
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6605

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education
(originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Oke, Fairley, Deccio,
Franklin, Rasmussen and Kline)

READ FIRST TIME 02/01/06.

1 AN ACT Relating to educational interpreters for hearing-impaired
2 students; adding new sections to chapter 28A.155 RCW; adding a new
3 section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.76
4 RCW; and creating new sections.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The isolating nature of deafness presents
7 major challenges to our educational system. Children who are deaf or
8 hard-of-hearing have unique cultural, linguistic, and academic needs
9 that make them different from other groups of children, with or without
10 disabilities. These unique student needs pose a special challenge for
11 developing appropriate education programming and support. Students who
12 use an interpreter can only access a portion of their education through
13 that interpreter. The limitations of the interpreter therefore magnify
14 the limitations of the student. In 2003, the legislature directed the
15 superintendent of public instruction to conduct a comprehensive review
16 and make recommendations regarding the qualifications and competencies
17 required for educational interpreters who assist deaf and hearing-
18 impaired students. The legislature supports the findings and
19 recommendations of the superintendent.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.155
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 For the purposes of this chapter, "educational interpreter" means
4 a school district employee who provides sign language translation and
5 further explanation of concepts introduced by teachers for students who
6 are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard-of-hearing.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.155
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 (1) By September 1, 2010, each school district shall have each
10 educational interpreter working within the district, who has not
11 already achieved national certification, assessed using a nationally
12 recognized performance assessment to evaluate the receptive and
13 expressive interpreting skills of the educational interpreter. School
14 districts shall provide additional training for those educational
15 interpreters who do not meet the standards to achieve the national
16 certification.

17 (2) By December 2006, the office of the superintendent of public
18 instruction shall partner with other states to build and enhance a
19 network of support for the successful implementation of the nationally
20 recognized performance assessment of the educational interpreters
21 working in Washington schools.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.155
23 RCW to read as follows:

24 School districts are encouraged to hire only educational
25 interpreters who are deemed qualified for the grade and subject to
26 which they are assigned and hold national certification.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The Washington state institute for
28 public policy shall retain the services of a professional meeting
29 facilitator to plan and conduct a series of meetings examining the
30 strengths and weaknesses of educational services available to deaf and
31 hard of hearing children throughout the state. The goal of the process
32 is to develop a set of recommendations that would establish an
33 integrated system of instructional and support programs that would
34 provide deaf and hard of hearing children the knowledge and skills

1 necessary for them to be successful in their adult lives and the
2 "hearing" world of work.

3 (2) Meeting participants shall include parents and representatives
4 of organizations that are directly providing educational and support
5 services to deaf and hard of hearing children and their families. They
6 shall include, but not be limited to, representatives of deaf parents,
7 the deaf community, public schools, private schools, the office of the
8 superintendent of public instruction, Washington school for the deaf,
9 the Washington sensory disabilities service, and the departments of
10 social and health services and vocational rehabilitation.

11 (3) The participants shall identify the gaps in the current
12 delivery system and other barriers that impair deaf and hard of hearing
13 children's ability to develop the skills necessary for success in the
14 world of work. Of particular importance is the analysis of the
15 challenges faced by public schools and other agencies that provide
16 direct instruction to deaf and hard of hearing children. The
17 participants also shall identify programs and services that are
18 necessary to achieve the goal and propose alternatives for how programs
19 and services can be organized and delivered in ways that assure all
20 deaf and hard of hearing children will have access to them regardless
21 of where they live in the state. Such proposals shall identify how
22 various agencies and organizations can work together most effectively
23 to assure that deaf and hard of hearing children have access to an
24 integrated educational system. To assist the participants in their
25 work, the Washington state institute for public policy shall use its
26 research resources to gather data necessary for the analysis.

27 (4) The institute shall transmit the recommendations of the study
28 group to the legislature no later than June 30, 2007.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
30 RCW to read as follows:

31 The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in
32 cooperation with the state board for community and technical colleges
33 and the higher education coordinating board, shall create an advisory
34 committee that includes certified educational interpreters, tactile
35 interpreters, interpreter educators, deaf leaders, public school
36 administrators, parents of deaf and deaf-blind children, and other
37 interested parties to advise the superintendent of public instruction,

1 the state board for community and technical colleges, and the higher
2 education coordinating board on issues of deaf education and
3 educational interpreting in each of the educational sectors.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.76 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 As part of the needs assessment process conducted by the higher
7 education coordinating board in accordance with RCW 28B.76.230, the
8 board shall assess the need for a baccalaureate degree program in
9 Washington state that provides educational sign language interpreter
10 training. If the board determines that there is a need for such a
11 program, the board shall encourage the appropriate institutions or
12 institutional sector to create a program.

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