November 22, 2018

Dear Applicant:

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to information and Protection of Privacy Act (Our File #: EECD/024/2018)

On October 24, 2018, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) received your request for access to the following records/information:

"I am looking for all information from the late 1990's and early 2000's regarding the closure of the School for the Deaf. I am requesting any studies, research and minutes from meetings that lead to the decision to close the school for the deaf in St. John's."

On October 31, 2018, your request was revised as follows:

"I'm looking for all studies, research, reports, minutes from meetings concerning the decision to close the school for the deaf. I'm not sure when discussions started but I think around the mid 1990's."  

A decision has been made by the Deputy Minister for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (the department) to provide access to some of the requested information and the appropriate copies have been enclosed.

Access to the remaining records, and/or information contained within the records, has been refused in accordance with the following exceptions to disclosure, as specified in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Act):

Section 27: Cabinet confidences

27. (1) In this section, "cabinet record" means

   (c) a memorandum, the purpose of which is to present proposals or recommendations to the Cabinet;

   (2) The head of a public body shall refuse to disclose to an applicant

   (a) a cabinet record;

Section 40: Disclosure harmful to personal privacy

40. (1) The head of a public body shall refuse to disclose personal information to an applicant where the disclosure would be an unreasonable invasion of a third party's personal privacy.

Please be advised that we are unable to provide you with Cabinet records. Therefore, access to the following pages has been removed in its entirety: 35-167. In addition, please note that data referencing 5 or fewer students are withheld for reasons of confidentiality (as noted on the following pages: 6, 7, 13-15, 24).

As required by 8(2) of the Act, we have severed information that is unable to be disclosed and have provided you with as much information as possible. In accordance with your request for a copy of the records, the appropriate copies have been enclosed.
Please note, since the mid-1990’s a number of reviews were conducted on various aspects of the Newfoundland School for the Deaf. These reviews focused on operational and financial practices (e.g., human resources, residence operations, food service, transportation, purchasing and capital assets), and academic programming. The purpose of these reviews was to ensure a more efficient operation of the school and therefore not included in this response.

You may appeal this decision and ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the decision to provide partial access to the requested information, as set out in section 42 of the Act. A request to the Commissioner must be made in writing within 15 business days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner. Your appeal should identify your concerns with the request and why you are submitting the appeal.

The appeal may be addressed to the Information and Privacy Commissioner as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner  
2 Canada Drive  
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A  
St. John's, NL A1B 3V8  
Telephone: (709) 729-6309; Toll-Free: 1-877-729-6309  
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500

You may also appeal directly to the Supreme Court Trial Division within 15 business days after you receive the decision of the public body, pursuant to section 52 of the Act.

Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the responsive records posted to the Completed Access to Information Requests website within one business day following the applicable period of time. Please note that requests for personal information will not be posted online.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned by telephone at 709-729-7425 or by e-mail at KimAnstey-Stockwood@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Kim Anstey-Stockwood  
Manager of Information Services  
ATIPP Coordinator

Attachment
Review of the Newfoundland School for the Deaf (NSD)

Information will be collected to evaluate the current NSD model of service delivery to students who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH). The information collected will inform government of the strengths and needs of the current NSD model and make recommendations to ensure a comprehensive level of service delivery to DHH students.

This review will be guided by the following:

1. The Newfoundland School for the Deaf is a placement option for deaf students whose primary mode of communication is American Sign Language. The Newfoundland School for the Deaf currently provides educational services to 42 students.

   What are the strengths and needs of the current NSD model of service delivery for DHH students (curriculum, communication, technology, transition, etc.)?

2. The Newfoundland School for the Deaf currently provides educational services to 42 students and residential services to 12 students. These numbers reflect a building/facility that is significantly under-utilized.

   What options exist for optimal use of the NSD facility?

3. For deaf students requiring ASL and residing outside of the St. John’s area, residence services are provided at NSD from Sunday evening to Friday noon.

   What supports and services (school, family and community) would be required to enable deaf students to receive their education in their home communities?

Actions:

1. An Advisory Committee to be established to assist in the review process. This Advisory Committee to include the following educators of the DHH:
   - Mr. Reg MacDonald, Principal NSD
   - Ms. Glenda Truitt, Itinerant Teacher DHH and Consultant to Department of Education
   - [Name redacted], Director, Programs for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA)
   - Ms. Nora Cahill, Auditory Verbal Therapist

2. Review of the research literature in the area of deaf education.
3. Consultations with DHH students and/or parents of DHH students currently attending NSD.

4. Consultations with past students of NSD.

5. Consultations with NSD staff.

6. Examination of NSD performance measures / graduation rates / transition data from past ten years.

7. Examination of other provincial educational and community service delivery models in support of DHH students, as well as the efficacy of such models for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

8. Report with recommendations addressing the above questions to be ready for presentation to government by March 31, 2007.
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<th>Time Frame</th>
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<td>1. Advisory Committee</td>
<td>a). Contact members.</td>
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<td>ii) students</td>
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<td>b) Conduct interviews.</td>
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<td>b). Create semi-structured interview for past students of NSD.</td>
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<td>c) Conduct interviews.</td>
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| 7. | Examination of other provincial educational and community service delivery models in support of DHH students, as well as the efficacy of such models for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. | a) Access policy manuals, guidelines for service delivery/educational supports for DHH students from other provinces.  
b) Make personal contact with education ministries of other provinces as follow up.  
c) Identify schools for the deaf in other provinces and examine service delivery models of the same (internet, telephone conversations, visits). | November 10, 2007  
November 17, 2007  
January 1, 2007 |
Agenda

Advisory Committee to the Review of the Newfoundland School for the Deaf
Wednesday, November 22, 2006
2:00 to 4:00 P.M.

