

Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Task Force on Education – Parent Resource Information
Availability

Meeting #2
November 13, 2012

Sheila E. Murphy, Ph.D.
Sheila Murphy, LLC
Facilitator

Overview

On Tuesday, November 13, 2012, the second meeting of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Task Force met from 9:00 a.m. until noon, to establish priority goals and approaches for the Task Force on deaf and hard of hearing education as well as parent information and the availability of resources in Arizona.

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Point #1: Role of the Task Force as Stated in Meeting #1, Reiterated and Affirmed

Members of the Task Force participating in Meeting #2 on November 13, 2012 reiterated the role of the Task Force as determined during Meeting #1 on May 15, 2012. During discussion, the applicability of components of roles was established as providing an effective guide to future action:

Provide Centralized Information Resource for Families

- At present, no single source provides all pertinent information.
- Who is responsible for providing that centralized resource?
- Develop and maintain a school selection information base. Parents need accurate information. Currently, many families go to charter or other schools, without obtaining sufficient knowledge about the state of the curriculum, the level of assistive technology, and general educational approach.
- Provide more readings, more lectures, and methods of determining needed and available tools. All parties should to be made aware of the range of needs and services.
- If hearing loss is determined, parents do not know what to do next.
- As the 24/7 responsible parties, parents need a strong educational component to satisfying their expectations and to help them plan.
- Presentations need to emphasize the range of communication modes and methods for adoption by learners.

Address Transitions across the Spectrum

- Provide education on educational resources and identify gaps throughout the spectrum of need, based upon ages of children.
- Find out how to streamline from 0-3 into school and from transition out of high school into adult services world and make those connections.
- Parents need the option of proceeding from 0 - 3 and then from 3 – 5. These experiences could take place at a charter school or another school.
- Look at transition at the other end including post-secondary to further schooling and/or to the workplace. How might these transitions work?

Facilitate Established Groups and Strengthen Potential for Networks

- Peer access is important.
- There is a need to meet and socialize with others.
- Sub-groups, such as the Latino community within the deaf community, are important.
- Currently, everyone goes to their own different places.
- At the secondary level, there is a definite need for connecting.

Enhance Parent Awareness of Services for Youth

- Do parents know what youth services are available?
- Transition from secondary to life beyond, and possibly identify additional disabilities.
- Programs are needed to prepare youth for independence in the workplace and an acquaintance with other services in schools to facilitate that independent lifestyle.

Provide Role Models and Expectations for Children

- Parents don't see role models for their children in our community
- Parents don't know what expectations to have for their deaf children

Explore Availability of Assistive Technology

- What assistive technology is available for students at varying stages of their educational journey?
- What approaches are needed to obtain and utilize such assistive technology?

Point #2: Review of and Refinement of Identified Needs

Participants in Meeting #2 of the Task Force reaffirmed the list of needs generated during Meeting #1 during May, 2012.

A distinction was made between Item B (clearinghouse of information of interest to consumers and stakeholders) and Item D (centralized database of children age 0 through 21 – up to 22nd birthday), including their current school locations and specific needs). The first of these pertains to available resources, while the second of these refers to the consumers themselves.

- A. **Increasing awareness** among parents, educators, other stakeholders, and the general public, regarding the needs and services associated with children who are deaf or hard of hearing, notably the level of fair access to services
- B. Furnishing and maintaining a **clearinghouse** for a broad base of information that includes current research pertinent to learning and support resources and best practices for the use of families, educators, and lawmakers
- C. Delivering **legislative advocacy** services to promote awareness of and satisfy the educational needs of deaf and hard of hearing students and their families
- D. Providing a **centralized database** for children (age 0 through 21) throughout Arizona, identifying where they go to school and their particular needs
- E. Offering one or more **state coordinator** positions to represent the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, and to ensure the opportunities for information access and decision making
- F. Ensuring that gaps in **early detection and diagnostic services** are brought to the attention of professionals who can act upon them
- G. Providing **decision support** for parents and families involved in **transition** at all levels of the spectrum
- H. Delivering **professional development** for specialized teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students, and for teachers in the regular classrooms who serve deaf and hard of hearing students
- I. Stimulating and developing **support networks** including but not limited to families who have deaf or hard of hearing children
- J. Coordinating endeavors to ensure **compliance** in regulatory areas pertinent to interpreter services, on behalf of deaf and hard of hearing children and their families
- K. Maintaining a **collaborative relationship** with key staff in the **Arizona Department of Education**, for purposes of jointly supporting strategic issues that support children's learning

