

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
161st Quarterly Commission Meeting
April 12th, 2019
Transportation Cabinet – Frankfort, KY**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Jeannie Taylor, Ms. Holly O’Mary, Ms. Barbie Harris, Ms. Nancy Perry, Ms. Gerry Gordon-Brown, Ms. Amy Hatzel (designee), Ms. Dodie Karr, Ms. Michelle Niehaus, Ms. Joy Kiser, Ms. Becky Cabe, Mr. George Tunstall IV, Ms. Edie Ryan, Mr. Eddie Runyon, and Ms. Kelly Daniel (designee)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Thomas Evans

STAFF PRESENT: Ms. Virginia Moore and Ms. Elise Kitchen

COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS: Ms. Marva Johnson, Ms. Jessica Minges, and Ms. Tracy Lundergan

VISITORS: Mr. James Karr

Ms. Taylor, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. after noting that although some members had been delayed, there were a sufficient number present for a quorum. Since Mr. Evans was unable to attend the meeting, Ms. Taylor called for a motion from the floor to accept Ms. Daniel as his proxy.

MS. KISER (Mr. Runyon) MOVED TO ACCEPT MS. DANIEL AS PROXY FOR MR. EVANS. THE MOTION PASSED.

Because Ms. Harris was delayed, Ms. Taylor called roll and welcomed everyone to the 161st Quarterly Commission Meeting, after which Commission members reviewed the minutes from the 160th Commission Meeting.

MS. GORDON-BROWN (Ms. Karr) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 160th QUARTERLY COMMISSION MEETING AS READ. THE MOTION PASSED.

Board members reviewed the Executive Board minutes from the December meeting. There were no items identified for discussion.

MR. RUNYON (Ms. Kiser) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES AS WRITTEN. THE MOTION PASSED.

REPORTS

Executive Board:

Ms. Taylor noted that there were several legislative updates provided during the Executive Board meeting, although the legislative session has since closed. She stated that additional discussion of future legislation would be forthcoming. Ms. Taylor also announced that after reviewing the Service Provider Representative applications, two applicants were chosen to present to the full board for a vote as noted in the agenda.

Ms. Taylor thanked the Commission members' for their participation in the Executive Director evaluation and said that several members expressed a desire to be more actively involved in the work of the Commission. She provided some examples of ways they could do that and encouraged them to contact the KCDHH office when constituents have concerns. Ms. Moore pointed out that Commission business cards had been placed at each representative's seat for their use as they move forward in representing their organizations and communities. She indicated that the cards would be replenished upon request.

Agency:

Ms. Moore began the Agency Report with legislation, acknowledging that several bills impacting deaf and hard of hearing individuals were passed and signed in the recent legislative session. She stated that those that were of particular interest to the deaf and hard of hearing community were summarized in the legislative section of the agency report. She highlighted a few of those bills, including Senate Bill (SB) 107 requiring new state government employees to be automatically enrolled in a 401(k) plan as a means of phasing out current retirement requirements. Ms. Moore also referenced House Bill (HB) 354 which is a reversal of the tax on admission fees for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

In reference to Personnel, Ms. Moore informed the board that the Policy Analyst job classification has been eliminated, meaning that position will need to be reclassified within the KCDHH organization. The Personnel Cabinet is in the process of matching the job duties associated with that position to an appropriate pre-existing job title. Ms. Moore said that until the position is reclassified, the vacancy will not be posted. Ms. Cabe confirmed that since the new procedures were implemented, it takes an average of 4-5 months to get a position filled. In the meantime, staff has been retained on a temporary, part-time basis to help maintain efficiency while the agency is understaffed.

Ms. Moore reported that the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Conference she recently attended was very informative. She said that while Kentucky is leading the way in early detection of hearing loss, the Commonwealth does not excel in parent follow-up, which falls under the umbrella of First Steps. Ms. Daniel added that, as a pediatric audiologist, she is all too aware of the struggle to show proof that there will be a speech and language delay before children who are identified as having hearing loss are able to demonstrate language acquisition or a lack thereof. She noted that by the time it's measurable and the child is eligible for services, the delay has already had a significant negative impact on their language acquisition. The members continued to discuss the issues surrounding this topic, after which Ms. Moore shared the benefits of involving Hands & Voices in this process, pointing out that they could provide parent mentors to partner with parents of newly identified children with hearing loss. She added that EHDI was in full support of exploring that option.

Ms. Moore also shared that the Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (KyRID) recently had their Spring Conference and requested that Ms. Hatzel explain the new policy requiring Continuing Education Units (CEU) that fall under the heading of "Power, Privilege and Oppression (PPO)." As they discussed PPO, the members also addressed related terminology such as "ally," "advocate" and "accomplice" within the context of PPO in the interpreting field. Ms. Taylor expressed appreciation for the education on this topic and suggested that it might benefit the members to attend a workshop on the subject.

