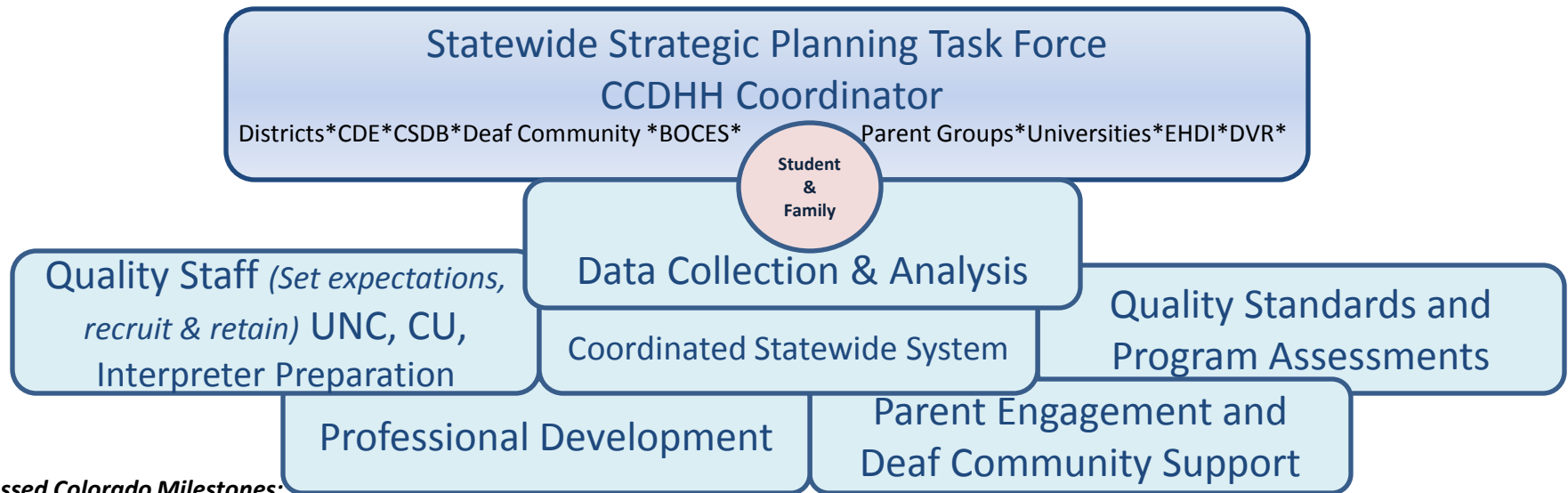


# Support Strategic Planning & Collaboration on Behalf of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Children & Their Families



## **Passed Colorado Milestones:**

1996: Passed Deaf Child's Bill of Rights; 1996: Hands & Voices begins  
 1997: Passed Minimum standards for Educational Interpreters (**now outdated**)  
 2002, 2004 Creation of *Blueprint for Closing the Gap* and the *CDE CO Quality Standards (now outdated)*,  
 2004 ASL as a Foreign Language Credit in High School,  
 2007: Hearing Aid Insurance Mandate, 2008 Last CO Deaf Symposium.

## **Timeline of Deaf Education Improvement Events:**

**November 2012:** Inspiring Change Grant accepted: **Feb & April 2013** Presentations from **Iowa, Washington, and Minnesota's** exemplary programs to jumpstart Colorado's discussion of system improvements after 7 years without action (aging list of best practices, stalled regional programs, foundering academic outcomes.)

**April 2013:** 56 stakeholders identified what they found useful in the plans of the other states and prioritized our own list.

- Need for full access to **data** that accurately depicts the students we serve, most of whom are educated in their neighborhood schools.
- Need for a **collaborative team/network to design a statewide strategic plan** to improve student outcomes (not just respond to requests).
- Increase Deaf involvement at all levels; focus on the *Cultural Connection*

The Superintendent of CSDB announced at the closing session: would work with H&V, CCDHH and CDE on strategic plan before all stakeholders.

## **No action on that pledge to date.**

CCDHH multi-org grant: *H&V/CAD/RMDS* grant proposal for "Implementing Inspired Change Task Force:"to revise 2002 Blueprint. Active participation by CSDB with 2 or more reps at most meetings. CDE was unable to attend two meetings. **Consensus reached on Blueprint items 2-6** Jan-April; May/June focused on remaining two recommendations. Added two meetings. Consensus reached October 2015 except for **CDE limited approval and CSDB no approval, finally given Jan-Feb 2015**. Final report to CCDHH June 2015. Recommendation for Coordinator of Task Force: CCDHH Final Report Fall 2015. Jan 5, 2016: JBC denies CCDHH request without input from grassroots community. Nov-Dec 2016: Grassroots second attempt with JBC.

