

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
147th Quarterly Commission Meeting
October 23, 2015
Frankfort, Kentucky**

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Amy Hatzel, Ms. Holly O'Mary, Ms. Joy Kiser, Ms. Gerry Gordon-Brown, Mr. Buddy Hoskinson, Ms. Becky Crawford, Ms. Michelle Niehaus, Ms. Sharon White, Ms. Jeannie Taylor, Ms. Kelly Daniel and Mr. Bryan Bowen
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ms. Michelle Haney, Ms. Edie Ryan, and Ms. Barbie Harris
- STAFF PRESENT:** Ms. Virginia Moore, Ms. Tashina Crowe and Ms. Rowena Holloway
- COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS:** Ms. Rachel Rodgers, Ms. Rachel Morgan and Ms. Laura Kogut
- VISITORS:** Ms. Jean Haynes, Mr. Ron Haynes, and ten University of Louisville Interpreter Training Program students

Ms. Amy Hatzel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Ms. Sharon White, Secretary, called roll and welcomed everyone to the 147th Quarterly Commission Meeting.

Board members reviewed the minutes from the 146th Commission meeting and recommended some minor grammatical edits.

MS. TAYLOR (Ms. White) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 146th QUARTERLY COMMISSION MEETING WITH EDITS. THE MOTION PASSED.

REPORTS

Executive Board:

Ms. Hatzel recognized the two new board members, Ms. Joy Kiser, representing the Alexander Graham Bell Association, and Ms. Gerry Gordon-Brown, representing the Kentucky Association of the Deaf. Each introduced themselves and gave a little background on why they were interested in serving on the board. Other board members also introduced themselves and the entity they represent. Members reviewed the Executive Board minutes from the last meeting and had no comments.

MS. GORDON-BROWN (Ms. Daniel) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MINTUES. THE MOTION PASSED.

Agency:

The Executive Director began the report by noting that we plan to pursue two pressing issues; hearing screening for children and broadband capping, possibly through legislation if other means are not successful. The current approach is to work with the Chair of the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) and the new Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), once appointed in the new administration, to inform school systems of their obligation to perform hearing screenings. The plan is to do a letter to each county/district reminding them of the vital nature of identifying hearing loss at the earliest possible age. We are also still working with the Commonwealth Office of Technology, advisors and some legislators to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing broadband usage is not capped, or an exemption is made for deaf and hard of hearing users.

Budget projections for 2016-2018 FY were submitted to the Cabinet as required and we plan to keep careful watch on legislative actions related to the budget during the General Assembly session next year. We also submitted our transition plan for the Governor's new administration. The report shows how vital our services are from cradle to the grave for the almost 700,000 deaf and hard of hearing consumers we serve in the Commonwealth. With the ne Governor's transition, the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet will have a new Secretary and other changes in personnel could be seen both within our Cabinet and with other state agencies we partner with, as the new administration takes office.

The Information Office Supervisor vacancy has been advertised and closed, and more than 60 applications reviewed. The promising candidates were sent to Personnel to be vetted and interviews will be conducted as soon as a response from Personnel is received regarding the individuals eligibility. Many of the potential applications reviewed had excellent qualifications but did not complete the state application process correctly, which disqualifies them from eligibility. KCDHH is working on a vlog, captioned, video explaining how to complete the application accurately so future candidates can understand the state application process, which is complicated.

The Board was updated on the progress of the American Sign Language (ASL) as a foreign language group meetings held this quarter. Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) explained the goals for their new Master's Program at EKU and what the future may have in store for applicants. From this discussion: stemmed the fact that individuals, not only deaf or hard of hearing, but hearing individuals as well are having trouble passing the PRAXIS. Some progress has been made in that they do give extended time for ASL users but the test itself cannot be signed by an interpreter because of standardization requirements, it must be read and understood in English. Therefore, we are working on the possibility of getting the organization to develop a standardized signed PRAXIS test for ASL users.

A vendor of KCDHH contacted the Executive Director and informed us of a four year old child in Eastern Kentucky that needed adaptive equipment. As she was not yet eligible to apply for our Telecommunications Access Program, the vendor provided her with an iPad. We were asked to meet with her and her parents, and the vendor did a filming of her story for use on their website. KCDHH will follow-up with her progress through her parents.

KCDHH staff has been busy assisting with conference planning for the National Black Deaf Advocacy (NBDA) Conference, the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) –

Kentucky Chapters Conference and the State Fair, as well as smaller outreach events. We are currently working with the Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD) and the Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (KYRID) to assist with planning the fall joint conference to be held in early November. Through all these outreaches we have distributed the new veteran's brochure and have had a lot of positive feedback. Ms. Moore expanded about different aspects of each conference and the diversity of the constituents we serve. For example: staff completed 421 requests from the State Fair, Justin Osmond was the inspirational keynote speaker/entertainment for HLAA KY Chapters Conference, and NBDA showed wonderful cultural differences in signing workshops. Kentucky was fortunate to have Deaf Nation come to Louisville as well. There we were able to meet a group that builds retirement homes for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, which may lead to a connection for the "Just Betty" Senior Housing Project in northern Kentucky.

