Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

# Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

## Instruction in American Sign Language

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## Standards for Teachers of American Sign Language

### Introduction

The American Sign Language (ASL) Standards describe the knowledge, skills and dispositions beginning teachers must have to meet expectations for quality instruction in North Carolina schools. They reflect a strong emphasis on target language competence and cultural knowledge; a dedication to a philosophy of pedagogy that serves the needs of all students; an appreciation and respect for diversity; and the importance of continued professional development. This document also serves to align standards for initially licensed K-12 teachers with both the national and state standards documents: *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* and the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCS)*.

The American Sign Language Standards are designed to be used in conjunction with the Core, Technology, and Diversity Standards common to all teacher education programs. The Core, Technology, and Diversity Standards outline the generic knowledge, skills and dispositions that every teacher should possess. These standards identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions specific to ASL.

ASL is a language distinct from spoken English—replete with its own syntax and grammar and supporting its own culture. ASL is not a spoken or written language; therefore teachers rely on expressive and receptive visual-spatial communication in their instruction. American Sign Language is used to learn about content, to interact with the community, to compare with one's own language and to gain knowledge and understanding of American Sign Language cultures.

Teachers of American Sign Language understand the multiplicity of cultures within the target language communities. They use their knowledge of cultural practices to develop student insights into the perspectives held by users of American Sign Language.

Teachers of American Sign Language understand the importance of a long sequence of second language instruction, but are also prepared to adapt to the reality of multiple entry points of language programs. They understand the importance of careful articulation within the American Sign Language curriculum and across levels of instruction. They also connect American Sign Language instruction to other curricular areas. Teachers use their knowledge of second language acquisition theory to develop and adapt varied activities to meet the needs of students. They use a wide variety of strategies to assess programs and student progress.

The nature of second language instruction affirms the value of diversity, leading students to an appreciation of similarities and differences. Teachers acknowledge that second language learning is appropriate for all students. They value the contributions of heritage language learners. Teachers vary instruction and assessment to meet the needs of all students.

Teachers of American Sign Language are strong advocates and seek opportunities to promote second language education in the school and the community. They understand that maintaining and enhancing language skills and cultural knowledge are crucial to their continued professional development.

## Standards for Teachers of American Sign Language

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**Standard 1: Teachers demonstrate ASL competency commensurate with their role as American Sign Language models. They function effectively in interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes.**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers demonstrate an understanding of the main ideas and details of conversations, visual presentations and video recordings by native signers.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers converse with a high degree of linguistic accuracy on familiar topics, make visual presentations in social and work situations, and are understood without difficulty by native signers.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers comprehend ASL on literal, interpretive and critical levels, and they are able to rephrase, summarize, critique or make personal applications of the ASL presented.

**Indicator 4:** Teachers communicate clearly, correctly and effectively using formal and informal styles on familiar topics for varied purposes and audiences.

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**Standard 2: Teachers demonstrate understanding of the linguistic components of the target language (e.g., phonology, vocabulary, morphology, syntax, pragmatics and discourse).**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers identify and produce the parameters and prosodic features (i.e., stress, rhythm, linking phenomena, and suprasegmentals) of the target language.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers explain the basic grammatical and syntactic units of the target language.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers demonstrate an understanding of the structured nature of the target language vocabulary (e.g., word families, derivations, antonyms and synonyms.)

**Indicator 4:** Teachers demonstrate how language features are used to carry out communicative needs and how language is defined by social context.

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**Standard 3: Teachers demonstrate familiarity with the culture represented by the target language as they relate to practices (e.g., customs, patterns of social interactions) and perspectives (e.g., beliefs, values and ideals).**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers demonstrate an understanding that differences exist in language use among various social groups in such areas as vocabulary, intonation and level of formality.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers demonstrate an understanding that culture and language constantly change as a result of political, economic and social conditions.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers explain everyday cultural practices and places where target language is used, and they dispel stereotypical images associated with those cultures.

**Indicator 4:** Teachers understand the perspectives of target cultures as represented by a range of practices and products.

**Indicator 5:** Teachers understand and model culturally appropriate social behaviors (e.g., deaf community interpersonal relationships).

**Indicator 6:** Teachers analyze historical and contemporary literature and the arts in order to explain the cultural practices and perspectives of the people of the target cultures.

