

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

H. 437 (Rep. Cabral), S. 253 (Sen. Crighton)

Bill Summary

This legislation directs the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to create standards and competencies for the hiring and assignment of school interpreters 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 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.

To aid in providing competent services, DESE is directed to develop and administer a system for training, assessing, and determining qualifications of interpreters; 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 DESE's discretion, subject to appropriation.

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