



Northwest School for Deaf and hard-of-Hearing Children  
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**Recent study shows the specialized education at Shoreline’s Northwest School for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children is helping its students achieve higher test scores and above average English skills.**

Shoreline, WA, November 16, 2016 – Over the last four years, two teachers from Northwest School for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children (NWSDHH), and two other independent researchers, conducted a study to see how the academic achievement of students who are deaf and hard-of-hearing (D/HH) at NWSDHH compared to that of hearing peers. Through a meticulous and specialized curriculum and style of teaching, all but one of the students achieved reading levels at or above their grade levels. This is a significant result because there is a documented plateau in reading achievement for this population. The authors of the study, which was published in the *American Annals of the Deaf* this summer, evaluated a group of NWSDHH students based on a set of different metrics involving listening, speaking, English language development and reading skills. Results showed that while children who are D/HH historically have trailed below their hearing peers in reading, speaking, and receptive and expressive English language, the students at NWSDHH defied this trend.

Barbara Luetke, Ph.D., NWSDHH Outreach and Literacy Coordinator and co-researcher on the study, said the results of the study validate the school’s research-based educational model, “Signing Exact English gives these students who are deaf and hard-of-hearing the opportunity to listen, speak, understand and use the English language and read in a manner that is not achieved by so many of their peers across the country. It is that attention to the signing of the smallest units of meaning, morphemes, that makes the difference at NWSDHH.”

Meigan McLean, Ed.D., NWSDHH Teacher of the Deaf and co-researcher on the study, stated “this study demonstrated that through the use of a common methodical and consistent linguistic model, Signing Exact English, across the curriculum, deaf and hard-of-hearing students are positively impacted in terms of acquiring and developing strong English language skills. These students have access and exposure on a daily basis to seeing, hearing, writing and speaking English. The overall, long term benefit for the students at NWSDHH is they individually experience success on a multitude of levels -- academically, socially and emotionally -- because of their understanding of how English functions for meaning and context.”

Entitled *The English-Language and Reading Achievement of a Cohort of Deaf Students Speaking and Signing Standard English: A Preliminary Study Research*, the study “suggests that English-language



proficiency is critical if students who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) are to read as their hearing peers.” The school’s mission includes using spoken English paired with Signing Exact English (S.E.E.) to help students who are D/HH become self-confident, articulate and academically competitive learners and contributing community members. S.E.E. uses a grammatically-accurate manual model of spoken English. This reinforces listening and speech skills, in addition to those of English. In the study, receptive and expressive English language ability was the most significant factor in predicting reading ability. Academic ability equal to that of hearing peers facilitates a student’s transition to general education classes, graduation from college, and employment. These factors were demonstrated in an earlier research project by the authors.

\*\*Attached with the press release are images of Dr. McLean and Dr. Luetke; the school’s logo; and the study in PDF format to be used as reference only.\*\*

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### **About NWSDHH**

NWSDHH located in Shoreline, WA opened its doors in 1982. The only preschool through eighth grade school of its kind in the state, the school provides educational services to deaf and hard-of-hearing (D/HH) students from more than a dozen different school districts in the Greater Puget Sound Region. Its mission is dedicated to using spoken English paired with Signing Exact English (S.E.E.) to help D/HH students become self-confident, articulate and academically competitive learners and contributing community members. From the beginning, the focus has been on three outcomes: grade level achievement; English proficiency; and oral communication and listening skills. For more information about NWSDHH, visit the school’s website at [www.northwestschool.com](http://www.northwestschool.com) or follow the school on [Facebook](#).