

Meeting the Needs of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Kansas

Workshop Proceedings

February 11 – 12, 2008

Table of Contents

Workshop Overview	p. 1
Section One: State and Local Issues	p. 3
Section Two: Deeper Exploration of Qualified Personnel Issues	p. 5

Workshop Overview: This report summarizes proceedings of the February 2008 workshop on *Improving Educational Services for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Kansas*. The workshop was co-sponsored by The Kansas Department of Education (KDE) and The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). Participants included approximately forty-five diverse stakeholders representing families, local school districts (practitioners and administrators), the Kansas School for the Deaf, higher education, early intervention, state agencies, outreach services, etc.

Colleen Riley, State Director of Special Education Services, and Robert Maile, Superintendent of the Kansas School for the Deaf, opened the workshop providing a context for the need to improve educational services for students who are DHH in Kansas. Cheryl DeConde Johnson, the workshop presenter, welcomed participants on the behalf of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). Cheryl clarified NASDSE's interests that every state will have a comprehensive plan for improving services and a community of practice focused on continual networking, learning, and improvement. Rhonda Beach Tyree, the workshop facilitator, overviewed the session objectives and established communication ground rules.

The primary workshop objectives were to:

1. Overview the *Educational Services Guidelines for Meeting the Needs of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH)*; and
2. Identify and prioritize state and local issues in meeting the needs of students who are DHH.

Additionally, participants began to identify possible solutions to challenges in providing qualified personnel (particularly teachers and educational interpreters).

Following the opening remarks, participants identified issues that were important to them in response to the following triggering question.

Triggering question: From your role perspective, what are the most pressing state and local issues in providing educational services to students who are DHH?

The issues were brainstormed and sorted under the five chapters of the *Educational Services Guidelines*. Before each chapter was overviewed, participants engaged in facilitated discussion regarding their experiences and observations about these state and local issues. These state and local issues are summarized in section one of this report.

During the workshop, participants divided into four small groups by role to identify the priority issue in determining and providing services and placement options for students who are DHH. From their role-perspective, the four groups identified the following priority issues:

- Priority family issue: Family access to well-rounded information to support their decision making.
- Priority practitioner issue: Access to qualified educational interpreters.
- Priority local and program administrator issue: Access to qualified personnel, including the need for higher education programs to train a pool of qualified teachers and educational interpreters.
- Priority state agency issue: Statewide awareness of effective practices.

Following the overview of the chapter on *Administration and Support Structures* participants further explored the priority issue identified by administrators – access to qualified personnel. After a brief recap of the priority issue (from the administrators’ group), the participants informally discussed and noted outstanding questions and needs in regards to the availability of qualified personnel (see section two of this report). In a concluding activity, participants addressed the challenges of providing qualified personnel and appropriate services as these issues relate to case studies (or scenarios) specific to individual children. This activity highlighted the importance of working together to share resources, support, and expertise.

Many resources were shared during the workshop, including:

- Copy of the *Meeting the Needs of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Educational Services Guidelines*;
- Resource bag of numerous resources;
- Technology demonstration by vendors, technology specialists, services, and associations;
- Overview of *Kansas School for the Deaf Outreach Team Resources*;
- Overview of *KSDE Resources*; and
- Many resources and practices shared by participants during the workshop.

At the conclusion of the workshop, the majority of participants expressed written interest in participating in a community of practice on DHH. NASDSE strongly encourages all states to implement the community of practice model as a promising model for deepening understanding of the issues and identifying collaborative strategies for improving educational services for students who are DHH.

Section One: Kansas State and Local Issues

Triggering question: From your role perspective, what are the three most pressing state and local issues in providing educational services to students who are DHH?

Foundations Issues:

1. The biggest struggle is meeting the needs of students and families with such diverse needs.
2. Addressing diverse needs
3. Low incidence disability – very costly, personal spread thin (miles, building case loads), kids are spread throughout multiple districts
4. Supporting non-English speaking parents and helping them understand the importance of literacy development for their child in another language.
5. Meeting needs of DHH: Oral vs. sign language.
6. Language spectrum and communication

Administration and Support Structures Issues:

1. Availability of qualified personnel (interpreters, teachers of the DHH).
2. Qualified professionals (teachers and interpreters).
3. Teach the interpreter to have a background in education.
4. Having special education teachers certified with hearing impaired meeting needs of children who are DHH.
5. Challenge to serve a student who has severe needs in remote areas.
6. Programming to address transition for secondary DHH.
7. Special education directors – educating to realize policy and protocol can't be generically applied. Network with other special education directors; to contract for KSD for consulting services.
8. Special education directors need to become more knowledgeable about the uniqueness of deaf education.
9. Administrators rely totally in the teachers of the deaf.
10. Having others recognizing the benefit of the Service Guidelines.
11. Expense of services.
12. Cluster sites.