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**Standard 4: Teachers demonstrate insight into how the target language and cultures compare to the students' language(s) and culture(s).**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers identify similarities and differences among cultures as they compare and contrast hearing culture and the target culture.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers understand that one's own cultural orientation affects the perception of another culture, and they avoid perpetuating cultural misperceptions.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers provide examples of mutual influences across languages and cultures.

**Indicator 4:** Teachers compare and contrast distinctive features of English with those of the target language.

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**Standard 5: Teachers demonstrate familiarity with current theories in American Sign Language acquisition, human cognitive development and brain research.**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers are able to differentiate and articulate ways in which young adolescents and adults learn American Sign Language.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers apply developmentally appropriate language learning strategies in the classroom.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers implement instructional strategies that reflect current American Sign Language acquisition theory.

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**Standard 6: Teachers create and manage a classroom environment conducive to American Sign Language learning.**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers use the target language as the principal medium of instruction and classroom management.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers provide frequent opportunities for students to use the target language in structured and creative practice within an authentic context.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers consider the emotional, physical and intellectual needs of the students as they may influence American Sign Language learning.

**Indicator 4:** Teachers demonstrate the ability to modify visual and physical aspects of the classroom to facilitate language learning.

**Indicator 5:** Teachers provide exposure to native signers, including peer models, in person and/or through multimedia sources.

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**Standard 7: Teachers employ multiple strategies to engage students actively and effectively in learning the target language and cultures.**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers motivate students through authentic communicative learning activities.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers provide opportunities for students to understand cultural and linguistic diversity.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers construct and implement varied activities to enable students to function in interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes, within a relevant cultural context.

**Indicator 4:** Teachers demonstrate the ability to differentiate between major and minor errors. They know how and when to make corrections, provide feedback and allow for delayed response.

**Indicator 5:** Teachers identify opportunities for students to practice their developing American Sign Language skills outside the classroom setting.

**Indicator 6:** Teachers assist students in making links to local and distant target communities.

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**Standard 8: Teachers identify, select, adapt and use a wide variety of instructional resources and technology to enhance students' learning and to provide access to the target language and cultures.**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers incorporate appropriate and authentic realia, manipulatives, print and non-print materials into American Sign Language instruction.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers use research skills, technology and resources (e.g., online and printed materials, e-mail and software programs) in English and American Sign Languages. They also provide opportunities for students to make use of these skills and resources.

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**Standard 9: Teachers understand the sequential nature of the American Sign Language curriculum and articulate the instructional program accordingly.**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers develop language specific curricula based on the generic frameworks of the Standard Course of Study.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers recognize the complexities resulting from multiple-entry points within the American Sign Language program and incorporate knowledge about their students' prior American Sign Language experiences into their instruction.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers demonstrate an understanding of the simple to complex or familiar to unfamiliar progression of topics, contents and language in the sequential curriculum.

**Indicator 4:** Teachers demonstrate an understanding of horizontal (within a level) and vertical (level to level) curricular articulation.

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**Standard 10: Teachers link the skills and knowledge between the broader curriculum and American Sign Language instruction.**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers recognize the importance of collaborating with teachers across the curriculum in order to incorporate concepts and knowledge from other subject areas at the appropriate grade level into American Sign Language instruction.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers seek to maximize the transfer of cognitive, academic and communicative skills between English and American Sign Language.

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**Standard 11: Teachers implement assessment strategies that are aligned with instruction. They address the visual modality and culture in order to measure student achievement and proficiency.**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers recognize that assessment has a variety of purposes for the American Sign Language program, including monitoring student learning, reporting student progress and achievement and evaluating instruction.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers demonstrate knowledge of a variety of assessment instruments, including paper-pencil tests, and alternative assessments such as portfolios and expressive and receptive performance assessments. They understand the importance of using multiple strategies to measure student progress, achievement and American Sign Language proficiency.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers strive to assess students within authentic contexts.

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**Standard 12: Teachers affirm that American Sign Language learning is appropriate for all students regardless of ability, language background, race, ethnicity, gender, religion and other cultural factors.**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers demonstrate an understanding that students learn American Sign Languages in different ways and they vary instruction to address individual learning styles and abilities.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers acknowledge that special needs students can learn American Sign Language.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers collaborate with special support personnel when modifying instruction to meet the needs of those students.

**Indicator 4:** Teachers model respect for the differences among students to foster a positive classroom climate that promotes American Sign Language learning for all students.

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**Standard 13: Teachers recognize the unique contributions of heritage language learners (students with home backgrounds in languages other than English) and adapt curriculum and instruction to meet their needs.**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers identify the particular instructional needs of heritage learners and integrate these learners into the American Sign Language program.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers select materials that will enhance instruction for heritage learners.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers create opportunities for heritage learners to share their language and cultural experiences.

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**Standard 14: Teachers maintain and enhance their linguistic and cultural skills beyond the classroom**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers acknowledge the importance of experiencing target cultures firsthand and of the need to expand and continually update cultural knowledge.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers engage in ongoing language practice and exploration of cultures by participating in activities in local communities, by continuing formal education through coursework, and/or by using technology to access the target language.

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**Standard 15: Teachers understand and communicate the value of learning languages other than English to students, colleagues, administrators, parents and the community at large**

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**Indicator 1:** Teachers advocate for a continuous sequence of American Sign Language instruction and understand the importance of collaboration among American Sign Language teachers at all levels.

**Indicator 2:** Teachers recognize how educational decisions are made and how those decisions affect American Sign Language programs and how to represent the American Sign Language program in the decision-making process.

**Indicator 3:** Teachers stay abreast of local, state and/or national legislation and policies affecting the teaching of American Sign Languages.

**Indicator 4:** Teachers communicate the benefits of American Sign Language study for diverse groups of students.

**Indicator 5:** Teachers see opportunities to promote American Sign Language education.

**Indicator 6:** Teachers foster constructive relationships with parents, colleagues, school administrators, local governing boards and state and national policy makers in order to promote the value of American Sign Language education for all students.

## American Sign Language
## Curriculum Standards
## LEVEL I

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**Competency Goal 1:** *Interpersonal Communication – The learner will engage in one on one and group conversation and exchange information and opinions on a variety of topics.*

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1.01 Express self in basic 1-3 sentence responses using ASL signs and phrases during question answer interactions.

1.02 Interact using a standard introduction, greetings, farewells and expressions of courtesy.

1.03 Ask and respond to basic questions about a variety of topics such as feelings and emotions, likes and dislikes, and personal information.

1.04 Give and follow simple directions, commands and requests.

1.05 Share basic opinions on familiar topics.

1.06 Fingerspell proper nouns (e.g., products, brands, names, places) with teacher-aided cues.

1.07 Exchange basic essential information using appropriate non-manual markers, and registers such as facial expressions, body posture and spatial orientation.

1.08 Produce commonly used classifiers appropriately in context.

1.09 Demonstrate appropriate conversational strategies during one on one conversation.

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**Competency Goal 2:** *Interpretive Communication – The learner will comprehend signed information on a variety of topics in ASL.*

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2.01 Demonstrate comprehension of basic personal and social questions by responding appropriately using ASL signs and phrases of 1-to-3 sentences in length.

2.02 Comprehend fingerspelling such as products, brands, names, places and words that have no signs and lexicalized fingerspelling with teacher-aided cues.

2.03 Demonstrate an understanding of simple directions (locations), commands and requests in ASL.

2.04 Comprehend basic questions on a variety of familiar topics and respond appropriately using ASL signs and sign phrases during interactions over personal and social topics.

2.05 Demonstrate an understanding of basic ASL syntax (e.g., O-S-V, rhetorical, topic-comment, conditional).

2.06 Identify key words, main ideas and important details from basic ASL narratives.

2.07 Understand basic ASL descriptions, physical attributes and surroundings (e.g., family and daily routines).

2.08 Demonstrate comprehension of phrases with accompanying basic non-manual markers and degrees of intensity.

**Competency Goal 3:** *Presentational Communication (Expressive Skills) –*
*The learner will present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience on a variety of topics.*

3.01 Express prepared short presentations (up to 5 minutes) in ASL about self, people, places, things, and events using conceptually accurate everyday signs and phrases.

3.02 Tell simple narratives/stories, and perform scenarios and anecdotes on familiar topics (e.g., daily routines and events).

3.03 Give simple directions and descriptions, describe attributes and locate simple objects in ASL.

3.04 Give simple commands and explain procedures.

3.05 Make requests (e.g., appointments, changing time schedule), plans and suggestions.

3.06 Fingerspell names, places and addresses, including abbreviations and categories and simple lexical fingerspelling.

3.07 Produce and comprehend number signs (e.g., age and time).

3.08 Express opinions about likes, dislikes and activities.

**Competency Goal 4:** *Cultures -*
*The learner will gain knowledge and demonstrate understanding of the relationship among practices, products, and perspectives, of cultures other than his/her own.*

4.01 Observe, identify, discuss and use simple patterns of behavior (e.g., eye contact and getting someone's attention) for interacting in various settings.

