

CDHH Recommendations on Deaf/HH Education: A Preliminary Overview

Objective: Using a future scenarios approach, the Council will develop viable educational delivery models for deaf/hh education in Idaho by consulting experts in the field and incorporating best practices from each of the 50 states. The models will be presented as recommendations to policymakers, according to the Council's statutory obligation (§ 67-7307).

Overarching Goal: To recommend models that will adequately serve students through a continuum of communication and placement options.

Essential Elements of Each Delivery Model:

Communication. Each model will consist of appropriate language-rich, communication-driven educational programs, including signing, oral-auditory, and both.

Placement. The models will include a broad continuum of placement options, including full mainstreaming, regional mainstreaming with increased supplemental support, and a direct-instruction program/campus in a metropolitan area. Families will have the option to enroll their children in local or regional programs with mediated instruction through interpreters/transliterators. They will also have the option to enroll their children in a program with a critical mass of students who receive direct instruction from language-proficient, certified teachers of the deaf communicating directly in the child's language (signing and oral-auditory options).

The direct-instruction program(s)/campus(es) will have the flexibility to accommodate families who want their children to spend a portion of their day receiving direct instruction and a portion of their day receiving mediated instruction. The recommended models will include a scalable residential component that can expand and contract based on enrollment trends and demand to avoid substantial fixed overhead costs.

Each of the models will recognize and incorporate the notion that natural and least restrictive environments are intricately tied to communication, language, and a critical mass of students.

Funding. It is essential that adequate funding be equitably allocated to the various programs according to enrollment trends and demand.

Expertise. The programs will be administered and staffed by individuals who are qualified in their respective sub-fields of deaf/hh education. They will receive competitive compensation to facilitate recruitment and retention.

Technology. Accommodations, assistive and adaptive technologies, and emerging technologies will be maximized for students in each of the models.

Regional Support. The models will include an expansion of regional support services, such as additional audiologists, outreach consultants, SLPs, interpreters, and resource/itinerant teachers.

Training and Developing Personnel. The models will include a recommendation to alter the Idaho certification process for deaf/hh teachers so it is on par with all other certification requirements in the Northwest and Mountain states. For example, the

current Idaho certification process is preventing teachers with oral-auditory skills from becoming certified in this state.

Transportation. The models will include a recommendation to modify the existing transportation policy. Emphasis will be placed on appropriately distributing the transportation burden between LEAs and the centralized agency responsible for deaf/hh education. Funding implications of this recommendation will be addressed.

Oversight of Statewide Deaf/HH Education. The Council's recommendations will address the need to have a diverse body of experts involved in the oversight of the deaf/hh educational system. Agency placement within Idaho government and a reporting relationship will be outlined.

Other Misc. Issues. There are many other miscellaneous issues that will be addressed in the Council's proposed models.

Research Methodology: The Council is formulating its recommendations based on the following research activities: engaging and consulting with dozens of local and national experts in relevant fields; synthesizing in-state ISDB research to-date (e.g., OPE, SBOE Sub-committee reports); analyzing local communication and placement trends; surveying parents, teachers/staff, administrators, and other stakeholders through Web- and mail-based questionnaires; observing the SBOE's Working Group progress; incorporating scholarly research findings from peer-reviewed journals; analyzing all 50 states' delivery models by reviewing their respective statutes and interviewing administrators of deaf/hh educational programs; and reviewing state-sponsored inquiries, national reports, and state-specific action plans.