

The Pennsylvania Agenda

Educational Resources for Children with Hearing Loss

State Leaders Summit
Riverside, CA
May 16 – 17, 2006

presented for ERCHL by:

*Joseph E. Fischgrund, Pennsylvania School for
the Deaf*

*Sandra Hyman-Mehaffey, Scranton State School
for the Deaf*

*Marlene Schechter, Pennsylvania Training and
Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)*

What is ERCHL?

- Educational Resources for Children with Hearing Loss
- An Advisory Committee to the Bureau of Special Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)
- Made up of representatives of stakeholder groups:
 - parents
 - Deaf community
 - school districts
 - Intermediate Units
 - schools for the deaf, state and private
 - Pennsylvania Technical Assistance & Training Network
 - Pennsylvania Dept. of Education, Bureau of Special Education staff
 - Dept. of Public Welfare (0-3)

Who we are . . .

- **Dennis Barrett, DePaul Institute**
- **Larry Brick, PSAD**
- **Denise Brown, ODHH**
- **Tom Clouse, PaTTAN, past co-chair**
- **Ginny Duncan, advocate**
- **Melissa Engel, parent**
- **Molly Finley, IU 13**
- **Joseph E. Fischgrund, PSD**
- **Susan Lindsey, PaTTAN**
- **Sandy Hyman-Mehaffey, SSSD**
- **Shatarupa Podder, PDE liason**
- **Ramona Pomian, DPW**
- **Donald E. Rhoten, WPSD**
- **Nan Rogers, PaTTAN, co-chair**
- **James M. Salem, PDE consultant, co-chair**
- **Marlene Schechter, PaTTAN**
- **Mary Sechman, Parent**

HISTORY

- Began as Task Force on Education of the Hearing Impaired, (1985-1987)
- The Task Force was charged with the responsibility of making recommendations concerning how deaf and hard of hearing children could best be educated in the variety of educational placements available to them.
- Became Advisory Committee for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, 1988
- Educational Resources for Children with Hearing Loss (ERCHL) formally established, 1991

HISTORY

- **Became formally recognized as part of the Instructional Support System of Pennsylvania, 1995**
- **Broadened membership – parents, Deaf community**
- **Was given an annual budget by PDE**
- **Establishes and measures yearly goals at an annual retreat**

Keys to success

- **Commitment from the Bureau of Special Education**
 - ◆ **either our State Director or Assistant State Director attends all ERCHL meetings**
- **Membership includes key stakeholder groups**
- **All educational options represented**
- **State consultants actively participate**
- **Based on consensus model**

Keys to Success

- **Problem solving for PDE**
- **Collaboration**
- **Consensus**
- **Relationships**
 - ◆ **Respect for multiple perspectives**
 - ◆ **Flexibility**
 - ◆ **Trust**
- **Accomplishing tasks**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- Promoted and provided input for the development of a Basic Education Curricular (BEC) recognizing all placement options as valid.
- Organized and hosted the first convocation of Pennsylvania's teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing students, leading to the establishment of a statewide teachers organization, PESDHH.
- Wrote and provided oversight for a Federally funded Interpreter Training Grant which led to significantly improving the quantity and quality of educational interpreters in Pennsylvania.
- Provided leadership for the adoption of the EIPA (Educational Interpreter Proficiency Assessment) as a tool for school districts to evaluate the ability of educational interpreters.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- **Provided guidance and input to the Bureau of Special Education and Department of Public Welfare concerning communicatively accessible mental health services for children with hearing loss.**
- **Developed an alternative certification process for the Bureau of Teacher Certification for teachers who are Deaf or hard of hearing.**
- **Developed accommodations for the administration of PSSA tests for children with hearing loss.**
- **Responsible for developing and updating “Pennsylvania Guidelines for the Education of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing,” published by the Bureau of Special Education.**

The Pennsylvania Agenda

- **Built upon previous efforts and collaborations**
- **Based on the National Agenda**
- **Facilitated by consultant Larry Siegel**
- **Adds a section on parents and families**
- **Will include an action plan and outcome indicators as well as goals**
- **Maintains a focus on a communication and language driven placement model**

Placement and Programs

- **DRAFT** Goal Statement:

Every student in Pennsylvania who is deaf or hard of hearing will have access to a full continuum of placement options that provide for the student's language, communication social/emotional, and technological needs; her or his need for role models; and the support services necessary for full communication access, including language-rich environments where students can communicate freely, easily, directly and fluently with a critical mass of peers of her or his own age as well as staff in the language of her or his choice.

Goal 1

- **At each IEP and IFSP meeting, the school district of residence will make information available to all team members, especially the parents/family and the student, concerning all the placement options available to deaf and hard of hearing students in the Commonwealth. IEP and IFSP teams will give particular emphasis to parent/family preferences and include the student in as meaningful a way as possible.**

Goal 2

- **All LEA's will offer access to a full continuum of educational placement options based on the individual student's unique communication, language, educational and social needs. These options will be offered regardless of location, cost, or general philosophical preferences. Placement and program decisions will be data driven and based on the student's present educational level and progress to date.**

Goal 3

- **All IEP and IFSP teams will fully consider the unique communication and language needs of deaf students and special factors identified in IDEA and any determination of what is 'least restrictive' or a 'natural environment' will reflect those unique needs. The IEP and IFSP teams will explain how the proposed placement will meet the student's language and communication needs and include a Communication Access Plan. (see Goal Area 1)**

Goal 4

- **The Pennsylvania Department of Education will monitor all school districts in the Commonwealth to insure that the mandates of 300.346 are followed and that the language and communication needs described in this goal area are understood and fully and appropriately addressed in the IEP and IFSP process.**

Goal 5

- **All deaf and hard of hearing children in Pennsylvania and their families will have available a full continuum of program options in which the general education curriculum is fully accessible and in which there are high standards and expectations for all students.**

Next Steps

- **Further refine and edit draft Pennsylvania Agenda**
- **Develop Action Plan and Outcome Indicators for all Pennsylvania Agenda items**
- **Complete first draft of Agenda at ERCHL retreat (June, 2006)**
- **Submit to PDE for review and approval**
- **IMPLEMENTATION!!!**