

# **The Illinois School for the Deaf Mission Statement**

**The Mission of the Illinois School for the Deaf  
is to educate students who are  
deaf or hard of hearing  
to be responsible self-supporting citizens.**

## **Illinois School for the Deaf Communication Policy**

### **Philosophy:**

**Illinois School for the Deaf is an accessible ASL/ English bilingual community in which people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing learn and work together without language and communication barriers.**

### **Policy:**

**In support of the Illinois School for the Deaf's accessible bilingual philosophy, the separation of ASL and English when communicating to/with others is expected. This helps ensure optimal accessibility and benefits all students and staff.**

**Illinois School for the Deaf is an accessible ASL/ English bilingual community that enhances the experience of learning and working together without language and communication barriers with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing.**

**Expectations:** The strategic use of ASL and English separately is expected for everyone to:

- Demonstrate respect for both languages, ASL and English.
- Be a consistent ASL and English bilingual role model.
- Be considerate when using spoken English around deaf people, especially students.
- Use ASL as the language of communication during all ISD related activities, from student meal times in the dining room, to field trips and other student activities.
- Foster a deaf friendly visual environment through the use of captioning; glare free lighting, unobstructed views and by minimizing visual distractions.
- Use interpreters for meetings.
- Practice strategies of clarifying information to assist all participants when no interpreter is available.
- Manage your meetings
  - o Know participants' language and communication skills.
  - o Give expectations at the beginning of each meeting.
  - o Report in ASL.
  - o Provide written English notes to participants.
  - o ID speakers by pointing to the person who is communicating.
- Use deliberate language planning, giving attention to expressive and receptive oracy, literacy and signacy.
- ISD believes in offering staff and students opportunities for ASL development.

Suggestions for improvement should always be respectful and constructive, and never public.

**\*\*In the coming months, we will experience a trial and error process to refine and achieve our communication philosophy and policies. We anticipate over time, ASL and English language separation will become natural to us. We will see our skills improve and rules that govern our communication choices in a bilingual context will become more apparent. \*\***

This policy is modeled after the policy used by the Wisconsin School for the Deaf. Our thanks go to them for sharing their excellent work.

The Illinois School for the Deaf is involved in a **PROCESS** of assuring that both English and ASL are developed by students.

ISD has been involved with the Center for ASL/English Bilingual Education and Research (CAEBER) since 1999.

ISD's staff continue to participate in CAEBER's ASL/English Bilingual Professional Development (AEBPD).

## CAEBER Vision Statement

CAEBER envisions...  
**high academic achievement**  
for deaf and hard of hearing students  
proficient in **American Sign Language**  
and **English**.



## CAEBER Mission Statement

The Mission of CAEBER  
is to promote effective instruction of  
**language and literacy** for  
deaf and hard of hearing  
students.

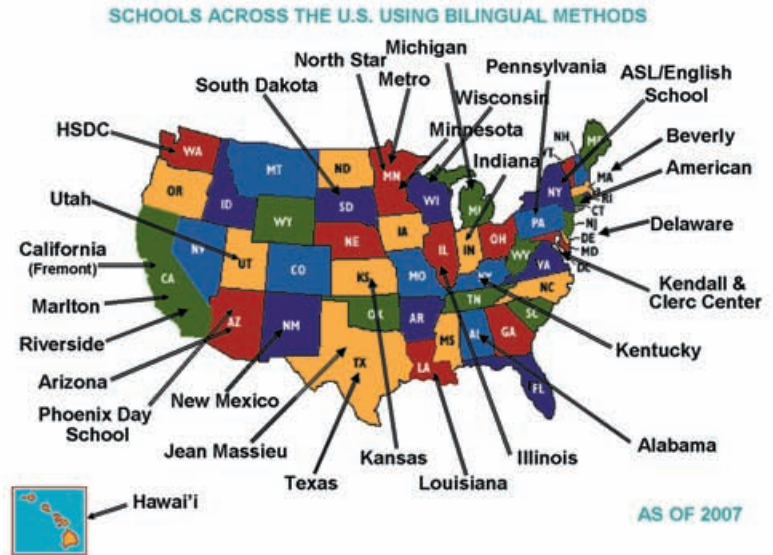


(Center for ASL/English Bilingual Education and Research)

