

Subject: Deaf Principal Back, please!

Aloha. It's for the sake Deaf Hawaii kids. They really need a good role model. I rather have a Deaf or signing principal than using an interpreter for the non-signing principal.

Yesterday there was a toddler storytime at one library, and they had an interpreter there. I notice few Deaf toddlers didn't pay attention much like Hearing toddlers. I could tell our granddaughter Aria prefers a signing story teller.

Since 1956, I went to HSDB (formerly Diamond Head School) until I graduated in 1968. I grew up with oral education until 1963 or 1964. I was struggling very hard with speech training, keeping me in the dark age. My education was terrible.

Thanks to Mr. Dunning, he introduced American Sign Language (ASL) to HSDB in 1963 or 1964. My eyes opened big, and I had only 4 years of sign language training until I then entered Gallaudet (Deaf college). I have to thank my family, too, for using sign language "under the table."

Sadly, many of my school friends could not go to the college, for today they still have problems reading and writing. But they still use sign language for effective communication.

So I support that Bilingual Education is a very important tool for Deaf Kids, using both ASL and English. They'll get best education that way.

Granddaughter Aria is only 2 1/2 years old. She could count to 40 by rote in sign language. She could sign over 500 signs and even fingerspell over 50 words. Her Deaf mother really works hard with Aria. Wow!

Please think of our Deaf Hawaii kids' special needs first. Thank you for listening.

~ Kathy Thomas, Kaneohe

Aria's grandmother

1968 HSDB graduate