Department of Education

I. Introductions
II. Terms of Reference
III. Discussion of high priority issues - Action Plan
IV. Dates for future meetings.
V. Other

how many face to face mtgs can we budget for?
Introductions

Review of Mandate and Terms of Reference

Darlene reviewed the current status of the school, the student population, and programming issues as follows:

- Older group use a lot of English; core group in intermediate are ASL users; primary children are primarily ASL users. 40 – 50% may have additional exceptionalities but the complexity of needs is not generally severe.

- 6 students have cochlear implants; of these are signing children; was in mainstream for years; others use oral/ASL combination.

- 15 teaching staff; AVT (who also serves children in mainstream) and educational audiologist.

- students will be graduating at the end of the school year 06-07.

- Of preschool children right now who are served by itinerant teachers, all are oral.

- 24 pediatric CI students in the province - 6 at NSD; in Labrador who are oral; multiple needs preschoolers who may be ASL (St. John's; Central)

- Universal New Born Hearing Screening now in place.
  - expect 5/1000 who would be profoundly deaf
  - CI team is expecting to do 6 CI's/year

- Most parents are choosing this for their children, the exception tends to be deaf parents.

Question re: process for educational decision making

- Team process – parents, school district.

- If School for Deaf is the option to be further pursued, then the school district makes application to the Department of Education.

- Ongoing reviews of placement are not common practice although this has happened recently for a few students who could possibly function orally in their home school communities.

- Ongoing information sharing between School for the Deaf and home-school/referring school is in the form of a yearly report. Also not a common practice.
s.40(1)

- suggested a model that involves an annual “placement review” – participants would include the principal of school for the deaf, parents and school district personnel.

- Currently NL has ___ students who are primarily ASL users and who are in mainstream schools; ASL training has been provided to staff that work with one of the children.

- Language Acquisition Support Workers exist in NS and NB. These are deaf adults who attend school with the child; most of these children have developmental delays as well.

- All children in residence go home on weekends.

Issues

- Boundaries of the Review
  1. Commitment to the School for the Deaf remains. Existence of School for Deaf is not under review
  2. Any model of service options for DHH students can be considered.
  3. Alternate options can be considered to enhance education for deaf students.
  4. ASL research can be a challenge ... to identify the issues within multiple philosophies. We will be looking at the individual children and what is best for them. Not talking about philosophies but rather looking at individual children

- Under-utilization of the building.

s.40(1)

- shared that APSEA offers short term programs to deaf students from around the province.

- Mandate also includes looking at any gaps in supports and services that exist.

- There are some concerns and issues around how well we are meeting the needs of the students who are at NSD and how we are evaluating these. Issues expressed about:
  a) having to deliver prescribed curriculum;
  b) different levels of learners in the classroom;
  c) should children be on ISSP’s?
  d) ASL curriculum ~ teaching, evaluating proficiency of teachers;
  e) simultaneous ASL and English instruction and not meeting the needs optimally of either group of learners.
  f) Grading is not as per the typical school – students are placed in 3 levels although children and parents always want to know “what grade they’re in”. Placement reviews is one way to assist parents in the understanding of “where my child is”.

- There are parents who have difficulty communicating with their children. All deaf people are different and come in at different levels and many parents don’t understand that.
• Deaf child sees the word on the page and connects to a real thing but must have that explained over and over again; children are all different.

• Deaf children in small communities may feel isolated by lack of communication. Must teach hearing people who are involved in their lives how to communicate with them.

• The issue of children who wish to stay in their home school and communities is emerging and we need to explore how we meet those needs.

• Very few children coming in to school are dependent on the manual mode (ASL); most are having cochlear implants.

• Need to look at technology.

• Need to look at preschool interventions that will maximize potential.

• Review of the research literature will be undertaken.

  S.40(1)

  Suggestions: [blank] for APSEA

  S.40(1) [blank] from Alberta

  Edmonton School for the Deaf

  B.C. also did a review

• Will request assistance in developing interview questions; Darlene will submit an outline of the interviews to committee members for comments.

• Discussion of process for conducting interviews and recording information.

• A priority is the meeting with NSD teaching staff to discuss and share information about this review. Marian will do this in the first couple of weeks in December.

• Every effort will be made to present this review as an opportunity.

• Regarding performance measures:

  ➢ some available at the school (SAT’s, individual assessments, etc. – not complete.

  ➢ graduation stats available at Department of Education.

  ➢ [blank] would be a good info source on employment status, etc. of deaf adults. Recommend that he be invited to make a presentation to the committee on the same.

Regarding examination of other provincial models of services to DHH, questions and issues to consider:

• Are we examining another service delivery model in general, or just on a case by case basis?

• If other models are explored (e.g. ASL interpreter) would this just be for outside St. John’s? or would it be a St. John’s option as well?
• A deaf child of hearing parents – the parents don’t always understand the implications of the decision. Also teacher and an interpreter are not interchangeable. Parents need all this explained to them so they understand.

• Historically it’s been manual children attending the school for the deaf and oral children attend home school with itinerant support.

