

## Senate Bill 370 Educational Interpreters

Good afternoon,

My name is Heather Beck and I've worked as an Educational Interpreter for 23 years. I also have a Deaf 8 year old son.

Two different interpreter bills are being presented today. Both are very important but I'm addressing SB370, requiring Educational Interpreters hold state credentials through the Maryland State Department of Education, the same as every other Related Service Provider, to work with deaf CHILDREN in Maryland.

Community Interpreters have very different responsibilities.

EDUCATIONAL Interpreters are defined by IDEA as Related Service Providers; qualified, integral participants on a child's Individual Education Plan, staffed by the school system, responsible for equal access to education and language development and acquisition.

The Maryland State Department of Education has requirements for all Related Service Providers, except Educational Interpreters.

Related Service Providers include:

Teachers of the Deaf

Audiologists

Physical and Occupational Therapists

Nurses

Psychologists

Speech Therapists....and

...Educational Interpreters.....who spend 1-3 years with a student for 6 hours of every school day- more time than any other Related Service Provider, yet Maryland does not hold them accountable.

To work as an Educational Interpreter, 44 states require proof of competency.

Maryland is one of 6 states that does not.

Exams are already in place here in Maryland. The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) has two testing sites, the Nationally recognized Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) has five sites and the exams given by CASLI (Center of Assessment for Sign Language Interpreters) can be taken at any ScanTron location. There is no additional work needed to ensure Educational Interpreters have credentials.

Interpreter programs (ITPs) exist at McDaniel College, Catonsville Community College of Baltimore and Towson University. Various counties

provide mentorship opportunities for student interpreters in education. –In fact, interpreting students must work with certified personnel to graduate, yet deaf kids in public schools may graduate without ever meeting a certified interpreter.

When Coordinators of Countywide Services hire professionals to work in their respective departments, they rely on standards mandated by the state to know if a person is qualified to work in their field. Educational Interpreting is rarely something they are familiar with and there are currently no state guidelines to help them. Because of that, deaf children are paired with signers who have minimal sign skill, zero training and no idea how to support learning and language acquisition. They have no certifying body to answer to, no accountability, no incentive to continue their education.

Requiring Educational Interpreters have exam scores to work in schools gives deaf students a fighting chance to access their education. Starting in Pre-K all the way to 21 years old, they shape how deaf students view the world and process information. With all the resources available to qualify educational interpreters, Maryland has the opportunity to catch up with the other 44 states whose requirements are already in place.

Respectfully,

Heather Beck

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Some differences between Educational Interpreters and Community Interpreters:

- Educational Interpreters are related service providers on a student's educational team by law.
- They may need to share information learned on the job with the relevant members of the IEP team.
- They are mandated reporters which means we may have to share information with the proper authorities.

- They attend mandatory school trainings and workshops specific to children: bullying, sexual misconduct, suicide prevention, responding to emergency situations, etc.
- They attend IEP meetings and collaborate with other professionals in education to meet IEP goals and communication needs of students.
- They hold in-services to educate team members on how to use an educational interpreter and establish boundaries and guidelines for success.
- They sign paperwork to adhere to the rules for state assessments.
- They have access to lessons beforehand.
- They are staff members of the school system.
- They attend workshops specifically geared towards educational interpreting.
- They use professional development time to further their skills in the Educational setting.
- They have credentials or assessment scores specific to Educational interpreting.
- To work in the state as Educational Interpreters, they must be licensed by the State Department of Education.

Whether or not these are true for every state, it is useful information for parents and educators to recognize differences between Interpreters who work in Education on a daily basis and those that do not.

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EIPA State Qualifications Needed:

- AL: EIPA 3.0, RID
- ALASKA: EIPA 4.0, RID
- AZ: 3.5, RID
- AK: 3.0, RID, BEI
- CA: 4.0, RID
- CO: 3.5
- CT: 3.5, RID
- DE: 4.0, RID
- FL: NOTHING —
- GA: 3.5, RID
- HI: 3.5, RID, State Test
- ID: 3.5, RID, NAD
- IL: 3.5, RID, BEI
- IN: 3.5, RID
- IA: 3.5, RID, BEI
- KA: 3.5, RID, State Test
- KY: 4.0, RID, BEI, State Test
- LA: 3.0, RID
- MA: RID
- MD: NOTHING—
- ME: 3.5, RID

MI: 4.0, RID, BEI  
MN: 4.0, RID, NAD,  
MS: 3.0, RID, State Test  
MO: 4.0, RID, BEI  
MN: 3.5  
NE: 4.0, RID, BEI, State Test  
NV: 3.0, RID  
NH: 3.5, RID  
NJ: 3.0, RID  
NM: 4.0, RID  
NY: NOTHING—  
NC: 3.0, RID, State Test  
ND: 3.5, RID  
OH: NOTHING—  
OK: 3.5, RID, other  
OR: 3.5, RID  
PA: 3.5, RID  
RI: 4.0, RID  
SC: NOTHING—  
SD: 3.5, RID  
TN: 3.5  
TX: RID, BEI  
UT: 4.0, RID, State Test  
VR: NOTHING—  
VA: 3.5, RID, State Test, other  
WA: 3.5, RID  
DC: NOTHING —  
WV: 3.5, RID, State Test  
WI: 3.3, RID, BEI  
WY: 3.5, RID

States EIPA 3.0- 7 states (NC, NJ, NV, MS, LA, AK, AL)

State EIPA 3.3- 1 state (WI)

States EIPA 3.5- 23 States (AZ, CO, CT, GA, HI, IL, IN, IA, KA, MA,  
ME, NH, ND, OK, OR, PA, SD, TN, VA, WA, WV, WI, WY)

States EIPA 4.0- 11 states (UT, RI, NM, MN, NV, MO, MI, KY, DE, CA,  
AK)

States EIPA NOTHING- 6 states (VT, SC, NY, MD, FL, OH)

Washington DC- NOTHING

No EIPA but other assessments- 1 state (TX)

RID only- 1 State (MA)