

MEETING MINUTES

NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

Opening:

The regular board meeting of NCAD was duly called to order at 9:12 a.m. on Saturday, August 22, 2026, at NC DSDHH, Greensboro Resource Center, located at 415 N. Edgeworth Street, Suite 175, Greensboro, NC, 27412.

Present were:

President – Mike Lupo
Vice President – Sion (Sam) Moss
Secretary – Jaime Marshall
Social Media Coordinator – Theresa Moss
Western Regional Representative – Laura Herman

Absent:

Treasurer – Martina Moore-Reid
Central Regional Representative – Tina E. Hanford
Eastern Regional Representative – Karin Desalu

Guests:

Kelly Faust of Morganton
Ally Ling of Morganton
Martha Johnson of Elon

With the approval of the board members present, President Lupo facilitated the meeting and Secretary Marshall recorded the minutes. Meeting Minutes from the last board meeting (5/30/2026) were reviewed.

Motion by: Representative Herman

Seconded by: President Lupo

Vote Count: Majority

President's Report:

President Lupo shared that he offers families in the Wilmington area the opportunity to bring their Deaf/HH children during the summer to continue developing their literacy skills.

Vice President's Report

Vice President Moss shared information about Google's display glasses, which feature real-time live captions and language translation directly in the user's field of view. When someone speaks,

the glasses use AI and smartphone processing to project translated or transcribed text as subtitles onto the lens.

Vice President Moss also shared information about the Google Pixel 11, which features a real-time American Sign Language (ASL)-to-text translation tool. Powered by Google DeepMind's SL2T (sign-language-to-text) model, the technology converts handshapes, facial expressions, and body movements into written English through Gboard and Live Transcribe. This technology could potentially save significant time when developing transcripts for ASL videos.

Secretary's Report

Secretary Marshall's presentation proposal, "Direct Instruction vs. Interpreted Instruction in American Sign Language," was accepted for the North Carolina 75th Conference on Exceptional Children. The conference, hosted by the NC DPI Office of Exceptional Children, will take place November 4–6, 2026, in Greensboro, North Carolina. The theme for this milestone year is *"Brilliant Past. Bold Future: 75 Years of Exceptional Children."*

Secretary Marshall shared an email dated July 3 from NC School for the Deaf's Language Equity Director Kimberly Lee, who invited NCAD to participate as a vendor during Registration Day on July 16 and requested confirmation by July 13. The ten-day notice did not provide sufficient time for NCAD to convene the Board and respond by the requested deadline.

The Board agreed to send an email response to Language Equity Director Kimberly Lee at the North Carolina School for the Deaf, explaining that the ten-day notice did not provide sufficient time for an NCAD Board member to attend the Registration Day event.

Western Regional Representative Report

After being appointed to serve on the UNC Blue Ridge Health Care Patient and Family Advisory Council, Representative Herman has been reviewing brochures and other published materials to ensure that the information is accessible to the Deaf community. Previously, the brochures did not clearly explain how Deaf patients could request an interpreter.

OLD BUSINESS

Agenda Topic: Organizational email addresses

President Lupo discussed creating email addresses using the NCAD organization's domain. The Board agreed to use Zoho's email service and establish three separate organizational email addresses:

- President@OurNCAD.org
- Conference@OurNCAD.org

- Info@OurNCAD.org
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Agenda Topic: NCAD e-Newsletters

Social Media Coordinator Theresa Moss asked Board members to volunteer to contribute articles for the upcoming quarterly issue. Representative Herman volunteered to write about her service on the UNC Blue Ridge Health Care Patient and Family Advisory Council.

NEW BUSINESS

Agenda Topic: Concerns Regarding Interpreter Use in Therapeutic Services

In its May 2026 e-newsletter, NCAD stated:

“NCAD further recommends the use of full-licensed and RID-certified interpreters for all services provided to Deaf and hard-of-hearing K–12 students, including mental health counseling, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and other related services.

Particular caution should be exercised when interpreting in mental health and therapeutic settings, as counseling sessions may involve highly sensitive information that could later become relevant in legal proceedings, including Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations or court cases. To protect the integrity of communication and minimize potential concerns regarding the accuracy, reliability, or admissibility of interpreted information, NCAD recommends avoiding the use of provisionally licensed interpreters in these settings and instead utilizing fully licensed, RID-certified interpreters.”

Community concerns have been raised regarding RHA Therapy Services using NCSD staff interpreters to facilitate communication with students during therapeutic services.

The staff interpreter at the residential school currently holds a provisional license. The Board discussed the importance of using full-licensed and RID-certified interpreters, particularly in therapeutic and mental health settings.

Regardless of whether the staff interpreter holds a full license, using a school-employed interpreter for a student’s therapeutic services presents a potential conflict of interest. RHA is strongly advised to provide a fully licensed, RID-certified interpreter who is independent of NCSD and not employed by the school, ensuring a neutral and confidential interpreting environment.

The Board agreed to draft a letter to Elizabeth Redefer, Director of Behavioral Health Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at RHA, clarifying why this practice may present a conflict of interest.

Agenda Topic: Concerns Regarding School-Employed Interpreters for IEP Meetings

In its May 2026 e-newsletter, NCAD stated:

“The North Carolina Association of the Deaf strongly advocates for the use of fully licensed and Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)-certified interpreters for all Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. This recommendation applies to both Deaf and hearing interpreters, as IEP meetings involve federally mandated documents and procedures governed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).”

The NCAD Board has received community concerns that public schools, including residential schools, continue to use school-employed staff interpreters for IEP meetings involving Deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Concerns have been raised regarding the neutrality and potential conflict of interest when an interpreter is employed by the same school responsible for providing services to the student.

NCAD emphasizes the importance of maintaining neutrality and recommends that schools utilize full-licensed, RID-certified interpreters who are independent of the school for IEP meetings. This approach helps ensure that Deaf and hard-of-hearing students and their families have access to qualified, impartial interpreting services during these legally significant meetings.

The Board agreed to draft a letter to Antwan Campbell, IDEA Consultant: Deaf/Hard of Hearing with the Sensory Support and Assistive Technology Office of Exceptional Children, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, to seek clarification regarding the definition of a **qualified interpreter** and to address concerns about potential conflicts of interest when school-employed interpreters are used during IEP meetings.

Agenda Topic: 2028 NCAD Conference – 120th anniversary!

Social Media Coordinator Theresa Moss discussed including parliamentary training as part of the next joint conference between the North Carolina Association of the Deaf (NCAD) and the North Carolina American Sign Language Association (NCASLA). The Board discussed offering the parliamentary training as a pre-conference event and reducing the training from four days to one day.

Although parliamentary training is available at no cost through the state, the Board agreed that it would be more beneficial to have the training conducted by a Deaf individual. Elizabeth Kraugh, a Deaf native signer from Montana and a certified parliamentarian, was suggested as a potential trainer.

Agenda Topic: Mission and Vision Statements

President Lupo recommended that the Board develop a **vision statement** to complement NCAD's existing mission statement. The Board discussed the distinction between a mission statement, which describes the organization's current purpose and work, and a vision statement, which articulates the organization's long-term goals and desired future.

The Board agreed that developing a clear vision statement would help provide strategic direction and strengthen NCAD's rationale when seeking donations and other financial support.

Agenda Topic: Mental Health Advisory Council

President Lupo received an email from Dara Baril, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program Lead with the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services (NCDHHS), requesting recommendations for individuals to serve on the Mental Health Advisory Council.

The following five individuals were recommended:

- Yvonnia Johnson
 - Elizabeth Moore
 - Kimberly Clarke
 - Dr. Robert Nutt
 - Ally Ling
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Agenda Topic: Session Law 2013-119, House Bill 317

After consulting with a legislative research department, the following findings were:

Section 2 of S.L. 2013-119 requires:

- **DHHS** and other State agencies to make “databases containing information on children under the age of 22 who are diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing available to” the DPI upon request.
- DPI to use information provided by DHHS and other State agencies to “develop and maintain a statewide data tracking system for the purpose of coordinating with other State agencies and organizations and ensuring literacy achievement for all such children who are deaf or hard of hearing.”

S.L. 2013-119 does not affirmatively require DHHS or other agencies to collect any additional information or create new databases containing data on children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

It merely requires DHHS or other agencies to provide any databases containing information on children who are deaf or hard of hearing to DPI upon request.

Additionally, S.L. 2013-119 does not specify what DPI must include in its statewide data tracking system.

team.

SECTION 2. The Department of Health and Human Services and other State agencies and organizations upon the request of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) shall make databases containing information on children under the age of 22 who are diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing available to DPI. DPI shall use this information to develop and maintain a statewide data tracking system for the purpose of coordinating with other State agencies and organizations and ensuring literacy achievement for all such children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

SECTION 3. The North Carolina Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCCDHH) has decided to

establish a third task force, led by Co-Chairs **Frank Griffin**, a Deaf native signer and Clinical Assistant Professor at UNC Greensboro, and **Christina Armfield**, a hearing Exceptional Children director who does not have ASL skills. The previous task force, titled **Common Grounds**, was initiated by former NC DSDHH Director Jan Withers but ultimately did not result in any substantive outcomes.

The NCAD Board agreed that President Lupo will contact NCCDHH Co-Chairs Hope Turpin and Michael Evola, as well as the new NC DSDHH Director, Tony Davis, to recommend establishing a **research team** rather than another task force consisting of approximately 15–18 members.

Agenda Topic: Senate Bill 257, N.C. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Education

The provision is in North Carolina Senate Bill 257 — the 2026 Current Operations Appropriations Act, now Session Law 2026-41. The timeline is:

- March 10, 2025: SB 257 was introduced.
- April 17, 2025: Senate passed the original budget bill.
- May 22, 2025: House passed it.
- The budget then stalled for more than a year.
- July 2, 2026: The House and Senate adopted the final conference report — House 88–21, Senate 35–10.
- July 7, 2026: Governor Josh Stein signed SB 257 into law. It became Session Law 2026-41.

Section 7.62(c) of Session Law 2026-41 specifically says that, effective December 1, 2026, the Early Learning Sensory Support Program (ELSSP) transfers from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to:

- North Carolina School for the Deaf (NCSD), and
- Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf (ENCSD).

Interesting - the law also says the transfer is a Type I transfer. This means the program, personnel, functions, etc., will automatically transfer with "the program" rather than simply creating a new program.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kyle Kiser, Interpreter Education Program Chair and American Sign Language Instructor at Central Piedmont Community College, requested that an NCAD representative visit the program to speak with students about NCAD's mission and work. The Board agreed to arrange for Central Region Representative Hanford to attend and represent NCAD.

Martha Johnson of Elon, at the request of former NCAD President James Wilson, is seeking NCAD's approval and support to serve as President of the Tillinghast Place Apartments Board. The NCAD Board supports her request.

Upcoming Announcements

2026 Board Meeting: November 7, 2026 (location to be announced)

Meeting Adjourned: 12:45 PM