Elementary Program for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Learners

Intermediate School District 917
Gideon Pond Elementary
613 East 130th Street
Burnsville, MN 55337

Who can I contact for more information?

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Our program:
- Provides a bilingual language-of-instruction model offering instruction and immersion in English via spoken and cued English and/or American Sign Language (ASL) to meet the special learning and communication needs for deaf and hard of hearing learners, as determined by a child’s parents and educational team.
- Develops listening skills and spoken English language fluency building on the foundation established during the preschool years.
- Implements traditional auditory/oral methods with simultaneous spoken/cued English (using the system called Cued Speech) so that learners have visual, as well as auditory, access to the consonant-vowel code of English.
- Provides a specialized, language-based elementary learning environment with developmentally appropriate language, reading and academic curriculums to meet the needs of the whole child as well as facilitate language development.
- Provides participation in the general education classroom as deemed appropriate by a learner’s IEP team.
- Provides a visual, auditory, and/or tactile language-rich, accessible learning environment for learners who are deaf or hard of hearing with additional special needs.

Services provided:
- Center-based elementary Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program resource classrooms for grades K-6
- Amplification equipment and services
- Auditory therapy to maximize the use of a cochlear implant and/or hearing aids
- Speech/language therapy
- Inservice to general education staff and support of the learner in the general education setting
- Instruction in compensatory and self-advocacy skills
- Parent and sibling classes in cued English and American Sign Language

Location of services:
An individual plan is developed specific to the needs of each child and may be provided in:
- The District 917 center-based Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program located at Gideon Pond Elementary School in Burnsville.
- The general education setting.
- A combination of classes in the 917 resource room and the general education setting.

Program philosophy:
- Children who are deaf or hard of hearing need constant access and deliberate exposure to complete representations of language to develop the linguistic foundation necessary for life-long learning.
- Proficiency in spoken/written English is critical to developing literacy, academic achievement and attaining access to the hearing community.
- Proficiency in American Sign Language (ASL) is critical to attaining access to the Deaf community.
- Some deaf and hard of hearing children need Cued Speech to visually access the consonant-vowel code of spoken English.

Staff members:
- Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Speech/Language Pathologist
- Educational Audiologist
- Physical Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Sign Language Interpreters and Cued Language Transliterators as needed for learners and families
- School Nurse
- Program Administrator

How are services initiated?
- The Intermediate School District 917 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Elementary Program serves all the school districts in Dakota County.
- Parents must first contact their local district special education director to request IEP team consideration of District 917 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program services.
- The local district sends a request for services through a referral to District 917.
- Service and placement decisions are made through the evaluation and IEP process.