



**A Report:**  
**The Center for ASL/English Bilingual  
Education and Research:  
National ASL/English Bilingual Early  
Childhood Education Advisory Focus Group**

**Laurene Simms, Professor  
Department of Education  
Gallaudet University, Washington, DC  
CEASD Annual National Conference  
Great Falls, Montana  
May 5, 2008**

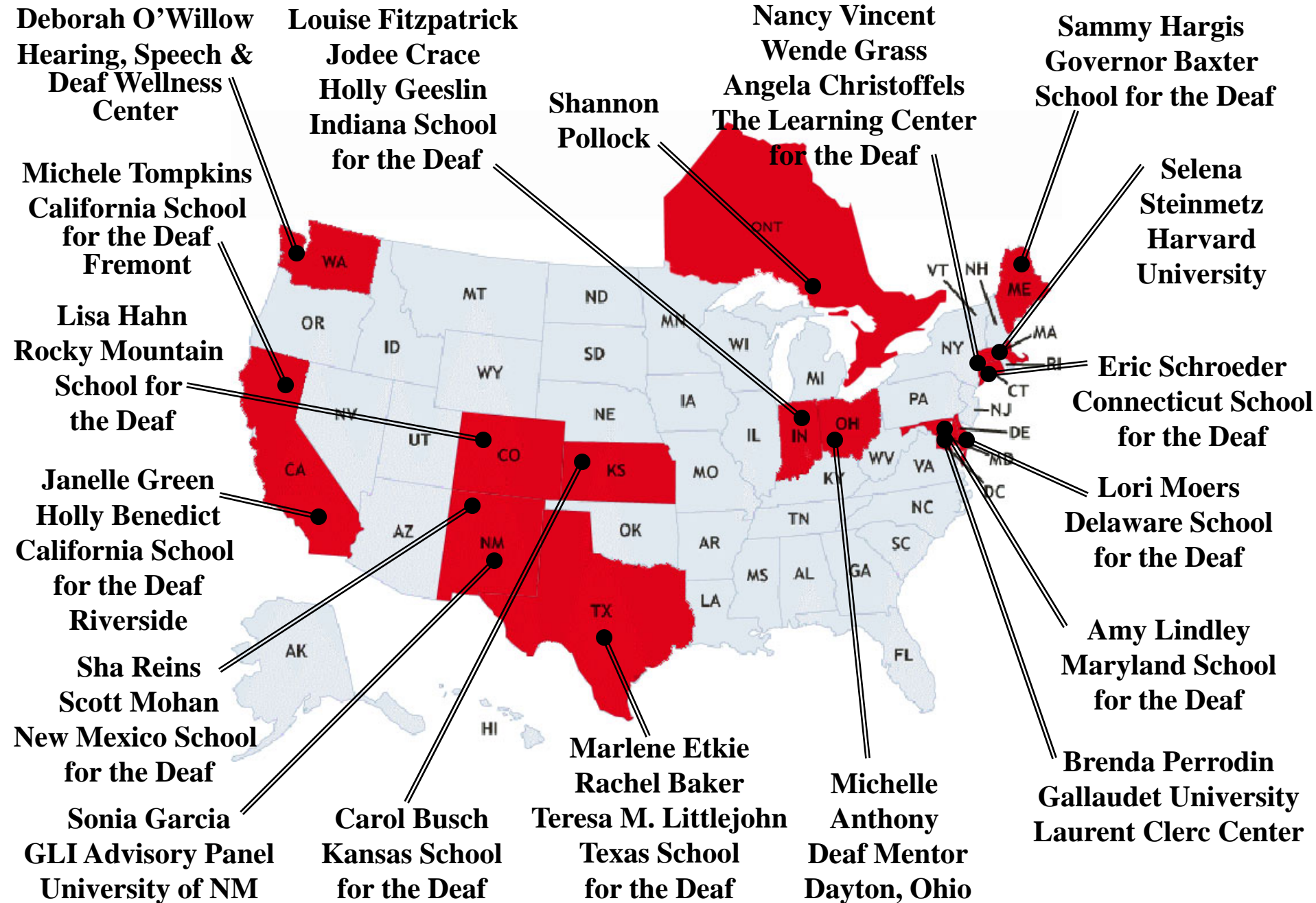


# CAEBER - Early Childhood Education: How did we get here?

- Met in Summer 2005
- Gallaudet University Department of Education, Gallaudet Leadership Institute & CAEBER
- Selection Process of Group Members
- Seven Priorities Identified
- Gallaudet Leadership Institute
- CAEBER: Early Childhood Education Advisory Focus Group