# Who is bilingual?

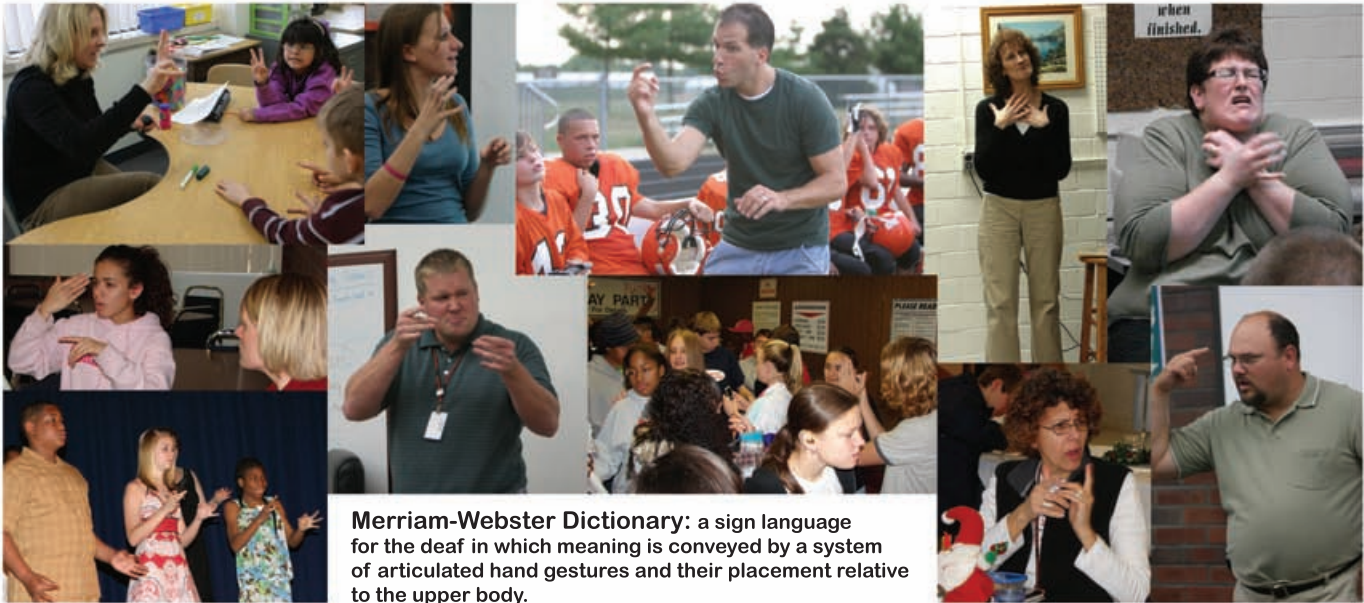
**Definition:** People who use two or more languages or dialects in their everyday lives.

Bilinguals acquire and use their languages for different purposes, in different areas of lives, and with different people.



# What is ASL?

**American Sign Language (ASL):** A complete, complex language that employs signs made with the hands and other movements, including facial expressions and postures of the body, used primarily by people in North America who are deaf.



**Merriam-Webster Dictionary:** a sign language for the deaf in which meaning is conveyed by a system of articulated hand gestures and their placement relative to the upper body.

# What is English?



## Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

- a: the language of the people of England and the United States and many areas now or formerly under British control.
- b: a particular variety of English distinguished by peculiarities (as of pronunciation).
- c: English language, literature, or composition when a subject of study.



## The Importance of Separating the Languages



- Research shows that when languages are combined, one or the other language suffers.



- Keeping languages separate ensures that teachers will know when they are presenting English and when they are presenting ASL. More deliberate teaching of English and ASL will occur.

