



An Act Relative to the Certification of Interpreters in Educational Settings

H417 (Rep. Cabral) S347 (Sen. Welch)

This legislation directs the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to create standards and competencies for the hiring and use of interpreters in educational settings in order to provide limited English proficient (LEP) parents and students with competent interpretation services.

School districts are already required to provide interpreter services for LEP families pursuant to state and federal law. However, many families across the Commonwealth continue to face significant language access barriers. Currently, 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. Meaningful language access is one of the greatest challenges faced by LEP families.

Implementation of the bill would be phased in, focusing initially on school districts designated as chronically underperforming, in order to enhance the ability to reach the goals of the districts' turnaround plans. Implementation in other districts would be delayed until the department determines appropriate.