



# Challenging the Proposed Restructuring of Delaware Statewide Programs Administration

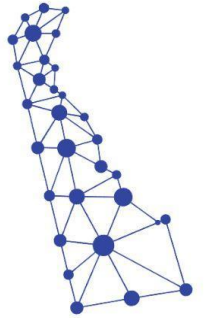


The Delaware Statewide Programs (SWP) is a Statewide organization in Delaware that includes the Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD), its dormitory, and the Outreach Services program, providing education and support for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind students both locally and Statewide.



The Delaware School for the Deaf is an educational program that caters to children from kindergarten through twenty-two years of age, providing them with visual access to language for learning. The school serves local deaf students who commute, downstate deaf students who reside in the dormitory, and deaf students who come from other districts.

The Outreach Services program, on the other hand, provides support and services to deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind students across the state, even beyond the organization's premises. While the Outreach Services staff operates from the building, they frequently travel throughout the state to offer their services to the students.



At the highest level of SWP's organizational structure, the SWP Director oversees five school leaders who manage the various programs and services offered deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind students both locally and Statewide.

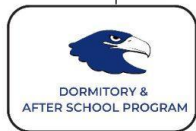
The Local Education Agency (LEA), Christina School District, was mandated by the State to provide oversight to the Delaware Statewide Programs.



The Statewide Programs Director reports to the Director of Special Education and the Superintendent of the Christina School District under which the organization operates.



The school dorm leader, serving as a dean of students, oversees the dormitory, and reports to our Statewide Programs Director.



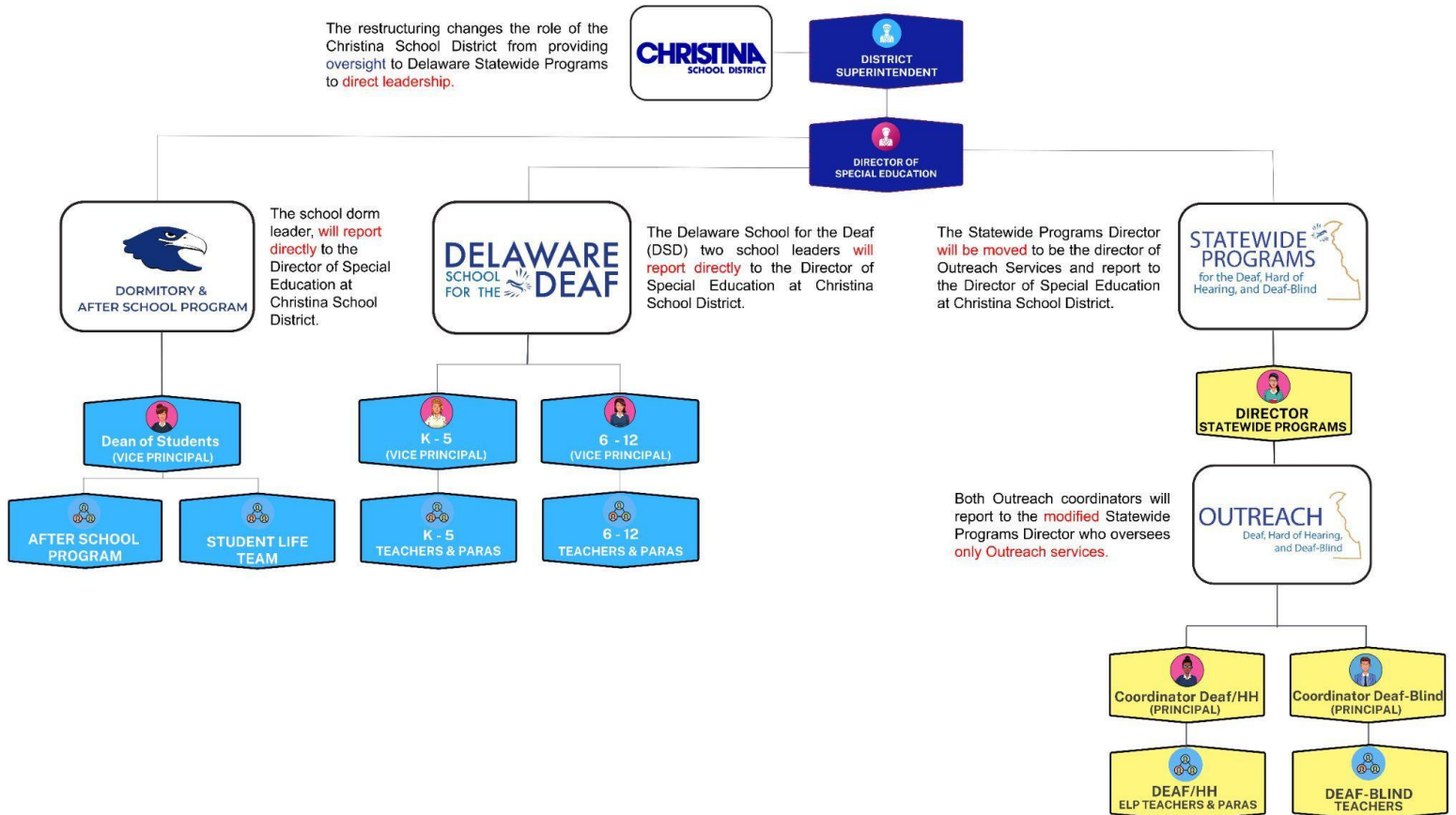
The Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD) has two school leaders, and they report to our Statewide Programs Director.



