

# Regional Day School Program for the Deaf

## Prepared for Board of Trustees Meeting

### September 9, 2014

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#### **Purpose of Report**

To provide the Board with an update of the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD).

#### **Board Goal**

II. Teaching & Learning. . . In pursuit of excellence, the district will develop academic skills and interpersonal relationships necessary for student success in college, the workplace, and for life.

#### **Objectives**

- To provide the Board with an update of the program and services provide by the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD)

#### **History**

RDSPD provides a continuum of services to students with hearing impairments from birth to age 21 from 26 school districts in Cooke, Denton, and Wise Counties. Services have been located on Denton ISD campuses historically in a manner that promoted socialization between students who are deaf/hard of hearing with their hearing peers and allowed them to transition together from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school. Students who are deaf/hard of hearing currently receive services at Ann Windle School for Young Children, Gonzalez School for Young Children, McNair Elementary, McMath Middle School, Denton High School, the Transition Center located at the ATC including Joe Dale Sparks when necessary. Each campus has lighted warning systems in every part inside and out of the building where a student who is deaf might be, including classrooms, restrooms, cafeteria, offices, hallways, gym/activity room, playground, etc.

#### **Status**

The RDSPD staff consists of 10 highly qualified teachers. Eight teachers certified to teach students with auditory impairments provide direct services to students enrolled in the RDSPD. Two additional teachers serve in an itinerant capacity and provide services (ARD attendance, consult, direct services, etc.) to students not enrolled in the RDSPD program. In addition to certified teachers, Denton ISD employs 5 para professionals, 14 Interpreters for the Deaf, a Parent Infant teacher, and an RDSPD Supervisor. Denton also contracts with an Audiologist for audiological services. Staff members at current campuses have many years of knowledge about the impact of deafness on language development and social/emotional growth, in working with students who are deaf, and in using sign interpreters in class. Denton ISD related services staff are instrumental in providing services as well. Services provided include counseling, speech therapy, health services, and occupational and/or physical therapy. Beginning 2014-2015, Denton ISD RDSPD reallocated staff to create a half-day Listening and Spoken Language PK classroom located at Gonzalez School for Young Children.

The program offers staff members the opportunity to attend workshops, such as a week-long sign language training each summer. These include general education teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, a school counselor, diagnostician, LSSP, SLPs, etc.

Based on the October 2013 federal count, the RDSPD will serve 53 students with direct services in Denton ISD. Itinerant Services (direct or consult) are provided to 90 PK-12th grade students enrolled in the 26 districts member districts.

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<b>Home District</b>	<b>Homebound Infants 0-2</b>	<b>School- based PK-12</b>	<b>of Total Number</b>	<b>Total Number Percent</b>
Cooke County SSA	0	0	0	0.00%
Decatur ISD	0	4	4	7.69%
Denton County SEC	1	5	6	11.54%
Denton ISD	3	19	22	42.31%
Gainesville ISD	0	3	3	5.77%
Lake Dallas ISD	1	2	2	3.85%
Lewisville ISD	0	7	7	13.46%
Little Elm ISD	2	1	3	5.77%
Northwest ISD	0	3	3	5.77%
Wise County SEC	0	2	2	3.85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Funding to support the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf is generated from various federal and state grants as well as from fees collected through the Management Board. The expected revenue for 2014-2015 is \$1,356,516. Beginning 2014-2015 member districts will be assessed a travel fee for itinerant services.

#### **Summary**

Deafness is an invisible handicap that results in a devastating impact on language and speech development as well as social/emotional development and interpersonal relationships. As a community, adults who are deaf or hard of hearing view themselves as a cultural group, not a disability group. However, reality reminds us daily that this is a hearing world. And in our part of that world, success is highly affected by both English literacy and diplomacy in interpersonal relationships. The difficulty arises when one is deemed more important and necessary for success than the other. The Department of Special Education and the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD) continue to express sincere gratitude for continuing to serve as the fiscal agent and for allowing the RDSPD Management Board the flexibility to provide a continuum of services for the students attending the DISD programs as well as for those receiving itinerant services from RDSPD staff. We look forward to a productive, successful school year.