
Education Committee

HB 1144

Brief Description: Regarding qualifications for educational interpreters.

Sponsors: Representatives Dahlquist, Lytton, Fagan, Haigh, Moscoso, Magendanz, Liias, Ryu and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that, by the 2016-17 school year, all educational interpreters in public schools meet a standard established by the Professional Educator Standards Board on an interpreter assessment.
- Requires that all educational interpreters by the 2019-20 school year also achieve National Interpreter Certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Hearing Date: 1/29/13

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

In November 2011 there were just over 1,300 students aged 3 through 21 receiving special education in public schools as a result of being hearing impaired, deaf, or deaf-blind. Some of these students need sign language interpretation in order to access their education. Although there are state laws requiring qualified interpreters for legal proceedings, there are no minimum qualifications or standards for interpreters in Washington public schools.

The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) is the primary national certification for educational interpreters and consists of both a written and performance examination. Other states that have established qualifications for educational interpreters have generally adopted scores ranging from 3.5-5 on the EIPA.

Summary of Bill:

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.

An educational interpreter is defined as a school district employee, whether certificated or classified, who provides sign language translation and further explanation for deaf, deaf-blind, or hearing impaired students. An educational interpreter assessment is defined as a written and performance assessment that is offered by a national organization of professional sign language interpreters that assesses performance in more than one sign language or system

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) must adopt standards and identify and publicize educational interpreter assessments that are available. The PESB must also establish a performance standard for each assessment, defining what constitutes a minimum assessment result.

By the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, educational interpreters who are employed by school districts must have successfully achieved the performance standard established by the PESB. By the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, educational interpreters who are employed by school districts must not only meet the performance standard, but also achieve national interpreter certification by the National Association of the Deaf Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.