Language Abilities for Deaf Bilinguals				
Language	ASL		English	English
Mode	Signacy	Additional Abilities	Literacy	Oracy
Receptive Skills	Watching or attending  (ephemeral)  Viewing (durable)	Fingerreading  Lipreading	Reading (durable)	Listening (when appropriate)  (ephemeral or durable)
	Expressive Skills			Signing  (ephemeral or durable)

Adapted from Novak, Christensen, & Cheng, 1996, p. 67

## Language Planning

is the deliberate presentation of English and ASL at specific times and for specific purposes during the school day.





# Language Abilities for Deaf Bilinguals

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Receptive Skills	Watching or attending (ephemeral) Viewing (durable)	Fingerreading Lipreading	Reading (durable)	Listening (when appropriate) (ephemeral or durable)
Expressive Skills	Signing (ephemeral or durable)	Fingerspelling Typing	Writing (durable)	Speaking (when appropriate) (ephemeral or durable)

Source: Adapted from Nover, Christensen, & Cheng ,1998, p. 67

# Clarification of Terminology

- The term “signacy” is derived from the concepts of “literacy” and “oracy” and refers to fluency in a signed language

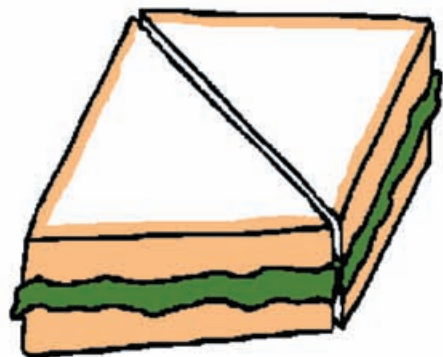


- “Literacy” refers to fluency in a written language (the ability to read and write)



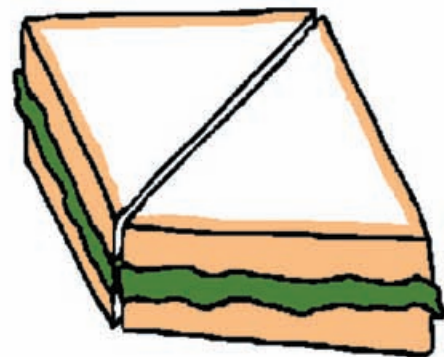
- “Oracy” refers to fluency in a spoken language (the ability to speak and listen)





W-E-E-K

## A Sample of a Bilingual Method “Sandwiching”



W-E-E-K



Fingerspelling - Sign - Fingerspelling



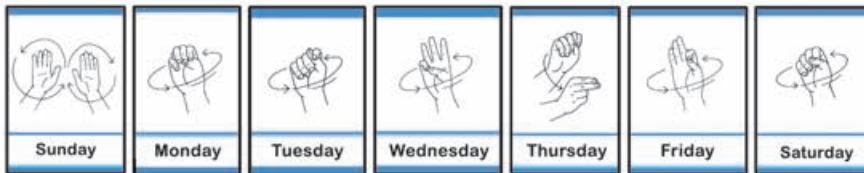
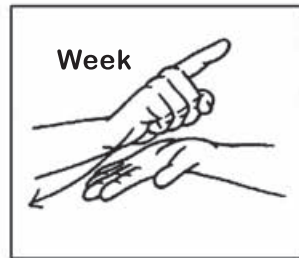
W-E-E-K



Signing - Fingerspelling - Signing

# Another Sample of a Bilingual Method “Chaining”

A technique used to form a relationship between a sign, a printed word, a fingerspelled word, spoken English and its concept



Source: Handsigns from “Signing for Dummies”, 2003

# How long does it take to learn a language?

## How did you become skilled in your second language?

**FACT:** It takes about two to three years to develop conversational proficiency (social language) in a second language, but it takes five or more years to develop academic language proficiency.

# The Seven Principles for Student Success

1. **Learning Goes From Whole to Part**
2. **Experiences Should be Learner-Centered**
3. **Experiences Should Have Meaning and Purpose for Learners Now**
4. **Learning Takes Place in Social Interaction**
5. **Experiences Should Develop Both ASL and English**
6. **Experiences Should Support Students' First Languages and Cultures**
7. **Faith in the Learner Expands Student Potential**

Source: Freeman and Freeman,  
1998, Heinemann