



Educational Sign Language Interpreters

Guidance for Local Educational Agencies

March 2025



**West Virginia Board of Education
2024-2025**

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Educational Sign Language Interpreters:

Guidance for West Virginia Schools and Districts

West Virginia Department of Education

Office of Special Education

West Virginia Department of Education Technical Assistance Center: West Virginia Outreach Center
for the Deaf and the Blind at West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

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Chapter 1: Impact of Disability and Specially Designed Instruction

Purpose

Interpreting services were added to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA) list of related services in the 2004 reauthorization and are defined at §300.34(c)(4) as follows:

(4) *Interpreting services* includes —

- (i) The following, when used with respect to children who are deaf or hard of hearing: Oral transliteration services, cued language transliteration services, sign language transliteration and interpreting services, and transcription services, such as communication access real-time translation (CART), C-Print, and TypeWell; and
- (ii) Special interpreting services for children who are deafblind. [§300.34(c)(4)] Interpreting for children who are deafblind is complex. This guidance document does not address their unique needs. Contact West Virginia's deafblind project: West Virginia SenseAbilities at the Department of Education for information regarding children who are deafblind. Additionally, the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness provides an excellent resource: Assessment of Deafblind Access to Manual Language Systems (ADAMLS). It may be found at: <https://documents.nationaldb.org>.

This guidance document provides resources and suggestions to enhance the provision of educational interpreting services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing in order to support their educational goals. It is written for administrators, teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, general educators, students, speech language pathologists, interpreters, and others who provide services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as parents. Information about CART, C-Print, and TypeWell along with a student readiness checklist for these services can be found in the appendix.

Impact of Hearing Loss

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing have needs that differ from other groups of students. Most hearing children, with or without disabilities, enter school with a basic command of language. They are able to receive, express, and process language and, as a result, have extensive vocabularies. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing usually do not enter school with the same language background as their hearing peers. Their unique language and communication needs present special challenges to educators regarding appropriate programming and placement (NASDSE, 2006). It is critical for these students to have a formal communication system that is accessible and allows for efficient social interaction and the sharing of ideas. Without communication skills, a student will be severely limited in language development and may lack appropriate social skills and opportunities for meaningful interaction with peers. For many students who are deaf or hard of hearing placed in the general education environment, educational interpreting is the support service that allows them equal access to instruction to benefit from the overall school experience. This support service provides these students, their parents, hearing children, faculty, and other school personnel the communication bridge necessary to allow participation in the educational and social activities of the school.

The educational and life consequences of inaccessibility to communication and social isolation include the following:

- Reduced literacy levels (Holt, Traxler & Allen, 1997, as cited in Siegel, 2000; Karchmer & Mitchell, 2003)
- Increased risk for social-emotional disorders (Leigh, et al., 1989; Hindley & Kitson, 2000);
- Lower graduation rates (Easterbrooks, 1999, as cited in Siegel, 2000);
- Increased reliance on government assistance (Siegel, 2000);
- Lower average income than their hearing counterparts (Siegel, 2000);
- High rates of un- and underemployment [Northern California Center on Deafness Report (NORCAL), 1998, as cited in Siegel, 2000]

Within the population of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, variables that may affect access to and progress in the general education curriculum include:

- Type of hearing loss;
- Degree of hearing loss and possible progression;
- Age of onset;
- Age at which intervention begins;
- Effectiveness of intervention services;
- The family system;
- Lack of appropriate language access;
- Cultural and linguistic background;
- Additional cognitive and/or physical disabilities

For these reasons, no single communication methodology, instructional strategy, technology, or guideline can meet the needs of all students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Terminology of Deafness and Hard of Hearing

The term “*deafness*” in West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities hereafter Policy 2419 defined as “a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, which adversely affects the child’s educational performance.” In accordance with Policy 2419, a student who is deaf relies primarily on his or her vision to access spoken communication.

The term “hard of hearing” in Policy 2419 is defined as “a hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness.” In accordance with Policy 2419, a student who is hard of hearing relies primarily on his or her hearing to access spoken communication.

The decision to provide an educational sign language interpreter does not rely solely on the identified student’s exceptionality (deaf or hard of hearing). For example, a student that is hard of hearing may require the support of an interpreter to allow full access to the educational environment.

According to Policy 2419, a sign support specialist is a person employed to provide sign supported speech assistance to students (W. Va. Code §18A-4-8(i)(15)). Sign support specialists provide signed communication support to a student who is able to access environments through audition (i.e., hearing).

A sign support specialist supplements communication for students who can hear, whereas, educational sign language interpreters provide access to the auditory environment through sign language for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

As specified in W. Va. Code §18-20-2 and §18A-20-4, a sign support specialist may be assigned to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing in lieu of an interpreter only if an educational sign language interpreter I or II is unavailable.

If the local educational agency (LEA) employs a sign support specialist in lieu of an educational interpreter, the LEA must show a continuous good faith effort by actively searching for an educational interpreter that can ensure student access equal to that of their hearing peers.

Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, schools must, without charge, ensure that communication with students with disabilities is as effective as communication with students without disabilities, giving primary consideration to students and parents in determining which auxiliary aids and services are necessary to provide such effective communication.

Provision of Services

In a 2011 letter to the president of the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf, Melody Musgrove, Director, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education interprets Part B's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requirements as applied to children who are deaf. "Any setting that does not meet the communication and related needs of a child who is deaf does not allow for the provision of Free And Appropriate Education (FAPE) and cannot be considered the LRE for that child." This interpretation reaffirms the October 1992 policy guidance provided by the Department of Education which states:

"Any setting, including a regular classroom, which prevents a child who is deaf from receiving an appropriate education that meets his or her needs, including communication needs, is not the LRE [Least Restrictive Environment] for that individual child...Any setting which does not meet the communication and related needs of a child who is deaf, and therefore does not allow for the provisions of a free appropriate public education (FAPE), cannot be considered LRE for that child..."

– Deaf Students Education Services: Policy guidance. 57 Fed. Reg. 49275 (October 30, 1992).

The IDEA requires the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team to consider the communication needs of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. Specifically, the IEP Team must consider:

- The child's language and communication needs
- Opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode
- The child's academic level
- The range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode. [34 CFR§300.324(a)(2)(iv); 8 VAC 20-80-62 E]

The IEP for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing must be communication driven. The West Virginia Department of Education's (WVDE) *IEP Consideration Factors for the Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing* assists the IEP Team in its consideration of a student's communication needs and in addressing the above requirements. This "communication plan" guides the IEP Team in identifying the student's primary and secondary form of communication. It is designed to be used during the development of the initial IEP and reviewed annually, providing an opportunity for the IEP Team to examine whether the students' communication needs are being met and to plan for support. A copy of this tool is included in the appendix.

Serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing often requires personnel with a unique, specialized set of knowledge and skills. These guidelines apply to any person providing educational interpreting or sign language services to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing, whether full time, part time, or as a substitute and regardless of whether the person providing interpreting services is an employee of -LEA- or is employed on a contractual basis.

Facilitator Not Instructor

Neither the educational sign language interpreter nor a sign support specialist should function as the student's teacher unless they have teaching credentials and are employed as a teacher by the district. Such responsibilities fall upon the general education and/or teachers of the deaf or hard of hearing. Educational sign language interpreters and sign support specialists are facilitators of communication; however, they may serve as tutors under the direct guidance and supervision of a certified teacher.

The remaining sections within this document further define the difference between an educational sign language interpreter and a sign support specialist. It provides a framework for their roles and responsibilities and delineates the responsibilities of administrators, educators, support personnel and the student in communication access.

Chapter 2: The Difference in an Educational Sign Language Interpreter and Sign Support Specialist

Educational sign language interpreters and sign support specialists are two separate classifications having different roles and responsibilities. Educational sign language interpreters I and II provide the communication access for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

This decision is determined by the IEP Team. It is a component of the required documented consideration of the special factor for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is based on the individual student's communication needs, not the determination of the student's exceptionality of deaf or hard of hearing.

What is the difference?

The differences between educational sign language interpreters and sign support specialists center on interpreting proficiency, classification, and roles and responsibilities. The **primary** difference is that sign support specialists **supplement** communication for students who can hear, whereas educational sign language interpreters **provide access** to the auditory environment through sign language for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

In 2013, House Bill 2470 amended W. Va. Code §18A-4-8 to define a sign support specialist as a person employed to provide sign supported speech assistance to students who are able to access environments through audition. A sign support specialist may be assigned to a student with an exceptionality other than deaf or hard of hearing if it is determined that the student needs signs to support his or her expressive communication. If the LEA employs a sign support specialist in lieu of an educational interpreter, the LEA must show a continuous good faith effort by actively searching for an educational interpreter that can ensure student access equal to that of their hearing peers.

An educational sign language interpreter I or II provides communication access across all educational environments, including extracurricular activities, to students who are deaf or hard of hearing. He or she meets the Paraprofessional Certificate-Educational Interpreter specified in WVBE Policy 5202: *Minimum Requirements for the Licensure of Professional/Paraprofessional and Advanced Salary Classifications*. As a related service provider and a member of the educational team, the educational sign language interpreter is fluent in the languages used by deaf, hard of hearing and hearing people, and works to ensure the implementation of the IEP. Using sign language or communication systems and spoken languages in public school settings, the educational interpreter provides access to the general curriculum, classroom dynamics, extracurricular activities, and social interactions.

Another option is a Restricted Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Sign Language Interpreter. Please see Policy 5202.

According to Policy 5202:

12.5.c. Restricted Initial Paraprofessional Educational Sign Language Interpreter.

12.5.c.1. General Criteria. The candidate for the Restricted Initial Paraprofessional Educational Interpreter must meet all issuance requirements as stated in sections 12.5.a.1 and 12.5.b.2 except for the minimum required assessment scores or certificate levels.

12.5.c.2. Conditions of Issuance. Candidates shall submit evidence of the following: have taken one of the required assessments at least one time; submit a completed Professional Development Plan; agreement to attend all WVDE-approved trainings as stipulated by WVDE officials; and receive the recommendation from the employing county superintendent.

12.5.c.3. Validity Period. The Restricted Initial Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Sign Language Interpreter shall be valid for one school year and may be renewed two times.

12.5.c.4. Renewal of the Restricted Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Sign Language Interpreter. The candidate for licensure must provide evidence of completing the following criteria: complete a minimum of 15 clock hours of WVDE-approved professional learning activities, and, beginning July 1, 2021, trauma-informed best practices; submit a completed Professional Development Plan and satisfy the requirements of the West Virginia Registry of Interpreters; and provide assessment scores yearly with evidence of progress towards meeting the required scores as stated in section 12.5.b.2; and receive the recommendation from the employing county superintendent.

