

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**PRESENTATION AT IOWA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF:
“SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY POLICY AND PROCEDURES”**

Action Requested: (1) Receive the presentation. (2) Consider recommending approval of the request by the Iowa School for the Deaf for the proposed changes to the Sign Language Proficiency Policy and Procedures (Attachment).

Executive Summary: The Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) is a valid assessment designed to evaluate sign language competence. The SLPI was adapted from the Language/Oral Proficiency interview; it involves a one-to-one conversation in sign language between an interviewer and a candidate. This sign communication evaluation model is designed to be incorporated with sign language instruction to improve manual communication skills. The Iowa School for the Deaf provides multiple communication systems on campus. One important avenue of communication is sign language. ISD adopted the SLPI to ensure effective sign language communication. The SLPI provides feedback to the employee on sign communication proficiency. The proposed changes to the policy have been reviewed according to ISD's procedures to ensure that it meets the communication needs of the campus.

Resource reallocation by the School together with special education funds provided by the Iowa Department of Education have allowed ISD to offer the SLPI to local education agencies (LEAs) and area education agencies (AEAs) throughout the state. ISD is in the process of interviewing and rating the sign language skills of sign language interpreters, teachers of the hearing impaired, and paraprofessionals.

ISD also provides sign language instruction for parents and professionals across the state through distance education. ISD hired a classroom teacher with an endorsement in teaching American Sign Language. Classes are provided for ISD students as well as for Lewis Central Public School students. ISD is exploring ways to offer distance education opportunities for students across the state.

Ms. Rebecca Gaw is the current Sign Language Communication Program Coordinator at the Iowa School for the Deaf. She is also a certified Sign Language interpreter, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and School Administrator. She was the ISD High School Principal from 2003-2011.

Iowa School for the Deaf

Sign Language Proficiency Policy and Procedures

Revised and Modified March 28, 2014

SIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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SIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION POLICY

Because of the unique environment at Iowa School for the Deaf, a sign proficiency requirement is in place. At the time of hire, all employees are assigned a sign proficiency level that must be attained. The assigned level has been determined by the contact employees have with deaf and hard of hearing students and employees. A Sign Language Communication Policy (SLCP) will be provided to employees upon hire. This policy is a part of the "Employee Handbook".

If employees are not at or above the level assigned to them, they are required to attend sign classes during work hours. Employees have three years from the time the first interview is conducted to attain the assigned sign proficiency level. If employees do not reach that assigned level in the three-year period, termination procedures may be implemented.

Financial incentives are available for faculty and P & S employees who exceed their required level. Faculty and P & S employees who exceed their level will be retested in five years. Merit staff and other employees who do not receive financial incentives based on their SCPI level, who exceed their sign proficiency level by two or more levels will not be required to retake the test as long as their required level does not change.

Employees who take a new position will be required to take the test if the following circumstances apply:

1. The new position has a higher proficiency level.
2. The employee doesn't exceed the new level by two or more levels
3. The new position offers a financial incentive and the previous position did not.

If the level required for the new position is above the employee's current level of performance, the employee will have three years to attain the new level.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) is to provide the Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD) a signed communication evaluation model designed to be incorporated with sign language instruction in order to improve the manual communication skills (of staff) and thereby maximize staff/student and staff/staff manual communication.

RATIONALE

The Iowa School for the Deaf, governed by the Iowa Board of Regents, provides multiple communication systems on its campus. Based on the Communication Philosophy adopted by the School, the School strongly endorses a communication program for its students, faculty, and staff, which must be of linguistic equity, which we define as the ability to draw upon a wide range of communication methods in order to be a full, active, and knowledgeable individual. One important avenue of communication is sign language. In order to ensure effective sign language communication usage and fluency, sign language proficiency testing is required for all employees. This testing is to ensure quality communication and education.

