

# DEAF EDUCATION NEWS

MISSOURI SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2013

*Greetings!*



School is back in full swing and hopefully everyone is settling into their routines. October and November are filled with a flurry of activity. School events, ballgames, holidays, good food – October and November have it all! During this busy time, please remember that you can contact MSD's Outreach Offices at any time to ask a question or request support as you serve Missouri's students who are deaf/hard of hearing. Contact information is listed on page 6.

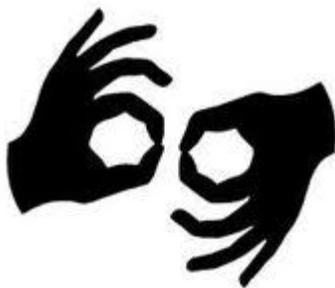
This newsletter is focused on the sometimes complex issues a school faces when they enroll a student who utilizes sign language as part of their communication or as their primary mode of communication. Should you hire an interpreter? What are the different types of interpreters? Are all Deaf Educators the same? What if someone on staff already knows some sign language? What if some staff are willing to take sign classes? This issue will touch on each of these concerns and more. Please take a few minutes to relax and enjoy the opportunity to read and learn.

-Nancy Wood



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## *What is an Interpreter?*

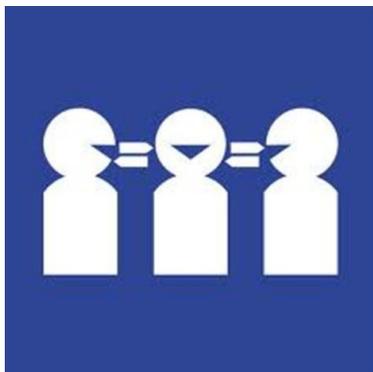
According to the Merriam-Webster's Student Dictionary an interpreter is defined as one that interprets; especially: a person who translates orally for people speaking different languages. Our focus in this issue will be on the first part of that definition – one that interprets. There are many types of interpreters that provide services to people who are deaf/hard of hearing. Certified interpreters, educational interpreters, oral interpreters, and transliterators are just a few of the terms you may see when you begin to investigate the world of interpreting. So what does all of that terminology mean?

Interpreter – a person who is knowledgeable of two languages and is able to assist communication by taking information presented in the first language and translating it into the second language and vice versa.

Transliterater – a person who takes information from one language and relays it using the same language with modifications to fit various communication modalities (cued speech, oral, etc.)

Some people are qualified to serve as both interpreter and transliterator, while others are not.

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### Missouri Interpreters Certification Levels:

Novice (Level 1)

Apprentice (Level 2)

Intermediate (Level 3)

Advanced (Level 4)

Comprehensive (Level 5)

For a complete description of each level please see the [Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing website](#).



### Restricted Certification in Education Levels:

RCED (General)  
Grades K-12

RCED, Grades K-6

RCED, Grades 7-12

Provisional Certificate in Education

For a complete description of each level please see the [Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing website](#).



## What is an Interpreter? (cont)

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Certified Interpreter – an interpreter who has earned certification from the Missouri Interpreters Certification System (MICS). This system evaluates interpreters, assigns them a skill level, and provides quality

assurance to consumers. This interpreter is able to work in a wide variety of settings.

Licensed Interpreter – an interpreter who has gone through MICS and has earned a license through the State Committee of Interpreters. This system is responsible for monitoring qualifications, code of conduct/ethics, and investigating/resolving complaints and violations of/by interpreters. This interpreter is able to work in a wide variety of settings.

Educational Interpreter (RCED) – an interpreter who has gone through the MICS system and has met the qualifications to hold a Restricted Certificate in Education. This interpreter is qualified to work in the school system. The certificate will have a communication mode endorsement which specifies the modality in which the interpreter was tested: American Sign Language – ASL, Pidgin Signed English – PSE, or Signing Exact English/Manually Coded English – SEE/MCE.

