Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

BILL:	Senate Bill 464	**DATE:**	February 11, 2021
SUBJECT:	Education – Educational Interpreters – Certification Requirements	**COMMITTEE:**	Education, Health, and Environment Affairs
POSITION:	Information Only		
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EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for your consideration regarding Senate Bill 464, Education – Educational Interpreters – Certification Requirements. This legislation requires the State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) to develop rules and regulations for the certification of education interpreters to include reimbursement of examination cost for candidates who successfully obtain certification and requiring an educational interpreter employed by a public school to hold certification on or before July 1, 2028.

The MSDE issues educator certifications to individuals who require an educator certificate to practice their profession such as teachers, specialists, and administrators. Currently, the MSDE does not credential support positions such as paraprofessionals, nurses, speech pathologist, occupational therapists, and others as they do not require teacher certification to be employed in an educational setting. Educational interpreters are considered supportive positions and are therefore not issued certification to be employed by a local school system by MSDE. Additionally, by requiring an educational interpreter employed by a local school system to hold certification, this legislation reduces the number of educational interpreters qualified to provide services in an educational setting.

Currently, the MSDE does not reimburse the examination costs for those individuals who require an educator certificate to practice their profession, such as teachers, specialists, and administrators. This Bill would set up an inequitable situation with those educators who are required to complete assessments and examinations for the issuance for their certificate.

As of January 1, 2020, Maryland has approximately 150 part-time and full-time American Sign Language Educational Interpreters who may seek educational interpreter certification on or before July 1, 2028. The estimated annual cost to cover the examination of these individuals may be as high as $74,125.00 ($350 per exam + $75 local administrator fee) x 150 + a projected 10% increase in examination cost). It should be noted that the cost of the assessment has increased by 40% since this Bill was first introduced in the 2020 legislative session.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB 464**. For further information, please contact Zachary Hands at 410-767-0504 or zachary.hands1@maryland.gov.