After attending the National Association of Relay Service Administrators (NASRA) conference and the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Administrators (TEDPA) conferences in September, Ms. Moore spoke about several new apps for the iPhone or iPad that could be beneficial to our consumers. We are in discussion with the vendors to see if these apps can be pushed to the iPad consumers we have already served and be loaded to future orders. Both conferences were very beneficial in providing new networking opportunities and on-site demonstrations of new specialized equipment as well as learning about proposed changes from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

At the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) conference in August it was announced that RID was placing a moratorium all performance exams beginning January 1, 2016. A risk assessment team has been compiled and analyzing improvements in testing that need to be made. The Executive Director emphasized the impact this action will have on our state because of our licensure law requirements. Through conference calls with RID's Acting Director they have reassured us that the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) Performance exam is not under question for its validity, but needs improvement. KCDHH, KYRID, and the Kentucky Board of Interpreters (KBI) are working closely together to try and take measures to ensure Kentucky bridges the gap for compliance with licensure until a new NIC performance exam is offered. RID has been notified of our concerns in writing. An audience member asked if the NIC written exam was part of the moratorium, and it is not.

Some unethical interpreting practices have been reported to KCDHH by consumers and Ms. Moore expressed her concerns for the interpreting profession's integrity. The primary complaint is the high fees being charged for services, which adversely affects the community as providers are balking at the expense and are trying to avoid providing interpreters. A vlog is being made to address this concern which will be shown at the KYRID/KAD joint conference, to reach out to both seasoned and new interpreters to be more ethically driven in their profession and think of the community and the providers we serve. KCDHH is considering hosting a town hall meeting to collect the concerns about this issue from the community and then develop a workshop to address possible solutions.

THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ

Finance:

The Executive Director summarized the agency's financial report for this quarter and indicated that the FY14-15 report was closed out successful with no issues. Spending is on track for the first quarter of FY 15-16. As required by the Budget Director KCDHH's projected budget for FY16-18 has been compiled and submitted. KCDHH has been praised for the clarity of the information we submit.

THE FINANCE REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

The K-12 Educational Study Group:

Ms. Hatzel reported on the study groups' efforts to obtain answers to our questions about issues facing the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD), from concerned parents, students and staff that work at the school. As Chair, Ms. Hatzel drafted a letter from the Board expressing our concerns and a response was received, but without a solution to the problems expressed. With the change in administration coming in November the group and the Board have decided to wait until a new Commissioner, Chair of the KBE and Secretary of the Cabinet are appointed and pursue this issue with the new staff. KSD parents continue to contact KCDHH asking for advocacy on a variety of issues.

Paralleling this, the study group also decided to approach the new elects to request that the hearing screening form be completed more diligently, as mentioned earlier.

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 progressing with its goals. The northern Kentucky library is hosting an open house to announce the videophone availability, and demonstrate setup and access to the community. Vendors of videophone services are also being approached to work with the library consumers to set up service accounts. The Louisville library site in place has requested that additional sites be added in Louisville and the group is working on this. It was also suggested that the libraries pair this with possible training session for iPad users, especially senior trainings, and the possibilities will be considered and discussed with the libraries already involved in the project.

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

Captioning in Sport Venues Study Group:

Ms. Hatzel spoke on behalf of Mr. David Bayersdorfer, for this study group, as he is no longer on the Board. There was no new business to report and a request was made for someone to take the lead on this study group. Ms. White and Mr. Buddy Hoskinson agreed to lead this group and bring in Mr. Bryan Bowen as needed.

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

BOARD OPEN FORUM

The “Tell Survey” that is administered confidentially by KDE to faculty within the school districts was discussed with the board member. Results of the survey were shocking and seemed to confirm some of the feedback KCDHH has received. It has been suggested that a similar survey be administered to parents to obtain their perspective and feedback about how their school is performing. KCDHH continues to work to improve the school environment for all deaf and hard of hearing children statewide. KSD is experiencing a lack of communication access on campus. More hearing teachers are being hired and utilizing interpreters for their instruction, and the environment to promote the use of ASL throughout campus is weakening. Strong leadership is needed within the community to ensure that future goals for KSD can be met.

Ms. Niehaus spoke of two projects currently in the works within her department and asked for volunteers to work on both. First; hospital kits, informational packets that give tips on how to deal with a deaf or hard of hearing person and provide resources are being developed for distribution; and secondly, volunteers are needed to sit with elderly individuals in nursing homes who are feeling isolated because of their hearing loss. To date those willing to be involved include, University of Louisville interpreting students, Louisville Association of the Deaf (LAD) members, and the Center for Accessible Living (CAL) staff and volunteers. However, the goal is to make both of these services available statewide so assistance is needed in spreading the word, and obtaining volunteers, outside the urban area of Louisville.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Executive Board meeting will be held Friday, December 11, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm at the KCDHH office in Frankfort
- The 148th Quarterly Commission meeting will be held Saturday, January 23, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm with the location TBA depending on what is available on Saturday.

MS. WHITE (Ms. Crawford) MOVED TO ADJOURN. The MOTION PASSED and the meeting was adjourned at 3:49 p.m.