Performance Management Plan Narrative

Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

OUR SCHOOL

Sequoia School for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (SSDHH) serves deaf, hard of hearing and students with multiple disabilities kindergarten through 12th grades. SSDHH provides students with a bilingual/bi-cultural education, empowering students to become independent, contributing members of society. Additionally, SSDHH teaches students self advocacy and leadership skills to better prepare them for the world beyond high school. Typically, students enter SSDHH with reading, writing and mathematics skills significantly lower than that of their same-aged hearing peers as a result of their communication deficits/differences. SSDHH strives to bring students up to and beyond grade level expectations.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is to provide a safe, challenging and motivating educational environment which promotes development of wholesome social skills, academic growth, and independent through the bi-lingual and bi-cultural approach.

HISTORY

Sequoia's founding charter holder, Don Flake, was motivated to establish a charter school for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing. One may rightfully ask the question "Why would a charter school organization take on a school for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing?" The answer requires insight into Mr. Flake's own family. Mr. Flake's niece, who is deaf herself, insistenced Sequoia must establish a school for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Her dedication and perseverance led to the decision to take on this challenging demographic.

During the early years the school experienced several principals as it grew and developed. In July of 2005, the school began a new journey under the leadership of two very capable and experienced leaders. Mr. Curt Radford as principal and Dr. Angel Ramos as the school's first superintendent. In the Fall of 2008, Mr. Radford left Sequoia

accepting a teaching position at the University of Utah. At that point, Dr. Ramos took on the responsibility of both the Superintendent and Principal positions. Dr. Ramos successfully led the school to its current place.

Under the tutelage of Dr. Ramos, Heather Laine and Jennifer Reid were mentored and trained to become the school's next leaders. At the close of the 2010-2011 school year, Dr. Angel Ramos took on a new challenge becoming the Superintendent of the New Jersey School for the Deaf. In July 2011, Heather Laine and Jennifer Reid (both currently working on their Doctorate Degree) assumed shared leadership responsibilities of SSDHH.

SSDHH is currently seeking special permission to establish a Bilingual/Bicultural Early Childhood program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing preschool aged students. The SSDHH High School Government class is working on a bill entitled 'A Deaf Child's Bill of Rights. To date, the students have presented their proposed bill to the Arizona Senate Education Committee and have partnered with Deaf professional organizations and schools in Arizona to write a draft of the bill.

DEMOGRAPHICS

SSDHH is located in Mesa, AZ. The campus is situated close to a major freeway providing convenient access to the local neighborhood and students living outside of the Mesa area. SSDHH's current enrollment includes students from Mesa, Tempe, Scottsdale, Queen Creek, San Tan Valley, Gilbert, Chandler, Sacaton. Due to the unique nature of SSDHH, our students come from various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

STUDENTS ENROLLED TOTAL: 69 (35 male / 34 female)

Grade Level	Total Students	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian	White (Not Hispanic)
K - 5th	28	2	3	5	2	16

6th - 8th	17	4	2	3	1	7
9th -12th	24	2	2	9	1	10
TOTAL	69	8 (12%)	7 (10%)	17 (25%)	4 (6%)	33 (48%)

FREE & REDUCED LUNCH QUALIFICATION

GRADE LEVEL	TOTAL	F/R LUNCH	FREE ELIGIBLE	REDUCED ELIGIBLE
K - 5th	28	20	17	3
6th - 8th	17	7	4	3
9th - 12th	24	15	11	4
TOTAL	69	42 (61%)	32 (46%)	10 (14%)

SSDHH STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS - 69 Students Enrolled

Deaf Students	41	58.82%
Hard of Hearing Students	27	39.71%
Hearing Student	1	1.47%

SPECIAL EDUCATION CATAGORIES - 69 Students Enrolled

Hearing Impairment	50	72.06%
Multiple Disability	10	14.71%
MDSSI	8	11.76%
Autism	1	1.47%

SSDHH STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS - 21 Staff Members

Deaf Teachers	4	19.05%
Deaf Staff Members	6	28.57%
Hearing Teachers	6	28.57%
Hearing Staff Members	3	14.29%

Deaf Administration Members	1	4.76%
Hearing Administration Members	1	4.76%

SSDHH FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS - 69 Students Enrolled

Deaf Parents	5	7.25%
Hearing Parents	64	92.75%

FAMILY SIGN LANGUAGE ABILITIES - 68 Deaf Students Enrolled

Hearing Parents' Signing Skills: Advanced	4	5.88%
Hearing Parents' Signing Skills: Intermediate	10	14.71%
Hearing Parents' Signing Skills: Novice	22	32.35%
Hearing Parents' Signing Skills: None	32	47.06%

DEAF EDUCATION

National statistics reflect the fact that roughly 90% of deaf and hard of hearing children are born into hearing families and are not exposed to American Sign Language (ASL) until they enter school. In some cases, a deaf child is not exposed to ASL until late in their elementary school years due to an emphasis on speech and auditory training that is implemented to "cure" the child's deafness. Research has shown significant differences in the academic achievement of Deaf students born to Deaf families. Deaf children exposed to language from birth demonstrate academic gains equivalent to their same aged hearing counterparts.

Trybus & Jensema (1978) found deaf children born to Deaf parents consistently scored higher on tests of reading ability than their deaf peers born to hearing parents. Deaf children born to hearing parents demonstrate a delay in the area of literacy development due to limited communication skills/exposure at home. Typically, deaf students have been unable to make up the deficit during their K-12 education. Research shows deaf high school graduates have an average reading level comparable to that of hearing children between the ages of eight and nine (Hermans et al., 2008).

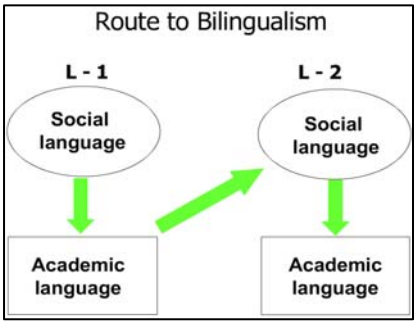
BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL APPROACH

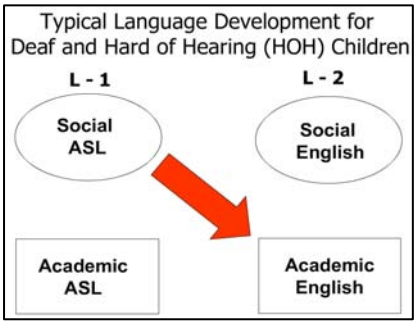
The ultimate goal in a bilingual/bicultural approach to educating deaf students is to maximize the student's potential

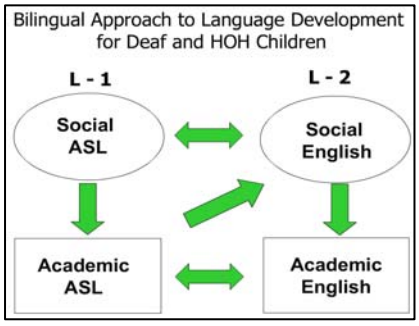
to participate in both the Deaf community and society as a whole.

(Evans, 2004, p. 26)

The bilingual/bicultural educational model has been well researched and applied in many deaf schools across the world. Bilingual/bicultural education as applied to the deaf population was first conceptualized based on the academic performance of deaf children born to deaf families. Deaf children born to deaf parents consistently performed better on English reading assessments than deaf children with hearing families (Trybus & Jensema, 1978). In the bilingual/bicultural model deaf students learn American Sign Language (ASL) as their first language and written English as their second, thus linking "the two separate language systems to a common conceptual core" (see diagrams below) (Evans, 2004, p. 17-18). In the classroom, consistent use of ASL by teachers supports the bilingual/bicultural approach. Bilingual/bicultural teachers provide deaf students with "conceptually accurate translations between the two







languages, and by presenting language in a multimodal way – through signs, words, print, and pictures – in order to make it meaningful" (Evans, 2004, p. 20). A common language shared by teacher and student allows for accessibility to the information and instruction. Deaf students become active participants in their own learning (Evans, 2004).

Language abilities for deaf children

Language	ASL	English	English
Mode	Signacy	Literacy	Oracy
Receptive Skills	▪Attending ▪Viewing	▪Reading	▪Listening (when appropriate) ▪Lipreading
Productive Skills	▪Signing	▪Writing (including typing)	▪Speaking

(Diagrams from Evans 2004)

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES ADDRESSED IN OUR PLAN

"We do know that an enormous discrepancy exists between the typical language and literate competencies of Deaf and hearing children (Allen, 1986; Erting, 1992; Gregory, 1995). This may be due to the fact that most Deaf children are born into hearing families and therefore not likely to be immersed in sign language from birth (Allen, 1986; Marschark, 1993). As a result, most Deaf students do not encounter accessible emergent language and literacy experiences until entering school (Erting, 1992; Gioia, 1997; Meier, 1991). Indeed, all too often, these children demonstrate significant limitations in their fund of general knowledge and language facility when compared with hearing classmates" (King & Quigley, 1985).

While 90% of Deaf and or hard of hearing children come from hearing families, at SSDHH the percentage is even higher (93%). The majority of hearing family members do not sign fluently enough to have normal, effortless communication. This lack of language from a young age has the greatest impact and handicaps our students more so than their actual hearing loss. Our school faces the unique challenge of constantly trying to make up for that loss of language, the foundation of learning, from the day they arrive in our classrooms; Kindergarten through high school. The delayed language impacts vocabulary, world knowledge, thinking and social and learning behavior and school readiness.

The SSDHH kindergarten students typically begin school with a significant expressive and receptive language deficit. As stated and illustrated in our diagrams, 93% of our students live in hearing households who do not use sign language this translates to 5 years of minimal exposure to language and experiences. Thus kindergarten students

arrive underprepared for the academics expected of a typical hearing child. Many have yet to learn the alphabet, colors, counting, etc. The kindergarten classroom focuses on language development and learning experiences. Strategies employed include use of pictures, drawings, and direct vocabulary instruction. It is important to note that while kindergarten students are learning the kindergarten standards they are learning basic language simultaneously.

Due to the hearing loss, reading instruction is not phonetically based. Instead it is centered on learning sight words and direct vocabulary instruction. Deaf students heavily rely on their vision as they are unable hear the world around them. Thus many Deaf students are visual learners, and as a result benefit greatly from the use of manipulatives and visual aids to support the learning process. Additionally, thematic instruction is utilized to increase categorical vocabulary. Art activities accompany themes and are used to build language as well as facilitate communication in the classroom between students.

Lack of world knowledge is a significant area of concern with our Deaf and hard of hearing students. World knowledge or incidental knowledge (background information) is something hearing children have access to from then second trimester of pregnancy. Hearing children have are surrounded with conversation and vocabulary throughout their day. In contrast, deaf children living with families who do not sign every conversation do not have the same access to information as their hearing counterparts.

