Standards for the Preparation of Teachers of American Sign Language (FS)

Adopted by the Michigan State Board of Education

(June 15, 2010)

Proposed Standards for the Preparation of Teachers of American Sign Language (FS)

Vision

Michigan students, like students throughout the United States, are living in and contributing to an increasingly diverse society and interdependent community of nations in the twenty-first century. To realize their personal, social, and long-term career goals, individuals need to be able to communicate with others skillfully, appropriately, and effectively. The challenge of contemporary education is to prepare all students for life in this new world. Because language and communication are at the heart of the human experience, the United States must equip students linguistically and culturally to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which all students develop and maintain proficiency in English and in at least one other language.

Development of the Proposal

A need for an American Sign Language (ASL) teaching endorsement was clearly demonstrated when the State Board of Education (SBE) added ASL as one of the world languages students can learn to meet the new high school graduation requirements in the Revised School Code.

> **Section 380.1157b High school credit in foreign language for American sign language.** *Sec. 1157b. The board of a school district may grant high school credit in a foreign language to a pupil enrolled in high school who has satisfactorily completed a high school course offered in American sign language or who has attained proficiency in American sign language outside of a public or private high school curriculum.*

For districts to offer ASL programs that prepare students to meet the new world language graduation requirement, ASL teachers need to be professionally prepared and highly qualified. This preparation will be made available through approved institutions of higher education that have based their curriculum on rigorous teacher preparation standards put forth in this document.

The World Language Teacher Preparation Standards Development Committee for American Sign Language was organized and met for the first time in the summer of 2008 and continued to work on this proposal until its submission in the winter of 2010. The world language committee includes ASL teachers and faculty from the Michigan School for the Deaf, Detroit Public Schools, Oakland Schools, Bloomfield Hills Public Schools, and Mott Community College.

Members have worked collaboratively to address concerns regarding the preparation of teachers in ASL that align with other World Language, Bilingual Education, and English as a Second Language endorsement areas. These proposed standards are the result of efforts by members of the deaf community as well as ASL and other world

language experts in an effort to recognize and promote the teaching and learning of ASL as a world language in Michigan schools.

This committee reflects the interests of public and independent teacher preparation institutions and K-12 teachers. The standards are designed to align with the K-12 content standards in the *Michigan Curriculum Framework*, as well as national standards from the American Council for the Teachers of Foreign Languages, American Sign Language Teachers Association, National Association for Bilingual Education, and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

The proposals include the following:

- For American Sign Language (FS) endorsements

    1. Elementary or secondary major of at least 30 semester hours

    2. Elementary or secondary minor of at least 20 semester hours

    3. Additional endorsement of at least 20 semester hours

    4. K-12 major (additional standards must be met for K-12 programs)

    5. Prerequisite: To meet the standards, all required content coursework must be beyond the first four semesters of language instruction in commonly taught languages (inclusive of Categories I and II of the Foreign Service Institute scale)

Approval of Programs

Teacher preparation institutions that wish to offer programs to prepare teachers of American Sign Language (FS) are required to submit an application for program approval that demonstrates how the new standards are met throughout the proposed curriculum. Following initial approval, the teacher preparation program will be reviewed through the national accreditation process.

Proficiency Level

Upon completion of an approved teacher preparation program in Michigan for Agricultural Education, a person recommended for the Michigan Standard certificate must meet the following proficiency level for each standard.

The description of proficiency levels are:
    A = Awareness: Possesses general knowledge of (exposure)
    B = Basic: Ability to comprehend and apply (use)
    C = Comprehensive: High level of understanding, application, and reflecting (proficient)

These proficiency levels for each standard are indicated at the end of each standard in parenthesis.

1.0 Language, Linguistics, Comparisons

Teacher preparation institutions provide candidates opportunities to develop and demonstrate:

1.1.1 At least a level 3 proficiency (equivalent to Advanced-low of proficiency in Category I & II languages FSI scale) in American Sign Language (ASL) using a variety of testing protocols, including assessment of comprehension and expressive communication.