Discussion

Centralized Database

- It is important to have point persons within each school district, to ensure eligibility and service to students and families.
- Of critical significance is early identification plus the availability of a centralized database of children.
- Recent efforts through Child Find and other resources have indicated "greater involvement," in multiple disabilities, including deaf and blind children and those with cognitive involvement.
- Issues exist relative to insurance changes and services received for families of children with multiple sensory impairments.

Services and Eligibility

- Misinformation about services and eligibility prevails. Parents and families require clarification.
- Vocational Rehabilitation and related services provided following graduation remain an area of opportunity. A shift in priorities of services, including different sources of funding, exists.
- Planning payment for post-secondary education requires education for families of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Many families anticipate that "someone else" will be prepared to pay for educational costs. In fact, this area necessitates careful planning and awareness.

Dissemination of Information

- Involve directors of Special Education at districts, charter schools, and private schools as representatives of the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Professional Development

- Provide both teachers and administrators the needed professional development opportunities.
- Utilize a mix of electronic and face-to-face engagement, to serve both informational and connective needs.

Networking and Support

- Seek to support families with efficient and complete information delivery regarding opportunities for connecting with others having parallel or identical needs.

Additional Task Force Recommended

- Issues associated with licensure should be pursued outside of this Task Force and maintained as a separate entity.

Point #3 Goals for the Task Force

Long-Term Goals

1. Create a position to support the coordination of services for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families, to be presented and considered for the next budget cycle.
2. Plan and present a conference for October 2014, to address in a collaborative manner the specific needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, encompassing the educational, health-related, and other needs.
3. Stimulate and develop support networks through the conference and other methods. Facilitate networking among key constituencies and service providers, emphasizing self-advocacy as well as formal, supportive networks.

Short-Term Goals

1. Develop a database of children in the State of Arizona. Utilize current resources to reduce the current reliance upon self-reporting mechanisms to clarify the location and needs of all children eligible for services.
 - a. Fortify this effort through identification of a point person at individual districts and schools.
 - b. Work with the Arizona Department of Education, using the Student Academic Information System (SAIS) for support.
 - c. Ensure inclusion of public school districts, charter schools, and private schools.
 - d. Refine current information based upon categories incorporating multiple disabilities. Recognize issues pertinent to “secondary designation” that may result in reduction of services.
2. Provide legislative advocacy, notably by making use of database information for purposes of securing support for long-term goals noted above.
3. Place strong emphasis on the “I” in Individual Education Plan (IEP). The issues of individual students are unique to them, and must be recognized at all points during the process of designing, delivering, and evaluating service provision and follow-up.
4. Seek to secure legislative support and other funding, as available, representing a requirement for “matching” of designated and available federal funding designated for serving individuals in priority categories. At present, there is a shortfall, due to unavailability of state funding to match allocations through federal grants.
5. Strengthen self-advocacy through all available methods and using all resources, to ensure a unified voice regarding needs and opportunities.
6. Advocate for mandatory screening of children statewide.
7. Ensure seamless transitions from stage to stage of education and eligibility for children and their families. Support a fluid approach that reduces or eliminates missed opportunities for children of any age.

8. Enrich professional development for educators and administrators. Professional development should be available in flexible formats, notably electronically-based, to serve those whose schedules and locations do not permit travel and time away from their workplace responsibilities.
9. Offer decision support for planning post-secondary activities, including opportunities for independent living.
10. Disseminate information from this Task Force to directors of Special Education, as well as to other stakeholders who need to be made aware of this Task Force, as well as who may have a role to perform in establishing necessary linkages among organizations, to support goals and mission.
11. Facilitate parent knowledge of the rights of their children.
12. Address low graduation rate for post-secondary students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Opportunities exist for increased support, to ensure that students receive needed services.
13. Issue statements to the Legislature and to support communities, validating concerns and issues identified by the Task Force for needed action, in support of consumers, their families, and organizations seeking to provide required services.