

ATTRACT

PREPARE

RETAIN



OPTIMISE

OPENING THE PIPELINE OF TALENT
INTO MICHIGAN'S SPECIAL EDUCATION

ENERGY INTO ACTION

The Problem or Challenge addressed by the Action Team:

Lack of DHH professionals with the required certification/credentials and the skills necessary to meet the diverse linguistic needs of DHH students to ensure a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Lack of access to DHH education training/credentialing programs. Lack of DHH career knowledge, awareness, exposure.

Recommendation #1:

- ❖ Establish comprehensive four-year DHH Educator programs in Michigan.
- ❖ Establish four-year DHH Educational Interpreter programs in Michigan.
- ❖ When possible, the programs should be paired within universities in the State of Michigan.

The State of Michigan currently has no DHH Teacher Preparation Program at any university level, public or private in the state. However, it is still obligated to provide direct instructional services to its DHH population throughout the state and to abide by the obligations set forth in student IEPs, 504 plans, and IDEA. Without a pipeline to provide teacher candidates the pool continues to dwindle due to turnover, burnout, retirement, and teachers leaving the state. If this trend continues not only will Michigan be unable to meet its obligation to IDEA but DHH students in the state will at some point have no certified professionals to provide any type of instruction.

The State of Michigan currently has four Interpreter Education programs. One, the only four-year BA program, is housed at a private university while the others are all located at public community colleges. Each of these education programs are located in the southern part of the state. These options, based on cost or location, remain unattainable for many prospective students located in rural and northern parts of the state. Additionally, each of these programs are generalist in focus and do not offer programming specific to preparing interpreters to work in K-12 educational settings.

Recommendation #2:

- ❖ Provide funding for paid practicum experiences for DHH teacher candidates who are not currently employed as DHH teachers.

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Recommendation #3:

- ❖ Develop a comprehensive, systemic plan to raise awareness of the needs of learners across the spectrum of DHH and career opportunities for working with this population; targeting educational settings, community settings, and supporting agencies.
 - Include DHH career opportunities in EDP's, online Career Cruising and WorkKeys, and local and county career exploration programs
 - Develop a packet of resources
 - Establish a point of contact to present to constituents, i.e. presenting to high school ASL classes, career fair/days, district, county, and state level surveys to gather data from students who were presented to
 - Deaf awareness month materials (videos, resources, presentations, speakers)
 - Develop an exit survey for participants to collect data on impact of program, interest in learning more/selecting DHH education career options, ways to follow up with interested parties
 - Develop a list of Deaf community members around the state who would be willing to be involved in educating people
 - Deaf Pride Day
 - AP ASL classes for college credit in ASL as a world language and (possibly) IB credit as well
 - Early Middle College track for High School students to complete an Associate Degree in ASL (Local district or ISD funds completion of two-year degree completed in four years of High School and one year full-time community college)

Without knowledge of, awareness toward, or exposure to the different careers within the field of DHH Education, those in the process of making career selections will not consider entry into the field. This lack of exposure and awareness has led to a critical shortage of qualified personnel in all areas of DHH Education. Without addressing this lack of exposure and awareness, this critical shortage cannot be addressed, and will continue to negatively impact the educational needs and future opportunities for DHH learners. DHH is a low-incidence disability (less than 1% of the special education population). There may be only one student who is DHH in a whole district or school. The complexity of issues related to DHH may not be addressed if there is not an educator with DHH certification.

Recommendation #4:

- ❖ Provide State or Federal funding sources to universities within Michigan to help establish and sustain DHH Education programs.

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