1.1.2 Proficiency descriptors for interpersonal, interpretive, presentational. See attached chart from ASL National Standards (Appendix A)

1.1.3 Testing protocols

    Preferred:

        American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI)

        Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI): American Sign Language (ASL)

    Possible alternative interpreter assessments for those passing these tests prior to SBE standards approval:

        American Sign Language Teacher Association Certification (ASLTA Certification)

        Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) AT A MINIMUM LEVEL OF 2

        National Interpreter Certificate (NIC)

Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) AT A MINIMUM LEVEL OF 4

(The assessments will be adjusted to align with the final determination of the Department of Energy Labor and Economic Growth - Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing.)

1.2   Knowledge of the linguistic elements of ASL and its varieties. (B)

1.3   An understanding of the dynamic nature of language systems and demonstrate competency in helping students acquire and use ASL in comprehension and expressive modes, for social and academic purposes. (C)

1.4   Knowledge of the similarities and differences between English and ASL. (C)

2.0 Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts

Teacher preparation institutions provide candidates opportunities to develop and demonstrate:

2.1   Knowledge, understanding, and use of the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to the nature and role of culture in language development and academic achievement that support student learning. (C)

2.2   Application of knowledge and understanding of how the deaf community and deaf students' cultural identities affect language learning and school achievement. (C)

2.3   An understanding of the value and role of ASL storytelling and use these cultural texts to interpret and reflect upon the perspectives of cultures over time. (C)

2.4   An understanding of the connections among perspectives of cultures, their practices and products, and be able to make comparisons. (C)

2.5   Ability to recognize distinctive cultural viewpoints of multiple content areas available only through ASL. (C)

3.0 Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices

Teacher preparation institutions provide candidates opportunities to develop and demonstrate:

3.1   An understanding of language acquisition theories and research. (C)

3.2   Ability to use language acquisition knowledge to create a supportive classroom learning environment that uses ASL as the primary means of

instruction and provides opportunities for negotiation of meaning and meaningful interaction. (C)

3.3 A variety of instructional practices that produce language proficiency through an articulated program that address the needs of diverse language learners. (B)

3.4 Knowledge and use of a variety of strategies for instructional management that facilitates language acquisition and student achievement for second language learners. (B)

4.0 Integration of Standards into Curriculum and Instruction

Teacher preparation institutions provide candidates opportunities to develop and demonstrate:

4.1 An understanding of the standards and benchmarks of the *Michigan Curriculum Framework, Michigan World Language Standards and Benchmarks,* and the *Standards for Learning American Sign Language* (national standards) in curricular planning. (C)

4.2 Ability to integrate the *Michigan World Language Standards and Benchmarks* and the *Michigan Curriculum Framework* into language instruction. (B)

4.3 Ability to use standards and benchmarks to evaluate, select, design, and adapt instructional resources by connecting curriculum to students' experiences and skills of home and community. (C)

4.4 Ability to serve as an effective model of English (reading and writing) and ASL for developing comprehension and expressive skills. (C)

4.5 Understanding and utilization of strategies that promote student competence in using critical thinking skills in conjunction with learning English (reading and writing) and ASL. (B)

4.6 Familiarity with and adaptive use of a wide range of standards-based materials, resources, and technologies in effective world languages and content teaching. (B)

4.7 Skills in supporting students studying ASL as a world language as they access the core curriculum and learn language and academic content together. (B)

4.8 Knowledge of past and current second language teaching methodologies and their applicability in developing instructional practices and resources to meet the needs of individual learners. (A)

5.0 Assessment of Languages and Cultures

Teacher preparation institutions provide candidates opportunities to develop and demonstrate:

5.1 Knowledge of the ongoing nature of assessment and multiple age- and level-appropriate ways to assess that provides purposeful outcome data. (B)

5.2 Reflective assessment practices including: analysis of assessment results, adjustment of instruction based on assessment results, and use of outcome data to determine the direction of instruction. (B)

5.3 Ability to interpret and communicate the results of student performances to all stakeholders and provide opportunity for discussion of the interpretations and decisions based on the information. (B)

5.4 Knowledge of various assessment issues (e.g., cultural and linguistic bias, political, social, and psychological factors). (C)

5.5 Knowledge of the value of assessment data for demonstration of language proficiency and academic achievement of world language student. (B)

6.0 Professionalism

Teacher preparation institutions provide candidates opportunities to develop and demonstrate:

