

**Arkansas Department of Education - Special Education Unit
Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities
Children And Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI), January 2019**

- The Southeast Regional Deafblind Team brought together a group of professionals that serve deafblind individuals and their families. The group included deaf interpreters, deafblind specialists, deafblind interpreters, teachers of the visually impaired, orientation and mobility specialists, family consultants, and others. The meeting, held in Asheville, North Carolina, provided an interactive training on Haptics Communication. Haptics is a standardized system of communication using touch for individuals with dual sensory impairments. Representatives from Arkansas School for the Deaf, University of Arkansas Little Rock, Educational Services for the Visually Impaired, and CAYSI staff were introduced to Haptics as a means to empower and increase the independence of students and adults with deafblindness and allow them to receive access to and input from their environment without delay.
- The Arkansas team trained in Asheville on December 19th to debrief and begin exploring ways to increase awareness of Haptics Communication and to discuss potential trainings.
- CAYSI is working with Arkansas school districts to update Arkansas' Deafblind December 1 Child Count and submit this to the National Center of Deafblindness by May 1st, 2019.
- CAYSI currently has 218 students on its registry. In this quarter, CAYSI received four new referrals and three students were found eligible for services.
- CAYSI provided Technical Assistance in Lake Hamilton, Springdale, Batesville, Sheridan, Bryant, Mountain Home, and Russellville.
- CAYSI Educational Consultant collaborated with Easter Seals Outreach to present a Literacy Make and Take to teachers for all students in a session at the AR CEC Conference. Each attendee had the opportunity to make a Story Box (a strategy from Universal Design for Learning) to use in their classroom. This presentation resulted in a request for two presentations for students at Henderson State University (HSU) in November, HSU personnel expressed interest in including this strategy for literacy in her future curriculum.
- Initial home visits in Marion, Gurdon, and Siloam Springs have been conducted.
- CAYSI continues work on Family and Community Engagment. A parent group in Osceola met twice in this reporting period and the Arkansas' family leadership group, Arkansas Empowering Families with DeafBlindness (AEFDB) met in Little Rock in December. AEFDB is working to become a 5013c, growing in membership, and learning more from their affiliate, the National Families of DeafBlindness (NFADB).

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Personnel Development, January 2019**

Personnel Development Activities

Paraprofessional Supports and Training

Districts and agencies continue to employ the six Special Education Training Modules available through ArkansasIDEAS for training paraprofessionals. The 6 one-hour Modules were developed by a committee of Arkansas school district and agency special education personnel in collaboration with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and the ADE-SEU. The Modules focus on the Foundations of Special Education and student Behavior. They are available to all Arkansas licensed teachers and administrators, and school age paraprofessionals.

The Special Health Care Needs Training Module has been updated, is being finalized and should be ready for review by the ADE soon.

Recruitment and Retention

The ADE-SEU completed all direct funding support (tuition reimbursement) to graduate level students seeking certification as Speech Language Pathologists at the end of Summer 2018. The ADE-SEU now collaborates with educational service cooperatives to provide opportunities for recruitment and retention of educational personnel, which can include Speech Language Pathologists, at the local level.

The ADE-SEU continues to support the last cohort of graduate level students seeking certification as Vision Specialists under the previous tuition reimbursement program. The ADE-SEU will now work with two out of state IHEs to recruit and support licensed Arkansas teachers seeking to add Visual or Hearing Specialist certifications by means of stipends available after certification and time spent teaching in a qualified position.

SEU Personnel Development Staff continue to actively partner with the ADE's Teacher Recruitment and Retention program by attending and supporting all "Become an Arkansas Teacher" events and working with Educator Prep and Licensure Units to attract and support persons interested becoming special education teachers. ADE-SEU staff participates in all ADE "Become a Teacher" events. SEU staff also directly assist teachers and others interested in entering the field of Special Education by providing information via phone and email.

Staff at ADE-SEU work with personnel at the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to share information about the Teacher Opportunity Program (TOP), State Teacher Education Program (STEP), and loan forgiveness programs. These programs encourage new personnel to enter the field and current educators to acquire special education licensure.

Educational Interpreters

The ADE-SEU will continue to offer free EIPA assessment opportunities for interpreters working in educational settings and sponsor free workshops in 2019 to help Educational Interpreters increase their skills and assist them in obtaining their license and credentials required for working in public schools. The ADE-SEU collaborates with the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Arkansas Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (ARID) to support Educational Interpreters and schools in Arkansas.