

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
146th Quarterly Commission Meeting
July 24, 2015
Frankfort, Kentucky**

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Amy Hatzel, Ms. Holly O'Mary, Mr. John Horsley, Mr. David Bayersdorfer, Mr. Buddy Hoskinson, Ms. Becky Crawford (proxy Neils Ewing), Ms. Michelle Niehaus, Ms. Sharon White, Ms. Jeannie Taylor and Ms. Edie Ryan
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Bryan Bowen, Ms. Barbie Harris, Ms. Michelle Haney, and Ms. Kelly Daniel
- STAFF PRESENT:** Ms. Virginia Moore, Ms. Rowena Holloway and Ms. Tashina Crowe
- COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS:** Ms. Rachel Rodgers, Ms. Vanessa Arnold and Ms. Laura Kogurt
- VISITORS:** Ms. Stephanie Belt, Ms. Rebecca Horsley, Ms. Brittany Burkhead, and Ms. Michelle Armstrong

Ms. Amy Hatzel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:13 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the 146th Quarterly Commission Meeting. Ms. Sharon White, Secretary, called roll and as there was a quorum the meeting continued. Mr. Neils Ewing is here today as a proxy for Ms. Crawford. Members voted unanimously to accept the proxy designation for voting purposes and welcomed Mr. Ewing to the meeting.

Board members reviewed the minutes from the 145th Commission meeting as presented.

MS. TAYLOR (Ms. Ryan) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 145th QUARTERLY COMMISSION MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED.

Members reviewed the Executive Board minutes as presented.

MS. WHITE (Ms. Niehaus) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MINTUES. THE MOTION PASSED.

REPORTS

Executive Board:

Ms. Hatzel summed up the Executive Board Report as presented in the minutes and announced that the letter to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) was drafted and sent, outlining our concerns with education for deaf and hard of hearing students, especially the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD). A response has not yet been received.

Agency:

Ms. Moore began her report noting how the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) has been busy working on potential legislation, with two pressing issues; hearing screening for school children and internet providers' data capping. Individuals who use Captel Internet-Based phones or Videophones will be charged a higher rate for services because they use more bandwidth. However, since it is for communication this is inequitable. Staff has met with several legislators who are very supportive and have also met with staff from the Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT) who are in charge of broadband and they are also willing to work with us to draft legislation to prevent this from happening in Kentucky.

In meetings with Representative Graham, Chair of the Education Committee and Senator Alvarado, a pediatrician, both seem very interested in pursuing legislation to required hearing screenings for children. From research and analysis of data, we have found that few schools successfully screen all students, and most counties are testing less than 50 percent of their students. To approach this matter there are two options; one, parents being the responsible party to take their children for testing, or two, the administration of standardized hearing screenings. Many agencies and businesses give free hearing screenings, but students should be correctly screened at school, just as they are required to provide vision and dental testing records. If legislation is filed for the 2016 session a suggestion was made to conduct a hearing screening demonstration as part of our testimony in front of legislators, to show the simplicity of the procedure.

Another issue brought to the attention of KCDHH, by the deaf and hard of hearing community, is that individuals from KSD have reached out to us for guidance on how, and whom, they should voice their complaints to. Some concerns stated are reversed mainstreaming and not letting deaf students attend Boyle County public school if the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) states they excel in a certain subject. Reversed mainstreaming had previously been attempted at KSD, but was unsuccessful. There is some deliberation about how the classroom ratio would impact the deaf students. One proposal is 50/50, with the intent of keeping the environment deaf culture oriented. The fear is that the learning environment would transition into instruction through an interpreter because of the hearing students rather than directly from the teacher. This communication issue is being addressed, along with the fact that the school needs to hire staff that can communicate directly with the students in their native language. KCDHH's goal is to ensure that all parties consider the culture and history of the school and the type of students attending KSD, and what is the best environment for them to ensure they are getting the education they need to succeed. We will continue to work with KDE and KSD Administration to bring the issues of concern to light and address a solution that will work for everyone. Hopefully the response to the letter will give us alternatives to pursue. We may consider having a Town Hall meeting and invite the schools staff and department administrators, as well as the public, so everyone can feel they have a safe space to express their concerns and give their viewpoints on the transitions happening at KSD.

Ms. Moore commented that we have requested to open and fill the Information Office Supervisor position, and are waiting to hear back from Personnel.

Ms. Moore explained the meeting with Heather French Henry, Commissioner of Veterans Affairs went extremely well. She took our sample brochure and passed them out to a group of her people and we are now awaiting feedback from them. This joint partnership will allow us to reach out to veterans returning from the war with a hearing loss, the number one and number two disabilities for that group.

During this year Kentucky had to deal with serious flooding in several areas of the state. This meant that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) came in to aide our constituents. KCDHH invited them in to record a series of videos explaining the paperwork and procedures required to receive assistance. The national office took notice of our hard work and collaborative job and named Kentucky one of the best states they have worked with and want to know how FEMA can use the same technique with other states. FEMA even mentioned their success in working with Kentucky at the National Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) conference held in St. Louis recently.

At the HLAA conference Ms. Moore had an opportunity to listen to Tom Harkins, a national senator, about how captioning in movie theaters is becoming more common and technology is being provided to make theaters more accessible.

