



Leadership Guide

Deaf-Centered Practice

KEY COMPONENTS:

1. Representation of Deaf Role Models
2. Deaf Culture & History in Shared Spaces & Schoolwide Programming
3. ASL Recognition and Use Across the School
4. Deaf Community Engagement
5. Student Leadership & Advocacy

Improvement Recommendations by Rating Level

IF YOUR PROGRAM IS EMERGING:

- Introduce the Program Identity focus areas explicitly to all staff
- Clarify why Program identity is a leadership and systems responsibility
- Begin auditing: Deaf role model representation, ASL visibility, and Deaf culture presence in shared spaces
- Identify where Program Identity is dependent on individual staff
- Provide introductory learning for leadership and staff

Leadership Move:

Move from “we value Program Identity” to “this is how we build it.”

IF YOUR PROGRAM IS DEVELOPING:

- Increase intentional representation of Deaf professionals across roles and activities
- Expand Deaf culture and history beyond isolated events
- Clarify expectations for ASL use in shared spaces and routines
- Formalize partnerships with Deaf community organizations
- Expand student leadership opportunities beyond symbolic roles
- Begin documenting trends in Program Identity supports across the school

Leadership Move:

Replace individual effort with shared practice.

IF YOUR PROGRAM IS PROFICIENT:

- Embed Program Identity goals into school improvement and strategic plans
- Strengthen reciprocal Deaf community partnerships
- Increase student-led leadership and advocacy initiatives
- Align hiring, PD, and programming with Program Identity priorities
- Use data and reflection to deepen impact on: Belonging, Language pride, Student voice
- Ensure new staff understand Program Identity expectations

Leadership Move:

Shift from “many students” to “every student.”

IF YOUR PROGRAM IS EXEMPLARY:

- Position the school as a hub within the Deaf community
- Support student advocacy that influences school or community policy/practice
- Use the school as a model site for Program Identity leadership
- Mentor other programs in Program Identity development
- Protect Program Identity priorities through leadership succession planning
- Regularly refresh expectations based on student and community voice

Leadership Move:

Steward the work so Program Identity leadership survives change.