

2017

Best Practices for Educational Interpreters in South Carolina

Stephen Fitzmaurice

Clemson University, sfitzma@clemson.edu

Karen Chamness

Greenville County Schools

Diane Formhals

Horry County School District

Terri Gross

Dorchester Two School District

Beth Ann Kluff

SCSDB Division of Outreach Services

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/languages_pubs

Part of the [American Sign Language Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fitzmaurice, Stephen; Chamness, Karen; Formhals, Diane; Gross, Terri; Kluff, Beth Ann; Irons, Maureen; Spainhour, Susie; Steichen-McDaniel, Anita; Weber, Eric; and McKay, Sara J., "Best Practices for Educational Interpreters in South Carolina" (2017). *Publications*. 5.

https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/languages_pubs/5

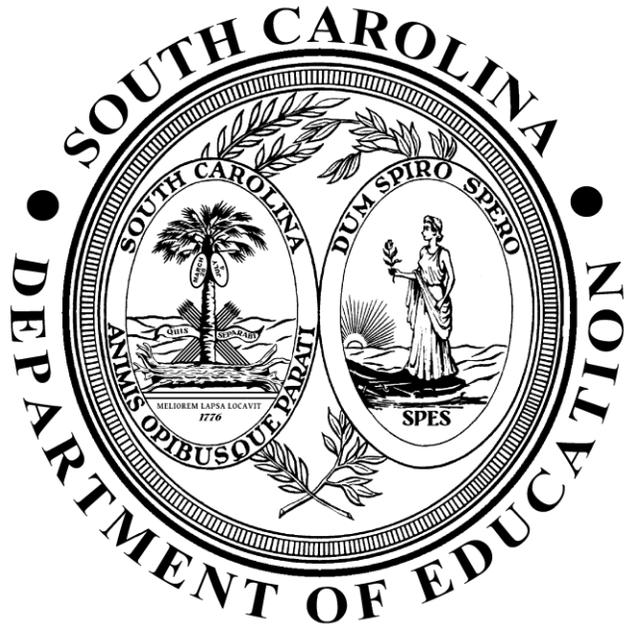
This No Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Languages at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.

Authors

Stephen Fitzmaurice, Karen Chamness, Diane Formhals, Terri Gross, Beth Ann Kluft, Maureen Irons, Susie Spainhour, Anita Steichen-McDaniel, Eric Weber, and Sara J. McKay

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



**Best Practices for Educational Interpreters in
South Carolina**

2017

The South Carolina Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability in admission to, treatment in, or employment in its programs and activities. Inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies should be made to the Employee Relations Manager, 1429 Senate Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201, 803-734-8781. For further information on federal nondiscrimination regulations, including Title IX, contact the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at OCR.DC@ed.gov or call 1-800-421-3481.

Contents

Acknowledgements..... 1

Purpose of the *Best Practices for Educational Interpreters in South Carolina* 2

Definitions..... 2

Best Practice for the Educational Interpreter 2

 Competencies 3

 Responsibilities 3

 Codes of Professional Conduct..... 3

 Preparation Time..... 4

 Physical Environment 4

 Educational Interpreter’s Role as a Member of the IEP Team 4

 Special Situations..... 5

 Professional Development 5

 Interpreter Absences 5

Best Practices for Administrators 5

 Hiring Educational Interpreters..... 6

 Interviewing Educational Interpreters..... 6

 Supervision 6

 Administrative Supervision 6

 Performance Evaluation..... 6

 Schedule..... 6

 Professional Development 7

 Special Considerations..... 7

 Substitute Interpreters 7

Best Practices for the IEP Team 7

Best Practices for Teachers Working with Educational Interpreters 8

Best Practices for Interpreting Services for Non-Students 8

Appendix A: Roles Matrix..... 10

Appendix B: Sample Position Description 12

Appendix C: Sample Interview Questions..... 13

Appendix D: Interpreter Credentials..... 14

 Skill-Based Competencies 14

 Maintaining Certification..... 14

 Knowledge-based Competencies 14

Appendix E: Tips for Teachers and Administrators Working with Educational Interpreters 16
Glossary 17

