

Educational Interpreters Handbook

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I. Educational Interpreter Information

1. Educational Interpreter Information

What is an Educational Interpreter?

An Educational Interpreter in the State of Missouri is a state certified, licensed professional who generally works under the direction of a teacher of the deaf, and/or the classroom teacher. The state qualified Educational Interpreter is fluent in American Sign Language and spoken English, is fluent in one or more English based sign language systems, and has specialized training or skills specific to the educational interpreting process.

The Role of the Educational Interpreter

The fundamental role of the Educational Interpreter is to be the critical language link between students who are deaf or hard of hearing and hearing teachers and peers in the classroom setting. By using an American or English Sign Language system for the deaf student and using voice for the hearing student or staff member in the interpreting process, communication can take place. As sign language professionals, Educational Interpreters are the communication and interaction connection that can help teachers and students provide the deaf student with understanding needed to meet learning and behavioral goals set by the Independence School District. In primary and elementary levels, interpreters share in promoting understanding, acceptance, encouragement, independence, and support for the deaf or hard of hearing students. Services are extended to interpret for all staff or students who wish to communicate with a student requiring an interpreter. Job descriptions for Educational Interpreters in the Independence School District are included in the "Employment" section of this handbook.

Qualifications for Educational Interpreters

All Educational Interpreters, in order to be titled as such, must be certified and licensed in the State of Missouri. Interpreters for the Independence School District must have a high school diploma or GED. It is preferred that the educational interpreter has completed a two year Interpreter Training Program (ITP), has at least 60 post secondary credits, and is an interpreter at the Intermediate Level (3), or above. In certain situations, a licensed, certified interpreter who is not yet a level three may have permission to work under the direction of the deaf education teacher, with the goal of being re-tested for attainment of level three or above certification. The interpreter must maintain certification and licensure annually through the State of Missouri.

Instruction

Although the teacher is responsible for the instructional program of all students in the classroom, including the deaf or hard of hearing student, the Educational Interpreter needs to have a basic

understanding of how students learn and appropriate instructional techniques and strategies, so that the interpreting process of instruction can be most effective and beneficial for the student. With the deaf or hard of hearing student, there will be additional strategies of instruction. The Educational Interpreter would benefit by consulting with the classroom teacher, the deaf education teacher, and other fellow interpreters in the workplace, and by attending interpreter workshops relating to the field of educational interpreting.

Performance Responsibilities With Staff

Interpreters will work with administrators, deaf education teachers, regular classroom teachers, team interpreters, and other staff members in the implementation of instructional and behavior plans for deaf and hard of hearing students. The interpreter will exercise good judgment, flexibility, and patience while attending to assignments. The interpreter will take responsibility to provide clarification to staff and students regarding an accurate understanding of the interpreting role with the deaf or hard of hearing student.

If requested, the Educational Interpreter may provide input for, and/or may attend educational team meetings to answer questions and address concerns related to a student's communication abilities and needs. Interpreters will be alert to direct parents' questions and concerns to the appropriate personnel.

The interpreter will keep all school related information strictly confidential. School related information may be shared only with other teachers and supervisors who are directly responsible for the educational program of the deaf or hard of hearing student for whom the interpreter is assigned. The educational interpreter shall not discuss a student's progress or behavior in the classroom and shall direct questions on school performance to the appropriate personnel. However, an interpreter may report serious behavior which any other school personnel would be required to report.

Team interpreters will also use discretion and practice confidentiality when discussing an assigned student or student's assignments, communication needs, or behaviors.

If the interpreter's job description includes tutoring, this should be under the direction of the classroom or deaf education teacher. The teacher should be fully informed of progress in the tutoring sessions with the student. Results of tutoring sessions are also a matter of confidentiality.

As a general rule, it is not part of the interpreter's role to supervise a classroom in the absence of the teacher, so another teacher or trained personnel should be assigned that responsibility. Unless specifically trained and employed to do so, the interpreter does not function as a substitute teacher, teacher's assistant, or paraprofessional.

Performance Responsibilities Elementary (K-5)

When interpreting in the elementary grades, an interpreter will wear many necessary "hats" while participating in the education of the young student. It is important to remember that a student's developmental and/or language level may impact the role and responsibilities of the interpreter. As

the child builds language, becomes more socially mature, becomes more independent, and learns how to use an interpreter, the role of the interpreter usually changes from a role of "helper" to the increasing role of "interpreter". The primary role of "Interpreter" or "Educational Interpreter" is how they are recognized within the educational setting.

In working with the very young deaf student, the responsibilities of an interpreter may include tutoring, redirection of behaviors, and various other roles. These responsibilities change as the child learns and matures, and the interpreter increases the interpreting role and lessens the "helper"

role (K-3). A job description for an Elementary (K-5) Educational Interpreter can be found in the "Employment" section of this handbook.