Sign communication competency is the issue. The Sign Language Communication Policy (SLCP):

1. Requires all part-time and full-time staff employed at ISD to have sign language skills that are appropriate for their individual job position. Contractual employees and temporary employees are exempt from the requirement.
2. Develops a statement of required sign language proficiency levels for each ISD job position.
3. Mandates that training in sign language be provided to all staff who have not reached the level of sign language proficiency specifically designated for their individual job positions. While sign language training is not mandated for staff members who have already achieved their designated levels, when feasible, the School will also make training available to them in order to encourage them in the continued development of sign language skills.
4. Establishes that not achieving the required level of sign language proficiency, after the time period specified by this policy, is grounds for dismissal.
5. May be used as an interview process as a pre-hire evaluation for those applicants who might be considered for a position that requires daily contact with deaf and hard of hearing students.

SIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

I. SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

The Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) is a direct test of sign language communication competency. Employees are interviewed in a conversational format for 15 – 20 minutes by a trained proficient signer who might be either deaf or hearing. Interviews can include conversation about both social and work-related topics. Following the interview, each candidate's signing skills are rated using a standard scale based on an "ideal" or knowledgeable native or native-like signer.

The SLPI is based on a standard language evaluation methodology, the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI). The LPI has widespread acceptance as a valid tool for assessing communication competence.

Like the LPI, the SLPI is a conversational procedure that allows candidates to discuss topics important for their communication needs, thus reducing the anxiety produced by less flexible assessment procedures.

The SLPI testing procedure shall include four steps:

1. A one-on-one conversation between the interviewer and the employee/interviewee. The interviews are conducted in sign communication only and only sign communication skills will be evaluated.

2. Taping of an interview will be located in a private area. Options of stances (standing or sitting) for one-on-one conversation will be available to employees/interviewees. The employee/interviewee may choose an option by notifying the SLCP Coordinator of his/her option prior to the interview date.
3. All SLPI interviews will be video recorded. Each video recorded interview will be rated by a trained three-member team who will assign an SLPI sign skill rating and then prepare a report of results to be given to the Sign Language Communication Program Coordinator (SLCPC) who will then prepare the "Notification of Interview Results" which is used to notify the employee regarding the level achieved and to provide feedback on sign language skills.
4. Although the SLPI is at the heart of the process, it is only a part of the process. Therefore, ongoing sign skill development activities and opportunities will be available to all staff. The School encourages employees to make attempts to exceed the levels of sign language proficiency designated for their job positions.

II. NOTICE OF INTERVIEW

An employee will be scheduled for an initial interview (a video recorded presentation of sign language skills) within six months after the employee begins working at the School. In order to monitor an employee's progression in the development of sign language skills, the School's SLCP Coordinator may periodically schedule subsequent interviews for employees who have not achieved the level required for their position. The School also encourages employees to request interviews so that they can monitor their own progress.

Notice of interview will be sent to the employees:

1. Within six months after hire or upon changing to a job position that has a higher proficiency level.
2. Annually for three years after their initial testing in which they did not meet their expected proficiency levels.
3. Every five years after they have met their expected proficiency levels.
4. One year after an extension.
5. Upon employee's request.

The School's SLCP Coordinator will be responsible for providing employees with written notification of all scheduled interviews. Each written notification will include the date, time, and location of the interview as well as the name of the person who will be conducting the interview. The following documents will accompany the written notification:

1. A brief description of the SLPI.
2. The SLPI Rating Scale.
3. "General SLPI Procedures: Information for Candidates".
4. "Tips for Candidates on how to take the SLPI." (This document contains information about strategies employees may use in order to enhance their performance during SLPI interviews.)

III. SLPI RESULTS

A. Notification of Interview Results

As was stated in Section III, each interview will be video recorded and then sent to a trained, three-member team who will rate the video record, assign an SLPI skill rating to it, and prepare a report of the results. The rating team will send its report of results to the School's SLCP Coordinator. Upon receipt of the rating team's report, the SLCP Coordinator will provide the employee's supervisor with written notification of the results of the employee's interview. The employee's supervisor will present the employee with the results of the employee's interview. Specifically, the written notice will include:

