

BC DEAF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PREAMBLE

This document was created collaboratively by a diverse group of people to establish a process to guide educational decision making to best support students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The BC Deaf Education Committee will use the terms of reference to guide, assist and where appropriate, make decisions as defined in the purpose statement. A review of these terms of reference may be called at any time by the Deaf Education Committee in consultation with the Burnaby School District, Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

COMMITTEE PURPOSE

The purpose of the BC Deaf Education Committee (BCDEC) is to determine whether the BC School for the Deaf or the Provincial Oral Program is the most appropriate school placement for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

The BC Deaf Education Committee:

1. Receives referrals from the student's home district for the BC School for the Deaf or Provincial Oral Program;
2. Reviews student's educational needs;
3. Confirms eligibility for the BC School for the Deaf or Provincial Oral Program.

The Committee's primary function is to determine eligibility for entrance into the BC School for the Deaf, or the Provincial Oral Program. Upon request, the Committee can also be convened to review and provide consultation on student's placement and educational needs.

Deaf and hard of hearing students are eligible for the BC School for the Deaf or the Provincial Oral Program provided:

1. The student is designated as a deaf or hard of hearing student in the province of BC.
2. The student is currently enrolled in a BC school.
3. There is evidence that the student would benefit academically, socially and developmentally from placement in a program with other deaf and hard of hearing students based on data collected.
4. There is evidence that the student's behaviour is such that they are not a danger to themselves or others.

5. The BC School for the Deaf or the Provincial Oral Program have the resources in the school to meet the educational needs of the student. Individual programs within the school may have limited space.
6. The *Principles of Learning for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students* will be used to guide the eligibility process.(appendix I)

If the student does not fully meet eligibility requirements, the committee may recommend interim eligibility. It is at the discretion of the committee to determine the length of time for the interim status.

Students/families and school districts may seek recommendations on educational services for deaf and hard of hearing students at any time through the Provincial Outreach Program: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION:

Core members of the BC Deaf Education Committee include:

- Vice Principal of the Provincial Outreach Program: Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Committee Chair)
- Principal of the BC School for the Deaf and Provincial Oral Program
- Vice Principal of the BC School for the Deaf (Elementary)
- Vice Principal of the BC School for the Deaf (Secondary and Provincial Oral Program)
- Residential Manager of the Victory Hill Residential Program (MCFD Representative)
- Director of Instruction for Learning Support Services, Burnaby School District or designate

A key principal to identifying committee members is to ensure Deaf community representation. At least 50% (in this case 3 of the 6) Core Committee members must be Deaf. If ratio is not met, additional Deaf members must be added. The additional added Deaf members must have a level of expertise within the educational context to be added to the committee.

When the Committee requires external consultation; consideration may be given to additional members of the Deaf community to contribute to decisions and to make recommendations. In these cases, consultative members will be invited by the Committee Chair, **when needed**.

Additional members may include:

- Representatives from the student's home school district
- Representative from Sunny Hill Hearing Loss Resource Team
- Member of the Deaf Community
- Representative from the Provincial Resource Program – Auditory Outreach
- Representative from the Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness
- Occupational or Physical Therapists
- Representative from the BCSD Parent Consultative Committee

- Representative from the Council of Service Providers
- Representative from the Burnaby School District
- Representative from Ministry of Education
- and others as needed based on the student's situation, students and families may also be invited to attend meetings.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

The BC Deaf Education Committee meets monthly from October to April for the purpose of receiving and reviewing new referrals during the school year. The January meeting will review kindergarten applications and interim placements. If needed, additional meetings may be called by the Committee Chair.

The committee will have its final meeting to review applications in April of every year. The deadline for the admissions for the next school year is March 31. BCDEC will accept applications and submission of forms once the deadline has passed but the committee cannot guarantee admission into the program for the following school year.

BCDEC PROCESS AND PROCEDURES:

1. The Committee Chair receives a referral for the BC School for the Deaf or the Provincial Oral Program.
2. When necessary the Committee Chair visits the student's home school district / independent school to gather information for the Committee.
3. The Committee Chair ensures all application information is received including the student referral form, educational summary, student profile, student needs checklist, audiogram, language assessments, video sample, and release of information form.
4. The student is added to the BC Deaf Education Committee meeting agenda.
5. The committee members review the student's application information and determine if the student is eligible for acceptance to the BC School for the Deaf or Provincial Oral Program.
6. Decisions are based on consensus of the Core Members. If consensus is not reached, the final decision will be made by the Assistant Superintendent of the Burnaby School District.
7. Within ten business days of the committee meeting, the Committee Chair informs the student's family, and the student's home school district of the Committee's decision simultaneously:
 - i. When the student is deemed eligible to the BC School for the Deaf or the Provincial Oral Program, the student's family will be directed to contact the administrator at the BC Provincial School for the Deaf or the Provincial Oral