Performance Responsibilities Middle School/High School

A job description for interpreters at the middle school and high school level is included in the "Employment" section of this handbook.

Discipline

Disciplining the student is the responsibility of the classroom teacher. The interpreter will interpret and assist in redirecting, but not disciplining, the young student to follow classroom directions and rules (K-3). With older students, the interpreter will interpret for the teacher or other staff member who is administering discipline. Interpreters should not counsel students or include personal opinions while involved in an interpreting situation.

The interpreter will be involved in training the young student in how to work with an interpreter. On occasion, an interpreter will be confronted with a young deaf student who is frustrated and disrespectful. The interpreter should redirect with a reminder that mutual respect is required in school settings and should encourage the student back on task. However, if discipline is needed, the matter should be referred to the classroom teacher (K-3).

Mutual respect between the interpreter and older students is also essential. The interpreter will advise the teacher of any problems concerning unacceptable behavior that is directed toward the interpreter, so that the teacher can discipline the student accordingly.

The interpreter should inform appropriate personnel if a student confides serious problems in the home or other circumstances outside of school, or if serious emotional problems are suspected. If the interpreter sees a conversation concerning drugs or other serious matters, the interpreter will follow the policies and guidelines of the school district.

The interpreter will be accessible to the student for interpreting while they are in the Recovery Room, nurse's office, or anywhere on school property where interpreting may be necessary. The interpreter will accompany and interpret for a deaf or hard of hearing student who is being escorted by another staff member from one place to another for discipline purposes.

Professional Ethics

In order to protect the rights of students and parents, Educational Interpreters must be relied upon to practice appropriate ethical behavior. Educational Interpreters are trained in a specific Code of

Ethics for Interpreters and are bound by school policies and federal law and state laws regarding privacy and confidentiality. Educational Interpreters should demonstrate honesty, loyalty, dependability, cooperation, and a willingness to enrich their abilities. The following is a suggested code of ethics for Educational Interpreters working in the Independence School District.

- Refer concerns expressed by parents, students, or others to the supervising teacher and/or building administrator.
- Recognize that the supervising teacher and/or building administrator have the ultimate responsibility for instruction and management.
- Help to see that the best interests of the individual students are met.
- Discuss a child's progress, limitations, and/or educational program with the supervising teacher and/or building administrator in an appropriate setting.
- Use discernment when discussing your assigned student or any other student with the supervising teacher. It is suggested that discussions about students should only be conducted when the students are absent from the room.
- Discuss school problems and confidential matters with the supervising teacher and/or the appropriate building administrator.
- Do not engage in discriminatory practices based on a student's disability, race, sex, cultural background, or religion.
- Respect the dignity, privacy and individuality of all students, parents, and staff members.
- Be a positive role model.

Confidentiality

Educational Interpreters who are licensed for the State of Missouri are legally bound to protect the privacy of the clients/or students for whom they interpret. Additionally, the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require school districts to maintain confidentiality of students' records and progress.

Confidentiality can be extremely difficult to maintain because situations arise that are unexpected or appear harmless if information is shared. If any questions arise regarding what information can be shared and with whom, discuss this with your supervising teacher and/or building administrator. It is

important that Educational Interpreters discuss students only with school personnel in appropriate situations, such as staffings, conferences, and IEP meetings.

Hours for Educational Interpreters

Educational Interpreters may be hired for full or part time work. Consult your letter of appointment for the number of hours you are to work. You will have a half hour duty free break during the day. This will mean that you will be in attendance at your school for a half hour longer than your work hours. For example, if you are to work 7 hours, you will be in attendance at your school for 7 1/2 hours. Any interpreting hours performed immediately after the school day or in the evening must be approved by the principal and Director of Special Services.

Interpreters will not work on teacher professional days when students are not in attendance unless otherwise specified on the interpreter work calendar or pre-approved by their principal and the Director of Special Services. On early release days, interpreters will normally work five hours. It may happen that the interpreter will be asked to stay longer than five hours. This added time needs to be approved by the principal.

If the student is late, the interpreter will be accessible for that student until it is established that the student will be absent. The interpreter will use that time for preparation of materials to be interpreted or follow the direction of the Deaf Education teacher or supervisor in charge, and will be on call for when that student arrives. If the assigned student is absent, the interpreter who normally works with that student will contact the immediate supervisor to see if there is a need for an interpreter at another school in the district or if there is an alternative assignment.

Attendance

Regular attendance is an essential function of the job. Deaf and hard of hearing students depend on the daily language support of the interpreter. If you must be absent, contact your supervisor and principal as soon as possible, so that a substitute interpreter may be contacted to cover your responsibilities for the day.

Failure to report for duty or neglect to report absences for three (3) consecutive days will be considered by the employer as employee job abandonment.