1. The level of sign language proficiency that has been assigned to the employee by the rating team.
2. The level of sign language proficiency required for the employee's position.
3. A description of the relationship between 1 and 2 above, i.e., a statement that the employee has met, exceeded, or not met the level of sign language proficiency designated for his/her job position.
4. A description of the opportunities that are available to the employee to aid in the continued development of sign language skills, including sign language classes the employee can attend and instructional materials that can be checked out by the employee.
5. In situations where the employee has not met the level of sign language proficiency designated for his/her position, the written notice will also include the following:
 - a. An indication of the number of levels through which the employee must progress in order to reach the required level of sign language proficiency.
 - b. A statement of the time frame of three years within which the employee will be expected to achieve the required level of proficiency.
 - c. A statement of the requirement to attend sign language classes on a regular basis for three years or until the employee attains the level required for their position.
 - d. Information on how to access required sign language classes.
6. Sign language classes for employees who meet or exceed the levels of sign language proficiency required for their positions will be at the discretion of the employee's supervisor. When financially feasible, the School's Administration supports those employees who wish to continue attending sign language classes after meeting the level of proficiency required for their job positions. Iowa School for the Deaf encourages all employees to continue to develop their sign language skills.
7. Employees who do not receive financial compensation for exceeding their skill proficiency levels and who exceed their sign proficiency level by two or more levels will not be retested during time of employment in their current position, unless their required level changes.
8. Employees will be notified by their supervisor that their interview results are ready to be picked up at their respective department.
9. Employees will be required to sign in writing for their results to insure delivery and confidentiality. "CONFIDENTIALITY" will be stamped or marked on both the interview result and the envelope in which the interview result is enclosed.

B. Steps to be Followed if an Employee is Dissatisfied with the Interview Results

If an employee disagrees with the skill level rating assigned to a video recorded interview, then the employee may elect to have a second interview. An employee who wishes to schedule a second interview must make a request, in writing, to the School's SLCP Coordinator and the employee's supervisor within ten (10) working days of receiving the results of the first interview. This second interview will be evaluated by a different SLPI rating team to ensure that no bias from the first interview exists.

The results of the second interview will be delivered to the employee in the manner described above. In the event of a conflict between the ratings assigned to the employee's interviews, the employee will be assigned the higher of the two ratings.

C. Confidentiality of Results

Results of the SLPI, reports, and interview tapes will be treated as confidential information. However, this information is part of staff evaluations and therefore, may be shared with the following:

1. Employee (individual result, report, and interview recording).
2. Immediate Supervisor (s) (cover memo of results).
3. Institutional Official who serves as the Employee's Department Head (cover memo of results).
4. Superintendent (results, reports, and interview recordings).
5. Institutional Official who is charged with directing the School's SLPI Program (results, reports, and interview recordings).
6. SLCP Coordinator (results, reports, and interview recordings).
7. Human Resources Director (memos, employees/positions, interview dates, evaluation dates, both expected and rated proficiency levels).
8. SLPI Consultants (for report writing and training purposes only).

IV. SIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The sign language program at the Iowa School for the Deaf is provided to all employees. Appropriate books and videos will be provided to those who have sign language classes. The SLCP Coordinator will coordinate and schedule sign language classes during employees' work hours for those required to attend sign language classes. Opportunities are available to the employees to aid in the continued development of sign language skills. Employees wanting to check out instructional materials and videos may do so by contacting the SLCP Coordinator.

Training in sign language is mandated for all staff who have not attained the sign language proficiency levels specified for their individual job positions. Those required to attend sign language classes are expected to attend classes at least twice a week for three years or until they attain their sign proficiency levels. The employee's supervisor is responsible for working with

the SLCP Coordinator to arrange times and dates for the employee to attend sign language classes. The employee's supervisor ensures that the employee attends the classes.

Employees who meet or exceed the sign language proficiency levels required for their positions are not required to attend sign language classes. However, they are strongly encouraged to continue developing their sign language skills and to make attempts to exceed their proficiency levels. Because the School's Administration supports those employees who wish to continue attending sign language classes after meeting their proficiency levels, training in sign language may be available to the staff.

New employees with little or no signing skills will be instructed immediately to take sign language class. The SLCP Coordinator will work with the employee's supervisor to arrange sign language classes during the employee's work hours.

