Regional Day School Program for the Deaf
Program Peer Review Report

Program: Denton Regional Day School Program for the Deaf
Dates of Visit: Nov. 7th -8th, 2011   **Reviewers:** Rakia Musa, Ector County ISD
Date of Report: November 9th, 2011   Martha Elder Region 15 ESC

Goal Area:

1. Early identification and intervention.

Families of deaf and hard of hearing infants will be provided, at the earliest possible moment after the birth of the child, appropriate identification, screening, information, and services to ensure age-appropriate communication, linguistic, social and cognitive development. Such options and services will be child-centered and family-focused to ensure that families fully understand the meaning and consequences and are aware of all services and programs so that they can appropriately provide for their deaf or hard of hearing child. Such options and services must be "deaf-friendly," reflecting an understanding of the communication, technological, and environment issues that are important to deaf and hard of hearing infants and children.

Rubric Summary:

Indicator		Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
1.1	Early amplification	☐	☐	☒
1.2	Referral process	☐	☐	☒
1.3	Service provider education	☐	☐	☒
1.4	Collaboration with outside agencies	☐	☐	☒

Current Efforts: The program currently has one full time Parent Advisor who serves sixteen babies within a three county area. The program uses the SKI-HI Curriculum to provide unbiased information to families and service providers in the region. The SKI-HI assessment is used to document language acquisition. The parent advisor and parents use this child-centered and family-focused process of documentation to aid in the development of IFSP goals for the infant. The Parent Advisor and the ECI personnel maintain a good line of communication and collaboration. The Parent Advisor is very flexible with scheduling service time to meet the individual needs of the families. She collaborates with diagnosticians, PPCD teacher, Speech Therapist, and another Parent Advisor from one of the SSA districts.

Commendations:

The Parent advisor also provides information to parents on local agencies and services. She empowers the individual families to advocate for their children. Parents are encouraged to document the child's vocalizations as they occur in the home by utilizing the Mastery Skill List. The program has two other personnel trained on the SKI-HI Model to be prepared for program growth. The Parent Advisor follows the SKI-HI Model that allows the parents to decide on the communication mode for their child.The ParentAdvisor gives a copy of her lesson plan to the parent and creates a notebook for each individual family.

Side Note:

- Develop a program to increase program visibility and relationships with local hospitals, pediatricians, and other health service providers.
- Involve more outside agencies to meet with parents to start networking for services as early as possible.

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Goal Area:

2. Communication, Language, and Literacy Access.

Deaf and hard of hearing children will develop age-appropriate expressive and receptive communication and language skills which are commensurate with their hearing peers and will become fully literate and productive adults.

Rubric Summary:

	Indicator	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
2.1	Alignment with primary mode of communication	☐	☐	☒
2.2	Guiding instruction	☐	☐	☒
2.3	Staff development	☐	☐	☒
2.4	Interpreter certification	☐	☒	☐
2.5	Assistive technology	☐	☐	☒
2.6	Meaningful literacy instruction	☐	☐	☒
2.7	Research-based instruction and assessment	☐	☐	☒
2.8	Literacy integration	☐	☐	☒
2.9	Grade level alignment	☐	☐	☒

Current Efforts: The program provides a continuum of services to students in a variety of educational settings; the communication used during instruction is aligned with the preferred mode of communication used by the students. The RDSPD staff is trained in Visual Phonics and SEE to support meaningful literacy instruction for the development of age-appropriate literacy skills, including the ability to read and write. District wide staff development is provided to all staff members to empower teachers with training on differentiated instructional strategies in order to meet the needs of all students. Instructional decisions are based on informal and formal information gathered through teacher observation, student work samples, formative evaluation, running records, and classroom performance. The staff utilizes the district curriculum and whatever general education teachers are using to address the Pre-School Guidelines and TEKS. The materials used for literacy instructionvaries from teacher to teacher in meeting the individual needs of students reading below grade level. Assessment tools and methods used by the RDSPD staff to evaluate the language competencies of students includes but not limited to CLASS, ELI, QRI, AEPs, ERA, TCIP, WRITE From the Beginning, Guided Reading, Thinking Maps, SKI-HI, IEP Check list, Anecdotal Notes, Brigance, and Math Vocabulary Lab.