In addition, Ms. Moore reported that the staff recently recorded a “coffee chat” with the Division of Protection and Permanency, which is under the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS). The intent was to clarify some of the issues surrounding the removal of a child from the parent(s)’ home and how that process works as well as identifying the rights of both the parents and the child. Ms. Moore stated that a Deaf Interpreter (DI) was brought in after the filming session to provide additional clarification; however she explained that after reviewing attempts to insert video clips of the DI at various points throughout the coffee chat, it became clear that a different approach was necessary. She has since scheduled a reshoot to integrate the DI more effectively. Ms. Moore requested feedback from the Commission members and indicated that she and Ms. Niehaus would continue to work together to ensure the video is clear and accessible to all.

Ms. Moore informed the Board that the Kentucky Board of Interpreters is working to modify the regulation terminology to more closely match that of other professions. Recommendations included changes in terminology from “consecutive” to “lifetime” and “temporary” to “apprentice”.

Ms. Moore also gave an update on the status of the new database, reminding the board that while it is an expensive investment, it is also the backbone of the agency. The database allows KCDHH to store and access information vital to agency’s mission of serving the 700,000+ deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians. Ms. Moore indicated that the ability of the current database to function effectively is tenuous at best, and the installation of the new one will be both a welcome relief and an exciting opportunity to expand the agency’s services.

Ms. Moore closed the report with a brief update regarding the ongoing issues with the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD). She reported that she is working with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), school officials and parents to resolve the issues and ensure that the school continues to survive and thrive. She indicated that she would keep the Board apprised of any pertinent developments.

THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Finance:

Ms. Moore explained that an appropriation increase was submitted to cover the added expenses associated with the new database. Ms. Moore also announced that while there have been no official budget cuts, the amount state agencies are expected to contribute to the Kentucky Employees Retirement System (KERS) is likely to increase, which has the same effect on operating funds as a budget cut. There were no additional questions or comments from the Board.

THE FINANCE REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

K-12 Education: Birth-5 Study Group:

Ms. Hatzel began her report by stating that the study group is still looking at the research base for the evidence that First Steps has requested. She reported that Ms. Moore and the Executive Staff Advisor met with the Executive Director and the State Head Start Collaboration Director within the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood (GOEC), which recently received a \$10.6 million grant for new early childhood initiatives. Ms. Hatzel explained that the purpose of the meeting was to communicate the importance of having

deaf and hard of hearing children included in early childhood development plans. She said that after receiving a detailed explanation of the work the Educational Study Group has done regarding language acquisition, the GOEC acknowledged the importance of such legislation and suggested that it be resubmitted during the 2020 session. GOEC recommended that KCDHH begin pushing the legislation now in preparation for the long 2020 legislative session. Ms. Hatzel added that they also provided excellent advice regarding the most effective method for ensuring the passage of that legislation and indicated that KCDHH needs to engage in discussions with the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet (EWDC). Ms. Hatzel stated that Ms. Moore plans to follow up with the Deputy Secretary of the EWDC. Ms. Moore added that they also requested funds to assist in providing Sensory (Kids) Impaired Home Intervention (SKI-HI) parent advisor training. She explained that SKI-HI is a comprehensive approach to identification and home intervention for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families. Ms. Moore said that the GOEC was provided with a brief overview of the training and the positive impact it could have for parents and the Hands & Voices organization. She indicated that they expressed interest and requested more detailed information regarding the training. Ms. Hatzel said that going forward, the study group plans to push the Language Acquisition legislation as detailed in the upcoming proposal. She also urged Board members to be ready to lobby local legislators and to encourage their respective organizations to do the same.

As the importance of early language acquisition was discussed, several Board members expressed concern that the schools don't recognize the need for interpreters at the preschool level. They also indicated that there are some issues regarding the role of the interpreter in the classroom, especially with young children. Ms. Hatzel stated that she had developed some workshops for teachers and interpreters to help bring them together as a team to navigate the difficulties of overlapping roles and is hopeful that those will help resolve those issues.

Ms. Hatzel also reported that she is working to reconvene the Common Grounds group but has had a difficult time getting members of the group to respond. She expressed concern that they may have lost faith when the LEAD-K legislation was postponed. Mr. Tunstall shared his personal experience regarding the impact the lack of early language acquisition had on his son and emphasized the importance of getting this legislation passed. Ms. Moore and Ms. Taylor agreed, stressing the importance of bringing these groups together to support this legislation and urging Board members to get involved in lobbying in their respective legislators and organizations.

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

Services for Seniors Study Group:

Ms. Niehaus reported that the Seniors Open Symposium (SOS) has been scheduled for August 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Lexington Senior Center. She said the facility is beautiful and the director has a heart for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and those who are disabled, so she's providing the venue free of charge as well as paying for the security guard for the whole day. Ms. Niehaus stated that the workshops will feature Nigel Howard, who will present on topics identified by seniors through the needs assessment process using American Sign Language (ASL). She indicated that his workshops will be interspersed with presentations by local community organizations who provide services for seniors. In addition, information booths will be available for attendees to gather information and resources to meet their individual needs. Ms. Niehaus added that

interpreters and Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) will be provided courtesy of KCDHH in addition to a temporary loop, so the event will be fully accessible. She indicated that some of the funding for the event will come from registration fees collected from interpreting workshops held the day before in partnership with the Sign Language Network of Kentucky. The workshops will focus on issues related to interpreting for older adults and people with language dysfluency in medical and other settings. She added that the mental health aspect of the event qualifies it for financial support by the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID). Ms. Niehaus clarified that although there will be a nominal registration fee for the interpreting workshops on August 23, the SOS on August 24 will be free of charge. She also requested that the Board assist in finding alternative methods of transportation for those seniors who don't drive.

