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ARIZONA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND THE HARD OF HEARING
JUNE 18, 2022
LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PUBLIC FORUM

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>> BECA BAILEY: Hello, and good morning, everyone. I'm Beca Bailey. I'm the Community Engagement Liaison with the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I want to welcome you all on this Saturday morning. Thank you for attending the Language Acquisition Task Force public forum. I'm going to quickly go through -- well, actually, before I get started, I wanted to let you know that you can access the PowerPoint through our website. We have provided the link in the chat if you would like to follow along with the PowerPoint as we present.

>> INTERPRETER: Mario, can you mute yourself in the main room?

>> INTERPRETER: Oh, yes, I apologize.

>> BECA BAILEY: Sorry about that, everybody, and let me take a step back. I'm Beca, I'm the Community Engagement Liaison with the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I want to welcome you again to the public forum of the Language Acquisition Task Force. Thank you for joining us this Saturday morning.

You can access on the website our PowerPoint. So you can follow along as we present.

There's a lot of information that we will be sharing with you today. And we're very excited



about this session.

Before we start, we wanted to provide some communication tips to ensure that our time together runs smoothly. We will have an opportunity for public feedback towards the end of our session today. Until that time, can you please mute your microphones and also turn your cameras off at this time until you're called. It makes it easier for us to access the interpreters.

During the public comment section, we will and that you use the "raise your hand" tool at the bottom of your screen. You can click "raise your hand" and we'll call on people in order that their hands were raised.

This forum will be recorded for YouTube for those people who were unable to attend or would like to review what we discuss at a later time.

For those who need captioning, again, at the bottom, right-hand side of your screen, click on the "closed captioning" button and follow along in that manner. We have both American Sign Language and Spanish interpretation as well as English and Spanish CART transcription.

We have a phone number for those who need to access the Spanish interpreter, and I'm hoping that somebody can repost that in the chat for those who may have just joined us. We also have a Streamtext link for the Spanish captioning. We want to make sure that we have everything in place before we officially begin.

Our goal is full access for all in attendance today. Okay.
I'm moving myself into the next slide, bear with me.

So the purpose of the task force is to get to a better understanding -- actually, I want to give you a better understanding of the task force. So that can guide your feedback. ACDHH was tasked with establishing a task force with diverse representation of agencies and community organizations. That could provide feedback and recommendation on Senate Bill 1092. Which is looking at language acquisition for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children in the State of Arizona for school readiness. So we're excited to share what we have done thus far before we open it for public comment.

I'd like to give you a brief overview so you know what to expect from today's forum. We will have our facilitator joining a little bit later who will give an overview and background of the task force. And then we will have subcommittee represents come and share their experience and their recommendations based on the work that they've done.

And then we will call for your feedback on their presentations and recommendations, and then close the session for today.

I would like to take a moment to introduce some of our ACDHH staff who have been



integral for this task force. Sonia Samaniego is the Family Engagement Coordinator. Unfortunately, she is unable to attend today. She was one of the leads for this task force, so we want to recognize the work she has done. And we have our public policy and community relations director Nikki Soukup. And then myself, Beca Bailey.

I'm not sure if we have our Executive Director, Sherri Collins with us today. So I want to recognize her if she does happen to be in attendance.

We're excited to share what we have done in this work and invite you, happily, to this public forum. We've been working as a task force over the last few months, but we feel it's important to engage with the community and get feedback from stakeholders, parents, and community members on the work that we have done before we finalize the draft that we will be submitting.

On the PowerPoint, slide number five, we have a link that refers you to SB Senate Bill 1092 so that you can read more about ACDHH's role with this task force.

I will wrap up my introduction and move forward to introduce our facilitator, Tawny Holmes Hlibok. Welcome, Tawny.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Well, good morning, everyone in Arizona. Well, I assume participants are here in Arizona, but some of you might be traveling or on vacation. I'm not sure. I'm on the East Coast. So I happen to be in Florida visiting my mother, but I'm happy to join today's forum on Zoom.

Thank you, Beca, for the wonderful introduction and your discussion of the purpose and helping us set the stage as we move forward today. Some of you may be watching via YouTube. And you'll want to see the PowerPoint or the PowerPoint in Spanish or accessible transcripts after this meeting. They'll be available with the recording after this meeting. And you can find those on the ACDHH website by looking specifically for the Language Acquisition Task Force page. And I will provide the website for you to make note. www.ACDHH.org/get-involved/task-forces/. And if you access that link you will see all information available related to this forum including recordings and transcript and some other information like the PowerPoint may already be there as well.

I will only be showing the PowerPoint during the draft recommendations that the task force has worked so hard to achieve over the last six months, so I will briefly show the PowerPoint during that time, but otherwise, it is accessible to you in that other format.