It was suggested at the last Commission meeting that some of KCDHH's videos be uploaded to YouTube. After some further research we confirmed that to do this would direct consumers off the KCDHH website and they could potentially miss out on other valuable information they might need to access. Also, some individuals might not be able to access that site due to employer restrictions. Therefore other options will be researched and considered in the future.

Ms. Moore updated the board on the progress of American Sign Language (ASL) as a foreign language being taught in K-12 classes. During the most recent meeting at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), goals for their new program were explained and how future applicants may be certified in teaching ASL. From this discussion stemmed the fact that the PRAXIS continues to be difficult for the deaf or hard of hearing to pass. Other meetings will be held to continue the discussions. Ms. Ryan explained a project in her area called *Community Coming Together*, which brings skilled individuals into the classroom to teach ASL. Ms. Moore asks that Ms. Ryan bring in more information about how this project is run, and if the individual is paid, to the next meeting.

KCDHH has been working with Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (KYRID) and Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD) for their upcoming joint conference. The conference is planning on hosting workshops pertaining to the medical aspect of the profession and Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) services that hospitals are opting for.

Ms. Moore spoke about attending the System of Care Conference hosted by the Department of Mental Health and expressed how well the conference spoke to the people who need services and how attendance was appropriate to those scenarios. KCDHH is handling more calls about deaf individuals being placed in facilities and needing interpreters, and we are working to ensure access even though some of the facilities are resistant to providing appropriate services.

THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

TAP Advisory Board Report:

Ms. Moore advised board members that the recent bid for new Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) equipment was completed and an award has been made. TAP is looking forward to offering some new models of equipment to our constituents in the upcoming year.

THE TAP ADVISORY BOARD REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Finance:

Ms. Moore summarized the agency's financial report for this quarter. KCDHH requested a one-time allotment increase to relieve the immediate need for TAP equipment on the waiting list and the request was granted through the Public Service Commission and Finance Department. Those on the waiting list will have equipment ordered by the opening of the next fiscal year.

Ms. Moore introduced Ms. Stephanie Belt who will be working with the Commission through the Department of Education Workforce and Development to determine our budget for the next two year cycle.

THE FINANCE REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

The K-12 Educational Study Group:

Ms. Hatzel expanded on the groups continued efforts to work towards obtaining more in-depth hearing screenings and ensuring referrals at a younger age. The study group also feels passionate about what is taking place at the KSD, and they are paralleling their efforts as the study group continues to improve education for all school aged children. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with First Steps has been finalized, and we have developed trainings and the framework for the First Steps teams going into the homes of identified children.

THE K-12 EDUCATIONAL STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Access to Videophones in Public Libraries Study Group:

Ms. White reported that the study group is going smoothly, but with the demand of videophone (VP) providers to obtain the user's last four digits of their social security number there are some concerns. Ms. Moore stated she would contact the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to discuss this issue in regards to public VP's.

THE ACCESS TO VIDEOPHONES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Captioning in Sport Venues Study Group:

Mr. Bayersdorfer stated the group held a meeting to discuss the different venues to be contacted about providing captioning. The group hopes to meet again in September or October.

THE CAPTIONING IN SPORT VENUES STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

OPEN FORUM

Ms. Michelle Niehaus provided copies of her agency's Biennial Report for 2015 and advised who receives the report. Members discussed the fact that it was well written and shows the story of Kentucky's deaf and hard of hearing with mental health needs.

Mr. Bayersdorfer reminded everyone of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Mr. Buddy Hoskinson added that the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has been celebrating all week and on Monday the 27th the Governor will be signing a proclamation to highlight the work of the ADA.

Ms. Ryan expressed gratitude to the Commission for providing interpreting services during the Fancy Farm Picnic in western Kentucky. She also asked if KCDHH would have a booth presence for the Barbecue on the River, and Ms. Moore confirmed we would.

Ms. Moore reminded the board of the upcoming State Fair to be held August 20th thru August 30th, and that slots are still needed for volunteers.

Ms. White informed the board of the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) Conference coming to Louisville August 4th thru August 9th. They are bringing in several performers, a pageant, and several worthwhile workshops. They are anticipating roughly 400 attendees.

KCDHH is also partnering with Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) regional conference to bring in Justin Osmond and Ms. Niehaus's Division is

sponsoring Dr. Michael Harvey. The conference is to be held on September 11th and 12th.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Moore stated that we have yet to obtain confirmation about the Governor's appointments on our Board and we hope to hear something soon.

Mr. Horsley brought up the question of how the Veteran's brochure is coming along. He is eager to get information out to our veteran constituents who suffer from hearing loss. Ms. Hatzel mentioned that going through Federal channels to obtain approval can sometimes be challenging.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was introduced.

BOARD OPEN FORUM

Ms. Ryan pointed out that Kentucky was published in the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) *Views* magazine. Ms. Moore stated that the article is coming at the perfect time, considering concerns KCDHH is hearing from the community about interpreters, the costs, and their practices.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 18, 1:00pm - 3:00pm at KCDHH in Frankfort
- The 147th Quarterly Commission meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 23, 1:00 pm –4:00 pm at a location to be announced.

MS. WHITE (Mr. Hoskinson) MOVED TO ADJOURN. The MOTION PASSED and the meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m.