

Overview Tip Sheet

ASL/English Bilingual Deaf Education Programs

A strong school climate in an ASL/English bilingual program is intentional, inclusive, and consistently accessible. School climate reflects how values are lived out across communication, relationships, leadership, and decision-making. It shapes whether students and staff experience the school as predictable, respectful, and affirming every day.

1

Communication Access Across All Settings

Communication access must be equitable, predictable, and consistent—not dependent on individual choices or circumstances.

- ASL and English are used intentionally across classrooms, common spaces, meetings, events, and daily interactions
- Clear schoolwide norms guide when and how ASL, English, and interpreters are used
- Staff rely on their own ASL skills when appropriate and use interpreters only when genuinely needed
- PD, staff meetings, and team meetings model the same access expectations expected for students
- Students and staff can anticipate access without having to ask or advocate repeatedly

2

Respect and Inclusion

Respect and inclusion are embedded into daily practice, not limited to special events or statements.

- Deaf culture and linguistic diversity are visible, valued, and normalized
 - Students experience equitable treatment and a sense of belonging
 - Differences in language, identity, background, and experience are acknowledged and respected
 - Inclusive practices are consistent across settings and interactions
 - School culture actively promotes pride, dignity, and community
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3

Respect for Deaf Knowledge and Experience

Deaf knowledge is recognized as expertise, not anecdotal input.

- Deaf individuals' lived experiences inform decisions, policies, and practices
- Deaf perspectives are meaningfully included in planning, problem-solving, and leadership
- Deaf staff, students, and community members are treated as knowledge holders
- Decision-making reflects cultural and linguistic understanding of Deaf education
- Deaf expertise is centered—not consulted as an afterthought

4

Leadership Vision, Modeling, and Accountability

Leadership sets the tone for school climate through clear expectations, visible modeling, and consistent follow-through.

- Leaders clearly communicate expectations for access, inclusion, and bilingual practice
- Leadership behavior aligns with stated values (modeling ASL/English use and inclusive practices)
- Concerns around access or climate are addressed promptly and constructively
- Strong practices are recognized and celebrated
- Leadership inspires confidence, shared purpose, and forward momentum

