

Organization/Group Name: SEAC Stakeholder

Meeting Date: 9/9/2026

Time: 9:00 am (Central Time)

Location/Platform:

ESU 3 Educational Service Unit #3

6949 S 110th St

La Vista, NE 68128

Announced this is a public meeting and has been posted to our website, and social media sites.

Announced [Open Public Meetings](#) Act and where to find it.

Requested reports from agencies that missed the chance to post to the newsletter.

Attendance

Present: Sara Peterson, Mike Brummer, Vali Hitz, Lindsay Darnall Jr., Cody McEvoy, Shelli Janning, Anne Thomas, Holly Luff, Kate Peterson, Sarah Howells, Lindsey Schubert, Lindsey Hinzmann, Heather Witte, Macie Morehead, Angel McFarland, Sue Petersen, Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, Mackenzie Savaiano, Brian Wojcik, and Marie Herrman, Teresa B.

Communication Access (Interpreters): Alecia Barnes and Sharon Sinkler

Question/Discussion - Open Forum

- Agency Report Questions
 - No reported questions or additional information
- Follow Up from previous meeting
 - Rule 51 Updates
 - On August 9, 2026, the new Rule 51 guidelines were signed into policy.
 - 4.0 interpreter requirement **did not change**
 - The two-year requirement for meeting a 4.0 was removed.
 - Grandfathered statement in Rule did not change, if requirements were met - interpreters were grandfathered in
 - If grandfathered in, it is not required to retest for a 4.0
 - Interpreters may choose professionally to retake EIPA to get to a 4.0
 - Metro interpreters are considering to get their national certification

- If on a PD plan, having a mentor is not optional - advertisement for mentors will start through this group first
- It is expected that Rule 51 and 52 will be reopened multiple times in the next few years for changes
- Will let this group know when Rule is going to open
 - Macie will send a google form with a questionnaire to entire stakeholders group asking if they would like to be notified of the Rule opening when she sends today's meeting minutes
- Heather (CWRP) spoke about all the opportunities that have been provided by the Nebraska Regional Programs for interpreters with trainings and mentors
 - Expressed the importance of interpreters continuing to develop their skills
- Marie Herrman suggested utilizing feedback mentors to help interpreters continue improving their skills.
 - Science of Reading was discussed for continuous education
 - TASK 12 - group through Utah State University - provides PD for the state of NE
- Statewide listserve for TODHH
 - Has been created - will be sent out again in the fall
 - Open Google forum for teachers to connect with each other and share out information
- Statewide email list for current Educational Sign Language Interpreters
- Regularly scheduled agency planning sessions
- **2026 State Deaf Education Conference**
 - September 25-27, 2026
 - Younes Conference Center in Kearney
 - Whole-group keynote presentations and breakout sessions for professionals and parents
 - Hands & Voices assisted with securing parent presenters
 - Marie and other interpreters assisted with conference collaboration
 - Registration fees changed due to funding sources - Free for teachers and interpreters employed directly by a school district or ESU
 - Other registrations are \$25

Discussion Topics Received

- NRP State Coordinator open Q&A Zoom session(s).
 - On the NRP agenda for coordinators to discuss how to offer this from NRP
- NRP Student and Family Mentoring
 - Cody McEvoy shared information about the program of Mentoring and Advocacy

- Deaf Mentor available statewide (5-6 mentors are currently spread out across the state)
- Cody will be sending out a flyer soon
 - NRP Coordinators will send out
 - Cody will send to TOD listservs
 - Will provide access to other languages on flyer if requested
- Question of the difference from NEaD deaf mentor program to the NRP program was discussed and roles have been clarified
- To receive an NRP mentor, students must have an IEP. Parents can then complete a short form identifying topics they would like the mentor to focus on.
- Cody will not be providing mental health or therapy - he will refer out if he believes the student needs this
- Hopeful that mentor connections earlier on will help see an impact with students' mental health as they age
- Mike Brummer shared information about his monthly transition topics.
 - He can help mentoring - he is not limited to working with only students on an IEP, he can work with children on a 504 plan or not receiving any services
 - Can provide services via Zoom or be there in person
 - Parents can reach out with referrals, NSTEP equipment program which gives parents a voucher and provides communication access for children 3+
- Shelli Janning discussed she shares information at their family activities for each agency here today so parents have information on who to contact
 - She requested a five-minute video from each agency by September 25th so it can be shared with families
- UNL Student - request for observation and tutoring connections - How to better partner and support students in the Deaf Ed Program with setting up their field experiences (DHH observations and tutoring)
 - Requirement for students in the graduate deaf ed program, two credit hours of field of experience
 - 45 hours of observation in the field – what does a TOD do in their role serving children from birth through age 21?
 - Observation of other related service providers, sit in an IEP meeting (not of their own) to have opportunities to receive different perspectives of this role.
 - Tutoring - one on one with a deaf student providing some sort of support.
 - Any skill related to their needs does not have to be academic
 - Students can complete this experience “on the job” if they are employed in a position that would support it
 - Students in the program are required to arrange their own observations and tutoring experiences. Reaching out independently to meet these requirements is an expectation of the program.
 - Requested ideas on how to better streamline/coordinate this
 - Students will do this at all different times and no set timeline when this will happen

