

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5142

---

---

C 34 L 17  
Synopsis as Enacted

**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).

**Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**  
**House Committee on Education**

**Background:** In 2013, the Legislature 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.

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 PESB to establish a performance standard for each educational interpreter assessment, defining what constitutes a minimum assessment result, and specifying that beginning in 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, 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 a passing score on the EIPA written test; or
- the National Interpreter Certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and the EIPA written test with a passing score.

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

---

*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.*

The performance standards adopted by 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 PESB.

**Summary:** An educational interpreter who has not successfully achieved the performance standard required by PESB may provide or continue providing educational interpreter services to students for one calendar year after receipt of their most recent educational interpreter assessment results, or 18 months after completing their most recent educational interpreter assessment—whichever period is longer. Educational interpreters wishing to continue providing interpreter services must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the employing school or school district, ongoing efforts to successfully achieve the required performance standard. In making a determination as to whether an educational interpreter has demonstrated satisfactory ongoing efforts to successfully achieve required performance standards, the employing school or school district may consult with 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 PESB, is not capable of being evaluated by PESB for suitability as a performance standard in Washington.

New definitions are established for 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.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	49	0
House	94	3

**Effective:** April 17, 2017