

Virginia Department of Education
State Action Plan for Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

This plan was developed at a facilitated focus group, held on September 22, 2006 and attended by 32 stakeholders. The information below shows progress made on goals set at that time, as well as goals that have been added in the last three years.

I. Language, Communication, and Literacy

System Goal: All students who are deaf and hard of hearing in the Commonwealth will develop age-appropriate expressive and receptive language and communication proficiencies fundamental to literacy, educational achievement, and full participation in adult life.

Background: The development of age-appropriate communication and language skills is fundamental to a child's cognitive, academic, linguistic, and social development, and will determine largely whether that child will become literate and a productive adult.

Goals Set by Stakeholders 9/06	Actions	Com- pleted	Outcomes
I.1 Soon after diagnosis of a hearing loss, all infants and toddlers and their families will receive unbiased information regarding language and communication options	I.1 A.) Establish a workgroup from Virginia Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (VDHDI) Advisory Committee to select a parent guide model program to emulate;	X	I 1.A.) A workgroup was established and Hands and Voices', "Guide By Your Side" program was selected
	B.) Develop a resource guide for families;	X	B.) A resource guide was produced.
	C.) Develop policies and procedures;	X	C.)Policies and procedures were developed.
	D.) Solicit applications for guides and select parents;	X	D.)Guides were solicited; parents were selected from applications and interviews 10/06. A second group was recruited summer, 2007.

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	E.) Provide training for parent guides.	X	E.)A group of 14 parent guides were trained 10/06; a second group of 7 was trained 9/07, three guides trained 2/08, 3 more trained July 31-Aug 1, 2009 for total of 27 trained parent guides.
	F.) Provide VA GBYS services.	On-going	F.) 147 parent-to-parent matches were made by VA GBYS 1/07 – 1/09. Home visits involved sharing of unbiased information regarding communication options. Parents received a Resource Guide with same information as well as many other resources. Approximately 20 more referrals have been made and matches will be made.
I.2 Individual Family Service Plan/Individual Education Program (IFSP/IEP) team members will recognize the importance of communication/language development, and the IFSP/IEP will be communication driven.	I.2 A.) Provide training to increasing Part C and Part B providers' competencies in developing communication/language in children using different communication methodologies.	X	I.2 A.) SKI HI training for Part C and ECSE providers was offered summer, 2005 and summer, 2006. INSITE training for Part C and ECSE providers was offered July and August, 2007; (SKI HI training is for individuals working with birth to five year olds who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families; INSITE training is for those working with birth to five year olds who have dual sensory impairments or a sensory impairment with additional disabilities.) Follow-up training for SKI HI participants was provided summer, 2007; follow-up for INSITE participants was provided at Pathways Conference, 8/13 – 15, 2008.
		X	A.) A Fact Sheet was developed by the VEHDI Workgroup led by Beth Tolley, DMHMRSAS, and