Commendations:

The staff recognizes the student's individual differences in communication abilities. They respect the differences and incorporate a variety of communication strategies.The staff also attends training provided to general educators on differentiated TEKS-based instruction. The program has seven certified interpreters out of thirteen. The program Supervisor sends general education teachers, RDSPD staff, parents, nurses, and speech therapists to SEE trainings during the summer.Non-certified interpreters are sent to available interpreter trainings in/or out of town with the support of funding from the Special Education Department. The program takes great measures to include the RDSPD students with their peers in the general education setting for instruction, extracurricular activities, and special classes such as Art, Music, and P.E.The AI PPCD and Kinder students are integrated with age appropriate peers for centers and other activities. Signing Exact English is utilized within the program starting with the babies.

Considerations:
- Continue to provide the interpreters with opportunities to become certified.

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Goal Area:

3. Collaborative Partnerships

Deaf and hard of hearing children require and are best served when effective and mutually respectful partnerships are established between and among educators, families, and the institutions and programs in the community that serve those children and their families. Given the importance of early and on-ongoing communication, language, and educational development for these children, a seamless system of information and services and programs must be made available to the family and child throughout her/his educational career.

Rubric Summary:

Indicator	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
3.1 Outside agencies/service providers	☐	☐	☒
3.2 Community resources	☐	☐	☒
3.3 Parental and student involvement	☐	☐	☒

Current Efforts: The program interacts with agencies to support efforts to provide early intervention and post secondary transition. The RDSPD staff and the contracted Educational Audiologist provide training to parents and school personnel on audiological information, FM System use and trouble shooting, Hearing Aids, and Cochlear Implants in order to meet the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Audiologicals are done bi-annually.

Commendations: The high school students are provided with Deaf Education Career classes to prepare them for post secondary, employment, and independent living. The high school deaf education teachers invite representatives from DARS, SWCID, NTID, RIT, TSD, Deaf Action Center, and other agencies to provide information to the deaf and hard of hearing students on what is available to them after they graduate from high school. These agencies inform students and their parents about the services, resources, and opportunities for post-secondary education. The high school students participate in the Teen Leadership Summit for DHH held in the Fall and Spring. Students are encouraged to lead ARD meetings and attendance is expected for all high schoolers.

The Parent Advisor has a strong relationship with the different Early Childhood Intervention Agencies in the counties that participate in the Shared Service Arrangement. Parent advisor also provides information to parents on local agencies and services. She empowers the individual families to advocate for their children.

The contracted Educational Audiologist not only provides training to parents and other school personnel on the use of FMs but also collects the equipment in June to send to the companies for maintenance checks. When the FM systems return, she checks each one to make sure that everything is working properly for distribution before the first day of school. She also orders new equipment if needed and delivers the equipment to each campus where students will be attending. Her goal is to have each student's amplification system in place by the first day of school; she schedules meetings with their teachers and show them how to trouble shoot ALDs. The Educational Audiologist also collaborates with students' personal audiologist and provides counseling to their parents.

The program collaborates with Starkey Foundation that awards free personal hearing aids to students who cannot afford to purchase one.

Side Note:
- Consider formalizing the system used to document communication and collaborative activities with outside agencies and service providers.
- Consider annual audiogicals instead of bi-annually.

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Goal Area:

4. System Responsibility

Deaf and hard of hearing students are entitled to an educational program in which system-wide responsibility is clear and involves procedures for accountability, high-stakes testing, assessment, and standards. Accountability measures must include examination of programs and services on a local and statewide basis. High-stakes testing must be based on and fully incorporate the child's communication and language needs. Assessment of deaf and hard of hearing children must be comprehensive and include testing and evaluation of the child's communication, linguistic, academic, cognitive, psychological, physical and all other areas of need pertinent to the child. The entire educational delivery system for deaf and hard of hearing children must be based on clear standards or "best practices" which reflects the best thinking regarding educational programs and services and the relationship of communication and language to literacy and educational growth.

