

Highly Qualified Teachers

Position Paper

Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD)

CEASD supports the goals of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. CEASD has long supported high standards for deaf and hard of hearing children's achievement, school accountability, and the provision of well-trained teachers in the classroom. CEASD has long supported educational decision-making that addresses each child's right to a free appropriate public education in the Least Restrictive Environment, based on the child's Individualized Education Program.

NCLB has mandated that core academic subject teachers become "highly qualified" and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has set out requirements for highly qualified special education teachers. Discussion has taken place around the country to determine how to apply the highly qualified provisions to teachers in the continuum of alternative placements.

Historically, state regulation and best educational practices have led schools for deaf children to seek candidates who possess three important characteristics.

These candidates:

- Can communicate fluently with deaf students. To be able to impart subject knowledge effectively teachers must be skilled in the language of the child.
- Have a master's degree in deaf education. Deaf education programs train potential teachers in methodologies that address deaf learners' strengths.
- Have subject matter knowledge in the subjects they will be teaching. A teacher needs to know the subject s/he is teaching.

However, candidates with this background are rare. Very few deaf education teacher-training programs offer such a program.

CEASD believes that all deaf children should be taught by a teacher who is highly qualified in deaf education and is highly qualified in the subject being taught.

In order to reach this goal, deaf education teacher training programs must provide coursework in deaf education and subject matter content, leading to a degree that would encompass both areas. The U.S. Department of Education should be a leader in this effort, requiring teacher-training programs, which receive Federal funds to make this type of degree available.

CEASD believes that all schools for deaf children and all local education authorities that have deaf students should seek out teacher candidates who are highly qualified in deaf education and are highly qualified in the subject being taught.

In situations where such teachers are not immediately available, schools and local education authorities should have the option of using a consultative teaching arrangement to ensure that all deaf children are being taught by teachers who can address the language, communication, academic and social needs related to deafness and by teachers who can ensure that grade-appropriate material is being taught. Consultative teaching could be approached in a range of ways depending on size of school or district, resources available, needs of the student(s), and other factors. Standards delineating the responsibilities of each teacher should be established, with a background in deaf education being a starting point. This arrangement would not be a substitute for having a teacher with both deaf education knowledge and subject matter knowledge. We support this because of the severe shortage of highly qualified teachers of the deaf. It would be a stop gap measure until a highly qualified teacher can be found.

CEASD supports the continued availability of the HOUSSE (High, Objective, Uniform, State Standard of Evaluation) approach to becoming highly qualified in core academic subjects including extended timelines.

HOUSSE recognizes and respects the expertise and knowledge teachers have acquired through pre-service and in-service professional development as well as the valuable experience gained on a daily basis in the classroom. HOUSSE is helping states effectively meet critical personnel demands.

CEASD believes that the U.S. Department of Education, state general and special education authorities and representatives, local education authorities and representatives, deaf education teacher training programs, and schools for deaf children should consistently move toward making available and hiring teachers who are highly qualified in deaf education and are highly qualified in the subject being taught.

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.

Adopted DATE: May 1, 2005