In regard to the Senior Resource Guide, Ms. Niehaus indicated that she is in the process of collecting feedback before it is finalized and made available on the KCDHH website under the new tab for seniors. She added that the new tab will also include an option to fill out a senior contact form as well as some other basic links and information.

Ms. Niehaus reported that the group is continuing to collaborate with ElderServe, which provides services to deaf and hard of hearing seniors in Jefferson County, but they are still struggling to get referrals. She indicated that they sent out several letters to deaf churches and other deaf organizations in the Louisville area to attempt to recruit both volunteers and referrals. Ms. Niehaus said the study group is also reaching out to other agencies across the state that have similar programs that may be willing to consider partnering with them.

As for long-term care and accessibility for people in nursing homes or assisted living facilities, Ms. Niehaus reported that they have not yet submitted the grant for the Civil Monetary Penalty (CMP) funds. She reminded the Board that they are currently applying to fund a part-time position for three years that will handle the care teams. These teams will be composed of a deaf senior, an interpreter, and someone from the Long-term Care Ombudsman office. She indicated that there have been some delays within the Long-term Care Ombudsman program, but they meet again in May, and the group hopes to submit the draft at that time.

THE SERVICES FOR SENIORS STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

BOARD OPEN FORUM

Ms. Taylor announced that due to time constraints, there would be no Open Forum.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Taylor reminded the board that applications for Commission representatives from Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD) and Kentucky Speech-Language-Hearing Association (KSHA) were submitted to the Governor, but no appointments have been made at this time. She requested that the Commission Members take a few minutes to review the applications for Service Provider representative and announced that following the review, Ms. Niehaus and Ms. O'Mary would give a brief presentation on behalf of each of the candidates. Ms. Niehaus spoke on Mr. Brewer's behalf, while Ms. O'Mary spoke for Ms. Kelly. Members were given an opportunity to comment and ask questions prior to submitting their vote. Following the vote, Ms. Taylor

announced that Ms. Kelly was selected as the new Service Provider Representative and will begin her term in July.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Taylor stated that although she accepted officer nominations via email for several weeks, she would open the floor for additional nominations by position as listed in the Bylaws beginning with the Chair. Ms. Taylor, Ms. Harris and Ms. Gordon-Brown were all unopposed in their bids for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary respectively and won their positions by acclamation. In accordance with the Bylaws, Ms. Taylor announced that the newly elected officers would select the two members at large.

Following the elections, Ms. Taylor asked for study group proposals to be submitted. Ms. Niehaus proposed the continuation of the study group on the Needs of Senior Citizens who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, outlining their goals for Education, Aging in Place and Long Term Care. Those goals include hosting the SOS, distributing education and advocacy resources developed by the study group, and securing funding to establish, train and maintain care teams in collaboration with the Long Term Care Ombudsman program.

MS. HATZEL (Ms. Cabe) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL TO CONTINUE THE STUDY GROUP ON THE NEEDS OF SENIOR CITIZENS WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING. THE MOTION PASSED.

Ms. Hatzel proposed to continue the K-12 Education: Birth to 5 study group under the revised title of Early Childhood Language Access and Acquisition. Goals for the group include revising the former Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K) legislation for submission during the 2020 General Assembly and the implementation of a statewide early childhood language accountability system, assuming the legislation passes. The study group's ultimate goal is to close the gaps in educational gain between deaf and hard of hearing students and their hearing peers that result from delayed language access and acquisition.

MR. RUNYON (Ms. Karr) MOVED TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL TO CONTINUE, UNDER THE REVISED TITLE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE ACCESS AND ACQUISITION STUDY GROUP. THE MOTION PASSED.

No other study group proposals were submitted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Executive Board meeting will be held in the KCDHH Conference Room on Friday, June 7, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- The 162nd Quarterly Commission meeting will be held on Friday, July 19, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Transportation Cabinet.
- Ms. Gordon-Brown announced that the next Telecommunication Access Program Advisory Board meeting will take place on Thursday, April 18, 2019 in the KCDHH Conference Room.
- Ms. Taylor announced that the new Members at Large selected for the Executive Board are Ms. Niehaus and Ms. Hatzel.
- Ms. Karr announced that KAD is hosting KSD's Alumni Association (KSDAA) meeting at Tates Creek Library in Lexington on Saturday, May 4, 2019.

- Ms. Karr also announced that KAD will be hosting a day of fun and sun for KAD members as a recruitment event at the Juniper Hills swimming pool in Frankfort on Saturday, July 6, 2019.
- Several members shared inspirational stories about families who attended the ASL classes offered through the grant provided through the Commission for Children with Special Healthcare Needs (CCSHN) in partnership with the Knowledge Center on Deafness.

MS. HATZEL (Ms. O'Mary) MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED and the meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.