Acknowledgements

The *Best Practices for Educational Interpreters in South Carolina* was revised from the 2007 guidance by several stakeholders representing various areas of perspectives and specialty including:

Karen Chamness
Teacher Coordinator
Greenville County Schools

Maureen Irons, Ed. D
Statewide Consultant
SCSDB Division of Outreach Services

Steve Fitzmaurice
Assistant Professor of Interpreting
Clemson University

Susie Spainhour
President
SC Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

Diane Formhals
Special Education Coordinator
Horry County School District

Anita Steichen-McDaniel
Executive Director
South Carolina Association of the Deaf, Inc.

Terri Gross
Educational Interpreter
Dorchester Two School District

Eric Weber, Ed.D.
Director of Statewide Interpreting Services
and ASL Programs
SCSDB Division of Outreach Services

Beth Ann Kluff
Interpreter III
SCSDB Division of Outreach Services

Sara J. McKay
Education Associate
SCDE Office of Special Education Services

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is supportive of this best practices reference and hopes it will provide districts with the information needed to provide effective educational interpreting services for their students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The SCDE is also extremely thankful for the number of alliances it has been able to make with the many individuals and organizations involved in this process.

Purpose of the *Best Practices for Educational Interpreters in South Carolina*

The purpose of this reference is to provide districts, charter schools, and state operated programs with best practices for working with educational interpreters including, but not limited to, roles and responsibilities, code of professional conduct, and suggested credentialing. It is not required by regulation but is simply the most up-to-date recommendation from the field.

Definitions

An *interpreter* is someone who conveys a message from one language to another, maintaining all essential elements of meaning and message equivalence. Interpreting is a highly sophisticated and demanding mental task involving complex thinking and analytical strategies. Such complex mental tasks and bi-modal channels (aural/oral and visual/gestural) of communication require rapid mental processing, good working memory, the ability to sustain concentration under stress, and excellent predicting and closure skills.

The definition of a qualified interpreter as set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to public schools. The ADA defines a “qualified interpreter” as one “who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary” (28 C.F.R. § 35.104).

The term *educational interpreter* refers specifically to interpreters working in educational settings with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. For students who are deaf or hard of hearing, access to the general curriculum can necessitate the related service of a qualified educational interpreter. This related service may be provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) depending on whether or not the student also needs specialized instruction. The interpreter will also be necessary for such events as assemblies and field trips as they are part of the educational program. A student who communicates using sign language may need an interpreter for extra-curricular activities such as clubs and sporting events. The ADA and Section 504 provide for this service.

A *cued language transliterator* is someone who changes a message from one language into a visual code conveying all essential elements of meaning and maintaining language equivalence. Cued language is distinctly different from sign language.

Additional definitions can be found in the Glossary at the end of this document.

Best Practice for the Educational Interpreter

The educational interpreter’s primary role is as an interpreter. While engaged in interpreting, he or she should not be asked to interrupt this activity in order to perform other tasks. Educational interpreters should not take on the responsibility of the teacher for management of the class or other duties.

Competencies

Providing interpreting services requires a highly specialized set of skills, knowledge, training, and expertise that include both skill-based competencies and knowledge-based competencies.

Responsibilities

The central responsibilities of educational interpreters are:

