length of utterance, right now it's 2.5 words, we'll work up to 4. I think it might be helpful to consider the functional listening evaluation test to see really what he's hearing in class functionally, where is the breakdown in following classroom discussions. That may be something to look forward to.

>> In terms of his participation in his class.

>> Yes, so compared to the beginning of the year, John is certainly accessing his interpreter a lot more. So he's able to participate in

circle time. I think the idea of a passed mic would be fabulous. Having you come in and do an in-service for his peers would be great. He's expressing some frustration sometimes when his peers don't do what he wants them to do, because he's been unable to connect with them.

I worry a little bit about behavioral problems, you know, emerging because of that. And I also -- when he responds to a question, sometimes he gives an incorrect answer because he didn't understand the question, and I'm beginning to see him feel a little badly about that once in a while.

The passed mic might be a way to correct that. I'm always doing classroom management, trying to keep the kids speaking one person at a time, but that is a challenge.

>> So we will update the present levels of performance based on this input, looking at what are the strengths, his ability to function, and what are the needs and the goals. The purposes of this, we're not going to go through every goal and objective, but let me just list them.

So we'll have an auditory comprehension goal. We will have a self-advocacy goal. We will have a vocabulary goal. We will have another goal for syntax and morphology.

There will be goals included regarding academics. And there will be a goal regarding use of an interpreter. Appropriate attention-getting techniques, use of an interpreter during nonacademic setting. We also want to include a goal on self-determination. And ASL acquisition, using context to find meaning of unknown signs.

>> Can I just jump in?

>> Please.

>> In hearing Sharon talk about does the team feel that we should have a goal around pragmatic language, maybe? Social language, is that something that we might want to think about, maybe?

>> Yeah, I think that would be helpful.

>> Great, thank you, Jen, for bringing that to the team. Let's look at the service pages. If each provider will make a recommendation based on the strength and weaknesses we just noted and input. What do you think of the appropriate level of services in order to achieve these goals and objectives within the next year? In terms of audiology?

>> So for audiology, I think the monthly 60-minute consultation and technical assistance is still really important to make sure that the technology is working well and so we can implement a trial with the pass microphone. And then for speech, we will continue with the two times a week, the pullout where it comes out one on one or in a small group, then one time a week where I'll be in class to help him facilitate some language, and then an hour of consultation with the educational team.

>> Thank you.

>> And I would continue to recommend the five times a week for 60 minutes, which is what's recommended for the Foundations For Literacy program. Because we're doing it one to one, we might get through it a little quicker, so I will also try to work on some of his self-advocacy skills in that time.

Also one hour a week consultation with members of John's educational team to talk about some of these challenges that Sharon has talked about, that she's seeing in class, and try to think about ways that we can work on those. I would also likely try to do some observations in class.

Rebecca?

>> I would like to keep the once weekly for 60 minutes, specifically with the family and John, and also once a week for 30 minutes for ASL instruction, working with the peers and the staff in the classroom to support socialization.

>> Thank you. Emily?

>> I would like to continue the five times a week for 420 minutes a

day, which works out to a full school day, including 30 minutes during lunchtime. And I'm also available after school for any activities that he might take part in, if he's playing soccer again in the fall, let me know who is scheduled and I can meet you all there for practices and games.

>> And then regarding the communication plan.

>> Oh, I was going to talk about --

>> Okay. Sorry.

>> We're good.

>> And then case management, one time 60, we're a large team, there's lot of consultation that occurs for John's program. I would add one times 60 for case management. Is the team in agreement in terms of the level of services needed in order to support John and his program?

>> I would really like to increase his Deaf mentor hours, especially since we're trying to work on his expressive communication, just to give him that fluency and work with natural signing.

>> Happy to do that, more than happy to increase the hours. The more time, the better. Whatever John needs. If you want to increase that to whatever extent, we can make that happen.

>> And is it possible to think about one or two of John's peers learning a few sign language --

>> Oh, absolutely.

>> That might help with some of the things I'm observing.

>> Sure, can do. The more socialization, the better.

>> Did you want to talk about the communication plan?

>> Yeah, I was just -- that's fine. So I was just -- I'm in agreement with the services. Like, I do think that one step that we should think about is doing the Vermont Communication Plan for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, which I don't think we've going to have time to do typically at an IEP meeting. It's about a ten-page document, so it does



take some time.

It's a way for the team to really have a rich, real comprehensive conversation and discussion about the students' communication needs, expressive and receptive, both how to communicate at school and also how does he communicate at home, getting input from both areas.

And also thinking about, you know, is there training that needs to come for the family to support the student's communication. So luckily, Rebecca's been working with his family to increase their ASL skills, so that they can support John's communication and language needs to make sure that they continue to develop appropriately.

