

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 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