

RCW 28A.410.271 Washington professional educator standards board—Performance standards for educational interpreters—Limited and full certificates—Deaf and deaf-blind certification. (1) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Educational interpreter" means a person, whether certificated or classified, providing sign language interpretation, transliteration, or both, and further explanation of concepts introduced by the teacher for students who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing.

(b) "Educational interpreter assessment" means an assessment that includes both written assessment and performance assessment that 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.

(c) "Interpretation" means conveying one language in the form of another language.

(d) "Transliteration" means conveying one language in a different modality of the same language.

(2) The professional educator standards board shall:

(a) Adopt standards for educational interpreters including, as necessary, separate standards for deaf and deaf-blind educational interpreters;

(b) Identify and publicize educational interpreter assessments that are available and meet the requirements in this section;

(c) Establish a full performance standard and a limited performance standard for each educational interpreter assessment for the purposes of this section, defining what constitutes a minimum assessment result; and

(d) Establish criteria for educational interpreter certifications based on meeting the standards established under this subsection.

(3) (a) The professional educator standards board shall establish certificates for deaf and deaf-blind educational interpreters based on criteria established under subsection (2) of this section.

(b) (i) Each category of certificates established under (a) of this subsection must be categorized as follows:

(A) A certificate granted to an individual who has met the limited performance standard but has not met the full performance standard for an educational interpreter assessment under subsection (2)(c) of this section is considered a limited certificate and may only have a period of validity of up to five years from the date of the issuance of the certificate; and

(B) A certificate granted to an individual who has met the full performance standard for an educational interpreter assessment under subsection (2)(c) of this section is considered a full certificate and has a period of validity as determined by the professional educator standards board.

(ii) The professional educator standards board may adopt rules that add additional requirements for educational interpreters who have not previously worked in a role as an educational interpreter prior to September 1, 2026.

(c) By December 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the professional educator standards board shall make data publicly available relating to educational interpreter certification including, but not limited to, the number of each type of certificate granted,

demographic information of certificate recipients, and the geographic distribution of certificate grantees.

(4) (a) Through the end of the 2026-27 school year, educational interpreters must have successfully achieved the performance standard established by the professional educator standards board on one of the educational interpreter assessments identified by the board. An educational interpreter who has not successfully achieved such a performance standard may provide or continue providing educational interpreter services to students subject to the requirements of (c) of this subsection.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by this section, by the beginning of the 2027-28 school year, educational interpreters must have successfully obtained a certificate established by the professional educator standards board under subsection (3) of this section. Evaluations and assessments for educational interpreters for which the board has not established a performance standard or certificate may be obtained as supplemental demonstrations of professional proficiency but may not be used as evidence of compliance with this subsection (4) (b).

(c) Beginning in the 2027-28 school year, an educational interpreter who has not successfully obtained a limited certificate 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, if he or she can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the employing school or school district, ongoing efforts to successfully achieve the full certificate established under subsection (3) of this section. In making a determination under this subsection (4) (c), the employing school or school district may consult with the professional educator standards board. For purposes of this subsection (4) (c), "educational interpreter" includes persons employed as educational interpreters before the 2016-17 school year.

(d) The professional educator standards board may adopt rules to limit the number of times an educational interpreter may take an educational interpreter assessment for the purposes of qualifying for a certificate under this section.

(5) When conducting the activities required under subsection (2) of this section and drafting any rules to implement this section, the professional educator standards board must consult with a college or university that provides interpreter training in Washington and that is accredited by an accrediting association recognized by the student achievement council under its rules.

(6) The provisions of this section do not apply to educational interpreters employed to interpret a sign system or sign language, including nonsigning 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 professional educator standards board, is not capable of being evaluated by the board for suitability as a performance standard in Washington. [2025 c 255 s 1; 2017 c 34 s 1; 2013 c 151 s 2.]

Effective date—2017 c 34: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or

support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [April 17, 2017]." [2017 c 34 s 3.]

Finding—Intent—2013 c 151: "The legislature finds that although the professional educator standards board has begun work on standards and assessments for educational interpreters as directed by the 2012 supplemental operating budget, there is a need formally to codify this as an ongoing responsibility. The legislature also intends to specify how the standards and assessments will be used to improve learning opportunities for students who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hearing impaired." [2013 c 151 s 1.]