V. PROCEDURES FOR EMPLOYEES WHO ARE UNABLE TO REACH DESIGNATED PROFICIENCY LEVELS WITHIN ESTABLISHED TIME FRAME

- A. In the event an employee fails to achieve the proficiency level designated for the employee's position within the time frames established in this policy, termination proceedings will begin, unless the employee has requested and has been granted an extension.
- B. If an employee wishes to request an extension, the employee needs to send a letter to the School's Superintendent, his/her supervisor and the SLCP Coordinator no later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the "Notification of Interview Results". Written requests must include a statement of the employee's rationale for requesting an extension.
- C. The Superintendent will review requests for extension and make decisions to grant or to deny extensions based upon the following:
 1. A review of the employee's progress in sign language skill development.
 2. A review of the employee's attendance at instructional opportunities.
 3. Recommendation of the employee's supervisor.
 4. Recommendation of the School's SLCP Coordinator.
- D. Within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving an employee's written request for an extension, the Superintendent will notify the SLCP Coordinator, the employee, the employee's supervisor and the Director of Human Resources in writing, of his/her decision to grant or deny the employee's request for an extension.

If the request for an extension is granted, the employee has an additional year to achieve the required proficiency level.

If the request for an extension is denied, then the written notification will include an explanation of the basis for the denial, an indication of the date on which termination proceedings will occur and a statement of the appeal procedures available to the employee.

VI. TIME FRAME FOR REACHING ESTABLISHED PROFICIENCY LEVELS

- A. For new employees who do not initially meet the level of sign language proficiency they will have three years in which to attain the level required.
- B. After employees initially meet the required level of sign language proficiency designated for their positions, they will be required to interview and be rated once every five years throughout the duration of employment. Retesting will ensure that employees at ISD are maintaining the sign skill levels that are appropriate for their job positions.
- C. Merit staff and other employees who do not receive financial compensation and who exceed their skill proficiency levels by two or more levels will not be required to retest during their time of employment at the School. If any employee changes to a job position that has a higher proficiency level, to a position which provides financial incentive or the required level changes for their current position, the employee will be retested.
- D. Employees may request an interview before their appointed year. The employee will provide rationale.
- E. Employees receiving an extension will be interviewed again prior to the end of the next school year.

VII. SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL STANDARDS

The standard levels of sign language proficiency range from No Functional Skills (0) to Superior (10). The proficiency levels that are required for each job position at Iowa School for the Deaf are designated in Part X: Sign Proficiency Levels for ISD Employees. In assigning proficiency levels to job positions, the following factors were taken into consideration:

- 1. The amount of contact someone employed in the particular position would have with deaf and hard of hearing students and/or deaf and hard of hearing staff.
- 2. The type of contact involved; i.e., one-on-one, group situations, etc.
- 3. The nature of the subject matter involved: teaching, counseling, giving instructions or directions, etc.

VIII. SIGN PROFICIENCY LEVELS FOR ISD EMPLOYEE

POSITION	REQUIRED LEVELS	EXPECTED LEVEL
Assistant Administrator	Advanced	Advanced
Director of Business Operations	Survival	Survival
FACULTY		
Teacher	Intermediate	Advanced

POSITION	REQUIRED LEVELS	EXPECTED LEVEL
ACADEMIC SUPPORT STAFF		
Principal	Advanced	Advanced
School Guidance Counselor	Intermediate	Advanced
Speech/Language Pathologist	Intermediate	Advanced
Statewide Consultant	Intermediate	Advanced
PROFESSIONAL & SCIENTIFIC		
Accountant	Survival	Intermediate
Athletic Director	Intermediate	Advanced
Dean of Students	Advanced	Advanced
Director of Human Resources	Intermediate	Advanced
Educational Interpreter	Advanced Plus	Advanced Plus
Facilities Manager	Survival Plus	Intermediate
Information Technology Associate	Intermediate	Advanced
Information Technology Specialist	Intermediate	Advanced
Outreach Coordinator	Intermediate	Advanced
Registered Nurse	Intermediate	Advanced
Registered Nurse, Head	Intermediate Plus	Advanced
Residential Counselor	Intermediate	Advanced
Sign Language Communication Program Coordinator	Advanced Plus	Advanced Plus
Social Worker	Advanced	Advanced
Student Life Advisor	Advanced	Advanced
ISD MERIT EMPLOYEES (AFSCME)		
Bus driver	Survival Plus	Intermediate
Clerk IV	Survival	Intermediate
Cook I, II	Survival	Intermediate
Custodial Service Supervisor	Survival Plus	Intermediate
Custodian I, II	Survival	Intermediate
Facilities Mechanic I, II, III	Survival	Survival
Foodworker I, II	Survival	Intermediate
Groundskeeper I, II	Survival	Survival
Houseparent I	Intermediate	Intermediate
Houseparent II	Intermediate	Intermediate Plus
Power Plant Firer/Utility Worker	Survival	Survival