# Early Childhood Education Professionals: 2005

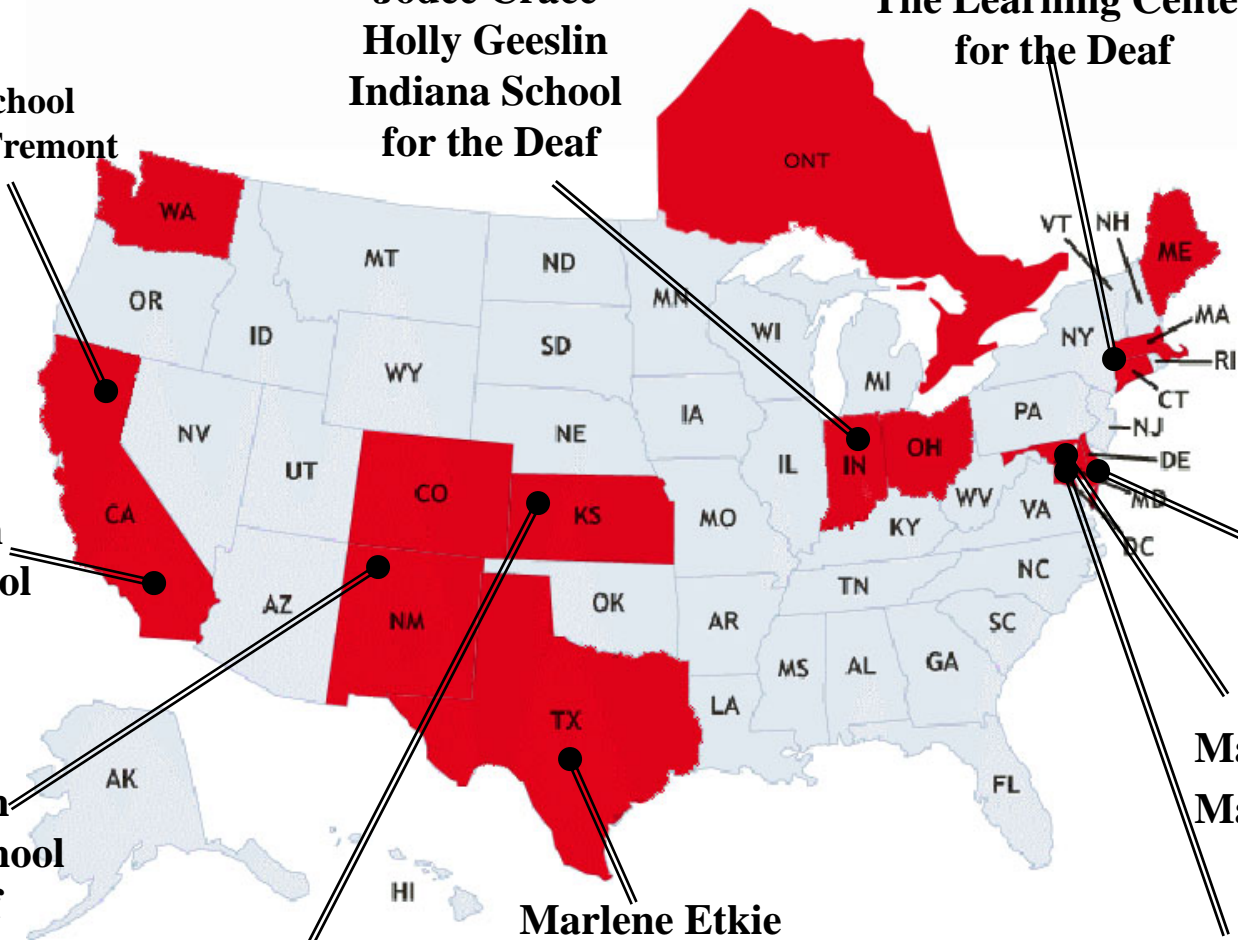


# The National Early Childhood Education: American Sign Language and English Advisory Focus Group (2007-2010)

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Laurent Clerc Center**

# CAEBER: Early Childhood Education Advisory Focus Group

- Project Co-Directors: Laurene Simms and Lori Moers
- Selection Process of Members
- Met in June 2007 at Indiana School for the Deaf
- November 2007 and April 2008: Gallaudet University
- October 2008: TBA
- Sponsorship: Hawk Relay, Dawn Sign Press,  
\*Schools for the Deaf and Gallaudet University



# \*Schools for the Deaf

- New Mexico School for the Deaf
- California School for the Deaf
- Texas School for the Deaf
- Indiana School for the Deaf
- Delaware School for the Deaf
- Kansas School for the Deaf