Therefore, prior to introduction of a new topic, teachers must first develop background knowledge requisite to learn the new concepts. This is especially true in the areas of Social Studies and Science. Background knowledge is developed through scaffolding onto familiar subjects, use of visual aids, manipulative materials, and/or movies. Often teachers role play or act out important events or interactions, especially in history, making the lesson more accessible, Marzano's list of background knowledge words inform and guide this work (see discussion of Marzano's Vocabulary Development in addendum).

SEQUOIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING'S EFFORT TO PROVIDE CHALLENGING CURRICULUM STANDARDS

The following section is provided to give the board a detailed description of the efforts used at our school to increase our capacity to work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and improve their achievement. An addendum provides additional detailed looks at several of the Sequoia-wide initiatives that guide our efforts along with more information regarding implementation of these efforts. A second addendum provides a "by grade level" look at some of the efforts described to provide added detail if needed.

During the past five years we have utilized the following curriculum materials and methods in mathematics, language and reading, (we include language as a vital component of our narrative as it is critical to our population's needs). Data analysis will be provided for several of these efforts further along in this report.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL)

ASL is a deaf student's natural language, although it is not always acquired in the home. Establishing a strong ASL foundation is of utmost importance in the deaf child's formative years. Deaf students need a strong first language to build the foundation for learning. ASL instruction is a daily focus. ASL linguistic skills include: articulation, facial expression, classifiers, and grammar, in addition to story-telling and Deaf culture and history.

Introduction of new concepts begin with group discussion of the topic to assess students' background knowledge and understanding of the new concept. Discussions are conducted in ASL. Use of ASL as the first language when introducing a topic aids students with their initial exposure to the concept. Using ASL allows the teacher to access students' background knowledge. The goal is to guide the class from a conceptual understanding of the topic in ASL to a conceptual understanding in English. Students first brainstorm ideas in ASL and then write their ideas in English. This is often done as a class to develop a more comprehensive list of ideas. Allowing students to generate ideas in their first language (ASL) then translate the information into their second language (written English) demonstrates comprehension of the concept and

promotes their language development. The reverse is true as well. We strive to ensure our students can translate from ASL to written English and written English to ASL.

MANIPULATIVE VISUAL LANGUAGE K-12

Manipulative Visual Language (MVL) is a visual tool to break the code of English using colorful visual blocks for visual learners. Students learn the MVL symbols in an effort to improve their understanding of the English language. Deaf students are considered to be visual learners. Currently, MVL is taught at all grade levels.

"The most striking feature of MVL is the use of colored shapes to teach the parts of written English. Black equilateral triangles represent nouns, red circles represent verbs, purple triangles represent pronouns, green crescents represent prepositions, and blue equilateral triangles represent adjectives" (Gore & Gillies, 2003, p.72).

"When writing, children must be able to manipulate the syntactic and morphological structures of the language in order to express themselves." (Schirmer, Bailey, & Fitzgerald, 199, p. 383).

SSDHH implemented MVL during the school year of 2007-2008.

READING A-Z

The Reading A-Z program provides teachers with assessments and leveled reading books. SSDHH uses the website in conjunction with the interactive white board and overhead projector to lead guided reading activities. Reading A – Z is used with students who are not ready for the SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory) (typically our K – 3 students. Further discussion is provided under the Assessment segment of this report.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In the past, SSDHH students participated in PE with the other schools on our campus. There were many communication barriers between the hearing PE teacher and deaf students. We believed that deaf students could benefit greatly from a PE Teacher who could communicate directly with them.

In the fall of 2010, SSDHH hired a teacher with a B.A. Degree in Physical Education and was fluent in American Sign Language. We have noticed our students' participation has increased as a result of this intervention. In addition, we have seen a growth in their vocabulary development. Presently, the PE program has developed into a learning environment. Students enjoy various types of physical activities. The proof of this plays out when we see students using the skills they learned during P.E. time at recess times.

TECHNOLOGY IMPACTING DEAF EDUCATION

By far the tool that has made the greatest impact in is the document camera. The document camera and projector allows teachers to project text onto a board allowing the text to be visually accessible to all students. This tool has significantly and positively impacted reading instruction. Our results, which will be highlighted in the data charts show that we have made significant progress in reading when our nationally norm referenced testing is compared to comparable groups (i.e. other deaf and hard of hearing students). This technology has become vital to our program.

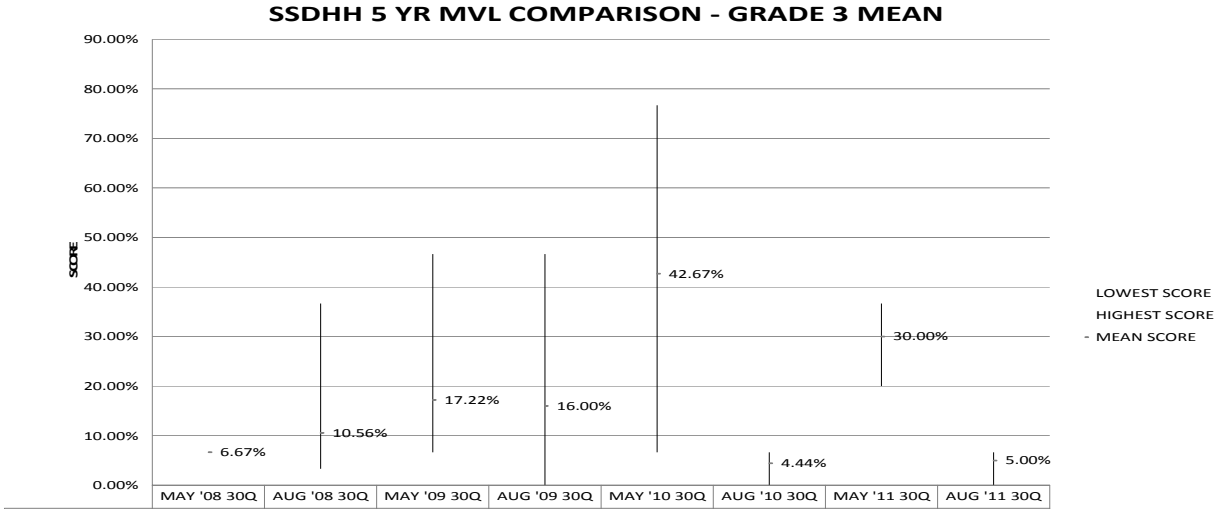
ASSESSMENTS USED AT SSDHH (Monitoring and Documenting Student Proficiency)

ASSESSMENTS USED

MANIPULATIVE VISUAL LANGUAGE - K-12

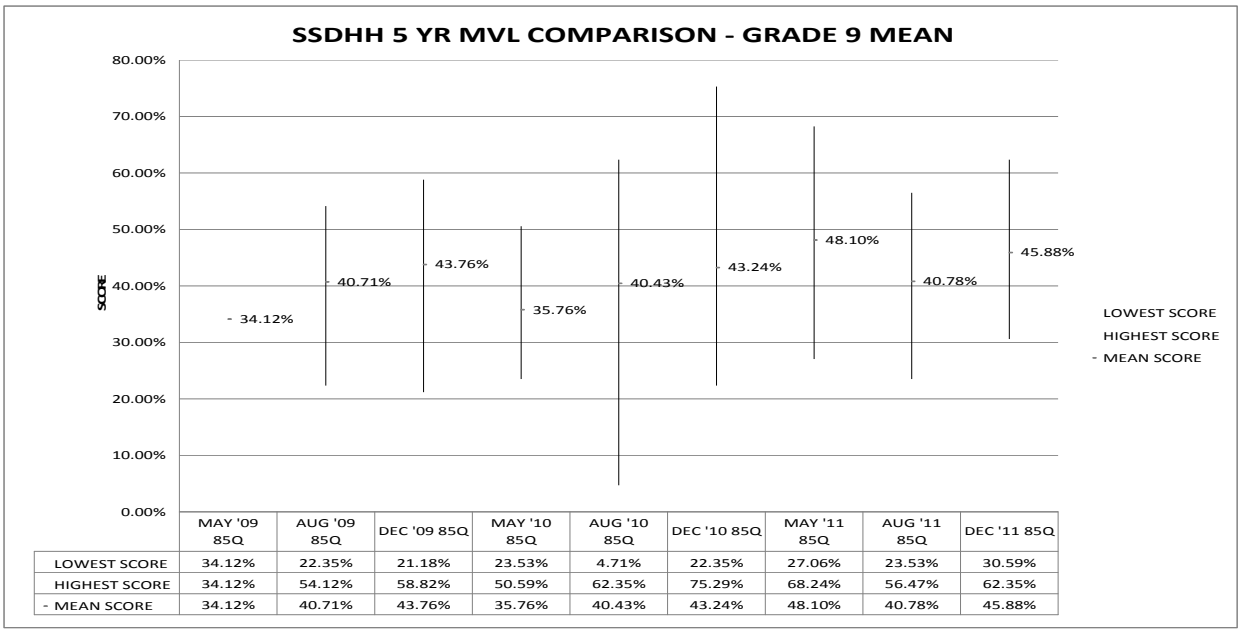
Assessments are leveled and results are based on a total of 15, 30, 36, or 85 problems. Each child receives a score out of 15, 30, 36, or 85 (for example, 4/15, 11/30, 23/36, or 38/85). The MVL assessment is given twice a year (August and May).

The data charts shown show the growth between August (start of the school year) and



	MAY '08 30Q	AUG '08 30Q	MAY '09 30Q	AUG '09 30Q	MAY '10 30Q	AUG '10 30Q	MAY '11 30Q	AUG '11 30Q
LOWEST SCORE	6.67%	3.33%	6.67%	0.00%	6.67%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%
HIGHEST SCORE	6.67%	36.67%	46.67%	46.67%	76.67%	6.67%	36.67%	6.67%
MEAN SCORE	6.67%	10.56%	17.22%	16.00%	42.67%	4.44%	30.00%	5.00%

May (end of the school year). Data is shown for several grade levels as MVL is an important piece of our reading and language program. There is growth noted at all levels of performance in these charts. Teachers use this data to guide their use of the MVL curriculum. When staff changes occur we train new staff members on MVL to ensure consistency from year to year. We will continue improving and using MVL in our program as we move forward.

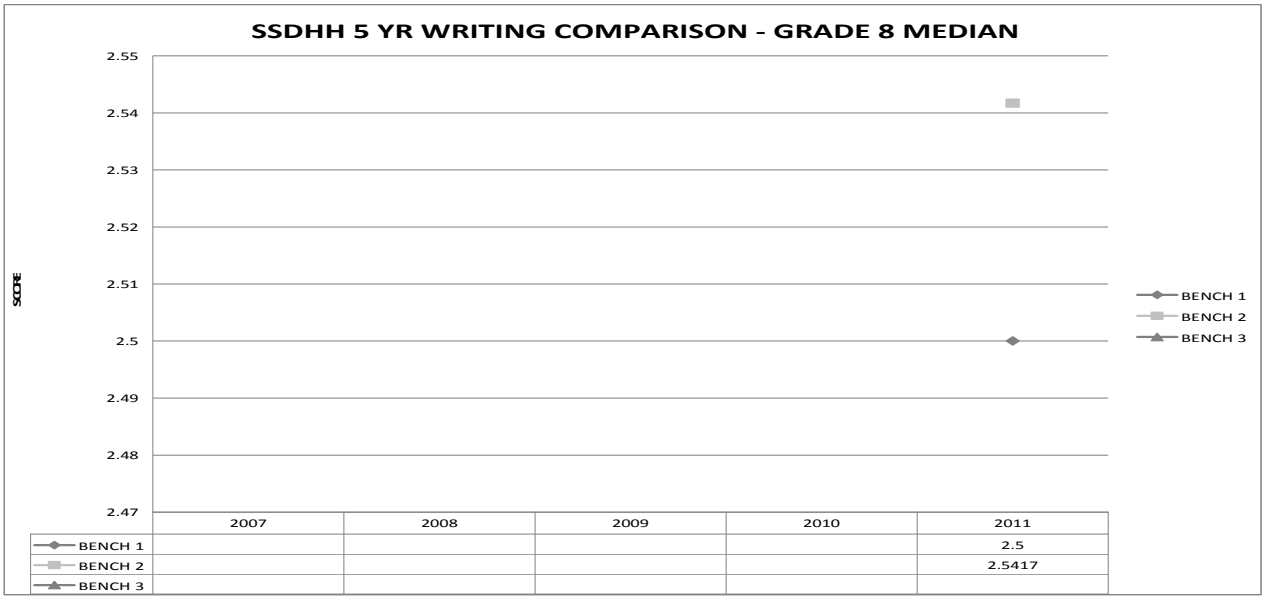


	MAY '09 85Q	AUG '09 85Q	DEC '09 85Q	MAY '10 85Q	AUG '10 85Q	DEC '10 85Q	MAY '11 85Q	AUG '11 85Q	DEC '11 85Q
LOWEST SCORE	34.12%	22.35%	21.18%	23.53%	4.71%	22.35%	27.06%	23.53%	30.59%
HIGHEST SCORE	34.12%	54.12%	58.82%	50.59%	62.35%	75.29%	68.24%	56.47%	62.35%
MEAN SCORE	34.12%	40.71%	43.76%	35.76%	40.43%	43.24%	48.10%	40.78%	45.88%

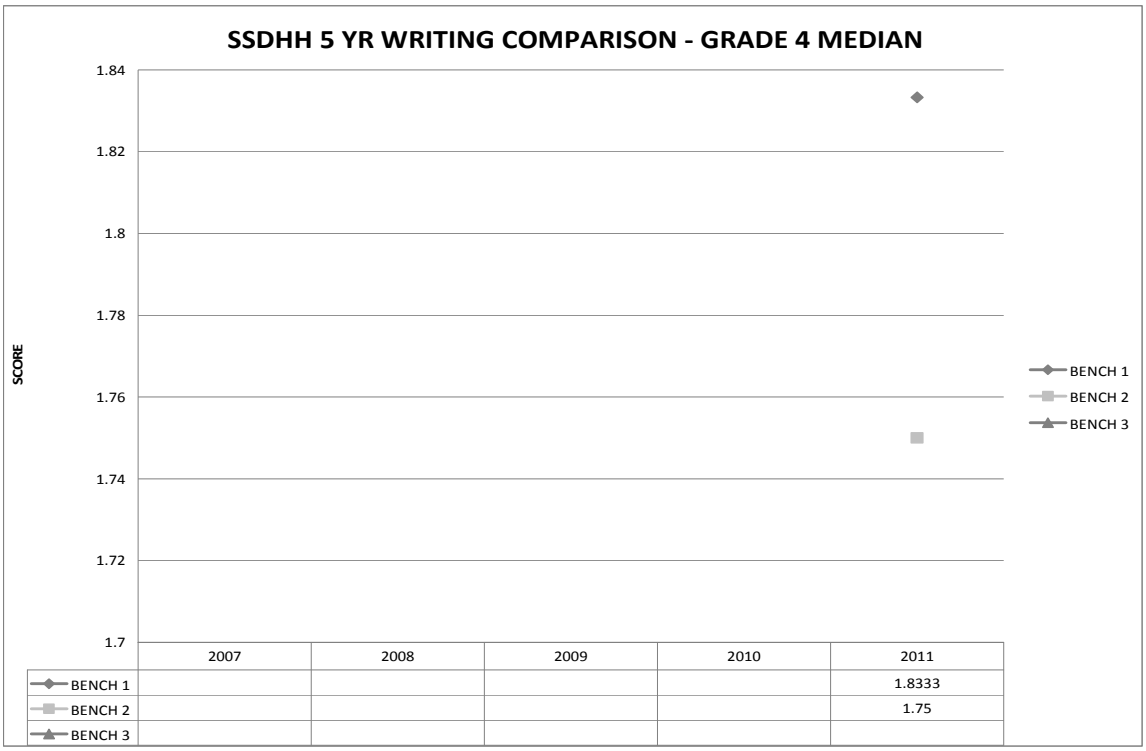
WRITING: 6+1 TRAITS WRITING RUBRIC - K-12

6+1 Traits Writing Rubric is an assessment tool used state-wide. Students are supplied with a writing prompt, or idea, and they write an essay following the topic. This assessment mirrors the AIMS Writing Assessment. Student essays are given to tow different teachers to evaluate. Evaluators use the 6+1 Rubric to evaluate the student's writing strengths and needs. The rubric is based on a total of 36 points.

"Writing typically presents a tremendous challenge to children who are deaf" (Schirmer, Bailey, & Fitzgerald, 199, p. 383). "For students who are not grade-level English users, including many deaf students, the written-English format of the assessment may be a barrier to demonstrating what they know" (Cawthon, 2011. p. 255).



Writing data has accumulated during this school year as we added Six Traits Writing to our assessments. The samples show the growth between benchmark one (circle) and benchmark two (square). We selected two random grade levels that are consistent with data for the other grade levels to illustrate the progress being made. Teachers have been trained by the district support team (see listing in addendum) to ensure inter-rater reliability in our grading of the writing samples analyzed. Teachers are also evaluated and supervised on several elements of the evaluation tool (see Sequoia Model for Effective Teaching) regarding their use of this data to drive instruction in their classroom. We believe our MVL program has impacted our students' ability to read and write and expect these results to improve even more dramatically in the future.



The current fourth graders have a longer exposure to the writing process and MVL than our ninth graders may have had. Our interest in creating a pre-school for our deaf school (bill allowing this is currently in AZ legislature) would allow us to begin the process of introducing our students to reading, mathematics and language earlier reflects our commitment to improving performance based on research on deaf children and our data.

FAST MATH - K through 2nd

Fast Math K-2 was designed and implemented for the school year of 2011-2012 through Sequoia School District to meet the Common Core Standards in Mathematics. The K through 2nd grade FAST Math is proctored in a one-on-one format. Students' mathematics knowledge and development are assessed and the data is utilized to drive the instruction. (See data charts)

FAST MATH BENCHMARK - 3rd through 12th

The FAST Math Benchmark is a Sequoia Schools assessment tool that is aligned with the Arizona State Standards for Mathematics. The benchmark assesses concepts that will be taught throughout the current school year. The benchmark scores are reported by

percentage. Students participate in the FAST Math Benchmark Assessments four times per year.

RIGBY PM READING ASSESSMENT – K through 5th

Rigby PM Reading Assessment is given to all K-5 students. Rigby PM assesses students' reading fluency. The assessment is proctored one-on-one. Students read a benchmark book with a teacher. Mastery is accomplished when a student earns a score of 85% or better on the benchmark book. Once a level is mastered, the student moves to up to next level book. Scores are reported as grade equivalencies (grade and month).

READING A-Z BENCHMARK READING ASSESSMENT – K through 5th

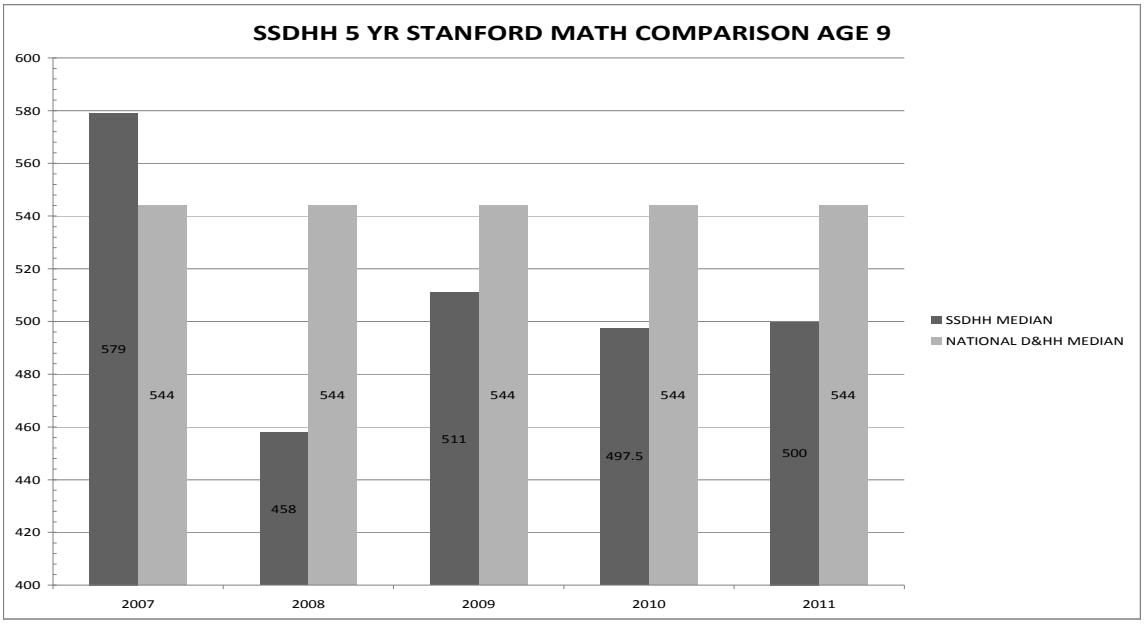
Reading A-Z Benchmark Reading Assessment is given to students who are not ready for SRI. The students are assessed on reading fluency. The assessment is proctored one-on-one. Students read a benchmark book with a teacher. Mastery is accomplished when a student earns a score of 85% or better on the benchmark book. Once a level is mastered, the student moves to up to next level book. Scores are reported as grade equivalencies (grade and month).

SRI READING ASSESSMENT – 3rd through 12th

Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) is an online reading assessment tool to determine how well each child reads and provides each student with a reading list of books within their reading level range. The assessment is taken independently on a computer. Students take SRI four times a year to determine monitor reading comprehension progress. Scores are reported as Lexiles® ranging from 200 to 1700+ for advanced readers.

We have chosen to leave out graphs for the various assessments listed above and use the state's own standardized measure as an indicator of the progress our students' have made.