Guidelines to use when making decisions:

Classifications/ Qualifications		Summary of Roles and Responsibilities	
Educational Sign Language Interpreter	Sign Support Specialist	Educational Sign Language Interpreter	Sign Support Specialist
Classified as a related service provider on Part IX of the IEP.	Classified as supplemental aids and services on Part IX of the IEP.	Member of the IEP Team who contributes knowledge and professional background and expertise on the student's communication access and needs.	May or may not be invited to participate in IEP Team meetings.
- Has met the requirements for Paraprofessional Certificate: Educational Sign Language Interpreter I or II (Policy 5202). - Fluent in the languages that they interpret. - Knowledgeable of and committed to following a Professional Interpreting Code of Ethics. - Knowledgeable in language systems, interpreting theory, cross-cultural communication and ethical decision-making.	- Has NOT met the requirements for Paraprofessional Certificate: Educational Interpreter (Policy 5202). - Knows sign language but may not be fluent. - Able to communicate basic/ general thoughts. - May not be aware of a Professional Code of Ethics for Interpreters and is not bound by them. - May have taken sign language classes or learned from a book. - May know one or two deaf people. - Unlikely to be knowledgeable about the professional interpreter's role. - Views his or her role as a "helper."	- Provides complete interpretation of all academic content. - Assigned only to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing. - Provides the student with access to the curriculum, classroom dynamics, extracurricular activities, and social interaction by interpreting all spoken language and auditory cues.	- Supplements communication through language support and reinforcement of academic concepts and lessons. - May be assigned to students with exceptionalities other than hearing loss (e.g., Autism, Communication Disorders, Intellectual Disability) or those who access the curriculum primarily through hearing. - Can only be assigned to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing if an interpreter cannot be found. In this case, specialist must be on a professional development plan leading to credentialing as an interpreter. After two years, an approved waiver from WVDE must be obtained.

Chapter 3: Interpreting - Framework

Qualified educational sign language interpreters have demonstrated sign language competence and should be recognized as knowledgeable in that area just as teachers of the deaf or hard of hearing are knowledgeable in the education of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The expertise of both is needed for the student to progress in the general curriculum.

The interrelatedness of the roles and responsibilities between an educational sign language interpreter and a student is a fluid progression from a high level of dependence in preschool to responsibility and self-advocacy in high school. Initially, the student is often dependent upon the interpreter to access the educational experience. As the student gains in knowledge, language and understanding of the environment, the interpreter must adjust behaviors and facilitate the student gradually becoming more independent. This balancing act required of interpreters is further explained in the article, *Inverse Pyramids of Educational Interpreting Discussion* by Patrice Stephenson (2002).

In preschool and elementary settings, the educational sign language interpreter is responsible for assisting the educational team in supporting the student's developing a strong language base. This encompasses identifying key vocabulary, prioritizing what is to be relayed, understanding language development and other means of teaching communication. The interpreter must recognize and shape the student's communication attempts into a more formal system and accurately relay information to the teacher and the student's peers. This relayed information enables the teacher to appropriately set goals and to monitor social and academic achievement. Simultaneously, the interpreter trains the student to focus on the interpreter. Prior to exposure to an interpreter, the preschooler attends to the person speaking to determine the intended message. In the educational setting, the student learns to look to an adult who is not speaking to access the information from the person speaking. Trust is established as the student discovers the interpreter shares all important happenings in the classroom by teacher, peers, and others. Attending to an interpreter is a learned behavior; this goal should be included in the child's IEP.

Modeling appropriate social skills is another important role of an educational sign language interpreter in preschool and elementary schools. Through the interpreter's behavior, the young student learns techniques for getting someone's attention, active participation in groups and the register for speaking to adults versus peers. Unlike hearing students, students who are deaf cannot simultaneously engage in an activity and "listen" to instructions. It is not possible to work/play and listen at the same time. The interpreter must know how to guide the teacher or look for opportunities to guide the student's attention back to the group when information is provided. Use of an interpreter during interactions is a learned process in these early years.

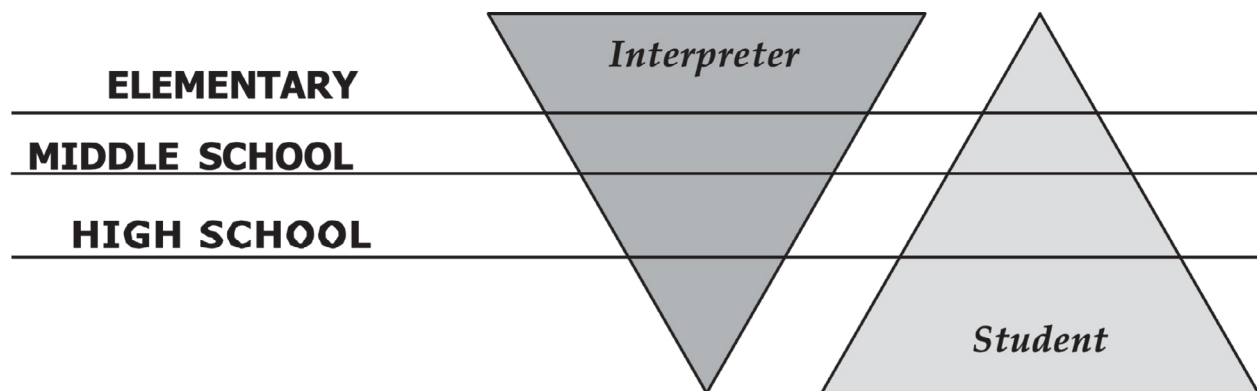
The educational sign language interpreter is with the student the majority of the time. Until the student matures, the interpreter is often responsible for getting the student to speech therapy or other related services. The interpreter may be asked to reinforce goals of these professionals. However, by middle school or high school the student, not the interpreter, should be responsible for his or her own schedule and assignments. The interpreter should not need to remind the student to bring a pencil or complete assignments. The student should not need to borrow materials from the interpreter. At this stage, the student learns to ask the appropriate person for help when needed and to seek clarification from the teacher, and not the interpreter. The student should be an active participant in developing the IEP.

Progressing from preschool through the 12th grade, the student gradually accepts more responsibility for self-advocacy in various environments.

The educational sign language interpreter's role is to ensure communication access to the environment. Community interpreting is very different from educational interpreting. With increasing independence, the student's effective use of a community interpreter is essential to successful post-school transition. By graduation, the student should be competent in advocating for accommodations such as special seating, lighting, acoustical and other environmental requirements. The student must have the confidence and skills to clearly articulate needs for basic communication access. For example, the student must communicate to an employer or professor that it is not possible to take notes or copy from the board and watch the interpreter at the same time, or that the student can attend to only one speaker at a time making "free-flowing" discussion difficult. It may be necessary to request the speaker slow the pace in order for the interpreter to keep up. Problem-solving and advocacy skills are essential for access to post-secondary and community opportunities. These goals should be reflected on the student's IEP.

NOTE: It is critical to understand the interrelatedness of the student's independence and the roles and responsibilities of the educational sign language interpreter. Student independence is a life skill that must be supported by the interactions of adults with the student. This illustration is based on a model widely credited to Dennis Davino who is involved in training parents and interpreters in Signing Exact English II (SEE II).

Interpreter Responsibility/Student Independence

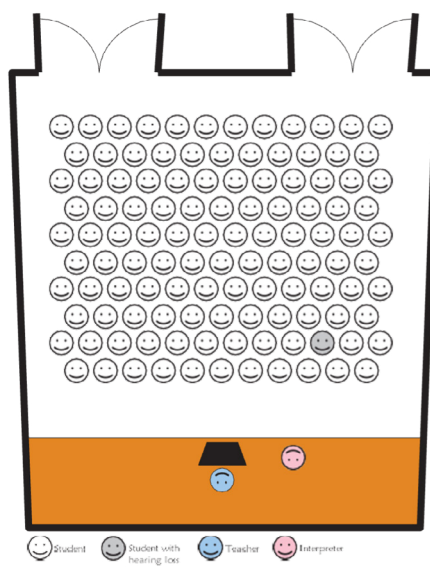
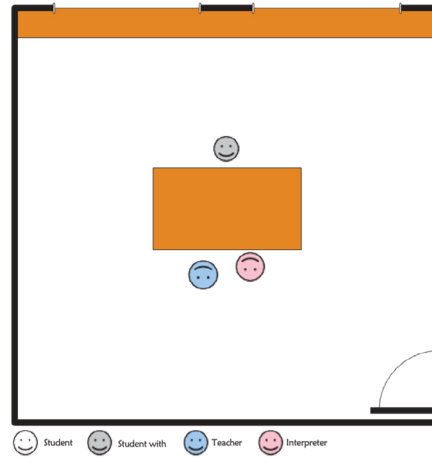
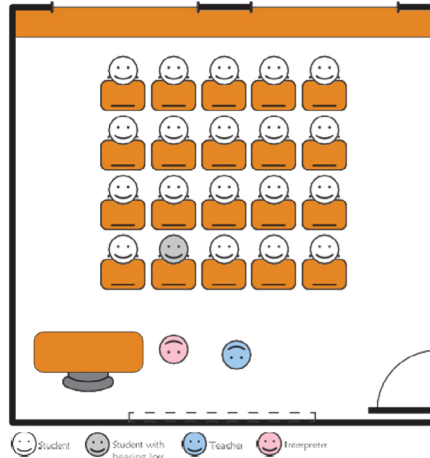
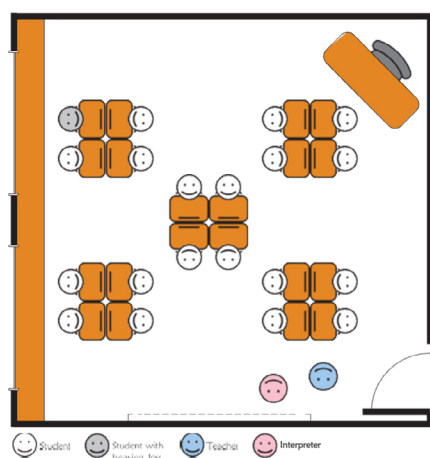
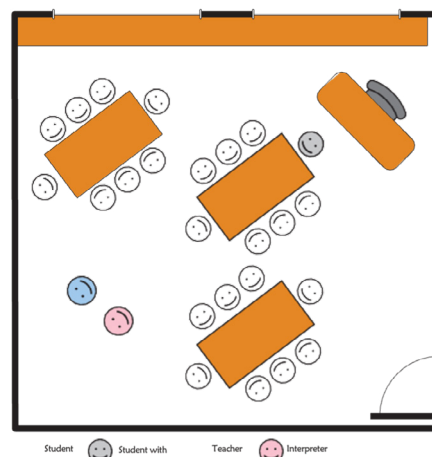
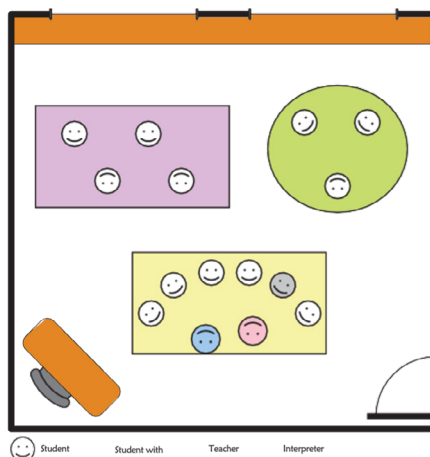
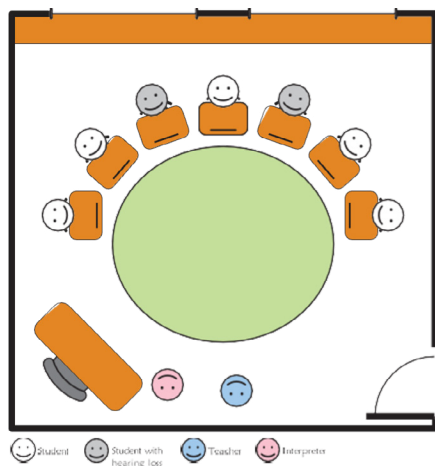


Scenarios for Optimal Visual Access:

The following are examples of classroom environments that provide the visual access required for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing. The critical thread throughout these scenarios is assurance that the student has a direct line of vision to the teacher, interpreter, and the materials presented. Additional environmental considerations include cluttered backgrounds, hallway traffic, lighting either artificial or natural and changes in lighting. An educational sign language interpreter might need to be in close proximity to both the teacher and the material in order to reference the material. For example, dividing “x” by “y” is not possible to interpret if the interpreter is not standing next to the board or screen with the teacher. The student must also have visual access to others who may be speaking during class discussions. These considerations take careful discussions with the teacher, interpreter, and student. The student’s maturity is a critical factor.

