



## Case Study: Atlanta Area School For The Deaf

### An Excellent Partnership

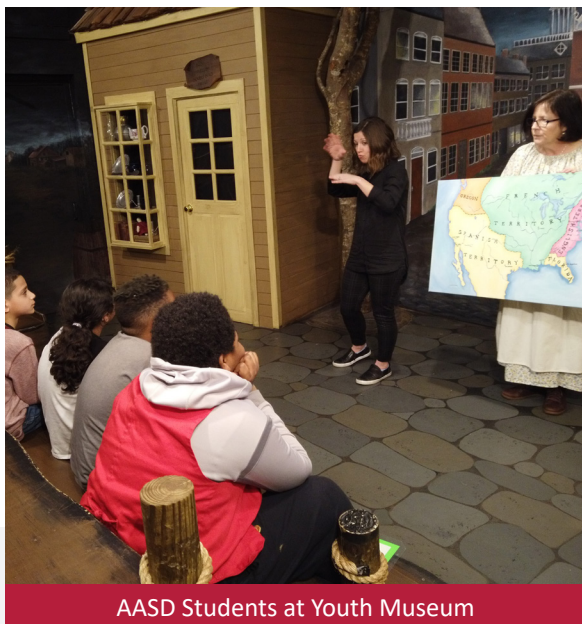
The faculty and administration at the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf (AASD) provide academic programs in a bilingual environment—English and American Sign Language (ASL). Visitors to the school who lack fluency in sign language are often joined onsite by an ASL interpreter. That’s necessary because about 40 percent of the faculty and staff are deaf, as are all the students.

AASD employs two part-time ASL interpreters to support visitors. But for some visits, the school needs more support to ensure access. A school open house, a night of parent-teacher conferences, or other family engagement activity may call for as many as 10 ASL interpreters. On such occasions AASD supplements its staff by contracting with Interpretek. Over the course of a typical year, Interpretek sends about a dozen different certified interpreters from their pool to AASD for different events.

“ASL interpretation partners like Interpretek play a critical role in communicating with our external constituents,” said AASD Superintendent John A. Serrano. “Their efforts benefit our students, our institution and the wider deaf community. It’s not just about interpreting, but it’s bringing ASL and English users together for the sake of common good for our students.”



Students in AASD Robotics Program



AASD Students at Youth Museum

“But not everybody is a good match to interpret in our setting,” said Stacey Shapiro, AASD Support Services and Outreach supervisor. “Interpreters have styles and strengths. When we work with the same people over and over, we develop a rapport, they develop an understanding of our educational jargon and a familiarity with our staff, and it all improves communications.”

And after years of working with multiple agencies, Shapiro said, “Interpretek is one of our top agencies for ASL interpretation services.”

### Quality, Responsiveness and Partnership

AASD activities requiring interpreters include community public events and engaging with families, social workers, various contractors and other constituents in a range of forums.

Shapiro appreciates working with multiple agencies because, “There are different things we like about different agencies,” she said. For example, one provides Spanish interpretation, as well as ASL, for the school’s significant Spanish speaking contingency. And sometimes she needs to work with multiple agencies simply to get the number of interpreters she needs. Other times specific interpreters are preferred for specific events and not all interpreters work with all agencies.

Interpretek has been a partner agency since 2017. “We found their quality level was very consistent,” Shapiro said. “And when we gave them feedback about who was working well and who wasn’t, they responded, and now they’re really good about helping to match the interpreter with the scenario.”

Shapiro also appreciates that Interpretek is communicative. “They’re very good about letting us know the status of their efforts to fulfill our requests,” she said. “And they reach out regularly to ask how things are going and what they can do. We appreciate the partnership.”

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### Going the Extra Mile

Since 2018 Interpretek has reinforced its commitment by serving as one of the school’s top-rung sponsors. “Interpretek very generously supports us every year, enabling us to do creative programming for non-academic activities, such as hosting speakers and providing rewards for students and faculty,” Shapiro said. Interpretek also staffs an exhibit booth at the annual Fall Festival, which is a key event that attracts 600 to 700 attendees each year and brings together the Atlanta Deaf community.

She sums up Interpretek’s contribution this way: “What Interpretek brings is access. Access to people like parents, local school system representatives and community members who come to the school to support our students in some way, but they just don’t know ASL. Interpreters make our school and all we offer fully accessible to those visitors. A non-ASL user with a high-quality interpreter can leave AASD with a really good picture of just how special our school is and how amazing our students are.”

You’d expect no less from such an excellent partnership.



**Atlanta Area School For the Deaf (AASD)** is one of three state schools for the deaf in Georgia, the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf (AASD) serves over 33 surrounding counties and enrolls about 180 students ages three to 22. Graduates earn Georgia high school diplomas, and their coursework is further enriched with career-oriented curricula in business marketing, graphic design, the Internet of Things, agriculture, audio visual film technology, and nutrition and food sciences. They also can participate in a wide range of after-school activities, including sports teams and special interest clubs. [www.aasdweb.com](http://www.aasdweb.com)

Interpretek provides American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting services nationwide for entities in education, business, healthcare and government via onsite and remote video delivery systems. The company also offers interpreter training and consultation as well as ASL classes. Interpretek was founded in 1993 and has its headquarters in Rochester, N.Y. To learn how Interpretek can support you please contact us at 888.273.0277



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