Board of Education policy 4310 states; "When employees are absent more than ten (10) days in any semester or more than fifteen (15) days per school year, their absence is considered excessive." The Superintendent/Designee will review each incident of excessive absence and may require the employee to provide medical documentation or may consider disciplinary actions up to and including termination. Appropriate documentation may also be requested for unusual patterns of absences, or absences of three or more consecutive days.

Evaluations

To help you understand your job responsibilities and assess how well you are fulfilling those responsibilities, you will be evaluated using the performance-based evaluation included in the "Employment" section of this handbook. Although you may be evaluated at any time during the year, evaluations generally are completed in the Spring. Your building principal will discuss the evaluation with you and ask that you sign the evaluation. Please take time to study this evaluation and discuss any questions with your principal.

Salary and Benefits

Your annual salary is based on student contact time in your particular school. Educational interpreters are paid in twelve (12) monthly installments according to the scale approved by the Independence Board of Education. A copy of the current scale is located in the "Employment" section of this handbook.

Educational Interpreters should record their working hours using the district's electronic timekeeping system. The payroll secretary will review your timesheet by verifying the information recorded in the system. The building principal will approve the timesheets at the end of the pay period. Payday is on the fifth (5th) and twentieth (20th) of the month, or the preceding Friday if these days are on a weekend.

Educational Interpreters who are scheduled to work at least twenty-five (25) hours a week are paid on an "even pay" basis. This means that their annual salary is divided into twenty-four (24) equal payments, no matter how many days are worked in the month. Overtime, extra hours, or docks are adjusted on the paycheck following the month in which these events occur. If an employee exits from the district before the end of their work year, the final paycheck is adjusted to pay them for the actual days worked at the time of exit.

Additional time worked for required in-service training(s) and conferences will be paid through the Office of Special Services.

Educational Interpreters who are hired to work a minimum of twenty-five (25) hours a week may participate in the Board of Education paid health, dental and life insurance programs. For information concerning these benefits you may contact the Benefits Office (521-5300) at the Board of Education Building. For a summary of all district benefits, please refer to the "Benefits" section of this handbook.

Leave Days

All employees working a minimum of twenty-five hours a week are eligible for a part-time leave package. Interpreters working at least twenty-five (25) hours per week will receive five (5) sick leave days per year, two of which may be used as a personal leave day. Three (3) bereavement leave days will be available annually.

During the first year of employment, sick leave time shall accumulate at the rate of two (2) days per month until allowable days are accumulated. During the second and subsequent years of employment, annual allowable sick leave days are accumulated immediately upon assuming responsibilities for the school year. Sick leave days not used each year will accumulate for future use. Unused personal days will roll over as sick leave days for the coming year. Bereavement days do not accumulate.

Exceptions to the district's leave policies should be directed to your supervisor to forward to the Human Resources Office.

Releasing a Student

If a person not connected with the school seeks information about a child or permission to take the child from the room, refer that person directly to the principal. The principal will determine whether or not the child should be excused and will notify you of the decision.

Under NO circumstances should a child be released without permission of the principal.

II. Job Descriptions

2. Elementary Educational Interpreter (K-5)

Qualifications:

- High School Diploma or GED required
- State requirements for title of Educational Interpreter
- Current State of Missouri Interpreter Certification: Intermediate (level 3), or above (level 4 or 5)
- Current State of Missouri Interpreter License
- Degree in Interpreting from an accredited Interpreter Training Program preferred
- Ability to use email, or willingness to learn skill with training

Fair Labor Standards Act Status: Non-Exempt

Reports to: Building Administrator(s)

Job Goal:

- To strengthen and facilitate communication in the language most beneficial between students who are deaf or have a hearing loss and their teachers and peers in the educational environment.
- To interpret learning and behavior goals that are in the school district's curriculum so that the student who is deaf or has a hearing loss is able to benefit from these provisions.

Performance Responsibilities for Educational Interpreter:

- To work cooperatively and collaboratively with teachers and other staff members, administrators, and parents
- To perform according to State Regulations for Interpreters and to comply with the Interpreters' Code of Ethics, as well as perform within the professional guidelines of the Independence School District
- Interpret any and all classes, social and academic activities, formal or informal, in the spirit and content that is presented, in which the assigned deaf or hard of hearing student is involved during the school day
- Prepare for interpreting assignments and arrange with the appointed supervisor an appropriate time during the school day to do so
- Meet the assigned student at the designated time and location.
- Until the student learns to be responsible for hearing aids and/or FM systems, be observant if these devices are not working properly and escort the student to the appropriate personnel for any battery replacement or adjustments (k-3)
- Consult with the classroom teacher and position themselves so that lighting, location and vision is adequate for the student to see the interpreter and the teacher, as well as the material presented
- Interact positively with all students and model appropriate dress and behavior

