

An Act Relative to the Training, Assessment, and Assignment of Qualified School Interpreters in Educational Settings

HD 1883 (Rep. Cabral) SD 392 (Sen. Crighton)

This legislation directs the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to create standards and competencies for the hiring and assignment of interpreters in educational settings in order to provide parents and students with limited English proficiency (LEP) competent interpretation services. This bill incorporates the recommendations of DESE's School Interpreter Task Force, formed pursuant to section 81 of chapter 154 of the acts of 2018.

School districts are already required to provide interpreter services for families with LEP pursuant to state and federal law. Unfortunately, many school districts rely on untrained employees or volunteers who are often unqualified as interpreters and unprepared to adequately interpret information vital to a child's growth and development. As a result, too many parents are provided inaccurate information, are unable to participate meaningfully in their child's education, and are unable to access equal education opportunities for their children.

This legislation implements a tiered system to train and assign school interpreters. To aid in providing competent services, DESE is directed to adopt regulations consistent with the recommendations of the School Interpreter Task Force as necessary to develop and administer a system for training, assessing, and determining qualifications of interpreters in educational settings; develop a training curriculum; and maintain a publicly accessible mechanism to identify the interpreters with the highest level of training and skill. Implementation of the bill would be phased in at the direction of the Department, subject to appropriation.

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