



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

December 1, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman

SUBJECT: Adoption of Resolution Regarding Michigan State University's Deaf Education Teacher Preparation Program

Attached is a resolution regarding the decision by Michigan State University to eliminate its American Sign Language Program. This resolution was requested at the November 24, 2009, State Board of Education Retreat.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education adopt the resolution regarding Michigan State University's Deaf Education Teacher Preparation Program, as attached to the Superintendent's memorandum dated December 1, 2009.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Resolution

Michigan State University Deaf Education Teacher Preparation Program

WHEREAS, The Deaf Education Teacher Preparation Program at Michigan State University's College of Education is one of only two in the State of Michigan, and the only teacher preparation program in the State that prepares teachers for bi-lingual (American Sign Language/ASL and English) programs and services; and

WHEREAS, the proposal by the College of Education to terminate this program as well as the ASL program has significant negative consequences for the State of Michigan, its public schools, and students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing as well as the supply of teachers; and

WHEREAS, Michigan students who enroll in Deaf Education programs in other states are less likely to return to Michigan after completion of such programs, thus increasing the exodus of Michigan citizens; and

WHEREAS, the loss of nationally prominent faculty at Michigan State University who created this federally recognized Deaf Education Program will negatively impact the training of higher education faculty in Deaf Education as well as teachers of students who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing in Michigan; and

WHEREAS, Michigan identifies over 3,000 students as Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing and eligible for special education services annually, all of whom are entitled to special education programs and services; and

WHEREAS, the consequences of the termination of this program and the ASL program will disproportionately impact signing Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and multiply impaired students in Michigan; and

WHEREAS, not only Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons, but also Hearing persons without verbal language learn through the use of sign language; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education and the Department are dedicated to ensuring that teachers and other personnel serving children with disabilities are adequately prepared and trained; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the State Board of Education and Michigan Department of Education request Michigan State University's College of Education reconsider the decision to terminate the Deaf Education Teacher Preparation and ASL Programs, and rededicate its Land Grant mission to meet expectations not only as a great research university but also meet expectations as a great teaching and service university, with a focus on the needs and priorities of the citizens of the State of Michigan, including those who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing.