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Sent: Sunday, November 10, 2024 11:40 AM

To: Roy, Meagan She/Her/Hers <Meagan.Roy@partner.vermont.gov>

Subject: Comments for Members of the Steering Group (11/14 meeting) - re: data framework

Hello Meagan,

Thank you for inviting comments; please share my comments below and the attached Council memo (dated 5/13/2024) with all Steering Group members in advance of your 11/14 meeting.

As a Vermont taxpayer and as a Parent Member of the [Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind Advisory Council | Disabilities Aging and Independent Living](#), I have found the AOE (and the AOE grantee of the Deaf-Hard of Hearing Annual grant) to be very uncooperative in sharing data with the Council even though they are supposed to collaborative (and the AOE holds a seat on the Council, legislatively mandated). The collaboration between the two entities is critical given that the Council's legislative mandate is to "assess the services, resources, and opportunities available to children in the State who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind (D/HH/DB). ([Vermont Laws](#)).

Thus, the comments in the Commission's 11/4 meeting minutes that referenced the lack of data infrastructure at the AOE and the data framework (document attached) certainly resonate and the data framework outlines the data that are, in fact, needed for a variety of efforts, including the Council's. These data are the similar data fields that the Council has recommended to/ask for from the AOE to help the Council fulfill its legislative mandate....with no response on multiple occasions - very frustrating as you might imagine. This frustration seems to be shared by the VASBO, VSA VSBA in their 10/28 memo to the Commission.

Specific data concerns include:

1. As you will see from the attached 5/13 memo from the Council to the AOE, two of the major categories of data that the Council has recommended/requested (Who is being served? What are the academic outcomes?) are similar to Data Sets that the Commission needs and apparently is having difficulty obtaining.

2. Given that D/HH/DB is a *low incidence disability* and that we have workforce challenges in this arena, having student outcome data that is disaggregated by disability (while still adhering to PII and HIPPA regulations) is critical. Little data has been shared with the Council despite our legislative mandate and multiple requests for cooperation from the AOE and grantees. However, when a subset of data for this student population was available (for AY '22-'23 only), the University of Vermont CARES Team CARES program noted that the:

a. academic assessment results (N=146 students) indicated that 42% (reading/writing) and 44% (math) were 2 or more years behind; 21% (reading/writing) and 22% (math) were more than 3 years delayed; together nearly 50% of the DHH students are 2 or more years behind academically;

b. language assessment results (N=212 students) indicated that 41% were 2 or more years delayed, and 20% were more than 3 years delayed; together roughly 60% of DHH students are 2 or more years delayed.

Frustratingly, no other data have been shared so the Council cannot assess whether these student outcomes are getting better or worse.

· Of additional concern, particularly in light of the current budget challenges, is the very significant discrepancy between the AOE count for DHH students (61 students on IEPs with a primary diagnosis of DHH, ages 5-21 yrs in 2021-22) and the actual number of children served by the UVM CARES and UVMCC DHHDB Education Services programs (220 students in 2022-23). <https://data.ed.gov/dataset/idea-section-618-data-products-state-level-data-files>. This raises concern about the lack of state oversight to ensure an accurate student count for federal reporting and for allocation of state resources. Furthermore, in a time when budgets must be cut, undercounting a disability category that is already considered a *low incidence disability category* is very concerning.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important work,

Sharon Henry

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