- Interpret all spoken messages and signed messages accurately—including the subtlety and nuances that the speaker conveys—without censorship;
- Convey students' questions or replies to questions to the teacher and the class in the language level used by the student;
- Encourage teachers, staff members, peers, and students who are deaf or hard of hearing to speak directly to one another while the educational interpreter is signing what is being said;
- Adhere to the [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf \(RID\)](#) and the [Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment \(EIPA\) Codes of Professional Conduct](#);
- Acknowledge that each class has its own procedures and technical language; understand material; and interpreting the subject (e.g., health education class, school counseling services) without personal bias or emotion;
- Interpret questions on a test while ensuring that the answers are not divulged;
- Preview new class material and become familiar with it;
- Consult with the student who is deaf or hard of hearing and with members of the deaf and hard of hearing community and/or the interpreting community regarding appropriate signs for new or technical terminology in order to avoid introducing erroneous sign vocabulary;
- Translate a student's signed message into English word order to assist with the development of the student's written English skills;
- Position themselves close to the teacher in order for the student to be able to view both with ease;
- Be mindful of clothing choice to reduce eye strain of the student;
- Provide information about the dynamics of interpreting at educational conferences, IEP review meetings, and parent-teacher conferences as needed;
- Maintain the confidentiality of information regarding students such as grades, behavior, and personal information. Interpreters function as an integral part of the education team and therefore may have access to certain information that may be discussed within an education team meeting but must be kept confidential within that setting;
- Assist school staff and other individuals by providing information or referring them to other sources on deaf culture and sign language;
- Stay current on developments in the interpreting profession by maintaining memberships in professional interpreter organizations;
- Identify conflicts of interest and, in consultation with school administration, have strategies in place for dealing with conflicts should they arise; and
- Maintain knowledge of school and classroom rules.

Codes of Professional Conduct

As referenced at [RID](#) and EIPA, the tenets of the Codes of Professional Conduct are to be viewed holistically and as a guide to professional behavior. It is the obligation of every interpreter to exercise judgment, employ critical thinking, apply the benefits of practical experience, and reflect on past actions in the practice of their profession. The overarching

guiding principles in this Best Practices document represent the concepts of confidentiality, linguistic and professional competence, impartiality, professional growth and development, ethical business practices, and the rights of participants in interpreted situations to informed choice.

Preparation Time

Educational Interpreters need to have time to prepare. To make effective use of preparation time, it is best practice for educational interpreters to have advance access to copies of texts, scripts, notes, and electronic media so that they may become familiar with vocabulary and language usage. Educational interpreters need adequate time and appropriate space for preparation, which involves such tasks as pre-reading and previewing instructional materials (e.g., videos and class presentations) so that the interpreter is able to interpret the materials accurately to the students. Interpreters also need time for consultation with teachers and other members of the education team. Preparation time allows the educational interpreter to perform his or her job effectively, thereby ensuring access to the education of the student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Physical Environment

It is important for educational interpreters to assume the responsibility for ensuring a suitable physical environment for classroom interpreting as well as for interpreting in other situations. Such factors as lighting and seating as well as the appropriate distance and positioning for a comfortable and unobstructed view need particularly to be addressed. Educational interpreters also need to ensure that any modification of the physical environment is mutually agreeable to the teacher, the interpreter, and, as appropriate, the student.

An educational interpreter may be positioned in many different ways such as sitting (when appropriate) or standing in direct line with the student and teacher so that the student, by shifting his or her gaze, can see the teacher, the board or overhead screen, and the interpreter; or following, or “shadowing,” the teacher who uses the board and visual aids around the classroom for demonstration so that the student is able to see the teacher, the interpreter, and the visual aid at the same time.

Educational Interpreter’s Role as a Member of the IEP Team

As an integral part of the education team, it is recommended the interpreter be invited to the IEP meetings; the IDEA encourages, “individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate” (IDEA, Section 300.321 (a)(6)) at the discretion of the parent or the agency. When attending IEP meetings the educational interpreter needs to comment on interpreter-related issues such as communication preferences, the student’s use of interpreting services, and cross-cultural communication. It is the role of other IEP team members to address issues such as behavior and academic progress.

Because the educational interpreter is expected to participate as an active member at IEP team meetings, he or she cannot effectively provide interpreting services at such a meeting. If an IEP team meeting requires interpreting services, it is best practice that a second interpreter be secured to facilitate communication.

Sample questions appropriate for the educational interpreter to address during IEP meetings include:

- Does the student attend to the interpreter?
- How does the student sign (American Sign Language, Contact Signed English, Manually Coded English)?
- How does the student communicate with the teacher, other school personnel, and peers?

Best practice recommends the educational interpreter be invited to participate in workshops at the beginning of the school year to explain to faculty and staff the roles and responsibilities of an educational interpreter within the educational process.