- Work with and interpret for a deaf or hard of hearing student in a group setting with hearing students to encourage independence and interaction with peers, and to reinforce skills and language introduced by the teacher
- Accommodate the language, interpreting for the deaf student according to their language capability (k-3)
- Interpret language of learning materials and instruction from teachers in the sign language system that is best understood by the deaf or hard of hearing student, which will be determined by the educational team
- Be prepared to teach the classroom teacher and students basic gestures and survival signs for the deaf, such as line up, stop, quiet, walk, work, time for lunch, recess, math, etc., to encourage appropriate school conduct and direct communication between the deaf and the hearing
- Teach the deaf student and hearing peers about cultural differences with a deaf student, such as tapping the shoulder to get a deaf student's attention
- Direct students' questions to the teacher to encourage direct interaction between the teacher and the student. This will foster independence and promote classroom participation
- Avoid being overly helpful so the student will understand that the learning process is the responsibility of the student and not the interpreter (k-3)
- Allow the deaf student freedom to work on his/her own, make mistakes and choices, so as to learn as independently as possible
- Team with other interpreters when necessary for class assignments, assemblies, field trips, plays, etc
- If no interpreting services are needed, additional responsibilities may include: Tutoring another student who is deaf or has a hearing loss, informal sign language instructions, assisting the teacher in the classroom, and other duties as assigned

Terms of Employment:

The duration of the position is contingent upon the continued funding of the program, project, or assignment for which the appointment is made. The salary and work calendar is to be established by the Board of Education.

Evaluation:

Performance of this job will be evaluated in accordance with Board of Education policy by the immediate supervisor, utilizing the Independence School District School Support Staff Performance Based Evaluation.

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3. Middle School / High School Educational Interpreter (6-12)

Qualifications:

- High School Diploma or GED required
- State requirements for title of Educational Interpreter
- Current State of Missouri Interpreter Certification: Intermediate (level 3), or above (level 4 or 5)
- Current State of Missouri Interpreter License
- Degree in Interpreting from an accredited Interpreter Training Program preferred
- Ability to use email, or willingness to learn skill with training

Fair Labor Standards Act Status: Non-Exempt

Reports to: Building Administrator(s)

Job Goal:

- To strengthen and facilitate communication in the language most beneficial between students who are deaf or have a hearing loss and their teachers and peers in the educational environment.
- To interpret learning and behavior goals that are in the school district's curriculum so that the student who is deaf or has a hearing loss is able to benefit from these provisions.

Performance Responsibilities for Educational Interpreter:

- To work cooperatively and collaboratively with teachers and other staff members, administrators, and parents
- To perform according to State Regulations for Interpreters and to comply with the Interpreters Code of Ethics, as well as perform within the professional guidelines of the Independence School District
- Prepare for interpreting assignments, and arrange with the appointed supervisor an appropriate time during the school day to do so
- Meet their assigned student at the designated time and location
- Consult with the classroom teacher and position themselves so that lighting, location and vision is adequate for the student to see the interpreter and the teacher, as well as the material presented
- Interact positively with all students and model appropriate dress and behavior
- Work with and interpret for a deaf or hard of hearing student in a group setting with hearing students to encourage independence and interaction with peers, and to reinforce skills and language introduced by the teacher

- Interpret any and all classes, social and academic activities, formal or informal, in the spirit and content that is presented, in which the assigned deaf or hard of hearing student is involved during the school day
- Interpret language of learning materials and instruction from teachers in the sign language system that is best understood by the deaf or hard of hearing student, which will be determined by the educational team
- Direct students' questions to the teacher to encourage direct interaction between the teacher and the student. This will foster independence and promote classroom participation
- Allow the deaf student freedom to work on his/her own, make mistakes and choices, so as to learn as independently as possible
- Team with other interpreters when necessary for class assignments, assemblies, field trips, plays, etc
- If no interpreting services are needed, additional responsibilities may include: Tutoring another student who is deaf or has a hearing loss, informal sign language instructions, assisting the teacher in the classroom, and other duties as assigned

Terms of Employment:

The duration of the position is contingent upon the continued funding of the program, project, or assignment for which the appointment is made. The salary and work calendar is to be established by the Board of Education.

Evaluation:

Performance of this job will be evaluated in accordance with Board of Education policy by the immediate supervisor, utilizing the *Independence School District School Support Staff Performance Based Evaluation*.

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III. Salary Scales

4. Educational Interpreters Salary Scales

To view the 2020-2021 Educational Interpreter Salary Scales, please visit: https://www.isdschools.org/hr/employee_handbook/2020-2021/salary_schedules/index.html#interpreters

IV. Performance Based Evaluations

5. Educational Interpreter Performance Based Evaluations

To view the Performance Based Evaluations for Educational Interpreter Staff, please contact your supervisor.