Okay, I believe we are ready to proceed. I would like to check what number slide we're on. We're currently on slide number five. And if you're following along with the PowerPoint, you'll see four circles on that slide that are in different colors. And the title of the slide is Who is at the table? Because we really want to emphasize that I'm just the facilitator.



I'm here as a support for ACDHH, but the most important work has been from stakeholders, from various aspects of the community, and they have brought a wealth of information and a depth of knowledge that has been incredible.

So we want to show you who is being represented. Basically individuals from four different groups, state agencies, of which we have several here, the clinical community partners, the educational community partners including schools and educational organizations and other community partners as well like the Arizona Association for the Deaf, parent organizations, and whatnot, have all had representatives at the table over the last six months on our task force.

Now that gathering of individuals doesn't only include those that are actually on the task force but it includes those that are parts of subcommittees. And our task force is the greater task force which has a number of community representatives on the subcommittee level. I would like to show you slide number six which lists the subcommittees. You might be wondering which committees we've had as a part of this task force. And there are three. Data and Demographics is the first one. Systematic Connections, and Assessment Review. Those are our three subcommittees. And all of our task force members are on at least one of the three committees plus we have additional participation of stakeholders on those three committees as well. So today, we'll talk a little bit about the work that those committees have done.

And a little bit about who is on the task force and the subcommittees is all public knowledge. I'll show you the next slide.

Slide number seven shows the lists of the individuals on the three subcommittees and the agencies that are represented. You'll also see asterisks next to some names. And if you do see one, that means they are also on the larger task force as a member. If there's no asterisks, it means that they are a participant in the subcommittee but not on the larger task force. The goal of the task force was to meet once a month as the large group to share out, check in, exchange input, and brainstorm, and then the subcommittees also met monthly on a smaller basis to focus specifically on their task as their subcommittee. Where they would discuss more in-depth, share knowledge and resources and then prepare information to bring back to the larger task force. And they would have represents that were sharing to the larger group and that's how it's been coordinated over the past several months. And it's worked beautifully. And we've had a wonderful group of people that are dedicated and knowledgeable and motivated as members of these committees and the larger task force.

Now on the next slide, we'll show you why that's important, slide number eight, building blocks. You'll see some Legos that are four different colors, and you'll see three



different children jumping around. So the building blocks are for this task force because ACDHH gave us the responsibility to survey the language acquisition needs for the desks Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind children in State of Arizona. Which has been a vital question that we've all been faced with. And as we faced this question, we've had to determine what to do next. And that's where the task force and subcommittees come in. Now the public forum is where we're at right now. So that we can gather additional input and feedback as we have compiled and show our final recommendations to the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. And they'll prepare a format to propose to legislation. So that we can focus on the next steps of the task force and this legislation. But we do want the community input before we do so.

So we wanted to make sure that we had language acquisition assessment so that we are focused on the language acquisition of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children, and the emphasis has been on all in those categories. And that's been an emphasize of our task force all along. It's not some of these categories or some of these individuals, but it's all of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children in Arizona.

Now I'll talk a little bit about our timeline on the next slide. Slide nine shows the timeline with a few different circles of various colors. We gathered first in January where we did a screening and some nominations of who should be on this task force based on their knowledge, their roles, and various agencies, and whatnot. We've tried to identify people that have multiple roles that can bring different perspectives. So for example, we might have an audiologist who is also a mother of a Deaf child. Or a pediatric doctor who is also from the Latino community. And that has worked out so well because as many of us know, we don't typically have just one identity. There are many aspects to our identity including gender and location, occupation, whether or not you have children, whether or not you yourself identify as Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing. And these are the various aspects that we looked at to make sure that our group was as diverse as possible, representing these different stakeholder communities.

And some people were not available of the names that were nominated, but we did eventually send out invitations and have our first task force meeting in February and subsequent subcommittee meetings. And here we are already in June. So today's public forum is to show the draft of recommendations. Obviously, we've had a very short window of time to prepare them. But we want to show them to you for your comment and then we'll have one final subcommittee meeting to try to incorporate any feedback we receive from the community to then finalize a report to submit to Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. And that is my responsibility. And that will be available in English, in American



Sign Language, and also in Spanish.

So we will have that available in the three formats on the website after the report has been submitted.

Now I think I've talked a little bit about the task force and our work thus far. I really would like for you all to meet the three individuals that have worked behind the scenes working very hard on the various subcommittees and we will have a representative from each of our subcommittees to share out today. So I'm looking forward to that. We are currently on slide 10. And I would like to invite the Data and Demographics committee representative to come on to the screen and share your experience briefly. A little bit about what your experience has been like, the Data and Demographics for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities in Arizona as well. I'll wait a moment.

Let's see if that person is here yet. I'm just going to take a brief moment to look at the participant list. Okay, I see Kendra here. Kendra, are you able to come forward and join us on screen?