- The Learning Center, Massachusetts
- The Clerc Center



# Researchers

- Signs of Literacy, Gallaudet University (Dr. Cindy Bailes)
- Lamar University (Dr. Jean Andrews)
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, (Dr. Jenny Singleton)



# Seven Priorities

- National Curriculum Development
- Cooperative and Collaborative Networking Between and Among Professionals
- Impact of Technology, Medical and Education Communities
- Training (Leadership and Instruction)
- Training in the Unique Needs of Diverse Children (CI, including retention, MDA, Culturally and Linguistically, CODAs, HoH)
- Public Policy/System Issues Advocacy
- High Quality Research

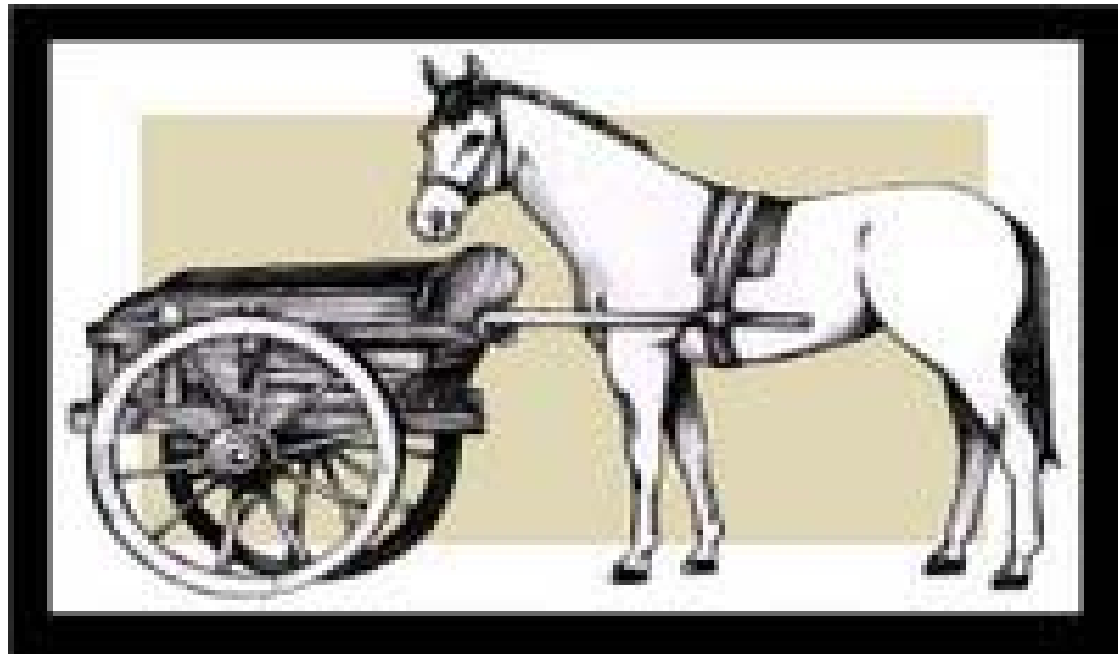


# Rationale

Rethinking: Now, in the 21<sup>st</sup>  
Century, dismal academic  
achievement of deaf children still  
exists. Why?