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	<p>B.) Make Part B providers aware of the importance of “Special Considerations” language in IDEA 2004, emphasizing that students who are deaf or hard of hearing should have access to direct communication with educators and peers if possible.</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>X</p> <p>X and on-going</p>	<p>disseminated to Part C providers. This fact sheet included the statement, “All children with hearing loss, regardless of severity or current level of development are eligible for supports and services in Virginia’s early intervention system.” Elements of service coordination and effective intervention were described, and several pages of online resources were provided.</p> <p>A.) Spoke with TODHH at TODHH meetings 2008; state conference 2008 and 2009; Guidelines trainings for teachers/related service providers, 2008 about contacting their local Part C providers to let them know if they are interested in providing Part C services, and encourage TODHH who will be retiring to take the 4 online courses needed to be certified Part C providers.</p> <p>B.) “Guidelines for Working with Students Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Virginia Public Schools” (<i>the Guidelines</i>) were revised, printed and disseminated May – October, 2008. The <i>Guidelines</i> emphasize the importance of language development and communication, and the special considerations language in IDEA, 2004.</p> <p>B.) These special considerations were emphasized in the 4 regional administrator and 5 regional teacher/related service providers’ <i>Guidelines</i> trainings. Also presented as 2009 SHAV conference and at Cue Camp VA for families, 8/09. Continue to emphasize importance.</p>
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	<p>C.) Develop a Communication Plan form for Virginia and require its use by IEP teams of students who are deaf and hard of hearing.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>C.) A Virginia Communication Plan was developed, after reviewing the plans of several other states and adapting for Virginia. The <i>Guidelines recommend</i> use of this tool by IEP teams to evaluate a student's language/communication strengths and weaknesses and identify supports needed.</p>
		<p>X</p>	<p>C.) Administrators' and teacher/related service providers' roll-out trainings for the <i>Guidelines</i> included the importance of use of the VA Communication Plan for each student who is deaf or hard of hearing. Participants were given the opportunity to develop a communication plan using a sample student profile. Four administrator trainings and 5 teacher/related service providers' trainings were conducted between May, 2008 and October, 2008, reaching more than 320 individuals. Feedback on the VA Communication Plan was consistently positive.</p>
		<p>X</p>	<p>C.) The VA Communication Plan was also presented at the Speech and Hearing Association of VA (SHAV) statewide conference 2009, and at Cue Camp VA Aug, 2009.</p>
		<p>On-going</p>	<p>C.) Continue to promote awareness and use of the VA Communication Plan.</p>
	<p>D.) Conduct surveys 6 months and 12 months after roll-out trainings to gather data about use of the VA</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>D.) Six-month follow-up surveys were sent out 4/09 by Partnership for People with Disabilities, VCU. Of the 119 who responded, approximately 1/3 said they have</p>

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	<p>Communication Plans in the schools.</p> <p>E.) Provide training so that personnel can meet the communication/language needs of all students including the increasing number whose families have chosen the oral method.</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>used the VA Communication Plan; another 55% said they have not used it yet, but plan on using it.</p> <p>D.) Surveys will be sent again in Oct, 2009.</p> <p>E.) Trainings on the strategies for development of auditory function in an educational setting were provided by a certified AVT in November, 2007, March, 2008 and April, 2008. 50 – 55 professionals attended each of the trainings.</p> <p>E.) Two additional trainings were provided June, 2008 at Radford University (funded by DOE) with more sessions provided at the summer, 2008 Pathways conference for professionals working with students who are deaf and hard of hearing.</p> <p>E.) A training was held April 3 – 4, 2009 in collaboration with AG Bell (international oral deaf organization), the Partnership for People with Disabilities, and Radford University entitled “Optimizing Auditory Learning.” Approximately 60 people attended.</p> <p>E.) Radford University conducted another trainings on A-V strategies in July, 2009.</p> <p>E.) DOE funded and assisted in development of an oral preschool program at Old Dominion University’s Child Study Center. Pre-service and in-service professional</p>
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			development opportunities are being offered on site for parents and for professionals from participating school divisions.
I.3. Students who are deaf and hard of hearing will demonstrate improved achievement on the PALs test and on Reading/Writing SOLs.	I.3. A.) Provide training to assist educators in developing the literacy skills of children who are deaf and hard of hearing.	X	I.3. A.) Trainings in Visual Phonics were provided ongoing at VSDB-S for their staff members, as well as: 10/25/06, Charlotte County; 3/21/07, Abingdon; 6/19 & 6/21, Radford University; 8/10/07, Staunton (two tracks); 10/25/07, Rockbridge Co (Lexington); 10/26/07, Radford University; 11/5 – 11/6/07, Spotsylvania (regional training), with 2-hr. follow up session 2/21/08; 6/19/08, Radford University; 11/2/08, Winchester (regional training); 12/2/08, Radford University (pre-service class session); 12/8 – 12/9/08, Winchester (regional event); 1/26/09, Ashland (regional training) with follow-up on 5/5/09. 8/17/09, Rockingham County, with follow-up on October 12, 2009.
		X	A.) Workshops on literacy were included in statewide summer conferences conducted for professionals working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing, August, 2007 and August, 2008.
		X	A.) Training for TODHH were provided in literacy, Math, and Science instruction 6/08 Radford University.
		X	A.) A training was offered July 16-17, 2009, Radford,