>> KENDRA BENEDICT: Hi. Good morning.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Welcome, Kendra.

>> KENDRA BENEDICT: Thank you very much. I'm sorry, I missed what you said prior to asking me to come on. Did you want me to go into any detail now on the actual findings? Or hold off on that?

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Sure, I will be going through the draft recommendations a little bit later. But for right now, I would like to share generally about your experience, whether or not it was easy, if it was a difficult task, what you got excited about, what was frustrating? You know, maybe share two or three minutes a little bit about your experience.

>> KENDRA BENEDICT: Okay, I can do that. So like Tawny said, about four months ago, five months ago, the actual group got together. The a good first meeting. You could tell it was a group that was going to be able to accomplish a lot. It was a real diverse group, representation from all areas of education. Some that you don't even realize do play a role, because we don't connect regularly with some of these entities like in the medical community and such. But then we broke off into our subcommittees and that's where it did get a little challenging. Especially for those of us that are kind of research geeks and really want to make sure that we're working with the most reliable and valid data available. And to do that takes time. And we did not underestimate the depth and breadth of this project. It's important to us. And we wanted to give it the time it deserved. Which was challenging when you have a full-time job and you're dealing with COVID and you're dealing with, you know, just being short-staffed and the realities of what it's like out there right now.



So it was difficult sometimes to dedicate the time that this project needs. And we felt rushed. But at the end of the day, we feel like we had the people at the table that were able to bring the data that's available and put it together and identify next steps. So yeah, that's it.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Beautiful. Thank you for that nice and brief summary to give everyone a picture of the type of work that you've done and the challenges that were in front of you. Thank you for sharing.

>> KENDRA BENEDICT: You're welcome.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: That's all for now.

Great. Thank you for that capture. I would like to move on to the next committee, Assessment Review. And let's see who is here from that subcommittee prepared to share. Okay. Great, Jennifer is here. Let's make sure you're spot lit. Great. Sidney, I think you can turn your camera off. Thank you. Great.

Hello.

>> JENNIFER SCARBORO: Hi, I'm Jennifer. I'm a representative from the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. Our experience was interesting as well. I think the biggest challenge was figuring out what assessments were used throughout the State. We were primarily able to figure out the assessments used at the school for the Deaf. However, the remaining school district, we had to rely on individuals which was difficult.

The school districts themselves determined which assessments were used. Unless the State Department of Education had determined which assessments should be used. If the State Department of Education determined the assessment of that the entire state use that assessment, no matter what school district, so unfortunately, we ran into either we know what the school for the Deaf is using, the ADE is requiring all of us to use, another than that, it was determinant upon individuals in the varying school districts.

We did review what other states are using. Which was wonderful to see the variety. Sometimes there was a limitation the assessments that were used, sometimes we did get a long list, sometimes too many choices to look into. It was important that we thought about a focus for our students' needs, so we were able to use that as a primary focus during our discussion to narrow things down.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Great. Thank you for that terrific summary. I know that it can be a process. And I saw how your subcommittee really dove into the assessments and the recommendations that you were able to put together. So I'm looking forward to sharing that later on in this meeting. So thank you for that synopsis.

>> JENNIFER SCARBORO: My pleasure, thank you.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Okay, on our third committee, we have Systematic



Connections. And let's see who is present to share from that committee. Hi, Germaine.

>> GERMAINE GRAHAM: Good morning, everyone. I'm Germaine Graham. I'm representing our committee today. Mollie Harding was our chair for this meeting who couldn't be here, so I am here in her stead. We had a mix in our committee of whether or not our tasks were easy for us or challenging. Overall, it was a good experience. For me personally, I just moved from Mississippi. So it was an opportunity for me to understand the families here in Arizona, their experiences, and their journeys. So I was appreciative for this task force and the ability to be part of the process.

We looked to see the present systemic in the community and we wanted to identify gaps. We quickly realized that it was a difficult task. families' journeys are so unique. Whether or not their child was identified early and if they were paired with support early. There are so many different factors that are involved in the systemic connections. Many entities are involved with the families' journey so, working to connect and gather all of the information that support early intervention and how that might differ in Phoenix versus rural or other parts of the state. We realized that there were some information gaps on language acquisition as well. So we faced many challenges as far as the systemic connections were concerned throughout the State.

As a task force subcommittee, I think the information that we gathered was very instrumental in developing our draft recommendations. We were able to identify gaps and where additional supports are needed. We had an awesome group of people. Our numbers did diminish through time as the meetings progressed so, that became an additional challenge. So many factors involved in the process. Busy end of the year, and different agencies have their own responsibilities that took precedence over the subcommittee work, but it was a fantastic experience. And we're excited to get feedback from the community to see what they might recommend we include in our recommendations.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Great. Thank you for sharing a little bit more about your experience with the committee over time. And I definitely agree that it's important to follow families on their journey. And they all might be in different places or taking different routes. Some might have taken a number of turns where others have had a more direct path, but I think it's really important to meet them wherever they're at in the Deaf education system, whether or not they've entered that system as a Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind individual, it's important that -- I appreciate the work of your committee and the careful assessment that you have done along the way. So thank you Germaine for sharing that.