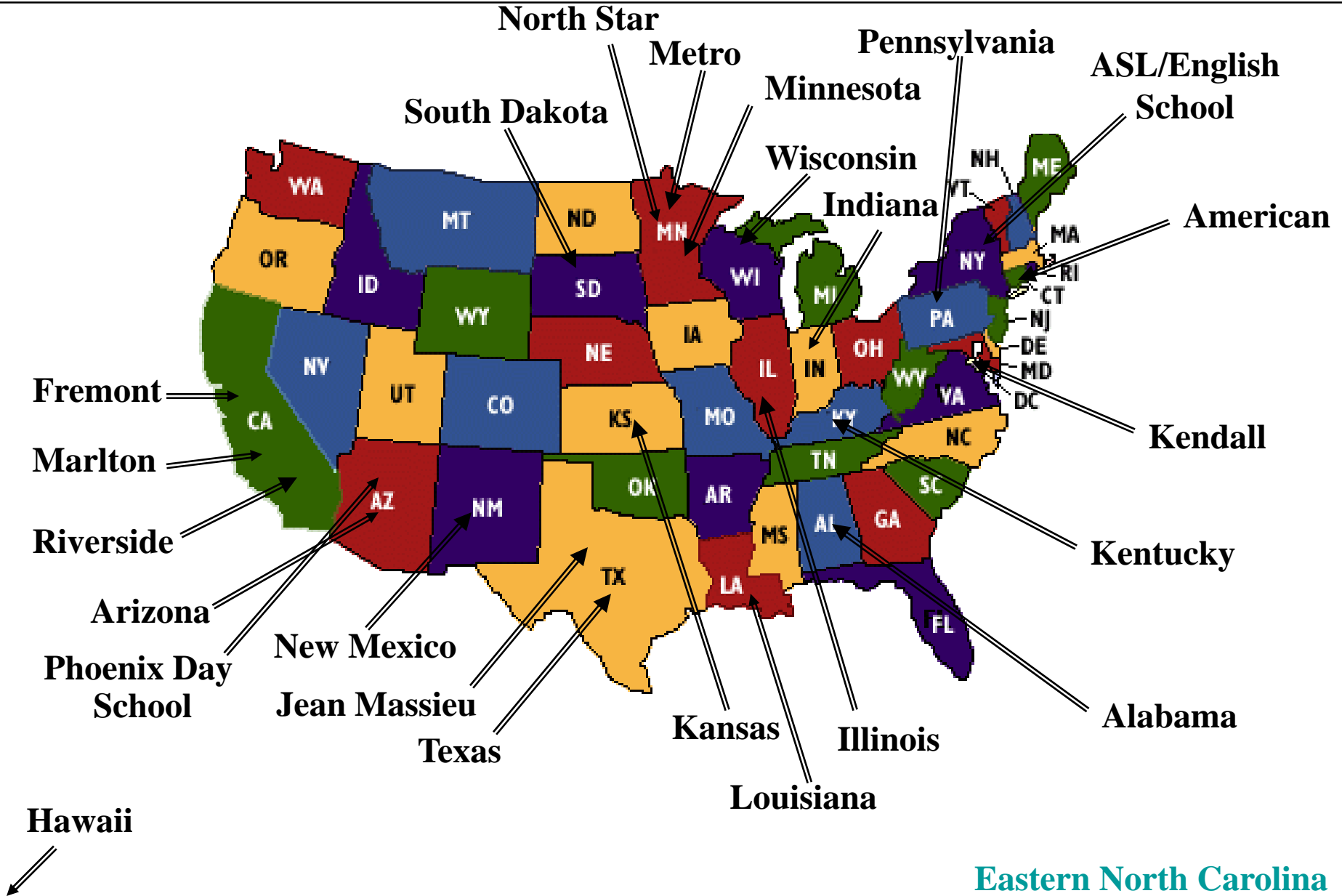


# Cart Before the Horse?



# AEBPD Schools (30)

American Sign Language/English Bilingual Professional Development

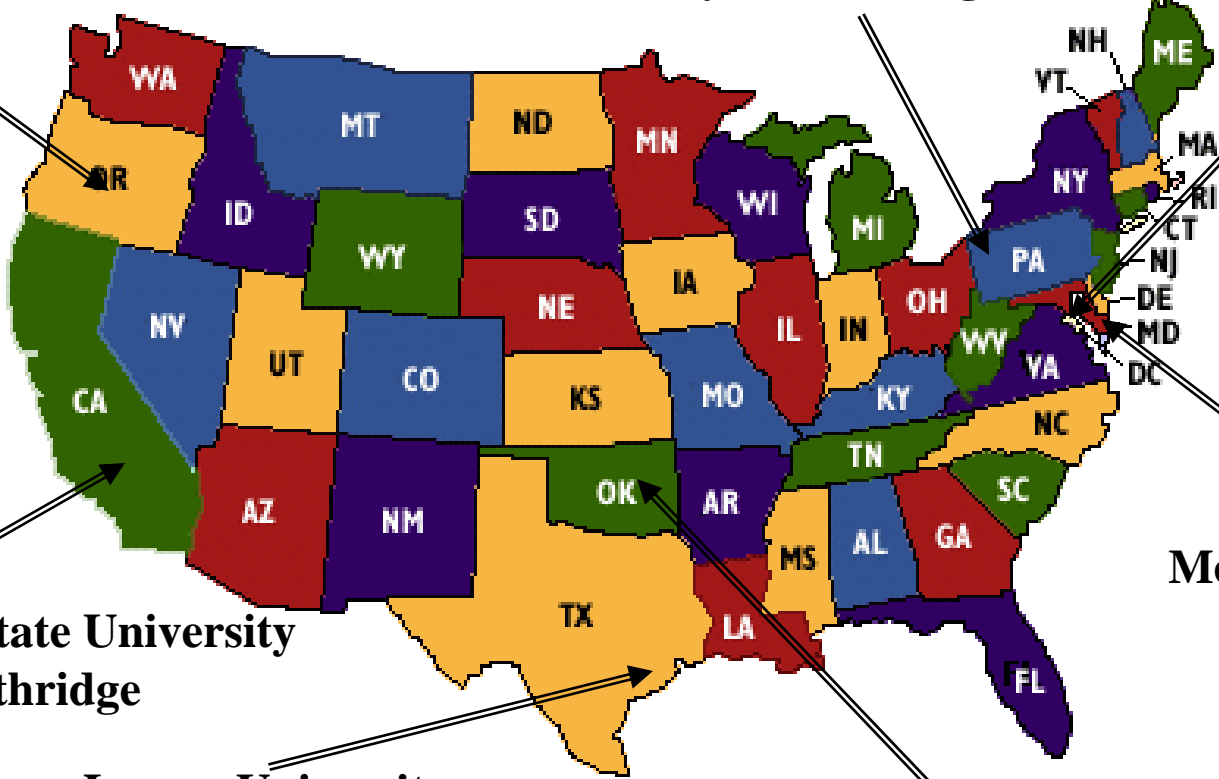


# Participating Universities

**Western Oregon  
University**

**University of Pittsburgh**

**Gallaudet University**



**California State University  
Northridge**

**McDaniel College**

**Lamar University**

**University of Tulsa**

**University of Hawaii**

**Dr. Henry Klopping, Superintendent of California School for the Deaf, Fremont, California remarked that virtually all Deaf children who enter the California School for the Deaf, Fremont, at an early age, have been passing the California high school exit exam and are receiving their high school diplomas, and he expressed dismay that many educators are unable to open their eyes to see this reality and hence are blinded by their own ill-formed preconceptions.**

**“This is not acceptable”, said Dr. Klopping.**

**March 7 2008  
Marriott Hotel San Ramon, CA**



# Hard Facts

- More hearing people are learning ASL than deaf people.
- Less than 1% of deaf people are learning ASL.
- More teachers are teaching ASL to hearing people than to deaf people.



# Hard Facts (continued)

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- Less than 1% of deaf people are learning ASL.
- More teachers are teaching ASL to hearing people than to deaf people.



# Hard Facts (continued)

- More hearing parents are using sign language to communicate with their hearing children.
- More hearing parents are using spoken English to communicate with their **deaf** children.



# Hard Facts (continued)

- The number of deaf learners who possess ASL skills has dwindled.
- No formalized ASL Curriculum and assessment exist for deaf children in America, yet.
- More deaf people do not have adequate literacy skills.
- Fewer and fewer K-12 teachers possess the ASL skills to model for their students.



