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SENATE BILL 6605

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State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senators Fraser, Oke, Fairley, Deccio, Franklin, Rasmussen and Kline

Read first time 01/16/2006. Referred to Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education.

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.**    The institute for public policy should  
28    conduct a follow-up study to the 2002 study of the Washington school  
29    for the deaf and determine the feasibility, demand, program design, and  
30    cost of regional programs encompassing students from several school  
31    districts to one location instead of the current delivery model.

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

34        The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in

1 cooperation with the state board for community and technical colleges  
2 and the higher education coordinating board, shall create an advisory  
3 committee that includes certified educational interpreters, tactile  
4 interpreters, interpreter educators, deaf leaders, public school  
5 administrators, parents of deaf and deaf-blind children, and other  
6 interested parties to advise the superintendent of public instruction,  
7 the state board for community and technical colleges, and the higher  
8 education coordinating board on issues of deaf education and  
9 educational interpreting in each of the educational sectors.

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

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

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