For our next series of graphs we have chosen Stanford results comparing our deaf students' medians over the past five years to the national Deaf and Hard of Hearing medians (provided by Stanford)


SSDHH 5 YR STANFORD MATH COMPARISON AGE 9
600
580
560
540
520
500
480
460
440
420
400
579
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2007
2008
2009
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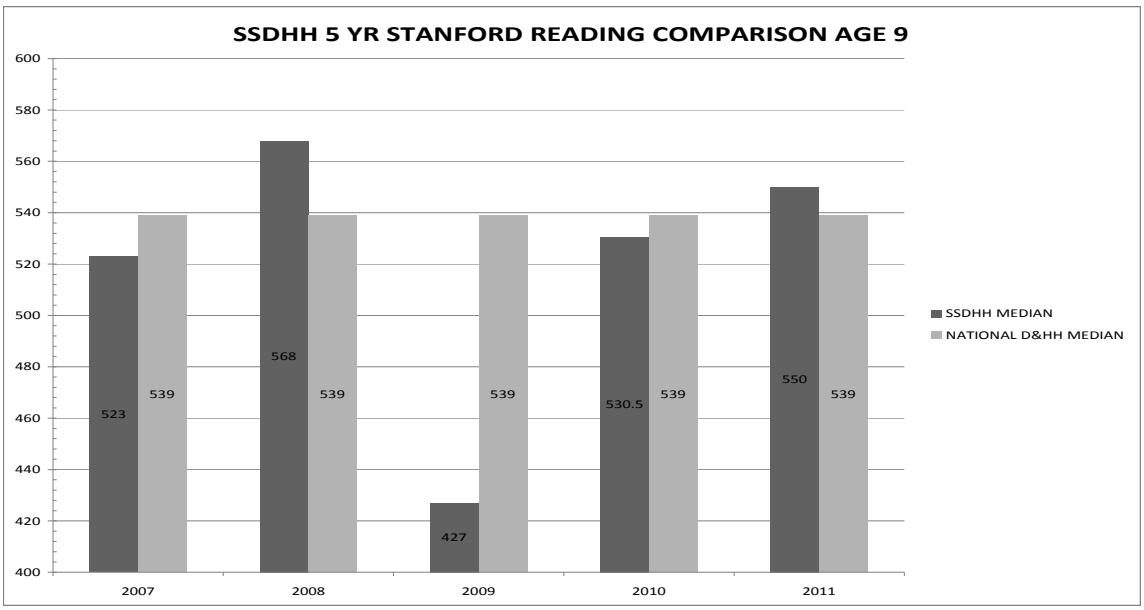
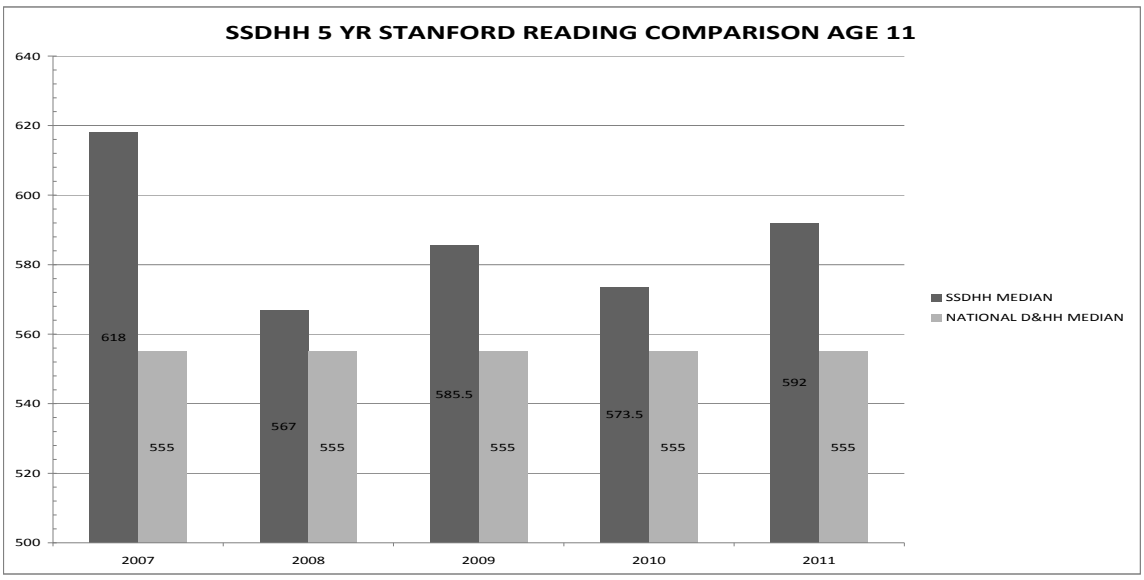
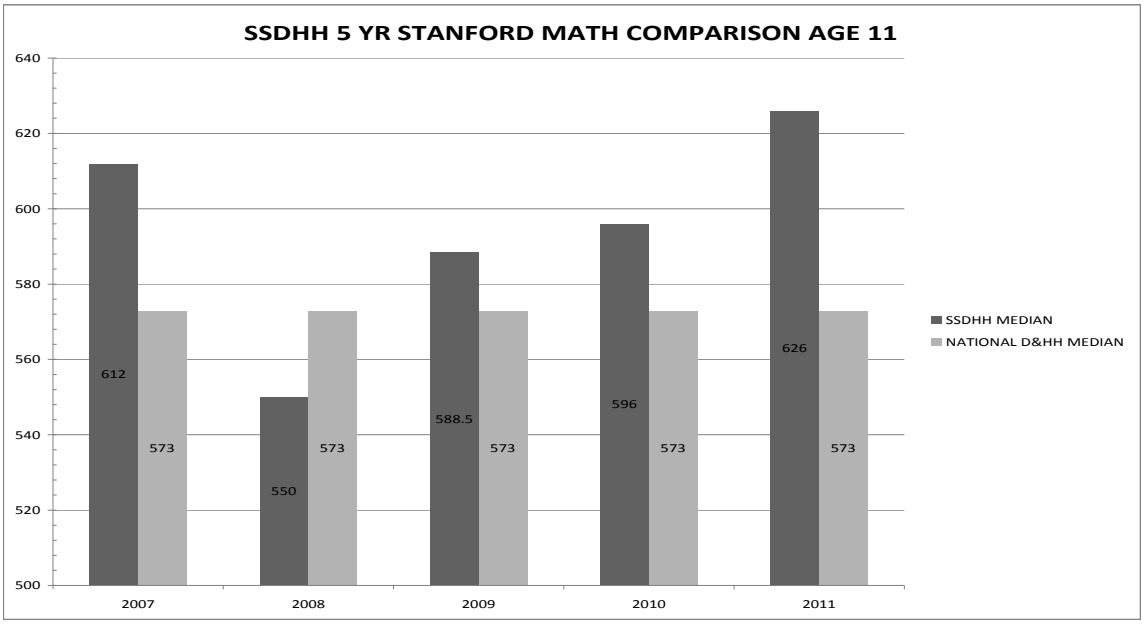
2011
SSDHH MEDIAN
NATIONAL D&HH MEDIAN

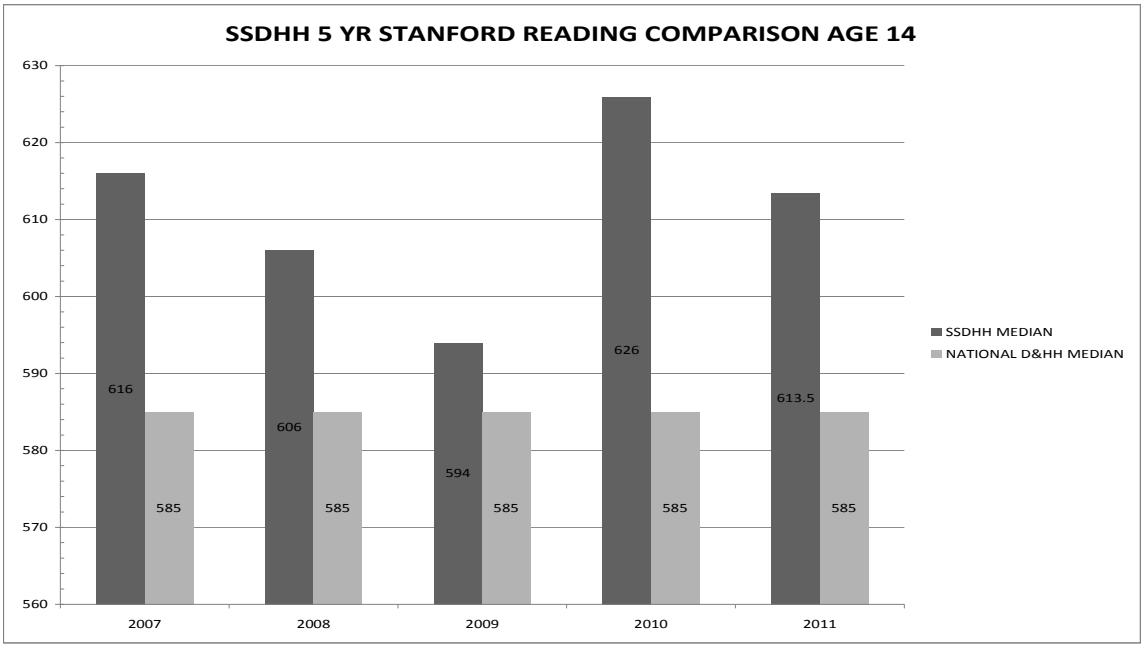


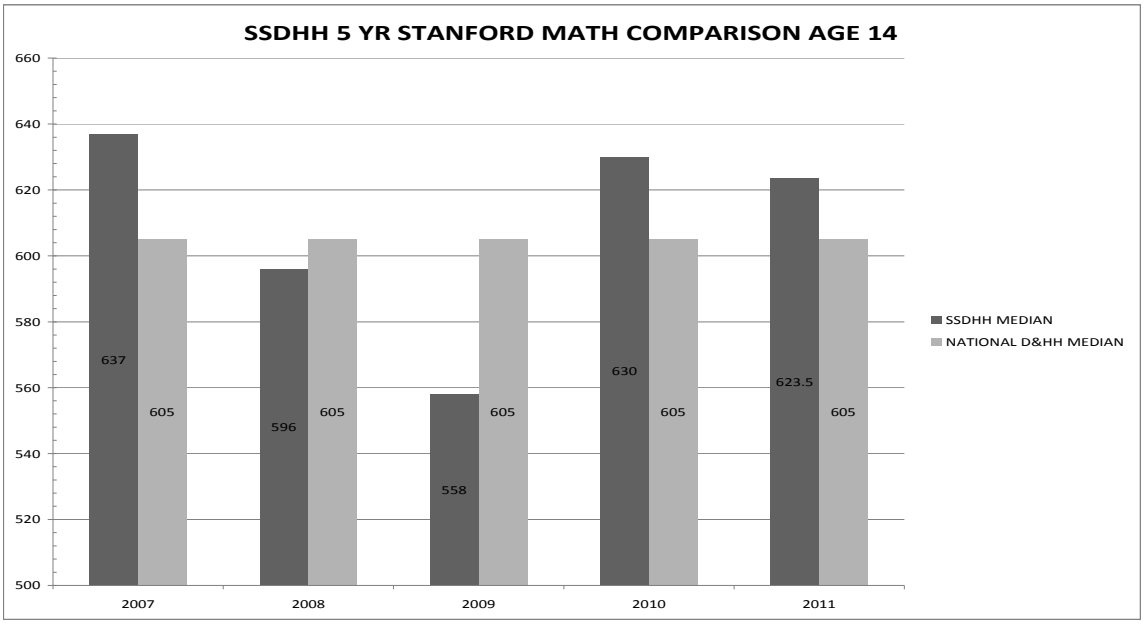
The dark bar in all of the graphs represents the median of Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. With the exception of 2007 and 2009 above when our programs were not fully developed our students have consistently performed at or above the national median for deaf and hard of hearing students on the Stanford Achievement Testing used by the State of Arizona. We have included graphs in Reading and Mathematics for the ages of 9, 11 and 14 as samples for this presentation. Our data is consistent at all ages in our population. Note that the students who were below median as 9 year olds moved to above median two years later in the years 2009 – 2011 in Reading.





