



Department of Aging and Disability Services  
Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (ADS/BESB)  
DeafBlind Advisory Committee (DBAC) Meeting

March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Chairwoman Hana Tyler called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Review of Meeting Protocol

Chris Lassen reviewed the protocol for participating in the DeafBlind Advisory Committee Meeting.

Christopher Lassen conducted a roll call.

Voting Members Present

Hana Tyler, Chair, Consumer Representative; Wayne Seidel, Department of Developmental Services (DDS); Jesse Stanley, American School for the Deaf (ASD); Lisa Flaherty-Vaughn, DeafBlind Support and Access Network (DBSAN); Barbara

Cloonan, Parent; Karen Olson, New England Consortium on DeafBlindness (NEC); Cheri Byrnes, DeafBlind Association of Connecticut; Bruce Stovall, Oak Hill School; Kathy Morgan Guardian; Sandra Miles, Department of Developmental Services – Southbury Training School, (DDS–STS); Voting Members Absent; Stephen Thal – BESB Board; Dwayne Strawder, Oak Hill School

#### Non-Voting Members Present

Carol Jenkins– ADS–BESB Director; Chris Lassen, ADS–BESB Adult Services; Marjorie Santos; Muriel Aparo, ADS–BRS, CT Tech Act; Alvin Chege, ADS–BRS; Jennifer White–Jackson; Ed Peltier, Communication Advocacy Network (CAN); Krystal Kelly; ADS – BESB.

#### Non-Voting Members Absent

Mary Johns, ADS–BESB Children’s Services; Heidi Henaire, ADS–BRS;

#### Others Present

Lisa Drew, ADS–BESB; Alan Gunzburg(Member of the Public)

#### Introduction of Morrison – Director of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Services

Morrison, the new Director of the Bureau of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing, introduced themselves, highlighting their focus on accessibility, systemic change, and improving interpreting services in Connecticut.

## Old Business

Approval of minutes from December 10, 2024.

MOTION: Chairwoman Tyler moved to approve the minutes from the December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 meeting, and Christine Teleford seconded the motion. The vote carried unanimously.

## New Business

Update on DeafBlind Technology Program (ATT)

Appendix 1

DBAC expenditures through February 2025

Appendix 2

Report on the development of new DBAC contracts

Carol Jenkins reported that four service providers—Elizabeth Hilton, UCP, Oak Hill School, and Communications Advocacy Network (CAN)—will continue under new contracts starting July 1, 2025.

## Review of the purpose of the BESB DBAC

Carol Jenkins (BESB Program Director) reviewed the purpose of the DeafBlind Advisory Committee (DBAC), emphasizing that it was established to advise BESB on the use of grant funds for community inclusion activities. She clarified that the committee is not an advocacy group but focuses solely on allocating funds to support services for DeafBlind individuals.

## Report from the Chair

Chairwoman Hana Tyler shared updates and insights with the committee. She introduced new assistive technologies, including Ray-Ban Meta AI Glasses, which provide real-time descriptions and translations, and BYOT outlet covers with built-in lighting to assist those with low vision in dark environments. Hana encouraged members to explore these innovations and emphasized the importance of technology in enhancing independence for DeafBlind individuals.

## Announcements

Jesse Stanley (ASD) announced that ASD will host a DeafBlind workshop on April 26, 2025, focusing on educating the general public about the DeafBlind experience. This workshop follows previous successful training sessions, including a two-day interpreter training event in February that attracted over 45 interpreters from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania,

and New Jersey. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing enthusiasm for continuing education on working with DeafBlind individuals. The upcoming workshop will include voice interpreters and aims to increase awareness and understanding of DeafBlind communication needs and accessibility.

Carol Jenkins (BESB Director) shared that Chris Lassen will retire on March 31, 2025, after 20 years of service at BESB, and expressed appreciation for his dedication and contributions to the DeafBlind community.

Adjournment:

Barbara Cloonan moved to adjourn the meeting and Sandy Miles seconded the motion.

The was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

### **Appendix 1**

#### **ACCESS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY**

#### **8TH YEAR- PERMANENT PROGRAM**

#### **QUARTER 2**

**Oct 1, 2024 – Dec 31, 2024**

**We have been allocated \$122,673 for the 2024-2025 year.**

**13 Consumers received services/equipment this quarter.**

<b><u>Quarter 1</u></b>		<b><u>YTD</u></b>
<b>\$3,466</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>\$8,606</b>
<b>\$7,578</b>	<b>Equipment/upgrades/inventory</b>	<b>\$25,093</b>
<b>\$1,143</b>	<b>Installation</b>	<b>\$3,843</b>
<b>\$7,060</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>\$10,985</b>
<b>\$3,774</b>	<b>Travel/Maintenance/Shipping</b>	<b>\$6,947</b>
<b>\$3,077</b>	<b>Administration cost</b>	<b>\$8,708</b>
<b>\$930</b>	<b>Outreach</b>	<b>\$2,570</b>

**\$27,028 total spent funds for Quarter 2.**

**Total spent this fiscal year is \$65,663**

**Balance left for 2024-2025 year is \$57,010**

**Outreach for Quarter 2**

**October 4<sup>th</sup> Attended the New Britain Disability Employment Event Held in New Britain City Hall.**

**November 9<sup>th</sup> Sponsorship for the Newington Expo at the Senior Center that was held in Newington**

**December 12<sup>th</sup> Presentation of the Access Through Technology program at the UR Community Center in Manchester**

**January 23, 2025 Sponsorship and Attendance at the UR Community Center in Manchester for the Eye Health Fair.**

## **Appendix 2**

<b>DEAFBLIND GRANT FINANCIAL REPORT</b>			
<b>Grant Period</b>	<b>7/1/2024-6/30/2025</b>		
<b>Grant Total</b>	<b>\$198,034</b>		
<b>Financial Summary Period</b>	<b>7/1/2024-6/30/2025</b>		
<b>SSP Providers</b>	<b>SFY 2025 Annual Allocation</b>	<b>Amount Paid YTD</b>	<b>Amount Remaining YTD</b>
<b>Communication Advocacy Network</b>	<b>\$141,051.00</b>	<b>\$76,181.27</b>	<b>\$64,869.73</b>
<b>CT Institute for the Blind</b>	<b>\$38,354.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$38,354.00</b>
<b>UCP of Eastern CT</b>	<b>\$9,999.00</b>	<b>\$3,810.24</b>	<b>\$6,188.76</b>
<b>Elizabeth Hilton, INC</b>	<b>\$9,999.00</b>	<b>\$1,597.07</b>	<b>\$8,401.93</b>
<b>DB Consumer Reimbursements</b>		<b>\$2,942.77</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Vendors</b>			
<b>American School for the Deaf</b>		<b>\$1,330.84</b>	

<b>Cosign CT LLC</b>		<b>\$1,485.00</b>	
<b>NWI Global</b>		<b>\$218.40</b>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$87,565.59</b>	
<b>Remaining Grant Balance</b>		<b>\$110,468.41</b>	

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