Assessment Issues:

1. If a child is not making adequate progress, what's next?
2. Reading gains.
3. Effect of cognition on aural-oral language skills of DHH students.
4. Separating the assessment issues/findings that are specific to the DHH different ability and individual to the child.
5. Determining how much of the issues are behavioral, cognitive, related to their deafness.
6. Accessing a team that is experienced in hearing loss.
7. Accessing appropriately normed tests.

8. Testing the student directly instead of through an interpreter. Considering/weighing the interpreter role/input during the assessment situation.
9. Providing an objective assessment.
10. Providing qualified personnel for administering, interpreting assessment. Can lead to misinterpretation of test results.
11. Assuring that assessments are appropriate for DHH students. (Bias review of statewide assessments.)

Services and Placement Options Issues:

1. Challenge to serve a student who has severe needs in remote areas.
2. In the rural areas, how can we connect to peers and role models for our DHH students?
3. Establishing local efficiency and effectiveness of services over large geographic area.
4. General education teachers that will “buy” into that this is your child and understand the concept of deaf students (unique learning).
5. Programming to address transition for secondary DHH.
6. Training and development of qualified interpreters.
7. Awareness of options for services.
8. With limited staff, how do we meet the needs of students who have a variety of preferred communication modes?
9. Balancing LRE.
10. Preschool level services DEHH at local level.
11. Language facilitation
12. If a child is not making adequate progress, what’s next?
13. What about special program for students with cochlear implants?
14. Wide range – DHH, cochlear implants, some parents want to stay local, others don’t
15. Addressing low-incident disabilities in a cost-effective manner.
16. Use personnel effectively to address student and family needs a priority.
17. KSD should be an immediate contact when a DHH student enters a district.
18. KSD should be used as an ongoing contact and support.
19. Interpreter 3.5 or better
20. Supporting non-English speaking parents and helping them understand the importance of literacy development for their child in another language.
21. How do we better serve students and support families who come from non-English speaking backgrounds – especially in the rural areas?

Personnel Issues:

1. Qualified personnel, not only in school setting, but need someone for direct communication without interpreter.
2. Finding core content highly qualified staff who can also instruct in student’s language.
3. Having special education teachers certified with hearing impaired meeting needs of children who are DHH.
4. Qualified professionals (teachers and interpreters).
5. Unable to find qualified interpreters and qualified teachers of DHH.
6. Finding qualified staff, either interpreters or teachers for DHH is the number 1 issue.

7. Training and development of qualified interpreters.
8. Where to find an interpreter?
9. Interpreters – currently central KS has enough. Mileage is paid to help with recruitment. Sent to TIES each summer; conferences are paid.
10. An ongoing issue is recruitment and retention of qualified interpreters.
11. Is the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) the only test that will be accepted for rating interpreters?
12. Challenge of use and training for technology. Get the information out to the teachers.
13. Having others recognizing the benefit of the Service Guidelines.
14. With limited staff, how do we meet the needs of students who have a variety of preferred communication modes?
15. What does the future look like for a grant to train staff to the teachers for DHH in KS?
16. Range of ages, capabilities and needs.

Section Two: The outstanding questions and needs for qualified personnel

Triggering question: What are the outstanding questions and needs for providing qualified personnel?

Shortages of Qualified Personnel

1. Qualified staff personnel – teachers and interpreters
2. How do we serve students without lack of available personnel?
3. Personnel interested and knowledgeable of not only interpreters and education
4. There has been so much discussion about interpreters but not enough about teachers of the deaf. The interpreter simply relays information. They don't teach language - regardless of their level. Again, placement options (pros and cons) must be discussed to address full access to a complete education.
5. Different pay for interpreters.
6. Qualified interpreters (recruiting, grow your own, interpreters with skills and training in educational issues)
7. Need for educational interpreters (not ASL – freelance interpreters).