Note: For students in preschool and lower elementary, it is often necessary for the interpreter to be close to the student to maintain attention and to provide additional language supports. Other learning behaviors such as knowing where to look, locating who is speaking, finding the correct page, and understanding how to use an interpreter need to be learned by the student in these early years. However, by upper elementary the following scenarios should be considered.

Classrooms and environments vary which can present a challenge to ensure the student has a direct line of vision to the interpreter, teacher/speaker, and materials presented.



Chapter 4: Roles and Responsibilities - Communication Access

A critical component of an effective program is clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of all parties involved. The following is a list of roles and responsibilities for a local education agency providing interpreting services. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing

During the Individualized Education Program Team Meeting

- Complete or update annually the student's communication plan: IEP Consideration Factors for the Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. (<http://wvde.state.wv.us/osp/IEPConsiderationFactors.pdf>)
- Guide the decision-making process in determining the student's readiness for an educational sign language interpreter and/or the language supports needed to benefit from the interpreter.
- Ensure the IEP provides the student full language/communication access to educational environments.
- Address the student's understanding and subsequent responsibilities of the changing roles and responsibilities of the interpreter as the student progresses through the pre-K-12 system.

Beginning of the School Year

- Ensure general educator(s), interpreter and all appropriate personnel have access to and understand the student's IEP and their role in its implementation.
- Ensure that staff and students have information and training on hearing loss and the role of an interpreter.
- Explain to the students' educational team the use and function of the students' equipment and facilitate the proper placement and use of any auditory equipment, if appropriate.
- Assist the general educator with the room structure or seating arrangement of the student who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- Explain to the general educator how to work with an interpreter, including the interpreter's role during tests and other assignments.
- Meet the interpreter and other team members and assist them with clarification of their roles and responsibilities. Direct any concerns or questions to the appropriate administrator.

Throughout the School Year

- Reiterate that the student is expected to obey all classroom rules.
- Work collaboratively with the interpreter and other team members to ensure the implementation of the IEP and the provision of language or communication access to the educational environment.
- Monitor the implementation of interpreting services as stated in IEP.
- Consult with general educators and related service providers to monitor the student's progress and placement.
- Provide the classroom teacher information on the impact of hearing loss specific to the student and on instructional techniques that may be helpful including the selection of an appropriate notetaker as needed. Offer assistance to teachers with any problems that occur.
- Mediate misunderstandings or conflicts; refer to supervisor or interpreter coordinator.
- Competently communicate directly with the student using the student's mode of communication.

- Work collaboratively with the interpreter and general educator to ensure the reinforcement of instruction or concepts.
- Provide information for staff, students, and their peers on Deaf culture, assistive technology, and activities in the deaf community, where appropriate. Consider organizing sign language classes and clubs (depending upon the needs of the student).
- Reinforce self-advocacy through instruction and IEP goals.

Educational Sign Language Interpreter

During the Individualized Education Program Team Meeting

- Participate in the student's IEP as a team member who contributes information about the student's language or communication needs and how the student is functioning with an interpreter.
- The LEA is responsible to obtain a Qualified Interpreter for the meeting.

Beginning of the School Year

- Review the IEP and support implementation of goals, accommodations, and modifications by providing communication access.
- Discuss with the general education teacher(s), student, and parents the primary role of the interpreter.
- Collaborate with the student's educational team in regard to the student's access to communication in the classroom.
- Obtain and review textbooks (teacher's editions if available), course outlines, content standards, and other related materials.
- In consultation with the student's teacher, determine appropriate position in classroom to maintain line of sight to teacher and materials. This will vary depending on student's age and classroom activity.

Throughout the School Year

- Refer the student to designated school personnel when problems occur with a hearing aid or auditory system.
- Dress professionally; be mindful of the student's eye fatigue and the impact your clothing has on this (e.g., avoid wearing nail polish colors which contrast skin tone; avoid patterned, bright or reflective shirts; avoid unnecessary jewelry on hands or wrists).
- Adapt/adjust signing to meet the communication of the student.
- Collaborate with the educational team to determine if problems are course-related or interpreting service-related. Accommodations may be necessary.
- Educate consumers (students and staff) about working with interpreters. This may include training students, both hearing and deaf or hard of hearing, to work with interpreters; orientation of new interpreters to the school; and professional development for teachers and staff.
- Refer parents with questions about the student to the teachers or administrator. It is the teacher's role, not the interpreter, to communicate directly with the parents.
- Promote direct communication between the student, teachers, and others. Encourage student independence.
- Interpret all lectures, discussions, demonstrations, announcements, and any other school-sponsored activities as effectively and accurately as possible asking for clarification when needed.

- Interpret sign-to-voice, in the manner in which the expression is presented. In the case of inappropriate or “questionable” language, it is not the role of the interpreter to act as an editor or censor the message. Consult with administrator regarding school policy.
- Non-interpreting duties must never interfere with primary role of interpreter. Do not leave a student without an interpreter in class.
- Inform and collaborate with the general educator regarding the student’s difficulty in understanding the course content. (Older students should communicate this to the teacher themselves.)
- Interpret the student’s comments, responses and presentations as effectively and accurately as possible.
- Maintain confidentiality as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Educational Interpreter Code of Conduct.
- Through collaboration with general educators and in reviewing lessons, be prepared for the classroom instruction and become familiar with the content in order to make appropriate sign choices, fingerspelling decisions, and communication of concepts.
- Interpreters are expected to arrive at work at the time designated by the school or district. Unless the interpreter is taking annual leave for a full or partial day, the interpreter must stay for the duration of the scheduled workday, whether the student, who is deaf or hard of hearing, attends school that day or not.
- Interpreters should take advantage of any “down time” during the day to prepare for future classroom lessons.
- Anticipate needs and assist in arranging an accessible environment prior to special events such as assemblies, performances or guest speakers.
- Use planning time to efficiently become familiar with new content area and signs required.
- Constantly monitor and adjust the learning environment to ensure the student maintains visual access to communication and all visual materials.
- Guard against the development of inappropriate dependence in the student/interpreter relationship. The student’s independence must be a priority. Promote age-appropriate self-advocacy and independence (i.e., getting assignments, asking for clarification, organizational skills).
- Pursue professional development opportunities pertaining to educational interpreters.
- Develop a folder of information to assist a substitute educational interpreter.
- Refer the student’s questions to the teacher and do not assume the teacher’s role.
- Dress in a professional and appropriate manner. Be on time for class and do not leave early. (See Chapter 5: Code of Conduct)
- Function in a manner appropriate to the situation and strive to maintain professional standards and interpersonal relations.

Student (With Increasing Levels of Independence)

During the Individualized Education Program Team Meeting

- Participate as an equal member of the IEP Team.

Beginning of the School Year

- Maintain responsibility for batteries and equipment.
- Discuss seating to allow a clear and unobstructed view of teacher and materials presented.
- Discuss communication preferences (including sign preference) and accommodations, such as notetakers with teacher and interpreter.

Throughout the School Year

- Follow the school rules and WVBE Policy 4373: West Virginia Manual for Expected Behavior in Safe and Supportive Schools.
- Be on time for class. Follow all class and school rules.
- Use hearing aid, cochlear implant, and group auditory system as needed.
- Acquire and demonstrate the skills to appropriately utilize interpreter services.
- Participate in all classroom activities and discussions with necessary accommodations.
- Remember the teacher is responsible for providing instruction, explaining lessons, answering questions, and giving assignments. The teacher is in charge of the class.
- Watch the interpreter. Do not talk to or distract the interpreter while interpreting. Do not expect the interpreter to repeat missed information because of student's lack of attention.
- Ask teachers to repeat directions, inform them of problems with classwork, or request clarification. Do not ask the interpreter.
- Learn the roles of the interpreter, other related service provider, and the IEP Team members.
- Learn the differences between educational and community interpreters.
- Self-advocate to ensure appropriate accommodations are provided, such as a notetaker and interpreter.
- Become familiar with the available assistive technology, such as relay services, Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD), Video Phone (VP), and texting/IM.
- Keep track of all assignments, tests, and projects as directed by the teacher.

School Administrator

During the Individualized Education Program Team Meeting

- Ensure that the student's interpreter is included as a member of the IEP Team to address communication issues specific to the student and the educational environment.
- If an interpreter is needed for the IEP Team meeting, ensure that another interpreter is used allowing the student's interpreter to fully participate.
- Discuss the need for interpreting services to participate in extracurricular and other non-academic activities.

Beginning of the School Year

- Ensure IEP Team members, students and parents have full access to the educational process including but not limited to evaluations, IEP Team meetings, social and extracurricular activities, instruction, parent-teacher meetings, and school plays.
- Ensure protocol is established for daily monitoring of hearing aid, cochlear implants, and other auditory amplification systems.
- Ensure interpreters have access to textbooks and other educational materials to effectively and accurately interpret.
- Provide appropriate educational environment with equal access (i.e., Video Phone (VP), lighting, fire alarms, acoustics and closed captions).

Throughout the School Year

- Provide time and space for interpreter preparation. Preparation includes pre-reading and previewing instructional content materials to accurately interpret the lesson. Time is also needed for consultation and collaboration with teachers and other members of the student's educational team.
- Provide sufficient time to plan and rest from interpreting thus avoiding repetitive motion injury which diminishes the quality of sign language interpreting due to mental and physical fatigue.
- Include interpreter in staff meetings and activities.
- In collaboration with the special education director, ensure appropriate interpreter related professional development opportunities are afforded to interpreters.
- Ensure non-interpreting duties do not interfere with primary role of interpreter.
- Discipline the student who is deaf or hard of hearing according to school policy.
- In collaboration with the special education director, provide guidelines, handbooks and in-service training concerning roles and responsibilities of the educational interpreter.
- In collaboration with the special education director, compensate educational interpreter appropriately for interpreting services outside the normal school day.
- In collaboration with the special education director, ensure county or school provides the interpreter with a clear job description.
- Do not pull an interpreter from the student for other duties. This leaves the child without access to the environment and is a potential safety issue.
- When having a personal conversation that does not involve the deaf or hard of hearing student, ask the student to leave the room, just as you would a hearing student. In the presence of the student, it is unethical to ask the interpreter to not interpret what is being said.
- One interpreter should never be responsible for interpreting for more than one student who is deaf or hard of hearing UNLESS the students are in the same classes throughout the day and share the same communication modality.

General Educator

Beginning of the School Year

- Be knowledgeable of the student's IEP and your responsibilities.
- Discuss these responsibilities with the interpreter and professionals to ensure a common understanding.
- Inform the interpreter of specific classroom rules and class format.
- Become familiar with and support use of any special equipment used by the student.
- Introduce the interpreter to the entire class; allow class time for the interpreter to explain his/her role.
- Be flexible in assisting the student and interpreter with classroom placement and seating arrangements. Preferential and roving seating are important so the student can have visual access to the teacher, interpreter and students who are contributing to classroom discussions.