The Stanford data above gives credence to the efficacy of the approaches we have adopted. While national medians for this group have remained static our data indicates that the longer we have contact with our students the better their performance becomes when compared to their peer groups nationally. This data supports our efforts to create a pre-school program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students as the time factor in an environment that is assisting these children in communications and vocabulary is a significant factor in their success.





The percentage of children that we had had a long term relationship with was lower in 2009 for this age group. Note that in spite of this in 2011 (at age 16 this group had a median of 654 compared to a national median of 635 for the same population).

For further discussion on Data Analysis Teams and how we continuously use Data Driven Decision Making please consult the addendum.

WHERE ARE WE GOING FROM HERE?

Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome.

Arthur Ashe

SSDHH is made up a group of dedicated educators. We realize that our efforts have only just begun. Our PMP includes purchases and plans that support the identified efforts in our narrative and provide additional materials and training in areas where we still feel we have weaknesses. The expenditures referenced in the PMP for mathematics materials are an example of texts and materials needed to implement our plan. The PMPs also provide for continuation of the efforts outlined in this narrative and the addendums.

In addition to the standard items called for in our PMPs we believe that there are items we can provide that have either no cost or are low cost solutions. We have many plans for the future of our students, their families and our school. SSDHH and all of its members have determined the areas we need to improve upon and the key elements required for successful attainment of our goals.

One of the elements we have identified as needing improvement is family involvement. Currently, we offer free American Sign Language courses once a week for family members of our students. We would like to expand this program to include the Shared Reading Project (SRP). SRP is designed to teach parents and caregivers how to read to their deaf and hard of hearing children using American Sign Language, and to use strategies to make book sharing most effective.

Culturally diverse Deaf readers were filmed as they used American Sign Language to read fun, predictable children's books. In our beginning statements we talked about the difficulties deaf children have with language. Several of the reasons cited were related to parent – child language and communication issues in early childhood. We fee that because children love seeing the books from the SRI program read over and over again, the parents will have repeated opportunities to practice. Deaf tutors will also visit the home to demonstrate how to sign the stories, and provide instant feedback to family members. We will provide DVDs of deaf readers signing the story to reinforce the new signs after the tutor has left.

- Once a week, a deaf tutor visits each home. The visits are scheduled at a time convenient for each family, with most taking place evenings or weekends.
- The tutor demonstrates how to sign a popular children's storybook.
- Family members practice signing the story.
- The tutor gives needed feedback to family members.
- The family members read the story to the deaf child.
- The tutor watches and gives helpful hints.

- The tutor leaves a "family book bag" with the family for a week. The bag contains a copy of the book, a DVD for practice, a bookmark with tips for reading to deaf children, and a guide containing activities to do with the child after reading the story.
- During the week, family members read the story to the child again and again. If family members forget some signs, they can look at the DVD, which has a deaf signer reading the story, to reinforce what the tutor previously taught.
- Family members make note of the number of times they read the story. They also jot down questions for the next tutoring session. The following week the tutor brings a new book, and the process begins again.

Currently, SSDHH owns all of the SRP materials and we are working to secure funding for the SRP Tutors outside of the normal budget process (i.e. donations). The program costs $450 per family and we would like to offer the program to families with a deaf child in grades K-3.

In addition to the Family ASL Classes and Shared Reading Project, SSDHH will house an ASL & Deaf Culture Resource Library. Our vision includes the library includes ASL videos, deaf culture/history books, information regarding parenting a deaf child and a resource librarian to assist parents, family members, ASL students and the public. The ASL & Deaf Culture Resource Library would also include an ASL Lab area. The ASL will be equipped with video camera, green screen and a Mac computer for video editing. The lab will provide parents, students, and others the opportunity to use and evaluate their developing ASL skills. We would like to offer established times where the library is open to the public.

Another element SSDHH has identified as an area to strengthen is student access to language beyond the school day. Due to the reality of our students' family communication issues, SSDHH recognizes the opportunity to use both social networking and the internet to enhance language development. We are working on developing a visual vocabulary list that represents both ASL and English and includes an ASL description of the definition. We would like the visual vocabulary dictionary to be

accessible to students online to aid in both their vocabulary development and homework. In addition to the online visual vocabulary dictionary, we would like to create a social network via videophone or internet where students can participate in guided conversations with peers and a tutor. The intent of the social network would be a structured, guided, setting to develop social ASL skills and develop ASL vocabulary.

A team of ASL experts and researchers are developing curricula and common standards for American Sign Language, Native Language. These common standards are scheduled to be published in the 2013-2014 school year. Upon availability, SSDHH will purchase and implement them. The ASL Standards will provide a framework for teaching and assessing our students understanding and use of their first language, ASL.

SSDHH is provides K-12 programming. We see a need in the area of transition of deaf students from the K-12 environment to either post-secondary education or into the workforce. We strive to continually enhance the transition planning and experiences for our students. Currently, we are offering ECAP as a semester long course required by all freshmen, although we encourage students to take the class again to re-frame and update their career goals. During the 2011-2012 school year, SSDHH hosted a 'College Week' welcoming presenters from Gallaudet University, National Technical Institute for the Deaf/Rochester Technical Institute, California State University-Northridge, and Mesa Community College. In addition, SSDHH hosted a 'Career Week' welcoming presenters from all over the US. Each presenter was a Deaf adult working in a different career field. Students had the opportunity to meet with each person, learn about their field, education required and how they overcame obstacles to be successful.

Within this narrative, SSDHH has explained the importance of language exposure early in a deaf child's development. We strongly believe we can be part of the solution. Working closely with the Arizona Legislature, we have drafted a bill allowing us to provide pre-school programming to deaf and hard of hearing children. Thus far, the bill has passed the AZ Senate and the House. Fingers crossed, we are planning to open the pre-school at the onset of the 2013-2014 school year.

Capacity and Resources to Support Change and Improvement

Sequoia is fully committed to this school's efforts to improve educational performance for deaf and hard of hearing students as noted in this document and District Level Narrative we provide this school with the support it needs to succeed. This support network has evolved during the past five years to its current state. The assistant superintendent (a former highly qualified New Hampshire Superintendent) now assigned to this school (fall of 2010) is overseeing the transition. There is direct involvement with the school and the current Instructional Support Team (see chart on following pages).

District Level Instructional Support Team

Name	Title	Responsibilities
Ms Tamara Becker MSEd	Director of Professional Development	• Oversees all aspects of professional development training, activities and implementation. • Provides researches and training on professional learning communities (PLC's) for implementation at all Sequoia Schools during 2012-13 school year. • Works with principals and teachers on BEST practices training at their school site. • Sequoia has invested heavily in training at the administrative and teacher level in the Dufour Model of Professional Learning Communities we have utilized Title II monies for this purpose.
Ms Becky Wong MSEd	Instructional Support Team	• Works with principals and teachers on BEST practices training within the school site. • Facilities unwrapping of Common Core standards in Mathematics and English. • Develops and prepares teaching aids to implement Common Core standards. • Supports new teachers to Sequoia and to the profession. • Provides support for the FAST Math program. • Writing Committee Facilitator (Six Traits and Beyond)
Ms Jodi Fults MSEd	FAST Math Coordinator	• Creates and maintains the FAST Math assessment program aligned to state/common core standards. (See data charts in assessment area of this report) • Grades and prepares Fast Math benchmark data for interpretation at the school site. • Facilitates Unwrapping Common Core Mathematics Standards. • Modify and revise FAST Math Assessment Program (Sequoia Proprietary Mathematics Benchmark) to accommodate Common Core change. • Trains teachers/principals to administer Fast Math Assessment Program.

Ms Kemberlyn Cotter	DORA/Writing Coordinator SSDHH DOES NOT USE DORA	• Trains teachers/principals on how to administer/interpret DORA & writing benchmarks. • Writing Committee Facilitator (Six Traits and Beyond)
Ms Rachelle Hanson	ELL Director SSDHH DOES NOT USE ELL SERVICES	• Oversees Sequoia Schools ELL program. • Writes and manages ELL grants. • Supports site administration with ELL compliance.
Ms Melinda Poit 2 MAs	Data Analyst	• Organizes all benchmark/AIMS/etc… data for interpretation at all levels within the Sequoia School Organization. • Hired in 2011 as part of our comprehensive move to Data Driven Decision Making
Ms Tammy Richardson MS	Librarian and Archivist	• Librarian for Horne Campus Schools • District AIMS Coordinator • At SSDHH this is handled by the High School Assistant Principal • Professional Development Coach
Ms Maxie Patel MSEd	Title 1 Coordinator	• Works with Grants Coordinator • Assists with Title 1 compliance at all sites • Works with principals and teachers on BEST practices training. • Professional Development Coach • Trains teachers/principals how to administer/interpret DIBELS.

Sequoia District-Wide Initiatives that Promote Best Practices

Supervision and Evaluation Program	Professional Grade Model (see attached documentation) for the supervision and evaluation of teachers and principals.
Data Driven Decision Making	Professionally developed and monitored benchmarks in mathematics, reading, and writing with extensive district level support including dedicated data professionals and area specialists.
Policies and Procedures	Web based, linked support for staff on Sequoia policies and procedures, including academic, social curriculum, professional and disciplinary supports.
Curriculum Maps and Curriculum Alignment to State and Common Core Standards	Policy, procedures and requirements for curriculum maps from each teacher. District wide participation of staff in the unwrapping of common core standards and their impact on curriculum. Common Formative Assessments in Mathematics for all grade levels aligned to state and common core standards.
Professional Learning Communities	District wide and school level PLC's supported by a district administration. Common Professional Development Days and expectations for school level PLC's. Professional Development Coaches at each grade level and in each Jr. High and High School subject area. Profession Development for principals with paid scholarships to AZ Principals' Academy and regular professional development at the district for

	principals.
Academic Language Support	Training, and implementation of Marzano's et al, Building Academic Vocabulary.