4.02 Demonstrate familiarity with media such as newspapers, magazines and their values in the Deaf community.

4.03 Demonstrate familiarity with abstract genre such as poetry, art, folklore, jokes, and their values in the Deaf community.

4.04 Observe and discuss the historical and current role and impact of technology, education, deaf and mainstreamed schools, the laws and leadership of the Deaf community.

4.05 Demonstrate an understanding of the history of ASL and the Deaf community (e.g., Deaf organizations and sports), its connection to Deaf culture and the Deaf community.

4.06 Demonstrate an understanding about the perspectives of Deaf culture (e.g., medical and cultural perspective of hearing loss).

4.07 Demonstrate knowledge of ASL and Deaf Community (including Deaf organizations & sports)

4.08 Understand the unique role of name signs in Deaf culture (arbitrary as opposed to descriptive names).

**Competency Goal 5**: *Comparisons – The learner will develop insight into the nature of language and culture by comparing his/her own language(s) and culture(s) to others.*

5.01 Compare suprasegmentals of ASL with other languages.

5.02 Compare morphology of ASL with other languages such as inflection, modulation and temporal aspects.

5.03 Compare basic syntax of ASL with other languages.

5.04 Compare basic discourse of ASL with other languages.

5.05 Compare frequently recognized regional sign variations.

5.06 Compare simple patterns of behavior among deaf culture and other cultures.

5.07 Compare concrete and abstract products of Deaf culture and other cultures.

5.08 Compare Deaf culture with values from other cultures.

5.09 Identify assistive technology used by deaf persons (e.g., light flashings and vibrating devices).

**Competency Goal 6** *Connections – The learner will acquire, reinforce, and further his/her knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.*

6.01 Identify the use of technology to access and exchange information with and within the Deaf community (e.g., closed captions (CC) and relay).

6.02 Demonstrate understanding of concepts learned in other high school subjects using ASL.

6.03 Recognize and understand the learning strategies and processes from other disciplines.

6.04 Recognize and understand the importance of name signs in Deaf community.

6.05 Demonstrate awareness of print and non-print resources for and by people who are deaf.

**Competency Goal 7:** *Communities – The learner will use ASL and demonstrate cultural knowledge and understanding within and beyond the school setting for personal, educational, and professional growth and enrichment.*

7.01 Demonstrate awareness of diversity in the Deaf community (e.g., communication modes, educational placement, and sub-groups).

7.02 Attend and/or participate in Deaf community events.

7.03 Demonstrate awareness about networking in the Deaf community (e.g., sports, organizations, resources, and clubs).

7.04 Explore career possibilities using ASL.

7.05 Share knowledge of ASL and Deaf culture with others (e.g., Deaf awareness week, Deaf, Deaf World, ASL clubs, informal sharing).

**American Sign Language**
**Curriculum Standards**
**LEVEL II**

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**Competency Goal 1:** *Interpersonal Communication The learner will engage in 1:1 and group conversation and exchange information and opinions on a variety of topics.*

1.01 Express self in 3-5 sentence responses using increasingly complex conceptually accurate grammar and syntax.

1.02 Interact using formal introduction and expansion on background information about self and others.

1.03 Ask and respond to complex questions about a variety of topics.

1.04 Give and follow complex directions, commands and requests.

1.05 Share more complex opinions and preferences about unfamiliar topics.

1.06 Fingerspell proper nouns (e.g., products, names, words that have no signs) with no teacher aided cues.

1.07 Exchange information using more complex non-manual markers, registers and cultural behaviors.

1.08 Use more complex classifiers appropriately in context.

1.09 Demonstrate appropriate listener feedback during group conversation.

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**Competency Goal 2:** *Interpretive Communication – The learner will comprehend signed information on a variety of topics in ASL.*

2.01 Demonstrate comprehension of and ability to paraphrase expressed ASL signs, phrases and sentences (3-5 sentences) and dialogues.

2.02 Comprehend fingerspelling of nouns such as products, brands, names, places and words that have no signs and lexicalized fingerspelling with less teacher-aided cues.

2.03 Demonstrate an understanding of complex directions (e.g., locations and tasks), commands and requests in ASL.

2.04 Demonstrate an understanding of increasingly complex questions, including conditional questions on a variety of topics.