6.1 Linguistic and cultural competence through reflective practices. (C)

6.2 Knowledge of the value of multilingualism to the overall success of all students and understands the teacher's role as an advocate for students, colleagues, and members of the community in promoting multilingualism. (B)

6.3 Ability to identify, analyze, and reflect upon professional knowledge and language proficiency, and seek resources for improvement. (C)

6.4 Knowledge of legislative impact on the teaching in programs for world languages and specifically ASL. (A)

6.5 Knowledge of the teacher's role as a professional within a discipline. (A)

6.6 Knowledge of the history and current state of teaching world languages specifically ASL as it affects public policy and advocacy issues. (B)

6.7 An ability to serve as a professional resource, an advocate for students, and an ability to build partnerships with students' families and communities. (B)

7.0 Institutional Resources, Coordination, and Commitment

Teacher preparation institutions provide candidates program structures that demonstrate a capacity for coordination of resources, and the commitment toward a quality program.

7.1   The program provides an administrative and governance structure that encourages collaboration across content and teacher preparation programs.

7.2   The program provides adequate resources, both human and material; to insure the world languages teacher preparation program is equivalent in stature to other teacher preparation programs.

7.3   The program provides a methods course with specific age-appropriate strategies of instruction for world language learners and collaboratively supports structured field experiences.

7.4   The program provides an assessment system that regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the program and its faculty and staff.

7.5   The program provides candidates with access to the appropriate testing opportunities, options, and procedures to demonstrate language proficiency.

K-12 endorsement program must provide candidates with the following experiences:

Structured field experiences (inclusive of student teaching) in three areas: elementary, middle, and high school.

Coursework in growth and development for early childhood and adolescent learners.

Preparation in instructional methods with specific strategies of instruction for students learning ASL and collaboratively supports structured field experiences appropriate to all levels of certification.

Framework of ASL Communicative Modes

	Context	Interpersonal	Interpretive	Presentational
Definitions	*In person, live*	Direct face-to-face communication	Receptive face-to-face communication and comprehension of visual materials	Presenting to an audience with whom there is no personal contact or one-to-many mode Presenting to an audience with whom there is personal contact Author or creator of recorded material not known personally to viewer
	In person, digital	Direct digital communication between individuals who are in personal contact	Receptive face-to-face digital communication and comprehension of visual materials	Digitally presenting to an audience with whom there is no personal contact or one-to-many mode Digitally presenting to an audience with whom there is personal contact Author or creator of recorded material not known personally to viewer

	Context	Interpersonal	Interpretive	Presentational
	Not in person, digital, not live	Indirect digital communication between individuals who are in personal contact	Viewing recorded communication and/or visual materials Viewing recorded material whose creator is absent	Digitally recording material not known to receiver Digitally recording a message to a known receiver
Paths	*Face-to-face, live*	Signing, attending	Viewing or attending	Signing
	Face-to-face, digital	Signing for digital communication, attending	Viewing or attending	Signing for digital communication
	Not face-to-face, not live	Signing for digital communication, attending	Viewing or attending	Signing for digital communication
Cultural Knowledge	All contexts	Knowledge of cultural perspectives governing individuals of different ages, statuses, and backgrounds Ability to recognize that languages use different practices to communicate Ability to recognize that cultures use different patterns of interaction	Knowledge of how cultural perspectives are embedded in products (literary and artistic) Knowledge of how meaning is encoded in products Ability to analyze content, compare it to information available in own language and assess linguistic and cultural differences Ability to analyze and compare content in Deaf culture to interpret other cultures	Knowledge of cultural perspectives governing interactions between the signer and viewer Knowledge of cultural perspectives governing interactions between signing digital messages and the viewer Ability to present cross-cultural information based on background of the audience Ability to recognize that cultures use different patterns of interaction
	KNOWLEDGE OF THE LINGUISTIC SYSTEM The use of visual-spatial grammar, including lexical, phonological, morphological, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse features necessary for participation in the Communicative Modes.			

Glossary

ACTFL	American Council for the Teachers of Foreign Languages
ASD	American School for the Deaf
ASL	American Sign Language
ASLPI	American Sign Language Proficiency Interview
ASLTA	American Sign Language Teachers Association
BEI	Board for Evaluation of Interpreters
EIPA	Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
NAD	National Association for the Deaf
SLPI	Sign Language Proficiency Interview