

Information for the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities
Chair Senator Barbara Cegavske
Meeting on January 18, 2006, in Las Vegas

To Accompany Testimony from Kris Christiansen and Jacque Matteoni
Special Education & Related Services
Washoe County School District

What steps has the Washoe County School District (WCSD) taken to comply with NRS 656A?

WCSD has taken the following steps to come into compliance with NRS 656A by providing the following training and support:

- a. District staff have worked extensively with In Group Ed, an organization solely formed for the purpose of training and testing interpreters on the EIPA exam in Northern Nevada. Marci Wilson, current teacher in Carson City School District, spearheaded these trainings while she was an employee of WCSD.
- b. District staff have worked with Kevin Williams from Boys Town to provide formal training and testing of interpreters. These trainings were open to all interpreters in Northern Nevada.
- c. District staff have worked with Karen Watson, Director of Special Education Lyon County, to provide the names of current interpreters in our district so that they could participate in a grant funded training program. Five of the District's current interpreters took advantage of this. (This program has since lost its funding.)
- d. The District has provided funding for interpreters to take formal classes through Western Nevada Community College (WNCC), Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), and the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR).
- e. The District has provided funding for interpreters to attend Signing Exact English (SEE) workshops held in Northern Nevada and those held out of state.
- f. The District's department for Special Education & Related Services maintains on-going data about current interpreters and their training (both formal and informal) provided by the department.

The District re-classified the level of interpreters through the Human Resources Department. As a result, all current interpreters were moved to the status of full-time employees and a scale was established to reflect skill development measured by completion of higher education programs in the area of deaf education and/or Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) scores.

EXHIBIT D Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities
Document consists of 3 pages.

☒ Entire document provided.

☐ Due to size limitations, pages _____ provided.

A copy of the complete document is available through the Research Library
(775/684-6827 or e-mail library@lcb.state.nv.us).

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What is the comparison of previous pay rates to those used currently within WCSD for interpreters?

During the period 2001-2004, the District classified interpreters at Level 15. Depending on years with the District, pay at this Level would range from approximately \$10.53/hr- \$13.11/hr.

In the Fall 2004, WCSD reclassified its current interpreters using a system similar to that in Clark County School District to establish new qualifications. Currently, there are three different classifications, based upon Hearing Impaired position qualifications:

1. The first is for those classified employees who have some signing skills but who have not been tested or have not scored high enough on the EIPA. (Four interpreters are in this category). These employees remained at the Level 15 with an hourly rate of pay of approximately \$ 11.10- \$13.81.
2. The second is for the employee who has been tested and has scored in the range of 2.0-3.9 on the EIPA or who have completed a two-year Associate Degree program in Deaf Studies or who have met the current Registry for Interpreters of the Deaf qualifications as established by the Nevada Administrative Code. (Eight interpreters are in this category.) These employees are at a Level 24 with an hourly rate of pay of approximately \$17.29-\$21.52.
3. The third is for the employee who has been tested on the EIPA and has scored at a 4.0 or higher or who has met the requirement per the Registry for Interpreters of the Deaf. This interpreter would be classified at a Level 29. (Currently, there are no interpreters in this category. These employees would make approximately \$22.08-\$27.59 per hour.

How does the rate of pay for a certified interpreter compare with that of a beginning teacher in the District?

The comparison provided reflects District-paid PERS and a full medical benefit package for each employee.

Certified Interpreter (Level 29 Classified) working 40 hours per week 185 days per year.... \$35,147

Beginning Teacher hired 16+ graduate level classes accrued during student teaching and working full-time 185 for days per year...\$29,373.

In other words, an interpreter without a college degree but who has passed the EIPA at the required level will be paid \$5,774.00 more per year than the licensed individual who has been hired by the District as the student's primary educator.

The educator has also completed a full college or university degree program and has obtained and certification through the Nevada Department of Education.

What types of Hearing Impaired programs does the WCSD offer?

As of the December 1, 2005, official count provided to the Nevada Department of Education, WCSD has 119 students enrolled under the category of Hearing Impairment (AH), and employees 9 teachers for the hearing impaired. Our District offers an aural/oral program, a total communication program, and an itinerant program for its hearing impaired students. Three of our teachers teach primarily in the aural/oral programs. The students in these programs receive intense auditory training from both the teacher of the hearing impaired and from a speech and language specialist. Two of the teachers in our total communication programs are hearing impaired themselves. These employees have proved to be very beneficial to the classified employees that work with them as well as providing positive role models for the students.

One of the total communication programs had created a relationship with Laura Davidton, a local deaf adult, who came in weekly to provide support to staff and students. Ms. Davidton has since been hired as an aide and works with hearing impaired students at Hidden Valley Elementary School.

One of our teachers in the total communication programs has taken and passed the EIPA at a level 4, so she is also qualified as an interpreter. Two of our teachers serve students on an itinerant bases, going from school to school, to ensure that the needs of hearing impaired students are being met.

All of our staff stay actively involved in the deaf community, receive information on activities and trainings held within the deaf community, and pass this information on to the students and families within our hearing impaired programs.

What type of data supports the conclusion that hearing impaired students in the District are well served? What about the graduation rates of AH students?

The Class of 2004 included 6 seniors who qualified under the eligibility category of AH. All 6 graduated with diplomas, 3 with regular diplomas and 3 with adjusted diplomas. The 3 students who graduated with adjusted diplomas had multiple handicapping conditions along with their hearing impairment. It is important to look at the whole student and not just the hearing impairment when determining an individual's ability. All of these students had transitional services provided through the IEP process and possess the skills necessary to be viable members of society.