Special Situations

If an interpreting situation is complex and requires intense interpreting, educational interpreters should be prepared to discuss special considerations such as arranging for a team interpreter and taking more frequent, short breaks than normally would be required.

Off-campus trips or special performances in the school will need preparation by the educational interpreter which may include obtaining scripts, establishing appropriate placements for community performances, and negotiating the physical environment.

Professional Development

The educational interpreter, under the supervision of an administrator, should develop and review annually a professional development plan that addresses the educational interpreter's professional growth and development.

Interpreter Absences

An educational interpreter must adhere to district policies on reporting to the administration and notifying the teachers in advance when he or she will be absent from school. Districts are encouraged to consult interpreters in developing a list of qualified substitute interpreters and in maintaining a substitute interpreter folder that includes, but is not limited to:

- class schedule,
- emergency information,
- placement positions,
- special assignments,
- map of the school,
- mode of communication,
- sign choices for vocabulary agreed upon by the student and educational interpreter, and
- summary sheet for substitute interpreter's feedback about the day.

Best Practices for Administrators

Effectively implementing interpreting services is a critical role of the administrator. The administrator should actively understand the role of an educational interpreter, support interpreting staff, and facilitate the effective use of interpreting services. For further guidance on facilitating educational interpreting services, administrators should examine the appendices of this document.

Hiring Educational Interpreters

For assistance in the recruitment of educational interpreters, contact may be made with interpreter training programs, interpreting service agencies, and interpreter organizations in the region. See the [OSES website](#) for contact information.

Interviewing Educational Interpreters

The interview panel should include persons who are knowledgeable about the process of interpreting in educational settings and understand the guidelines outlined regarding qualifications. As part of the interview process the candidate should be required to demonstrate expressive and receptive interpreting skills.

Applicants may be asked to provide documentation of appropriate interpreting performance skills and knowledge based competencies as evidenced by their EIPA results.

See Appendix B for a Sample Position Description including position duties and responsibilities. See Appendix C for sample interview questions.

Supervision

Schools have the responsibility for evaluating their employees. It is recommended that the supervision of educational interpreters fall within two distinct areas as most building level supervisors do not have the sign language skills to evaluate interpreter's ability to communicate language but certainly do have the ability to evaluate their functioning as a professional member of their building:

Administrative Supervision

The principal or special education administrator can be responsible for supervising the educational interpreter in the performance of his or her professional duties.

Performance Evaluation

The principal or special education administrator could call in an individual who has expertise in the provision of interpreting services. This external evaluator can be responsible for evaluating the educational interpreter's job performance in terms of signing and communicating language to the deaf or hard of hearing student. School district personnel (e.g., teachers of the deaf or hard of hearing, administrators) often do not have the capability to evaluate interpreting skills and competencies. To evaluate the interpreting aspect of the job, it is strongly recommended that the services of a credentialed interpreter with evaluation skills and experience be secured on a periodic basis (annually or biannually) to observe the educational interpreter, assess skills, and recommend professional development.

Schedule

A schedule that clearly outlines the educational interpreter's work activities, including adequate preparation time should exist. To avoid both fatigue and reduction of effectiveness, the interpreter should not be asked to interpret continuously for longer than 40 to 60 minutes. Interpreters require a five- to ten-minute break each hour. If lectures or presentations are complex and intensive in nature, or exceed one hour without a break, a team approach (using two interpreters) should be used. Prolonged interpreting without a break severely compromises the

quality of the interpreted message and introduces a health risk for interpreters in the form of repetitive strain injuries.

Professional Development

Professional development plans for educational interpreters focus on content, professional service, and interpreting methods/assessment. For information on professional development opportunities for educational interpreters, contact the [OSES](#).

Special Considerations

In accordance to district policies and procedures educational interpreters should not take on the responsibility of the teacher for management of the class or other duties. The educational interpreter's duties should be consistent with the position description.

Administrators should support educational interpreters as they make appropriate arrangements for off-school property trips. Examples of this include obtaining scripts, establishing appropriate placements for community performances, and negotiating the physical environment.