Throughout the School Year

- Provide the interpreter with all textbooks and other related materials used in class. Provide an overview of upcoming instruction. Apprise the interpreter of specific or new vocabulary.
- Discipline problems in the general education classrooms are the responsibility of the general educator unless the IEP states otherwise.
- Expect the student to obey the same rules and regulations as his or her classmates. (The inability to hear the bell does not excuse tardiness).
- Direct questions regarding interpreting or language access to the interpreter, privately and professionally during the situation or after class.
- Maintain eye contact with the student, rather than with the interpreter. Face and talk directly to the child. "My name is Ms. Smith" is more empowering and inclusive than "Tell him my name is.."
- Speak at the same speed you would use in any instructional situation. You do not have to slow down to accommodate the child in the classroom. The interpreter will ask for clarification if needed. However, during oral reading, it is important to realize that speed tends to increase. Please be aware that the child may be trying to watch the interpreter and follow the text. Accommodations may be needed.
- Be aware that due to the time required to process the information, the interpreter may be several sentences behind the speaker. During classroom discussion, establish a rule that one person speaks at a time. When students raise their hands and teachers point to the next speaker, it allows the child who is deaf or hard of hearing to more fully participate in fast-paced lively conversations.
- When possible, use closed-captioned films and videos. The teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing will assist you in obtaining these.
- Include the student in class discussions. Be aware of the "lag" time in the interpreting process.
- Remember the interpreter is interpreting for everyone in class.
- Contact the teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing directly if academic problems exist. Do not relay information through the interpreter.
- Be aware the interpreter may continue to sign the information or to clarify communication even after the teacher or classmate has finished speaking.
- Students are not able to look at visual aids, write, read text, AND attend to the interpreter simultaneously. Accommodate needs of students who acquire information primarily through their eyes.
- When having a personal conversation that does not involve the deaf or hard of hearing student, ask the student to leave the room, just as you would a hearing student. In the presence of the student, it is unethical to ask the interpreter to not interpret what is being said.

Chapter 5: Code of Conduct - Adapted from Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Ethics

Sign support specialists and educational sign language interpreters are county school employees and, therefore, required to adhere to the guidelines within their educational system. Educational sign language interpreters must also adhere to the following ethical guidelines.

1. Confidentiality

- The interpreter in the educational setting may discuss student information only with other members of the student's educational team (i.e., interpreters, teachers, supervisors) who are directly responsible for the student for whom the interpreter service is provided.
- Private conversations among students and between professionals and students, such as personal problems or grades, are confidential.
- The interpreter in the educational setting should report directly to a classroom teacher or a designated supervisor when the interpreter finds it necessary to step out of the interpreter's role.
- As a professional member of the student's educational team, the interpreter is expected to participate in the IEP Team meeting to provide information regarding the student's communication access within educational environments. The interpreter should not be expected to interpret for the meeting in which the interpreter is participating. If the interpreter is unable to attend the meeting as a team member, written input may be submitted.
- The interpreter in the educational setting is obligated to report:
 - Serious behavior that any other school personnel would be required to report. (Examples include suspected physical, sexual, or psychological abuse at or outside of school; criminal activity).
 - "Need to know" items for the provision of best educational opportunities. Interpreters should share information with the student's educational team and substitute teachers and interpreters regarding accommodations, such as special seating arrangements for students.

2. Accuracy

- The interpreter provides an interpretation that meets the linguistic needs of the student. It is recognized that some students who are deaf or hard of hearing may require clarification, elaboration or adjustments in an interpreted message due to differences in knowledge base, culture, or language experience. It may be necessary to seek consultation and training from people well versed in the particular culture(s) of the student(s).
- The interpreter does not make the mode of communication determination.
- To deliver the content and spirit of the speaker's communication, the interpreter needs to convey the same register, emotion, and melody of the speaker's message.
- Effective interpreting requires the interpreter to prepare for classroom academic content, including previewing textbooks, teacher's lesson plans or electronic presentation slides or films, and learning technical vocabulary.

3. Impartiality

- The classroom teacher is responsible for the class and discipline. The interpreter shall maintain an impartial role. The interpreter is not responsible for either disciplining or calling on the students who are deaf or hard of hearing to answer questions.
- The interpreter clarifies his or her role in the classroom as situations arise. For example:
 - The interpreter gives clues needed for successful interaction and development of student independence (e.g., if the student mistakenly directs questions to the interpreter, the interpreter may sign, "I will interpret for you, so you may ask the teacher" or may use subtle body language or eye cues).
 - The interpreter may expand cultural concepts in order to meet the student's linguistic needs and bridge cultural issues.
 - The interpreter may explain Deaf culture behaviors to other adults and students.
 - The interpreter in the educational setting may be called upon to clarify, review and reinforce concepts presented.

4. Professional Conduct

- An educational interpreter will maintain an appropriate wardrobe that will provide appropriate visual contrast. The following considerations should be made:
 - Dark colors (black, navy blue, brown, green) for persons with light skin
 - Light colors (off-white, tan, peach) for persons with dark skin
 - Solid colored clothing (avoid stripes, polka dots, shiny material)
 - High necklines (no scoop necks or low V-necks)
 - Jewelry that is not visually distracting
 - Avoid rings, bracelets and necklaces and decorative nails that may interrupt the flow of communication
 - Due to close sharing of personal space, ensure good personal hygiene
- Interpreters are linguistic and cultural mediators between deaf or hard of hearing students and others. All actions should portray non-patronizing and positive attitudes.
- Educational interpreters often have other duties; a clear distinction must be made as to which role the person is functioning in at any given time. A separate time may need to be established when the student is scheduled for instructional support services provided by the interpreter.
- With support from the building principal and supervising teacher, the interpreter may conduct professional development for staff regarding communication with students who are deaf or hard of hearing and use of interpreting services.
- The interpreter will maintain professional boundaries, respect privacy of students and foster independent student learning.

5. Professional Development

- Interpreters should aggressively pursue an individualized comprehensive professional development plan. Occasional attendance at workshops will not enhance or maintain interpreting skills.
- Effective professional development opportunities
 - are tied to a specific plan of professional development--the plan should build on the interpreter's current skills (The EIPA Feedback Form, identifies the interpreter's current skills and provides suggestions for professional development.)
 - are job-embedded to ensure sufficient practice time
 - require active involvement of the participant
 - are completed with others, such as a study group or mentor
 - have a follow-up component, such as observation, networking, mentoring
 - include the interpreter's reflection about his or her implementation of the concept or skill

Educational sign language interpreters shall strive to maintain high professional standards in compliance with the Registry of Interpreters' Code of Ethics and the EIPA Code of Professional Guidelines.

Educational interpreters are employees of the local district. It is important to understand the interpreter works for the educational program and not for the student who is deaf or hard of hearing or the family. Not only must the interpreter maintain professional boundaries, but students and staff must also recognize and understand these boundaries.

How does the educational sign language interpreter handle discipline?

Generally, the educational interpreter would not be involved in disciplinary action. This would cloud the perception of roles, compromise the student-teacher relationship, and strain the relationship between the student and the interpreter.

However, due to the proximity of the educational interpreter and the student, the educational interpreter may be involved in situations that need disciplinary action. It would be helpful for both the teacher and the educational interpreter to establish a mechanism for dealing with these situations at the beginning of the school year. At this time, strategies to address behavior that may require disciplinary action could be jointly developed. The teacher and the interpreter could then implement a plan to address a student's classroom management needs, behavior expectations and discipline. This could be as simple as a predetermined signal from the interpreter to the teacher that there is a problem.

In situations where the student is misbehaving toward the interpreter, the interpreter may respond directly. This may take the form of a private discussion between the interpreter and the student concerning mutual responsibility and respect or may include expanding the discussion to include the teacher, administrators, and other staff, as appropriate. The educational interpreter may also be asked to facilitate communication in disciplinary settings involving the teacher or other staff. In this case, it is possible that the anger the student may feel at the punishment, especially during the elementary years, may be focused on the interpreter rather than on the individual dictating the punishment. If the interpreter is involved in the situation being discussed, he or she should not also be expected to interpret. It is important that the child clearly understands the roles of the various professionals. Both the person providing the punishment and the interpreter will need to understand and be able to articulate these dynamics.

Chapter 6: School Administrators

“Even with the most skilled interpreter, a student who is deaf or hard of hearing using an interpreter is provided an interpreted education.”

Introduction

Public schools are responsible for providing both students and parents with meaningful access to the educational process. For students and/or parents who are deaf or hard of hearing, an interpreter provides meaningful access. The situations in which an interpreter should be provided are:

- Any time a student who is deaf or hard of hearing is participating in school-sponsored activities. These include, but are not limited to, evaluative, instructional, social, and extracurricular activities. For eligible students, this falls under the auspices of IDEA.
- Section 504 and ADA Obligations of Public Schools

This memorandum addresses the obligations of a public school system under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Deaf or hard of hearing students, parents and others are entitled to equal access and an equal opportunity to participate in public school services, programs, and activities. The ADA and Section 504 apply to all programs and activities offered by a school system, including school board meetings, extracurricular programs, teacher conferences, recreational activities, social and cultural activities, adult education, summer school, or hobby classes.

In its 2013 session, the West Virginia Legislature addressed educational sign language interpreter requirements. Effective July 1, 2013, House Bill 2470 strengthens the requirements for educational sign language interpreters and changes class titles for service employees. It revises the service employee class previously referred to in W. Va. Code §18A-4-8 as a “braille or sign language specialist,” creating two separate classes, braille specialist and sign support specialist. **Sign support specialists are not intended to support students who are deaf or hard of hearing.**

Additionally, new class titles include restricted interpreter, educational sign language interpreter I and educational sign language interpreter II. Educational sign language interpreter I and II are established as the minimum requirement to provide interpreter services for any student who is deaf or hard of hearing whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan requires sign language or interpreting services. These new class titles align with WVBE Policy 5202: *Minimum Requirements for the Licensure of Professional/Paraprofessional Personnel and Advanced Salary Classification*.

Financial Support

House Bill 2470 requires the cost of certification renewal and satisfying the requirements of the West Virginia Registry of Interpreters to be paid in full by the employer. This includes the cost of testing, training, or continuing education.

Professional

Districts also have the option to employ interpreters as professionals. The WVDE has established a professional classification for educational interpreters on the annual certified list of personnel. Currently, only two states offer this option; therefore, this classification provides a strong incentive for recruitment and retention of qualified interpreters. This new position code is not state aid eligible, nor does it count toward the required professional instructional personnel ratio. Requirements are as follows:

Professional educational interpreter (Position Code 330)

- Meets the definition of professional personnel in W. Va. Code §18A-1-1.
- Possesses at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning.
- Scores a minimum of 3.6 on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment.
- Receives a passing score on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment-Written Test (EIPA-WT).

NOTE: The above requirements pertain to educational sign language interpreters. Teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing are not educational sign language interpreters unless they have met the qualifications listed above and are employed as educational sign language interpreters.

Registration with West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

As of October 1, 2013, all educational interpreters must register with the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The Legislative Rule: 192 CSR 3 *Establishment of Required Qualifications and Ethical Standards for Interpreters* requires all interpreters, including educational sign language interpreters, to register with the commission. The rule recognizes all educational interpreters employed in public schools who meet the standards of Policy 5202 as qualified. Additional information may be found at: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/cdhh/interpreters/Pages/default.aspx>.

Critical Shortage of Educational Interpreters

West Virginia has a critical shortage of qualified interpreters, including both educational sign language and community interpreters. This does not negate the administrator's responsibility to make a good faith effort to find the most qualified interpreter nor the responsibility for the IEP Team to determine the student's needs regardless of availability. However, it often requires an administrator to utilize non-traditional sources in the recruitment efforts, such as Interpreter Training Programs, the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Interpreting Agencies (both in West Virginia and surrounding states) and disability-specific listserves, to identify appropriate candidates. The established professional level position enables West Virginia districts to be competitive in the recruitment of highly qualified educational interpreters. Recruitment tips to assist the district are found in the appendix.

