

Metro Deaf School

Minnesota North Star Academy

Why Merge?

The merger of Metro Deaf School and Minnesota North Star Academy will expand opportunities for students, staff and faculty while realizing efficiencies of operations.

1. VISION

Provide enhanced educational and extracurricular opportunities for student's pre-K through grade 12+ and help recruit and retain Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind students from Minnesota and nearby states.

2. MISSION

Promote academic excellence in Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind Education using an ASL/English bilingual approach. The primary purpose is to empower students to develop a sense of identity and pride as Deaf persons while providing the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed as global citizens.

3. TIMING - WHY NOW?

- Students will benefit from increased space
- Enrollment growth of the schools will be accommodated
- Unified system will result in a reduction in duplication of costs and efforts - administration, transportation, etc.
- People involved with founding of both schools are still involved, providing continuity of leadership and ensuring that focus stays on the original goals of the schools.

4. WHY MERGE?

- Provide students with enhanced opportunities for learning
- Provide students with increased opportunities for extracurricular activities
- Provide staff and faculty with increased opportunities
- Improve efficiencies of staff, faculty and facilities
- Use resources efficiently (i.e., transportation)
- School's larger enrollment (more than 100 students) will generate increased attention from the community, leading to greater interaction, improved communications, and more fundraising opportunities

5. WHO BENEFITS?

❖ Students

- Increased student population
- Increased number of classes from which to choose

- Opportunity for older students to become role models for younger students
- Loyalty and pride for one school

❖ **Faculty and Staff**

- Enhanced career opportunities
- Room to be creative
- Opportunity to collaborate with teachers in different grade levels
- Opportunity to create content area departments
- Opportunity for subject area expansion

❖ **Parents**

- Reduced scheduling conflicts (e.g., having events happening at two different school locations at the same time)
- One master school calendar rather than two

❖ **Community Members**

- Focal point for Deaf community
- Larger school population will provide greater awareness of Deaf education
- Increased volunteer opportunities
- Opportunity to attend sporting and other extracurricular events at the school
- Gym available for community use when not in use for school functions

❖ **School Districts**

- Concentration of highly trained and specialized teachers of Deaf education
- Transportation cost savings
- One contact for Special Education Directors

6. COMPATIBILITIES

- Similar missions, values and commitments to providing exemplary education
- Strong belief in bilingual education
- American Sign Language/English bilingual professional development provided
- Investment in technology (i.e., all classrooms have Smart Boards and LCDs)
- Strong belief in using accountability plan to guide schools' success
- Strong, diverse board leadership

7. SIMILARITIES IN CULTURE

- Value of Deaf culture/history

- Focus on mission
- Innovative ideas in the classroom encouraged
- Attendance at workshops/training encouraged and supported
- Needs of students are highest priority
- Staff professionalism expected and encouraged
- Strong work ethic expected and encouraged
- Connections to family and community encouraged