School Assistant
Secretary I, II, III

Intermediate
Intermediate

Intermediate Plus
Intermediate Plus

IX. ATTACHMENTS

An attachment section in the SLPI policy provides supplementary materials on several areas that ISD employees have requested. Some materials are mentioned in the policy, but are not part of the policy itself. It is imperative to understand that attachments in this section are not to be viewed as the “policy”, but rather that they are information to help better understand the SLPI.

Included in the attachments are:

- A. Definitions
- B. Suggested Time Frame for SLPI Process
- C. Suggested Time Frame to Request an Extension/Time Frames for SLPI Evaluations
- D. SLPI Rating Scale
- E. Rating Techniques
- F. Criteria for Selection of SLPI Team Members
- G. ISD Communication Philosophy

**ATTACHMENT A
DEFINITIONS**

SLCP COORDINATOR: The Sign Language Communication Program Coordinator is responsible for implementing the Sign Language Proficiency Program. This includes scheduling and coordinating interviews and evaluations, writing and delivering reports, sending notices of results to employee's supervisors, maintaining SLPI files and coordinating training for SLPI raters/interviewers.

Also included is the scheduling and oversight of sign language classes including dissemination of class schedules to employees, hiring qualified sign language instructors, and preparing and teaching sign language classes.

SLPI RATING SCALE: The SLPI Rating Scale is a measurement developed to determine sign language proficiency. There are ten proficiency levels that range from No Functional Skills (0) to Superior (10). (See Attachment D: SLPI Rating Scale)

Plus (+) ratings indicate that the candidate demonstrates some of the language characteristics of a higher level of signing but is not consistent in his/her use of these characteristics.

IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR: An immediate supervisor is the person who directly supervises the employee.

INSTITUTIONAL OFFICIAL: The current Institutional Officials include the Superintendent, Assistant Administrator, and Director of Business Operations.

SLPI CONSULTANT: A SLPI Consultant is an expert in sign language. The Consultant may be called upon to review a rating, observe or provide feedback on sign language classes, teach a sign class or provide training for new and current members of the SLPI team.

TIME FRAME: A new employee has three (3) years to acquire the level of proficiency required for their position. If an employee does not acquire their level in the initial interview, they will be provided sign language instruction until they attain their level.

There are some positions that require sign language competence at the time of hire.

ATTACHMENT B
SUGGESTED TIME FRAME FOR SLPI PROCESS

TIME	ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
	Schedule interview	SLCP Coordinator
	Conduct interview	SLPI Interviewer
	Rate interview and complete summary	SLPI Rating Team
2 weeks	Results to supervisors	SLCP Coordinator
	Results shared with employee	Employee's Supervisor
3 weeks	Notify SLPI Coordinator you want to REVIEW your interview	Employee
5 weeks	Schedule Review	SLCP Coordinator
	Notify SLCP Coordinator you want a SECOND interview	Employee
	Contact interviewer	SLCP Coordinator
7 weeks	Schedule second interview with new interviewer	SLCP Coordinator
	Schedule rating with new rating team	SLCP Coordinator
10 weeks	Results to supervisors	SLCP Coordinator
	Results shared with employee	Employee's Supervisor

**ATTACHMENT C
TIME FRAMES TO REQUEST AN EXTENSION**

This time frame is for employees who wish to request an extension after they did not reach their designated proficiency levels within establish time frame.