• Training and evaluation of interpreters was an issue of discussion.

• How to make sure teachers have sufficient ASL skills to teach in ASL.
  ➢ Use SLP1 ~ which assesses the students’ signing skills with people who are qualified to do this. This evaluates ASL not signed English.

• In NB and NS since children have been educated in community schools, parents have taken responsibility for their children’s education. This responsibility can also be taken by parents of children who attend a school for the deaf.

• A residential component can be necessary for some signing children, a small number, but nevertheless necessary.

• Some hard of hearing children can also have difficulty expressing/understanding oral language and some of these may need intense instruction/training –always with the expectation that they go back to the home school.

• Small group conversational setting could meet these needs. In NL we have the option of using categorical teachers to ensure this need can be met close to home.

Next Meetings – January 9, February 6, March 6- 2007.
Agenda
Advisory Committee to the Review of the
Newfoundland School for the Deaf
Tuesday, January 9, 2007
9:00 to 4:00 P.M.

Department of Education

I. Minutes of previous meeting - November 22, 2006

II. Teaching Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing – NL Department of
    Education Document - 2006

III. Parent Interviews - update

IV. Utilization of NSD building.

V. Programming for Students with Cochlear Implants – current research and
    planning for the future.

VI. Programming for Students at NSD – identifying programming needs and
    priorities.

VII. Models of support services delivery to students who are DHH.
NSD Review
Advisory Committee
January 9, 2007

Attending: Glenda Truitt, Darlene Styles, Nora Cahill, Evelyn Lundrigan, Reg Macdonald, Marian Fushell.

Regrets:  

I. Meeting of November 22, 2006 - minutes approved as read with the following correction: not 6 students with cochlear implants at NSD.

II. Department of Education document: Teaching Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Glenda provided an overview of the contents of this document which is designed to assist teachers and parents and others in teaching children who are DHH. The intent of the document is to be as comprehensive as possible, but with ease of reading; it is practical and user friendly. The document has several pages that can be used separately as handouts or forms.

Reg wondered why we were looking at this document when looking at NSD? He had had comments from others who felt that the document moves deaf education back twenty years. Persons who had worked on the document removed their names from the acknowledgements in the final editing. Conclude that there must be some problem with the document.

Glenda clarified the issue around committee members removing names. It had to do with the policy of admission to NSD going through the Department of Education, Division of Student Support Services rather than directly through NSD.

Darlene explained that we are looking at the document because it identifies the continuum of supports to DHH students and how the NSD fits along the continuum for students requiring a visual mode of communication – ASL.

Reg had issue with preschool interventions being delivered by itinerants and other school staffs as we are K – 12 according to Schools Act. This dilutes services to school aged children who are DHH.

Glenda explained that the number of preschool children is worked into the caseload analysis of itinerants and therefore should not be a factor. Service to DHH not diluted.
Other issues related to the preschool service involves HI’s not feeling trained for preschool intervention. This is being addressed through PD and a preschool assessment/intervention package. Mentoring needed.

Monitoring of the itinerant services is a need.

Discussion around the July August gap in service to preschoolers. How significant is this and how might this gap be mended?

Need for preschool intervention is critical.

Newfoundland service to DHH is fragmented as some services get provided by health, others by education.

Schools designed for listening not communicating. Children learning a language must be provided ample opportunity for two way communication.

Signing does not impede language development.

Glenda was asked to review for us the process for eligibility of service for NSD or itinerant as per our department document. Placement depends on mode of communication. Signers would be more appropriately placed at NSD. Students who are oral or potential oral learners would be in regular stream. However, not cut and dried.

The belief by some in the field that children who are deaf cannot be assessed must be alleviated. This spring APSEA will be supporting the Division in providing training to educational psychologists and hearing itinerants in the area of assessment. A preschool assessment kit will be compiled for itinerants.

The interpretation of assessments for DHH must be done by qualified personnel. Historically this has been done at NSD. Reg feels that staff at NSD is undervalued in this regard. He feels there is an issue of SLP opinion superseding that of NSD staff.

Currently at NSD, assessment and reporting is anecdotal and informal (outside of the regular curriculum). Staff is struggling to identify outcomes for students in the absence of assessments, assessments are not getting completed, and outcomes outside of the regular curriculum are not being measured.

Assessment is critical. It speaks to accountability.

The issues around programming accountability at NSD must supersede staff fears around the survival of the school itself.
III Parent Interview as part of the review

NSD invited Marian Fushell to listen to staff concerns and the review was announced on December 21. A follow up meeting to discuss the terms of reference of the review is planned for Friday January 12. Interviews with parents are underway.

Reg expressed a need for the creation of a school council in order to have parent input as a collective group. While a January 31 meeting is set with [redacted] to begin the school council process, it will not be in place for the March 31 report submission to the Minister. Whether another mechanism for a collective voice of parents is necessary will be discussed at the next advisory committee meeting.

A copy of a child’s progress report should be forwarded to the home school district office each year. Currently this does not happen. Placement review meetings do not occur. Referring school teams do not remain on the student’s ISSP.

IV Utilization of NSD Building.

Floor plans were examined to get an idea of the vacant space at NSD. This is substantial. Currently, 300 students and staff from Paradise Elementary are utilizing some of that space. Preparation for receiving these students was relatively easy. No interference with programs at NSD.

