

Feasibility and Planning Study Committee
Iowa Services for Students who are Deaf, Blind, Visually Impaired or Hard of Hearing
MINUTES
September 24, 2012 – 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th St., Des Moines, IA

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	DECISION
1. Welcome and introductions	<p>Attended by: Core team: Shirley Kelley (facilitator) Shelly Bosovich, Patrick Clancy, Mark Draper, Polly Fullbright, Diana Gonzalez, Marty Ikeda, Tracy Isaacson, Kathy Miller, Brook Nolin, Sandra Ryan, Robert Spangler, Tammy O’Hollearn, Kenda Jochimsen, Charles Levine, Stephanie Lyons Department of Management: Dave Fardal Support Team: Cynthia Angeroth, John Cool, Marsha Gunderson, Gwen Woodward, Jim Heuer, Don Boddicker, Shari Slater, Pam Rubel Interpreters: Peggy Chicoine and Jeff Reese Others: Kris Maxwell, ISD Technology Audience of 31 members</p>	
2. Reminder of ground rules and guidelines	<p>The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. by Shirley Kelly Everyone at the table should feel comfortable to discuss topics and not feel judged. Identify self before speaking.</p>	
3. Reminder of committee charge	<p>Look at effectiveness and efficiency of future services and programs, and how that might impact education for students we serve. The guiding questions will help us to make recommendations.</p>	
4. Minutes from August 27, 2012 meeting (Action)	<p>Mark Draper moved and Diana Gonzalez seconded approval of minutes as written. Motion passed.</p>	
5. National Perspectives	<p>Via WebEx: Gene McMahan, Executive Director of Council of Schools for the Blind, retired superintendent of New York City Schools for the Blind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most importantly is to provide each child with appropriate education; location is secondary. For placement, determine 1. degree of specialization needed for curriculum, teachers and other staff/intensity of coordination between therapists and other interventions and 2. degree of specialization required in the 	

	<p>environment. Does student interact with peers and staff in this environment? Does this provide positive reinforcement or negative learning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two reasons a child needs residential placement: 1. When it's not possible to provide the child with appropriate education within a regular school day or 2. Travel distance is too far. • No two special schools operate the same; none have same level of effectiveness. More has to do with local factors (school mission, administrator knowledge, infrastructure) than national factors. It is critical to have infrastructure to address the national shortage of BVI instructors. <p>Guiding questions addressed: <i>#1: (Regional models in 4 to 5 locations around state within an hour's drive)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would reduce travel time for many students. • Possibly reduce number of students in residential placements who are there solely because of the travel time. • Parents who didn't want their children enrolled at residential schools might be more willing to enroll them at regional programs. • Those enrolled at residential services would be there because they really need the services (as opposed to being there due to long commute). • Possible to provide appropriate education without residential placement. • Advantages depend somewhat on size of students and size of staff. • Possibility of high level of interaction among staff, leading to better curriculum, instruction and problem solving, due to the concentration of specialized staffing. • Related personnel (occupational and physical therapists, etc.) would gain expertise from interacting and learning from the VI professionals, as opposed to those related staff who are in a LEA and only occasionally work with this population. • New teachers would have more support from peers, resulting in them performing at a higher level faster than if they were in an isolated setting. This helps address the teacher shortage, as someone with certification in a 	
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	<p>content area could be assisted with peers as they pursue coursework necessary to gain the specialized certification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical facilities (lighting, walkways, etc.) would be more supporting for students. • Typically, new adaptive technology is implemented faster in this setting • If this program has just 3 or 5 students, the aforementioned advantages will be lost. • Small regional settings lead to isolation of staff. • Small settings create challenges for getting experiences to students in terms of integration • If sites provide diversified services, it could reduce ability to identify any systemic needs to change. Five different sites could mean needs identified would be more site-specific rather than statewide. <p><i>#2: (Maintaining current campuses and have regional centers)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the five regional centers had options instead of only a residential placement option, then you would have to give it ample consideration. Some states don't have residential options. I've never known a state that didn't have some kids who needed residential placement for some part of their school year. It is important to have a residential option. <p><i>#3: (Continue providing services at both campuses)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to advantages cited above. This relates to the mission of the organizations and how they choose responsibility. Refer to Washington School for the Blind and their relationship with LEAs. Disadvantages continue to be travel time and parents may not send a child because they don't want them to be in a residential setting. <p><i>#4: (Provide services on a single campus)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This works for some schools. Savings comes more from facility. How do you get staff to feel unified? The difference of students who are b/vi or d/hh are such that there will not be a lot of interaction. Travel time remains a disadvantage. Also, those from the blind programs will think of 	
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themselves as a stepchild because deaf programs are larger. Important to consider how to implement this without creating this type of effect.