Substitute Interpreters

It is imperative that the educational interpreter is made aware of the appropriate procedure for informing the administration when he or she will be taking professional, personal, or sick leave from school. It is the responsibility of the school district or the immediate supervisor to contact substitute interpreters, consistent with the district's policies and procedures.

Administrators must ensure that provisions are in place in the event that the educational interpreter is absent. A list of previously screened substitute interpreters and/or local interpreting service providers should be available. As a reminder, when an educational interpreter is identified in the IEP, the student requires a substitute interpreter when their regular interpreter is absent or attending meetings.

Best Practices for the IEP Team

In the educational setting, the teacher, the educational interpreter, the administrator, the parents, and the student all share in the responsibility for making communication successful.

As an integral part of the education team, the educational interpreter should attend relevant team meetings—including IEP meetings, Section 504 meetings, and general teacher conference meetings—to comment on interpreting, communication preferences, and general use of the interpreter. It is imperative that the educational interpreter not discuss the student's progress or behavior in the classroom rather, the interpreter should direct questions on school performance to the appropriate school personnel (e.g., teacher, counselor, principal).

Because the educational interpreter is expected to participate in an IEP team meeting as an active team member, he or she is unable to provide interpreting services at the IEP meeting. If an IEP team meeting requires interpreting services, a second interpreter should be secured to facilitate communication.

Best Practices for Teachers Working with Educational Interpreters

Effectively implementing interpreting services is one of the critical roles of the classroom teacher. The first step is understanding the role of the educational interpreter. Primarily, the classroom teacher may need to:

- provide the educational interpreter with the opportunity to preview weekly lesson plans so that he or she becomes familiar with topics, concepts, and sign vocabulary that will be introduced to the students;
- provide the educational interpreter with advance copies of textbooks and supplementary materials (including video and audio tapes) to assist in interpreting preparation;
- obtain information from the student's case manager regarding roles and responsibilities of the educational interpreter and have them included with the substitute teacher's file;
- direct questions regarding the students' academic progress to the case manager, teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing, and/or special education teacher, not the educational interpreter;
- direct questions regarding interpreting to the educational interpreter, privately or after class;
- ensure the interpreter remains engaged in the task of interpreting and is not redirected to other classroom tasks;
- maintain responsibility for classroom management, including the student who is deaf or hard of hearing;
- notify the educational interpreter if there are questions regarding communication with the student;
- take an active role in the development of the student's IEP, which may include adding interpreting and note-taking services; and
- take an active role in the determination of the student's choice mode of communication or language.

Best Practices for Interpreting Services for Non-Students

School districts often raise questions regarding the district's responsibility for providing interpreting services to non-students related to activities, programs, and services in the district. In response to these concerns, the United States Department of Justice affirmed the district's responsibilities, relating them to compliance with the ADA:

Public school systems must comply with the ADA and Section 504 in all of their services, programs, or activities, including those that are open to parents or to the public. Examples include graduation ceremonies, parent-teacher organization meetings, plays, adult education classes, and other events open to the public. (28 C.F.R. § 35.102)

To clarify, federal law mandates that school districts provide interpreters for deaf or hard of hearing parents at school activities such as concerts, parent-teacher meetings, and graduations. Under the ADA, an individual who provides interpreting services in these situations must be "an interpreter who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary" (28 C.F.R. § 35.104).

Educational interpreters who meet the qualifications contained within this document may be able to interpret in these situations. However, if educational interpreters do not possess the requisite

skills to perform interpreting services in these settings, the school district is responsible for securing external interpreting services.

