



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



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GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

July 30, 2007

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Presentation on the Michigan School for the Deaf and the Non-Discrimination Policy for the Michigan School for the Deaf

The Michigan School for the Deaf (MSD) is established in state statute as a public school in the State of Michigan (Public Act 263 of 1937 §339.1 and Executive Order 1996-12) with oversight assigned to the Michigan Department of Education. The State Board of Education is the Board of Education for MSD.

This update (Exhibit A) provides a look at the past year at MSD as well as forecasts some of the continuing improvements for the school. Status of the Language Planning Referent Group recommendations and the development of an English Literacy-American Sign Language bilingual approach are reviewed as well. Data regarding students at the school and dormitories, as well as graduation and post-secondary education are included.

Exhibit B is a non-discrimination policy (policy) drafted as a component of a compliance plan (plan) resulting from a Civil Rights review (review). The review was conducted by the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG), Office of Career and Technical Education during 2005-06. One remaining requirement of the plan is approval by the State Board of Education of the policy for the MSD. The plan requires documentation of Board approval of the policy.

The policy, as presented, meets the requirements cited in the plan and covers Title VI (IDEA), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Services Act), and the Age Discrimination Act. The notice of the policy must be disseminated on a continuing basis and in documents such as student and parent handbooks, and other documents that reach the general public such as newsletters and bulletins.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the non-discrimination policy for the Michigan School for the Deaf as attached in Exhibit B of the Superintendent's memorandum dated July 30, 2007.

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**Update: Michigan School for the Deaf
August 2007**

BACKGROUND

For most of its 152 year history, the Michigan School for the Deaf (MSD) had its own Superintendent. That era ended in the 1990's when a State Office Manager was assigned to oversee the school and the Flint campus. In 2002 the Michigan Department of Education (Department) eliminated this position; oversight for the school and campus was assigned to the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS). At that time the school's enrollment had dropped to below 100 students. Under the leadership of the Deputy Director of the OSE/EIS, the MSD was supported and guided to re-vamp and re-tool. With this momentum, placement of students at MSD began to increase as the program and services were able to provide unique supports for some deaf and hard-of-hearing students that local districts were unable to provide. As student placement at MSD continued to increase, a full-time administrator was sought. The position was filled in August 2006.

Beginning in the spring of 2006, a Language Planning Referent Group was convened consisting of a wide variety of stakeholders from the deaf and hearing communities. Dr. Stephen Nover (CAEBER Institute) and Dr. Jay Innes (Gallaudet University) assisted the MSD and the Department to build a conceptual framework for language planning for the school. Principles around student outcomes in literacy, in both English and American Sign Language, were articulated. These principles were integrated into a strategic plan for the school.

OVERVIEW

It has been a productive school year for all of us at MSD and we are eager for the new school year. We will have Registration on August 20-21, 2007, Early Sports Week beginning August 20, and teachers and staff will report back to work on August 27th.

In an attempt to better balance and enhance instructional leadership across the whole school, the job descriptions of our instructional leaders (Principal and Assistant Principal) will be restructured. We will meet twice a month to discuss various curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development issues. This should make for greater improvement throughout MSD as we strive to increase the quality of student learning and education outcomes.

We will work with two organizations (The Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf and the North Central Association) to review our school for accreditation. We want to go through a self-review process so that we can analyze how we are doing with our student outcomes. This important accreditation effort will involve the whole school and be tied to our school's five year strategic plan. This is another example of our commitment to accountability and excellence as a school and outreach agency.

Class of 2007

Five MSD seniors have been accepted to Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. Three MSD seniors have been accepted to NTID (National Technical Institute for the Deaf) in Rochester, NY.

One MSD senior has been accepted to Mott Community College in Flint, MI.

Two others are awaiting acceptance to college.

Four students will return for further education in the fall.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT

Transition to Bilingual Program

We have started the transition to ASL/English Literacy Bilingual Education at the Michigan School for the Deaf. In response to federal mandates, especially those tied to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), we took the challenges to seek solutions to a major literacy dilemma: the average reading achievement of students who are deaf and hard of hearing remains well below that of their age-matched hearing peers. Improved pedagogy and the implementation of effective curriculum can fuel a cycle of high expectations. With NCLB requiring all students to achieve performance at grade level by the end of 2013-2014 school year, the need for instructional reform is evident.