- The other guiding questions have been addressed in my other answers.

Committee Questions:

- *How many students were at the school when you set up your program?* One hundred and fifteen; the numbers are the same today. There is a center-based preschool of 100 to 120 students, program for emotional needs, mostly residential, for 60 students, 110 students in the b/vi program.
- *How many blind students have additional disabilities?* 80 to 85%. (Patrick Clancy noted in Iowa, if we don't look at all of the disabilities, we would have similar percentages.)
- *Is there a trend for rural states the size of Iowa to look at these changes?* Confer with New Mexico, because their specialized schools play a significant role in the state although enrollment is only 60 students. It relations to their mission having high expectations. When we thinking about those with multiple disabilities we need to understand the diversity of learning characteristics and know what additional disabilities are. They may have good academic potential but need additional services.
- *What strategies are there to address the "stepchild" mentality?* Deaf programs are larger, and there are fewer students with additional disabilities. It would be important to acknowledge those differences and find a way to allow the blind program to feel equally important on campus. I don't see a lot of interaction between the programs.
- *Why is there a larger population of b/vi who have additional disabilities compared to deaf students who are normal? Does it deal with the way they are educated?* The prevalence of students with additional disabilities is often secondary to another medical problem. These are the students in special schools.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what educational programs exist, especially in the Midwest, for preparing teachers for b/vi students. In New Mexico, the school funds the professor for the b/vi program. (Patrick Clancy said there is a teacher training program at University of Iowa, a single-professor program. There is not a mobility program.) • In the schools serving both deaf and blind students, are the services administered by the same people? Are the students in the same facilities? How do these services go together? They run very separately. The leadership is the critical question. The head administrator needs the expertise in the disability. You make a decision on the chief administrator, and how do you make sure you have expertise administratively in the other disability? 	
<p>7. Additional data of Iowa Services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing</p>	<p><i>While technology was set up for the next national perspective, the committee moved through more of the agenda (#7).</i></p> <p>Shari Slater presented NWEA reading and math (refer to document on the IESBVI, Board of Regents, or ISD website). She said this is typical growth. About 2,000 students across the nation who are deaf or hard of hearing take the test. It is not normed. ISD is consistently above the average by 10 to 20 points compared to other deaf and hard of hearing students who take the test in the United States. Shari presented Indicator 14 (refer to document on website) data, discussing what ISD graduates were doing one year after graduation, years 2008 – 2011.</p>	
<p>5. National Perspectives <i>(Technology was ready to deliver address from James Tucker.)</i></p>	<p>Via Skype: James Tucker, Superintendent, Maryland School for the Deaf President elect of Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All states have flaws; none are a results-driven system designed to adjust the system to improve results. Iowa will be the first state in the country to publish individual/student data. In Maryland, the school for the Deaf has 55% of the state's deaf (500 students). We offer advanced placement, foreign language, and a state diploma. Our average scores have been better than public school scores. We have mainstream or regional programs and don't know how they are doing, there are no public reports. Many places aren't doing well because students who transfer from public schools to the school for the deaf are often 2 to 6 years below grade level. The descriptions of models look nice, but mean little to me personally because I am deaf and experience the pain every day. I encourage you to study and learn but be 	

stubborn at looking at results before moving with your work.