Determining the "most" skilled applicant

If an applicant holds a valid interpreter certification or has been assessed through the EIPA, administrators have a basis for determining the most skilled applicant. Without any valid assessment, this determination is difficult at best.

A sign support specialist may be assigned to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing only if an educational sign language interpreter I or II is not available, and the sign support specialist is executing a professional development plan while seeking certification as an educational sign language interpreter. After two years, the sign support specialist may remain in the assignment only if an educational sign language interpreter remains unavailable and approval is granted by WVDE.

In the absence of an interpreter assessment, districts should establish a team to screen and prioritize the interpreting skills of the applicants. Membership on this team could include teacher(s) of the deaf and educational interpreter(s) from the district or surrounding districts or partnering agencies.

A predetermined rubric addressing both expressive and receptive skills should be used to ensure unbiased recommendations.

Employment Considerations

Before hiring an educational sign language interpreter in the educational setting, the following should be in place:

- As determined by the IEP Team, an understanding of the student's communication mode and language needs. This will determine the skills needed by the interpreter. (The less language a student has, the more skilled the interpreter needs to be.)
- A district-developed interpreter job description and these guidelines for interpreters in the educational setting. A sample job description is provided in the appendix.
- Resources for the interpreter to develop and maintain communication competence and interpreting skills.
- A training plan for students and general education staff to learn how to properly use interpreter services for communication issues.

Modes of Communication

There should be a match between the student's mode of communication and the mode(s) of communication of the interpreter. It is not the role of the interpreter to select the modes(s) of communication to be used in class. The IEP Team should determine and document this decision on the student's IEP. Definitions for these modes of communication are provided in the glossary:

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE)
- Contact Varieties Sign
- Cued Speech
- Manually Coded English (MCE)
- Morphemic System of Signs (MSS)
- Oral Approach
- Pidgin Sign English (PSE)
- Seeing Essential English (SEE – I)
- Signing Exact English (SEE – II)

At the annual IEP Team meeting, the IEP Team is required to consider the communication needs of the student. The *IEP Consideration Factors for the Student Who Is Deaf or Hard of Hearing* will guide the team through the required components and assist in the identification of the communication mode for the student.

Teachers of the Deaf

Highly qualified educational sign language interpreters do not supplant the need for a certified teacher of the deaf. Even the most qualified educational interpreter cannot provide access to the entire auditory environment equal to that of a typical student with normal hearing. The speed and amount of information processed effortlessly by the auditory systems cannot be replaced through manual signs. Educational sign language interpreters must constantly make critical decisions on what information will be relayed to the student. Some information will not be relayed, making communication between the interpreter and educators critical.

In a spiraling curriculum, the cumulative impact of missed information on the student with a hearing loss must be addressed. A teacher of the deaf is trained to identify the splinter knowledge and skills obtained by the student through the years and design the appropriate intervention. As noted previously this is only a part of the teacher's responsibilities.

Professional Development

Continued professional development is a necessary part of growth for educational sign language interpreters, teachers, administrators, and other employees. Educational interpreters must be members of the professional national organization the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf (RID) in order to register with the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. As members, interpreters not only agree to adhere to an ethical standard for interpreters, but also are required to obtain approved continuing education as part of their certification maintenance program. Additionally, educational sign language interpreters are required to take no less than 15 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) per year. These hours are to be approved by the WVDE and must be focused on skill development.

Planned professional development activities should be made available or be supported by the administration. In addition to activities for all professional staff, the EIPA Feedback Form will identify specific target areas that need improvement and can be used to guide the interpreter's professional development plan.

Professional development topics and skill development for interpreters could include:

- Skill development and knowledge as measured by the EIPA
- Development of vocabulary, technical signs and fingerspelling skills
- Voice interpreting for children and teens who use sign language
- Roles and responsibilities
- Code of Conduct
- Child development and language acquisition
- Deaf culture and history
- Sign language modalities (e.g., American Sign Language, forms of Manually Coded English, Cued Speech)
- Effective teaming skills (e.g., collaboration, conflict resolution, communication)

Additional Considerations

Interpreter Assignment

In collaboration with the special education director, the administrator assigning personnel should be fully informed of the interpreter's skill level. Prior to making personnel decisions, the administrator should consider the interpreter's sign language and visual communication knowledge and skills. The administrator should also consider the interpreter's competence in the English language, especially grammar and spelling. The interpreter's knowledge and skills should be considered in relation to:

- Student's communication modality (American Sign Language, Contact Varieties Sign, Manually Coded English, Oral Approach, Cued Speech, etc.)
- Age of the student
- Content of the various classes (e.g., academic, career technical education)
- Special interpreting situations (e.g., assembly programs, field trips, films)
- Student's spoken and written English skills

In making interpreter assignments, the administrator will determine the needs of the students who are deaf or hard of hearing. For young children, the interpreter is not only interpreting but is helping the student develop a language base.

Interpreters Need to Prepare

The interpreter needs time and space for preparation. Preparation involves such activities as pre-reading and previewing instructional content materials in order to accurately interpret. Time is also needed for consultation and collaboration with teachers and other members of the student's educational team.

Interpreter's Schedule

A clearly outlined schedule of the interpreter's work activities is needed. To avoid fatigue and reduction of effectiveness, an interpreter should not be asked to interpret continuously for long periods of time without breaks (usually considered over one hour). Prolonged interpreting, without periodic breaks, will result in significant reductions in interpreting accuracy and poses potential health risks for the interpreter, such as repetitive motion injury. Interpreters may ask for assistance to identify interpreting breaks in order to reduce the risks. A second interpreter should be considered for situations that require interpreting for prolonged periods.

Other Duties

Educational interpreters are employees of a school district. As with other paraprofessionals, other duties may be assigned. However, the assignment of other duties must not conflict with the interpreter's primary responsibilities of preparing for and interpreting for the student. Careful consideration must be given before removing the interpreter. Even when "active interpreting" is not happening, such as during testing, the interpreter should remain in the room.

Substitutes

Once an IEP Team determines the student requires an educational interpreter, the district has acknowledged this accommodation must be provided for the student to have access to the educational program. It would be difficult to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) or to meet the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act in the absence of a qualified interpreter. Yet, there are times when an educational sign language interpreter is absent. **Providing no substitute interpreter or one that does not meet the recognized qualifications will not address the student's need to access the educational program.** Ideally, substitutes should meet the standards for educational interpreters. Graduation from an Interpreter Training Program (ITP) does not ensure competence in sign language interpreting. An ITP graduate's interpreting skills must be evaluated before hiring. Districts should make a good faith effort to identify qualified potential substitutes. A separate "call list" allows the district to identify community interpreters and/or interpreting agencies around the state that are willing to occasionally meet these needs. Nothing prohibits a district from offering a monetary incentive to qualified substitutes. It should be noted that skilled community interpreters' fees may be significantly higher than what is generally paid by the school.

Technology offers another option, which could be explored by a school district. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) may provide a short-term solution when districts are faced with limited options. VRI allows a student in a classroom with video conferencing equipment (a computer with a web camera or a videophone) to access an interpreter who appears on screen. This remote interpreter, working in a call center, listens through a headset to what is being said and interprets it. The student who is deaf/hard of hearing watches the interpreter on the screen. Likewise, the interpreter can see the deaf person via the camera.

There will be times when the educational sign language interpreter will be absent, and a qualified substitute cannot be found. Administrators should facilitate a contingency plan to ensure the student receives the content materials and avoids the potential social/emotional affect of isolation resulting from loss of communication. While extra tutoring, teacher's notes and outlines may address the content materials, ensuring an environment in which the student continues to receive or express information to teachers and peers may be challenging.

Evaluation/Supervision

The building administrator ultimately is responsible for supervision and evaluation of the educational interpreters. Areas for consideration include the interpreter's:

- Understanding of student's communication mode(s)
- Ability to relate overall content to the student
- Professional ethics
- Adherence to school policies
- Willingness to work with all educational team members
- Appropriate delivery of academic reinforcement of skills as provided by the general education teacher
- Peer evaluations and mentor program follow up with evaluation

Appendix

Glossary

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL): A visual language used by Deaf people in the United States and Canada, with distinct semantic, syntactic, morphological, and phonological rules that are different from English. The difference in word order makes it impossible to simultaneously speak English and sign ASL.

CODE OF CONDUCT: Standards of professional and ethical conduct for interpreters co-authored by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and the National Association of the Deaf.

CONCEPTUALLY ACCURATE SIGNED ENGLISH (CASE): A message using conceptual signs (ASL), in English form (structure and/or word order) that conveys the meaning of the speaker. The term relates to the balance of pragmatic (conceptually accurate) and linguistic (following English form) transliteration.

CONTACT VARIETIES SIGN: The language that results from prolonged language contact between members of different linguistic communities. It includes code switching, code mixing, and lexical borrowing sometimes referred to as Pidgin Sign English (Humphrey & Alcorn, 1998). It includes Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE).

CUED SPEECH: A system for visual representation of spoken language utilizing eight hand shapes and four hand locations near the face to supplement speech.

EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (EIPA): The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment is an evaluation tool that is language free (can assess American Sign Language or English sign systems) and is not tied to any specific grade level. It is geared specifically for interpreters working with children and young adults in an educational environment (Williams & Schick, 1999).

EDUCATIONAL SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER I: A person employed to provide communication access across all educational environments to students who are deaf or hard of hearing, and who holds the Initial Paraprofessional Certificate – Educational Interpreter pursuant to state board policy.

EDUCATIONAL SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER II: A person employed to provide communication access across all educational environments to students who are deaf or hard of hearing, and who holds the Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate – Educational Interpreter pursuant to state board policy.

FINGERSPELLING: The process of spelling words on the fingers using the American Manual Alphabet.

INTERPRETATION: The process of conveying a message from spoken English into American Sign Language or the process of conveying a message from American Sign Language into spoken English.

INTERPRETER: A person who facilitates communication by rendering the complete message between two or more people who do not share the same language. A professional interpreter for the deaf is someone who is fluent in English and sign language, is knowledgeable about Deaf culture, and has received training about the sociology of the Deaf community, the interpreting process, and the ethics of interpreting.

INTERPRETER IN THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING: A person who is able to perform conventional interpreting (or transliterating), together with special skills for working in the educational setting (National Task Force on Educational Interpreting, 1989).

MANUALLY CODED ENGLISH (MCE): A term applied to a variety of systems that use signs, fingerspelling, or gestures separately or in combinations to represent English manually (see also fingerspelling, SEE-I, SEE-II, Signed English, PSE).

MORPHEMIC SYSTEM OF SIGNS (MSS): Formerly known as Seeing Essential English (SEE-I), the Morphemic System of Signs uses a combination of basic, traditional signs and invented signs to represent morphemes that can be combined to form words.

ORAL APPROACH: The oral approach supports development of spoken language through use of a child's residual hearing.

PIDGIN SIGN ENGLISH (PSE): The use of a variety of sign languages that combines some features of American Sign Language and English. It is sometimes called "Contact Varieties Sign" or CASE.

REGISTRY OF INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF (RID): A national professional organization representing interpreters for the deaf, administering a national evaluation and certification system, maintaining state and national registries of certified interpreters, and advocating on behalf of interpreters and interpreting.

