*Summary of NCDB Personnel Preparation Work Group Discussions to Date*

*Adobe Connect Meeting*

*July 1, 2015*

*Salt Lake City, Utah*

*July 20. 2015*

*Background*

The National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) and its predecessors, the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) and the National Technical Assistance Consortium (NTAC) have been engaged in a variety of personnel preparation and training activities throughout the years. In 2006, in addition to its technical assistance and information and dissemination services, a third area of focus was added to the Center’s charge specifically addressing personnel training. As a result, the initial NCDB Personnel Development Work Group was initiated and remained active through February 2010.

The beginning of this effort occurred in Chicago, in March 2007, when NCDB conducted an initial focus group to address and define issues of national concern related to personnel training in deaf-blindness. Participants included professionals from low-incidence-disability and deaf-blind-specific personnel-preparation programs. After two days of brainstorming, a number of issues, challenges, and solutions were identified and a commitment was made by the focus group participants to provide leadership in the field of deaf-blindness personnel preparation. In subsequent meetings, building on ideas generated in Chicago, participants organized into work groups and began several activities related to policies, guidelines, criteria, and competencies used to develop training programs for teachers and interveners who work with children who are deaf-blind.

Final accomplishments reported at the cessation of the work group’s activities in March of 2010 included:

* Providing a forum to support ongoing dialogue on critical personnel development
* Promoting cohesiveness on standards, practices, and services for teacher training
* Promoting national collaborative development of a new model of personnel preparation and training
* Establishing a venue for Institutions of Higher Education with programs in deaf-blindness to meet face-to-face on a regular basis
* Sharing activities and courses to assist students majoring and studying in deaf-blindness
* Supporting the development and adoption of intervener and teacher CEC competencies
* Expanding a system for students enrolled in a personnel preparation program in deaf-blindness to receive new Student Packets from NCDB’s library
* Supporting and providing colleagues in work toward approval of the intervener and teacher CEC competencies
* Providing guidance and framework for the HK Fellows proposal
* Collaborating with the National Center to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel for children with Disabilities by presenting information about the NCDB Personnel Development Work Group and the HK Fellows project

*Current Charge*

In the spring of 2015 NCDB rejuvenated its personnel preparation work and brought together previous and newly identified work group members to review and assist in the implementation of the *Recommendations to Improve Intervener Services* that were requested by OSEP and published in 2012. Specifically, the work group was charged in assisting with Goal 2’s fourth recommendation and implementation activities, which are to:

*Goal 2****:****Establish a strong national foundation for intervener training and workplace support.*

*Recommendation 4:**Develop strategies to ensure that interveners have knowledgeable supervisors and access to experts in deaf-blindness who can provide consultation and coaching.*

The current work group’s tasks initially target the implementation strategies established for Recommendation 4 including:

1. Use of the intervener training curriculum described in Recommendation 3 to train teachers and other team members about deaf-blindness and the role of the intervener.
2. Identifying successful models used by state deaf-blind projects, university programs, and school districts that provide on-the-job support to interveners.
3. Replicating these models to support an increasing number of interveners.
4. In partnership with a broad group of stakeholders, examining the causes of the shortage of local experts in deaf-blindness, including teachers of the deaf-blind, and identify strategies to alleviate the shortage.
5. Designing and implementing strategies to provide distance consultation, coaching, and mentoring through the use of technology applications.

In addition to the implementation strategies established for Recommendation 4, previous personnel development and training work facilitated by NCDB and its predecessors are also being included in the work group’s future activities.

***Activities to Date***

An initial Adobe Connect meeting was held on July 1, 2015 and this meeting was followed by a one day face-to-face meeting in Salt Lake City on July 20th. The agenda for the initial Adobe Connect meeting included:

1. Welcomes, introductions and program overviews
2. Review of the work group’s charge
3. Review of previous accomplishments
4. Overview and potential implications of the Cogswell-Macey act
5. Current CEC activities related to restructuring and revision of standards
6. A brief discussion of data needs
7. Setting the stage for the face-to-face meeting in SLC

Discussions during the face-to-face meeting in Salt Lake City included:

1. Identifying shifting trends in service delivery and their implications
2. A discussion with state DB consultants on needed competencies
3. Changing models of service delivery and their implications
4. Discussion of additional competency(ies) needed
5. Institution of Higher Education – TA project roles and partnerships

*Participants*

Participants in the meetings were invited from existing and previously funded low incidence and deaf-blind specific personnel preparation programs and NCDB’s Advisory Committee. A limited number of the participants also represented state and multi-state deaf-blind technical assistance projects, as well as personnel training programs. Participants in the face-to-face meeting included:

Linda Alsop Faculty Utah State University

Susan Bruce Faculty Boston College

Susan Dell Faculty and RI-DBPS\* College of Rhode Island

Pam Hunt Faculty and CA-DBPS\* San Francisco State University

Holly Lawson Faculty Portland State University

Julie Maier Faculty San Francisco State University

Stephanie McFarland Faculty University of Arizona

Cathy Nelson Faculty University of Utah

Ella Taylor Faculty Western Oregon University

Alana Zambone Faculty Eastern Carolina University

Chris Montgomery Staff Texas DB Project

Susan Patten Staff Utah DB Project

Kirsten Corbett Consultant Utah School for the Deaf and Blind

Erin Farrer Consultant Utah School for the Deaf and Blind

Emily Maxwell Consultant Utah School for the Deaf and Blind

Linda McDowell Director, NCDB Western Oregon University

John Killoran Facilitator Davki Consulting

Also invited, but unable to attend were:

Sarah Ivy Faculty Florida State University

Nicole Johnson Faculty Kutztown State University

Jerry Petroff Faculty and NJ-DBPS\* College of New Jersey

Roseann Silberman Faculty Hunter College

***Potential Activities Discussed***

The following non-prioritized activities have surfaced during the discussions as potential next steps.

1. NCDB continues to facilitate the activities of the work group
2. Develop an NCDB web-based workspace for future discussions and repository of shared materials
3. Meet with OSEP to pursue an unsolicited proposal, or respond to existing RFAs, for a second consortia based deaf-blind teacher training and enrichment program similar to the HK Fellows grant (Research Institute at WOU as lead)
4. Provide basic personnel prep program overview and contact information on NCDB website, with links to the respective program for current and specific information to provide timely, accurate and more up-to-date information. (Info changes to often for NCDB to track and keep current)
5. Look at good TVI programs as models for what a good TDB program should/could include. Rationale is that TVIs have similar classroom and consulting roles as we seeneeded in TDB
6. Review how other low-incidence disabilities (e.g.; autism) have been successful and identify their successful strategies (http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/)
7. Publish a variety of written descriptions (or blog postings on newly established work space) including:
   1. Utah’s experience with developing and adopting a deaf-blind teacher endorsement and its impact on funding of IHE programs, impact on LEAs and impact on teachers, students and families
   2. A written document summarizing how and where students are now being served recognizing the increased consulting roles of teachers of the deaf-blind and related servers since so many students are now served in neighborhood schools and regular education environments. This can serve as a portion of the Needs section in future proposals, as well as in discussions with OSEP.
   3. A position statement on the unique role of the teachers of the deaf-blind, including competencies needed within classrooms, as well as for their itinerant and consultant roles. Look at teachers of the visually impaired as the model or corollary for the teacher of the deaf-blind description (similar classroom, itinerant and consulting roles)
   4. Describe existing and ideal models of IHE-TA project collaboration (e.g.; IHEs for coursework and TA project’s facilitating placements and conducting practicum supervision). Identify who is doing this and where.
   5. Identify and describe the quality indicators for effective face-to-face and distance consultation, as well as the best ways for consultants to communicate with teachers.
8. Review competencies described by Utah consultants (communication, leadership and organization) and develop TA modules around them
9. Identify and recommend minimal competencies and skills needed in technical assistance project staff
10. Review existing CEC standards for inclusion of consulting competencies
11. Review related services, as well as other itinerant teachers (e.g.; DHH/TVI) competency needs. All need consulting competencies, as well as DB expertise
12. Acknowledge differences in undergraduate and graduate teacher training programs and recognize varying degrees of content and competencies which can be included.

***Next Steps***

The following have been identified as next steps.

1. *Networking and engagement-* (Activities 1, 2 )

* Continuing to facilitate the activities of the work group
* Establishing a NCDB web-based workspace for future networking, discussions and repository of shared materials

1. *Personnel Preparation Program Descriptions -* (Activity 4 )

* Continuing to research and develop a comprehensive listing of program characteristics and descriptions of IHE teacher training programs, demographics, course work, etc.

1. *Defining the role of the teacher of the deaf-blind (TDB)-* (Activities 5, 7c, 7e, 8, 9, 10, 11)

* Developing and facilitating conceptual consensus on a proposed rational, role and competencies for the teacher of the deaf-blind (TDB)

1. *Reviewing competencies)-* (Activities 5, 7b, 7e, 8, 9, 10, 11)

* Reviewing how itinerant, consulting and/or supervision competencies are addressed in CEC standards for others (e.g.; TVI) and cross-referencing what is identified to the competencies for TDB

1. *Defining the existing and potential roles and partnerships between personnel preparation programs and technical assistance projects* (Activities 4, 7d, 7e, 9)

* Describing interactions during preservice training (e.g.; practicum sites, guest lecturing, materials or modules)
* Informing needs and trends in student services, settings, etc.
* Moving research to practice
* Moving practice to research

***New opportunities for collaboration***

In 2014, the Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Visual Impairments unanimously voted to change its name to include Deafblindness (one word, not hyphenated); later this change was approved by governing board of CEC and all of the divisions bylaws and documents reflect this change.  This recognition as well as the efforts of family organizations such as NFADB and the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation to acknowledge the roles of teachers of the deafblind and interveners, present the personnel prep group with new opportunities for partnership.  Further the progress that has been made by NCDB and its network partners in developing an open access, multi-media curriculum for interveners, offers new opportunities for this group of personnel prep programs to discuss the specific training needs for future teachers and interveners.  As the federal government emphasizes the importance of open access educational resources for all schools, our preparation programs in deaf-blindness have new opportunities to creatively approach shared materials and ideas to strengthen training for teachers and interveners.