Rubric Summary:

Indicator	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
4.1 Multiple sources of assessment	☐	☐	☒
4.2 Grade level alignment of assessment	☐	☐	☒
4.3 Communication mode alignment	☐	☐	☒
4.4 Home language consideration	☐	☐	☒
4.5 Accommodations, modifications and adaptations	☐	☐	☒

Current Efforts: The program teachers use different forms of assessment to document student performance such as chapter test, worksheets,unit tests, teacher made tests, CLASS Bridge Tests, and teacher observationThe 3-5 teacher uses daily quick review, bench mark, and six week quizzes to cover IEP. The K-1 teacher uses the district wide testing to determine the level of understanding on the content standards. Teachers in the2-5 grade use formative evaluation via interviewing techniques. Students in the nineth gradeare assessed on high-stakes state standards using the TAKS and STAAR Released tests. Teachers use checklists, teacher created tests, and teacher observations to assess student progress on their IEPs and TEKS. All students in the testing grades participate in the Statewide Assessments.

Commendation:

In the classrooms observed, teachers providedinstruction that included hands-on activities, peer interaction, and opportunities to record new learning in writing. High level math concepts were presented to a student by a scaffolding technique; this was an adaptation for the student to understand Algebraic terms. One teacher modifies the benchmark tests tomake them linguistically accessible. Teachers use assessment data to analyze the students' understanding of content standards and design instruction to meet their individual needs.

Side Note:

- Continue with the current process of providingdeaf and hard of hearing students who are taking the Statewide Assessments access to the general curriculum.

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Goal Area:

5. Placement and Programs

Deaf and hard of hearing students require a full continuum of placement options that recognize, provide for, and are based upon their language and communication needs. A determination of what constitutes the "least restrictive environment" for deaf and hard of hearing students must be determined by considering first and foremost these unique communication and linguistic needs and then the student's educational, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical abilities and needs.

Rubric Summary:

Indicator	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
5.1 Continuum of placement options	☐	☐	☒
5.2 TEKS alignment	☐	☐	☒

Current Efforts: The program provides a full continuum of services to students in a variety of educational settings. A majority of the students receive grade-level instruction in general education settings with inclusion support. All teachers provide instruction that is linked to grade level TEKS. Students receive instruction in home based (infants), self contained, special education classes, and in the general education setting. The program has certified deaf education teachers, an AI Specialist, seven certified interpreters, five communication aides, a contracted Educational Audiologist, a program administrator, and speech pathologist who serve students at various campuses. The AI Specialist works with teachers in the 26 districts of the SSA and explains the implication of hearing loss on language development, reading, and writing for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. She also provides training to other staff members such as nurses, speech therapists, counselors, administrators, parents, and special education teachers.

Commendations:

The program cross trains staff to assure that each service area is able to meet the needs of all students, regardless of their placement along the continuum. For example, all professional staff is trained and provides support in self-contained, general education, and home-based settings. The staff is highly dedicated and maintains rigorous schedules to meet the needs of their students. Teachers appear to recognize and respect student's communication modes and differences. While teachers primarily communicate using sign language, they were observed utilizing auditory oral strategies as well as incorporating strategies to bridge ASL and English.

Side Note:

The collaboration between the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf and school staff members, nurses, speech therapists, and counselors provides a unique educational partnership for meeting the communication needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing. It was noted that staff members who are not part of the RDPSD have committed themselves in learning to communicate using sign with the RDSPD students; they have gone to specialized training to develop the necessary skills. Also, speech pathologists have obtained specialized training in the Auditory Verbal Therapy methods to help children with Cochlear Implants develop oral language. The knowledge that these non RDSPD staff members have developed is very valuable in working with students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

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Goal Area:

6. Technology

Technology must be made available for and used by deaf and hard of hearing students to enhance their communication and language opportunities, enlarge their educational options, increase cognitive and academic skills and enrich their lives now and in the future.

Rubric Summary:

Indicator	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
6.1 Instructional and informational	☐	☐	☒
6.2 Amplification	☐	☐	☒
6.3 Assistive technology	☐	☒	☐

Current Efforts: All classrooms have LCD projectors, computers and access to the Internet. Instructional technology such as document and digital cameras, CD player, touch screen computer, Interwrite pad, graphing calculators, Video phones, and video camera were observed in different classrooms. Elementary students go to computer lab once a week. Students have access to a variety of amplification devices as required by the IEP.

Commendations:

Classrooms have several computers and access to internet. Teachers report utilizing a variety of technological tools such as online resources such as Webquest, Study Island, online math curriculum, Google to find visuals and information for projects, discovery education videos, and educational games. Students access a variety of amplification systems such as hearing aids, FM systems/assistive listening devices, and students with cochlear implants are supported.

Consideration:

- Consider equipping the classrooms with Smart boardsand Netbooks and if possible, a Smart Table in the Early Childhood classroom.

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Goal Area:

7. Professional Standards and Personnel Preparation

A collaborative partnership is needed among universities, schools, and communities to enable the preparation, recruitment and on-going professional development of an optimal supply of teachers, administrators, and related personnel with the demonstrated knowledge, skills, and experiences to meet the needs of a diverse population of deaf and hard of hearing learners.

Rubric Summary:

Indicator	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
7.1 General curriculum and instructional strategies	☐	☐	☒
7.2 Unique needs of students with auditory impairments	☐	☐	☒
7.3 Communication proficiency of staff	☐	☐	☒
7.4 Recruitment and retention	☐	☐	☒

Current Efforts: The program staff participates in regional and state professional development activities to assure the delivery of TEKS-based instruction that is aligned with grade level TEKS. The program supervisor meets with the RDSPD staff 7-8 times a year to share information and address program-wide needs and concerns. Teachers are strongly encouraged to participate in district level training opportunities and use ESC resources to support implementation efforts. The program supervisor monitors staff development by requiring that all teachers receive training in Visual Phonics and Signing Exact English.

Commendation:

Teachers attend Staff development targeted to standards based instruction for general and special educators. The staff attends state and regional training opportunities that target instructional knowledge and skill development; teachers will be attending the Statewide Conference on Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing this summer. Each staff member maintains a transcript of all professional learning activities at district,regional, and state levels.

Side Note:

Continue to provide general education teachers, RDSPD staff members, parents, nurses, and speech therapiststhe opportunity to attend SEE trainings during the summer.

Guiding Questions for Continuous Improvement Planning

National Agenda Indicators and Program Reflection Activities
NOTE: The following section expands on the National Agenda indicators and offers questions that could guide the program through reflection and goal setting activities.

Goal One: Early Identification and Intervention

1.3   Families of deaf and hard of hearing infants, toddlers, and children must receive complete and unbiased information about hearing loss, communication development, the central relationship between communication development and educational growth, and other matters unique to deaf and hard of hearing individuals, as well as information about all services and programs that provide assistance to them and their children.

Discussion Questions
▪ What materials do you use to support families of infants and toddlers who are D/HH?   ▪ How do you plan and implement topics for families of infants and toddlers who are D/HH?   ▪ What kind of planning documentation does the parent advisor use? Is it specific and does it address the areas listed in the indicator?

1.6   The medical, educational, and related professionals and institutions must collaborate among themselves to ensure that they can provide complete, unbiased, and useful information and services and programs to families of deaf and hard of hearing infants, toddlers, and children.

Discussion Questions
▪ How would you describe the relationship between the RDSPD (district) and other early intervention agencies (ECI)?   ▪ How do you collaborate with these agencies to provide services for infants and toddlers who are D/HH?   ▪ How would you describe the relationship between the RDSPD and medical providers?   ▪ Does the parent advisor document conversations/interactions with other agency or medical personnel?

1.7   Families with deaf and hard of hearing newborns, infants, and toddlers are entitled to work collaboratively with and be treated as equal partners and decision-makers by appropriately trained professionals so that they can all prepare the child to function at his/her highest level of communication/language, social and cognitive development. Such collaboration is essential to the development of all infant and toddler services and programs and in particular the Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) that determines the early intervention services which the child receives and where services are provided.