So just thinking about that, as well as, you know, we've sort of touched on all of these, but thinking about direct communication with peers and staff. So having Rebecca work with that, even any level of direct communication they can have is really great, as well as thinking about opportunities for direct instruction, if they arise, so that if a teacher of the Deaf is able to work directly with John, not having to have an interpreter, not that Emily isn't amazing, but sometimes having that Non mediated instruction can be helpful and necessary.

And just looking at his academic skills, does he have all the skills. he needs to continue to progress in the curriculum, as well as nonacademic. activities, afterschool program, plays, sports, anything they want to be involved in. And then also just looking at -- which we did a little bit today, but looking at is there any assistive technology or other services that needs to be in place.

So, the communication plan really just looks at all his communication, you know, from A to Z, and helps us really think about -- and who should be supporting those communication needs, who is appropriate to support those. So, I just think that that is something that we should think about completing as well.

>> So, I will include in the meeting minutes a recommendation that we schedule another IEP meeting for purposes of completing the communication plan, and then really making sure we have that robust plan in place as we move forward. Does the team agree?

>> Yes.

>> We may consider at that time any other training that the team needs in order make sure this continues to be the least restrictive environment for John.

>> And Sherry, would you say that the communication plan also helps the IEP team adjust the special factors part of the IEP?

>> I would agree, yes. Yes. Any other -- in terms of accommodations, anything else beyond looking at in-service around specific accommodations based on John's cognitive profile and hearing profile? We will include that. And a safety plan will be put in place including visual and touch cues for John.

Does someone want to give more information about that piece?

>> Yeah, I can. So we're just -- I think it's just important with John's hearing loss to think about that if there were an active shooter drill or a fire alarm, any kind of a drill that's happening in the school, we just want to make sure that John is -- there's a clear plan, if John is in the bathroom by himself, and he maybe doesn't hear the announcement or hear what they're saying clearly.

So we want to make sure there's a plan for if there is a drill, and hopefully not an actual event.

>> Thank you. Those are EE 1 through 8 on your Checklist. The team's decision regarding acceptance of the proposed IEP, are all members in approval of the draft as proposed?

>> Yes.

>> And Amelia, you have the opportunity to take the proposed IEP home, to provide us written or verbal feedback. You can give me a call if there

are any changes before we formalize the plan.

>> Perfect, thank you.

>> Thank you. So I think that the purposes of our mock IEP, that is our best case effort. Hopefully you see, what we've really tried to do with the Checklist, is to highlight -- and the meeting that we just had, that implementation of this tool is not going to increase the kind of things that are being asked of our special educators and our special education team.

It really provides a framework for, what are the standards of practice, not even best practice, but what are the standards. Amelia is a really important member of this team and we continue to pull her into every part of the conversation. We have a very robust team at this mock IEP. I know for special ed directors, that is a challenge, making sure you have an access to a range of providers.

I know that's something we're working on. And Linda's part of that opportunity. We would really like to take a few minutes to answer any questions you have, based on what we just shared with you. And I'll walk around with the microphone so the captioner can help us. Any questions? Okay, hang on.

>> Hi, thank you all for doing that, that was great. I'm a special ed director, so that's my lens. I was wondering if the panelists might be able to talk about any differences that they would anticipate for an IEP meeting for a middle or high school student.

I appreciated the kindergarten and elementary level, but I know there are logistical differences in that secondary level and I would love to hear ideas or feedback around that.

>> Who would like to take that one? So we're talking about transition planning.

>> Yeah, I think that's really the important key, transition planning.

Also in terms of, you know, providing in-services and things like that, the team is evolving a lot in middle and high school, so following up on implementing accommodations is a key factor for access for kids that are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

>> And also, you know, you notice John's not here. I think that the earlier we can get students involved in their IEP meetings and giving their input, I think is really important.

>> I'm the other parent on the board here.

[Laughter]

So in elementary school, of course, the FM system typically stays at school. When you go to high school, and particularly middle school, and the student is moving from classroom to classroom, and the whole thing of being different, when you have to walk into the classroom, give the FM system as one example to the teacher.

So my student said, no way. So that made him stand out too much. So then there's other accommodations, sitting in the front of the classroom, getting classroom teachers to face the student. And that takes a whole lot more work on the team, that was my observation, because some students -- some teachers love to walk around the classroom, and that's their teaching style.

So that didn't work so well. So yeah, there's a whole new set of challenges in the middle school and high school. But I think if you have -- really invite parent advocacy, and then I was able to feedback to the team, here is what comes home, here is what's said at home, and then they would have the strategies and the solutions that would be helpful to mitigate, support, remedy.

>> So I also bring the perspective, I was a special educator in the building, I was the 504 coordinator, and my oldest had profound hearing loss. So I heard about how the FM system went into the bathroom with the

teacher. I heard about how the teacher was cursing under their breath about a certain student.