Historically, academic paradigms have implied that deafness impedes literacy, intensely focusing on student deficiencies. However, the cause of poor outcomes for students may stem from instructional design, not insufficient student ability. By taking a fundamentally different approach to the literacy dilemma, current research provided by the Center for ASL/English Bilingual Education and Research (CAEBER) has focused on improving inadequate methods by capitalizing on each child's full linguistic repertoire. This alternative paradigm considers linguistic, cultural, and educational implications more than the actual sensory disability. In the last decade, supporters of this model have promoted American Sign Language (ASL)/English bilingual education to support the academic success of deaf and hard of hearing children.

According to the sources provided by CAEBER, nine schools had adopted bilingual methods in 1995 and by 2003 the number increased to 19. The CAEBER has trained 274 mentors since its inception in 1995. These mentors, in turn, have trained in-service teachers at over 20 respective school sites in the country. Fortunately, with the support of the Department, especially in time of our out-of-state travel restrictions, we have sent two teachers (mentors) to the CAEBER training sessions at Gallaudet University. Three administrators from Michigan School for the Deaf (MSD) attended the Gallaudet Leadership Institute. The goal is to build consensus on ASL/English Bilingual Education principles to frame future directions, policy, and practices at MSD. Simultaneously, eight university programs – California State University (Northridge), Gallaudet University, Lamar University, McDaniel College, Western Oregon University, the University of Hawaii, the University of Pittsburgh, and the University of Tulsa – have used the CAEBER curriculum in the training of pre-service teachers. Fortunately, Dr. Harold Johnson, and Dr. Claudia Pagliaro, professors in the Teacher Training Program at Michigan State University (MSU) are working closely with us to help us with the development of bilingual education program at MSD. We have a strong collaborative effort

between Michigan State University and MSD to prepare pre-service teachers and to provide professional development for in-service teachers with the goal of bettering the education that is provided to deaf and hard of hearing students.

Language Planning Referent Group

The Language Planning Referent Group met four times between April – September 2006. The purpose of this group was to assist in developing and implementing strategies for the ASL/English Literacy and bilingual education principles at MSD. When the program is fully implemented, we will share our language planning development at the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE) - Michigan Superintendents of Public School Programs for Hearing Impaired (MSPSPHI) conferences and establish networking between MSD and local school districts. We will invite Special Education Directors and Supervisors involved with deafness for a tour at MSD and educate them about bilingualism. We will also share information on language planning with parents and guardians. We will attend parent and community meetings and share parent friendly materials with them. We will continue relationships with Dr. Stephen Nover and Dr. Jay Innes (CAEBER and the Leadership Institute at Gallaudet University) for continual guidance in the successful implementation of the ASL/English literacy program.

TRANSITION SERVICES, RELEVANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS

MSD has attended the Transition Outcome Project (TOPs) meetings, sponsored by the Department's Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services since 2003. The intent of TOPs is to train and provide technical assistance in the implementation of secondary transition planning and services.

Since the re-authorization of IDEA in 2004, with the added need for assessments and formal transition planning inventories, the Summary of Performance requirement upon exit from public education, and with the high school redesign requiring Education Development Plans (EDPs) MSD is focusing on long-range planning for each student to improve post-school outcomes.

Highlights of the growth of transition programming include, but are not limited to a variety of activities. For example, EDPs and Transition planning inventories have been implemented this year beginning with 7th graders. Job shadowing experience off campus has been implemented. Extension of work experience opportunities on campus has been implemented. Enhancing collaboration with community partners such as Deaf/Blind (DB) Central, Career Alliance Customized Employment programming (job development meetings), and Genesee Intermediate School District has occurred. Stronger teaming with Genesee Area Skill Center (GASC) for class scheduling with defined career choices through the Education Development Plan (EDP) and career planning, has considerably reduced the number of students dropping out of Career and Technical Education. Students with multiple disabilities are beginning transition planning through the Person Centered Plan model with guidance and direction from DB Central. School counselor activity for college preparation and scholarship awareness (with help from key staff as well) through group meetings with seniors, and phone contacts with parents, have been undertaken with college planning becoming more defined through this process.