## JBC Hearing

### Grassroots Community Effort to Improve Deaf Education: Inspiring Change

December 15, 2016

Presenting:

**Sara Kennedy**, Parent of high school student who is Deaf, Director of Colorado Hands & Voices, a nonprofit supporting families raising children with hearing loss, [Sara@cohandsandvoices.org](mailto:Sara@cohandsandvoices.org), Colorado Springs

**Paul Simmons**, ADA Information Specialist, Rocky Mountain ADA Center, and President of the Colorado Association of the Deaf (CAD), now known as the Veditz Policy Institute, [psimmonsA@mtc-inc.com](mailto:psimmonsA@mtc-inc.com), Colorado Springs. Mr. Simmons is also representing Jennifer Pfau, parent of two Deaf young adults, and past President of CAD (Arvada).

**Janet DesGeorges**, parent of a young adult who is Deaf, and Executive Director of Hands & Voices, past Director, Colorado Hands & Voices, Boulder. [janet@handsandvoices.org](mailto:janet@handsandvoices.org)

#### 1. Introduction: (Sara Kennedy, CO Hands &Voices)

- Thank you to the JBC for inviting us to share our concerns.
- Daughter: was late identified with hearing loss, but doing great today because of the strong collaboration and emphasis on professional development in her early years. At Hands & Voices, we advocate for other parents and children: Pueblo story of preschooler who has no access to a strong sign language model or a team who understands implants, Cherry Creek teen who has a significant hearing loss and is using verbal communication without the supports he needs, most of which do not cost anything to provide. (lack of access to prepared professionals, sign language or to visual aids)
- Our group of parents and deaf/hard of hearing adults and concerned professionals has been working **since 2012** to improve outcomes in Deaf Education. (see timeline)
- We have written two grants to bring stakeholders together. One brought in presenters from three states and focused a discussion about our current needs (2013) called *Inspiring Change*. The second was focused on updating the past Blueprint for Closing the Gap and that was completed in June 2015, called the Seven Agreements for short (see link)
- **What is the issue? Student Achievement for this Low-Incidence group**  
Last data available: 2012 (shared with the Inspiring Change conferences in Feb 2012 by CDE in front of 86 stakeholders)  
out of 821 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through 10<sup>th</sup> grade students, only **29%** were proficient or advanced on the state assessment in reading. **40% were rated unsatisfactory.**  
Those numbers do not include any who took the Alternative Assessment, which by its very nature is intended for students with extremely low language. Those numbers were not available to us.

Yet, **out of 296 children in the birth to three program (2015 data)** served locally statewide, the majority reach a level commensurate with their hearing peers or with their cognitive ability on standardized measures. CO is recognized as a leader in birth to three supports for deaf and hard of hearing children.

*We want to know what happens to those children by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. If adequately supported, far more should be proficient and advanced.*

- At the end of *Inspiring Change*, agencies promised to work with us voluntarily on a statewide strategic plan to address gaps. *Nothing happened*. Then we had the Seven Agreements grant in 2014-15 (CAD, H&V, Rocky Mountain Deaf School) with good participation from all key stakeholders. All agreed that there were gaps in a comprehensive state plan and coordinated system, in quality standards and program assessment, availability of meaningful data given the amount of funds that the state and local districts expend on special education, targeted professional development and recruitment/retention, family engagement and deaf/hard of hearing mentors. *Nothing happened*.

*We need your help to bring about the reasonable request of the CCDHH for:*

- Creation of a statewide deaf education steering committee
- Create a position under the CCDHH for a neutral, impartial facilitator
- Including a statewide policy summit/education offering each year to showcase barriers and victories
- We vehemently agree with those recommendations in full.

## **2. Paul Simmons: Veditz Policy Institute (VPI)**

- The Deaf community continue to witness the quality of education deteriorating due to inconsistent models and ineffective programs both for deaf students and for hard of hearing students, which differs greatly.
- Statistics still show that Deaf students graduate reading below grade level (some statistics say 4<sup>th</sup> grade) on average. We know that students can graduate reading at grade level with effective supports.
- Silo-syndrome continues to weaken Deaf education in CO.
- *Sharing a fellow board member's story:* Lack of adequate instruction in ASL for her age-appropriate level son in the state: despite regular advocacy in school districts and at the state school for the Deaf, she finally sent him out of state to a deaf school in California so he could be educated in a language rich environment.