## Raise Your Hand

It is important to remember that an interpreter can only interpret one speaker at a time. In order to keep classroom communication clear require your students to raise their hand and be acknowledged before speaking when at all possible. This simple act gives the interpreter a moment to identify the speaker and a student who is d/hoh an opportunity to follow the conversational flow with less confusion.

Additionally, be sure to allow students who are d/hoh time to look at a visual aid for a few moments before you begin discussing it.

Otherwise you are asking your student to do three things at once: look at the visual aid, look at the interpreter, and make sense of what the teacher is talking about. That's not an easy task for anyone!



## Other Services an Interpreter May Provide

Some students who are deaf/hard of hearing utilize interpreters in the classroom as well as in other school settings. It is easy to acknowledge that the interpreter's first priority is to facilitate communication between persons who are d/hh and those who are hearing. It is also worth noting that interpreters may be able to provide other related services in

the school environment. You may ask your interpreter if they are qualified and willing to:

- Present in-service training to school staff about topics related to deafness
- Help increase interaction between students who are d/hh and their peers by offering sign language support/classes for hearing

classmates

- Provide or support tutoring services for students who are d/hh (with appropriate guidance)
- Provide information about resources and community activities related to deafness.



## Do's & Don'ts of Using Educational Interpreters

### DO

1. Make time to share information, materials, & vocabulary for upcoming lessons with the interpreter.
2. Work with the interpreter to learn ways to make beneficial communication accommodations to your classroom.
3. Provide the interpreter with their own workspace.
4. Discuss your expectations regarding discipline. Do you want the interpreter to give directives or discourage unwanted behaviors or do you want to be the sole person to handle all discipline issues.
5. Be certain the interpreter is fluent in the same communication modality as the student.
6. Communicate with the interpreter about what they observe regarding the students performance/behavior (i.e. - I had to break the concept down in order for the student to comprehend the information, etc.).
7. Discuss with the interpreter possible ways to make visual information more accessible.



### DON'T

1. Use the interpreter as a classroom aide.
2. Treat the interpreter as a participant in the class (i.e. - ask them questions or speak directly to them while they are interpreting).
3. Exclude the interpreter from IEP meetings and other team decisions involving the student.
4. Forget to share lesson goals & objectives with the interpreter.
5. Walk all over the room without a good reason while delivering instruction. It is important for the student to be able to see both the teacher and interpreter at the same time.
6. Don't speak to the interpreter and say, "Tell him (the student)....". Always speak directly to the student as if you are having a normal conversation. The interpreter will provide the message to the student as well as assist in communicating the student's reply.
7. Expect the interpreter to make lesson plans or materials for the student who is deaf/hard of hearing



Interpreters provide an invaluable service to students who are deaf/hard of hearing. Please take a moment to read the following excerpt from [www.theinterpretersfriend.org](http://www.theinterpretersfriend.org)

While reading:

- Visualize reading this aloud in your classroom
- Consider all of the meanings of the word "up"
- Realize that there is a different sign for each meaning of up
- Recognize the amount of work an interpreter is doing to make sure the student who is d/hh understands.



### The Word UP

There is a two letter word that perhaps has more meaning than any other two letter word, it's UP. It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we waken in the morning, why do we wake UP? At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP and why are the officers UP for election and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report? We call UP our friends, we use it to brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver, we warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen.

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We lock UP the house and some guys fix UP the old car. At other times the little word has real special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses. To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed UP is special, and this is confusing. A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP. We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night. We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP. To be knowledgeable of the proper uses of UP, look UP the word in the dictionary.



In a desk size dictionary, UP takes UP almost 1/4th the page and definitions add UP to about thirty. If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with a hundred or more.

When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When it doesn't rain for a while, things dry UP. One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP, for now my time is UP, so I'll shut UP.



