

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 651

(Delegate Qi)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education – Educational Interpreter – Certification Requirements

This bill requires, by July 1, 2022, the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) to develop regulations for the certification of educational interpreters who provide sign language interpreting. In adopting the regulations, SBE and PSTEB must consider fully or partially reimbursing candidates who successfully obtain a certificate as an educational interpreter for examination costs. An educational interpreter employed by a public school must obtain specified certification by July 1, 2028. Further, the bill establishes specified protections to enable a deaf or hard of hearing individual to become a teacher. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: SBE and PSTEB can develop regulations using existing resources. Potential minimal impact on revenue, as explained below.

Local Effect: Likely no material effect on local school systems, as explained below.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: In the bill, “educational interpreter” is defined as an individual who provides sign language interpreting services in an educational setting.

An individual who is deaf or hard of hearing may not be denied the right to receive a credential from PSTEB, receive training to become a teacher, or to practice teaching. In addition, a local board may not refuse to contract with or engage a teacher because of deafness if the hard of hearing teacher is capable of performing the duties of the position. In addition, the State must explore fiscal support for educational interpreters.

Current Law: PSTEB is a semi-autonomous board composed of 25 members. PSTEB and SBE share the authority to develop rules and regulations for the certification of teachers and other professional personnel and requirements for the preparation of teachers and other education personnel, including social workers.

State Revenues: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) charges a minimal \$10 processing fee to issue a new or renewal teaching certificate. To the extent MSDE decides to charge educational interpreters this fee, revenues increase minimally.

According to the preamble of the bill, as of November, 2020, there are 150 part-time and full-time American Sign Language Educational Interpreters in the State. This estimate assumes that 25 individuals successfully obtain a certificate as an educational interpreter each year, which accounts for all current educational interpreters to become certified by the July 1, 2028 (fiscal 2029) date in the bill. Thus, MSDE special fund revenues increase by an estimated \$250 per year.

Local Expenditures: Beginning July 1, 2028, local school systems must hire educational interpreters that meet the requirements established in the bill. However, these requirements are not anticipated to materially affect local school system finances.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 794 of 2020 received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action was taken.

Designated Cross File: SB 464 (Senator West) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland School for the Deaf; Baltimore County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History:
rh/rhh

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