

Andrew & Teresa Pierson

Parent, Metro Deaf School Birth-3 Program

Testimony in support of SF2502

Senate Education Finance Hearing

Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 8:30am

Chair: Sen. Mary Kunesh

My wife and I are extremely grateful for the resources at Metro Deaf School (MDS) that Carla organizes for families with deaf babies. Through Carla we learned that 0 to 3 years old is a critical developmental period for humans, especially for language and social development.

When we first found out that our daughter was deaf, we felt dread that she would have problems learning and making friends at school. I'm sure that would be the case if it were not for the Birth-to-Three parent classes on Mondays where parents get a chance to learn and practice signing ASL to our kids. We learned that deaf children can learn to communicate just as well as speaking children. Our world grew brighter and more hopeful with each class.

We are especially excited for our daughter to start attending the birth to three program for children twice a week starting on April 23rd where she will get exposure to language that she would otherwise not get at home.

Learning a new language is tough and the only real way to solidify what we learn in class is to put our skills to the test by communicating with other deaf adults. This is where the Parent Teacher Group (PTG) events come in. They provide an organized way to meet others in the deaf community. When we go to these events, we can tell that our daughter is absorbing all the ASL she sees around her. This is something she does not get anywhere else.

These are just two of many examples of events and programs at MDS that have been critical for our family. Other events such as family nights and fundraisers provide more opportunities for my family to learn ASL. At times learning ASL seems unattainable, but at these classes and events, we see other parents like ourselves who are succeeding.

In conclusion we are grateful for all the hard work Carla and others put in for families like us who rely on the deaf community to teach us how to communicate with our children so that they can have fulfilling lives and reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

Andrew & Teresa Pierson

Brooklyn Park