

January 15, 2017

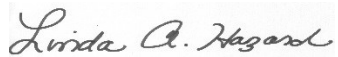
To: Governor Scott, Senate and House Committees on Education, Senate Committee on Health and Welfare
House and House Committee on Human Services,

Re: S-66 Section e- Reports 2 V.S.A. & 20(d)

Please find attached the Vermont Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Advisory Council report due on January 15, 2017.

Sincerely,

Linda A. Hazard Ed.D Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda A. Hazard".

Bill Hudson Vice Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Hudson".

January 15, 2017

The Vermont Deaf, Hard of Hearing DeafBlind Advisory Council Report

S-66 Section e Reports. On or before January 15, 2017 2 V>S>A>& 20(d), the Advisory Council shall submit a written report to the Senate and House Committees on Education, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, the House Committee on Human Services and the Governor with any findings and recommendations.

As outlined in Bill S-66 The Vermont Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind Advisory Council was established in the spring of 2016. The organizational meeting of the Advisory Council was held in November of 2016 and members bring a unique blend of experience and knowledge from the professional, community and family perspective. Attached please find a list of the current Council members and their affiliations.

Last	First	Association
Baker	Deb	Hard of Hearing Community Member
Boothroyd	Missy (Annette)	Vermont Association of the Deaf Member
Darling	Keri	Deaf Vermonters Advocacy Member
Gallo	Ralph	Deaf Community Member
Hazard	Linda (Chair)	VTEHDI Program Director
Henry	Sharon	Parent Member
Hudson	Bill (Vice Chair)	Senior Counselor Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Hutt	Monica	AHS Designee
Kimmerly	Susan	9 East Network Director
Limoges	Mark	Deaf Community Member
Pendlebury	Will	DeafBlind Community Member
Rohrer	Kelley	Audiologist
Van Tassel	AJ	Hard of Hearing Community Member
Willcutt-Weppler	Spenser	Hard of Hearing Community Member
Vreeland	Judy	Deaf Education Specialist
Shapiro	Eleanor	Deaf Community Member
Chalmers	Rebecca	Parent Member
Williamson	Amy	Professional Interpreter
Howes	Danielle	Children's Integrated Services Designee
Moran	Cindy	AOE Designee
Sousa	Sherry	Special Educator
Superintendent		TBD

As its first order of business, the council crafted and adopted the following mission statement:

The mission of The Vermont Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf/Blind Advisory Council is to improve the lives of all Vermonters who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf/Blind by recommending policy that promotes diversity, equality, awareness and access.

Prior to the passing of Bill S-66, four working groups, or sub-committees, were established (1) birth to 3 years of age, (2) school age (3 to 21 years of age); (3) adults, and (4) seniors. Each sub-committee completed a gap analysis in order to identify the strengths, challenges and opportunities for children and adults who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind. The sub-committees are continuing their work and currently identifying two key areas in each age group for recommendation to the full Council. Based on those recommendations, the council will be developing a strategic plan at the March meeting with short, mid and long term goals; it is our hope to meet with you at that time to review the strategic plan and solicit your input in order to finalize that plan. The work over the next year will position the Council to make recommendations that will shape quality improvement initiatives and policy implementation across the state.

One of the themes across all age groups is the need for a single point of entry for services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind children and adults. With the closing of the Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Vermont lost its most visible and available resource for the entire Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf Blind community. Forty-one states have addressed the issue by establishing a Commission for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind. We intend to explore the efficacy of that structure for Vermont and to report on our findings. In the interim, we will establish and communicate broadly the current available network of providers to address needs for individuals and families across the lifespan.

Our council looks forward to working collaboratively in moving the needle forward and improving services for children, adults and seniors who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind.