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TASK FORCE CREATED TO IMPROVE EDUCATION FOR ALL DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS

The Full Board has voted to create a task force to diagnose and recognize the challenges and opportunities needed to improve education for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Nebraska. This task force unit, selected by the NCDHH Executive committee, will be comprised of various leaders in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities, as well as the educational field.

The Full Board is recommending the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) seek a nationally recognized group to conduct an independent consultant review to focus on areas such as: Accountability, Competency, and Excellence in education. Specifically, the goal is to analyze current graduation rates, employment outcomes, remediation work, standardized testing, and the qualifications of supervisors, teachers and others working with students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

“In order to improve the educational and employment outcome of our students, reforms are needed and I am confident that this task force will do a thorough job recognizing and analyzing what needs to change,” NCDHH Executive Director John Wyvill said.

The mission of NCDHH is to promote and advocate for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing; with a goal to achieve equality and opportunity in social and educational settings and to enhance access to effective communication and technology.

“The regional programs do well to educate our students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, but there is always room for improvement. The creation of this task force will open up the communication and the collaboration of all who are vested in our children and their development as a whole person: academically, socially, and culturally,” NCDHH Chairperson Margie Propp said.

“The Educational taskforce is urgently important. Through the work of this group, we lay the foundation for generations of Nebraska’s young people, a foundation upon which they can stay in pride,” NCDHH Board Vice Chairman Dr. Frank Turk said.

The creation of this taskforce is a continuation of a workgroup that resulted in recommendations to increase the educational interpreter standards in the K-12 setting in Nebraska, with improvements made to Rule 51, the LPS special education review and audit, as well as feedback from a recent Town Hall Meeting NCDH hosted in O'Neill, Neb. The Full Board has also approved a request for an addition to the NCDHH Staff in the position of an Advocacy Specialist dedicated solely to work for advocating in the Educational field. This position stems from an existing vacated part time position at NCDHH. The request will be submitted through Governor Ricketts office.

"I look forward to the examination of educational services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. At the minimum, we need to assure parents that schools are using best practice protocol and teaching methods for these children," NCDHH Board member and Educational Advocate Dr. Peter Seiler said.

If you are interested in serving on the task force, please contact John Wyvill at john.wyvill@nebraska.gov.

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