Discussion Questions
▪ How would you describe the role the parent plays in the early intervention decision-making process?
▪ Tell me about your experiences after the child was identified with a hearing loss?
▪ How did the early intervention agency and school district work together to provide support to the family?
▪ Did you feel like an active decision maker regarding the type of services and need of your child?

Goal Two: Communication, Language and Literacy

2.3 Deaf and hard of hearing children must be provided with full communication and language clearly and consistently in all educational environments and with all peers and professionals. Appropriate access can occur in many forms, most notably from educational staff that can communicate directly, proficiently, and in an on-going manner in the child's communication mode and language, through qualified sign or oral interpreters, note-takers, and other services required to provide that necessary access.

Discussion Questions
▪ Describe the mode(s) of communication used by your students.
▪ Do students who are D/HH have full access to communication clearly and consistently in all educational environments? Please elaborate on your response.
▪ How does the program assure that all students have access to full communication and language in all educational environments?
▪ What are your strengths and weakness related to communicating in your students' preferred modes of communication?
▪ Identify the mode of communication used and level of interactions with professional staff and peers. In general, do the interactions appear to be appropriate to the student's age, preferred mode of communication, and content being addressed?

2.4 Deaf and hard of hearing children will have their individual receptive and expressive communication skills and language needs fully assessed as infants and throughout their educational experience. Such assessment must include the child's individual communication mode and language and specific recommendations for how to ensure that the child has age-appropriate communication and language skills in whatever mode and language that child uses.

Discussion Questions
▪ How frequently do you assess the receptive and expressive language skills of your students?
▪ What methods/tools do you use for evaluating the language skills of your students?
▪ How do you document student progress in the area of language acquisition?
▪ How is this information used to inform instruction?
▪ If you have students who communicate using American Sign Language, do you assess their proficiency in both languages?
▪ Does the teacher have any examples that might demonstrate his/her assessment protocol?
▪ To what degree does the teacher's documentation link student learning activities/objectives with performance data?

2.6   Early, consistent, and meaningful communication between family and child is essential in fostering language competency and the development of literacy. Therefore it is essential that families are provided with support in developing their own and their child's communication and language skills. They need to work educationally at home and with the schools to develop their child's communication and language skills.

Discussion Question
▪ How does the program support communication between the child and family? Is the program ongoing or a set of events?

2.7   Deaf and hard of hearing children will have as an integral, required part of their educational program, access to a critical mass of age, cognitive, and communication/language peers and teachers and educational staff who are proficient in the individual child's language and communication mode.

Discussion Question
▪ Since the RDSPD creates a "critical mass" of peers, how does the program support the needs of students using different modes of communication?

2.9   Deaf and hard of hearing children are capable of and must develop age-appropriate literacy skills, including the ability to read and write.

Discussion Questions
▪ Describe the reading and writing abilities of your students.
▪ How do you assess and determine the skills needing direct intervention?
▪ How does the teacher plan reading and writing instruction? List the major components/detail found in the lesson planning document. How is reading and writing integrated across the curriculum?
▪ If available, describe the writing samples provided/observed

2.10   A structured, early, and balanced program of activities for teaching reading and writing should be implemented consistently across the curriculum for deaf and hard of hearing students and should take into consideration individual differences, including an awareness of the communication modes and languages used by the students. Instructional approaches to developing literacy in deaf and hard of hearing students should provide creative and visual means to teach reading and writing.

Discussion Questions
▪ How do you integrate reading and writing across the curriculum?
▪ Look for evidence of reading/writing instruction being taught across the curriculum.

2.11   The development of age-appropriate English skills is crucial to deaf and hard of hearing students.

Discussion Questions
▪ Describe the type of planning used for developing age-appropriate proficiencies in English skills.
▪ Does instruction include real-life applications?

2.12   Reading programs for deaf children should be research-based and involve core components of reading (e.g. phonemic awareness skills, phonics skills, reading fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies) and thus allow the deaf learner to draw on syntactic, semantic, and phonological information to gain meaning.

Discussion Questions
▪ Are the five core components of reading documented in the lesson plans? Are they integrated to support speech and auditory skills development? ▪ Describe the reading program you use. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? ▪ What areas do you regularly target?