Future Plans

We are working on:

- Curriculum scheduling to allow more individualized community experiences
- Transition awareness and post-secondary planning for parents
- Teacher training on implementing transition planning in the IEP
- Post-secondary focused program for 18 – 26 year olds that fully focuses on movement from school to adult life vs. more classroom time.

NEW PROGRAMS

The SXI Program at MSD is growing. We have 13 multiply impaired students in our program and are currently offering a summer enrichment program for them. The students' local school districts are providing funding support and transportation

The New Beginning Center is a program for behaviorally challenged students. We currently have three students in our program. We have established a comprehensive treatment and educational services model for deaf children and adolescents who are challenged by severe social and emotional difficulties resulting from childhood trauma, mental illness, and/or organic dysfunction. Students learn new behaviors, build self-esteem, and maximize individual potential in a structured, supportive, and non-punitive environment. We collaborate with mental health agencies to maximize mental health support for our students. We have developed a placement flowchart to ensure that appropriate students are placed in this program. We are following the new policy called "Supporting Student Behavior: Standards for the Emergency Use of Seclusion and Restraint" adopted by the State Board of Education on December 12, 2006.

Summer Programs at MSD

MSD invited ISD Directors to our campus on March 6, 2007 to discuss our summer enrichment program for students with multiple disabilities. We received financial support for seven students to attend our five-week summer enrichment program. MSD also had a two-week summer enrichment program for our general deaf population. A Family Learning Vacation will be provided to parents of deaf children during the weekend of September 21 – 23, 2007.

STUDENT and STAFF ENHANCEMENT

Student Enhancement

We had wonderful Central State Schools for the Deaf (CSSD) basketball and cheerleading tournaments at MSD from January 25 – 27. Seven Schools for the Deaf competed. It was our 53rd Annual CSSD Tournament. We were proud and thrilled to host these competitions this year.

Several of our students went to the Academic Bowl Competition at the Texas School for the Deaf and we placed fourth nationwide.

Training for Staff

We have provided Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI), electronic IEPs (EZ IEP), Positive Behavior Support (PBS), Blood borne Pathogen and Anti-Bullying training for our staff.

Curriculum department meetings were held regularly to insure our students have access to general curriculum.

Administrative Learning

The State Administrative Manager and the Principal attended the Hearing Impaired (HI) Academy on November 3rd at the Sheraton in Lansing. We gave a presentation on the updates at MSD, especially on the transition to bilingual program. We were also at the MSPSPHI on February 20th at Heartwood School (Ingham ISD).

The State Administrative Manager attended the Midwest Superintendent's and Outreach Directors Conference from November 1st - 3rd, 2006; Council for Education Administrators of School for the Deaf (CEASD) on May 2nd - 3rd, 2007; presented at the Comprehensive Statewide Action Planning Workshop and Issues Exploration Workshop.

The Principal and several teachers attended the Michigan Association of Computer Users in Learning (MACUL) conference to update us on technology (MSD had a booth at the conference).

Weekly Leadership Team Meetings

Every Wednesday, we have leadership team meetings to keep all MSD's leaders informed regarding what is happening on the campus. We develop weekly agendas and each leader on the team follows through with assignments to keep the school moving ahead.

Relationships with Higher Education

We have met twice with professors from MSU and we will continue to cultivate the relationship. We are assisting MSU in the development of their Social Work Program. We hope to get interns from MSU as well as the National Technical Institute for the Deaf and Gallaudet University.

PARENT SUPPORT

Parent Teacher Conferences

We have two conferences - one in the fall and one in the spring. We are planning to have a "college fair" with booths so parents can collect information about programs at various universities serving the deaf and hard of hearing population.

Publications/Information

We have printed our Annual Report, Yearbook, Student Handbook, and brochures for Sports Banquets, Graduation, Student Honor Assemblies, and Parent Connections which is sent out to parents bi-weekly.