Appendix A: Roles Matrix

STUDENT	INTERPRETER	TEACHERS and ADMINISTRATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in <i>all</i> classroom activities and complete assignments as directed by the teacher • Pay attention to the interpreter and teachers during class • Be aware that he or she has the right to a qualified interpreter and the right to appeal if one is not provided • Indicate when he or she does not understand the speaker • Indicate when he or she does not understand the interpreter's signs so that the interpreter can clarify or change them • Ask questions directly of the teacher or person with whom he or she is communicating, not the interpreter • Maintain eye contact with the person or group of persons with whom he or she is communicating • Be aware that the interpreter will voice all reasonably signed communication (e.g., conversations taking place during class time) and, if the conversation is private, make the interpreter aware of that fact • Accept personal responsibility for his or her own academic and behavioral performance • Be aware that personal conversations with interpreters should not occur in the classroom while the teacher is teaching • Follow the rules of the classroom • Review communication needs with administrators, teachers, and the interpreter • Participate in IEP meetings when 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to the Codes of Professional Conduct • Accurately interpret instructional information including the subtlety and nuances that the speaker conveys • Convey students' questions or replies to questions to the teacher and the class in the language level used by the student • Encourage teachers/staff and deaf or hard of hearing students to speak directly to one another while he or she is facilitating and assisting in communication • Work in a given setting, keeping in mind that each class has its own procedures and technical language; understand the material; and interpret the subject (e.g., health education class, school counseling services) without personal bias or emotion • Preview new class material and become familiar with it • Consult with the deaf or hard of hearing student, members of the deaf and hard of hearing community, and/or members of the interpreting community regarding appropriate signs for new or technical terminology in order to avoid introducing erroneously invented sign vocabulary • Interpret questions on a test while ensuring that the answer is not divulged • Translate a student's signed message into English word order to assist the student's written English skills • Sign all spoken messages and voice all signed messages in class • Be available to provide 	<p>Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the IEP and become familiar with any accommodations or modifications needed by the student • Ensure that interpreters have access to all materials necessary for adequate preparation • Use visual strategies for communicating important information such as writing assignments and test dates on the board, utilizing maps, graphs, overhead projectors, and/or other technology • Be available on a regular basis for consultation and collaborative planning with the interpreter • Ensure, in collaboration with the interpreter, that the student is able to make effective use of interpreting services including checking for understanding during instruction directly with the student • Respect the individuality of the deaf or hard of hearing student while maintaining the same expectations for the student's behavior and performance that are appropriate for all students • Accept responsibility for classroom management of all students including any deaf or hard of hearing students • Direct questions regarding the student's academic progress to the administrator, teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, and/or resource teacher, not the interpreter • Direct questions regarding interpreting to the interpreter privately or after class

STUDENT	INTERPRETER	TEACHERS and ADMINISTRATORS
<p>appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask teachers to repeat directions if he or she does not understand them • Notify teachers and the interpreter if seating, lighting, or sound in the room is causing problems with communication for him or her • Inform teachers if he or she is experiencing difficulties with class work and/or the need for tutoring services • Notify the interpreter and teachers if he or she is unable to attend class • Collect his or her notes from the designated note taker 	<p>information about the dynamics of interpreting at educational conferences, IEP meetings, and parent-teacher conferences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist school staff and other individuals by providing information or referring them to other sources on deaf culture and sign language • Be familiar with school rules • Consider carefully his or her attire in order to reduce the eye strain of the deaf or hard of hearing student • Position him- or herself close to the teacher in order for the student to be able to view both with ease • Maintain confidentiality of information regarding students such as grades, behavior, and personal information • Stay in the role of interpreter during the interpreting process • Interpret what is spoken or signed without censorship • Identify conflicts of interest and, in consultation with school administration, have in place strategies for dealing with conflicts that might arise • Stay current on developments in the interpreting profession by maintaining memberships in professional interpreter organizations. 	<p>Administrators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for the interpreter and the student to meet prior to the beginning of the school year • Arrange for interpreter scheduling • Ensure that staff and students receive information and/or in-service training regarding the role of the interpreter, instructional strategies for working with a deaf or hard of hearing student, and integration of the student into the school community • Make available information for staff and students on deaf culture, assistive technology, activities in the deaf community where appropriate • Ensure that interpreting and note-taking services are included in the IEP when appropriate and are implemented accordingly • Support interpreter professional development opportunities • Monitor interpreting services by communicating with classroom teachers, student, interpreter, and parents as needed • Be available for conflict resolution

Appendix B: Sample Position Description

Position title: Educational Interpreter

Position description: The educational interpreter's primary function is to provide interpreting services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing, their classmates, the educational staff, and others involved in the education setting.