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			VA. on using assessment data to inform instruction.
	B.) Review data to determine if gains have been made on PALs and SOL assessments in Reading/Writing.	X	A.) Two one-day statewide conferences were held August, 2009 (Roanoke and Richmond) which included literacy training for those working with deaf/hh.
		X	B.) Review of PALs data collected at VSDB-S shows significant progress was made each year for the last three years in fluency and reading levels by more than 85% of VSDB-S students using See-the-Sound Visual Phonics and the Lindamood LiPs program. (For more information, contact Dr. Rebecca Plesko at VSDB-S). B.) State data on proficiency scores in English (and Math) SOLs have been reviewed and it has been determined that significant overall gains have been made in both.
I. 4. Educational Interpreters will increase competencies to meet state standards to better provide access to the curriculum and serve as language models for students.	I. 4. A.) Training will be provided to assist educational interpreters to increase competencies.	X	I. 4.A.) Annual grants from VDOE support the work of 6 regional coordinators and 4 university personnel to provide diagnostics, develop training plans, and provide training/classes/mentoring to meet the individual needs of educational interpreters. More than 40 trainings were provided during each school year, 2006 – 2007 and 2007 – 2008, with 36 provided July 2008 – Dec, 2008, and more than 20 provided spring of 2009. In addition, the Weekend Educational Interpreter Training Program (WEIT), JSRCC, TCC, and NOVA provided numerous ASL and Interpreter Training classes for credit.

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			<p>E.) Strategies for retaining qualified interpreters were distributed to administrators at regional trainings on revised Special Education regulations in the form of an FAQ document.</p> <p>E.) Explore use of promissory agreements at the state or local level that would require interpreters using grant money to remain in the school system for a specified period for every year of grant money used.</p>
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II. Placements and Programs

System Goal: Placement of students will be based on their language/communication needs. Educators will be knowledgeable about the “special considerations” of IDEA, the importance of a language rich environment and fluent language models.

Background: Often, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is interpreted as the general education classroom in the neighborhood school. For children who are deaf or hard of hearing, special consideration must be given to students’ communication, language, and educational (including literacy) needs. Information required to determine what LRE is for students who are deaf or hard of hearing should be provided.

Goals	Actions	Completed	Outcomes
II. 1 Administrators, other educators, and parents will receive unbiased information on best practice in placement and programs.	II.1.A.)Revise the “Guidelines for Working with Hearing Impaired Students in Virginia Public Schools.”	X	II.1.A.)Guidelines were revised; new title is “Guidelines for Working with Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Virginia Public Schools.”

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	<p>B.)Provide <i>Guidelines</i> implementation trainings including more information about LRE and placement.</p>	X	<p>B.)Guidelines trainings included discussion of LRE for students who are deaf/hh and the necessary components, including LRE as Language Rich Environment.</p>
	<p>C.)Develop a way for IEP teams to evaluate the child's language/communication skills and assess progress made to assist them in making informed decisions about what constitutes a linguistically appropriate placement option.</p>	X	<p>C.) The VA Communication Plan was developed, after reviewing the plans of several other states and adapting for Virginia. The <i>Guidelines</i> recommend use of this tool by IEP teams to evaluate a student's language/communication strengths and weaknesses and identify supports needed.</p>
		X	<p>C.) Administrators' and teacher/related service providers' roll-out trainings for the <i>Guidelines</i> included the importance of use of the VA Communication Plan for each student who is deaf or hard of hearing. Participants were given the opportunity to develop a communication plan using a sample student profile. Four administrator trainings and 5 teacher/related service providers' trainings were conducted between May, 2008 and October, 2008, reaching more than 320 individuals. Feedback on the Communication Plan was consistently positive. Six-month follow-up surveys were sent out 4/09 by Partnership for People with Disabilities, VCU. Of the 119 who responded, approximately 1/3 said they have used the VA Communication Plan; another 55% said they have not used it yet, but plan on using it.</p>