### **VPI supports the CCDHH proposal for**

- Creation of a statewide deaf education steering committee
- Create a position under the CCDHH for a neutral, impartial facilitator
- Including a statewide policy summit/education offering each year to showcase barriers and victories

We need your help to make this happen. Shared a quote from George Veditz: *“Every man is the architect of his own fortunes and every race the builder of its own future; let us plan our structure so and build it on such lines that the deaf of future ages will arise and call us blessed.”* –Veditz to Olof Hanson (1910).

### 3. Janet DesGeorges, Hands & Voices (HQ)

- Here as a parent and as a past director of Colorado Hands & Voices
- Raised a daughter who is deaf during a time of strong collaboration, interagency agreements, the Symposium, strong support of parent organizations,
- Example to illustrate some of the challenges of deaf education as seen by hearing people: Student in northern Colorado who couldn't get accommodation of captioning for in-class videos/films/YouTube. “It's okay. I understand it is difficult. But just so everyone has equal access, let's turn off the volume whenever a non-captioned film is shown. “
- The complexities of educating deaf education require that many have a seat at the table: deaf/hard of hearing professionals, parents, deaf educators, audiologists, district personnel. We want to see a statewide vision for deaf education. Other states like Minnesota and Washington have strong models. Colorado can, too.

We fully support the

- Creation of a statewide deaf education steering committee
- Create a position for a neutral, impartial facilitator for this task force under the CCDHH
- Including a statewide policy summit/education offering each year to showcase barriers and victories

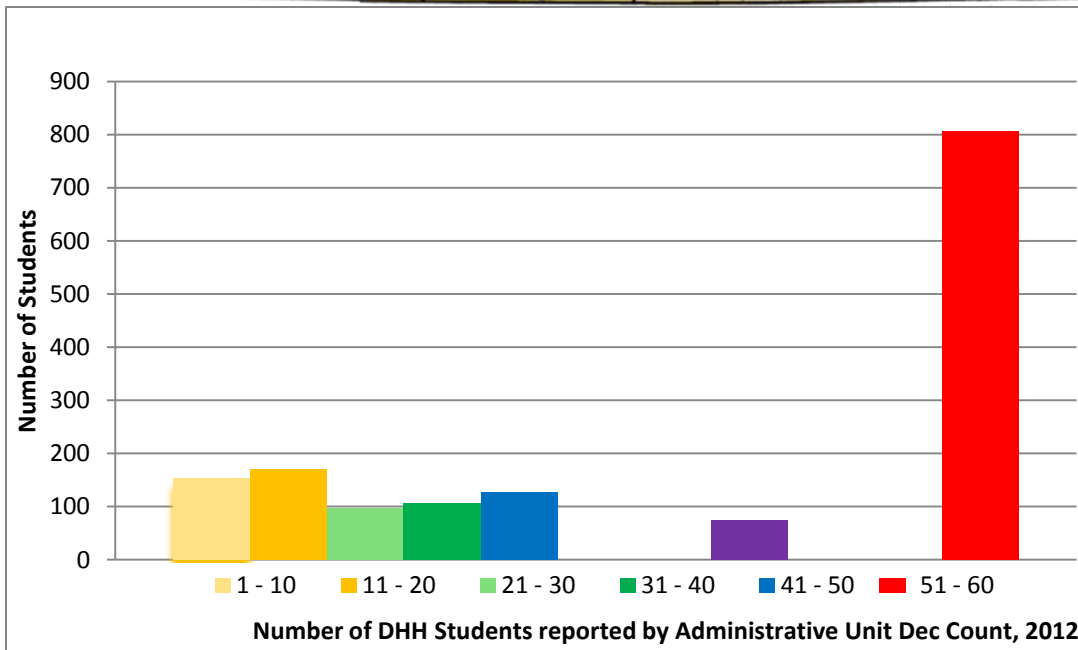
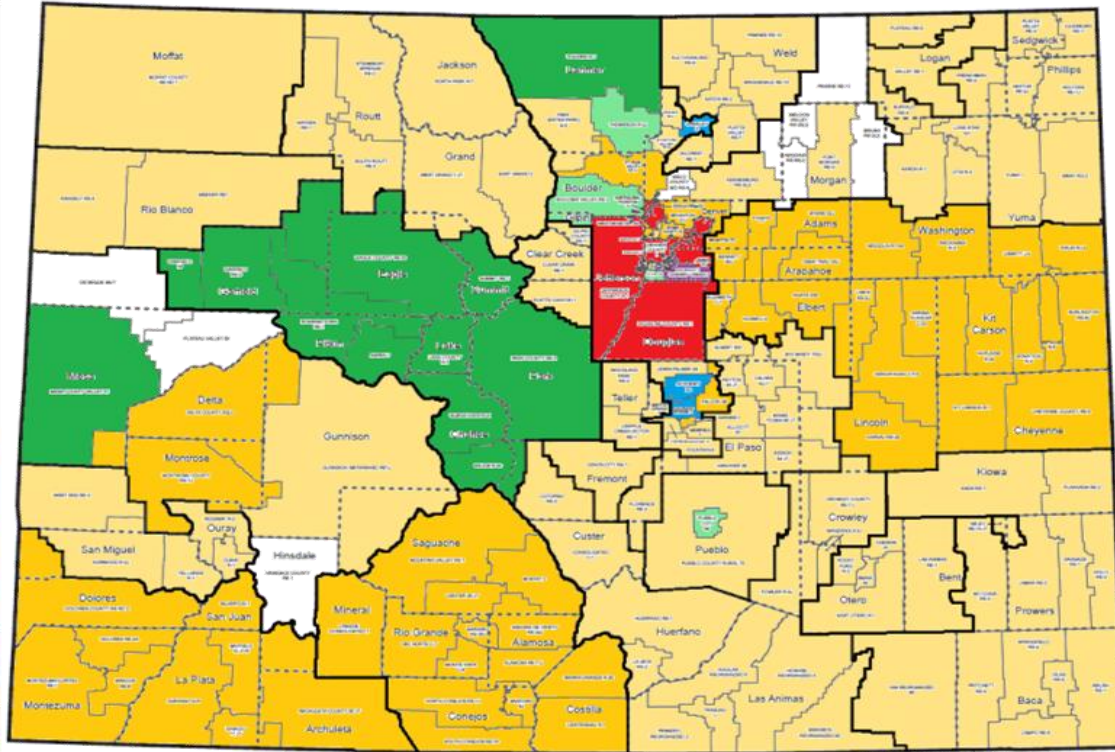
### References and other facts:

