

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 48th Legislature (2002)

HOUSE BILL HB2902

By: Blackburn

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to schools; creating the Oklahoma Educational Interpreter for the Deaf Act; stating legislative findings; providing definitions; establishing requirements for an educational interpreter in a public school; stating preferred educational requirement; requiring currently employed educational interpreters to attain certain proficiency by certain date; directing the State Department of Rehabilitation Services and the State Department of Education to collaborate on a registry; requiring continuing education; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 13-141 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma Educational Interpreter for the Deaf Act".

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 13-142 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The Legislature finds that it is essential for the well-being and educational growth of deaf and hard-of-hearing children that education programs recognize the unique nature of deafness and ensure that all deaf and hard-of-hearing children have appropriate, ongoing, and fully accessible educational opportunities. It is essential that deaf and hard-of-hearing children, like all children, have an education in which their unique communication mode is

respected, utilized, and developed to an appropriate level of proficiency.

SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 13-143 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

As used in the Oklahoma Educational Interpreter for the Deaf Act:

1. "Communication mode or language" means one or more of the following systems or methods of communication applicable to the deaf and hard-of-hearing:

- a. American Sign Language,
- b. English-based manual or sign systems, or
- c. oral, aural, or other speech-based training;

2. "Educational interpreter" means a person who possesses a combination of interpreting skills for expressing and receiving information in a variety of signed or oral languages and modes, the interpersonal skills to work effectively and collaboratively with staff and students within the school system, a comprehensive, general knowledge of academic subjects and current events, educational processes and organization, principles and practices of special education, aspects and issues of deaf culture, and has attained a mid-level competency on a recognized national or state interpreter's assessment;

3. "Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA)" means a tool used for evaluating the expressive skill level and receptive comprehension of educational interpreters that utilize American Sign Language and other modes as a method of communication for the deaf and hard-of-hearing;

4. "Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST)" means a tool used for the comprehensive evaluation of interpreters;

5. "Interpreter training program" means a state-approved program in a college or university for preparing interpreters for the deaf; and

6. "Work experience" means a minimum of three (3) years of full-time-equivalent work in the field of Deaf Education.

SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 13-144 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. Any person who functions as an educational interpreter in a public school shall have completed:

1. An interpreter training program;
2. A bachelor's degree; or
3. Three (3) or more years of work experience in the field of Deaf Education.

B. In addition to the requirements in subsection A of this section, a person who functions as an educational interpreter in a public school shall have one or more of the following:

1. Certification by the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf (RID);
 2. National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Level IV or better;
 3. Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST) Level III or better;
- or
4. Any other national or state-recognized educational interpreter assessment at a comparable level of proficiency.

It shall be desirable, but not required, for an educational interpreter to hold either a bachelor or associate degree.

C. Any educational interpreter employed by a public school on the effective date of this act who does not meet the requirements set forth in subsections A and B of this section shall be required to attain QAST Level I or a comparable level of proficiency on a national or state-recognized educational interpreter assessment by July 1, 2004. The educational interpreter shall have until July 1,

2006, to attain QAST Level III or a comparable level of proficiency on a national or state-recognized educational interpreter assessment.

SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 13-145 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The State Department of Rehabilitation Services and the State Department of Education shall collaborate to maintain a registry of persons who meet the qualifications as an educational interpreter. In order to remain on the registry, an educational interpreter shall complete a minimum of ten (10) contact hours of continuing education per year, of which five (5) hours shall be related to educational interpreting.

SECTION 6. This act shall become effective July 1, 2002.

SECTION 7. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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