Outreach Services has two coordinators. The coordinator for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students and the coordinator for Deaf-Blind students, both report to our Statewide Programs Director.



The current issue is the proposed restructuring of the Delaware Statewide Programs (SWP) leadership team by the Christina School District (CSD). Under the proposed restructuring, the SWP Director position would oversee only the Outreach Coordinators, removing the topmost official overseeing all of the associated programs. As a result, DSD's two school leaders and the Dean of Students will report directly to CSD.



The proposed restructuring of SWP presents several problems. The loss of crucial leadership, expertise, and oversight for the DSD and Outreach Services programs could create gaps in the provision of deaf education to DHH and deafblind students. The Director of Special Education at CSD, who will oversee the DSD school leaders and the Dean of Students, does not have experience in deaf education, which could limit the development of critical programs, resources, and the overall quality of education.

Moreover, the proposed restructuring of the Delaware Statewide Programs (SWP) would not only result in a loss of leadership but also threaten the autonomy of SWP and the cultural needs of the deaf community it serves. The move may further weaken the decision-making powers of SWP, depriving the deaf community of meaningful input into matters that affect their education and well-being. This change could give the Christina School District (CSD) more control over the organization and its decisions. It is essential to prioritize the cultural needs and autonomy of DSD to ensure that decisions affecting deaf students are made in their best interests.

Additionally, the proposed restructuring could lead to significant liability through both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, the proposed restructuring has become a matter of concern for the DHH community. It is important to address these issues to ensure that the education and well-being of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in Delaware are protected and supported.

## **Rationale for opposing CSD's admin change**

- The Christina School District has a history of district-wide policies and making decisions that do not include the perspectives and needs of the deaf community, this includes:
  - The restructuring of the SWP leadership team without consulting us.
  - The removal of DSD from the SWP Director job posting without consulting us has led to a loss of qualified Deaf candidates and may continue to do so.
- This history of exclusion of our community by the District makes it even more imperative that we have a Director at the top who will advocate for the entire program and its needs.
- The absence of meaningful input from the deaf community perpetuates years of deaf oppression, and we have no seat at the table.
- Statewide has evolved to become the umbrella organization in which DSD, Outreach, and others operate under, and one Director at the top leads, organizes, and coordinates the leadership team. The proposed restructuring is a setback to years of progress.
- The proposed restructuring will result in a loss of autonomy and decision-making ability, which will negatively impact our ability to serve deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind students effectively.
- The program is unique in that the student population shares similar life experiences, culture, language, and struggles as many of the school leaders and staff, and changes have a greater impact on us than any other Statewide program or school under the District.
- The restructure will cause reporting confusion among specialists, teachers, staff, and others in the various departments.
- Having school leaders report directly to the district administration could lead to a less supportive work environment, and without a Director to oversee the management of funds and personnel, staff, teachers, and paraprofessionals may feel unsupported in their roles.

The proposed changes to the administrative structure of the Delaware Statewide Programs have the potential to negatively impact the education of deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind students in the State of Delaware. It's crucial that we take action now to ensure that these students receive the support and resources they need to succeed.

For more information, Visit our website: <http://www.delawaredeaf.org>