Goal Three:Collaborative Partnerships

3.1   The establishment of a seamless, complete, and cross-institutional collaborative system will ensure that families are fully informed as to all service and program options available for their children and are equal partners and the key decision-makers in the education of their child. Generally such a system will address the communication, language, cognitive, academic, social, emotional, psychological, post-secondary, employment and independent living skill needs of deaf and hard of hearing children and must be in place to serve these children from their birth to high school graduation and beyond.

Collaborative partnerships among families and the medical community, educators, policy-makers, researchers, business, community agencies, state organizations and national organizations will be established and maintained in order to provide information to families and services to deaf and hard of hearing children and foster effective transitions for children and their families throughout their educational experience.

Discussion Questions
▪ Do you interact with any community agencies? ▪ How does the program interact with agencies to assist families and students who are D/HH to access the tools necessary to make educational decisions? ▪ Does the parent advisor document conversations/interactions with other agency or medical personnel?

3.4   Deaf and hard of hearing students are entitled to and can become independent, self-sufficient adults. All appropriate institutions, including state education agencies, intermediate educational service agencies, local educational agencies (LEAs), post-secondary programs, and all other pertinent governmental and community resources shall work together with deaf and hard of hearing students and their families to ensure that this goal is met.

Discussion Questions
▪ How do the program and agencies collaborate to help students prepare for post-secondary, employment, and independent living activities? ▪ How are the students involved in the ARD and transition process? ▪ How does the program provide students with career exploration opportunities? ▪ How do students demonstrate abilities to advocate for themselves and live independently? What supports are in place and how do you monitor the student's progress towards the transition goals? ▪ How are the student's goals described in the IEP document? Does the IEP include the course of study/schedule of services needed to assist the in meeting desired post-secondary outcomes?

Goal Four: Accountability, High Stakes Testing and Standards Based Environments

4.1   Assessments of deaf and hard of hearing students must be child-centered, focus on all areas of the child's profile, and employ multiple measures that include criterion-referenced tests, standardized tests, teacher and student accountability records, and other appropriate assessment tools. Assessments must take into account and reflect the child's communication and language preference, need, and expressive and receptive skill levels.

Discussion Questions
▪ To what degree do your students have access to TEKS-based instruction (on or off grade level)?
▪ How do your students demonstrate their understanding of the content standards?
▪ How do you assess and document student progress on the content standards?
▪ Do the assessments take into account the communication and language preference of the child?
▪ Does the teacher employ multiple measures to document student performance?
▪ How are assessments modified to meet the expressive/receptive skill levels of the students?

4.2   Assessment of deaf students who use ASL and English will include measures of competencies in both languages and will specifically measure expressive and receptive skills in both.

Discussion Questions
▪ How do you measure and document each student's competencies in receptive and expressive language?
▪ If a student's primary mode of communication is ASL, do you evaluate and document the student's competencies in both ASL and English?
▪ To what extent is the documentation used to guide instructional decision making?
▪ What assessment tools are utilized? How specific is the documentation?

4.3   Given the importance of age-appropriate communication and language, assessments for deaf and hard of hearing children must not only include information regarding current levels of skills, but also recommendations for how to improve communication and language skills.

Discussion Questions
▪ What types of data do assessments administered to students who are deaf or hard of hearing provide?
▪ Do the assessments provide current skill levels and recommendations for improving communication and language skills?

4.4   Parents, consumers, and educators must be provided with appropriate and complete information regarding accommodations, modifications, and adaptations to assessments for their deaf and hard of hearing children, as well as information regarding alternative assessments.

Discussion Questions
▪ How does the program provide parents with information regarding accommodations, modifications, and adaptations to assessments? ▪ How does the program provide parents with information related to alternative assessments?

4.6   District and statewide testing programs must take into consideration the unique language and communication preferences, abilities, and needs of the students.

Discussion Question
▪ How do the district testing programs take into consideration the unique language and communication preferences, abilities and needs of the students?