Have you ever noticed that interpreters do not always do things the same way? In one classroom the interpreter signs everything, while in another class he/she seems to pause when hearing students are reading aloud and the student who is deaf/hard of hearing is reading along in their book. Across the hall an interpreter is using Signed Exact English and later this afternoon when she is with another student she will be using American Sign Language. Why are there so many differences?

All interpreters are similar in that they are required to follow a code of conduct and ethics.

There are also certain protocol procedures and cultural norms that should be adhered to. Beyond those limits there is room for differences. A well qualified interpreter has a wide variety of skills and background knowledge that he/she uses to match the preferences of the client (person who is deaf/hard of hearing) and setting.

An interpreter must be aware of his/her audience. Is the client a young child or a teenager? Is the client familiar with using an interpreter? Is it a kindergarten classroom or a high school chemistry class? What mode of communication does the client prefer? What level of understanding does the client possess? Is the client comfortable having an interpreter or are they shy about having to use one in front of their classmates? All of these are factors that an interpreter

must consider and adjust for. The goal is to facilitate smooth communication between the person who is d/hh and other hearing people. Smooth communication, especially in an educational setting, involves a level of comfort and trust between the interpreter and student. By adjusting to the needs of their clients, interpreters provide a smooth communication experience for everyone.



## *Appreciate your Interpreters!*

THANK YOU

According to several internet sources, May 1st is Sign Language Interpreter Appreciation Day. Interpreters are vital in countless ways. Educational Interpreters alone assist with situations ranging from providing communication in the classroom, at extracurricular activities, in assemblies, and during IEP meetings. They may be a vital link to helping a family and school staff understand what a student is feeling or dealing with. They may provide sign language classes and in-service meetings to students and staff. Interpreters often give 110% everyday. Please remember to let them know how much you appreciate their hard work!



## *Sometimes Questions Arise...*

### ***What if our school cannot find an interpreter nor a deaf educator?***

If the IEP team has determined that the student who is deaf/hard of hearing requires the services of an interpreter or deaf educator, the school should attempt to provide these services. If the services are not readily available, continue to search for them (making a good faith effort) while doing everything you can to support the student. Three helpful resources to assist in your search are the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Missouri School for the Deaf Outreach Program, and the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH). Other local agencies that support people who are d/hh may also be able to assist you.

### ***Are all deaf educators the same?***

No. Like all regular educators, deaf educators come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some are trained in oral approaches while others are trained in sign only. Some are trained in a combined approach. Each deaf educator will have their own individual strengths and weaknesses. It is important when searching for a deaf educator that you consider the needs of your student(s) and find the best match. Like an interpreter, your deaf educator will be providing a service to your students and may be assisting other staff in learning how to work with the student who is d/hoh. Be sure your deaf educator is up to the task.

### ***What if someone on campus knows some sign language? Can we utilize that person?***

Unless the individual is a certified interpreter or deaf educator, then this is not the best option. It is always helpful to have a variety of people on campus who can communicate with your student(s) who are d/hh; however, to provide appropriate services you should employ individuals with appropriate credentials.

### ***What if some staff members are willing to take sign language classes?***

It is always a positive thing when school staff are willing to 'step up to the plate' and learn whatever is necessary in order to enhance their teaching skills. The more communication that is able to take place, the better. Unfortunately, it would take years for most people to develop sign language skills adequate enough to become a certified deaf educator or interpreter. That being said, every situation is different. If you have a staff person that has a strong background, a good skill set, and the financial means to pursue certification by all means encourage them to do so! At the same time realize that the process takes time and the school will have to continue to pursue adequate services for the student in the meantime.

### ***The IEP indicates the student has hearing loss, do we automatically have to hire an interpreter?***

The use of an interpreter is determined by many factors, hearing loss is not the sole criterion. The IEP team makes the determination on an individual basis (It's not called an Individualized Education Plan for no reason!). Among the factors to consider are:

- Communication needs
- Linguistic needs
- Severity of hearing loss

Each year the IEP is reviewed and the team determines what supports will stay in place and what variations may be needed.