# Exponential Growth

Welles, Elizabeth B., Foreign Language Enrollments in United States Institutions of Higher Education( Fall 2002).

**1998**

**2002**

**Spanish 656,590**

**Spanish 746,267**

**French 199,064**

**French 201,979**

**German 89,020**

**German 91,100**

**Italian 49,287**

**Italian 63,899**

**ASL 11,420**

**ASL 60,781**



# Percentile Growth

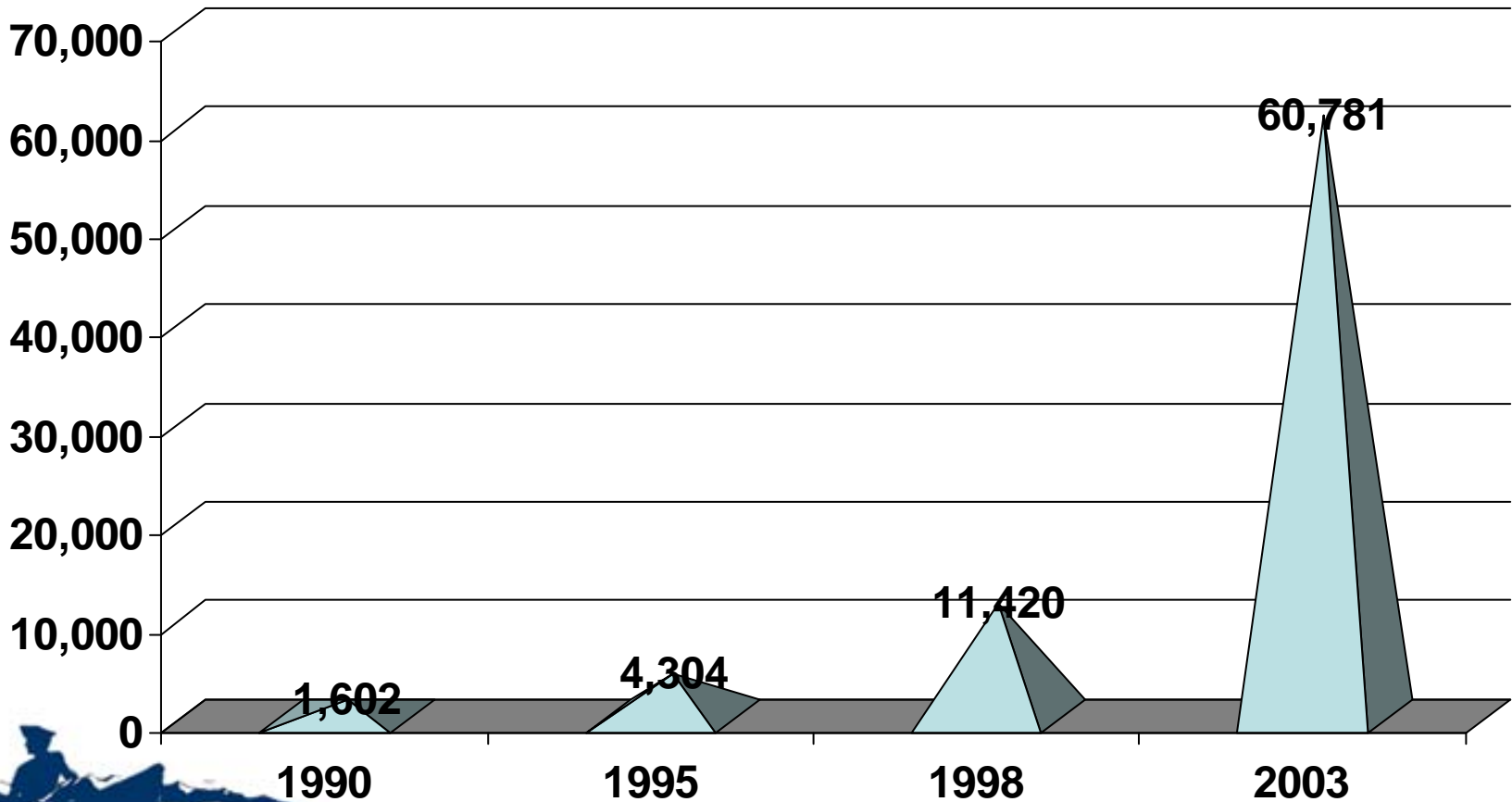
• Spanish	13.7 %
• French	1.5 %
• German	2.3 %
• Italian	29.6 %
• American Sign Language	<b>432.2 %</b>

Welles, Elizabeth B., Foreign Language Enrollments in United States Institutions of Higher Education( Fall 2002).