Our family information office continues to provide accessibility to information, resources, and support for families whose children are educated at MSD and for

those who are interested in learning more about education for deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

ADDITIONAL UPDATES

Technology and Communications Update

Sorenson & Communication Access Center Video Phones (VPs) were installed on our MSD campus. We have spent countless hours in discussing our emergency communication systems needs and looking at what is available in the market. We have ordered a visual alert system through Message Net System. The display on the boards will be very visual and accessible to our students and staff. It will serve as a schoolwide public announcement system which can be used for daily, routine announcements as well as to communicate immediate instructions in the event of emergencies.

It is hopeful that this exciting system will be placed by the time school restarts in the 2007-2008 school year. There will be regular drills using this new system to optimize campus responsiveness to various emergencies or crisis. This state of the art system will be expandable and geared to meet the needs of our students, staff, and visitors for years to come.

Our computer system will be upgraded using Michigan I, in conjunction with the Michigan Department of Information Technology. We have requested to purchase Skyward. Skyward is a data base program that we will use to compile and report student information/records.

Fence Project

We have secured approval from the Department and from the City of Flint to install a fence around our campus for the safety of our students. We are waiting for the City Council of Flint to adopt the approval. Once it is received, we will work through the Homeland Security agency to secure funds to build a fence.

Civil Rights Review

We have submitted evidence of compliance for the Civil Rights Compliance Review of the MSD and Flint Campus to the Office of Career and Technical Education in the Department of Labor and Economic Growth. The evidence not completed: 1) minutes from the State Board of Education documenting approval of MSD's non-discrimination policy/statement; and a letter from the Superintendent confirming the closure of Gilbert Hall as a facility for the Michigan School for the Blind.

Hosting MGW Film Crew for Movie

Last November, students watched a movie produced by MGW Productions called "Forget Me Not." It was shown using all Deaf actors and in ASL. Mark Wood, who is the director, happened to be on the campus and visited the Superintendent's Cottage. Because of the huge turn out from students, parents, and the deaf community, Mark suggested another movie called "Wrong Game" and wanted to use the Superintendent's Cottage. It has spawned interest and support from Deaf audiences since this is a unique movie using the language of the Deaf Community. It is currently being filmed on our campus. It is a good opportunity to highlight the contributions of the MSD community. The Superintendent's Cottage Board has

been very instrumental in making this happen. We are honored to play even a minor role in the making of this unique and important film.

MDE Golf Outing

MSD's State Administrative Manager will attend the MDE golf outing on August 7th. Every year we receive scholarship money for our students and MSD appreciates the support of the Department staff.

Hiring Challenges

We have experienced difficulty in filling vacant positions primarily due to low salaries (civil service classifications) when compared with local school districts and nearby Residential State Schools for the Deaf. The freeze in hiring did not help when good applicants decided to accept positions elsewhere after waiting so long to hear from us. We are now exempted from the hiring freeze and will continue to interview for prospective candidates.

We are always at risk for non-compliance with special education statutes and regulations due to lack of adequate staffing.

MSD Placement/Residential Data

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Placement (Enrollment)	105	109	127	137	156	172	183
Residential	48	65	75	69	73	92	109

MSD Graduation Data

Year	No. in 4-Year Cohort	Gallaudet University	National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)	Mott Community College	Extended Beyond 4th Year At MSD	Other Plans
2000	9	0	2	1	3	3
2001	14	2	1	1	8	1 - Northern Illinois University 1 - Other
2002	13	0	1	2	3	1 - Northern MI University 6 - Other
2003	12	2	3	1	2	4
2004	9	0	0	1	4	4
2005	6	1	0	0	1	1 - MI Tech 3 - Other
2006	16	1	2	0	10	3
2007	25	5	3	1	4	12

**Non-Discrimination Policy for the Michigan School for the Deaf
August 2007**

Notice

It is the policy of the Michigan School for the Deaf not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, hearing loss, height, weight, or marital status in its programs, services or activities.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

**Amy Abdo
Human Resources Coordinator
1667 Miller Road
Flint, MI 49503
(810)247-1449 (v/tty)**