LEGISLATIVE REPORT

SUBJECT: Urging the DOE to Incorporate Sign Language and Other Communication Strategies During Instruction to Enhance the Learning of Children with Cognitive and Other Disabilities

REFERENCE: SCR 195, SD1 (2010)

ACTION REQUESTED: Action and report on subject matter. DCE is urged to establish an appropriate level of sign language proficiency for individuals in the Department who provide instruction to children with disabilities that will enable those individuals to incorporate sign language and other communication strategies during instruction to enhance their students' learning; and is also urged to facilitate the professional development, training, and preparation of educational personnel, service providers, and other individuals involved with the instruction of children with disabilities, through continuing education or other means, to use the total communication method, simultaneous communication, or sign language during instruction as determined by the child's Individualized Education Plan.

DOE REPORT:
Introduction:
Department of Education (DOE) has a system in place to identify and address the needs of children with disabilities and to evaluate their instructional progress on an individual basis.

FINDINGS:

- The intent of SCR 195, SD1 is to urge educators to use sign language and other forms of communication during instruction for students with disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires states to identify and address the educational needs of children with disabilities on an individual basis. DOE has a system in place to assess the needs of all exceptional children through the Individualized Education Program (IEP), and to provide those services deemed necessary based on the needs of the child.

- Department staff are either qualified, or trained, in skills and strategies to provide the quality and appropriate instruction to all children. School, complex area and state staff work together to plan appropriate professional development activities to address the individual needs of children with disabilities. For students who require sign language and other forms of communication during instruction, the Department
has a cadre of educational interpreters to meet the needs of what continues to be a low-incidence population.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Schools will continue to identify and address student educational needs as outlined in IDEA.

- Continue to implement research-based instructional practices professional development opportunities for educators of students with disabilities.