SEEING ESSENTIAL ENGLISH (SEE-I): Seeing Essential English was designed to use traditional signs (signs that are common to all signed languages) plus signs invented to represent morphemes that can be combined to form words. It is now called Morphemic System of Signs or MSS.

SIGN SUPPORT SPECIALIST: A person employed to provide sign supported speech assistance to students who are able to access environments through audition. A person who has held or holds an aide title and becomes employed as a sign support specialist shall hold a multi-classification status that includes both aide and sign support specialist titles.

SIGNER: A person who knows signs and can communicate his/her thoughts effectively in sign language but does not have knowledge or training in the theory and practice of interpreting. A signer should not be used as an interpreter without proper training and assessment.

SIGNING EXACT ENGLISH (SEE II): A signed system devised to represent a complete visual representation of English. Traditional signs are used in English word order with the addition of 72 signed prefixes and suffixes known as markers that give an expanded use of the English language. Often referred to as SEE.

SIGN-TO-VOICE INTERPRETING (formerly known as reverse interpreting): The process of conveying a signed message, with or without speech or mouth movements, into an equivalent message in spoken English.

SIMULTANEOUS COMMUNICATION: A combination of some form of manually coded English and spoken English often used by teachers of the deaf in educational settings.

TEAM INTERPRETING (SECOND INTERPRETER): Two or more interpreters working together to support each other to meet the communication needs of the students involved. This mode of communication is not appropriate for the classroom. It may be appropriate for longer assignments without periodic breaks in the educational setting.

TOTAL COMMUNICATION (TC): A communication philosophy that allows, according to individual needs, the inclusion of any or all modes/methods of communication including, but not limited to, speech, reading, residual hearing, sign language, fingerspelling, mime, gesture, reading, writing, etc.

TRANSLITERATION: Transliteration includes sign-to-voice, sign-to-voice using SEE, voice-to-sign, and voice-to-sign using SEE.

TRANSLITERATION, SIGN-TO-VOICE: Looking at, processing, and conveying the intent of a signed language (any form or sign system), produced in English word order, into spoken English. The result is not necessarily (but can be, if it is the intent of the signer), a one-sign-one-word relationship, as all aspects of visual features contribute to the voiced meaning by word selection, vocal intonation, and inflection.

TRANSLITERATION, SIGN-TO-VOICE USING SEE: Looking at, processing, and conveying the intent of Signing Exact English (usually combined with other sign systems), produced in English word order, to spoken English. The result is the intent of the signer's words and meanings, as all aspects of visual features contribute to the voiced meaning by one-to-one word selections, vocal intonation, and inflections.

TRANSLITERATION, VOICE-TO-SIGN: Listening to, processing, and conveying the intent of the spoken English language into sign language using conceptual (semantically selected) signs in English word order, (though changing word order to another English structure is sometimes necessary), accompanied by mouthing in English. It is not a one-word-one-sign relationship; however, complete meaning is conveyed incorporating visual features of signed languages such as verb directionality, use of space, facial grammar, body shift, etc.

TRANSLITERATION, VOICE-TO-SIGN USING SEE: Listening to, processing, and conveying the intent of the spoken English language into Signing Exact English signs in English word order, accompanied by mouthing in English. It is a one-word-one-sign relationship, and meaning is conveyed incorporating visual features of signed languages such as verb directionality, use of space, facial grammar, body shift, etc. It may also be supported by elaborations that clarify the message to the consumer, such as conceptual signs and use of classifiers, etc.

IEP Consideration Factors for the Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (WVBE Policy 2419)

- (2) Consideration of special factors. The IEP Team must -
- (iv) Consider the communication needs of the child, and in the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode;

The IEP Team has considered each item below:

I. Consider the child's language and communication needs

1. The student's primary language is one or more of the following (check all that apply):

Receptive	Expressive	
☐	☐	English
☐	☐	American Sign Language
☐	☐	Native Language

2. The student's primary communication mode is one or more of the following (check all that apply):

Receptive	
☐	Auditory
☐	Conceptual signs [e.g., American Sign Language, Pidgin Signed English (PSE) also referred to as Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE)]
☐	English signs (e.g., Manually Coded English such as Signed English or Signing Exact English)
☐	Fingerspelling
☐	Gestures
☐	Speechreading
☐	Tactile
☐	Other, please explain:
☐	Cued Speech

Expressive

- ☐ Conceptual signs [e.g., American Sign Language, Pidgin Signed English (PSE) also referred to as Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE)]
- ☐ English signs (e.g., Manually Coded English such as Signed English or Signing Exact English)
- ☐ Fingerspelling
- ☐ Gestures
- ☐ Spoken Language
- ☐ Tactile
- ☐ Other, please explain:
- ☐ Cued Speech

3. What language(s) and mode(s) of communication do the parents use with their child? What modes does the child use with peers?

4. Comments (optional):

II. Consider opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel and opportunities for instruction in the child's language and communication mode

NOTE: Direct language/communication/instruction occurs person-to-person, not through an additional source (e.g., educational interpreter, captioner).

The IEP Team has considered: (These social, emotional, and academic opportunities may be provided by the school or family)

- ☐ Opportunities for direct communication with peers.

Describe opportunities:

- ☐ Opportunities for direct communication with professional staff and other school personnel.

Describe opportunities:

- ☐ Opportunities for direct instruction.

Describe opportunities:

III. Consider academic level

1. Does the student have the communication and language necessary to acquire grade-level academic skills and concepts of the general education curriculum?

☐

Yes: What supports are needed to continue proficiency in grade-level academic skills and concepts of the general education curriculum?

☐

No: What supports are needed to increase the student's proficiency in his/her language and communication to acquire grade-level academic skills and concepts of the general education curriculum?

IV. Consider full range of needs

☐

The team has considered the full range of needs. Comments (optional):

1. Does the child have access to all educational components of the school (regular education classes, related services, guidance counseling, recess, lunch, assemblies, extracurricular activities, etc.) If not what supports are needed to allow for access?
2. No: What supports are needed to increase the student's proficiency in his/her language and communication to acquire grade-level academic skills and concepts of the general education curriculum?

3. What accommodations/modifications are being provided? What additional accommodations/modifications were considered?

V. Consider amplification needs

- ☐ Personal hearing devices (hearing aid, cochlear implant, tactile device)
- ☐ Personal FM system
- ☐ FM system/auditory trainer (w/o personal hearing device)
- ☐ Soundfield system
- ☐ No amplification needed

Adapted from “Communication Considerations for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing,” New Mexico, “IEP Communication Plan for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing,” Iowa and “Communication Plan for Child/ Student Who is Deaf/Hard of Hearing,” Colorado.

Broad-Spectrum Student Competencies

STUDENT COMPETENCIES	CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM
Ability to maintain eye contact	• What is the length of time a student can attend to the interpreter? • Can the student navigate other visual supports in the classroom while watching the interpreter?
Ability to ask for clarification or repetition	• Is the student assertive? • Can the student proactively monitor whether or not he or she is receiving a clear message? • If a student is confused, does he or she have the ability to distinguish whether the interpretation is weak or the teacher's content or teaching style is unclear?
Social-emotional abilities	• How do student behaviors compare with their chronological age? • What is the student's emotional responses to stress, transitions in the daily schedule, discipline, and typical peer interaction? • What is the student's level of self-confidence and autonomy? • What are the student's social problem-solving skills?
Visual capacity	• Are there any vision issues that would impact the way an interpreted message is received?
Cognitive abilities	• What are the student's academic problem-solving skills? • Did the student have early language exposure and acquisition? • Will interpreted messages need to be adapted to ensure comprehension by the student?
Self-awareness	• Does the student know that he or she is deaf? • Does the student have a concept of how and when hearing people access auditory information and his or her own need to access that information visually?
Awareness of the interpreting process	• Does the student understand the concept of third party communication? • Can the student separate the message of the speaker from the interpreter delivering the message? • If applicable, does the student have the ability and flexibility to use a variety of interpreters who potentially have different linguistic signing styles?

Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment® (EIPA)

EIPA Rating System

The evaluation team uses an EIPA rating form to evaluate the interpreter's abilities.

The samples are rated in the following domains:

1. Grammatical skills: Use of prosody (or intonation), grammar and space
2. Sign-to-voice interpreting skills: Ability to understand and convey child/teen sign language
3. Vocabulary: Ability to use a wide range of vocabulary, accurate use of fingerspelling and numbers
4. Overall abilities: Ability to represent a sense of the entire message, use appropriate discourse structures and represent who is speaking

Evaluators use a Likert Scale to assess specific skills. Scores for each skill range from zero (no skills demonstrated) to five (advanced native-like skills). The scores from all three evaluators are averaged for each skill area, each domain, as well as the overall test score. An individual's EIPA score is the summary total score. For example, an interpreter could report her/his score as EIPA Secondary PSE 4.2, which represents the grade level, the language modality, and the total summary EIPA scores.

Descriptions of each EIPA Level

Level 1: Beginner

Demonstrates very limited sign vocabulary with frequent errors in production. At times, production may be incomprehensible. Grammatical structure tends to be nonexistent. Individual is only able to communicate very simple ideas and demonstrates great difficulty comprehending signed communication. Sign production lacks prosody and use of space for the vast majority of the interpreted message.

An individual at this level is not recommended for classroom interpreting.

Level 2: Advanced Beginner

Demonstrates only basic sign vocabulary and these limitations interfere with communication. Lack of fluency and sign production errors are typical and often interfere with communication. The interpreter often hesitates in signing, as if searching for vocabulary. Frequent errors in grammar are apparent, although basic signed sentences appear intact. More complex grammatical structures are typically difficult. Individual is able to read signs at the word level and simple sentence level but complete or complex sentences often require repetitions and repairs. Some use of prosody and space, but use is inconsistent and often incorrect.

An individual at this level is not recommended for classroom interpreting.

Level 3: Intermediate

Demonstrates knowledge of basic vocabulary, but will lack vocabulary for more technical, complex, or academic topics. Individual is able to sign in a fairly fluent manner using some consistent prosody, but pacing is still slow with infrequent pauses for vocabulary or complex structures. Sign production may show some errors but generally will not interfere with communication. Grammatical production may still be incorrect, especially for complex structures, but is in general intact for routine and simple language. Comprehends signed messages but may need repetition and assistance. Voiced translation often lacks depth and subtleties of the original message. An individual at this level would be able to communicate very basic classroom content, but may incorrectly interpret complex information resulting in a message that is not always clear.

An interpreter at this level needs continued supervision and should be required to participate in continuing education in interpreting.

Level 4: Advanced Intermediate

Demonstrates broad use of vocabulary with sign production that is generally correct. Demonstrates good strategies for conveying information when a specific sign is not in her/his vocabulary. Grammatical constructions are generally clear and consistent, but complex information may still pose occasional problems. Prosody is good, with appropriate facial expression most of the time. May still have difficulty with the use of facial expression in complex sentences and adverbial non-manual markers. Fluency may deteriorate when rate or complexity of communication increases. Uses space consistently most of the time, but complex constructions or extended use of discourse cohesion may still pose problems. Comprehension of most signed messages at a normal rate is good but translation may lack some complexity of the original message.

An individual at this level would be able to convey much of the classroom content but may have difficulty with complex topics or rapid turn taking.

Level 5: Advanced

Demonstrates broad and fluent use of vocabulary, with a broad range of strategies for communicating new words and concepts. Sign production errors are minimal and never interfere with comprehension. Prosody is correct for grammatical, non-manual markers, and affective purposes. Complex grammatical constructions are typically not a problem. Comprehension of sign messages is very good, communicating all details of the original message.