Position duties and responsibilities:

- provide interpreting for deaf and hard of hearing students, classmates, educational staff and others involved in the education setting
- participate in education team meetings
- provide interpreting for other activities during the regularly scheduled school day as needed (i.e. field trips, IEP meetings, etc.)
- prepare for interpreting (i.e., familiarization with the physical environment and with subject-area vocabulary and concepts)
- perform other related duties as required

Administrative supervisors: principal, special education director

Performance supervisor: individual with expertise in the provision of interpreting services

Minimum qualifications:

- [Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment \(EIPA\)](#) level 3.5, or [nationally recognized certification](#)
- successful completion of the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment: Written Assessment
- fluency in English and in American Sign Language (ASL)
- adherence to the [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](#) and the [Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment](#) Codes of Professional Conduct

Preferred qualifications:

- graduation from a recognized interpreter program (IP)
- baccalaureate degree
- [Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment \(EIPA\)](#) level 4.0+, or [nationally recognized certification](#)
- current membership in the state and/or national interpreting organizations

Appendix C: Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your training and experience as an interpreter.
2. What lead you to become an interpreter?
3. What attracts you to educational interpreting?
4. Tell me about your involvement in the Deaf community.
5. Do you see differences between interpreting in elementary, middle, and high school?
6. How do you adapt to students who are not skilled users of an interpreter whether it be from age or experience?
7. Describe how the role of an educational interpreter is different from that of a community-based interpreter.
8. Tell me how an educational interpreter supports the literacy and language development of a child.
9. Tell me about different modes of communication of deaf individuals.

Appendix D: Interpreter Credentials

Within the educational setting, tremendous value is placed on the educational background of any given employee or potential employee. While this is also true for educational interpreters, the more highly valued commodity is the possession of the required level of skill to effectively interpret. This may mean that an educational interpreter with a baccalaureate degree may not be the best candidate for an educational interpreter position unless they can demonstrate that they possess the skill level to effectively interpret. However, an educational interpreter with appropriate credentials and a postsecondary education will likely be the best candidate. Naturally, credentials, education, and years of experience must be taken into consideration when employing educational interpreters.

It is the responsibility of a district to evaluate whether or not a candidate for an educational interpreter position possesses the skill-based and knowledge-based competencies to interpret effectively in a preK–12 setting. The most effective way a district can determine whether or not an educational interpreter possesses the required skill set is through certification and/or assessment.

Skill-Based Competencies

A. [The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment](#)

The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) is an assessment tool being used by the South Carolina Educational Interpreting Center to assess the skill levels of interpreters working in a prekindergarten–12 setting. The five levels, from Beginner to Advanced are described on the EIPA website. The results are used to provide educational interpreters with feedback about their skills and to help them create a plan for professional development.

B. [Nationally Recognized Certification](#)

While the EIPA specifically assesses skill levels for interpreters working within a preK–12 setting, national certification offered by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) evaluate the skill level of interpreters in other settings.

An interpreter possessing national certification should have the requisite skills necessary to function well in a preK–12 setting.

Maintaining Certification

Holders of *any* certification, whether currently or no longer offered, must retain this credential by participation in the Certificate Maintenance Program (CMP) through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). Any interpreter who does not participate in the CMP holds revoked certification. For more information on RID national certification and the CMP, you may visit RID's Web site at <http://www.rid.org/>.

Knowledge-based Competencies

Educational interpreting is more than just knowing how to sign competently. Interpreting also requires one to be able to fluently and accurately process spoken and sign language simultaneously. It is also about being able to support the educational goals and outcomes as

defined by the child's IEP. The educational interpreter provides equal access to a language rich environment, which provides educational access for deaf and hard of hearing students, a requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The [Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment Written Test \(EIPA:WT\)](#) assesses the content knowledge essential to working with children or working in the schools by assessing an educational interpreter's knowledge of a variety of domains. This includes such domains as knowledge of language development, cognitive development, educational practices, the IEP process, basic information about hearing loss and hearing aids, Deaf culture, sign language and linguistics, and professional ethics.

