

The DCDD Board members prepare briefs about topics of interest for professionals who serve children and youth with communication disorders and their families. You are receiving this brief on the topic of resources for professionals who work with students who are deaf or hard of hearing because you are a member of DCDD. We appreciate your continued membership with DCDD. You are asked to share this message with your colleagues and to urge those colleagues to become a member of the DCDD community of learners.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education together published policy guidance titled, *Frequently Asked Questions on Effective Communication for Students with Hearing, Vision, or Speech Disabilities in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools*. It is available via the following link:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-faqs-effective-communication-201411.pdf>

The document indicates that schools are required to ensure that communication for students who are deaf or hard of hearing is as effective as communication for other students through the provision of appropriate aids and services so that they are able to participate in the district's services, programs, and activities. These requirements apply to all school-related communications.

When determining what types of auxiliary aids and services are necessary, the school must analyze the student's needs, how to meet those needs and give primary consideration to the specific request of the student. The type of auxiliary aids or services necessary to ensure effective communication will vary depending on the method of communication used by the individual, the type communication involved and the context in which the communication takes place.

The school must honor the individual's choice unless the school can prove that an alternative auxiliary aid or service provides communication that is as effective as that provided to students and affords an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the service, program, or activity. If the school can demonstrate that the particular auxiliary aid or service would result in an alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or an undue financial and administrative burden, the school must provide a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion and provide a satisfactory alternative auxiliary aid or service.

Dr. Cheryl D. Johnson wrote a comprehensive summary of the policy guidance that was published in the *Hands & Voices Communicator*, Winter 2015, Volume XIX – Issue 2. It can be accessed via the following link:
www.handsandvoices.org/astra/docs/GameChanger.pdf

Please use the DCDD Facebook page to ask questions and to share comments concerning the information in this message and please visit the DCDD Website
<http://community.cec.sped.org/DCDD/Home/>

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