1. Request in writing to the School's Superintendent and copy supervisor and SLCP Coordinator: **No later than 30 days after receiving results.**

2. The Superintendent's response to the request: **Within 14 calendar days.**

TIME FRAMES FOR SLPI EVALUATIONS

TIME FRAMES

WHO

Within six months after hire

New employees and current employees who change job positions

Annually

New employees not meeting their expected proficiency levels

Five years

Employees meeting or exceeding their expected proficiency levels

End of the next full school year

Any employees receiving an extension after not meeting their expected proficiency levels

No retesting required during their time of employment

Employees exceeding their skill proficiency levels by two levels or more for their current job positions, or having attained the Superior rating level and who do not receive financial compensation.

ATTACHMENT D
SLPI RATING SCALE

RATINGS	FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTORS
Superior (10)	Able to have a fully shared and natural conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics. Very broad sign vocabulary, near native-like production and fluency, excellent use of sign language grammatical features, and excellent comprehension for normal signing rate.
Advanced Plus (9)	Exhibits some superior level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Advanced (8)	Able to have a shared conversation with good, spontaneous elaboration for both social and work topics. Broad sign language vocabulary with clear and accurate production of signs and fingerspelling at a normal/near normal rate; occasional misproductions do not detract from conversational flow. Good use of many sign language grammatical features and comprehension good for normal signing rate.
Intermediate Plus (7)	Exhibits some advanced skills, but not all and not consistently.
Intermediate (6)	Able to discuss with some confidence, routine social and work topics within a conversation format with some elaboration; generally 3 to 5 sentences. Good knowledge and control of everyday/basic sign language vocabulary (may have several sign misproductions), with fluency generally characterized by moderate signing pace and some inappropriate pauses/ hesitations. Demonstrates use of some sign language grammatical features in connected discourse, but not controlled. Fairly good comprehension for a moderate to normal signing rate; a few repetitions and rephrasing of questions may be needed.
Survival Plus (5)	Exhibits some intermediate skills, but not all and not consistently.
Survival (4)	Able to discuss social and work topics with responses generally 1 to 3 sentences in length. Some knowledge of basic sign language vocabulary with many sign vocabulary errors. Slow to moderate signing rate with some inappropriate pausing. Basic use of a few sign language grammatical features. Fair comprehension for signing produced at a slow to moderate rate with some repetition and rephrasing.

- Novice Plus (3) Exhibits some survival skills, but not all and not consistently.
- Novice (2) Able to provide single sign and some short phrase/sentence responses to basic questions signed at a slow to moderate rate with frequent repetition and rephrasing. Vocabulary primarily related to everyday work and/or social topics such as basic work related signs, family members, basic objects, colors, numbers, names of the week, and time. Production and fluency characterized by many sign production errors and by a slow rate with frequent inappropriate pauses/hesitations.
- No Functional Skills (1) Able to provide a few basic signs, primarily fingerspelling responses to some basic questions either fingerspelled slowly or using a few signs.

Adapted from US Foreign Service Institute & ACTFL LPI Rating Scales by William Newell & Frank Caccamise

ATTACHMENT E RATING TECHNIQUES

Candidates will be rated on their ability to use American Sign Language. Both expressive and receptive signing skills will be evaluated.

A point system is used to rate each skill. The point system ranges from 0 (does not demonstrate the skill) to 5 (demonstrates the skill accurately and consistently). Rating judgment for each individual performance is based upon evidence documented within the interview tape. This evidence is carefully measured against the criteria listed in each category outlined in Attachment D. Attachment D provides a brief description of each proficiency level. The rater also uses these descriptions to help make a qualified rating decision. The rating team is made up of three trained members who are themselves fluent in ASL and have achieved a minimum level of Advanced on the SCPI.

Outlined below is an overview of what the rater looks for when evaluating a tape.