- Our goal at MSD is deaf children follow hearing children's benchmarks. The key foundation to any education system is to look at language benchmarks. What language skills should kindergartners (and grades on up) have?
- Look at the article I sent called *Reduction from Harm*. It explains about harm done to children when parents force an approach. In the public schools, English is the only approach for hearing students. In the deaf world, we teach two languages. Please take time to read this article. A lot of what our field does is counterproductive or counterintuitive. Hearing people may think something is good for deaf children but honestly, it may be harmful to deaf children. Different states have different models but if a child learns late it won't work. If a teacher doesn't provide full communication access, it won't work. If a child is deprived of using both ASL and English, it won't work. Too many students are forced to learn in a language they don't have full access to, so right away, academics suffer.

Committee Questions

- *What are the ages of the students in your program?* We have two campuses and 500 students. We have 96 enrolled in the birth – 5 program. The birth – 8th grade campus is in Columbia; the main campus is in Frederick. Of the 500 students, 100 have cochlear implants, 50 are bilingual (fluent or near emerging) and 25% of our students have additional special needs. Our students go to college, community college, group homes, training programs.
- *Thank you for saying to be successful, deaf children must learn two languages and learn them early. I believe that about blind children needing to learn Braille only. I think there are a lot of similarities about what we need. Please talk about whether or not it is ever appropriate for deaf and blind students to be mixed or get their education together.* There are 11 deaf/blind school in the country, often joined for economic reasons. I have no expertise about education of blind students. Here, the blind school is a private school; the deaf school is a state school. We do meet once in a while and compare our legislative strategies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am curious if we decided that deaf and blind people should be educated on the same campus... You have impressive results with your students. Would this work? You are a deaf person administering a deaf program. Or person is administering both programs and does not have specialty in either disability.</i> When I worked in California (at the school for the deaf), the blind school was on the same campus as the deaf school and I never saw a blind student. They shared a business office, maintenance department. There were two separate superintendents who they reported to the same boss in Sacramento. • <i>What would you like to see in a state model that focused on results and continuous improvement?</i> Iowa, with 2,000 deaf students, should have a school of 700, with regional schools set up through the 8th grade, and then attend ISD. • <i>What trend do you see around the country to equalize access to programs in larger rural states?</i> Rural education is always a challenge. Parents have a terrible time deciding what to do. Our dorm population is 30% of our total. Twenty years ago, it was 90%. I encourage families to move close so they will raise their own children. There are few resources for elementary aged children who don't want to be four hours away from home. By the time they reach middle school, 80% of them are academically and socially behind. They have a strong dependency on their interpreters, who become their teacher, counselor, and best friend. That is not healthy for a child. And we can't expect all these families to move here. • Your work is challenging, you have hard questions to answer. Don't forget the deaf community as the consumers of the system. Use the deaf community; learn about them. They are great resources. 	
7. Additional data of Iowa Services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing	<p>Kathy Miller presented information on Iowa School for the Deaf Graduates (see websites for document). Question: <i>Were you able to conclude from those who attended college, the percent who graduated and of those who graduated, how many are working in their area of study?</i> The study did not include those questions.</p> <p>Marsha Gunderson presented Achievement Data on Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (refer to websites for document). Question: <i>Why don't 46% of these students have IEPs?</i> These are students the audiologists identified as having hearing loss but perhaps with a hearing aid or unilateral or mild loss, or</p>	

