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Joint Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the South Dakota School for the Deaf

The Joint Committee on Appropriation's Subcommittee on the South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD) was established to review the Governor's proposal to close the campus of the SDSD and, instead, provide outreach services through the school districts. The Subcommittee met on Thursday, February 19, 2009, and again on Thursday, March 5, 2009.

In January of 2009, the Governor recommended a reduction in the FY2010 budget for the SDSD in the amount of $2,000,000 and 25.0 FTEs.

The subcommittee heard from many people involved in the issue. Dr. Perry, Executive Director of the Board of Regents, and Terry Gregerson, Superintendent of the SDSD, presented possible changes to the Governor's recommended budget reduction, as well as possible changes to the method of delivery of deaf education services to all children who are deaf or hearing impaired. The proposals include increasing the outreach services currently being provided, and the possibility of starting two "magnet" schools for different platforms of deaf education.

Numerous others participated to voice concerns regarding the lack of planning involved in this major decision. Those who voiced their concerns included numerous parents, an education tutor for the deaf, the President of the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf, the President of the National Associate of the Deaf, a representative of the South Dakota Advocacy Services, and many other advocates for the deaf community.

The Subcommittee makes the following observations and conclusions about the FY2010 proposed budget for the South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD):

1. The Subcommittee recommends an amendment to the FY2010 General Appropriations Act to restore the Governor's cuts.
2. The Subcommittee recommends the Board of Regents and the Department of Education work with all interested parties over the next ten months to make a recommendation to the Legislature that details changes to improve services provided by the SDSD. The proposal can include outreach models, magnet school models, or any other standard delivery of services model. States with similar demographics and geographic characteristics should be consulted, as well as nationally recognized organizations and experts in this field.
3. The Subcommittee questions whether children who are deaf, or have hearing impairments, are receiving the appropriate governance through the South Dakota Board of Regents. A review should be done to determine if these K-12 students should instead be represented by the State Board of Education. An amendment to the South Dakota Constitution would be necessary.

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Representative Tom Deadrick, Chair

Senator Al Novstrup, Vice Chair

Senator Dan Ahlers

Senator Corey Brown

Representative H. Paul Dennert

Representative Deb Peters