Appendix E: Tips for Teachers and Administrators Working with Educational Interpreters

- Be aware the interpreter will interpret in first person, using “I” to identify the speaker, whether he or she is deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing.
- Address the deaf or hard of hearing student directly in order to establish a rapport.
- Speak at a normal rate so that the interpreter is able to provide a smooth interpretation.
- Avoid movements that distract or block the students’ view of the interpreter or yourself.
- Provide the deaf or hard of hearing student and the interpreter with information on program structure and content in advance in order not only to facilitate the student’s ability to follow the process and comprehend information but also to allow the interpreter to research vocabulary and interpret content accurately.
- Use visual aids such as blackboards, interactive whiteboards, and overhead projectors to provide additional information for deaf and hard of hearing students and interpreters.
- Do not say things to the interpreter in the presence of the deaf or hard of hearing student that you do not want interpreted.
- Make provisions for note taking for the deaf or hard of hearing student during class lectures—it is challenging for the student to watch the interpreter and take notes at the same time.
- Facilitate group discussions by identifying speakers and their repeating questions before you answer so that the deaf or hard of hearing student and the interpreter will know whose answers or comments are being discussed.
- Be aware that deaf or hard of hearing students may not notice that you have begun speaking if you and/or the interpreter are not in their line of vision.
- Be aware that if someone speaks inaudibly or more than one person speaks at the same time, the interpreter may need to intervene for clarification. The interpreter accomplishes this intervention by emphasizing that it is he or she who is requesting the clarification and repetition of the information.
- Be aware that the interpreting process requires intense concentration and stamina. Interpreters require a five- to ten-minute break each hour. If a lecture will run for over an hour without a break, a team approach (using two interpreters) should be used.

Glossary

American Sign Language (ASL). A visual-gesture language used by deaf people with a syntax and grammar that is different from the syntax and grammar of English. ASL has evolved over the last two centuries and is indigenous to the North American Deaf Community. ASL is acquired as the first language by deaf children who have deaf parents. It is important to recognize that not all forms of signing are ASL. ASL has recently been recognized by various governments as the official language of the deaf.

cued language. A visual communication system that represents spoken language by visually representing syllables with hand movements. Cued language makes visual distinctions between easily confused mouth movements.

cued language transliterator. A professional with specialized training who facilitates communication between a hearing person and a deaf or hard of hearing person who uses cued language.

deaf community. A cultural group comprised of deaf persons who share similar attitudes towards Deafness. The “culturally Deaf community” is comprised of those persons who have a hearing loss, share a common language, values and experiences, and a common way of interacting with each other, with none members of Deaf community, and with the hearing community. The wider Deaf community is comprised of individuals [both Deaf and hearing] who have positive, accepting attitudes towards Deafness which can be seen in their linguistic, social, and political behaviors.

deaf culture. The beliefs, values, patterns of behavior, language, expectations, and achievements of members of the Deaf Community that are passed on from generation to generation.

hard of hearing. Hearing loss to the extent that makes difficult, but does not preclude, the understanding of speech through the ear alone, with or without a hearing aid.

interpreter. A professional with specialized training who facilitates communication between two or more people who do not share the same language, culture, or communication method.

interpreting. The process of changing a message from one language to another, conveying all essential elements of meaning and maintaining dynamic equivalent.

nationally recognized certification. Certification offered by either the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) or the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) that evaluates the skill level of interpreters in generic settings and is used to verify that interpreters have met the minimum performance standards imposed by the particular evaluation process.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID). A national organization providing information, certification, and advocacy for interpreters.

repetitive stress injury (RSI). A collection of injuries that are the result of the repetitive performance of a physical task with inadequate recovery time and rest at appropriate intervals. At least ten inflammatory conditions are associated with RSI.

National Association of the Deaf (NAD). A national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing advocacy for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

South Carolina Association of the Deaf (SCAD). The state chapter of the National Association of the Deaf.

South Carolina Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (SCRID). An affiliate chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.