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Addendum

The following narrative:

- ✓ Describes the initiatives outlined on the prior pages.
- ✓ Provides a context of how they were developed
- ✓ Describes the implementation process
- ✓ Describes the monitoring process
- ✓ Includes policies and procedures related to the initiative
- ✓ Describes the integration with Arizona and National Academic Standards
- ✓ Discusses professional development associated with the initiatives
- ✓ Analyzes tools used to review the data and the data's relationship to improving student achievement
- ✓ Relates this through supervision and evaluation with teacher effectiveness
- ✓ Describes the data presentation used in the school's narrative, and how it is related to our management plan

Sequoia Supervision and Evaluation Process

Fully implemented in 2010 – 2011 the Sequoia Supervision and Evaluation process is documented and fully reproduced in the documentation provided to the Charter School Board for each school's renewal. (See: Sequoia Supervision and Evaluation Model for Teacher (and Principal) Effectiveness). Work on this implementation began in 2009 (prior to any State mandate). Mr. Neil and the board had used several tools prior to committing to asking the staff to develop the attached model.

The Sequoia supervision and evaluation program is based on the premise that supervision and evaluation of the instructional program is essential to the efficacy and professional growth of the teacher and principal. Any performance management plan for a school must have a supporting system for supervision and evaluation that is designed to increase teaching effectiveness. *The Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing uses a modified version of this supervision and evaluation model with several modifications based on the specific needs of the deaf and hard of hearing clientele.*

We believe it is imperative that the supervisor and teacher identify, analyze, and act on the results of supervision and evaluation activities and use the data gathered in this process in a meaningful, constructive, and timely way.

The tools we have created provide this data in useful, easy to understand, and meaningful ways to the organization and to the practitioners in the field.

We believe that learners benefit from teachers who are effective in the classroom. Teacher effectiveness improves when thoughts, practices and information are shared. Effective professional conversations improve teacher's effectiveness and school performance.

At Sequoia our Supervision and Evaluation protocols were established in 2009 – 2010, and have been setting the benchmark for Supervision and Evaluation in Arizona Charter Schools. We have presented this model at the Arizona State Charter Schools Conference (2011) and to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools'.

Monitoring is done on a DAILY basis with principals in the classroom frequently for informal observations, semi-formal observations and protocols (see model) and formal observational tools for substantive follow up for ineffective teachers. Assistant Superintendents provide this monitoring for principals utilizing a similar format and structure. Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing principals conduct daily, weekly, and semi-annual supervision and evaluation. Several staff members are on an intensive assistance program with one teacher receiving a weeks worth of observations and feedback in February.

The Supervision and Evaluation process captures all of the data on each person being supervised and provides us with a way to monitor the professional growth and efficacy of each staff member. Graphic data including student feedback on performance is provided during the evaluation process. Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing used this data to inform its retention of staff.

Supervision and evaluation protocols are published and dates for monitoring the process are mandated in policy. Training in the method is continuously upgraded with special attention being given to inter-rater reliability at six annual principals' professional development days.

DATA DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

As noted, Sequoia provides several central office level staff members to provide the schools with data analysis services. Each principal is required to submit and review State testing, Sequoia Benchmark Testing, and any survey tool that Sequoia provides. This policy is institutionalized in Policy and Procedures. Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing conducts data meetings on a regular basis to evaluate their data.

FAST MATH - Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing uses FAST Math, an assessment program aligned to the Arizona Mathematics Standards. FAST is an acronym which stands for Focusing on Arizona Standards through Technology. FAST Math includes a Scope and Sequence for each grade level, micro-assessments aligned to each objective on the Scope and Sequence, benchmarks aligned to the essential objectives on the Scope and Sequence, and a skills test that assesses a student's knowledge of the basic math skills at each grade level. Monitoring is done at the local, district (dedicated staff (see chart)), and reviewed at the assistant superintendent and superintendent level.

Each quarter, Sequoia Schools Instructional Support personnel hand delivers math benchmark testing materials to grades 3 – 10. The benchmarks are then collected, scored, and the results provided to the teachers and principals. The K-2 teachers are given math benchmark testing materials at the beginning of the school year (initiated in 2011 at this level). They are responsible for administering, scoring, and recording the results of their math benchmarks. The principal monitors the results and provides feedback to the teacher regarding interventions and activities. Teachers are highly aware of the math benchmark data and use it to inform their instructional decisions. Students and parents are informed about the math benchmark results.

The development of FAST Math (Sequoia's Proprietary Program for Benchmarking Mathematics) began in 2002. Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is particularly interested in the data that we have gathered from FAST MATH and has decided to incorporate mathematics instruction during each subject as a result of this analysis.

Analysis reveals a 0.88 correlation between the results on FAST MATH and success on the AZ Standards. Data for FAST MATH is presented in the Charter and School Level Narrative.

DIBELS and DORA – Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing does NOT use DIBELS and DORA with their population. The programs and assessments used are noted in the main narrative.

AZ AIMS Testing - Annual AIMS testing is an integral part of each school's AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) and AZ LEARNS (Measurements taken by ADE to determine if each school is meeting "No Child Left Behind" and other state mandated requirements). All AIMS information can be accessed at the following site: http://www.azed.gov/standards-practices/

Special education students taking AIMS are granted various accommodations that must be followed as the test is planned and administered. Teachers should review each student's IEP prior to administering the test so that they are prepared to provide the stated accommodations as written with no exceptions.

Each year ADE provides fall and spring AIMS workshops which outline test guidelines, the ordering process and materials security and return instructions. Principals and/or a designee are required to attend this training and will be provided with hard copies of all the materials covered at the workshop. Upon completion of the workshop, each site should determine a plan of action to insure a smooth testing period. The principal and each staff member are responsible for all AIMS administration and record keeping. Graphs regarding AIMS and Stanford results are provided in the Charter-School Level Narratives.

A Five Year Testing Calendar provided by ADE helps each school plan their calendars to insure that adequate instruction and preparation has been given before the test.

Stanford 10 Testing - Stanford 10 Testing is required by state law and is conducted every spring for 2nd and 9th grade students over a one or two day testing period. The Stanford 10 Test provides each student's national percentile rankings in core subjects. The results of the Stanford 10 test can be used to determine student strengths and weaknesses and help them better prepare for AIMS testing. Sequoia Schools provide tutoring and after school programs at many sites to reinforce and encourage students' skills. One on one tutoring is provided as part of each deaf and hard of hearing child's educational plan.

Data is gathered and analyzed at the central office level and at the school level. AIMS and Stanford Testing results are widely distributed to staff. At Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Heaing this is part of our data team's activities and IEPs for each child.

At Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing our evaluation rubrics (see rubric 18-21 (Sequoia Teacher Effectiveness Rubric) specifically address the use and reporting of data from AIMS, Stanford, and Benchmark testing.

Formative, Summative and Performance Assessments - Teachers are expected to use formative, summative and performance assessments in their teaching. Monitoring and expectations for these assessments is provided for in the Teacher Effectiveness Rubrics. Sequoia tracks all teacher assessments through supervision and the Power School database. There must be a correlation between these assessments and the school's curriculum as stated in Curriculum Maps and Lesson Plans.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All Sequoia Charters are required to use Sequoia's Policies and Procedures to guide their day to day activities. As part of the supervision and evaluation system, all staff is rated on their understanding and implementation of Sequoia's Policies and Procedures.

Web based, linked support for staff on Sequoia policies and procedures. These resources include academic, social curriculum, professional and disciplinary supports. Expectations for interventions, special education, and student – staff interactions are all part of these procedures. Please visit our website for the entire document.

CURRICULUM MAPS AND CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT TO STATE AND COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Curriculum Maps - Sequoia implemented a policy regarding the construction and utilization of Curriculum Maps in 2008 with mandatory participation in 2009.

Any teacher employed by Sequoia Choice Education and Development, and Edkey, Inc. is required to create and utilize a curriculum map in their core subject(s).

For the subject of reading the curriculum map needs to, at a minimum, address the following:

- Explicit vocabulary instruction
- Direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction
- Opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation
- Instruction in reading foundational skills (e.g., decoding and fluency) for students who need to be taught these skills

2009 Curriculum Maps Requirements

Elementary School Teachers

- Teachers at the Elementary level shall be required to complete a DRAFT of their curriculum map for English Language Arts by July 30, 2009 and submit it electronically to their principal and the Instructional Support Department.

Secondary School Teachers

- Teachers at the Secondary level shall be required to complete a DRAFT of at least one core subject/grade by July 30, 2009 and submit it electronically to their principal and the Instructional Support Department.
- All Teachers Employed After June 1, 2009
- Teachers employed after June 1, 2009 shall complete the first DRAFT of their curriculum map by January 21, 2010 and submit it electronically to their principal and the Instructional Support Department

2010 and Beyond Implementation (All Teachers Employed After 2009)

All teachers hired after 2009 shall be required to complete a DRAFT of their curriculum map according to the Elementary and Secondary guidelines above and submit it electronically to their principal and the Instructional Support Department within the first 3 months of their employment. Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing fully implemented this process in 2010. It is a work in progress with monitoring during supervision and evaluation and during Professional Learning Sessions at the district and local level.

Failure to create and submit the required curriculum maps is viewed as a serious breach of Arizona's Professional Teaching Standards and may

result in dismissal at Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Curriculum Maps guide instruction throughout the year and are amended, enhanced and discussed frequently.

Sequoia Staff has been provided Professional Development Days during the past five years to work on and learn about curriculum maps. New teachers are oriented to these protocols during a separate week of orientation for new teachers each year. Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing holds specialized days for their staff's specific needs.

Unwrapping the New Core Standards - Sequoia currently has district wide (all schools) participation of staff in the unwrapping of common core standards and their impact on curriculum at all of our schools. Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing staff participates in this process. This process is monitored by members of the District Level Instructional Support Team as outlined previously. Principals, staff and the assistant superintendents also monitor curriculum and decisions are made based on data whether to change practice based on these discussions.

(See also Sequoia Supervision for Teaching Effectiveness for rubrics related to staff implementation and monitoring of curriculum and staff expectations for curriculum maps.)

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve.

PLC's operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.

- DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, 2006

Professional Learning Communities are

- A collaborative process
- Focused on student work and student learning
- Focused on Instructional Practice
- An empowering infrastructure of support
- Effective professional development
- Connected to the context of teachers' classrooms
- Action and results oriented
- Continuous school improvement

Professional Learning Communities at Sequoia:

- Professional
  - "Every teacher is a leader; every leader is a teacher."
- Learning
  - In a PLC School, learning applies as much to teachers, administrators, and parents as to students.
  - Focus on instruction, curriculum and assessment.
- Community
  - Support
  - Cooperation vs. competition
  - Focus intensely on the mission, vision, goals, and values.
  - Improvement of the whole vs. striving to get ahead individually.

Professional Learning Communities change the focus from "teaching" to "learning', and establishes a strong student centered environment.

Support for the organization wide and school level Professional Learning Communities is provided by the Instructional Support team identified earlier. Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing also runs school based PLCs.

