

Report to the Superintendent of
Public Instruction from the Committee
to Study the Feasibility of a

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY CENTER FOR THE DEAF

Utah State Board of Education
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

December 1, 1975

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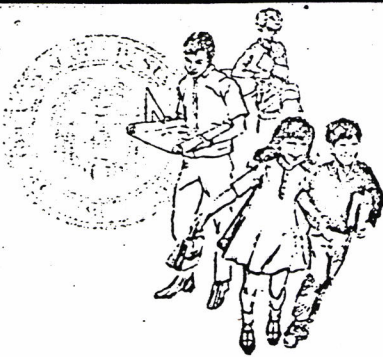
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WALTER D. TALBOT, STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

June 10, 1975

To: Harvey Hirschi, Robert Sanderson, Jay J. Campbell, Charles Schmitt

From: Walter D. Talbot *W.D.T.*

Subject: Community Center for the Deaf

During the last legislative session we introduced a resolution calling for the State Board of Education and the State Building Board to study the feasibility and desirability of a Community Center for the Deaf. That resolution failed. We then hoped that the Legislative Council would assign the study to one of its own interim committees so that preparation could go forward in time for the next legislative session. It now appears that such a study will not be made.

Accordingly, then, I am taking this opportunity to establish our own committee to make the study in the hope we can have a good plan to recommend to the next legislature. I would like to have you serve on such a committee. In addition, I am asking that each person named above select one additional person from the deaf community to serve on the committee. I would further like Robert Sanderson to serve as chairman.

Following the selection of the additional committee members would you move right ahead on the study. I would like to have a report and recommendation by December 1, 1975.

Thank you.

/bt

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THE COMMITTEE

W. David Mortensen (Deaf)

President, Utah
Association for the
Deaf; printer

Dora Laramie (Deaf)

Housewife; long time
teacher of the deaf,
now retired

Ned C. Wheeler (Deaf)

Office Engineer for
Ogden City Engineering
Department; Chairman,
Governor's Advisory
Council for the Schools
for the Deaf and the
Blind

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Bishop, Salt Lake
Valley Ward for the
Deaf, LDS; self-
employed carpenter
and contractor

Jay J. Campbell

Associate Supt. of
Public Instruction,
Utah State Board of
Education

Harvey C. Hirschi

Administrator, Div.
of Rehabilitation
Services, Utah State
Board of Education

Charles C. Schmitt

Facilities Coordinator,
Division of Rehabili-
tation Services

Robert G. Sanderson (Deaf)

Chairman; Coordinator,
Services to the Deaf,
Division of Rehabili-
tation Services

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PREFACE

The concept of a Comprehensive Community Center for the Deaf has been around for many years. Deaf people have been frustrated in their continued search for a "home of their own" by their inability to articulate the concept strongly, to train their own leadership and galvanize them into activity, and to secure the support of the general "hearing" community.

In the past year, the deaf community has coalesced behind the concept and has developed strong leadership cells to push for political support. They believe that their time and opportunity has come.

The leadership of the Utah State Board of Education, Office of the Superintendent, and that of the Division of Rehabilitation Services, have recognized this movement. The Superintendent directed that this study be made in order to determine whether or not such a Center is feasible.

The Governor of Utah, Honorable Calvin L. Rampton, also has expressed general support for such a Center in a recent talk to the Utah Association for the Deaf.

INTRODUCTION

The Committee felt that its primary objective should be to determine whether the needs of deaf people in the community were of sufficient gravity and complexity to justify the support of the Board of Education for the establishment of a Comprehensive Community Center for the Deaf. The needs were explored through direct contact with leaders of the deaf community, and through collection of data from various meetings of the deaf community at which brainstorming sessions and serious discussions of the concept took place.

The problems of size, location, design, funding, and operation were not considered in any depth because it was felt that these were matters more appropriate for specialists such as architects and legislative analysts. However, a strong feeling exists that the deaf community needs an accessible location, easily reached by the multiply-disabled deaf who cannot drive and need convenient bus service; and design needs to be one of nearly total visual orientation. Several design considerations are included herein, as expressed by deaf members of the committee.

The approach used by the Committee in its discussions followed this general outline:

A Feasibility Study Must:

- a. Describe the population to be served
- b. Define the needs to be provided for
- c. Define existing facilities and services
- d. Describe how the program will be implemented and coordinated

a. The population to be served consists of a potential 78,000 hearing impaired persons in Utah, of which 10,000 are estimated to be deaf for communication purposes. Many of these people are multiply disabled in that they have disabilities in addition to deafness. It should also be pointed out that since there are no Community Centers for the Deaf in the intermountain region, the establishment of such a center in the Salt Lake area probably would attract many more deaf people since it is a characteristic of the deaf population that it tends to gravitate to those cities where services, facilities and other deaf people are to be found.

b. The needs to be provided for may be listed quite briefly in this introduction; amplification follows, item by item, in other sections of this report.