- Program to confirm enrolment.
- ii. When the student is deemed eligible to the BC School for the Deaf or the Provincial Oral Program and requires residential placement, the student's family will be directed to contact the residential manager of the Victory Hill Residential Program to apply.
 - iii. When the student is deemed ineligible to the BC School for the Deaf or the Provincial Oral Program,
 - a. recommendations to further support the student's educational program will be provided to the student's family and home school district. An offer of support from the Provincial Outreach Program: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, will also be provided.
 - b. information on the appeal process will be provided to the student's family and home school district.
 - iv. Interim placements will be reviewed by the Committee each January. Assessment evidence will be used to determine whether the student is benefiting academically, socially and/or developmentally from the placement through consultation with the school staff. This review has three possible outcomes:
 - a. The student is accepted into the program on a permanent basis and does not need to reapply for admission.
 - b. The student is not accepted into the program and must return to his/her home school but can reapply for admission.
 - c. The student may be provided with the option to continue the interim placement for an additional year to allow the BCDEC to review assessment evidence to determine if the student is benefiting from the program.
8. Admissibility caveat: At any time, the BCDEC may be requested to review a student's eligibility status. The results of the review process may necessitate a change in admission eligibility status.

APPEAL PROCESS

1. Committee decision with documented rationale is communicated to the family, home school district and Burnaby School District.
2. Family disagrees with committee's decision. Family informs committee within 60 days after the letter mailing date.
3. Second committee meeting called with opportunity to explore decision/additional information/ with family. Decision is the same or new decision made.
4. Family make a decision to move forward with the appeal within 30 days of the second meeting. Committee informs representative of Burnaby School District (typically the Assistant Superintendent) reviews the decision and committee refers the family to the representative of the school district.

5. Burnaby School District representative becomes the conduit between the committee and the parent.
6. School district representative:
 - a. meets with committee to review original decision,
 - b. meets with committee to review result of secondary committee meeting, and
 - c. meets with family to review appeal decision
 - d. seeks additional information as necessary to review the appeal a neutral advisor with deaf education background is consulted, if needed.
7. Final decision is communicated by Burnaby School District representative to committee and family with documented rationale.

APPENDIX I

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS

Principles of Learning for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

Deaf and Hard of Hearing students need access to Deaf and Hard of Hearing culture, a culture that may be defined by the individual and may evolve over time. In order to flourish, Deaf and Hard of Hearing students need a learning environment that fosters a sense of belonging. They need an environment that is welcoming and is designed to meet the needs of the students, where they are supported to participate and benefit from all aspects of their education. All students benefit when these principles of learning are in practice in the learning environment.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing students develop their full potential as members of their school and broader community when:

1. Students can identify their primary or preferred language and access their learning with their primary language established as a strong foundation
Rationale: We recognize that all students are individuals and learn at different paces. We also recognize that students may have additional learning needs and may arrive at school without a first language. It is important that deaf and hard of hearing students acquire and continue to grow in their language development. It is through early acquisition and on-going development of language that students will best be able to learn and succeed in school.
2. Qualified and certified personnel deliver supports and services
Rationale: We recognize that for students to be successful, they must have access to, and be supported by, highly skilled teachers and support staff. We also recognize that the students learn best from adults who are highly trained.

3. Assessment of student learning is a priority, is appropriate for deaf and hard of hearing students and reflects the expectation that students are able to meet their potential as learners

Rationale: We know that deaf and hard of hearing students are each unique and may require unique assessment methods to ensure that they are progressing in their learning. We also recognize that appropriate assessment must take place regularly to ensure the best possible decisions are made regarding the learning environment and the student's progress.

4. Learning takes place in a social setting with same language mode peers

Rationale: Deaf and hard of hearing students, like all children, learn best in a social setting. This setting includes children and adults with whom they can share their thoughts, ideas, opinions and learning.

5. Learning involves attachment with family, and interaction with peers, Deaf/Hard of Hearing adult role models and community

Rationale: We recognize that students are part of a larger social network and to reach their potential this network must be taken into consideration when planning the learning environment and the learning opportunities provided for the student. It is through maintenance and nurturing of these relationships that the student will be most likely to succeed.

6. The learning environment is designed to ensure that Deaf and Hard of Hearing students experience being fully engaged in all aspects of their education.

Rationale: Deaf and hard of hearing students, like all students, learn best when they are fully engaged. This includes not only specific learning tasks but in the larger system of the school and the opportunities provided for all students. This requires system awareness of the learning and social needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students and system change to adapt to those needs.