

# **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