	<p>whatever reason, they are doing satisfactory in the classroom. There appears to be no concern to have them on an IEP. They may or may not have a 504 plan; we don't have a way to collect that information statewide.</p> <p><i>Are these 46% behind their hearing peers?</i> Yes, all of the students with disabilities have proficiency levels on average that are behind. The percentage of students without an IFSP or IEP proficient in literacy averages 72.5% and math averages 77.6%. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students have proficiency lower than students without a disability.</p>	
<p>6. Summary of public hearings and public comments</p>	<p>Gwen Woodward and Cindie Angeroth presented information regarding the two public hearings and written comments to date (see websites for documents).</p> <p>Committee comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks to those who participated./It was an emotionally charged time./Hope the committee understands that. • ISD students were excited and disappointed more committee members weren't there. • The number system does not work for b/vi individuals. This was disrespectful. • IEP teams often don't understand deaf culture or isolation and the Dept. of Ed needs to step in. • The number of interpreter vacancies needs to be attended to./This is hard for parents. • Patrick Clancy noted this committee is advisory in nature and decisions will not be made here. Recommendations will come from discussions around the guiding questions. 	
<p>8. Guiding Questions #1 and #2</p>	<p>Patrick Clancy reviewed regional center characteristics (refer to websites for document.) The objective here is to take services closer to the child; that's why there would be 4 or 5 centers. This would add to the continuum for students. This is a redefining and not a beginning. Regional centers would operate with that school district. None would look alike. There would be an integrated approach if connected to a school physically.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign language levels and competencies vary, and sometimes teachers can't shift their language for a child's needs. Language skills of those teaching in regional programs 	

	<p>need to be addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's use this time to discuss in small groups rather than advocate positions. • Whatever we do, parents and families are going to have to be in the system; they need the support. <p>Groups were asked to discuss and report out their strongest advantage/disadvantage to the specific component assigned to them regarding regional programming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Group 1: Advantages/disadvantages of regional programs</i> Advantage: Provide closer services for students in rural areas Disadvantage: Services at regional centers would not be uniform. • <i>Group 2: Advantages/disadvantages to having regional centers and maintaining the CB campus</i> Advantage: The right facilities are in CB. Disadvantage: We have no data on where students live across the state and travel time is an issue. • <i>Group 3: Advantages/disadvantages to having regional centers and maintaining the Vinton campus</i> Advantage: If we focus programmatically on outcomes, it doesn't matter where it is located. Two can be magnet locations to facilitate the regional programs. Disadvantage: Still needs to focus on data and outcomes. • <i>Group 4: Advantages/disadvantages to having CB and Vinton as regional centers</i> Advantage: The schools could be hubs that support other regional programs and could share equipment. Disadvantage: Cost of maintaining two facilities. 	
<p>9. Additional information needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate the data from ISD and the general population (for instance by age) to learn the outcomes for literacy and math skills • A map to know where students who are blind and deaf are currently living in Iowa • How deaf children who do not attend ISD are educated in Iowa/perspectives from mobility specialist or teacher of the b/vi • How many b/vi students are learning Braille and getting classes in mobility and why aren't others? • Language development data for birth to 5 years • Perspectives from teachers and students as to how things are going, a viewpoint 	

	<p>from the IEP teams about how they make decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would a regional center look like and what people would be involved, what are the costs associated with it? • Diana Gonzalez noted some of the questions should be asked by the executive council and management team. • <i>Is there a plan that's going to happen no matter what? Who is wanting that plan to happen?</i> Patrick Clancy answered: There is not a preconceived outcome to the work of this committee. It does need to look at the efficiency of things: should it be that we use two campuses in Iowa? There are limited resources and we may have to bring more than one proposal. There are questions being asked about keeping two large campuses in the future; too many resources that should be going to kids might be used to maintain two campuses. • Iowa's mainstream programs and interpreter qualifications, use of Typewell or CART. • Transition to employment of secondary services after graduation. Who advocates for kids after graduation? 	
10. Next meeting agenda	Focus will be on guiding questions.	
11. Additional public hearing	The committee agreed to hold a third public hearing following the next Feasibility and Planning Study Committee Monday, Oct. 22 from 5 – 7 p.m. It will be held via the Iowa Communications Network and sites will be in Vinton, Council Bluffs and Des Moines. If there is a small number of presenters, an extended time limit (more than 3 minutes) will be considered.	
12. Other	The 2012 convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Iowa will be this weekend and perspectives on how this committee work is progressing will be presented.	
13. Closing	Meeting concluded at 2:52 p.m.	

Future meetings:

Monday, October 22 Heartland AEA room 13A

Monday, November 26 Heartland AEA room 18