So it's really hard. And now she's 29, and now she's finally gone back and she's advocating for her own audiological needs. It helped in basketball, because the coach could give cues on the basketball court with the FM system, I know it was cheating but it worked.

[Laughter]

The modeling we can do on the school team, as parents, it doesn't define you but it's part of who you are. I think that's what she's had to negotiate as now an adult. It impacts -- the transition piece is critical, it's impacted who she is as a professional, what are her choices for jobs.

I think that was really something that she had to come to terms with. And she's a software engineer now, she figured out what works for her. But it was part of the understanding what I can do and what I can't do, and that was part of the -- and I think that's where the transition planning, as we become young adults, which is always so much fun, grade 9 and 10, but then, how does that not define you, but it does inform who you are and where you're going.

So I think --

>> Right.

>> Great question.

>> And if you're not going to use the DM system or whatever, what will you do, will you sit at the front of the room, will you sit, you know -- have a note-taker? What will you do in order to help you get that access? I think that dialogue with the student can be really helpful.

>> Thank you.

>> Great, good question. Other questions? Thank you so much, and thank you for coming. I'm going to pass the microphone over to Linda, who is doing another really important piece of work. And this is an evolving

tool. We want -- it's so important that this tool work for school teams. It's important that it works for families.

We've really put a lot of energy into making sure we're getting lots of perspectives. And for special ed directors, it's not often that you have a student who has this profile. But when you do, you need resources. You need to know who to go to. And at times, and I'm from, you know, the southeast, we had so little to help us out, so that's what we're hoping to do.

But Linda, what Linda is doing now is prototyping the work within a district, to, again, inform the process. So I'm going to pass this over to her.

>> Thank you so much. I thought the mock IEP did a great job, and thank you, Sharon, for putting me in the right spot. I'm going to introduce myself first for those who do not know me. I'm Linda Hazard, an audiologist licensed in the State of Vermont. I have a background in educational leadership in social policy.

I'm the program director for the Vermont early hearing detection and intervention program at the health department. And my other hat is the director for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind educational services program under the University of Vermont medical center. I always like to introduce new initiatives as a quality improvement initiative using what I call plan, do, study, act cycle, so we can really review and understand what we're trying to accomplish, what works, what doesn't work.

And I'm very grateful to two of our districts that were willing to trial with me this year. We've actually been able to introduce the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Checklist to four districts and trialing that in the last few weeks, that's been really helpful to us.

As Sharon mentioned, it will be evolving, as well as the evaluation tool. It was mentioned earlier that the NASDSE guidelines were introduced

in 2018, just prior to the pandemic. So their rollout has I think been a little bit slower.

Vermont is really progressive in this area. And other states are excited and looking at the work we're currently doing. So we are going to be in phase 1, we're introducing the Checklist at all student meetings, whether they be IEP, 504, educational planning.

And then we will be assessing that Checklist to make sure that it's meeting the needs. It's step 1, because our teams need to know what should be included in these minutes or the IEP or 504. We will be, you know, documenting the level of support service for Deaf and Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind students, and then getting the feedback from teams.

One thing we learned in this last two weeks is that it's important to send the Checklist ahead of time so that teams have the opportunity to look and see what should be in there rather than introducing it at the meeting. The other thing I will say about the Checklist, it will be a great tool to use for new referrals of students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind.

So we will also plan to implement it there. Phase 2 will be the beta testing of the Vermont Quality Indicator Tool based on NASDSE guidelines. So once we have gone through the process of phase 1, we will start to look at phase 2. But we do want to -- we do want you to know that if you have any questions, please reach out to any one of us, because we are really here to support you and to support the needs of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind students in Vermont.

And then if you want to learn more about the Checklist tool and more about the NASDSE guidelines, we will be hosting another training on Friday, July 14th, from 12:30 to 3:30. Lunch is included. It will be at the Capitol Plaza in Montpelier, in-person. There is a Zoom option. We're hoping we'll be able to also record the meeting for others, so if you're

not able to be here.

And it is an educational session for providers. You can pick up a flier or the forms can be found at this link. So thank you very much. Do you have any questions that I can answer for you at this point? We really appreciate you coming today.

>> Thank you. So you have a copy of the Checklist in front of you.

If anyone is interested in the Tool, which again is a more detailed assessment tool to assess the program, you're welcome to take that. It is in revision. It's evolving. We're meeting July 10th to incorporate more feedback. If you are willing to take one and give us feedback, we would really appreciate it. It's available up here and also available on the DAIL website.

Any other questions or comments? Okay, great. Thank you so much. Enjoy the rest of your meeting, and thank you for coming.

[Applause]