Goal Five: Placement and Programs

5.1   All IEP team participants will be provided all information, without any bias, about all educational options along the continuum of educational placements and in particular how the communication, linguistic, and educational needs and goals of the deaf or hard of hearing student will be addressed in those options.

Discussion Questions
▪ How do you inform IEP team members of the continuum of services and options? ▪ How do you provide IEP team members with unbiased information regarding the communication, linguistic, and educational needs/goals that will be addressed in those options? ▪ Does the program have a flyer that describes the continuum of services and options available to students who are D/HH?

5.2   Local educational agencies must have a full continuum of placement options that can provide for the unique communication, linguistic, and educational needs of deaf children and shall make all placement and LRE determinations based on all of those needs.

Discussion Questions
▪ How does the program serve students using different communication modes? ▪ Does the program offer comprehensive programming options to meet the needs of different modes of communication?

5.3   As required under IDEA the provision of a full continuum of placement options and the further requirement that a child be placed in the "least restrictive environment", shall mean for deaf and hard of hearing students those environments that can address the student's communication, linguistic, and educational needs. The IEP team will make all placement/LRE determinations based on the abilities and needs of the child, including fundamental communication and linguistic needs, and not solely on a philosophy that one particular option on the continuum best serves all children.

Discussion Question
▪ Does the program offer comprehensive, individualized programming options to meet the needs of students with different modes of communication?

5.5   Deaf and hard of hearing studentsare entitled to access the general curriculum, regardless of where their individual program is located or where on the continuum of placement options, their classroom is located.

Discussion Question
▪ To what degree do your students have access to TEKS-based instruction (on or off grade level)?

Goal Six: Technology

6.1   All instructional and information technologies used in the teaching and learning process for deaf and hard of hearing children should be, as appropriate for each individual child, visually and/or aurally/orally accessible.

Discussion Question
▪ What technology do you use to support teaching and learning?

6.2   Educational programs for students who are deaf and hard of hearing should integrate technology standards into the general curriculum at all developmental levels.

Discussion Questions
▪ How do students use technology to support learning?
▪ To what degree is technology being used to support the delivery of TEKS-based instruction?
▪ Is technology included in the planning process as a meaningful component of instruction?
▪ To what degree do students interact with the technology?

6.3   Accurate diagnosis of hearing loss and appropriate amplification and other assistive technologies, both acoustic and visual, is the right of all deaf children.

Discussion Question
▪ How do you determine the appropriate form of amplification and assistive technology needed to provide acoustic and visual access to instruction?

6.4   Technologies such as videoconferencing, distance learning, and video-relay services should be utilized to allow deaf and hard of hearing students the opportunity to communicate, collaborate, and interact with peers, experts, and other audiences.

Discussion Questions
▪ How are technologies such as distance learning, videoconferencing, and video-relay services used with students who are D/HH?
▪ Does the program have access to videoconferencing, distance learning, or video-relay technologies?

Goal Seven: Professional Standards and Personnel Preparation

7.2　　Teacher training programs for deaf and hard of hearing students need to offer additional coursework in general education curricular areas and instructional strategies in order to better prepare teachers for improving student achievement in relation to mandated state curricular standards.

Discussion Questions
▪ Does the program have a professional development plan that links adult learning goals with student performance objectives?
▪ How does the program/district assure that deaf educators have the skills necessary to meet the rigors of mandated standards-based instruction?
▪ How does the program support and monitor the implementation of standards-based, "best-practice" strategies?
▪ Does the program have a formal process for planning adult learning activities, monitor the implementation, and measure the impact of professional development on student performance?
▪ Is professional development job-embedded and sustained or a set of events?

7.7　　The level of proficiency of personnel providing educational interpreting services must be increased in accordance with state or national standards.

Discussion Questions
▪ Are all interpreters either BEI or RID certified? At what levels?
▪ How many interpreters are on a temporary permit?

7.8　　All educational staff working with deaf and hard of hearing students must demonstrate adult-level proficiency in the communication mode and language used by the students with whom they work.

Discussion Question
▪ Does the program have a process in place to evaluate the communication proficiencies and provide communication skills support for both teachers and interpreters?