



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact: Rebecca Helmke
or Erin Pabody
Phone: (317) 232-9805
Email: RHelmke@iga.in.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislation establishing education center for deaf passes out of House

STATEHOUSE- A bill that provides one central educational source for deaf children and their parents passed out of the House today with a 61-36 vote. Rep. Cindy Noe (R-Indianapolis) authored the legislation, House Bill (HB) 1367.

To ensure that children who are deaf or hard of hearing acquire optimal communication and academic abilities, the bill establishes a center for deaf and hard of hearing education.

“Ninety percent of deaf children are born to parents who can hear,” said Rep. Noe, “and many of those parents are at a loss for what to do. They don’t know where to go for help. The center would provide a one stop shop with the best resources in Indiana for parents seeking services for their deaf or hard of hearing child. We want to provide a center of support for parents and ensure they are well equipped to make one of the most important decisions they’ll ever make for their children.”

The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education would ensure that children who are deaf and children who are hard of hearing acquire optimal language skills and academic abilities.

Some of the center’s duties would include monitoring and tracking success of students, developing student learning opportunities, training the parents of deaf and hard of hearing children and providing support in each family’s chosen method of communication. The center would also provide audiological, communication and educational assessment services.

Currently, services for deaf children are scattered across several entities including the Department of Health, the Family and Social Services Administration, the Department of Education and the Indiana School for the Deaf. There is no central authority that handles these services. The Indiana School for the Deaf (ISD) is required to provide outreach services to all deaf children in Indiana.

The state’s outreach and evaluation of educational options to the deaf and hard of hearing have been an ongoing effort since 2010. This past summer and fall, interviews with staff from Indiana School for the Deaf were conducted as well as public forums organized by the Indiana Association of the Deaf to gather additional input.

The goal of HB 1367 is to provide one central source for deaf and hard of hearing children and their parents. It aims to eliminate confusion and administrative difficulties that parents of deaf children encounter when they are attempting to receive information and support from the State so that they can have easy access to complete information and services for their deaf children. To assure public input, two public forums will be held before Oct. 1.

“The bill supports the right of all parents to choose the communication and education options that are best for their children,” said Rep. Noe. “The Center will carry out these duties in a manner to ensure that children who are deaf and hard of hearing acquire optimal language skills and academic abilities, regardless of the mode of communication they choose. We, right here in Indiana, have the makings to do something quite remarkable for our deaf and hard of hearing children and parents who love and take care for them.

“I must commend all those involved at the ISD campus for their openness and transparency in this process. I know it came from a desire to consistently improve and do the right thing.”

HB 1367 will now be heard in the Senate, and will be effective upon passage.

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Rep. Cindy Noe represents District 87 which includes parts of Marion, Hamilton and Boone Counties. Rep. Noe is Chair of the Family, Children and Human Affairs Committee. She also serves on the Education Committee, as well as the Select Committee on Government Reduction.