



Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind Advisory Council

TO: Zoie Saunders, Interim Secretary, Agency of Education

FROM: Spenser Wepler, Chair, Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Council (on behalf of the Council)

DATE: May 13, 2024

RE: Recommended data standardization for D/HH students

As appointees of the Governor's Office, the members of the DHHDB Council operate under our legislative mandate outlined in the Vermont Statutes (33 V.S.A, § 1602). One of our primary responsibilities is to assess the services, resources, and opportunities available to children in the State who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind (see:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/33/016/01602>).

Under this mandate, the DHHDB School Age Subcommittee has developed the *Vermont Quality Indicator TOOL and CHECKLIST to Assess Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Services* using evidenced-based standards that are founded in large part on the work of National Association of State Directors of Special Education ([NASDSE](#)) Guidelines (3rd ed., Sept 2018) in addition to stakeholder input (including the AOE) as well as the NASDSE Guidelines for DeafBlindness (2008) and conversations (email/Zoom) with national experts.

In order to implement the best practices described in the NASDSE Guidelines and begin to capture accurately the DHH school age population in Vermont, the DHHDB School Age Subcommittee has discussed and recommended a minimum data set (described below) that is an initial step toward data standardization for this population. The full DHHDB Council membership has voted, and a 2/3 (super) majority (tally below) voted to endorse the recommendation.

We now request that the AOE review and consider our recommendation and implement changes in the upcoming grant cycle such that these data would be collected by AOE grant recipient for the '24-'25 cycle (and beyond). In making the request now, we hope there will be ample time for the AOE to include this recommendation in the RFP. Ideally, the AOE grant recipient would provide these data in aggregate by July 2025 to the DHHDB Council enabling the Council to assess the services, resources, and opportunities available to children in the State who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind.

The Council recognizes that this minimum data set collected and reported by the AOE grant recipient will serve only as a starting point given that many DHH children are served by vendors other than one funded by the AOE.

Initial minimum data set

1. Who is being served?
 - Demographics (grade, race, ethnicity)
 - Diagnosis (type/severity of loss/laterality/onset)
 - Communication Option used (ASL, Cued Speech/language, Listening and Spoken language, Total communication (English-based sign system and speech))

2. What are the students' needs?
 - Technology used (CI, HAs, laterality, Hearing Assistive Technology)
 - Type of Plan (EST, IEP, 504)
 - Student Services provided (ASL/Bilingual Services, Consultation and Technical Assistance, Direct Instruction, Educational Audiology, SLP, Sign Instruction, Other Services: Evaluations, Peer to Peer Opportunities)
 - What are the unmet needs?

3. What are the academic outcomes?
 - Educational Assessments (academic based on State Testing *for starters*; language/literacy need further discussion).

Thank you for your consideration of our request and we are available for further discussion and to answer any questions.

Cc: Honorable Governor Phillip Scott
Heather Bouchey, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Education
Heather Doxsee-Willis, VT State Director of Special Education