So hopefully that has given the public a little bit more of a picture of the work that these committees have done behind the scenes. And I think that you can look at the list on



the earlier slides, slide seven, that shows the lists of about 22 people that have been involved in the task force plus the staff at ACDHH. And when we have come together as a group, it has really made this task force achieve in developing recommendations as we move forward. And we are moving toward with excitement.

I would like to move to slide -- the next slide after shared experiences to talk about the overview of the recommendations. And what I will do is show a PowerPoint slide, give you a moment to view it. And then I will explain it briefly before showing the next slide. And we'll go through the process that way. And that will give you one or two minutes to read each of the slides as I show them. If you feel like I'm moving too fast and you need more time, please feel free to let me know via the chat, and I will make modifications as we go along. If you don't understand the translation or you don't understand my sign language or there's any sort of communication barrier with captioning or interpreters, please make sure that you let us know because we would like to make sure communication is accessible. Those of you viewing on YouTube, you'll want to make sure you let us know if there's anything we can do to improve upon after this meeting.

Now hopefully what will happen is I'll show you the draft recommendations in the three various areas that you just observed, Data and Demographics, Assessment Review, and Systematic Connections. And once we go through those, we would like to open it up to all of you to get your feedback, suggestion, and thoughts. We welcome any thoughts, opinions, or ideas that you have or even a suggestion of something we may have missed, please feel free to do those because this say draft. And I've given you kind of a snapshot for PowerPoint purposes, but we will be in much more depth in the final report. And it will also be accessible as well.

So PowerPoint is very limited in the amount of information you can include. So the idea is just to provide an essence of the recommendations. But if you have questions, comments, or anything, you are welcome to follow-up via email after this meeting as well if you need to discuss something in more depth.

We'll go ahead and get started with the PowerPoint slide number 11. Which is the overview of the recommendations.

I'll talk a little bit about the recommendations in the three categories. And then I'll come back onscreen.

I just need to find it again here.

Give me one moment.

Okay, I have it here ready to show you.

Okay, we will remove our video.



>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Did all of you see the PowerPoint? Okay, looks like -- I just want to make sure all the technology is worked out. Okay. I see some comments saying that you could see it. That's great. Now that slide offers you an overview of the three areas, Assessment Review, noticed the need of a widespread use of the same assessment. So that it would be easier to obtain data on how Deaf, Deaf blind, and Hard of Hearing children are doing. So that's something that needs to be worked on. And the main recommendation is an increase in training and an increase in the number of assessors available. So that more people could actually do the assessments.

Now for Systematic Connections, their recommendation is that we maintain agency partners that we have in place right now and that was a good thing. And data research involvement was strong. But we did need an increased strength in transitions for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children who move from the birth to three process into being school-ready from four to 14. And making sure that those connections are strong and available. Making sure that information is also accessible to families so that they can have more knowledge and awareness of issues in the community. And that Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing opportunities also have access to that information so that they can continue to acquire language and grow.

For Data and Demographics, the recommendation is that they want to see a more centralized repository of data. And an increase in agency sharing of information, particularly data associated with this. There are partnerships for services that are strong, but data partnerships could be strengthened. As well as tracking a child from birth throughout their journey in the system. To make sure that we are aware of how that child is doing with their language acquisition. So there's some overlap of these connections and partnerships that is great. And it's nice -- it would be nice to see them all in the same system. We have noticed that there are similar challenges and similar opportunities among the three committees that we had. Now I would like to go a little bit more into depth on Assessment Review and the other committees as well.

So I'm going to go ahead and share my PowerPoint again. I will remove my video and show you the next slide momentarily.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: So that is one example of the findings during the Assessment Review. About two-thirds of children are served by ASDB. And they partner with about half of the school districts. About one-third do not partner with ASDB. So I did see a question already. We'll go ahead and save that for the public input portion of today's session. But we are not familiar with how school districts are working and providing services for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing students if they do not partner with ASDB.



So about half the school districts, I wanted to emphasize that.

Okay, so I'm going to turn my video off to show the next slide.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: We'll wait to be spot lit.

Okay. I'm keeping a close eye on the time. We'll go ahead and show the remaining slides for that committee, so you can read through them, and then I'll give you a summary. Because I want to make sure that we have time for your input which is the most important piece of today's session.

And again, the PowerPoint will be available on ACDHH's website. Actually it has been since Wednesday's specific additions included yesterday.

