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### **Supreme Court Ruling on Education; NCDHH Representatives React**

In an 8-0 vote, the Supreme Court voted yesterday to mandate school districts to give students with disabilities the chance to make meaningful, “appropriately ambitious” progress in education.

Andrew F. v. Douglas County School District centered on a child with autism and attention deficit disorder. His parents removed him from public school and argued that the individualized education plan provided by the public school was inadequate, suing to compel the school district to pay his private school tuition.

The Supreme Court sided with the family, overturning a lower court ruling in the school district’s favor. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees a “free appropriate public education” to all students with disabilities. Today’s opinion held that “appropriate” goes further than what the lower courts had held.

“This is indeed a ruling long overdue. The children without disabilities are encouraged to excel but not the disabled children,” Dr. Peter Seiler, Education Advocate and NCDHH Full Board member, “Our disabled children, and, in particular, the deaf and hard of hearing, should not have to settle for little effort by school personnel. Now we can provide for quality education for these children.”

The mission of NCDHH is to promote and advocate for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing and to strive for equality and opportunity in the social, educational and legal aspects of daily lives.

“We are here to provide support to students, parents, teachers and administrators in our shared goal to provide the very best educational and employment opportunities for our

students,” NCDHH Executive Director John Wyvill said. “This recent court decision reaffirms that our Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing students need more resources and support.”

NCDHH recently hired Jenny Corum as an Advocacy Specialist, specific to the education setting.

“An advocate’s role is to provide support to the student and parents in any situation needed,” Corum said. “Part of my duty is to stay current in regulations that affect children, while successfully helping guide parents and students through education and individualized education programs (IEP) to be most beneficial to the student.”

Former educator and NCDHH Board Chairperson Margie Propp agrees in what a positive step this ruling is in education for all.

“We, meaning school districts, students, families, and all involved with education, should never be satisfied with ‘good enough’ or adequate. We should always fight for the best for ALL of our students,” Propp said. “This ruling is a huge step for our students with disabilities and their rights to a quality education. The Commission, as an advocacy agency for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is committed to fight for the rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children to have the best and not settle for adequate education.”

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