

Resolution 2223R-018
Creation of a D/HH Task Force for a major review of MPS's D/HH program

Directors Peterson and Herndon

WHEREAS, The Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) program in Milwaukee Public Schools is long overdue for review and revision; and

WHEREAS, The D/HH program, in its current state, is ineffective and is lacking an understanding of modern D/HH educational practices; and

WHEREAS, Since the 1990's the Department of Public Instruction has recognized the need to have total communication and unsegregated programs for D/HH students, given that such programs can provide wholistic education within the broad spectrum of communication needs rather than segregating students into one of two extreme language binaries; and

WHEREAS, With 30 plus years of studies conducted on best practices for D/HH education, Bi-modal Bilingualism, also known as the Bi-Bi model, has stood out; and

WHEREAS, The Bi-Bi approach facilitates and enhances bilingual development in both English and American Sign Language, without hindering development of spoken language (Mitchiner, Nussbaum, & Scott, 2012): and

WHEREAS, Many school districts with D/HH programs have adopted bi-modal bilingualism as a multi-sensory approach that is additive rather than subtractive; and

WHEREAS, There are on-going issues within MPS's D/HH program regarding staffing, program locations and initial placements of young children in the D/HH program; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Administration and D/HH interpreters and teachers jointly establish a D/HH education task force that includes D/HH teachers, MPS sign language interpreters, other staff members, the MPS administration, and parents of students identified as D/HH; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Education Services Program (WESP-DHH), the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and other community stakeholders be invited to participate on the task force; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the task force conduct a thorough review of the current state of the MPS D/HH programing including, but not limited to these tasks::

- Review current Deaf education research and use it to evaluate the efficacy of the current MPS D/HH program;

- Review and compare Deaf educational approaches like the bilingual/bimodal model to the split language model that is currently being used in MPS;
- Survey key stakeholders including:
 - MPS staff members (interpreters, teachers, support staff) who directly work with the MPS D/HH population.
 - Current families of D/HH students.
 - Families with D/HH children who have left the district.
- Review efficiency of current program location(s) and consider the pros and cons of centralization or combination of services of MPS's D/HH programs taking into account where current D/HH students live and attend school and space considerations for all units and staff offices;
- Review staffing needs as impacted by possible changes in D/HH program locations including numbers of staff and certification requirements and levels of sign language efficiency,
- Review of initial assessments and qualifying indicators for D/HH services; and, be it:

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Administration and other task force members report back to the board during the June 2023 Board Cycle as to the composition of the task force and with a proposed timeline for completion of this review.

Introduced March 23, 2023