CDE has been attempting to raise the standards of educational interpreters for the last four years on the advice of the Educational Interpreting Advisory Committee. The licensure change was stalled at the State School Board last year, asking us to work with special interest groups (CO Association of School Boards, CASE, CEA, CO BOCES, CO Rural Schools Alliance, Consortium of Special Ed Directors.) Very little progress has been made, and meanwhile, students work with interpreters who aren't meeting an acceptable standard.

The Consultant for CDE Deaf/Hard of hearing programs is not a full time position. Hours have been given to general education monitoring as well as deaf education.

**CSAP data 2012 from the minutes of Inspiring Change**

<http://www.cohandsandvoices.org/newsite/seven-agreements-2015/>



Reported by CDE at Inspiring Change Feb 2013

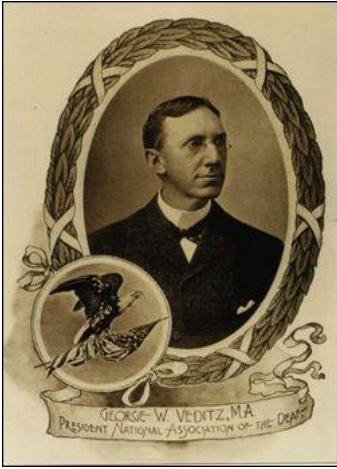
## Quote by George W. Veditz

“Every man is the architect of his own fortunes and every race the builder of its own future; let us plan our structure so and build it on such lines that the deaf of future ages will arise and call us blessed.”

–Veditz to Olof Hanson (1910).

# Brief Biographical Backgrounds

## George W. Veditz (1861-1937)



Founder and President of the Colorado Association of the Deaf (33 years from 1904 to 1937) and the 7<sup>th</sup> President of the National Association of the Deaf (1904 to 1910). Primarily responsible for the creation of the Motion Picture film collection at the US Library of Congress.

## Olof Hanson (1862-1933)



A nationally known architect who designed the United States Court House in Juneau, Alaska among several other prominent buildings in Minnesota and Washington DC. Hanson was the 8<sup>th</sup> President of the National Association of the Deaf (1910 to 1913).



# Community Support for a Statewide Strategic Plan

**THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS AGREE TO SUPPORT THE VISION OF THIS DOCUMENT AND LOOK FORWARD TO EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT THESE AGREEMENTS FOR OUR STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF IN COLORADO.**

- Alisha Pattavina, Parent of a deaf child
- Amber Duffy, Parent of two deaf children
- Amy Novotny, Deaf representative
- Angel Trevino, Teacher of the Deaf
- Ann Gavin, Parent of deaf children
- Belinda Price, Professional
- Barbara Coffan, Interpreter
- Bethany Ann Smart-Bolling, Professional
- Brenda Elliott, Parent of deaf children
- Carmela Roybal, Deaf professional
- Cathy Bowles, Professional
- Cheryl Johnson, Professional, former CDE Consultant, Education Audiologist
- Chris Dietrich, Parent of deaf children
- Christie Yoshinaga-Itano, Professional, Professor and Researcher, CU Boulder
- Christopher Martinez, parent of a deaf student
- Chuck Walker, Parents of a deaf student, western slope
- Cindy Woehle, Teacher of the Deaf
- Courtney Williams, Professional
- Cruz Martinez, relative of a deaf child
- Cynthia Moore, Parent of a deaf child
- Cynthia Stephens, Professional
- Danelle Jansen, Professional
- Denisse Perez, Parent of a deaf student
- Diana Martinez, Parent of a deaf child
- Donna Massine, Teacher of the Deaf, Educational Audiologist
- Elizabeth Marglin, Parent of a deaf child
- Emily Gvestang, Parent
- Frank Johns, Parents of a deaf student
- Gina Straight, Parent of a deaf child
- Hesmelda Amador, Parent of a deaf child
- Janet DesGeorges, parent of a deaf adult
- Jennifer Pfau, Deaf representative, parent of a deaf child
- Jennifer Vargas, Relative of a deaf child
- Jeremy Duffy, Parent of two deaf children
- Jerilyn Hutchins, Professional
- Jim Collins, Relatives of a deaf child
- Jodi Dietrich, Parent of deaf children
- Karen Carpenter, Professional, audiologist
- Kat Olson, Parent of a deaf child
- Kathryn Johnson, Teacher of the Deaf
- Katrina Kuzmich, Parent of a deaf child
- Leigh Newton-Hardin, Parent of a deaf child
- Libby Robinson, Parent of a deaf child
- Liesel Lancaster Thomas, Parent of deaf children
- Lindsey Antle, Professional
- Lonnie Burkholder, Parent of a deaf student
- Lynne Canales, Professional
- Mah-rya Proper, Professional and parent
- Maria Navaratne, Parent of a deaf student
- Maria Rodriguez, Parent of a deaf student
- Marion Collins, Professional
- Marissa Rivera, Child of Deaf parents
- Martha Fydrich, Parent of a deaf student
- Megan Murillo, Parent of a deaf child
- Michael A. Thomas, Parent of deaf children, professional
- Mindy Mitchell, Parent of a deaf child
- Molly McDonald, Deaf professional
- Nicki Schroeder, Parent of a deaf child
- Paul Simmons, Deaf Representative, and Deaf Professional
- Pamela Sewell, Parent of a deaf child
- Peggy Hecker, Parent of a deaf child
- Pippi Howard, Parent of deaf children
- Rebecca Novinger, Professional and Deaf adult
- Robin Getz, Deaf professional
- Sandra Gabbard, Professional
- Sara Kennedy, Parent of a deaf child
- Sarah Wedekin, Professional
- Shana Bokelman, Professional, and deaf adult
- Shelley Hanson, Parent of a deaf child
- Stacy Claycomb, Audiologist
- Stephanie Olson, Deaf professional
- Steve Hardin, Parent of a deaf child
- Susan Elliott, Teacher of the Deaf, deaf representative
- Susie Broderick, Professional
- Susie Martinez, Relatives of a deaf child
- Tammy Johns, Parent of a deaf child
- Tracy McGurran, Parent of a deaf child
- Trinity Martinez, Relatives of a deaf child
- Valerie Walker, Parent of a deaf child
- Vickie Thomson, Professional
- Victoria Douglas, Parent of a deaf child

## Organizations

- Parent 2 Parent
- Peak Parent
- CDE (partial)
- University of Northern Colorado (partial)
- University of Colorado –Boulder, (Christie Yoshinaga-Itano, Ph.D. )
- Colorado Association of the Deaf
- Colorado Cued Speech Association
- Veditz Policy Institute
- Commission for Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of hearing Minnesotans
- Vickie Thomson, CO Newborn Hearing Program, University of CO Denver

## Contacts from Larger Core Committee:

- Janet DesGeorges, Hands & Voices, 303-492-6283
- Jennifer Pfau, Veditz Policy Institute, 510-366-6216 (text), [jennpfau7@gmail.com](mailto:jennpfau7@gmail.com)
- Paul Simmons, CO Association of the Deaf, 410-660-0285 (text), [psimmons@mtc-inc.com](mailto:psimmons@mtc-inc.com)
- Sara Kennedy, CO Hands & Voices, 719-650-3159 - [Sara@cohandsandvoices.org](mailto:Sara@cohandsandvoices.org)