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		X	C.) After the state Special Education regulations were revised, sample IEPs were posted on the DOE website. On the page with “Considerations,” after the section regarding students who are deaf or hard of hearing, readers are referred to the VA Communication Plan.
	D.) Encourage collaboration among school divisions with a low incidence of students who are deaf or hard of hearing to meet staffing and student needs.	X	D.) In the Guidelines implementation trainings, administrators were given the opportunity to discuss possible ways to collaborate with nearby school divisions to share resources. Teachers and related service providers were also encouraged to utilize technology and parent associations to enable their students to meet peers who communicate using the same methodology.
II 2. Personnel in school divisions will build competencies in developing programs with a full continuum of placement options.	III. 2.A.) Provide training to help educators build competencies that will allow them to increase options in providing a full continuum of placement options and in meeting the diverse needs of all students who are deaf or hard of hearing.	X	II.2. A.) Few oral preschool programs are available across the Commonwealth. DOE funded and assisted development of an oral preschool program at Old Dominion University’s Child Study Center. Pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities are offered on site. A.) VDOE could assist school divisions in collaborating to provide appropriate preschool placements for all students who are deaf or hard of hearing, using any communication methodology, by identifying programs currently using this strategy and sharing information about them with other school divisions who may be exploring ways to provide a full continuum of options.

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		X	A.)Radford University’s Deaf Education Teacher Preparation Program prepares teachers to meet the needs of all students, regardless of placement needs.
		X	A.) VNOC (Virginia Network of Consultants for professionals working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing) has provided 64 trainings/consults to professionals in Virginia Public Schools since this action plan was developed 9/06 to help them meet diverse needs, some of which involved long term technical assistance.
	B.) Survey general ed teachers and TODHH to determine if training is needed to promote more inclusive, collaborative environments (ex. – strategies for co-teaching)	On-going	B.) Radford University Deaf Ed Program can provide knowledge and skills to better prepare pre-service teachers to become itinerant and/or collaborative teachers.
	C.) Utilize evidence-based strategies in programs to improve post-secondary outcomes.	X	C.) DRS and VSDB have collaborated in developing a transition stakeholders’ meeting. Stakeholders met July 23, 2009 to discuss transition and the possibility of joining with College Quest or another college orientation program or creating a separate program to get students who are deaf/hh together in one place to focus on transition.
		X	C.) VDOE’s “I’m Determined” (self determination) project was highlighted at the statewide summer

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			conferences, 2009, for TODHH and related services providers, featuring student-led IEPs that have been done at VSDB-S.
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IV. Early Identification and Appropriate Intervention

System Goal: All families will be provided with comprehensive, unbiased information and intervention to assist them in helping their children to develop communication, cognitive, language, and social skills at the earliest possible age.

Background: Research confirms that the first six months after birth are critical for the development of communication and linguistic skills. 26-month-old infants who were identified and provided effective early intervention services between birth and 6 months of age had “significantly higher” measures of language growth and personal-social development than children who were provided services only after 6 months of age (Yoshinago-Itano & Apuzzo, 1998).

Goals	Actions	Completed	Outcomes
III.1. Diagnosis of hearing loss will be made before three months of age.	III.1.A.) Effective July 1, 2000, all hospitals with newborn nurseries and hospitals with neonatal intensive care services in Virginia screen the hearing of newborns prior to discharge after birth, but no later than three months of age (12VAC5-8080)	X	III.1.A.) 97.5% of all newborns in Virginia were screened before three months of age in 2006; 96 % of all newborns in Virginia were screened before three months of age in 2007; and 96.6% of all newborns were screened before three months of age in 2008.
	B.)The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will collect, maintain, and evaluate hospital newborn hearing screening data and provide	X	B.) VDH has collected the following data: 2006 – 2318 infants were referred for a full audiological evaluation after failed screening; 1553 (67%) were evaluated; 5.7% of those referred were confirmed as having a hearing loss.