Reference was made to a preschool/kindergarten oral class that had been attempted several years ago, without success. The issues around its demise had to do with what was actually happening at the classroom level. While intended as an oral class, teaching was being done without an emphasis on oral programming. This was unfortunate because children then went into the mainstream not as prepared as they could have been. Parents are now reluctant to associate with NSD because they fear their children may not be allowed to be oral.

V Cochlear implants as presented by Nora

Currently there are [redacted] students at NSD, [redacted] of these over 8 yrs post CI. These children were somewhat older in receiving the CI and therefore results have been variable. These older students may choose to remove the implants when there is too much auditory input that cannot be tolerated or interpreted.

Over 3 years of age is considered old for a CI. The goal of programming is to teach children to listen, to recognize what sounds mean. The research is just now coming in terms of success. There is outstanding support for early implantation and for these children, the research is extremely positive. For many children with early CI, the language gap is small or absent. 87 children supported by APSEA have CI’s. Early is key. These children are doing amazingly.
Reg feels that the research around CI is flawed within the respective disciplines. Language versus speech is a point to be considered.

Candidates for CI are those with severe enough hearing loss.

Intervention/programming for CI children is extensive in the beginning and lessens as time passes.

The gap in service for CI children outside of St. John’s area is very evident. Currently:
- in Labrador City
- in Corner Brook
- in Bishop’s Falls
- in Grand Falls.

Need more AVT services outside St. John’s.

Therefore, training for itinerant teachers around CI is essential and must be ongoing. Explained the APSEA model for providing this training and suggested collaboration with APSEA in meeting this need. 4 itinerants who are also AVTs at APSEA. In addition to programming for students with CI, they also have regular caseloads, do in-services and consult.

PD for itinerants focused on AVT techniques is essential and must begin now to meet upcoming needs.

All options including ASL must be presented to families at the time of diagnosis. Current inter-agency guidelines indicate that all options must be presented objectively to parents. Some would disagree that information is in fact presented objectively from the medical profession or from NSD. Both departments of health and education have agreed that a neutral presentation is critical.

Some parents will not consent for referrals to be made to NSD. The fear that their children will be taken from them is real.

Reg presents deafness not as a disability. He takes exception to the conversation about CI in that the goal is to make children oral. He feels the advisory committee is philosophically an oral group. He takes offense to the position that deafness is to be fixed.

The group concurs that should a parent of a child who is deaf choose to opt for manual communication, we must support them in our school systems.

It appears that only time will allow some to come to accept that parents of children with CI will choose oral communication for their children.
What about the child who has a cochlear implant but is not learning? While few in number, programming and meeting the needs of these students is a major issue. We do have [redacted] in the province.

VI Programming for students at NSD.

The coming together of children who are deaf and hard of hearing can be a very rich and empowering experience. Opportunities for such must be made available.

Hard of hearing children may feel more disabled than deaf children in knowing where they belong.

Following a review of the academic achievement scores of NSD students over the previous year (Stanford Achievement Test), conclude that the special education needs of DHH students must be met.

The starting point is the assessments which support the programming

Some provincial CRT assessments are completed at NSD as well – have data on this.

Last year [redacted] students went to home school for a trial period. These have not returned and no indication of return. Other issues at play here. Students were very oral.

A lot of students lagging behind their age peers academically. While lags are expected in deaf education, it is the lack of progress over the year that is concerning.

Maybe a PD piece to teach reading through science, math, social studies, etc. is required. The reading outcomes must be the priority.

Darlene - The current model at NSD does not support being able to provide for all the individual needs of the students as well as providing the prescribed curriculum k-12.

Reg - 110 individual programs at NSD last year.

This speaks to needing to do something differently.

Other program options can be presented at the next advisory meeting in light of the time crunch today. There are a number of provincial models out there and probably no one fit for us. We will need to create what works for this province.

Such an interesting frustrating field.

Next meeting – February 6, 2007
Meeting with Staff at NSD  
Friday, January 12, 2007. 9:00 A.M.

Attending: Reg Macdonald, Darlene Styles, Evelyn Lundrigan (acting Director of Student Support Services), staff of NSD.

Purpose of the Meeting: to discuss the terms of reference of the review of NSD.

Reg: Good morning delivered. Purpose of the meeting reviewed.

Reg offered to chair the meeting.

Sophie Redmond: Where is Marian Fushel? She promised us she would be here and have not had a response from her on the letter we sent her. Marian said she would be here.

David Sing: I am personally and professionally disappointed. Have issues over how deaf education in this province is being handled, policies, how we are feeling (gave background with NLTA). How deflating, you do not understand, I do not agree with you. Issue: closing of the school? Why are we having this review? Issue: date of review Nov 1/2006. We knew about it Dec 22/06. Issues around committee – have not been involved with deaf education in the province.

Why not apprised of review? Reg attempted to respond - trying to be sensitive to the current issues and the timing of events, wanted to separate meetings (residence versus review) to inform of review.

David: Darlene allow me to explain.

Staff: You have no creditability in what you say.

