

Memorandum



Date: December 10, 2021

To: Office of the State Superintendent

From: Paul Manriquez, Duy Nguyen, Julia Hartwig, Jennifer Kammerud, Ryan Gollner and Julie Holma

Subject: Deaf Interpreter Licensure Recommendation

Background

PI 34.086(3)(a)1 allows for the state superintendent to issue an educational interpreter license to an applicant who holds a sign language interpreter license issued by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) as an alternative pathway to licensure. Currently, DPI issues education interpreter licenses for the DSPS license areas of Sign Language Interpreter-Intermediate and Sign Language Interpreter-Advanced for hearing individuals, in addition to the traditional educational interpreters licensure process under PI34.086(2).

The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC) defines a Deaf Interpreter as a specialist who provides interpretation and visual and tactual communication forms used by individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind. As a Deaf person, the Deaf Interpreter has their own cultural and linguistic awareness that enables nuanced comprehension and interaction that an educational interpreter (who can hear) would not have. Using a Deaf educational interpreter would enable a level of linguistic and cultural bridging that is not possible when hearing educational interpreters work alone. This communication expertise could benefit students from the English as a Second Language population, those who experience language development barriers, as well as deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind students in educational settings per the IEP team's decision.

Recommendation

The Divisions for Learning Support and Academic Excellence, in consultation with the State Superintendent's Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Issues, recommends allowing a DSPS licensed Deaf Interpreter to apply for and obtain the Educational Interpreter

license under PI34.086(3)(a)1. This allows DPI the opportunity to provide more equitable opportunities for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind interpreters and thus students across Wisconsin.

To obtain a DPI Educational Interpreter license, like their hearing interpreter counterparts, and in addition to having a DSPS license, Deaf candidates would need to complete a practicum of at least 150 hours in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12 with a licensed educational interpreter assigned as a mentor. Completion is verified by a representative from a higher education interpreter training program or the school district administrator where the practicum took place [PI34.086(3)(b)].

An equitable communication and accessible environment is an integral part of a successful experience of any Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind student in Wisconsin. Providing options for students' communication and development is a key part of that scenario. Adding Deaf Educational Interpreters would support DPI's mission of Every Child Every Day by equipping IEP teams with more options to support deaf students' success.