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<p>III.2. Unbiased information will be provided to families regarding communication, cognitive, language, and social skill development.</p>	<p>follow-up for all infants reported.</p> <p>III.2. A.)Persons responsible for providing audiological services after discharge will provide unbiased resource information to the parents of any child who is found to have a hearing loss. A Parent Resource Packet will be developed by VDH and given to parents by the audiologist who confirms the hearing loss.</p> <p>B.)VDH refers family to Virginia Guide By Your Side (VA GBYS) program. VA GBYS parent guide meets with family and provides unbiased information and resources regarding communication options.</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>2007 - 2186 infants were referred for a full audiological evaluation after failed screening; 1501 (68.7%) were evaluated; 5.7% of those referred were confirmed as having a hearing loss.</p> <p>III.2. A.) A Parent Resource Packet was developed by VDH and is given to parents by the audiologist who confirms the hearing loss. The packet is available in several languages and a videotaped version in American Sign Language is also available.</p> <p>B.) 147 parent-to-parent matches were made by VA GBYS 1/07 – 1/09. (see pages 1 – 2 of this document for more information.)</p> <p>B.) GBYS guides are meeting with audiologists, nursing students and pediatricians to inform them of GBYS services and referring kids to Part C.</p>
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<p>III.3. Appropriate intervention services will begin before 6 months of age. Services will be delivered by individuals knowledgeable about deafness.</p>	<p>III.3. Part C early intervention providers need training to become more knowledgeable about services needed by families of birth to three year olds who are deaf or hard of hearing.</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>III.3.A.) 2006 – 39/132 or 27% of children with confirmed hearing loss entered into Part C services by 6 months of age (incomplete information based on informal assessments at EHDI).</p> <p>2007 – 25/124 or 20% of children with confirmed hearing loss entered into Part C services by 6 months of age. (incomplete information based on informal assessments at EHDI).</p> <p>A.)A Fact Sheet was developed by VEHDI Workgroup and disseminated to Part C providers. This fact sheet included the statement, “All children with hearing loss, regardless of severity or current level of development are eligible for supports and services in Virginia’s early intervention system,” and listed elements to be included in service coordination and effective intervention.</p> <p>A.) I.2 A.) SKI HI training for Part C and ECSE providers was offered summer, 2005 and summer, 2006. INSITE training for Part C and ECSE providers was offered July and August, 2007; Follow-up training was provided at Pathways Conference, 8/13 – 15, 2008. (INSITE training is for those working with birth to five year olds who have dual sensory impairments or a sensory impairment with additional disabilities.)</p>
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		X	A.) Rehabilitation Associates sponsored a series of three trainings in 2008 for Part C providers to develop skills in developing listening and spoken language skills in children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
		X	A.)Trainings were provided at the 2006, 2007, and the 2008 early intervention conferences to increase competencies and share resources for working with infants and toddlers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Creating Connections, the annual statewide conference for early intervention providers, was cancelled for 2009.
		On-going	A.) VA Dept of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services disseminates info on online courses and training opportunities to early intervention providers.
		X	A.) Two DVDs were purchased from BoysTown by the VA Dept of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and given to each each local lead agencies regarding The Art and Science of Home Visiting with families of infants and toddlers who are deaf/hh.
		X	A.) Representatives from VA A G Bell Assoc. met with third year med students and residents in pediatrics at VCU and EVMS to talk about early

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		X	<p>intervention and early diagnosis.</p> <p>A.) Materials were purchased and are stored at the VDDHH lending library for early intervention providers to borrow re: working with children who are deaf/hh and their families. Periodically in technical assistance updates, people are reminded of all the resources available.</p>
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V. Professional Standards and Preparation

System Goal: To provide a collaborative partnership of universities, schools, and communities for the preparation, recruitment, retention, and on-going professional development of qualified teachers, administrators, and related service providers to meet the needs of a diverse population of deaf and hard of hearing learners.

Background: Teachers of children who are deaf and hard of hearing require specialized training to obtain the skills necessary to meet the diverse needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Educational interpreters are the gatekeepers to a quality education for those students taught in general education classrooms. These professionals along with school Speech/Language Pathologists and Audiologists need to be familiar with technology and strategies for promoting student growth.

Goals	Actions	Completed	Outcomes
IV. 1.A. Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (TODHH) and related service providers will receive appropriate pre-service and in-service training.	IV.1.A.) Radford University will provide pre-service and in-service training to prepare TODHH to meet the diverse needs of students.	X & on-going	IV.1.A.) Personnel at Radford University Teacher Prep program have developed a curriculum to prepare TODHH to meet the needs of students who use diverse methods of communication. ASL classes are provided during the school year (ASL I - IV); supplementary courses in working with oral deaf students are provided during summers and opened to professionals already in the field. A.) Radford is in the process of having ASL accepted as a foreign language. They have an articulation agreement with Danville Community College to encourage students from the ASL/ITP programs to transfer to RU and go right into their JR year. They hope to do the same with other IHE in VA.

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	<p>B. On-going in-service training will be provided to personnel working with students who are deaf/hh to assist them in meeting their diverse needs.</p>	<p>X & on-going</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X & On-going</p>	<p>A. Students in the Communication Disorders Department at Old Dominion University are receiving special training in working with the oral preschool classroom, to better prepare them for developing listening and spoken language skills of students who are deaf and hard of hearing.</p> <p>B.) 15 trainings in Visual Phonics were provided 10/06 – 3/09 (see I.3.A for listing of dates and locations.)</p> <p>B.) Summer statewide conferences for TODHH, SLPs, interpreters, and others working in schools with students who are deaf/hh were provided August, 2007 in Staunton and August, 2008 in Virginia Beach. Two one-day trainings were provided August 4 in Roanoke and August 11, 2009 in Richmond.</p> <p>B.) Training was provided for TODHH in literacy, Math, and Science instruction 6/08 Radford University; training on Utilization of Neuropsychological Assessments in Implementation of Instruction was provided at RU July, 2009. One -two summer trainings in auditory/oral strategies have been offered at RU every summer for the last 7 years.</p> <p>B.) Information about online seminars offered is disseminated through email group lists and in</p>
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			TODHH newsletter.
IV. 2. Educational Interpreters will increase competencies to meet state standards to better provide access to the curriculum and serve as language models for students.	IV. 2. Training will be provided to assist educational interpreters to increase competencies.	X	IV. 2.A. Annual grants from VDOE support the work of 6 regional coordinators and 4 university personnel to provide diagnostics, develop training plans, and provide training/classes/mentoring to meet the individual needs of educational interpreters. More than 40 trainings were provided during each school year, 2006 – 2007 and 2007 – 2008, with 36 provided July 2008 – Dec, 2008. , and more than 20 provided spring of 2009. In addition, the Weekend Educational Interpreter Training Program (WEIT), JSRCC, TCC, and NOVA provided numerous ASL and Interpreter Training classes for credit. A.) 26 grant trainings are planned for Fall, 2009 with 10 additional after school practice sessions, 10 training provided outside of the grant but reimbursable with approval. Interpreter Training Program and ASL classes are being offered at WEIT (Danville Community College), JSRCC, NOVA, and TCC.
		X	I.4. A. 48% of educational interpreters now meet state required standards, up from 8% in 1998.
IV.3. Paraprofessionals working with students who are deaf-blind will receive training to assist in meeting students’	IV.3. Training in strategies specific for meeting the needs of students who are deaf blind will be provided.	X & On-going	IV. 3. VDOE is collaborating with the VA Project for Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness at the Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU to provide funding and

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special needs..			support to a cohort of 5 paraprofessionals and 5 “mentors” taking distance courses from University of Utah in intervener strategies. Distance support sessions are provided monthly for the cohort; as courses are completed, VA Deaf-Blind Project staff will go onsite to check competencies of students. Cohort 1 has completed coursework and is being assessed on competencies; Cohort 2 had begun coursework.
IV. 4. Administrators will receive training on meeting the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and to better support their teachers/related service providers.	IV. 4. Provide training related to needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Include information that will help administrators make decisions about professional development needed for their staff members working with deaf/hh.		IV. Implementation trainings for the revised “ <i>Guidelines for Working with Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing</i> ” provided information on SOL results and best practice to better prepare administrators to meet the professional development needs of staff members working with students who are deaf/hh.