



Educational Interpreter Licensure

State Board of Education, January 28, 2016

Rationale

The purpose of having educational interpreting licensure is to ensure that students who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing will have:

- Equal access to the curriculum,
- Equal educational opportunities,
- High quality, proficient interpreters to implement the IEP and instruct the student in their primary language, sign.

Student Impact

For students who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing, access to effective, visual and/or tactile communication communication is **critical** for:

- Student success,
- Career and college readiness,
- Employment, and
- Independent living

Certification and professional licensure is necessary for this to be possible.

Educational interpreter Impact

- Educational Interpreters in Tennessee currently hold position titles and salaries drastically below our neighboring states.
- This has led to a shortage of qualified educational interpreters for Tennessee students.
- As a result of this, deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing students in Tennessee ***do not have equitable interpreter services or equitable access to core instruction*** as their non-disabled peers.

Training Data

At a recent training for interpreters in Tennessee, the following data was collected related to training:

Question #1 – Where did you learn sign language?

Sign Language Training	State						Total
	Tennessee	Alabama	Georgia	Virginia	Illinois	Texas	
Church/Family/ Friends	15 (one also took a class)	2					17
Interpreter Training Program	8	2		1			11
Adult Ed. Class	2						2
High School Class	2						2
On the Job	1	3					4
College		1	1		1	1	4
Classmate		1					1

Compensation Data

At a recent training for interpreters in Tennessee, the following data was collected related to compensation:

Question #2 – What is your rate of pay?

State	Pay Level Responses
Tennessee	Hourly: \$11 - \$27.26/hour; \$17.75/hour Monthly: \$1600 - \$2400/month; \$1895/month Yearly : \$16,000 - \$24,000
Alabama	Hourly: \$25.00/hour Yearly: \$35,000/year
Georgia	Yearly: \$33,000/year; \$35,000/year; \$37,000/year
Virginia	Yearly: \$35,000/year
Illinois	Hourly: \$25.00/hour
Texas	Hourly: \$13.70/hour at a university, \$25.00/hour at a high school, \$30/hour with interpreting agency

Training Program

Currently, there are only two training programs in Tennessee for educational interpreters:

- University of Tennessee at Knoxville
- Maryville College

Licensure Proposal

School Services Personnel - Educational Interpreter

Candidates for licensure as an **Educational Interpreter** shall satisfy of the following criterion:

- Hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree and current nationally recognized certification which includes a written examination related to ethics and practice.

or

- Pass the written portion with a minimum score of 3.5 on the performance assessment of the Educational Interpreter Proficiency Assessment (EIPA).

Employment standards for non-licensed interpreters

The following employment standards shall be used by schools systems that currently employ **Non-Licensed Interpreters** who do not meet licensing criteria.

Candidates actively working as an educational interpreter prior to January 2016 who do not satisfy the criterion for licensure must complete, at a minimum, the following by January 1, 2021:

- Pass the written portion of the EIPA **and**
- Obtain a minimum 3.0 score on the performance assessment

LEA Expectations

For all newly hired **Non-Licensed Interpreters**, LEAs must show evidence of good faith attempts to obtain a licensed educational interpreter. However, if a candidate cannot be obtained, school systems may use the following employment standards to hire an unlicensed educational interpreter.

- Minimum of an associate's degree, passed the written portion of the EIPA, and obtained a 3.0 on the performance assessment of the EIPA.

LEA Compensation Guidance

Educational interpreting requires skill above that of an educational assistant. The following guidance will be provided to LEAs as recommendation for compensation.

- Licensed Educational Interpreters – equivalent to a licensed teacher
- Associate's degree and EIPA certification – an increase above that of an educational assistant
- Non licensed interpreters meeting the employment standard – an increase above that of an educational assistant

Contact Information

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