2.05 Demonstrate an understanding of increasingly complex ASL syntax (e.g., temporal aspects, and pronominalization).

2.06 Understand and summarize key words, main ideas and important details from increasingly complex ASL narratives.

2.07 Understand more complex ASL description of objects and concepts (e.g., instruments, food, texture).

2.08 Demonstrate comprehension of phrases with increasingly complex non-manual markers and degrees of intensity.

**Competency Goal 3:** *Presentational Communication (Expressive Skills) –*
*The learner will present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience on a variety of topics.*

3.01 Express prepared presentations (at least 5-10 minutes) in ASL (e.g., about self, Deaf community) using appropriate ASL vocabulary, syntax and discourse.

3.02 Tell short stories, and perform scenarios and anecdotes stories on familiar topics (i.e. health and family history) and Deaf/ASL Literature (e.g., cheers, handshape stories).

3.03 Give complex directions (locating, describing, and identifying things around the house and outside surroundings), and give directions about how to get to places in the community.

3.04 Make complex requests, complaints and suggestions.

3.06 Produce technical terms (e.g. health, medical, legal) and complex lexical words and acronyms using fingerspelling.

3.07 Produce accurate number signs for complex mathematics, (e.g., whole-part, ratio, fraction, and percent.)

3.08 Express opinions about food and situations using appropriate vocabulary, non-manual signals and register variation.

**Competency Goal 4:** *Cultures – The learner will gain knowledge and demonstrate understanding of the relationship among practices, products, and perspectives, of cultures other than his/her own.*

4.01 Observe, identify, discuss and use complex patterns of behavior (eye contact, getting someone's attention, negotiating signing environment, cultural greetings, information sharing, and etiquette for social interaction) for interacting in various settings.

4.02 Demonstrate familiarity with complex and abstract media such as websites, newspapers, magazines and their values in the Deaf community.

4.03 Demonstrate familiarity with complex and abstract genre such as poetry, art, folklore, jokes, and their values in the Deaf community.

4.04 Narrate and discuss in-depth the historical and current role and impact of technology, education, deaf and mainstreamed schools, the laws and leadership of the Deaf community.

4.05 Demonstrate knowledge of Deaf heritage and discuss in-depth major historical events and persons which affect beliefs about Deaf culture.

4.06 Elaborate on the perspectives of Deaf culture (medical and cultural perspective, identity, appropriate technology, and politics) and their impact.

4.07 Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse Deaf communities in the United States and its related organizations.

4.08 Describe the unique role of name signs in Deaf culture.

**Competency Goal 5**: *Comparisons – The learner will develop insight into the nature of language and culture by comparing his/her own language(s) and culture(s) to others.*

5.01 Utilize and apply phonology of ASL with other languages.

5.02 Utilize and apply morphology of ASL with own language and culture.

5.03 Discuss and compare complex discourse of ASL to other languages.

5.04 Give examples in ASL of several frequently recognized regional sign variations.

5.05 Discuss complex patterns of behavior among Deaf culture and other cultures.

5.06 Discuss more complex concrete and abstract products of Deaf culture and other cultures.

5.07 Compare and discuss Deaf cultural values with values from other cultures.

**Competency Goal 6** *Connections: The learner will acquire, reinforces, and furthers his/her knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.*

6.01 Explain how technology is used to access and exchange information with and within the Deaf community (e.g., Closed Captions, TTY, Relay).

6.02 Demonstrate understanding of more complex concepts learned in other high school subjects using ASL.

6.03 Express personal interests and knowledge from other disciplines in ASL.

6.04 Describe the experience of using hearing dogs and technology normally used by deaf persons at home and work (e.g., light flashings and vibrating devices).

6.05 Discuss and make reference to print and non-print resources for and by people who are deaf.

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**Competency Goal 7:** *Communities – The learner will use ASL and demonstrate cultural knowledge and understanding within and beyond the school setting for personal, educational, and professional growth and enrichment.*

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7.01 Discuss and make reference to diversity in the Deaf community (i.e., communication modes, educational placement, and sub-groups).

7.02 Communicate in ASL with people who are Deaf at non-interpretive community events to gain background information.

7.03 Develop a network of contacts in the Deaf community (e.g., sports, organizations, clubs).

7.04 Determine career possibilities using ASL.

7.05 Share and discuss in-depth knowledge of ASL and Deaf culture with others (e.g., Deaf awareness week, ASL clubs).