So from the report, the subcommittee found just like Jennifer said that there is a variety of assessments being used. We're waiting to make sure that myself and the interpreter are both spot lit. Okay, much better. Thank you so much for letting us know of that communication barrier. So the Assessment Review found just as Jennifer had said, there is quite a diverse use of assessments throughout the State. We're familiar with what ASDB uses, but those school districts who do not partner with ASDB make decisions on their own assessments.

Also there was a lack of assessors which means more training should occur so that more assessors could be available. We want qualified assessors who are specifically trained in the language of the test or the child. Also many of the assessments are not normed to Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind children. Or students with multiple disabilities, so that was found in the subcommittee work and something for our consideration. The recommendations are re-establish. Of a statewide assessment team for all Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind children, no matter their educational placement, whether or not they have an IEP, 504, or they're not receiving services, to ensure that they're on track for language acquisition as they develop.

So the team recommended the need for training assessors for both English and American Sign Language. And then also recommendation for a biannual -- wait, that doesn't make sense. Twice a year? Two-time-a-year assess for younger children and older children from kindergarten on could be annually assessed. And that abides by the federal legislation to make sure that the child is supported throughout their educational journey.

So I'll go ahead and speak to what the Assessment Review committee found and their recommendations. And then I'll show you the slide. There are seven recommendations from birth to five or almost six, visual communication or sign language checklist should be used. The day C assessment should be used. The third, birth to five, these are assessments from birth to 24, but there was recommendation of some for students who have language



struggles. So using the language of communication matrix assessment for ages two to 21. The expressive one-word picture vocabulary test could be used, the fourth edition. EOWPVT4, for ages two to 12 using the audio comprehension language assessments.
>> EACL.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: The ASL assessment instrument, ASL EI, is currently not available but hopefully it will be available soon. Unfortunately, the development was put on hold because of COVID. ASL expressive skills assessment from age four to 14. So those were the seven assessments that were recommended by the subcommittee.

And now I'm going to show the Systematic Connections slides, quickly, for your review. There are three slides that I'll let you review. And then we'll go ahead and summarize those. I won't go line by line, just take a moment to quickly review what's on the slide, and then I will summarize them.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Great. Making sure the interpreter and myself are spot lit. Okay.

So as you can see, the Systematic Connections from birth to five or when the child is first diagnosed as Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind is missing connections. Also there is a need for a brain shift focused on the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind child. Instead of looking at medical issues, more looking at the child as a whole and how they connect to the greater world and socialize with their peers and family members or the community. Thinking more holistically, those types of resources need to be provided to parents and families. There are gaps in services that were identified. Which is common throughout the United States. There's a lot to follow-up where families are unsure of whether or not their child is Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind. They might start in the system, and then we lose them for one reason or another. So developing a more shared connection and exchange of information might help with that loss to follow-up.

Next is the Data and Demographics findings.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: So that is our third and final subcommittee findings and recommendations. What they saw is that data is there, but it's difficult to assess. Sometimes it's difficult to make sense of it. It's often there are issues with reliability or validity of that data which leaves many questions.

We do have a wealth of data. the State Department of Education does have that. The EHDI program, Early Hearing Detection in Infants, but there needs to be a pipeline of ensuring that the data is shared, that it's readily available, it's reliable and valid. So hopefully with shared ideas, we can come up with a strategy to make that happen. Our three subcommittees took a deep dive and thought carefully on the topics that they were assigned



to look into. And included the perspective of teachers, audiologists, speech language pathologists, educators of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, early interventionists. We made sure to include not just metro area representation but also the voices of stakeholders from rural communities.

So for those of you during public input, this is our time. If you would like to use sign language, please raise your hand which is in the "reaction" tab at the bottom of the screen. Raise your hand, you will be identified. You will be called forward. You can turn your camera on at that time. If you would prefer -- so you can use spoken English or American Sign Language. We would ask that you share your screen. You can also use spoken Spanish because we have interpreters. If you want to write your comments in English or Spanish, you can put that in chat and Beca will go ahead and share your question to the greater group.

Please keep in mind that this is a safe space. Try not to name names And specifically point out individual people or agencies. We would like to keep our comments broad and not pinpoint individuals or agencies by name. If you want to reach out to us privately to talk about a certain person or agency, please feel free, but not in the public forum. What we share is draft. And the goal is that we are collecting more information from you so we would like your comments and questions to be geared towards what we have shared today. If you have outside comments or questions, we ask that you hold them for another time. So saying that, we're going to call Beca forward to help navigate this public open comment period. And we will open things up for you to be involved.

>> BECA BAILEY: Okay, Tawny, yes, we do actually have a few questions already by two people. If you would like me to go ahead and relay those questions.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: That would be great, Beca.

>> BECA BAILEY: Wenonha Holmes has a two-part question. She said for those children not served by ASDB, what services are they receiving? And how do you know whether or not they are being served?