Darlene: Directive from Minister of Education. It is timely to review supports and services at NSD. Correspondences are received that are positive, some have concerns about programming and post-high school functioning in the community, some parents are choosing to keep children in their home communities, cochlear implants and community schools are being chosen by parents – how to support that choice, how does NSD fit into the current needs of DHH? Supports and services for DHH are being or have been given review across the country because of declining numbers. Parents are making choices for their children that do not fit with a model of separate schooling, but instead wish their children to be in their community schools. We must respect the rights and choices of parents and families. It is not our position to question those parental choices nor is it the place of NSD to do so.
Brenda: Our home program is gone, itinerants are gone without our input. Will every hard of hearing child come to NSD? On the issue of children requiring visual language – wrong, wrong, wrong. (Darlene responds it is the department policy). Historically is not how it was. Terms of reference – include home program numbers (noted).

David: Issues around families not wanting their child to attend NSD. Where did the statement come from. Who are they?

Staff: The dorm review which no one has seen. Marian said she would get us the report.

Darlene: We now have an opportunity to move with change. Technology advancement.
Home supports.

Chris: We need relationships with other departments who diagnose such as health. (noted) Could we have a school staff person on the committee? (noted)

David: Will you go through this place with a fine tooth comb? How will the current staff be handled with respect to closure, change, new directions given that the numbers of students coming in will be low?

Darlene: This is a review of supports and services. The school is not closing. Cannot answer your question at this time as to how staffing will be next year regardless of this review.

Eleanor: Include in review:
- entrance criteria (noted)
- post secondary needs for NSD students (noted)
- other to be included such as past alumni and graduates from other deaf institutions? (noted)
Letter to parents – they are invited but will you be contacting them? (response: possibly)

Des: Itinerant service not being reviewed so why Glenda Truitt is on the committee. (response: she is our provincial consultant for deaf and hard of hearing.) Want copy of Evelyn’s notes. Want future meeting dates.

Reg: Suggests a sub committee and asks for future meeting dates. Will request substitute days from department.

Darlene: To be determined at a later time.
Agenda
Advisory Committee to the Review of the
Newfoundland School for the Deaf
Tuesday, February 6, 2007
9:00 to 4:00 P.M.

Department of Education

I. Minutes of previous meeting – January 9, 2007

II. 9:30 Presentation by [Redacted] – Issues Around Post-Secondary Education of DHH

III. Results of Parent Interviews – Themes and Issues

IV. Models of Support to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students
Presentation Made to Advisory Committee regarding feedback from parent interviews.

NSD Advisory Meeting

February 8, 2007

Parent Interviews
- 20 to date.
- Phone contact to follow up with remaining families.
- All but 2 with recommendations for programming.
- 16 with concerns around programming.

Themes to date...
1. Issues Around Programming at NSD
2. Issues Around Staff at NSD
3. Other School Related Issues
4. Community Issues
5. Management Issues
6. Strengths

1. Issues Around Programming at NSD
Pathway 2 versus Pathway 4.

...Issues - P4 programming
- No clearly identified language goals.
- ASL – no curriculum, questions around proficiency
- English reading and writing – proficiency level of each child not assessed, current skills not detailed, no detailed plan in place for skills required in a given school year.

...Issues - programming
- No oral classes (guided by AVT and/or SLP). Oral development not encouraged.
- Deaf culture course – not available to all students.
- Speech reading courses not available.
- Coop program – meaningful outcomes not identified.
- No clearly identified outcomes for transitions.
...Issues - general programming

- Course options restricted (college prerequisites, music, French).
- Age of high school completion (21 years).
- No grade levels identified.
- 1.5 to 2 years to complete a course/grade.
- 3-5 year plan for senior students has not been seen.

...Issues - general programming

- Homework – very limited if at all.
- Tests – not preparing students to cope with traditional tests.

...Issues - perceptions of programming

- No accountability for where my child is and where he is going.
- Perception of staff “lowering the bar” for deaf students.
- Simultaneous ASL and English diluting both.
- Students not getting a good base in ASL or in English.

2. Issues Around Staff at NSD

- Accountability (course completion, language outcomes, alternate curriculum outcomes).
- ASL proficiency.
- Attitudes (oral communication, volunteerism, innuendo and manipulation of parents, “party line” for lack of accountability).

...Issues Around Staff at NSD

- Skills stale or missing (assessment, programming of language outcomes, reading, writing).
- Environment and culture not supportive of total communication.
- Time management (frivolous activities, lateness, additional half hour)

...Issues Around Staff at NSD

- Teacher turnover (“new blood” needed, same teachers year after year, teachers assigned to skill areas).
- Communication between home and teaching staff poor.
3. Other School Related Issues
- Report cards vague non informative.
- No extra-curricular activities, sports, teams.
- No access to hearing peers.
- Tutoring (having to pay residential workers and others).
- Cost for ASL courses.
- Bussing issues (residential and local).
- Parent access to residence.

4. Community Issues
- Community requires ASL training, awareness and education.
- Transition to work placements.

5. Management Issues
- Problems with management of school, particularly of the staff.
- Department of Education ignoring the programming needs of the students at NSD.

6. Strengths
- Students who are DHH come together.
- Family atmosphere with emphasis on the social development.
- Early language development (first 2-3 years at NSD).

Recommendations - Programming
- ISSP’s for all students.
- Teacher for one year only.
- Complete course/grade in one year.
- Twin with other schools in the district.
- Mainstream in some classes, strengths.
- Access to hearing peers, NSD and outside NSD through academic, clubs and social activities.
- Role models DHH to work with students in a meaningful way.
- Students who are DHH access to other students who are DHH.
- ASL, AVT, SLP, oral only, reading, writing, math, deaf culture courses to students who are DHH.

- Learn CART technology.
- More course options (university prerequisites).
- Homework with webpage access.
- More school trips to build experiences.

...Recommendations - school

- NSD open to other provinces.
- Other programs in the school.
- Bring students into NSD. Not necessary to be DHH students.
- Rent apartments to university students.

...Recommendations - staff

- Attitudes - ASL presented as neither superior or inferior to any other mode of communication.
- Bring in other teachers with interpreters if needed.
- Team teaching.

...Recommendations - community

- Supplemented costs of text messaging through Alliant.
- Community ASL, awareness and education.
- Video courses for parents.
- Expansion of interpreting services for youth in the province (adults).

...Recommendations - other

- Assign a governing body for NSD.
- Explore credibility issues re: Galladet, other colleges for DHH.
NSD Review
Advisory Committee
Minutes for Meeting of February 6, 2007

Attending: Glenda Truitt, Darlene Styles, Nora Cahill, Evelyn Lundrigan, Reg Macdonald, Marian Fushell.

Regrets: none

Meeting was opened with a presentation by [REDACTED] of NLAD: Post Secondary Education of the Deaf

- NLAD - Newfoundland and Labrador Association for the Deaf have been unusually quiet as of late, but as an association, is trying to expand.
- Oldest association for the Deaf in this province - since 1946.
- Currently no paid full time staff or executive director. This is a problem.
- Unsure of the level of awareness and education (around deafness) within government in this province.
- NLAD represents the Deaf and is liaison to government.

Stats on people who are Deaf in the province?

- Numbers in Newfoundland are not easy to identify.
- Federal government did a limited survey in 2001 that included the range of deafness/hard of hearing and 512,930 persons were identified.
- 22,658 were identified in NL.
- Of those, 3846 were identified as culturally Deaf.
  - In 1981, [REDACTED] visited 100 communities in NL (island only) and 600 persons who are Deaf were identified.
  - In 1992, [REDACTED] conducted a survey in NE Avalon region, where most Deaf persons reside in order to access supports. At that time, 400 Deaf persons were identified. Out-migration appeared to be a factor in explaining this lower number. Of course, there are Deaf persons living in isolation in smaller communities and we may not know about them.
  - In 2003, [REDACTED] conducted a comprehensive needs assessment in NL to examine literacy and employment of the Deaf. Roughly 400 persons were identified at that time. Similar to 1992.
- Included in that sample were recent graduates of NSD who were in their home communities and isolated because few or no other people who are DHH in the community.
- This comprehensive needs assessment was made possible through monies from the Literacy Secretariat of the Federal government via 3 phases of a Deaf literacy project.
Currently (2005) in phase 2 – the instruction phase – with [redacted] as program instructor and through financial support from the Department of Education.

- Instruction takes into account that ASL is the first language of the deaf and English is the second language. It would be like hearing people learning a second language - if not immersed in it then you forget it. ASL to English has no oral medium for the Deaf. English is a real challenge.

- Most of the students in the project are aged 40, ranging from 22-50. The older students were taught at NSD when it was oral and therefore ASL was not learned well. They have poor ASL and poor English.

- In literacy programs such as this, the Dept of Education requires a student/instructor ratio of 12:1, but here they have allowed a ratio of 10:1 due to the signing demands. A part time student assistant had been in place until recently, which helped. In reality, the Department of Education should assign 2 instructors to the project. At schools for the deaf across the country, the student/instructor ratio is 6:1. Having students at different levels of functioning is a challenge as well.

- Currently there are 10 participants. All are former students of NSD. [redacted] s.40(1)

- Program components include: English, Math, Computers, and Work Force Literacy. An external consultant helped to develop the curriculum. Several programs were explored in Nova Scotia (NSCC has a similar program), Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto (student/instructor ratio of 5:36).

- The program here is 40 weeks in duration – September to June – and is ABE 1 – grade level to 6. Full time program. Grade 8 is ABE Level 2 and participants would access CONA with an interpreter to go on to this level. So far [redacted] is ready to do this.

- Interpreters are available in St. John’s only for the most part. There is one in Central.

- This program is the only one of its kind presented in ASL. Critical that literacy levels of the Deaf be increased as college entry programs require it. Participants would be disappointed if this program was cancelled.

- Deaf feel marginalized in the workplace and feel less valued. Need to be allowed to be successful. Example, [redacted] s.40(1)

- My personal experience – [redacted] s.40(1)

- [redacted] s.40(1)

- [redacted] s.40(1)
• At NSD, kids become very dependent. Everything was done for me, no independence.
• Today NSD is still creating dependence. Dependent on teachers and supervisors too much. In residence, students do not learn independence.
• Only in the early 80's was a training program in ASL begun.
• When a child is born deaf all family members should learn to communicate through sign language. I want to push you to promote this. Early development with a visual language is critical.

What about employment stats?
• The Labour project of 2006 did some research regarding employment for Deaf adults. Interviewed adults who are Deaf and employers. On March 2, 2007 this report will be submitted to government agencies. I dropped a copy here this morning
• The data from this project are limited to NE Avalon:
  ➢ Age 20-59 born Deaf and currently living NEA
  ➢ 131 people – 29 have retired, thus 103 left.
  ➢ 39.8% are working
  ➢ 60% are not working.
  ➢ Interesting that all of the non-workers are single.
  ➢ Unemployment rate for the Deaf community 5 X that of general population of 11%.
  ➢ No M/F data breakdown
• Issues for employers in the public sector:
  how would they communicate with Deaf,
  what environmental adaptations would be needed – no knowledge of day to day needs,
  occupational safety another barrier,
  workplace awareness and education around deafness,
  cost of interpreters.
• There is no equal access to employment for the Deaf. Employment counseling for DHH needed. A service proposal by NLAD was made to HRLE for Apr 2007.
- An employment strategy plan for Deaf community is needed.
- Graduates of NSD? Some are lucky and get to study and get a job. Others do not find work and become dependent on family. A few have good jobs, others are very isolated and communicate by writing. But some families are illiterate.
- Opening Doors: good program but declaring disability may be an issue for some. For the benefits, we say we have a disability.
- Many issues with changing personnel and governments.
- Deaf want to be known as a minority group based on language.

What do you think of literacy rates of the Deaf?
- We do not know, English has always been a problem, students gain and then fall back.
- In math, they do much better. English is very complex. Math is more visual and Deaf are good at using their hands. Words in isolation are okay, when they put words together it is too much. Early, early, early is best.
- The students in the project are progressing slowly and struggling with English. If we could get them motivated.
- We need to make sure that English skills are assessed at graduation and the transition to work/post secondary must be seamless. The waitlist and associated down time causes a loss of skills. Funding and availability of interpreting is a major barrier too.
- Funding for post-secondary – used to be the EAPD program, which was initially designed for Deaf clients. Then it was opened to other disabilities but the funding remained the same and thus the waitlist. Now called LMPD. (Reg)

Why are interpreting services tied to this funding? If students wish to pay tuition and residence themselves, is the interpreting available? (Darlene)
- This needs to be looked at. Lack of collaboration across the disciplines and departments.
- Interpreting services are tendered – very business-like rather than a human service.
- Move away from politics and focus on the child. Groups and organizations need to have a focused agenda and broad perspective.
- CHAA, NLAD, NCDD- different perspectives around deafness. There was a multi-agency effort at one time and CHAA withdrew. A partnership and coordinated discussion is needed between the associations with representation of DHH

Darlene: Thanks to [name withheld] for sharing personal story.
Marian: will consider [name withheld] for committee and report back.
Minutes were read and accepted.

Parent Interviews Summary

- Summary and themes were presented by Darlene with much discussion. Parents have much to say about how their children are doing at NSD.

- Responses from across the province. Approximately half of families came forward. Others are to be contacted a second time.

- How to build on strengths at NSD for future improvements?

  - [Redacted] emphasized the comprehensive assessment issue as needing to be addressed first and foremost with every student having a comprehensive service plan. (This would be an ISSP in this province).

- NSD needs continuous support from Department to ensure accountability and continued learning for staff. Accountability is key.

- There is a need to have someone at the Department level to oversee itinerant services as well.

- A draft model for supports and services to the Deaf was created.

- Charge Syndrome: 6 cases in 3 provinces. Information on Charge Syndrome is added below.

CHARGE syndrome is a recognizable (genetic) pattern of birth defects which occurs in about one in every 9-10,000 births worldwide. It is an extremely complex syndrome, involving extensive medical and physical difficulties that differ from child to child. The vast majority of the time, there is no history of CHARGE syndrome or any other similar conditions in the family. Babies with CHARGE syndrome are often born with life-threatening birth defects, including complex heart defects and breathing problems. They spend many months in the hospital and undergo many surgeries and other treatments. Swallowing and breathing problems make life difficult even when they come home. Most have hearing loss, vision loss, and balance problems which delay their development and communication. All are likely to require medical and educational intervention for many years. Despite these seemingly insurmountable obstacles, children with CHARGE syndrome often far surpass their medical, physical, educational, and social expectations.
Agenda
Advisory Committee to the Review of the
Newfoundland School for the Deaf
Tuesday, March 6, 2007
9:00 to 4:00 P.M.

Department of Education

9:00 a.m.

I. Welcome and introductions.

II. Review of Minutes of meeting – February 6, 2007.

III. Submissions from Itinerant Teachers - DHH.

IV. Report from BCSD.

V. Proposed model of support to DHH.

1:00 p.m.

VI. Role of technology in the education of DHH.

VII. Submissions from past graduates of NSD.
Maintain the following:

- Technical support.
- Audiological services.
- Educators of DHH involved in decisions around NSD.

Assessment

- NSD to play a vital role.
- PD for district personnel in understanding the impact of hearing loss on language development and assessment.
- Open door policy for assessments at NSD.

Home Parent Program (HPP)

- Pre-school resources from a central location and budget for same.
- Families in rural areas to travel to NSD to access HPP.
- HPP to travel to districts to support families and IT-DHH.

Pre-school services

- New face to AVT pre-school services for both CI and non CI students (oral language).
- More intensive level of services to families such as educational workshops, assessment, intervention, interface with and PD to other agencies.

PD for Itinerants

- AVT services.
- Pre-school development, assessment, intervention.
- PD with NSD teachers.
- Feelings of isolation.
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<th><strong>Collaboration with HCS</strong></th>
<th><strong>NSD</strong></th>
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<td>• With present set-up there is confusion as to whether NSD or IT-DHH provide services to pre-schoolers. Children falling through the cracks through Janeway referrals.</td>
<td>• Clear criteria for admission to NSD (ASL, oral language, low self-esteem, early intervention).</td>
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<td>• Better collaboration between IT's, NSD, Janeway, HCS, AVT</td>
<td>• Cultural centre for Deaf.</td>
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<td>• Resource to IT-DHH.</td>
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<td>• Outreach programs.</td>
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<td>• Team teaching in mainstream PT for K-9</td>
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<td>• Interpreters, team teaching in mainstream for high school.</td>
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<th><strong>NSD</strong></th>
<th><strong>Attitudes</strong></th>
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<td>• Annual transition workshop 9-12.</td>
<td>• More positive image of NSD by parents.</td>
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<td>• High school credit courses outside of school calendar.</td>
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<th><strong>Efficiency of NSD</strong></th>
<th><strong>Other</strong></th>
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<td>• Open to national and international students.</td>
<td>• Need options for ASL when parents are not wanting to send their children to NSD.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Person to oversee consistency and support of itinerant services</td>
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Minutes
NSD Review Advisory Committee
March 6, 2007

Attending:
Glenda Truitt, Darlene Styles, Nora Cahill, Evelyn Lundrigan,
Reg Macdonald, Marian Fushell, [redacted], [redacted], Colleen Moyst,
[redacted], [redacted].

Regrets: none

I. Welcome to new members.

II. Minutes of meeting February 6, 2007 adjusted as per [redacted] request and adopted.

III. A presentation was made by Darlene to outline a summary of the submissions from the Itinerant Teachers - DHH. Some discussion was held on this.

IV. Darlene reported on information gathered around the British Columbia School for the Deaf in Burnaby. This model appears to address many of the needs apparent at NSD.

V. A presentation from CHHA on the CART system was attempted by [redacted]. Apparently the IT firewalls in government were interfering with the access to this demonstration. After some frustration with the technology, [redacted] gave the group an overview of the technology available to the hard of hearing.

VI. Some discussion was given to the proposed model of support to DHH at the NSD. There were questions about the number of students/teachers/interpreters that might be required to implement this model, the benefits of students being included with same-aged peers, some possibilities for students from outside of the province being admitted to NSD. This discussion was long and incomplete. Suggestion to adjust the proposed model to consider high school students at NSD.
Update on NSD Review  
March 16, 2007

Current Statistics:
- 41 students at NSD, 12 of these students in residence.
- Projected enrollment for next year – 35 students, 10 students in residence.
- Projected new registrants over next five years: no children currently of preschool age intended for NSD
- 15 staff members in this current school year.

Residence:
- This year the residence is in operation from September to June and Sunday evenings to Fridays noon.
- All residential students return to homes on weekends.
- This new residential schedule as of September 2006 has had minimal disruption to students.

NSD Review Advisory Committee:
- Marian Fushell, ADM Education
- Evelyn Lundrigan, Director (Acting), Student Support Services  
- Darlene Styles, Consultant and NSD Review Leader
- Reg Macdonald, Principal NSD
- Glenda Truitt, Provincial Consultant for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing DHH
- Nora Cahill, Auditory Verbal Therapist
- [Name], Director for DHH, Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority APSEA
- [Name], parent and Canadian Hard of Hearing Association NL – CHHA-NL representative
- [Name], parent
- [Name], representing the Deaf community
- Colleen Moyst – Itinerant Teacher DHH

Progress of Review:
- Four meetings held to date. One final meeting scheduled.
- Parent interviews completed.
- Meeting with staff at NSD. Awaiting written submissions.
- Interviews with past NSD graduates in progress.
- Presentation by NLAD, [Name] [s.40(1)]
- Presentation by CHHA-NL, [Name] [s.40(1)]
- Extensive review of programming of current NSD students. Further assessment and recommendations for individualized and group programming to follow.
- Review of schools for the Deaf in other provincial jurisdictions completed.
• Review of community and post-secondary/work transition supports ongoing.
• Recommendations made by stakeholders for increased efficiencies in the use of the NSD building under review. Most recommended is the option to open the school to non-DHH children.
• Preliminary report to Minister due March 31, 2007

Presenting Issues to be addressed by the review:
• Major absences in programming at NSD for students who are DHH. Will not improve as enrollment declines. Other schools for the Deaf are merging with community schools due to declining enrollments and to meet programming demands. Perception by parents that there is no accountability for programming at NSD.
• Access to American Sign Language (ASL) in the communities. Access to training in ASL in the communities. No ASL curriculum at NSD. No evaluation of ASL development at NSD.
• Literacy development and employment opportunities for DHH.
• Philosophies and attitudes of educators of the Deaf interfere with meeting individual needs of students. NSD staff perceived as stagnant and isolated.
• No opportunities to relate with hearing peers. Extra-curricular opportunities related to school limited for NSD students.
• No clear policies around the operation of NSD.

Note the politically correct way to refer to individuals who are Deaf:

"Deaf" is capitalized to represent a language/culture in the same way French or English is capitalized.

One would not refer to "deaf students" or "deaf educators" but would instead say "students who are Deaf" or "educators of the Deaf".

Prepared by Darlene Styles
Agenda
Advisory Committee to the Review of the
Newfoundland School for the Deaf
Wednesday, May 2, 2007
9:00 to 1:00 P.M.

Department of Education

9:00 a.m.

I. Welcome.

II. Review of Minutes of meeting – March 6, 2007.

III. Presentation of proposed model of support to DHH at NSD.