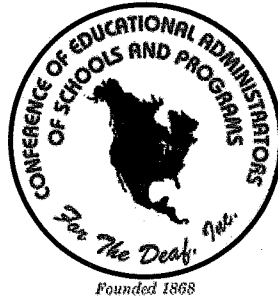


# CONFERENCE OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS of Schools and Programs for the Deaf, Inc.

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February 26, 2009

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120  
Fax: (717) 772-8284  
Sent by postal mail and fax

Dear Governor Rendell:

On behalf of the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf, I write regarding the education of deaf children at the Scranton State School for the Deaf (SSSD). We understand that you have proposed that SSSD be closed at the end of this school year. The proposal would then have services to these children provided through an agreement with the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit and the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (WPSD).

While we appreciate that budget realities have been forcing difficult decisions in every state, we are concerned that the decision to close SSSD is being made hastily.

Decisions about how to serve deaf children in any state are complicated. Deaf and hard of hearing students are extremely heterogeneous, yet they are relatively few in number. Despite this, as you move through any decision making process regarding the future of SSSD we offer the following.

- Put children and families first. Decisions about the future of SSSD must keep the educational needs and interests of SSSD students and families in the forefront. Saving money cannot come at the expense of the education of deaf children and the support of their families. Family placement choices should be respected.

- State programs serving deaf students should seek to optimize the use of each entity's resources. Center-based programs can offer a level of service quality that is difficult, if not impossible, for other programs to replicate, therefore they should always be an accessible and viable option for deaf students. Pennsylvania is fortunate to have two other schools for the deaf, and PDE is wise to include WPSD in discussions about the needs of children and families served by SSSD. PDE should support collaboration and cooperation among all programs serving deaf children, whether they be public or private, or general education or deaf education.
- PDE should move slowly and engage in an open dialogue that allows all reasonable solutions to be considered. While monetary considerations never go away, today's economic climate is the worst that it has been in years. States should not make decisions today that they may regret later. States should ensure that all points of view are considered in any decision-making process. They should be able to provide reliable data for the decisions they propose. And they should be able to provide assurance that the decisions they make are optimum for families and citizens of the state.

Founded in 1868, CEASD is committed to the promotion of excellence within a continuum of equitable educational opportunities for all children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing. CEASD advocates on behalf of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and supports the efficient and effective management of schools, programs, program service centers, and governmental units offering educational and related programs and services. CEASD's membership consists of over 100 member schools and programs serving over 12,000 deaf and hard of hearing children and their families.

CEASD stands ready to assist you and PDE as you consider how to best serve deaf and hard of hearing students in Pennsylvania. Feel free to call on us at any time. Also, for your information, I have attached the CEASD Position Paper on The Full Continuum of Educational Placements for All Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Thank you for consideration of our views.

Very truly yours,



Edward Bosso

President

Attachment