- What background checks are completed for UNL students before they Zoom with children?
 - Every student who enrolls in the program is required to complete a UNL background check (criminal history) at the 1st credit hour. This is valid for two years, if the student takes longer than two years to complete the required hours they would have to complete another criminal history check
 - Interactions with parents who speak a separate language than the UNL student was discussed but has not been a needed resource yet
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6. Old Business

- Organization Report Out/Discussion
 - Discussion: Linsay Darnall Jr - "What can the museum do for you?"
 - Museum has closed their physical location, working on developing a website as well as a newsletter
 - New logo has been created
 - Identified 3 areas of need
 - Traveling Museum - looking into what funding can be used to make this happen
 - Linsay can provide presentations for districts/programs on current events and history - Currently offered by the museum
 - Website launch soon (hoping it will go live early fall), newsletter will be sent out soon, will be present at the Nebraska State Conference
 - Website will include general information about the museum
 - Some History
 - Memberships – three tiers of membership; members will have access to the online museum
 - Hoping to have an online exhibit every 3 months
 - Flood is what caused the location closure, goal is to open a new location soon
 - All of the original artifacts were in storage and the museum showcased copies
 - Discussion: Work together/partnership/collaborate to brainstorm ideas on how to meet the needs of students and families - new positions, etc.
 - NRP has started to fill this issue with Cody McEvoy (position added)
 - UNO has added a position to look at curriculum development and needs of teachers

- Deaf Blind Project was housed at the Department of Education - this has shifted to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, in addition to project director they now have a project manager
 - This gives time to provide technical assistance to families and professionals in schools
 - How do they use their funds to “advertise” to families - Brad or Mackenzie will reach out by email to find new ways to support a deaf/blind child
 - How many K-12 deaf/blind children are in NE (88 is a general number of who are being counted)
 - New database has been developed to better track this number; they are still reaching out to find the true number (building back up)
 - Communication on the different options for Deaf/Blind students
 - Suggested going to PRT groups (early childhood ages) IFSP a lot of kids are labeled DD (Developmental Disability) and a lot of times programs don’t know about them until they show up at a district in schools. NRP coordinators are attending as many PRT regions as they can.
 - Build connections with PRTs and provide education about available DHH resources.
 - Planning Region Team (PRT)
- Discussion: “What can we do to advocate for our kids at the government level” - what resources outside of our group can come in and talk to us to help begin those discussions.
 - It was discussed that NRP does not engage in governmental advocacy, while NCDHH has been involved in advocacy efforts.
 - Newborn screening is going to advocate for more money through the NE EHDI program
 - If you are interested in helping advocate reach out to EHDI
 - Meeting October 8th, 2026 in Lincoln - new committee will be developed (some have stepped down)
 - NE EHDI work for NE families “How can we work with our community partners to do better for our families”
 - National Association of the Deaf has hired a new CEO
 - New board positions have developed
 - Retreat planned in October to see what revisions need to be made to their plans and their goals
 - Communication Video Technology Access (CVTA) is going to be brought to Congress to have amendments to the ADA
 - Also pushing for an amendment for the IDEA
 - Focus more on the communication than the actual impairment

- Discussion focused on the frequent use of the Developmental Disability (DD) category for young children and the need to educate early childhood providers about appropriate verification categories, evaluations, and available DHH services.
 - Can we add this to Rule 51?
 - NRP Coordinators have been tasked to get out to all the PRT's to help access this population of children who need services (even if it is a minimal loss)
 - NRP is interested in collaborating with Deaf Blind Project and Hands & Voices to get to all the PRT meetings throughout the year in NE. Can this be done in person, or virtual, ideas of sending flyers offering different areas of support
 - PRTs are always looking for community resources and would welcome agency participation.
- Opened for Public Comment
 - Continued need for a pathway for sign language to be offered in high schools or at younger grade levels.
 - Legally allowed to offer in high school
 - Can this be considered a World Language credit?
 - Qualifications to teach a class
 - Can you find a college to partner with to offer for credit through a school
 - Change the wording that is used to describe it
 - How do we show that this is an area of need - prove the need in school and how schools can adopt that - what data can we provide to support the need
 - School-day clubs with teacher sponsors to start the interest, having groups of students who are interested and could advocate
 - Can this be an elective - no you still have to be certified to teach
 - Deaf Community also wants this to be started (how do we get enough kids interested in one location)
 - How do you address the interest vs the costs? Would the cost become a barrier
 - Online classes for the statewide need for high school students
 - Need to look at Nebraska curriculum at the high school level also
 - Arizona has been able to offer this in High School
 - Stakeholders expressed a preference for in-person meetings, noting that they find them more productive than Zoom meetings. There was general agreement among those present.
 - Creative with new locations - tri cities for a central location
 - The Spring meeting will be changed to an in-person meeting

- Future Agenda Item Spring 2027 - April 14th, 2027
 - Does NCDHH have updated information on how they are working with state and federal levels (ask Vali)
 - Mike Brummer - how can we advocate for students in private schools versus public schools and the opportunities provided by both
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Next Meeting

- Date: April 14th, 2027
 - Time: 9:00 am
 - Location:
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Follow Up Items:

- Cody will send the Mentoring and Advocacy flyer.
- Agencies asked to provide Shelli with a five-minute video by September 25.
- The Spring 2027 meeting will be in person.
- Macie will send a Google Form to stakeholders asking who would like to be notified when Rule 51 reopens and about how to brainstorm (creating a small group) to continue the discussion