(See also Sequoia Supervision for Teaching Effectiveness for rubrics related to Professional Learning Communities and staff expectations for this vital part of our program.)

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Sequoia lists this as a separate component rather than linking it to Curriculum Mapping, Curriculum, and Unpacking the Core Standards because Academic Background knowledge consists of segments of information which have words and phrases associated with them. Numerous studies have found a positive correlation between academic background knowledge and achievement in school.

Students who have a large amount of academic background knowledge about a topic learn new information on the same subject easier and quicker than those who do not. Moreover, studies have revealed a significant relationship between knowledge of academic information and achievement later in life.

In Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement: Research on What Works in Schools, Robert Marzano first outlines a program of wide reading to compensate for the lack of academic experiences. Its purpose is to provide a variety of virtual experiences. Then, he details a research based process for teaching academic terms, people, and events to build academic vocabulary.

Marzano details this process in his six step process for teaching new terms. Sequoia currently has brought all staff up to speed on this method training and paying for workshops for staff since 2008. We provide staff with access to Marzano's materials via our web page. All classrooms are expected to work on academic vocabulary during all of their lessons. Word walls are expected in each room. Monitoring is provided in our supervision and evaluation model, through checks on lesson plans and with daily visits. Several of our supervision and evaluation rubrics address this issue. At Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing teachers are expected to keep word walls and to actively teach vocabulary using our own protocols designed for our specific clientele. This effort is starting to pay off in our reading and language data. Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is concentrating on increasing our students' mathematics vocabulary as we have identified that deficit as a problem area.

Working with Students

Our students are the most important people at Sequoia Schools. *Sequoia Schools offers all students including those who have not been successful in other academic environments* a chance to succeed. Sequoia Schools strives to give its teachers the tools they need to work effectively with all students.

Each teacher, instructional aide and other staff member is responsible and evaluated (see Teacher Evaluation Artifact) for the following:

Assuring the safety and well-being of each student in their class and each student at the site on a daily basis;

Creating an environment of academic progress for each student in their class as outlined below:

1. Knowing each child in their class at a level sufficient to promote best teaching practices;
2. Supervising each of their students' personalized learning plans, attendance and behavior. This includes making learning goals,

setting expectations for student performance and modifying their teaching and those goals and expectations as directed by the data;

3. Assessing, monitoring and acting on assessment data ***and*** information gleaned from dealing with the student as an individual;
4. Initiating consistent and pertinent contact with each student and their parents to communicate student performance and insure achievement of academic and individualized learning goals;
5. Maintaining accurate and timely records of student progress toward achievement of academic goals in Power School.
6. Maintaining accurate and timely records of student attendance and discipline in Power School
7. Designing and implementing the site's instructional program as outlined in the school's curriculum guides and curriculum maps;
8. Being an active member of the site's curriculum team;
9. Providing assistance to site staff and students in their particular area of certification and beyond as needed.
10. Supporting, implementing and enforcing all of Sequoia Schools' Policies and Procedures including student attendance, dress and behaviors.

Staff Expectations Regarding Student Achievement

In "What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action", Marzano et al present a comprehensive survey of the research on best practices and rank the factors that impact student achievement. The chart on the next page consolidates the information and presents the factors, their rank and the descriptor used by the research.

School Level Factor	Rank	Descriptor used by Researchers of the Factor
Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum	**1**	**Opportunity to Learn** **Time, Content Coverage, Concentration of Teaching and Learning, Focus on Central Learning Skills, Emphasis on Basic Skill Acquisition**
Challenging Goals and	**2**	**Monitoring of Student Progress**

Effective Feedback		**High Expectations and Requirements** **Pressure to Achieve**
Parental and Community Involvement	**3**	**Parental Involvement** **Home – School Partnerships**
Safe and Orderly Environment	**4**	**School Climate / Safe and Orderly Atmosphere** **A LEARNING Environment** **Pupils have Rights and Expectations** **Positive Reinforcement**
Collegiality and Professionalism	**5**	**Leadership, Shared Vision and Goals** **Process Oriented Staff Development** **Cooperation** **A Learning Organization**

Chart 1.0 **Modification of Marzano et al 2003**

Student Achievement

Sequoia Schools' intention is to provide its staff with the tools needed to take "what works in schools" and apply it at each site. While the above factors are self-descriptive some deserve further explanation as outlined below:

Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum - A guaranteed and viable curriculum is not an accident. To be guaranteed and viable each teacher must create a meaningful annual curriculum map along with effective weekly and daily teaching plans that provide each student the opportunity to learn, that allow adequate time to cover all content satisfactorily, that focus on central learning skills and that emphasize basic skill acquisition

Children must be actively taught vocabulary to succeed in reading and other academic endeavors (See a complete list of necessary academic vocabulary for success in school and AIMS testing in Marzano's Word Lists a PDF file is available.)

Challenging Goals and Effective Feedback - Each child will have a greater opportunity to achieve academic success if they are appropriately guided, challenged and monitored. As teachers help their students set realistic and attainable educational goals and then consistently work to fulfill, refine and report on those goals academic achievement will increase. We

will outline the steps we have taken to manage the challenges we face at each site in the Performance Management Segment of this renewal application.

Parental and Community Involvement - Student achievement will rise in proportion to the level of parental or other interested parties' involvement in the child's learning. To this end, effective, consistent and regular communication between the school the teachers and the parents is imperative and must be an ever improving attribute at each site. This involvement is detailed in the specific school (charter) report that follows.

Effectively managed site councils are not only encouraged but required at each site. Each site administrator is encouraged to develop relationships with individuals and organizations that desire to assist in the educational process.

Safe and Orderly Environment - Students must feel safe while attending or in transit to or from their school. Classes must maintain a level of order that permits teaching and learning to occur. Students must understand and be empowered to claim their right to learn. We specifically teach the Social Curriculum at our sites and maintain a highly trained group of teachers that help monitor and train staff on this method.

Collegiality and Professionalism

Sequoia Schools seek to become the standard for student success. As part of that vision each school is committed to creating an environment of collegial and professional relationships.

Collegiality - Sequoia Schools defines collegial behavior in terms of teachers and staff in a supportive role with one another. The ultimate goal is the academic success of each student. Open and civil interactions that are respectful of each professional's role in the education of students are expected.

Because of the correlation between professionalism and student achievement Sequoia Schools has placed a premium on attracting and keeping highly qualified and effective instructors. Each staff member is encouraged to constantly augment and monitor their professional growth. All principals are expected to attend the Arizona Principals' Academy as part of their professional growth.

Pedagogical Knowledge - Sequoia Schools seek pedagogical methods that lead to success in the educational environment. Research shows that

when schools do the following action steps there is a high rate of academic success:

- Establish norms of conduct and behavior amongst staff that engender collegiality and professionalism.
- Establish methods of structures that allow professional staff input into decisions and policies for the organization.
- Engage teachers and staff in meaningful staff development activities.

Evaluating Pedagogical Success of a Principal - Principals are evaluated using the Sequoia Principals' Effectiveness model developed by Sequoia and presented at the annual Charter School Conference this October (2011). See artifacts section of this application). Principals are evaluated on their ability to effectively apply the following pedagogical skill sets in their schools:

- Be the academic leader of their school
- Resolve conflicts between themselves and their staff or district office
- Address and solve professional problems
- Share information about students and employees
- Communicate to third parties about their interactions with one another
- Conduct themselves professionally

Staff Competencies

Sequoia Schools' principals are the site supervisors at their site. Sequoia Schools' staffs are supervised based on expectations in the following components:

- Teachers' Professional Hierarchy
    - Teachers receive a copy of the Teachers' Professional Hierarchy (see Artifacts on Evaluation) and are supervised and evaluated based on their progress on this hierarchy.
    - In addition to this hierarchy teachers are expected to display the following:
        - Computer Resources Mastery
            - Sequoia Schools' staff members are expected to be proficient users of the computer systems and programs. To assist employees in this requirement Sequoia Schools Information Technology

Department (IT) provides training on the computer systems when a new employee is hired or as requested.

- Access to Sequoia Schools' computers is limited to students and/or employees of Sequoia Schools. Assignment of computer rights occurs after the employee is hired. All staff members are trained and sign off on Sequoia's Policies and Procedures regarding computer use and electronic communications. Our systems are highly monitored for internet safety.

▪ Student Management Systems

- All teachers are expected to be able to keep their student records up to date and accurate. Training on the school management system is conducted each August.

Control of the Learning Environment - The first task of the teacher is to establish the tone of the room as that of a classroom with expectations for students relating to talking in the room, entering and exiting the room, requesting assistance and other rules and procedures that promote an engaged learning environment. As noted earlier the Social Curriculum is actively taught in each of Sequoia's Schools.

Addendum 2

GRADE BY GRADE SYNOPSIS

SSDHH ELEMENTARY DEPARTMENT

Each elementary classroom has a wide range of student backgrounds and abilities. The students range in language ability from being exposed to sign language and learning it from birth, to students who knew absolutely no sign language at all when they started the 2011-2012 school year. The statistics regarding hearing parents' communication skills with their deaf/hard of hearing children due to the language situations in the home show that most hearing parents do not learn sign language, language is greatly delayed because of this deficit and affects academics. Those who have more communication with their parents or a family member tend to be closer to appropriate grade level than the others.

Our SSDHH kindergarten students usually start with a large deficit in expressive and receptive language. As stated 90% of our students come from hearing families that do not use sign language. That translates to 5 years of not knowing what is going on in the environment. Five years of inability to communicate with family and others around them.

As with a hearing classroom, we start with learning who we are, our names, and those around us. We use of a pictures, drawings, and direct vocabulary instruction at this stage. Again, it is important to note that along with the academics that need to be taught, the students are learning basic language at the same time. When hearing children come to school most have already memorized the alphabet song, they now need to learn the symbol/letter that represents what they already have heard and learned. Our Deaf and Hard of Hearing students have not had the exposure to some of these basic pre-kindergarten skills and arrive having to make up for lost time.

- In the day to day classroom happenings, our students receive instruction in reading, math, writing, and some exposure to science and social studies.
- Due to the hearing loss, reading instruction is not phonetically based.
- Instead it is centered on learning sight words and direct vocabulary instruction.

- Our students heavily rely on vision because they do not hear the world around them.
- This categorizes our students as visual learners
- As a result we use manipulative materials and visual aids to support the learning process.

Our students hearing counterparts are able to use language to learn. Themes are used to increase categorical vocabulary and literature is used as a resource for every subject. Art activities accompany themes and are used to build language as well as facilitate communication in the classroom between the students. It is because our students have to learn language first that they start school facing challenges academically.

Teaching 1st to 2nd grade students requires a lot of visual and tactile materials for all subjects. Deaf and Hard of Hearing students do better with hands-on activities due to their shorter attention span.

Providing hands-on activities encourage the students to learn a new concept in a fun way at the same they are acquiring new information using American Sign Language. Each student is different based on how they learn. We accommodate these differences with individual plans for each child.