# ASL Enrollment

Enrollment has steadily climbed over the last 17 years but from 1998 to 2003 we see a 432.2% increase in enrollment



# Misperceptions of ASL and/or ASL & English for Early Childhood

## Why?



# Limited Research

- Relationship between play and language and literacy development had been noted earlier with a Deaf ASL user (Spencer, 1993).
- Significant correlation between children ASL signing skills and reading skills (Padden & Ramsey, 1998)
- Importance of understanding Deaf Literacy; a critical practice of bicultural education emphasize on education one in own language and learning style by maintaining bicultural (Prinz & Strong, 1998).
- To retain identification with own culture while introducing the dominant culture (Gilliard, J. L & Moore, R.A (2007) .
- Subcultures have different norms, values and styles different from those of dominant group, the difference impact student learning outcome such as literacy (Delone, 1979)

Source: Millicent Musyoka

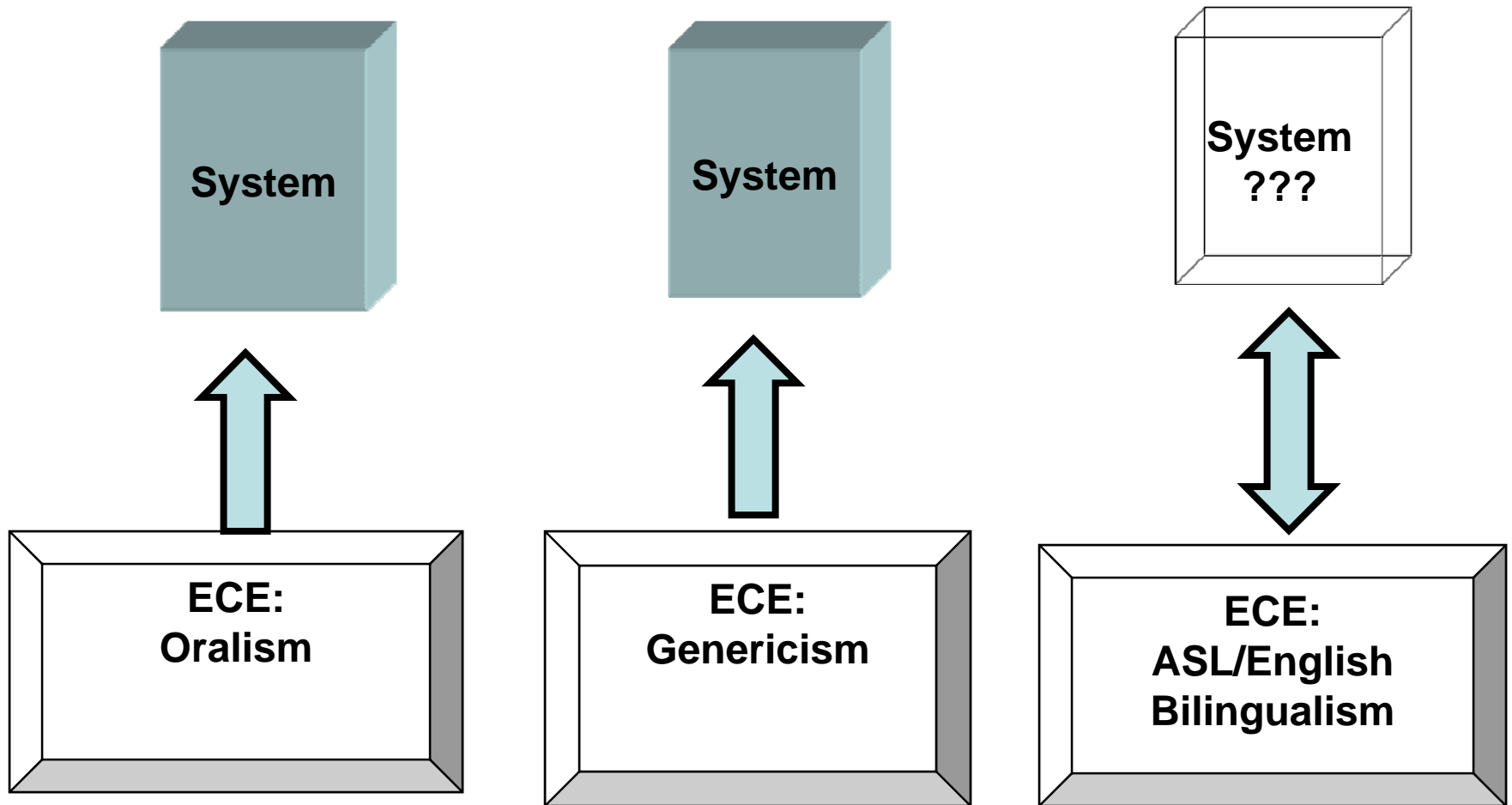


# Play and emergent literacy

- Positive relations have been found between play and language acquisition and literacy ((Yawkey, M & . Yawkey, T., 1979; Casby, & Ruder, 1983; Pellegrini, 1980; Casby & Della corte, 1987; McCune-Nicolich, 1995)
- This relationship between language, play and emergent literacy (Pellegrini, 1980; Saracho, 1980; Casby & Della corte, 1987; McCune-Nicolich, 1995; Vedeler, 1997; Saracho, 2001).

Source: Millicent Musyoka

# A Frame Reference



# Mission

**The mission of the National Early Childhood Education: American Sign Language and English Advisory Focus Group is to promote natural acquired dual language to enhance daily learning and literacy for deaf and hard of hearing children, ages 0 – 8 through a home-based and school-based curriculum and other resources. Full accessibility in a language rich environment at their home, school, and community ensures children to maximize their potential in becoming fully participating, contributing and productive members of American society.**



# Vision

- **Provide and advocate for families of newly identified deaf\* children with opportunities to receive support in the beginning.**
- **Offer families of deaf children and professionals accurate information and resources about the benefits of dual language opportunities in order to make well informed decisions.**