- **Visual-Gestural Production**
Here the rater evaluates how clearly and precisely the examinee forms and executes signs, fingerspelled items and numbers. Important here are the parameters of each sign, e.g. handshape, palm orientation, location and movement. The rater notes any discrepancies that may cause distortion of meaning or otherwise cause confusion on part of the receiver of the message. An example of this is unnecessary shifting from the dominant to the non-dominant hand. In fingerspelling, letter configuration, palm orientation, position of the hand, and transition from letter to letter are reviewed. In addition the rater must observe how well the interviewee incorporates facial expression and upper body movements that are not grammatical into the overall production of messages he or she is trying to convey.
- **ASL Grammar**
In this category the rater looks for evidence that shows how well the interviewee correctly uses specific features of ASL grammar throughout the interview. Core features include sentences with topic-comment structure, questions, conditionals, commands and incorporated assertion or negation. The rater examines how well role shifts are handled as well as mapping skills. Many grammatical functions are conveyed by synchronization of both manual and non-manual components. Non-manual components may include linguistic eye-gaze, specific facial inflections, and upper body movements that have grammatical significance. Here, too, the rater will look at how well the examinee is able to use various classifier types such as descriptive and instrument classifiers and those used with motion or location verbs. Other grammatical components will include the use of pronominal indexing, plurality markers, number incorporation, and sign modulations or inflections. These modulations or inflections include noun/verb pairs, incorporated adjectives and adverbs, verb tense and aspect.

- **Sign Vocabulary**
This category focuses on the range and accuracy of ASL sign selection across a variety of topics. The rater looks at how well the examinee selects and uses signs so that they fit the intended meaning the examinee is trying to convey. The use of colloquial expressions and figurative language is also considered.
- **Fluency**
In this category, the rater looks at how well and consistently the examinee communicates his or her thoughts and ideas through signs and fingerspelling. The rater will also look at the degree of consistency and smoothness evident in the examinee's performance. And, finally, the rater will evaluate the appropriateness of the examinee's rhythm and pace of delivery on all topics discussed.
- **Comprehension**
The rater judges comprehension on the basis of overall understanding of questions, comments, topic shifts, and statements made by the interviewer, including fingerspelling and number use. The rater also looks at the spontaneity of responses from the examinee and whether or not repetition or rephrasing is needed from time to time during the interview. How well the examinee uses visual feedback or back-channeling is also examined.

**ATTACHMENT F
CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF SLPI TEAM MEMBERS**

SLPI Team Members will include ISD staff/faculty, administrators and non-ISD staff who are proficient in the use of American Sign Language (ASL). When selecting non-ISD staff, people who are deaf or are licensed sign language interpreters will be considered for selection to the SLPI team. All members of the SLPI team will be interviewed and rated. All members of the SLPI team will achieve a level of Advanced or higher on the SLPI.

Members of the SLPI team will be assessed on their ability to be fair and confidential. Team members will receive ongoing, specialized training on being an interviewer and/or rater. SLPI team members are required to attend training sessions. SLPI rating teams will consist of at least one deaf person and one hearing person.

ATTACHMENT G ISD COMMUNICATION PHILOSOPHY

The Iowa School for the Deaf provides many unique opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to encounter and come to know peers and colleagues from diverse backgrounds. Examples of such diversity include gender, ethnicity, deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing.

This rich tapestry of diversity – and diversity within diversity – provides a wide pool of talent and life experiences from which all can benefit. Yet, with this opportunity, comes challenges. The foremost is in the area of communication. Students, faculty, and staff come to the Iowa School for the Deaf with a variety of communication abilities and needs. Developing the communication skills of all individuals in this environment of linguistic diversity is vital so that the primary business of Iowa School for the Deaf, education, can be accomplished.

We believe that communication is a two-way process with a shared responsibility. It is a dynamic process by which information, direction, needs, ideas, desires, and feelings are transmitted within a culture. The heart of communication can only occur when a conversation is shared and understood.

We believe that our students, faculty and staff have a basic right to be able to communicate in an open and comfortable fashion. Therefore, we recognize that the primary goal of the communication program at the Iowa School for the Deaf must be of linguistic equity, which we define as the ability to draw upon a wide range of communication methods in order to be a full, active, and knowledgeable individual.

Finally, we believe that the primary method for developing linguistic equity is education. Through both formal and informal education, and by maintaining high expectations, we believe that students, faculty and staff will develop skills in signed communication as well as English literacy. Expertise in each language is vital for future success. Our students will enter a society that is also linguistically diverse. Fluency is expected of them.