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: I'm happy to answer that based on the Systematic Connections subcommittee work. They do have numbers for students served by ASDB. And they also do know how many Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing students are in the general school district. And the numbers aren't matching. So ASDB serves roughly two-thirds of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind students in the State of Arizona. And then the second question, I can't remember the second question. Oh, how do you know what services they're receiving?

We would actually have to ask questions on a case-by-case basis. Some individuals



have 504 plans. Others, IEPs. Others might not be receiving any services. It depends on their needs. So in order to answer the question, we would personally have to go to each school district and then on a student-by-student basis what services they're receiving. So I think that satisfies both questions.

>> BECA BAILEY: Okay. Another question from We know that again is that from the lens of social, the social model, what is that phrase from the lens of the social model mean in terms of the Deaf community?

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: I actually would have to follow-up with the Systematic Connections subcommittee. I would prefer to check in with them because I just took the wording from their recommendation list. I believe that the premise is there's a goal of a child interacting with their family, with their peers. And that we're focusing not just on a vision or hearing loss of that child but also how they're connecting to the greater world, socially. I believe that is social model which could include the Deaf community but also the greater community wherever the child belongs. Whether they're Indigenous, whether they're members of the Black community, Hard of Hearing community, if they have additional disabilities, whatever community that they're involved with would be a part of their social model. The overall goal is to shift away from the sensory loss and into a frame of greater connection to the community so that they can express themselves fully.

>> BECA BAILEY: Lilas Olsen's question was: Whether or not there were any specific recommendations to legislature on legislation needs?

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: That's a great question. We're not to that point yet in our process. We're focusing right now on the systematic issues or systemic issues. Once we finalize the report with recommendations, ACDHH then can interpret and determine where there may be gaps in the laws looking at what current legislation says and what we need to focus on in terms of meeting the recommendations of the task force. So we're not quite at that place yet. And we appreciate Lilas, your participation in the subcommittee work and all that you have brought to that work.

>> BECA BAILEY: There's another question. From Laura Morales, her question is: How will you find culturally and linguistically appropriate professionals for family that may need more access to information? That's something that we need. And I personally haven't seen it.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: It's very important for us to look at that. There is a scarcity of diverse language culture, race, ethnic backgrounds in our Deaf community, to be honest. Over 80% of our professionals tend to be people who can hear, who are white, and female. So many of the statistics show that. You are right, we need to do better. We need to attract and support and draw people of varying cultures, identities, whether they be Deaf,



DeafBlind, DeafBlind, with other disability, Black, Latino, Indigenous. We want to welcome any and all identity so that we can do better. We really do need to do better. A resolution for that is more personal. We will encourage agencies to look within themselves to determine how they can establish programs and what types of job qualifications that they can set to make sure that the system is accessible, but it is definitely an underlying issue of concern. Thank you so much for bringing it up today.

>> BECA BAILEY: okay, I just want to make sure that I catch the name of the person who asked this question. Sarah Laird made a note asking: Where is the listening and spoken language portion of this report? Or those organizations seem to be missing from the task force, those that serve Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind children and families like Karla Zimmerman and her SLP team, Desert Voices, Arizona Hands & Voices as well as AG Bell Arizona chapter and parent choice of modality of communication seems to also be missing from this conversation. So when you talk about all children, what about those parents that say that they don't want to use American Sign Language, and they want to only use spoken English? Has that been included? Or are we neglecting identifying those individuals as well?

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: I just looked back at the list of subcommittee members. And I can confirm that we did include those agencies. We asked several of those people that you mentioned, but unfortunately, they didn't respond or they weren't able to participate. But we did reach out to all of those agencies and entities that you mentioned. Because we wanted all voices heard. You can feel free to reach out to them to get their view.

The recommendations are any and all Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind children, not based on American Sign Language. Whatever language modality is chosen by parents, we want to make sure assessments are fitting, that services are supporting them, it was not solely based on American Sign Language. We were looking at the system in general and looking at language in general. If the child is using English, then are they meeting their acquisition milestones? If they're using ASL, are they meeting the milestones? There was no requirement for sign language as part of this process or spoken language. In turn, the recommendations for any and all children to make sure that their language acquisition needs are being met.

>> BECA BAILEY: Okay. Christina Voyeur Davis said she's trying to understand the primary purpose of this draft. Is the purpose to share what you've studied with the legislation to make submissions in phases to improve accessibility to assessments services and education for all Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in Arizona? Is that something that will eventually become law?

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Yes and no. From my understanding as a facilitator in this



project, whatever recommendations are given will be the staff at ACDHH. They'll look to that and make recommendations in steps. It could be encouraging agencies to collaborate more for communication facilitation, potentially there may be some new legislative needs if gaps are identified in current legislation. That might also in turn increase interagency connections. Many agencies were at the table in this task force process. And have already started making connections and making changes based on what they've done. So there isn't necessarily a requirement for legislation to make this happen. But more information, communication, transparency, and partnerships, strengthening those in the task force and then the subcommittee has already started to take shape. ACDHH will take the recommendations and then from there meet with the legislation or the legislature to determine what the next steps are based on the task force work and where it goes from there, that's why I say yes and no, there are many different approaches and results that can come from this process.