SSDHH 2ND/3RD/4TH GRADE TEACHER SUMMARY:

In the 2nd/3rd/4th classroom, the teacher focuses on reading and writing across all subjects areas. The class reads and writes every day. Each day begins with writing in their journals. The writing prompt is projected onto the board and the students answer this prompt in their journals. Sometimes there is a discussion about the topic, helping the students move from American Sign Language (ASL) to English, and other times the students are expected to read it on their own and then answer the prompt. The former, going from ASL to English, is critical because the students' natural language is ASL. If they can first brainstorm ideas in ASL and then write them down in English, they will

have a greater success rate in the area of ideas. This is often done as a class so that more ideas are generated. The latter, meaning allowing them to read and answer themselves, is equally important because this shows what exactly they understand and how well they are able to read the English print, translate it into ASL in order to truly comprehend it and think of ideas, and then translate it back into English print in order to produce it. Following the morning routine, we begin reading centers.

Every two weeks the students learn 6-8 new vocabulary words. These are introduced at the beginning of the week and then practiced throughout the week during reading centers. Vocabulary practice includes activities such as drawing a picture of the word; writing a sentence using that word; choosing the correct word to complete the sentence; matching word with definition; and identifying vocabulary words in text. These 6-8 vocabulary words are typically pulled from the main text for the week. Sometimes they are from science, social studies, or math, but mostly from the main selection. One text is chosen as the focus text for the two week period. During this time, the text is read, re-read, and read again. The level of the text determines whether the teacher guides the reading everyday, or if the students can handle reading the selection in a small group. With each selection there are comprehension activities that follow. Those activities are done independently with as little help as possible.

ASL American Sign Language

Seeing as ASL is the student's natural language, and it is not always acquired in the home, establishing a strong ASL base is of utmost importance in our classroom. If the students do not have a solid language to build upon, they will not have a solid foundation to build upon for all areas of life, including academics. Everyday we take some time to work on our ASL skills this includes articulation, facial expressions, classifiers, and grammar, in addition to story-telling the deaf way.

SSDHH 4-5TH GRADE TEACHER

While 90% of Deaf and or hard of hearing children come from hearing families, in our school that percentage is even higher (closer to 95%). The majority of these family

members do not sign fluently enough with their child to have normal, effortless communication which most of his take for granted. This lack of language from a young age has the greatest impact and is really what handicaps our students, not their actual hearing loss. Our school faces the unique challenge of constantly trying to make up for that loss of language, the foundation of learning, from the day they arrive in our classrooms; Kindergarten through high school. The delayed language impacts vocabulary, world knowledge, thinking and social and learning behavior and school readiness.

Lack of world knowledge is a huge area we have to address with our Deaf or hard of hearing students. World knowledge or incidental knowledge (background information) is something hearing children gain through hearing and talking about the world nonstop throughout the day with their peers, family members, teachers and the media. For almost every subject before we begin a new topic we do much to build up the background knowledge of that topic before we introduce the new concepts, this is especially true in Social Studies and Science. We build this background knowledge through discussion of familiar subjects, use of visuals, manipulative materials, or movies. We will often act out to demonstrate important events or interactions especially in history to make events more accessible to them. We use Marzano's list of background knowledge words to inform this work.

The lack of world knowledge hugely impacts vocabulary and so this is an ongoing area we constantly work on. Vocabulary is reviewed daily sometimes several times, especially for reading. Weekly vocabulary is assigned for a reading and students have vocabulary cards in which they draw pictures of the word and copy the teacher created definition on the back of that card. We do not have them look up the word in the dictionary because most of the time, the definitions are made up of more unfamiliar words and so that is even more confusing to them.

Weekly vocabulary tests occur in which they must match the word and definitions, sometimes match the word and antonyms, use the word in fill in the blank sentences and write sentences using some of the words.

Whenever possible students are taught thematically so they can approach the same content through different subjects. For example, if we are learning about Martin Luther King we will have them read about him and civil rights events in reading class as well as act out events in Social Studies. Students may write about Martin Luther King in their journals or for a writing assignment. In art, we may ask the art teacher to come up with a project where they can make a visual expression of their view point of that era or Martin Luther King's work, etc.
By far the tool that has made the greatest impact in is the use of the ELMO projector. Being able to have text projected has been a huge step out of the Dark Ages in teaching reading to our students. This tool is vital to our program.

Besides language delays, and a lack of basic world knowledge, at least a third of our students have additional learning disabilities and this makes processing of information or retaining information very challenging. We attempt to address a child's additional learning challenge by presenting information through a variety of methods such as using graphic organizers, color, visual representations (drawings or Google images), symbols, dramatizing a concept (myself acting it out with my aide or other students) and much, much repetition of terms and problem solving steps, especially in math. To drive home a point we are constantly engaging the students by asking questions and often point out what something is not, in order to understand what something is. We will lessen the amount of work to do either in writing, memorization of math facts, solving problems, vocabulary words or spelling for those whom memorization is especially taxing. We also try and enlarge font or have less examples of problems or information on a page to make the visual presentation of information less overwhelming. The notion of one size fits all does not apply to our students and we are constantly adjusting and or accommodating lesson plans and the children’s projects, tests and homework to meet their unique needs.

Literacy Class

This class works on reading, vocabulary development throughout the day in every subject. In math, we review math vocabulary, story problems with teacher guidance or a student signing a problem for the class. In Social Studies or science we will also review vocabulary specific to the concepts we are learning, as a class we read together (teacher led) about various issues with the text projected for all to see. Student projects such as an experiment or presentation on a subject are written in English, students read these aloud to the class. We discuss current articles from the student magazine Scholastic every Friday, again the text is projected for all to see and teacher will chose specific vocabulary or concepts to focus on. We have read aloud activities several times a week that the aide/teacher signs stories to the students. The English text is projected for students to see and the aide or teacher will frequently refer to text elements or vocabulary. Students have independent reading Mon- Thurs every day for 15 minutes when they come in from lunch. I have recently tried to make an effort where I also take time out and model reading my own reading with them (like DEAR). My aide and I will take turns modeling independent reading while one reads one on one with a student during this time. When our class goes to the library biweekly they are allowed to choose 3 books; two must be at their fluency level and one can be any level- teacher/ aide read with them a few pages of their fluency level books to make sure they are appropriate levels for them. When they return from the library they spend the next 40 min reading the books one on one with a buddy, teacher or aide.

In the main subject of reading we read various types of texts; fiction: fantasy, historical fiction, adventure, plays, myths, comic or graphic novels, non-fiction: science articles, historical, news articles, biographies. We begin each session with reviewing vocabulary from the text we are currently reading. When introducing a new reading we always discuss the characters, setting and specific elements about the text such as genre or dialect, we do a picture walk and make predictions. Some times our reading groups are whole class other times two smaller groups working with peers who are closer to their reading level. At the end of the week Thurs, Friday we do buddy reading of the

previously guided reading of that week. Fridays are vocabulary tests where they match words to definitions, fill in the blanks sentences and write sentences using some of the words. Students also do nightly reading for homework -they can choose from a library book or an A-Z paper book that is at their fluency level. They also have an independent reading assignment each week where they read a short story, article (2-3 paragraphs) and have to answer questions related to it. In their writing work and journals they of course read these aloud to the class with their writing projected so everyone can see the text.

Writing is approached through various methods. We have a formal writing workshop time twice a week that is a longer session that the other subjects. During this time we will often create a writing piece together as a class with the teacher guiding the students with much participation. For example, if we just took a recent field trip, I would solicit ideas about what we did on the trip and write the words on the board. We use a graphic organizer that they frequently use to organize a paper into various paragraphs. I might take a few of the ideas we brainstormed and put those onto the organizer. Then I would ask how do we take these few words our "skeleton" and flesh them out into actual sentences. Students would advise me on what to write in the sentence and I would solicit peer feedback about whether or not the sentence was grammatically correct or what was missing, etc. Each process of the writing; brainstorming of ideas, outline on graphic organizer, rough draft, etc is modeled and then students will go work on their own pieces for 15- 20 min. There are still some students who need one-on-one guidance on this part. At some point, I might stop everyone and ask for a few samples for the class to view together for feedback on their progress. We again use the ELMO to project their writing piece for discussion. Their final pieces after joint editing with a peer and then the teacher is turned into final copies which they read aloud to the class.

During formal writing times we will address specific writing elements or grammar points as the come up for example, punctuation, paragraph formation, run on sentences, word choice, and organization.

Specific grammar elements are taught during a separate time when we instruct in depth on a particular grammar topic such as subject verb agreement. The main tool we use is Manipulative Visual English, a tool developed by a Deaf man to teach Deaf and hard of hearing children English forms through colorful, manipulative objects that represent the main patterns of English. Through seeing the visual pattern of objects repeatedly students are able to retain internally the rules of English more effectively and we have seen much progress since this method was introduced to our school.

Informal writing happens in several ways such as weekly in class journal work and a home journal that they write in themselves and with family members several nights a week. The in class journals including writing four or more sentences about a particularly engaging topic, experience or picture that is relevant to them. The home journal was added last year after I noticed students would do well in their grammar lessons on a particular topic but not applying the concept to their own actual writing and that they were very weak in expressing themselves spontaneously with the simplest of sentences. Both journals are not graded for their grammatical accuracy but for their effort, ideas and completion.

Math

We introduce and review vocabulary as well as solve word problems frequently to expose our students to math terms and phrases. Also I stated above that due to many students with additional learning disabilities much drill and practice must occur daily to review math facts and processes. Math problems are broken down into simple steps to review the problem solving parts. Colored markers to highlight specific functions or steps is utilized, one on one tutoring or practice, plus much student participation and teacher questioning is necessary to ensure comprehension during instruction. Our math is broken up into several ability and or grade level groupings.

Science/ Social Studies

While we have curriculum and materials for both of these subject areas we often have to expand upon them and or revise them to fit our unique student needs. As much as

possible we try to support the concepts taught through additional materials such as visuals, movies, actual materials, manipulative materials such as science tools or animal, plant samples, trips and speakers to come in and share their own experiences. An example of this type of activity occurred during a recent Social Studies unit on cultural diversity and immigration I invited some parents and staff members who had immigrated to the U.S. to share about their experiences and reasons for moving here as well as some examples of their culture: clothing, pictures, food, etc.

SSDHH SECONDARY DEPARTMENT

6-12 grades Language Arts classes (reading and writing)

This year we have been focusing on how English and American Sign Language differ. Students are currently using Reader's Theater to practice translating written English into ASL. Students use the Elmo and LCD projector to study and practice English and then applying the meaning in ASL. They are asked to create a "movie in their minds" to attempt to feel what the character is feeling as well as what is going on around them. As for writing, the students attempted their first research project. Currently, we are working on writing good simple sentences. A strong simple sentence allows for the student to communicate with anyone. Once following the MVL patterns for simple sentences, students have been branching into writing more complex sentence structures. Finally, students are working on personal and peer edits of the written word. Language Arts students have been working on contemporary literature such as Frankenstein and will soon start Shakespeare.