

POLICY

SOMERSET COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

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| Date Submitted: July 23, 2003 Date Reviewed: September 19, 2006 March 17, 2009 | Number: 700-52 |
| Subject: Duties/ Responsibilities of Educational Interpreters | Date Approved: August 19, 2003 October 17, 2006 June 16, 2009 Date Revised: October 17, 2006 March 17, 2009 Effective Date: September 3, 2003 October 17, 2006 June 16, 2009 |

1. PURPOSE

- A. To establish procedures/guidelines as to the duties/responsibilities of the Educational Interpreters of Somerset County Schools.
- B. To assist Somerset County in providing appropriate interpreting services to the children who require such services.

2. PROCEDURE

A. **Philosophy**

- (1) The Board of Education of Somerset County has the responsibility for providing the deaf/hard-of-hearing students with the best learning situation for all involved.
- (2) A clearly defined set of guidelines as to the duties/responsibilities of an interpreter will be beneficial to all educational interpreters employed by Somerset County as well as the teachers/staff who work with the interpreters.
- (3) All educational interpreters employed by Somerset will be expected to follow the duties/responsibilities herein.

B. Roles/Responsibilities – These roles and responsibilities of the educational interpreter were written to assure the interpreters in Somerset County will function as an integral part of the educational team which serves the students who are deaf/hard-of-hearing. Having specific roles and responsibilities will allow the interpreters to provide quality interpreting and/or transliterating in the educational environment.

(1) **Interpreters**

- a) The main responsibility of the educational interpreter is to facilitate communication between the deaf student, hearing peers, teachers and other staff, parents etc. The interpreter should accurately interpret/transliterate

the thought and intent in the student's communication mode which is determined by the IEP team.

- b) The interpreter should direct all comments questions to the teacher and the teacher's comments to the student.
- c) The interpreter should use appropriate techniques such as rephrasing to add clarity to the message and interpret all auditory information in the environment.
- d) Depending on the training/expertise of the individual interpreter, additional duties may be assigned at the time of hiring, such as: in-service for the staff about how to work with deaf students and interpreters, teaching sign language, and tutoring the deaf/hard-of-hearing student under the direction of the classroom teacher.

(2) School System Personnel

- a) The school system will use an interview process to determine which applicant is the best match for the student's needs. They may use a team comprised of an educational interpreter, a deaf adult, and/or a certified teacher of the deaf/hard-of-hearing which will assess the receptive and expressive skills of the applicant during the interview.
- b) Interpreters will be paid as a separate class of employee and should be paid commensurate to education, experience, and certification.
- c) The Board of Education will require all applicants applying for an interpreting position in Somerset County to take the MQAS(Maryland Quality Assurance Screening) given by the Maryland State Board of Education. The applicants will be asked to submit a copy of their score for both the written assessment and the performance assessment. If an applicant is hired, the scores will be used to match the applicant with the needs of the deaf/hard-of-hearing students.

(3) Teachers/Staff working with deaf/hard-of-hearing students

- a) The teachers/staff should direct any questions and/or responses to the deaf/hard-of-hearing student.
- b) Speak clearly and loudly enough for the interpreter to understand as to provide an accurate interpretation to the student.

C. Professional Conduct

The educational interpreters of Somerset County are expected to adhere to the following:

- (1) Function in a professional manner and follow ethical standards as applicable to educational interpreting.

- (2) Refer all questions from parents etc. about the student's progress, health, safety, or welfare to the appropriate school personnel.
- (3) Encourage independence in students and avoid the development of inappropriate dependence in the interpreter/student relationship.
- (4) Comply with all school policies, procedures and standards.
- (5) Maintain and continue professional development.

D. Discipline of students

- (1) Interpreters are generally NOT involved with disciplinary action involving a child's misbehavior, including the d/hh student's. Being involved with such situations confuses the perception of roles, thus compromising the student/teacher relationship as well as the interpreter/student relationship.
- (2) If a student is directing misbehavior directly towards the interpreter, it is then appropriate for the interpreter to respond.
- (3) It will be helpful for the teacher and interpreter to work together on developing a plan as to how to handle situations in the classroom involving discipline.
- (4) The interpreter may sometimes need to interpret a situation which requires disciplinary action. It is important the student is clear as to the various roles of the professionals involved. The person implementing the punishment needs to be aware and understand the deaf student may direct their feelings of anger towards the interpreter (thinking the interpreter is implementing the punishment).

E. Absence of deaf/hard-of-hearing students – The following are the procedures the educational interpreter will follow in a situation where the d/hh student is absent on a given day.

- (1) Report to a school administrator and inform them of the student's absence.
- (2) Make preparations for upcoming lessons (i.e., copying vocabulary words, reviewing upcoming lessons with the teacher, becoming familiar with any new stories, videos that will be used).
- (3) Prepare for sign language class (if applicable).
With permission of principal and/or supervisor, visit another school to team interpret.
- (4) Team Interpreting – The concept of team interpreting is essential since most interpreters are at a school by themselves with no other interpreter from which to feed. Just as teachers need to use other teachers as a resource, interpreters can greatly benefit from the input of another interpreter.
 - a) When an interpreter goes to another school to team, he/she should:
Watch/observe the regular interpreter in the classroom and take turns interpreting to help prevent overuse syndrome.
 - b) The interpreters should be offering each other suggestions and helpful interpreting ideas at the end of the school day.

F. Absence of Interpreter

- (1) Inform school administration about the absence.
- (2) Contact the Supervisor of Special Education. If the interpreter is unable to speak directly with the supervisor, he/she should contact the interpreter facilitator for help with finding a substitute.
- (3) When an interpreter will be absent from school on a given day:
 - a) The school should be contacted as soon as he/she knows of the absence.
 - b) The school will use a substitute list (that will be provided) to contact a substitute interpreter for the deaf student.
- (4) Each interpreter should fill out the Substitute Guideline Document and place it in a folder with other important information about the interpreting assignment.
- (5) Each folder should be kept in a place that is easily accessible to the substitute.
- (6) The folder should contain: Substitute Guideline document, seating chart, sign names used in the class for the teacher and close hearing peers, any other important medical issues or information the substitute should need.
- (7) When an interpreter will be out for an extended period of time due to illness, maternity leave, etc...he/she will need to inform the Supervisor of Special Education in order for the county to hire a long term substitute. The Supervisor of Special Education along with the interpreter facilitator will take care of hiring a substitute interpreter until the regular interpreter is able to come back to work.