



LANE EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

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www.lesd.k12.or.us

EQUITY

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March 12, 2025

Chair Senator Deb Patterson, Vice Chair Senator Cedric Hayden, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Lane Education Service District (Lane ESD) to express our strong support for Senate Bill 950. While we recognize that SB 950 offers a range of benefits in streamlining the interpreter licensure process, our primary focus is on the creation of a *Sign Language Interpreter-in-Training License*. This license would help us continue developing a robust and skilled workforce for educational interpreters.

At Lane ESD, we take great pride in our comprehensive training, mentorship, and feedback programs. We believe that investing in the professional growth of early-career interpreters is essential for strengthening our entire program. By pairing interpreters with mentorship and feedback partners, we foster a professional community of support that encourages leadership and promotes retention. As a result, we've seen significant success in developing our workforce—our average Educational Interpreter Proficiency Assessment (EIPA) score across our 30 interpreters is 4.0. This is a testament to the high quality of service we provide to students.

However, without structured "hands-up" learning opportunities, graduates of Interpreter Training Programs often enter the field without the necessary skills to achieve a qualifying EIPA score. Currently, the process for receiving EIPA results can take up to 10 months. During this waiting period, interpreters are unable to work in their field, despite having earned advanced degrees. Many are forced to move out of state or experience a decline in their skills. This delay in licensure not only impacts interpreters' professional development but also exacerbates staffing shortages in our schools.



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If we experience interpreter resignations, we will face challenges in recruiting qualified staff, which could undermine our ability to provide critical services to Oregon's Deaf students. The current process is flawed, and SB 950 offers a timely and effective solution to address these issues.

We urge you to consider the positive impact that Senate Bill 950 will have on our ability to recruit, mentor, and develop a skilled workforce of Sign Language Interpreters in Oregon. Your support of this bill would directly benefit Deaf students across the state by ensuring a steady pipeline of qualified interpreters.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Dr. Annie Galaxy

Annie Galaxy, PhD
Associate Director of Special Education
Lane Education Service District