The Time Is Now

Leeanne Seaver, M.A.
Executive Director
Hands & Voices National

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Time for what….?

- Better academic outcomes
- Authentic, meaningful social life
- Full & effective communication access
- Opportunity to realize his/her fullest potential

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"A deaf or hard of hearing child is, to some degree, without hearing. And yet the term "disabled" may be a misnomer. That same child is fully capable of developing language—spoken or manual—and becoming a complete person. A communication difference is not the same as a communication disability."

Lawrence Siegel, J.D., Director,
National Deaf Education Project

Old Paradigm v Today's Realities

- Average age of identification: 2-4 yrs
- Primitive assistance communication technologies
- Sign language viewed as inferior
- Limited educational options

- Universal newborn hearing screening & identification
- High-powered, programmable hearing aids, cochlear implants
- ASL legitimate foreign language
- Accessibility expanded via interpreters & assistive technologies

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Time for a Different Future…

Time to Expect Full and Effective Access

Barriers to Solutions

1. Disagreement on the problems & how to solve them
2. Research void
3. Resistance to change
4. Lack of administrative support
5. Missing stakeholders

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What are we gonna do about it?

#1. Lack of <u>Consensus</u>

- rooted in bias
- historically <u>implacable</u>

= accept diversity & keep our eyes on the prize

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What are we gonna do about #2 "Research Void"?

. Meta-Analysis proves our lack of reliable, evidenced-based resources (Luckner, 2004)

. "Deaf kids are not hearing kids who can't hear." (Marschark, 2005)

. JDSDE Author's Corner connects parents & professionals directly to the researcher at www.wiki.educ.msu.edu

= ***Let's admit to what we don't know and commit to credibly finding out!***

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What are we gonna do about
#3 "Resistance to Change"?

- systemic inertia rooted in job security & administrative agendas
- professional & biological imperative to *survive* (i.e., sustain our comfort zone)

= lower the drawbridge…

let in the change agents

(parents, deaf community, advocates within the system)

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What are we gonna do about #4 "Lack of Administrative Support"?

- The classic "low-incidence" dismissal
- Realities of under-funding, lack of qualified (or any) human resources, and mandates that work counter to our purposes

= Strengthen our lobby by unifying for new mandates in a climate of collaboration & respect

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What are we gonna do about
#5 "Missing Stakeholders"?

- The "Dennis Rodman" Syndrome
- The "system" is often contra-indicated for collaboration of all vested parties

= "Influence is the union of power and purpose." -- Condoleezza Rice

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Signs of Progress!

- Our "issues" articulated (www.ndepwnow.org)
- **The National Agenda**
- **National Deaf Education Summit Conference** helps establish the *"Wisconsin Agenda"*
- **"Deaf Child's Bill of Rights"** legislation passing at the state level
- **Hands & Voices** creates a mechanism for local & nationally unified message

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“First they ignore you,
then they laugh at you,
then they fight you,
then you win.”

- Mahatma Ghandi

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Hands & Voices National

Cheryl DeConde Johnson, EdD, President
Leeanne Seaver, M.A., Executive Director
Janet DesGeorges, Outreach Director
PO Box 3093
Boulder, CO 80307
1-866-422-0422 toll free V/TTY

Wisconsin Hands & Voices

Michelle Kihntopf, myshelle2@msn.com

Laurie Nelson, Laurie.Nelson@DPI.wi.gov

parentadvocate@handsandvoices.org

www.handsandvoices.org

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