Lack of Personnel Prep Programs

8. No state training program.
9. No training program in deaf education in KS. This makes recruiting teachers of the deaf very difficult, if not impossible.
10. Re-establish deaf education at KU or any other programs in the state.
11. We need a training program for deaf educators at least one state university in the state of KS.
12. Build capacity of KS universities and colleges to produce qualified personnel in the area of deaf education and educational interpreting
13. Educational resources – colleges and universities available for people interested in the field.
14. Need certified interpreter training

Need for Professional Development

15. Finding training and emphasizing the importance of that
16. How to provide ongoing inservice and staff development for deaf education teachers.
17. Statewide trainings for certification
18. Local staff development for staff working with hearing impairment.
19. Need more training opportunities for teachers and interpreters (ongoing, consistent, assessable, ITV, scholarship to encourage program attendance, programs within KS to meet the demand)
20. Can KSD provide a trainer-of-trainers module?
21. Common training program. Teachers/interpreters.

Consideration of Incentives

22. Maybe we need some state-level incentives to encourage people to become certified in deaf education.
23. Incentives for certification.
24. Assistance or loan forgiveness for DHH professionals.
25. Cost of out-of-state tuition if a teacher or college student is interested in DHH.
26. University grants to train deaf educators (i.e., autism).

Need for Funding

27. State and federal governments provide funding to fully fund any mandated requirements for DHH and other disabilities.
28. Need more money for everything! DHH isn't our only crisis. We have shortages with special education teachers, early childhood special education, school psychologist, emotional/behavioral teachers.

Mentoring

29. How can we mentor new deaf education teachers?

Rural Challenges

30. How to get qualified staff – teachers, interpreters, support staff to work in rural areas.
31. From where do rural directors recruit educational interpreters?
32. From where do rural directors recruit teachers of the deaf – especially since no teacher of the deaf program exists in KS.
33. Geography – having sufficient services and supports. Also, qualified personnel to serve kids in the natural environment.

Retiring Personnel

34. Retiring teachers – lack of replacements. No in-state teacher training programs.
35. With a small population – if there is mobility (in or out) it has a huge impact on staffing.
36. Dealing with burnout.

Attitudes

37. How to change attitudes, “Doing the best we can.” Is it enough. It's not, so how do we adapt?

38. How do teams have the very difficult discussion of “good intentions aren’t enough.” Everyone around the table wants a quality education for DHH kids, but the reality is it isn’t happening. Are the IEP teams fully knowledgeable about all placement options and the pros and cons of each – directly links to qualified personnel.

Relations/Information Campaign

39. Lack of PR/information campaign to attract people information profession(s).
40. Program awareness to get new staff into deaf education training programs.
41. The communication and problem solving of the personnel concern before it becomes a crisis.

Cultural Diversity

42. Need staff to be aware of cultural diversities – so we can explain/compare DHH and ethnic cultures.
43. How do we find qualified staff to work with DHH students whose primary language is not English?
44. Understanding and blending of multiple cultures
45. With increasing numbers of non-speaking families, many illegally or non-documented, what techniques/strategies are available? What is being done to serve DHH students? What can be done?

Partnering/Networking

46. Partnership between KSDE, KSD, & KU in developing trainings.
47. How to network deaf education teachers

Recruitment

48. Recruitment of qualified staff

Isolation

49. Isolation of families/students who are DHH.
50. Isolation of deaf education teachers in rural areas.

KSD

51. KSD has an 18 month wait.
52. Think of a language-rich environment (LRE). Consider KSD as one of the options.
Don’t use KSD as a last resort.

Multiple Disabilities

53. How are we meeting the needs of the multi-disabled deaf students?

Communication Modes

54. How do we ensure that teachers of the deaf have the training necessary to meet the needs of a variety of communication modes?

Regionalization

55. Maybe an “out of the box” idea would be to have students attend regional programs or state school while districts “grow their own” teachers of the deaf and interpreters. Then, if appropriate, they can transition back to the home school. This would build capacity without sacrificing education. It also would help build supports within the community.

Technology

56. Use of technology (videoconferencing) if student(s) is isolated – especially in rural areas.

57. Training programs in KS or accessible to KS via web, IDL and incentive tuition.

58. We need to utilize the State Interactive Distance Learning network to improve staff development opportunities especially for rural areas.

Data-Informed Decision Making

59. What has been done in KS to assess the ongoing effectiveness of programs that serve DHH? How is that shared/disseminated with districts and coops so appropriate discussions and decisions take place?