Typically, if a student who is deaf/hard of hearing requires an educational interpreter they will continue to need one throughout their educational career. At times you may come across a student who has not previously utilized an interpreter and is now ready to take that step.

The most important thing to remember is that an interpreter is not automatic. It is a team decision based on the needs of the individual student.

## First Choice, Not Last Resort



Missouri School for the Deaf, 505 East 5th Street, Fulton, MO 65251  
Phone: 573-592-4000 V/TDD; Fax: 573-592-2570; [www.msd.k12.mo.us](http://www.msd.k12.mo.us)

### MSD Outreach Services: Audiology

Dr. Alison Burco administers free hearing evaluations to Missouri children, from birth through age 21. She is available Monday-Friday for testing and consultations concerning hearing aids, FM systems, cochlear implants and other issues related to hearing loss. Dr. Burco can be contacted at the MSD Resource Center on Deafness.

**Phone: # 573-592-2543, voice or TDD or Email: [rcd@msd.dese.mo.gov](mailto:rcd@msd.dese.mo.gov)**



### FAMILIES FIRST

### EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM



Parent Advisors with this program provide home visits for deaf or hard of hearing children from birth through 8 years of age. Parent Advisors offer the family information, support, and encouragement, as well as provide ideas for strategies parents may use to help a child develop in the areas of language acquisition, communication, and social and emotional skills. All services are provided free. Families must live in Missouri to qualify.

**For more information: Phone: 816-633-5648; E-Mail: [ff@msd.dese.mo.gov](mailto:ff@msd.dese.mo.gov)**

### MSD Resource Center on Deafness-Outreach Services

#### Free Services

- Information about hearing loss and appropriate educational services for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing
- Audiological exams and APD testing for Missouri children birth through 21
- School visits and consultation by a deaf educator
- In-service presentations for schools
- Language assessments for students who are deaf and hard-of-hearing and unable to be appropriately tested in their home districts

#### Rental Program

- Annual leases of personal and group amplification systems to schools.

**Phone: 573-592-2543      Email: [rcd@msd.dese.mo.gov](mailto:rcd@msd.dese.mo.gov)**



The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Office of the General Counsel, Coordinator – Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI/Title IX/504/ADA/Age Act), 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; fax number 573-522-4883; email [civilrights@dese.mo.gov](mailto:civilrights@dese.mo.gov).



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[www.msd.k12.mo.us](http://www.msd.k12.mo.us)



Deaf Empowerment Awareness Foundation, Inc  
25 E Frisco Ave, Webster Groves, MO 63119  
314-714-6405 -- [annette@deafinc.org](mailto:annette@deafinc.org)  
<http://www.deafinc.org/>

Dear Families with children, who are deaf or hard of hearing,

Most children who are deaf or hard of hearing leave high school with less than a 5th grade reading level. Most children with cochlear implants are behind their hearing peers in reading too.

*The best thing you can do to promote good reading skills is to **read to your children.***

But, reading to children who are deaf or hard of hearing requires different skills than reading to hearing children.

Missouri School for the Deaf and DEAF Inc now offer the **Shared Reading Project** at DEAF Inc, in Webster Groves, MO. Specially trained deaf tutors meet with families regularly and show them how to read to deaf or hard of hearing children. Best of all, **it is free!**

The Shared Reading Project at DEAF Inc, serves families of deaf or hard of hearing children that are birth through 3rd grade.

### **To Learn How To Read To Your Deaf or Hard of Hearing Child**

**CALL ANNETTE NITKO at 314-714-6405 or EMAIL at [annette@deafinc.org](mailto:annette@deafinc.org)**

\*Outreach Services: V/TTY: 573.592.2543; Email: [rcd@msd.dese.mo.gov](mailto:rcd@msd.dese.mo.gov)

\*Families First Early Intervention Email: [jaurascott.familiesfirst@email.com](mailto:jaurascott.familiesfirst@email.com)

