
Education Committee

SSB 5142

Brief Description: Concerning educational interpreters.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kuderer, Rolfes, Palumbo, Billig, Pedersen, Mullet, McCoy, Keiser and Wellman).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows educational interpreters who have not successfully achieved the applicable performance standard required by the Professional Educator Standards Board to provide or continue providing interpreter services to students for delineated periods of time if certain requirements are met.
- Modifies provisions governing the inapplicability of the educational interpreter performance standards to other sign systems or languages.
- Establishes definitions for "interpretation" and "transliteration" in provisions governing educational interpreters.
- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, by December 1, 2017, to submit a report to the education committees of the Legislature regarding costs, associated timelines, and the feasibility of conducting or contracting for a peer review of the Educational Signed Skills Evaluation.
- Includes an emergency clause making all provisions effective immediately.

Hearing Date: 3/13/17

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Legislation adopted in 2013 (i.e., Substitute House Bill 1144, enacted as Chapter 151, Laws of 2013) directed the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to adopt standards for educational interpreters and to identify and publicize educational interpreter assessments that meet specified requirements.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

As defined in statute, an "educational interpreter" is a school district employee, whether certificated or classified, who provides sign language translation and further explanation of concepts introduced by the teacher for students who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hearing impaired.

An "educational interpreter assessment" is defined in statute as an assessment that includes both a written assessment and a performance assessment, is offered by a national organization of professional sign language interpreters and transliterators, and is designed to assess performance in more than one sign system or sign language.

The 2013 legislation also directed the PESB to establish a performance standard for each educational interpreter assessment, defining what constitutes a minimum assessment result, and specified that by the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year, all educational interpreters employed by school districts must have achieved the established performance standards.

In accordance with a workgroup-based process, the PESB adopted two options for educational interpreter assessments and performance standards:

- the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) with a minimum score of 3.5 and the EIPA written test with a passing score; or
- the National Interpreter Certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and the EIPA written test with a passing score.

The PESB has not authorized the use of the Educational Signed Skills Evaluation (ESSE) in Washington.

The performance standards of the PESB do not apply to educational interpreters employed to interpret a sign system or sign language for which no educational interpreter assessment has been identified by the PESB.

Summary of Bill:

An educational interpreter who has not successfully achieved the performance standard required by the PESB may provide, or continue providing educational interpreter services to students for one calendar year after receipt of his or her most recent educational interpreter assessment results, or 18-months after completing his or her most recent educational interpreter assessment, whichever period is longer. Persons wishing to continue providing interpreter services in accordance with this provision must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the employing school or school district, ongoing efforts to successfully achieve the required performance standard. Schools and districts, in determining whether an educational interpreter has satisfactorily demonstrated ongoing efforts to successfully achieve the performance standard, may consult with the PESB.

Provisions governing the inapplicability of the educational interpreter performance standards for other sign systems or languages are modified. The standards do not apply to educational interpreters employed to interpret a sign system or sign language, including non-signing interpretation such as oral interpreting, computer-assisted real time captioning, and cued speech transliteration, for which an educational interpreter assessment either does not exist or, as

determined by the PESB, is not capable of being evaluated by the PESB for suitability as a performance standard in Washington.

New definitions are established in provisions governing educational interpreter requirements. "Interpretation" is defined as conveying one language in the form of another language, and "transliteration" is defined as conveying one language in a different modality of the same language.

By December 1, 2017, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must submit, to the education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, a report evaluating the costs, associated timelines, and feasibility of conducting or contracting for a peer review of the ESSE.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.