An individual at this level is capable of clearly and accurately conveying the majority of interactions within the classroom.

EIPA Results and Feedback

Along with the test results, each candidate receives specific feedback about her/his interpreting performance. This feedback helps the interpreter and her/his interpreter educator to create a plan for professional development.

Feedback includes:

- A copy of the rating form with the average score for each rated item and an average overall score.
- Written feedback on the interpreter's strengths and weaknesses.
- Suggestions on how to improve areas in need of development.
- Glossary of EIPA terminology.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Certification Descriptions

National Interpreter Certification (NIC)

Holders of this certificate have demonstrated professional knowledge and skills that meet or exceed the minimum professional standards necessary to perform in a broad range of interpretation and transliteration assignments in the following domains:

- General knowledge of the field of interpreting through the NIC Knowledge Exam;
- Ethical decision-making through the interview portion of the NIC Interview and Performance Exam; and,
- Interpreting skills through the NIC Interview and Performance Exam.

NOTE: As of December 1, 2011, the NIC Interview and Performance Exam became a pass/fail exam. Those who have passed the exam since December 1, 2011, have been awarded the NIC credential.

CDI (Certified Deaf Interpreter)

Holders of this certification are interpreters who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, hard of hearing and who have completed at least eight hours of training on the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct; eight hours of training on the role and function of an interpreter who is deaf or hard-of-hearing; and have passed a comprehensive combination of written and performance tests. Holders of this certificate are recommended for a broad range of assignments where an interpreter who is deaf or hard-of-hearing would be beneficial. This exam has been available since 1998.

Recruitment Tips

There is a critical shortage of educational sign language interpreters in West Virginia. Knowing that qualified interpreters are a scarce commodity, begin as early as possible and in places where you will have the greatest success of finding one. Traditional methods of advertisement are not likely to be successful. The following should aid in recruitment efforts for a qualified educational sign language interpreter:

- There is now a professional classification for interpreters; this can significantly increase recruitment efforts in finding a qualified interpreter from another state;
- Post the announcement on the statewide WVDE Low Incidence listserv;
- The West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WVCDHH) maintains a registry of interpreters on their website. <http://www.wvdhhr.org/wvcdhh/>;
- Pierpont Community and Technical at Fairmont State offers an Interpreter Training Program. Contact: Ruby Losh, Director, at ruby.losh@pierpont.edu;
- Mount West Community and Technical College has a two-year ASL program. The director is Leigh-Ann Brewer and her contact information is as follows: (304) 417-3244 or brewer13@mctc.edu.
- Video Remote Interpreting- there are several video remote interpreting services that are available through contract. Classroom must have access to internet services, and it is not nearly as ideal as a live interpreter;
- Deaf Education job site: <http://deafed.net/>

Finally, if the student needs an interpreter, that is what the IEP must reflect. Do NOT change the IEP to sign support specialist because a qualified interpreter cannot be secured for the student.

Sample Job Description

Educational Sign Language Interpreter

Title: Educational Sign Language Interpreter

An Educational Sign Language Interpreter is a qualified interpreter who is able to provide communication access to students, teachers, and staff in settings requiring sign language, both receptively and expressively in a pre-K through 12 public school setting.

Job Description Summary

Responsible for providing communication access through sign language in a wide range of instructional and extra-curricular activities within an educational program. Notetaking support for a student may be considered necessary when not interpreting but is not a primary responsibility of the interpreter.

Dimension

Works cooperatively with school personnel to provide coordinated interpreting services to students.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Work under the direction and supervision of the teacher to whom assigned
2. Interpret for students utilizing the student's preferred mode of communications
3. Provide interpreting during the school day in academic and non-academic settings with staff, peers and other students who are deaf or hard of hearing
4. Confer with educators to plan for interpreting
5. Demonstrate and understand the educational process of interpreting by attending county-provided interpreter training during staff development
6. Assist students who are deaf or hard of hearing and perform other related duties which benefit the students
7. Demonstrate professionalism in all interactions with individuals unfamiliar with the educational setting
8. Interpret auditory and signed information which includes environmental sounds, teacher instruction, student questions and peer communication as described in the Code of Ethics for Educational Interpreters
9. Attend student's IEP Team meeting in order to provide information about the student's communication abilities and needs

Qualifications

Applicant must have a high school diploma or general education development (GED) certificate and meet the requirements for a WVDE Paraprofessional Certificate: Educational Sign Language Interpreter I or II. This includes the ability to qualify for the West Virginia Paraprofessional Certificate, a score of at least 3.0 on the Educational Interpreter Proficiency Assessment (EIPA) for Interpreter I certification or 3.5 and pass the EIPA Written Performance Assessment for Interpreter II certification. Applicant must be registered with the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Applicant must be able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary and must have knowledge of deafness and Deaf culture. The interpreter must have knowledge of hearing loss and other conditions and their effect on early development of language. An interpreter should have knowledge of speech, motor, adaptive skills, and social-emotional development of the student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Principle Accountability:

- Interpreters shall accept the same responsibility and authority as other members of the educational staff. They will abide by and enforce federal, state, school district, and individual school laws and rules.
- Interpreters shall provide communication access in the wide range of instructional activities within the educational program.
- Interpreters shall interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially both receptively and expressively using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

Speech to Text

Included in the IDEA's definition of interpreting services are the following:

Cart

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is word-for-word instant speech-to-text translation provided on scene in just about any venue. A stenographer listens to what is being said and then types it on the stenograph machine, which is hooked to a computer and screen where the words appear for anyone to read.

C-Print

Primarily used in educational settings, C-Print® was developed at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) to convert spoken messages into text. A C-Print® typist, specially trained in text-condensing strategies types on a laptop computer using an abbreviation system. The text is displayed on one or more student computer (laptop) monitors. The transcriber does not provide a verbatim transcript but does provide a “meaning-for-meaning” rendition of the spoken English content.

TypeWell

TypeWell used most often in schools, is a communication method to provide a “meaning-for-meaning” form of spoken English into English printed text on a laptop computer. Students read the “real time” text on a second laptop. The student’s laptop can also be used for note-taking and turn-taking. Transcribers are specially trained on licensed software provided by TypeWell.

The informal assessment below is designed to assist the IEP Team in determining the appropriateness of a speech to text option for the student.

Directions: Rate each of the following skills according to the scale of *always* (>90%), *frequently* (70-90%), *sometimes* (40-69%), *rarely* (10-39%) or *never* (<10%).

Interpretation: Students with mostly ratings of “always” and “frequently” are more likely to benefit from the use of captioning or transcribing services with consideration given to the type of service that is most appropriate. Areas with ratings of “sometimes” indicate the skill is emerging, but still may need significant support. Students with many ratings of “rarely” or “never” should not utilize these services and will require other accommodations. This checklist can also be used to identify student goals to prepare students to use captioning/transcribing services in the future.

Transcribing/Captioning Readiness Checklist

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Completed by: _____

1. Does the student demonstrate the ability to:	Never <10%	Rarely 10-39%	Some 40-69%	Frequently 70-90%	Always >90%
• Read English at the instructional language level used by the teacher?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Learn abstract and/or decontextualized material with minimal expansion?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Learn new vocabulary from typical classroom exposure?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Comprehend written class content and instructions?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Understand what to do without continuous prompting from a teacher or other adult?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Make age-appropriate progress without excessive assistance?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Complete class material and tests without frequent teacher assistance?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Store, retrieve, and organize transcription information received through captioning or transcribing?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Communication strengths/preferences. Does the student:	Never <10%	Rarely 10-39%	Some 40-69%	Frequently 70-90%	Always >90%
• Prefer reception of academic information in print?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Require captioning/transcribing of classroom speech to support residual hearing or other support services?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Display motivation to read captions/transcripts of class content? (Note: studies show this to be an important factor in successful use of captioning/transcription services.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Understand classmates' questions/inputs from captioning/transcribing services?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Communicate his/her own questions/comments in class? - <i>Transcription is recommended if a student is unable to communicate his or her own questions or comments in class as captioning does not allow for the captioner to communicate for the student.</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Communication strengths/preferences. Does the student:	Never <10%	Rarely 10-39%	Some 40-69%	Frequently 70-90%	Always >90%
• Need technology that would allow two-way communication with the transcriber? - <i>Transcription is recommended in this situation (TypeWell and C-print provide this service).</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Read at a speed or linguistic level that would require or benefit from condensing strategies? - <i>Transcription is recommended if the student has reduced language and reading levels.</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Read at a speed and linguistic level that would enable the student to receive the teacher's speech verbatim, using full text captioning. - <i>Captioning is recommended in this situation.</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Does the student demonstrate how to use captioning/ transcribing services by:	Never <10%	Rarely 10-39%	Some 40-69%	Frequently 70-90%	Always >90%
• Asking for assistance when needed?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Understanding when additional support is needed (e.g., an interpreter, or teacher of the deaf)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Advocating for communication needs?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Speaking up about missing information?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Requesting clarification from the teacher?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Participating in class discussion?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Participating in small group discussion?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Utilizing captions/transcript as notes for study after class?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Utilizing highlighting/notetaking tools included in newer transcription software during class, if available?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Using messaging technology to communicate questions/comments to captioner during class (if available in transcription software)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Does the student demonstrate adequate social development to:	Never <10%	Rarely 10-39%	Some 40-69%	Frequently 70-90%	Always >90%
• Interact with peers about class materials without support?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Interact with peers about social issues without support?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Participate appropriately in class?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Take the responsibility to double-check spelling of new vocabulary in notes after class?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Attentional Factors – Does the student: - Attend to the captioning/transcribing and the teacher? - Manage the multiple visual and/or auditory demands of complex visual and auditory environments (reading captions/transcript; looking at teacher; looking at classmates to get the mood of the class; review graphics from board/book, etc.)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Attentional Factors – Does the student:	Never <10%	Rarely 10-39%	Some 40-69%	Frequently 70-90%	Always >90%
• Attend to the captioning/transcribing and the teacher?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Manage the multiple visual and/or auditory demands of complex visual and auditory environments (reading captions/transcript; looking at teacher; looking at classmates to get the mood of the class; review graphics from board/book, etc.)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Sample Educational Sign Language Interpreter Observation Form:

Suggested Areas of Competence

Educational Interpreter : _____

Supervisor: _____

Date of Observation: _____

Class/Activity: _____

I. Professional Code of Ethics	District Evaluation Criteria (e.g., Exceeds Job Requirements)	District Evaluation Criteria (e.g., Meets Job Requirements)	District Evaluation Criteria (e.g., Needs Improvement)	Comments
• On time for class assignment				
• Dresses appropriately according to district policy				
• Remains at interpreting assignment for the duration of the scheduled time				
• Maintains confidential information when interpreting for counseling sessions, medical screenings, etc., according to district policies				
• Reports information that may be detrimental to the school population according to district policies				
• Provides feedback to general education teacher(s) and/or special education personnel according to district guidelines				

II. Professional Preparation	District Evaluation Criteria	District Evaluation Criteria	District Evaluation Criteria	Comments
• Requests tests and materials prior to class instruction and/or assessments				
• Asks questions to clarify the goals/ objectives of the lesson				
• Participates in educational team meetings and provides feedback on the student's communication needs				