>> BECA BAILEY: Okay. Germaine wanted to respond to the comment in and the follow-up question about the social lens. Germaine said more training and education to professionals regarding the social Deaf community perspective rather than the medical model that is typically used when viewing a Deaf person as somebody that needs to be fixed. And so trying to remove that negative perspective. There was a comment in return about what about that child's choice?

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: So the assessment should give us more information about the child. That is the goal of any assessment. So we always are huge advocates for child's perspective. L, child's thoughts. So making sure that educational professional agencies or organizations and the child and parents are involved in the process. The child is the key part of the process in total. We always look to the child's choice.

>> BECA BAILEY: Okay, Sarah Laird again regarding the LSL and the organizations said she did actually contact them, and they reported that -- or that was not what they reported. So thank you for sharing that.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Okay, thank you for sharing that with us. I'll follow up with ACDHH's staff. I did see the emails going out to the various agencies and organizations. Maybe it got to the wrong person's desk or there was something that fell through the cracks. I'll definitely investigate that further. So thank you for bringing this to our attention.

>> BECA BAILEY: Okay, Kendra Benedict just wanted to mention that we spent a lot of time talking about the needs of children with significant developmental delays and who may be medically compromised. ASL versus LSL versus any other approach was never really a part of that discussion. Okay.

Moving on to another question from Delight Lydiate. So clarify, one of the purposes of



this draft is to identify what is contributing to language acquisition gaps in the State of Arizona and to identify steps to remedy these gaps to the legislation.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Precisely. That's a great summary of the goal.

And more. Because we can work together, all the agencies that play important roles in the life of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind children on their journey can work together. And then the legislation or legislature is also part of that.

The agencies and the organizations and the people working with the children are the boots on the ground, but of course, we need to have the legislature understanding the needs as well.

>> BECA BAILEY: Okay. And another comment from Sarah Laird. Sorry, another one popped in. I have to readjust. In terms of the discussion of ASL versus LSL, it should be, especially if you are discussing developing a statewide assessment system on language, and acquisition, how can that not be part of the conversation?

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: I'll respond to that comment. We often find ourselves focused on modality. Modality is how the child communicates which language, but I think our goal was language acquisition in general. It could be English. It could be Spanish. It could be Navajo. It could be sign language. The goal was: Is the child acquiring language as they should? That was the focus of the task force. If we look at typically-developing children and how they acquire language versus children who have emotional, physical, or other disabilities or impairments that may prevent them from typical language acquisition, we were looking at language acquisition as a whole. We weren't talking about the pros and Congress of each language and how they are acquired. We want to respect whatever language the child is using and just ensure that we are meeting their language acquisition milestones.

>> BECA BAILEY: Okay, I was just checking the Spanish line, and I didn't see any comments or questions. So I'll move on to the next question here from Laura Morales who says as a parent of a Deaf child who was not initially serviced appropriately, I'm glad to be see more accessible assessments being used for our kids. I feel that we are in the right direction with this task force. Often see a priority on funding of services that go to the listening and spoken language. And we need to fill the gaps with our Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind kids who come from diverse backgrounds.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Thank you for your comment, Laura. I want to emphasize that we had an amazing panel that gave us a perspective on social economic background and the important role of that in a Deaf child's journey. If a family doesn't have transportation to access services, if they can't transport their child to a various schools, maybe they don't have a car in their family, or due to churl or race, families lives on reservations that don't



have services nearby and don't have the same access to information as those who live in cities. So it was an important perspective that we received as a task force on socio-economic differences and how that impacted the child. So we made sure to include that as part of our discussion for each area that we nows cussed on in the task force. And for me, it was one of the most important pieces. We have such diverse terrain and cultural backgrounds in the State of Arizona, we have to keep those things in mind when considering the children's Lang acquisition and how we can work as organizations and agencies to ensure that kids are getting what they need so that they can live prosperous lives.

>> BECA BAILEY: Okay, another question from Sarah Laird I have another question. Is there data showing the language outcomes as of today in any of the languages used by the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind communities? Such as data showing their proficiency levels in the language primarily used, birth to 21?

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Right now, that data is not available. It's tied to individual child's information. It seems that Kendra wants to add something to this.

>> KENDRA BENEDICT: Yeah, if that's okay --

>> INTERPRETER: Just one second, Kendra. Can we wait for the interpreter to be spot lit. We're good, Kendra.

>> KENDRA BENEDICT: Okay, just real briefly, and again, this does not account for all of the children across the State, but we have to start somewhere. And I can say that we have been participating with children that attend ASDB's preschools and are enrolled in our birth to three, I'm sorry, and in our birth to three program. We've been participating in the CDC grant through the University of Colorado at boulder. EHDI programs or something. And we just finished our first year of data collection. And just yesterday I got a summary report that considers demographics of all kinds. And the outcomes scores of children on the DC and McArthur which are not specific to either language, or any language or communication mode. And I'm very happy to report that our states in comparison to the other states participating in ODDACE are doing just as they are. And they're doing well. I just got the report yesterday. So I don't want to go into any specifics. And it's not even been presented to our board yet, but just wanted to share a little bit of good news that we have a starting point. So that's exciting.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Thank you, Kendra. Thank you for reminding us of that brand new grant. And we're so excited that you were able to get some of the hot-off-the-press data for us today. And again, that data didn't pinpoint a specific language. So it's good that we have that information coming soon. Hopefully with our task force



recommendations, we can find more children and learn and understand more about their language acquisition journey.

>> BECA BAILEY: Looks like we have one more question. From Wenonah. How is it fair to let the hearing bias impact the child's future? Yes, many children can and do speak and there's no desire to prevent them from speaking or using listening and spoken language, but when a child is missing information or working extra hard to get the same access to information another children easily pick up by hearing, it's extremely difficult to go back and fill that gap when they're older. I strongly believe that all Deaf children should be given all access to language by speaking, hearing, signing, and that way we can prevent any educational gaps. As they grow, if they're more comfortable with one or both modalities, they can continue using those. I have been at Gallaudet and seen how many students come to Gallaudet learning sign language and Deaf culture and shunning their hearing families because they never felt equal to them. That's not a part of Deaf culture. That's a part of the oppressive hearing culture.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Thank you for your comment.

>> BECA BAILEY: Okay, I see a comment from Sarah saying, That's great. I look forward to you sharing the data report with the community and showing language proficiency levels of using language. And then there was a link to the ODDACE testing information.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Oh, wonderful, thank you Germaine for including that.

>> BECA BAILEY: And then one final comment from Wenonah is: If you have a Deaf child that didn't have access to sign language early on but started using it later on because it became apparent they needed it, that is not a fair comparison to a child who had access to sign language from birth. The child with ASL access will be proficient with English.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Thank you for that comment. Kendra?

>> KENDRA BENEDICT: Yeah, thank you. I just want to add to that --

>> INTERPRETER: Kendra, just one second.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Okay.

>> KENDRA BENEDICT: Okay, I wanted to add to that, with the ODDACE project, again, the demographic data is -- there's a lot of it. And those are things that are considered. We asked all sorts of questions about what could potentially contribute to a child's language development. Socioeconomic status to parent's education level to exposure of language to therapies they've reefered, history of early intervention. And the data that I received yesterday, again, very preliminary and I'm excited to talk to the folks there because I think there's even more we can do with that data to discover what are the contributing factors in our communities that are why we're seeing the results we're seeing. So all of that is being



considered.

>> TAWNY HOLMES HLIBOK: Thank you for adding that, Kendra. Also, a federal grant released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is ODDACE so we're excited to see the partnership with the Arizona State School for the Deaf and blind for that collection of data in this pilot program. And then sharing of that data. This is specifically for students served by ASDB. So that's something that we can keep our eyes on for the future.

I think that actually concludes the public input portion of today's forum. Thank you all for participating. We would like to invite the ACDHH staff, Nikki Soukup particularly, on screen to close us out. And Beca, thank you so much for being the person relaying the questions from the chat to the greater audience. Thank you, everybody.

>> NIKKI SOUKUP: Wonderful. Just making sure we had the spotlights accurate. I would like to thank everyone for joining today. And for all of the amazing work that has been done over the course of the last several months. This was created by work prior by establishing the Senate Bill. And then has involved a number of individuals to testify to make that legislation pass. And as a result of the legislation, ACDHH has been able to host these various forums including the task force led by Tawny Holmes Hlibok. Thank you very much, Tawny, for your facilitation throughout the task force since the beginning of this year.

We would like to also thank everyone. I realize that everyone that's been on the task force and the committees are volunteers, but that we all have a shared belief of improving language acquisition and the quality of life for children who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing in Arizona.

Now if you have additional thoughts in the chat, I've submitted a form that you are welcome to complete after today's session. To include additional thoughts. And you're also welcome to call via telephone or videophone. We will continue to post more information including the video from today on our website along with the transcript. So if any of you want the opportunity to know more, you're welcome to look at that website to view previous task force meetings and transcripts including the panel that was mentioned earlier.

Please reach out to us for any continued conversation. We here at ACDHH will review the report once we received the final report and make determinations on the next steps. And we will continue to gather involvement from the community going forward. Thank you all. And we'll go ahead and turn off the live session.