- **Give guidelines for language and cultural competencies which contribute to healthy social, cognitive, emotional development and well-being in deaf children including interactions among the deaf and hearing communities.**
- **Promote deaf children in achieving optimal and authentic linguistic fluency, so they become bilingual in American Sign Language (ASL) and English as early as feasible.**
- **Develop a home and school based curriculum and assessment to establish a strong foundation for full access to world knowledge which leads to lifelong learning.**



# Vision (continued)

- **Disseminate resources and contributions of Deaf culture and linguistic studies through visual media to enrich the human diversity.**
  - **Ensure the rights of a deaf child to pursue happiness, freedom and the enjoyment of life which should serve the same purposes as education by using both ASL and English.**
- \*The term “deaf” is used to encompass the spectrum of hearing level that has educational significance. This includes the term “hard of hearing.” The term “Deaf”, when capitalized, refers to Deaf Culture where American Sign Language (ASL) and English languages and membership in the Deaf community are factors. Not all educators and parents agree on the appropriate role of ASL/English languages in classrooms. However, in our Program, ASL/English are used as educational languages of medium in educational settings, and are also taught to families of diverse deaf learners.**



# Action Plan

- Website
- Brochures
- FAQs
- Early Childhood ASL/English Research & Publications
- Early Childhood Regional Programs
- Teacher Training Programs
- Peer Reviewers



# Impact on Early Intervention & Early Literacy Development

- Use of both languages for deaf children starting at birth.
- Empower parents.
- Resources on ASL/English Early Childhood Education.
- Strategies to use at home and in programs serving early childhood.
- Guidelines for language and cultural competencies .



# Impact on Early Intervention & Early Literacy Development (continued)

- Both home based and school based curriculum and assessments to be available for parents, teachers, service providers and other professionals involved with early childhood education.
- “Training Kit” for Professionals and Families



# Q & A



# Contact Information

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