III. Interpreting Skills	District Evaluation Criteria	District Evaluation Criteria	District Evaluation Criteria	Comments
• Maintains eye contact with student and checks for visual feedback from student				
• Arranges placement for seating or standing in order for the student to access visual information				
• Interprets all communication from teacher(s) and other presenters when the student with the hearing loss is present				
• Maintains an appropriate rate of interpreting according to the teacher's pace of instruction and student's level of comprehension				
• Voice interprets student's signed responses and/or questions				
• Voice interpreting is articulate and audible				
• Maintains appropriate affect when voice interpreting				
• Interprets ALL communication between the student with a hearing loss and other students when specified in the individualized education program (IEP)				
• Interprets environmental information when present (e.g., PA announcements)				

IV. Discipline	District Evaluation Criteria	District Evaluation Criteria	District Evaluation Criteria	Comments
• Supports the behavioral management system established by the classroom teacher or the behavioral intervention plan outlined in the student's IEP				
• Interprets for disciplinary actions, in an educational setting, as appropriate				

V. Professional Development	District Evaluation Criteria	District Evaluation Criteria	District Evaluation Criteria	Comments
• Interpreters with emergency certification: Currently working towards standard certification requirements according to the district policies				
• Participating in continuing education and professional activities in accordance with district and state requirements				

VI. Interpersonal Communication	District Evaluation Criteria	District Evaluation Criteria	District Evaluation Criteria	Comments
• Maintains appropriate social conduct when interacting with the student according to the district policies				
• Collaborates with the classroom teacher regarding reinforcement of instruction, repeating questions, or rephrasing information according to the student's IEP				
• Displays a positive attitude when interacting with students and professionals				
• Collaborates with the classroom teacher in order to redirect the student's private conversations when they are off topic and refocuses communication on instructional content				

VII. Additional Comments

Developed by: Wendy Eufemia, NJ Specialized Child Study Team Therese Sheehan, NJ Office of Special Education Programs



Office of Certification
Building 6, Suite 550
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, WV 25305
(304)558-7010

1. Applicant Information		2. Disclosure of Background Information			
Social Security Number _____ Birth Date (MM-DD-YYYY) _____ Gender: Check One ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer Not to Answer US Citizen: ☐ Yes ☐ No Military Service: ☐ US Veteran or ☐ Spouse of US Veteran Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____ Previous Last Name (or Maiden) _____ (If your name has changed since your last application, proof of name change must be attached , e.g. copy of marriage certificate, etc.) Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Primary Phone _____ Secondary Phone _____ Email (Required) _____ Are you employed by a West Virginia School System? (Circle Yes / No) If YES, please indicate the school system: _____		If you answer yes to any question below, submit a narrative with your application. The narrative should include dates, locations, school systems, and any/all other information that explains the circumstance(s) in detail.	YES	NO	Previously Submitted
1) Have you ever had adverse action taken against any application, certificate, or license in any state? Adverse action includes but is not limited to the following: letter of warning, reprimand, denial, suspension, revocation, voluntary surrender, or cancellation.					
2) Have you ever been disciplined, reprimanded, suspended, or discharged from any employment because of allegations of misconduct?					
3) Have you ever resigned, entered into a settlement agreement, or otherwise left employment as a result of alleged misconduct?					
4) Is any action now pending against you for alleged misconduct in any school district, court, or before any educator licensing agency?					
5) Have you ever been arrested, charged with, convicted of, or are currently under indictment for a felony? *					
6) Have you ever been arrested, charged with, or convicted of a misdemeanor? (For the purpose of this application, minor traffic violations should not be reported.) Charges or convictions for driving while intoxicated (DWI) or driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (DUI) must be reported.*					
*For a YES response to items 5 and 6, the following must be included for all charges, including those that have been dismissed: 1) Charging Document; and 2) Judgement Order; or 3) Final Disposition; and 4) All other relevant court documentation.					
3. Applicant Signature I swear or affirm under the penalty of false swearing that all information provided in or with this application is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any false statements, misrepresentations, or omissions of fact in or with this application are grounds for denial, suspension, or revocation of the license(s) that I am seeking or currently hold. The WVDE collects personal and non-personal information. Any information submitted or on record may be open to public inspection and/or publication as per our privacy policy located on our website.					
4. Fingerprinting Information Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____ Fingerprinting instructions at https://wvde.us/certification/certification-info/application-forms/first-time-application/ ☐ I have previously received Certification in WV. ☐ I have never held WV Certification and will complete at background through IdentoGo. All first-time applicants must have fingerprints processed by IdentoGo (https://www.identogo.com). A fingerprint service code will be sent to your e-mail once the application is received by the WVDE.					
5. Superintendent Recommendation (Required if employed by a WV School System) I certify that I have reviewed and can attest to the accuracy and truthfulness of the information provided in this application. When necessary, I have included documentation verifying this information. I have reviewed the disclosure of background information, and, to the best of my knowledge, the applicant is of good moral character and is physically, mentally, and emotionally qualified to perform the assigned duties. I recommend that s/he be granted certification.					
Signature of Superintendent/Multi-County CTE Administrator, or WVSOT Superintendent/designee _____ County _____ Date _____					

Form 60—Paraprofessional Certificate-Educational Interpreter (County employment required)

Social Security Number: _____

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

MI: _____

REV 20250116

Certification Request

Check one:

- ☐ **Permanent Certificate** — All certification requirements are met (hold national cert. or minimum 3.5 EIPA performance score and all academic requirements are met, and passing EIPA-Written Test score)
- ☐ **Initial Certificate** — All certification requirements are **NOT** met (must hold national certification or minimum 3.0 EIPA performance score, and completed coursework) - may be renewed **Two (2)** times
- ☐ **Renewal Certificate** — Initial Certificate awarded previously and successful completion of 15 clock hours of WVDE approved professional development activities
- ☐ **Restricted Certificate** (Renewable only **twice**) — Has met all requirements for initial certificate and taken one of the required assessments (EIPA, etc.) but not achieved the minimum required score. **(Approved Professional Development Plan must be submitted)**

Verification of Education

The applicant holds the minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent;

☐ YES ☐ Verification attached

National Certification

☐ EIPA-Performance Score 3.5 ☐ 3.0 Other ☐ (Check one and circle score as applicable)

☐ EIPA-Written ☐ NAD Level III ☐ Level IV ☐ NIC

State Competency Exam

The applicant has taken and passed the current state competency exam for aides developed pursuant to W. Va Code §18A-4-8e and have satisfied this requirement.

☐ YES ☐ Verification attached

DATE: _____

Basic Skills (3 Semester Hours in Each or Equivalent Training)

Courses Claimed				Praxis — CORE	
Dept.	Course Name	Date	Score	Date Completed	
Reading					
Writing					
Math					

General Studies (6 Semester Hours Required in Any Combination)

Courses Claimed			Courses Claimed		
Dept.	Course Name	Date	Dept.	Course Name	Date
				Humanities OR	
				Fine Arts OR	
				Science OR	
				Social Studies	

Required Courses (3 Semester Hours in Each or Classroom Experience)

Courses Claimed				Classroom Experience	
Dept.	Course Name	Date	Year	Specific Assignment	
Classroom Management					
Special Education*					
Human Growth & Dev. or Psychology					
Elective					
Elective					
Elective					
Elective					

* If two years of classroom experience is being used in lieu of coursework for the Special Education requirement, it is also required to document ten (10) clock hours of in-service training directly related to special education.

The ACDS certificate issued by the U.S. Department of Labor after Fall 2002 satisfies the following: Reading, General studies, Classroom Management, Special Needs, Human Growth and Development, and 3 semester hours of electives. The CDA certificate satisfies the following: Reading, Classroom Management, Special Needs, Human Growth and Development, and 3 semester hours of electives. The EIPA Written Test passing score satisfies the 9 elective hours, the Reading, Special Education, Human Development, and Social Studies course requirements.

Information listed on this application must be supported by official documentation such as official seal-bearing transcripts, score reports, certificates of completion, or any other sources of verification. Failure to produce such documentation may result in the formal denial of this application.

Applicant Information Page must be attached.

Employing Superintendent Signature _____

Date _____

Overview of Requirements

Classification	Notes/Timelines	Policy 5202	WVCDHH Registry	RID Membership	CEU/Training Professional Development
Sign Support Specialist Position Code 518 Pay Grade E	- In lieu of an interpreter only if an interpreter cannot be found - Maximum two years - After two years if unable to find interpreter, must request waiver from WVDE and PD plan must be approved	N/A	Recommended (\$25) Not qualified	Associate Member (WVCDHH Registry Requirement) \$130.00	Must be on a Professional Development Plan
Restricted Interpreter Pay Grade F	Meet all requirements as stated in sections 12.5.a.1 and 12.5.b.2 except for the minimum required assessment scores or certificate levels. Submit evidence of the following: have taken one of the required assessments at least one time. This is valid for one school year and may be renewed two times.	Yes	Yes (\$25) Not qualified	Associate Member (WVCDHH Registry Requirement) \$130.00	- Complete Professional Development Plan - Agreement to attend all WVDE- approved trainings as stipulated by WVDE officials - Receive the recommendation from their employing county superintendent.
Educational Sign Language Interpreter I Position Code 516 Pay Grade F	- Good for One year - Can be renewed twice - Recommendation of Superintendent	Yes (EIPA 3.0) Paraprofessional	Yes (\$25) (Renewed every three years)	Associate Member \$130.00 annually	Must have 15 WVDE approved clock hours per year
Educational Sign Language Interpreter II Position Code 517	N/A	Yes (EIPA 3.5 and EIPA-WT) Paraprofessional	Yes (\$25) (Renewed every three years)	Associate Member \$130.00 annually	- No CEUs required but should be on a PD plan - RID ACET Recommended
Educational Sign Language Interpreter II Pay Grade G				Certified Member (EIPA 4.0 or NIC) \$160.00 annually	8.0 CEUs or 80 RID sponsored hours PD over a four year period.
Professional Educational Interpreter	- Meet professional personnel §18A-1-1 - BA 3.6 EIPA and EIPA-WT	N/A	Yes (\$25) (Renewed every three years)	Associate Member \$130.00 annually	- No CEUs required but should be on a PD plan - RID ACET Recommended
Professional Educational Interpreter Position Code 330				Certified Member (EIPA 4.0 or NIC) \$160.00 annually	8.0 CEUs or 80 RID sponsored hours PD over a four year period.

References

Boys Town National Research Hospital. "Classroom Interpreters."

<https://eipa.boystown.org/>

Huff, Cindy. *Determining a Student's Readiness to Successfully Use Interpreting Services*. Gallaudet University. Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center. Spring, 2010. pp30 – 34.

Kansas State Department of Education. 2003. *Kansas Guidelines for Interpreters in the Educational Setting for Students Who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing*. Topeka: Kansas State Department of Education.

<https://www.ksde.gov/Portals/0/TLA/Program%20Standards/Deaf%20HardofHearing%20Standards%20final%2011-09-2021.pdf>

Nebraska Department of Education. 2002. *Guidelines for Educational Interpreters*. <http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/technicalassist/InterpretersGuideline.pdf>

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. <http://www.rid.org/>

Stephenson. P. (2002) *Inverse Pyramids of Educational Interpreting Discussion*. pp. 27 – 30. Kansas Guidelines for Interpreters in the Educational Setting for Student Who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. December 2003.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. *Deaf Students Education Services: Policy guidance*. 57 Fed. Reg. 49275 (October 30, 1992).

West Virginia Legislation:

2012 House Concurrent Resolution No, 104. Recognizing the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Student's Bill of Rights.

West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. 192 CSR 3 *Establishment of Required Qualifications and Ethical Standards for Interpreters*

2013. H. B. 2470. Amends the Code of West Virginia relating to sign support specialist and educational sign language interpreters I and II.



Michele L. Blatt
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools