



Board Meeting
July 16, 2026
Via Zoom

In Attendance

Board Members

Jacob Leffler, Chair and MDAD Representative
Leslie Puzio, Vice Chair and Community Member
Susan Beaver, Community Member
Nancy Gaskins, Community Member
Jim Skjeveland, PCRID Representative
Vacant, DeafBlind Representative

Absent: Juliana Apfel, Community Member

Governor's Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GODHH)

Usherla DeBerry, Director
Tanea Brown, Outreach Manager

Others

Ethan Sonnenstrahl, Assistant Attorney General
Anna Rose and Gavin Gobble Baker, Interpreters
Community members (attendees; viewers only)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jacob Leffler at 8:02 p.m.

Chair Leffler welcomed all board members, and each board member introduced themselves with their name and visual descriptions. Chair Leffler also discussed the meeting protocols.

Board Member Nancy Gaskin moved to approve the agenda as read. Board Member Susan Beaver seconded. CARRIED

Previous Minutes

Chair Leffler asked if the board had reviewed the previous minutes and if there was anything needing to be added or changed. Vice Chair Puzio stated the two interpreters listed were not the ones that provided services and asked that they be corrected. The two names were Anna Hayes and Christina Whitehouse-Suggs.

Vice Chair Leslie Puzio moved to approve the February 19, 2026, minutes as edited. Board Member Beaver seconded. CARRIED

GODHH Updates

Outreach Manager Tanea Brown provided updates on GODHH's activities. She thanked the questions from the Board. GODHH continues to offer study groups and expanded efforts by providing in person mentorship opportunities throughout the State of Maryland. The focus is to support the interpreters of color and Deaf interpreters. Regarding the OneStop Portal, the timeline has been shared with the Chair. The timeline is tentative and is contingent on the Board's decision regarding the finalization of regulations.

The Board inquired about the location of the study groups. Outreach Manager Tanea Brown explained that Laurel is a location that people are attending. She also added that they offer virtual study groups. Vice Chair Puzio reiterated that the Board reiterated that the in-person study groups were to be held across the State of Maryland. The Board asked that GODHH seeks other locations such as Eastern Shore and Western Maryland and partner with colleges and universities. Vice Chair Puzio also suggested trying to host at non-religious locations to be mindful of religious views of our community members. Outreach Manager Brown stated that GODHH would welcome other locations and if some are found to let them know. Outreach Manager Brown also indicated that they do the study groups on zoom.

Board Updates

Chair Leffler reported on behalf of the Board. The Chair provided an update on the legislation that has been signed by the Governor. It will be effective on October 1, 2026.

The regulations have to be finalized and posted by July 1, 2027, and the license will begin on January 1, 2028, for the general settings. For the educational setting, it will begin on July 1, 2028. The regulations for the speciality settings have to be consulted with the stakeholders and have a report to the Governor and the General Assembly 60 days before the Board promulgates the specialty regulations.

The Board has expanded from 7 members to 11 members. Out of 11, two are ex-officio and are the Department of Disabilities and the Department of Labor. The other two additional members will be affiliated with an entity that operates and implements interpreting services in an educational, legal, or medical settings.

Workgroup/Taskforce Reports

Board Member Sue Beaver gave a report on the Educational Workgroup. The letter was sent to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), Boystown, and the National Association of Interpreters in Education (NAIE) regarding educational interpreters and questions that were requested in the legislation.

RID responded and said that they do not track K-12 interpreters' certification and do not have any information. NAIE responded and said that they do not have the Board's approval to release the information and they are short staffed at this time. We have not received any information from Boystown at this time.

Board Member Jim Skjeveland gave a report on the Alternative Pathways Taskforce. They have met several times. The taskforce researched what other states are doing regarding licensing regulations and

alternative pathways. The taskforce is looking into two areas – Ethics/Knowledge/Cultural Competency and Performance. There is a possibility of requiring the CASLI knowledge & ethics exam for the Ethics/Knowledge/Cultural Competency portion. The taskforce has discussed several ideas regarding the performance such as the potential for a live panel, a video submission, letters of recommendations, and more. Board Member Skjeveland asked the Board for some ideas/suggestions so he can pass it on to the Taskforce for further discussion.

The Board was concerned about the possibility of bias with the panel and wants to avoid that. The Board also suggested scenarios, interviews, and videos.

Chair Leffler thanked the Taskforce for their work and supporting the Board in this kind of work. Chair Leffler also emphasized that this is a priority to the Board and wants to see this a successful one. Chair Leffler looks forward to the result.

Chair Leffler thanked the Board, GODHH, AAG, and interpreters for their work and thanked the participants for watching the Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM.