

2024

LANGUAGE ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Report to the Legislature

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Executive Summary

The Language Access Advisory Committee (Committee) was established in 2022 by [HB 1153](#) and codified in [RCW 28A.18.070](#) to continue the work of the 2020 and 2021 [Language Access Workgroups](#) by guiding, monitoring, and making recommendations on the following topics:

- a) The effectiveness of language access policies, procedures, and programs.
- b) Family and community engagement, with a focus on multicultural families, families whose students have multiple barriers to student achievement, and families least engaged with their schools.
- c) The definition of "qualified interpreter."
- d) Supply of and demand for interpreters.
- e) Training for interpreters.
- f) Credentialing requirements for interpreters, including a code of professional conduct.
- g) Grants to cover nonstate controlled interpreter credentialing costs.
- h) Language access and language access service data collection and analysis.
- i) Evidence-based practices regarding language access, including best practice for using state and federal funding to provide language access services.

The table below lists the recommendations made by the Committee in the 2024 report.

Table 1. Recommendations

Recommendation	Audience		
	OSPI	PESB	Schools/Districts
Recommendation 1a: The Language Access Advisory Committee recommends that the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) collect from school districts the feedback provided by participants of interpreted meetings on the effectiveness of the interpretation and the provision of language access services (as required by RCW 28A.183.050) for the purpose of improving the quality of interpretation and the provision of language access services.	✓		✓
Recommendation 1b: The Language Access Advisory Committee recommends that Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) update the interpreted interaction feedback form template to include a question that indicates that services were provided in the correct language.	✓		

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Recommendation	Audience		
	OSPI	PESB	Schools/Districts
<p>Recommendation 2a: The Language Access Advisory Committee recommends that school staff receive training in providing language access services with the purpose of an inclusive and strengths-based approach to family engagement.</p>			✓
<p>Recommendation 2b: The Language Access Advisory Committee recommends that Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) develop a process of data collection, analysis and reporting on the family engagement opportunities provided by school districts including any language access services provided.</p>	✓		
<p>Recommendation 3: The Language Access Advisory Committee recommends that Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) establish a tiered system of OSPI interpreter credentials as described by the Language Access Advisory Committee 2024 Report. These credentials are to be issued by Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) upon verification of interpreter qualifications and required by Local Education Agencies (LEAs) as proof of qualification to interpret at the assigned interaction level.</p>	✓	✓	✓



Background

The Language Access Advisory Committee (Committee) was established by [HB 1153 \(2022\)](#) and codified in [RCW 28A.183.070](#). The Committee is charged with, at a minimum, guiding, monitoring, and making recommendations on nine topics:

- a) The effectiveness of language access policies, procedures, and programs.
- b) Family and community engagement, with a focus on multicultural families, families whose students have multiple barriers to student achievement, and families least engaged with their schools.
- c) The definition of "qualified interpreter."
- d) Supply of and demand for interpreters.
- e) Training for interpreters.
- f) Credentialing requirements for interpreters, including a code of professional conduct.
- g) Grants to cover nonstate controlled interpreter credentialing costs.
- h) Language access and language access service data collection and analysis.
- i) Evidence-based practices regarding language access, including best practice for using state and federal funding to provide language access services.

"By November 1, 2024, and periodically thereafter, the advisory committee must submit, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, a report on implementation of this chapter to the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the Washington professional educator standards board, the governor, and the appropriate committees of the legislature."¹

Committee Meetings

The whole Committee meets on the first Wednesday of the month. Three subject specific subcommittees are also convened either during the monthly meeting or on additional dates as needed. Subcommittees review research and draft recommendations on specific topics for presentation to the full committee. Final decisions were made by the whole committee in accordance with the agreed upon decision making protocol.

Subcommittees membership is as follows:

¹ Washington State Legislature. (2022). RCW 28A.183.070: Advisory committee. Retrieved from <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.183.070>



Figure 1: 2024 Language Access Advisory Subcommittee Members

Family & Community Engagement	Signed Language Interpreting	Spoken Language Interpreting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alfonso López• Angela Jovel• Emani Donaldson• Holly Bocchi• Liliana Villanueva• Lin Crowley• Minh Nguyen• Mohammed Akmoosh• Moses Perez• Winnie Lee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Becky Engel• Charlene Williams• Erin Sullivan• Heather White• Kimberley Scott-Olson• Matt Dressen• Melissa Klindtworth• Taralynn Petrites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Angelica Alvarez• Fanny Cordero• Helen Eby• Joana Ramos• Karina Vanderbilt• Michael Nguyen• Milena Calderari Waldron• Nasue Nishida• Rebecca Pinzon• Tami Lentz

Decision Making Process

The committee used a hybrid-consensus decision making process. This means that the group worked to reach full consensus where possible, using polls to gauge agreement. Recommendations brought forward by subcommittees on the assigned topics were reviewed and approved by the full committee. Therefore, the recommendations presented in this report represent the position of the committee as a whole, not that of individual members or a majority opinion.

Committee Membership

The diverse membership of the Committee includes representation from across the spectrum of stakeholders, from language access service users to providers and system managers. Required committee membership roles are outlined in [RCW 28A.183.070](#) to include representatives from:

- Spoken and sign language services users.
- Community organizations that provide direct services to non-English speaking families.
- Interpreters for students' families.
- Interpreter preparation programs.
- Advocacy organizations.
- Schools and school districts.

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Table 2. Currently Serving Language Access Advisory Committee Members

Member Name, Title, Organization	Community Representing (according to RCW 28A.183.070)
Mohammed Akmoosh, Freelance Interpreter, English<> Arabic	Interpreters for students' families
Angelica Alvarez, Director, Student & Family Centered Improvement Initiatives, Puget Sound Educational Service District ESD 121	Schools and school districts
Holly Bocchi, Family & Community Partnership Coordinator, Clover Park School District	Schools and school districts
Milena Calderari Waldron, Certified Interpreter Spanish <> English, 1671 Interpreters United	Advocacy organizations
Fanny Cordero, Certified Interpreter – Translator, Spanish <> English<> French	Interpreters for students' families
Lin Crowley, SPS Co-Chair/Program Director, Asian Pacific Islanders Coalition	Advocacy organizations
Matt Dressen, Preparation and Credentialing Policy and Grant Specialist, Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB)	Non-voting
Helen Eby, Certified Interpreter – Translator, Spanish <> English	Interpreters for students' families
Becky Engel, Professor American Sign Language, Clark Community College	Interpreter preparation
Angela Jovel, Community Leaders Advocate	Language services user
Winnie Lee, Community Leaders Advocate	Language services user

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Member Name, Title, Organization	Community Representing (according to RCW 28A.183.070)
Tami Lentz, Certified Interpreter Spanish <> English	Interpreters for students' families
Alfonso López, Director of Hispanic/Latino Relations, Wenatchee School District	School and school districts
Minh Nguyen, Family Advocacy Program Coordinator, Open Doors for Multicultural Families	Community organizations that provide direct services to non-English speaking families
Michael Nguyen, Program Manager, Educator Credentialing, Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB)	Non-voting
Nasue Nishida, Lobbyist – Government Relations, Washington Education Association (WEA)	Advocacy organizations
Taralynn Petrites, American Sign Language Program Coordinator, Central Washington University	Interpreter preparation
Rebecca Pinzon, Language Access Coordinator, Highline School District	Schools and school districts
Joana Ramos, Co-Chair – WASCLA Board of Directors, Washington State Coalition for Language Access (WASCLA)	Advocacy organizations
Kimberley Scott-Olson, Teacher of the Deaf and Language Access Advocate	Interpreters for students' families
Erin Sullivan, Outreach Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth	Language services users

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Member Name, Title, Organization	Community Representing (according to <u>RCW 28A.183.070</u>)
Karina Vanderbilt, Director of Multilingual Services, Puget Sound Educational Service District ESD 121	Schools and school districts
Liliana Villanueva, Community Leaders Advocate	Language services user
Heather White, Interpreting Department Supervisor, Washington School for the Deaf, Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth	Interpreters for students' families
Charlene Williams, Mediated Education Liaison, Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth	Interpreter preparation

Table 3. Alternate Members 2023–24

Member Name, Title, Organization	Community Representing (according to <u>RCW 28A.183.070</u>)
Emani Donaldson, Advocacy and Civic Engagement Program Manager, Open Doors for Multicultural Families	Community organizations that provide direct services to non-English speaking families
Melissa Klindtworth, Educational Interpreter Mentor Coordinator, Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth	Interpreter preparation
Moses Perez, Director of Advocacy & Civic Engagement, Open Doors for Multicultural Families	Community organizations that provide direct services to non-English speaking families
Jesus Torres, Washington State Coalition for Language Access (WASCLA)	Advocacy organizations



Table 4. Past Members 2023–24

Member Name, Title, Organization	Community Representing (according to RCW 28A.183.070)
Stacey Brown-Sommers, Washington State Coalition for Language Access (WASCLA)	Advocacy organizations (Alternate)
Jen Chong Jewell, WASCLA Board of Directors, Washington State Coalition for Language Access (WASCLA)	Advocacy organizations
Monique Dugaw, Executive Director, Communications & Public Engagement, Educational Service District 112	Schools and school districts
Emily Fung, Advocacy & Civic Engagement Lead, Open Doors for Multicultural Families	Community organizations that provide direct services to non-English speaking families
ZZ Newman, Translations and Interpreter Services, Highline School District	Schools and school districts
Lolita O'Donnell, Director of Family & Community Partnerships, Highline School District	Schools and school districts

Committee Staff

As required by [RCW 28A.183.070](#), the Committee is staffed by the language access technical assistance program at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) which in 2023–2024 included (alphabetical):

- Leonard Alvarez, Language Access Program Supervisor, Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, OSPI (former)
- Maria Flores, Executive Director, Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, OSPI
- Veronica Gallardo, Assistant Superintendent, Office of System and School Improvement, OSPI (former)
- Michele Lovell, Language Access Program Supervisor, Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, OSPI

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- Lindsey Maehlum, Associate Director of Secondary Education Initiatives, Secondary Education & Pathway Preparation, OSPI
- Heather Rees, Research and Policy Development Program Manager, Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, OSPI



Glossary of Key Terms

Certificates are typically awarded after the completion of a specific course or training program.²

Certification is a formal process wherein an independent organization assesses and verifies skills (such as transfer skills) and knowledge (such as language proficiency).³ In Washington, “certificated” educators hold a certification issued by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Credential is a broad term that includes both certificates and certification and indicates some level of qualification.

Family Engagement establishes two-way communication built on a foundation of social justice practice that encourages a welcoming environment while: creating trust, recognizing and celebrating differences and culture, individualizing access, building relationships, supporting advocacy and education of rights, and engaging families and communities as partners in the education of children.

Interpretation is the process of first fully understanding, analyzing and processing a spoken or signed message and then faithfully rendering it into another spoken or signed language. (American Society for Testing Materials International, F2089 – 24, Standard Practice for Spoken and Sign Language Interpreting, 2025)

Language Access includes plans, policies, procedures and services meant to establish meaningful, two-way communication between the district and school and families and communities with limited English proficiency (LEP), who are Deaf, blind or need other communication assistance, and promote access for those individuals to the programs, services, and activities of the district and school.

Language Services Users are the individuals who utilize language access services such as interpretation and translation to communicate with other individuals or groups. The individuals on both sides of the conversation are language service users, not only the individuals who do not speak or write English, or other primary language of the location.

Other modes of communication include braille, recorded audio and video, and any other language assistance outside of translation and spoken or signed language interpretation.

² For more information see Linguist Education Online. (n.d.). *Certificate vs. certification for interpreters: What’s the difference? (Part 1)*. <https://linguisteducationonline.com/certificate-vs-certification-for-interpreters-whats-the-difference-part-1/>

³ Ibid.



Sight Translation is the oral rendition of text written in one language into another language and is usually done in the moment. (National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (2009). [Translation guidelines for interpreters](#))

Simultaneous Interpretation is the process of converting a speaker or signer's message into another language while the speaker or signer continues to speak or sign. (National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (2008). [The terminology of health care interpreting: A glossary of terms](#))

Strengths-based is a term used in the fields of psychology, social work, education and leadership, to describe an approach which focuses on identifying and leveraging the positive attributes, skills, and resources of individuals or groups, rather than concentrating on their weaknesses or deficits.

Translation is the process comprising the creation of a written target text, based on a source text, in such a way that the content and in many cases, the form of the two texts, can be considered equivalent. ([Language Access Workgroup 2020 Report](#))



Introduction

Within the scope of the Language Access Advisory Committee's (Committee) charge and this report, "language access" includes plans, policies, procedures, and services meant to establish meaningful, two-way communication between the district and school and families with limited English proficiency (LEP), who are Deaf, blind or need other communication assistance, and promote access to the programs, services, and activities of the district and school. It does not include English Language Learner (ELL) supports, dual-language programs, bilingual initiatives and other services or efforts targeted to students.

The legal right to language access services is established in both state and federal law. In 1974, the *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court case⁴ concluded that the Civil Rights Act of 1964⁵ requires that LEP persons must be ensured effective participation in the same benefits and services as English speakers. Additionally, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990⁶ requires that schools take appropriate steps to ensure that communication with students, parents, and members of the public with disabilities is as effective as communication with others. In Washington state, these rights are affirmed by non-discrimination laws that apply to public schools, including the Washington Equal Education Opportunity Law, [Chapter 28A.642 RCW](#), and the Washington Law Against Discrimination, [Chapter 49.60 RCW](#).

To operationalize these rights, Washington State has developed interpreter credentialing programs for court, medical and social service settings, established the [Office of Equity](#) to provide guidance to state agencies, and in 2022 passed and funded [HB 1153 – Addressing language access in public schools](#). Codified as [Chapter 28A.183 RCW](#), the law created the Language Access Technical Assistance program at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, set requirements for reporting and program implementation, and established this Committee to serve in perpetuity to guide and monitor the implementation of a program for language access for students families in Washington public schools.

The Committee presents here its 2024 report including recommendation on the five topics covered in detail this year (lettering correlates to charge in RCW 28A.183.070):

- (a) The effectiveness of language access policies, procedures, and programs.
- (b) Family and community engagement.
- (c) The definition of "qualified interpreter."
- (e) Training for interpreters.
- (f) Credentialing requirements and code of professional conduct.

⁴ Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (1974).

⁵ Civil Rights Act, 42 USCS § 2000e (1964).

⁶ Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131-12165 (1990).



The following recommendations on these topics are presented to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board, the Governor, and the appropriate committees of the Legislature with the goal of moving forward the work of providing equal access to public education for all students and families in Washington.

Recommendations

Topic: (a) The effectiveness of language access policies, procedures, and programs

Introduction

Language access for families and communities is an essential right which enables family and community engagement, establishes trust and builds community, and embraces diversity, benefits which impact all of society. Civil rights laws that ban discrimination on the basis of disability and national origin have been in effect for decades⁷, however the experiences of committee members demonstrates that these rights are not always respected and upheld.

The passage of [HB 1153 \(2022\)](#) established the requirement for all school districts to adopt a language access policy and procedures, as well as implement a language access program for culturally responsive, systemic family engagement.⁸ In monitoring the effectiveness of these policies, procedures, and programs, the Language Access Advisory Committee (Committee) has found that additional feedback is needed to ensure that the experiences of families are not only heard but that their input is also utilized to inform meaningful actions steps to solve problems.

Recommendation 1a: The Language Access Advisory Committee recommends that the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction collect from school districts and report on the feedback provided by participants of interpreted meetings on the effectiveness of the interpretation and the provision of language access services (district collection required by RCW 28A.183.050) for the purpose of improving the quality of interpretation and the provision of language access services.

While [RCW 28A.183.050](#) now requires that school districts provide “an opportunity for participants in each interpreted meeting to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the interpretation and the provision of language access services”⁹ this information is not reported

⁷ Civil Rights Act, 42 USCS § 2000e (1964); Washington Law Against Discrimination, [Chapter 49.60 RCW](#); Washington Equal Education Opportunity Law, [Chapter 28A.642 RCW](#)

⁸ Washington State Legislature. (2022). *RCW 28A.183.040: Liaison—Policy and procedures.* <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.183.040>

⁹ Washington State Legislature. (2022). *RCW 28A.183.050: Service information collection—Feedback.* <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.183.050>



up to the state-level. State reporting of feedback on the effectiveness of language access services would increase accountability, inform targeted supports for districts, and identify areas for improvement. Limiting this information to the local level limits the power of family voice.

Recommendation 1b: The Language Access Advisory Committee recommends that the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction update the interpreted interaction feedback form template to include a question that indicates that services were provided in the correct language.

Examples:

- A. Was the interpreter proficient in English and the language you prefer?
- B. Was the interpretation provided in the language in which you prefer to communicate?

Review of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction’s current language access feedback form template by the Committee concluded that additional questions were necessary to determine that interpretation was provided in the preferred language of the family. Because there are currently no requirements in place for interpreter testing and certification, meeting participants are unable to verify interpreter competencies, making feedback essential to ensuring quality services. The Committee notes that when evaluating effectiveness, it is important to remember that language access services are provided for the benefit of everyone in the interaction, not only the individuals who use a language other than English. Effective policies, procedures, and programs result in successful two-way communication for everyone.

Topic: (b) Family and community engagement

Introduction

The goal of language access should always be to create culturally responsive, systemic family engagement. In order for parents and families to be able to engage with schools as partners in their student’s education, they need access to open and efficient communication with school and district staff, teachers and administrators. Engaged parents and guardians serve as “supporters of learning, encouragers of grit and determination, models of lifelong learning, and advocates of proper programming and placements for their child.”¹⁰

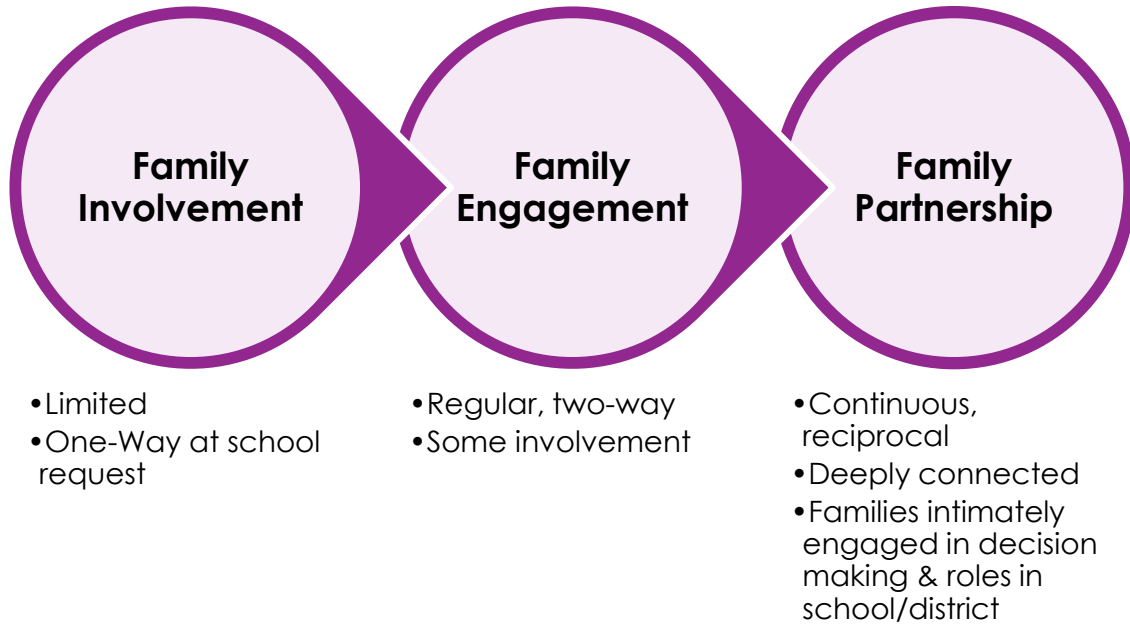
A program for language access will only be as effective as the family engagement efforts on which it is based. If a meeting is inaccessible due to timing, location, or modality, providing language access services will not overcome those issues. On a scale from family involvement to

¹⁰ Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). *Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family–school partnerships*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://sedl.org/pubs/framework/FE-Cap-Building.pdf>



family partnership (see Figure 2), language access efforts should be considered an essential part of creating a family-school partnership.

Figure 2. Family Engagement Spectrum¹¹



The Committee has emphasized that schools and districts must intentionally create opportunities for families to feel valued. These opportunities need to be inclusive and rooted in a strengths-based approach to family engagement. Family engagement opportunities can be improved by increasing capacity through additional training for school and district staff and creating accountability through reporting.

Recommendation 2a: The Language Access Advisory Committee recommends that school staff receive training in providing language access services with the purpose of an inclusive and strengths-based approach to family engagement.

The current Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction online modules for interpreting in education settings outside the classroom address the responsibility of the interpreter to provide culturally competent and ethical interpretation. School and district staff also need training in how to work with interpreters and facilitate interpreted meetings in an inclusive and strengths-based way that empowers families to participate as equals.

¹¹ Adapted from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2024, July). *Parent advisory council guide (English)*. <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2024-08/parent-advisory-council-guide-english-1.pdf>



Recommendation 2b. *The Language Access Advisory recommends that the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction develop a process of data collection, analysis, and reporting on the family engagement opportunities provided by school districts including any language access services provided.*

This process should consider and incorporate any existing family engagement reporting requirements for state and federal programs. A comprehensive program for culturally responsive, systemic family engagement should go beyond opportunities that are provided to specific populations through targeted funds, to include strategies that engage with ALL families.

Topic: (f) Credentialing requirements and code of professional conduct

Introduction

In Washington State, there is no consistently used or required test, or other set of credentials, for schools and school districts to use to determine if an interpreter meets the standard for a qualified and competent interpreter. Additionally, no national credential exists for interpreting in education settings outside the classroom; however, work is ongoing in this area.¹² This situation is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, school and district staff lack clarity and guidance on how to ensure the provision of a qualified interpreter and how to effectively utilize their own bilingual staff members. Secondly, the system lacks accountability mechanisms when there are no consistent standards or pathways to meet that standard.

Models for interpreting credentials do exist in the medical, social service, and court settings, both locally and nationally. The Washington Administrative Office of the Courts manages a program of training, testing, and certification for language interpreters who serve in court settings. Court interpreters are required to:

- Pass a written exam.
- Attend an orientation class.
- Pass an oral exam.
- Attend a class on ethics and protocol.
- Pass a criminal background check.
- Receive an interpreter ID badge.
- Take the interpreter oath.¹³

¹² See the [American Association of Interpreters and Translators in Education](#) (AAITE) and the [National Association of Educational Translators and Interpreters of Spoken Languages](#) (NAETISL)

¹³ Washington Courts (2020). *Court interpreters*.
https://www.courts.wa.gov/programs_orgs/pos_interpret/index.cfm?fa=pos_interpret.display&fileName=becomingACourtInterpreter



Similarly, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) credentials spoken language interpreters for services in medical and social services settings.¹⁴

Additionally, various training and certificate programs exist to prepare aspiring interpreters including those offered by state universities in Arkansas, Georgia, and Massachusetts; the National Association of Educational Translators and Interpreters in Spoken Languages (NAETISL); school districts designed interpreter training programs; and community college courses.

In order to address the needs of the K–12 setting, which also can involve complex legal issues, culturally nuanced situations, and requires knowledge of educational terminology and the school system, [HB 1153 \(2022\)](#) charged the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) with “establish[ing] credentialing requirements for interpreters”.¹⁵ The following recommendations are based on the concept of a tiered system of interpreter practice linked to successive levels of training and qualifications which was initially recommended by the first Language Access Workgroup in their [2020 Report](#) and is based on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education structure.¹⁶

Recommendation 3: The Language Access Advisory Committee recommends that the Professional Educator Standards Board establish a tiered system of Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) interpreter credentials as described by the Language Access Advisory Committee 2024 Report. These credentials are to be issued by OSPI upon verification of interpreter qualifications and required by Local Education Agencies as proof of qualification to interpret at the assigned interaction level.

The Committee advocates for a state authorized and maintained system of credentialing to verify interpreter credentials that can be relied upon by local education agencies. This system should include verifications of both language fluency in English and the target language(s), the ability to manage an interpreted interaction, and knowledge of the context of interpreting in the education setting.

Interpreted Interactions

In this proposed structure, a series of qualification requirements are matched to three tiers of interactions of increasing complexity and difficulty of skill from 1–3. An interpreter that has the

¹⁴ See Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. (n.d.). *Language testing and certification program*. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/office-of-the-secretary/language-testing-and-certification-program> for more information

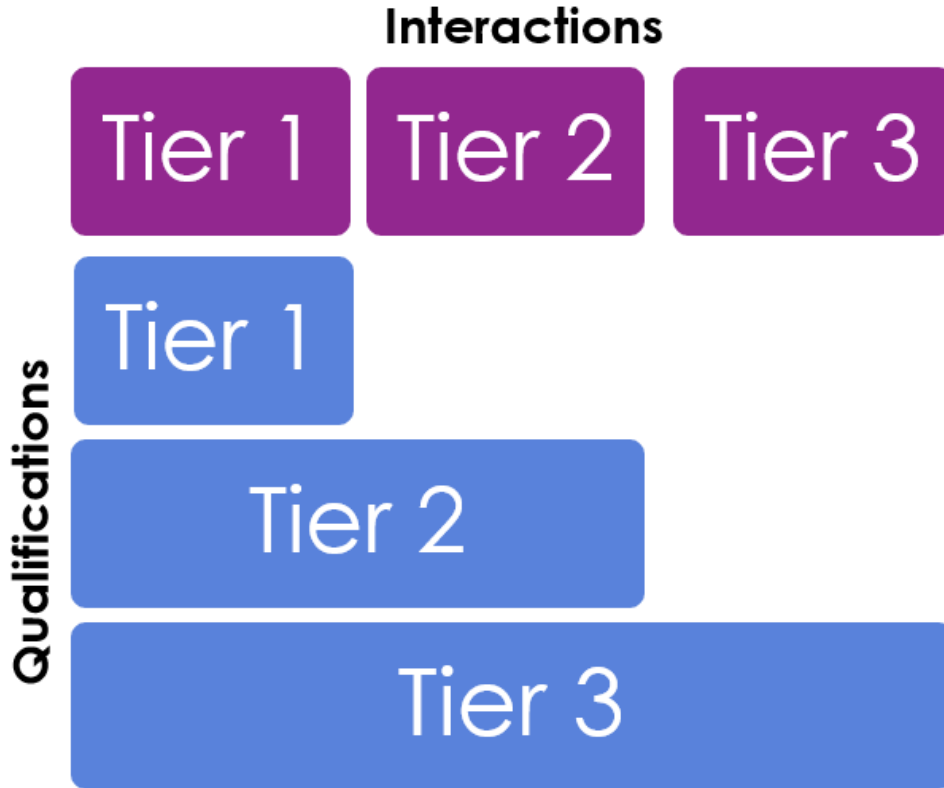
¹⁵ Washington State Legislature. (2022). *RCW 28A.183.080: Credentialing requirements for interpreters*. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.183.080>

¹⁶ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2024, October). *Language access: Interpreters in the Education Setting*. <https://www.doe.mass.edu/language-access/interpreters/default.html>



skills to interpret at the highest tier (3) is assumed to be also qualified for every level below and so on.

Figure 2. Tiered Interactions and Qualifications



Spoken Language Interactions

In the context of spoken language interactions, Tier 1 interactions are considered Basic Interpretation (see Table 5). These are limited to spontaneous, unannounced encounters or communication scenarios that occur in schools when a Tier 3 or Tier 2 interpreter is not available. Tier 1 includes in-scope sight translation of materials from one language to another. Tier 1 does not include interactions between two speakers of the same language when the reference materials are in the same language (this is not interpretation). If a 3rd party is required to explain the content of the written material, the interaction moves into the appropriate tier of interpretation.

The urgency or spontaneity of an interaction does not waive or modify the requirement to utilize interpretation of the appropriate tier level. For example, if a spontaneous meeting begins to involve a topic that requires a Tier 2 or Tier 3 interpreter, the interpreter and school staff will need to stop and engage the services of a Tier 2 or Tier 3 interpreter.



This tiered structure exists to assist school staff in locating the language access services that are most appropriate for the situation and for families and advocates to understand their rights to a qualified interpreter. The priority is to affirm that language services for families are linguistically and culturally appropriate and person-centered, not a rigid adherence to the structure.

Tier 2 interactions are meetings and other school gatherings that do not have a legal context and that do not require simultaneous interpretation. The Committee recognizes that there can be situational overlap between Tiers 1 and 2. Not all interactions take place in pre-planned, formal parent-teacher conferences. For example, a teacher or a guardian, might have noticed changes in a student's behavior at home and/or at school, or about their performance in school, at any time during the year; or there may have been changes in a family's circumstances that they want the teacher to know about. Depending on the school culture and family's comfort with different personnel, an individual with a Tier 1 designation might not only be the first person a family interacts with, but also someone who the family is comfortable with and who can assist with communications.

Tier 3 interactions are specialized meetings with potential legal impact and/or require simultaneous interpretation. Examples of these specialized meetings include:

- Initial or annual individual educational program (IEP) meetings.
- Disciplinary meetings.
- Truancy meetings.
- School Board meetings.

School events that require simultaneous interpretation include events where a presenter is speaking to a group of listeners with one or more languages other than English.

Signed Interactions

In the sign language context, an individual who knows sign language may not be available for spontaneous, unannounced encounters. Participants are encouraged to write notes, use text to talk apps and other tools, or engage a Video Remote Interpreter (VRI) (see Table 6). These communication methods may be used to schedule a meeting when a Tier 2 or 3 interpreter is available, depending on the context. The distinction between Tier 2 and 3 is that Tier 3 interactions are those with potential legal impact and/or large group or platform interpreting and therefore require demonstration of a higher level of skill (see Table 6 for examples).

In all contexts, the service user must be empowered to request an interpreter who meets their needs. Fit between the services user and the interpreter is essential for good communication and the family may provide a list of preferred interpreters. When in doubt, schools should always ask the family's preferences. Some resources available to schools include: the Center for

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Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth (CDHY), the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH), [Hearing Speech and Deaf Center](#) (HSDC) Interpreting Services, Deaf service centers and referral agencies.

Table 5. Tiered Interactions for Spoken Language Interpretation

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<p>Tier 1 interactions are spontaneous, unannounced encounters or communication scenarios that occur in schools when a Tier 3 or Tier 2 interpreter is not available.</p>	<p>Tier 2 interactions are meetings and other school gatherings that do not have a legal context and that do not require simultaneous interpretation.</p>	<p>Tier 3 interactions are specialized meetings with potential legal impact and/or require simultaneous interpretation.</p>
<p>Tier 1 includes in-scope sight translation of materials from one language to another.</p> <p>The urgency or spontaneity of an interaction does not waive or modify the requirement to utilize interpretation of the appropriate tier level. For example, if a spontaneous meeting begins to involve a topic that requires a Tier 2 or Tier 3 interpreter, the interpreter and school staff will need to stop and engage the services of a Tier 2 or Tier 3 interpreter, potentially via remote interpreting.</p>	<p>Examples of Tier 2 interactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment activities. • Parent-teacher conferences. • Medical related meetings. • Sight translation of non-legal materials. • Other events that do not require simultaneous interpretation. 	<p>The list below, which may expand over time, details the types of specialized meetings that require the highest level of interpretation skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School events that require simultaneous interpretation.* • Meetings and discussions likely to involve topics that implicate a student's legally protected status involving a disability. This includes special education, individual educational plans (IEPs), Section 504 Plans, behavior intervention plans, and functional behavioral assessments. • Meetings and discussions that have the potential to result in restricting or excluding a student from a class, program, or school; including, for example, meetings involving law enforcement or school resource officers (SRO), disciplinary meetings, truancy meetings, and any communication about harassment, intimidation, bullying, discrimination, safety plans, behavior intervention plans, physical restraint and seclusion of students, risk assessment, truancy. • Meetings and discussions likely to directly involve a student's English Learner (EL) status. • Meetings regarding highly capable programming. • School Board meetings. <p>*School events that require simultaneous interpretation include events where a presenter is speaking to a group of listeners with 1 or more languages other than English.</p>



Table 6. Tiered Interactions for Sign Language Interpretation

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<p>Spontaneous, Unannounced interactions – occur when Tier 3 or Tier 2 not available</p>	<p>Meetings, gatherings without a legal context</p>	<p>High stakes meetings with potential legal impact and/or large group or platform interpreting</p>
<p>Participants may write notes, use apps, or VRI. If Tier 1 interaction touches on Tier 2 or 3 topic, need to engage Tier 2 or 3 interpreter.</p>	<p>Examples of Tier 2 interactions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enrollment. 2. Parent-Teacher conferences. 3. Special events (ex. Math Night, Open House). 	<p>Examples of Tier 3 interactions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special Education. 2. IEP. 3. 504. 4. Exclusion meetings. 5. English Learner status. 6. Highly capable. 7. Parent-Teacher conferences. 8. School board meetings. 9. Special events (ex. plays).

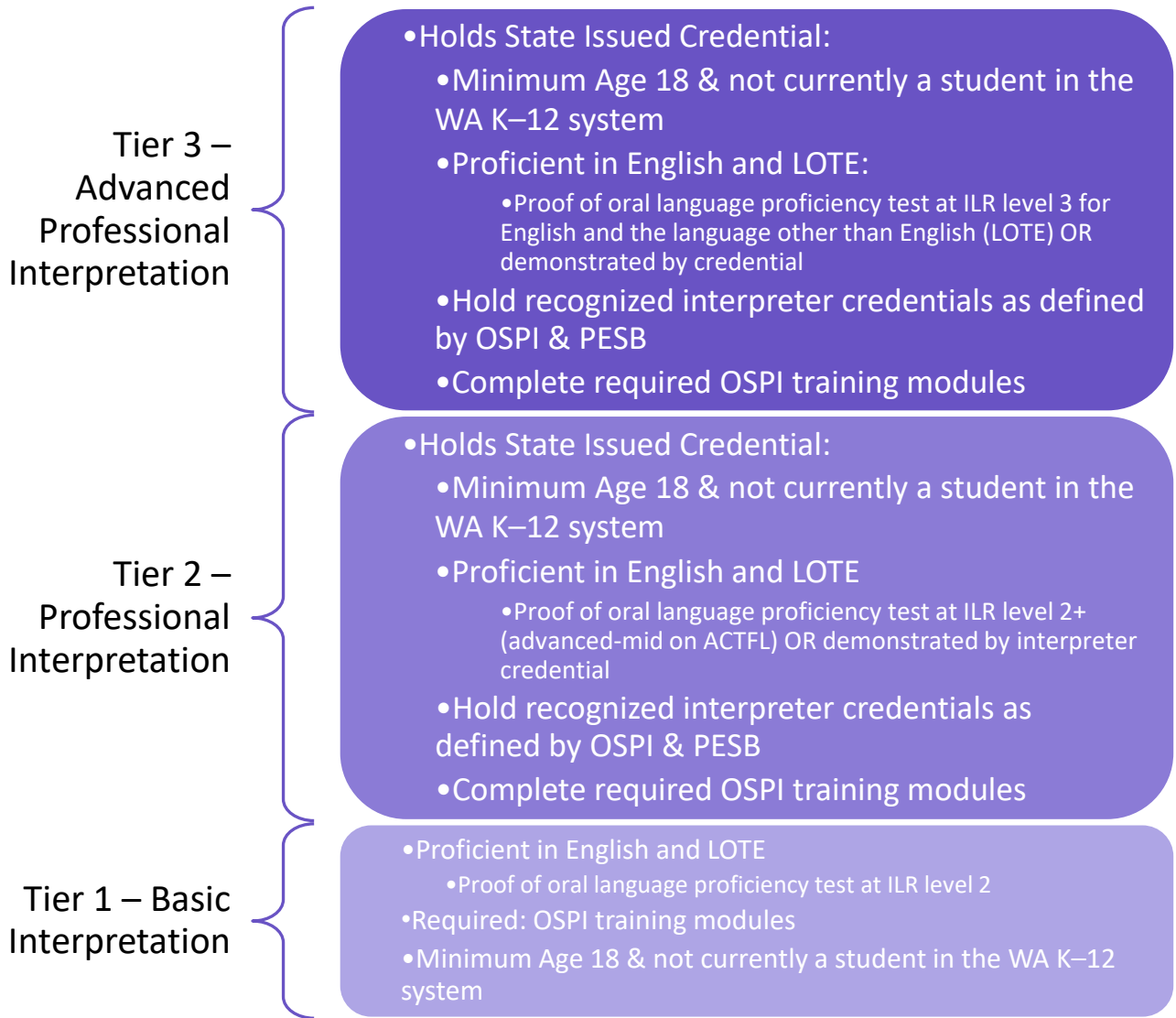
Interpreter Qualifications

Once an interaction type is identified, a matching qualified interpreter can be sought. For both spoken and sign language, Tier 2 and 3 interpreters are those who have demonstrated both language and interpretation skills through a variety of methods that have been verified by the state and then been issued a state level credential. This credential will demonstrate to school and district staff and family and community members that this person is qualified to provide services in that setting. This removes the burden of verification from the service users and provides an objective measure of qualification.

Spoken Language Interpretation Qualifications

At Tier 1 – Basic Interpretation, it is recommended that the individual providing services be proficient in English and the language other than English (LOTE) as demonstrated by proof of oral language proficiency testing at Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) level 2, complete the OSPI interpreter training modules and be a minimum age of 18, and not currently a student in the Washington K–12 system. Tier 2 and 3 consist of a state issued credential which verifies that the individual is proficient in English and the LOTE as demonstrated by proof of oral language proficiency test at ILR level 3 (or as demonstrated by another credential¹⁷), hold recognized interpreter credentials as defined by OSPI and PESB, complete minimum required OSPI training modules, and be a minimum age of 18 and not currently a student in the WA K–12 system.

¹⁷ If the interpreter holds a state recognize credential that includes proof of oral language proficiency at the appropriate level, testing records or retesting should not be required.



Minimum required training modules to include:

- Module 3 – Ethics and Standards.
- Module 4 – Cultural Competence.
- Module 8 – Terminology Management.
- Module 9 – Specific Processes.

Recommended Recognized Spoken Language Interpreter Credentialing Bodies

The following state and national organizations offer testing of spoken language interpreters that can be considered for recognition of interpreter qualification at the tier 2 and 3 levels:

- Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.
- Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI).
- National Board of Medical Interpreters (NBCMI).



- State of California.
- U.S. Department of State.
- Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts.
- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

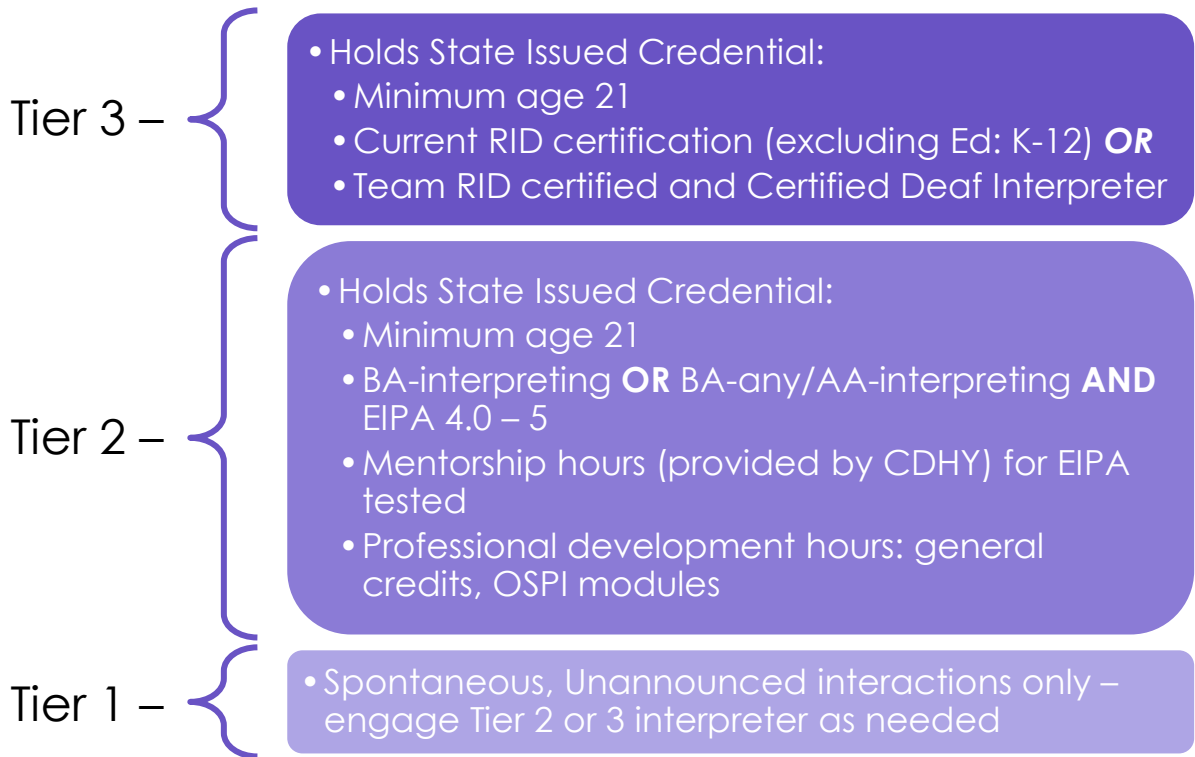
Tests and certifications should be carefully considered before inclusion as a recognized credential and must include: oral language testing in English and the LOTE, transfer skills testing, and ethics training. Proof of simultaneous interpreting skills should be required for interpretation certifications recognized for Tier 3. Currently, no interpreter certifications include education subject knowledge. That can be gained through the recommended OSPI training modules or another approved program. As the field of interpreter testing and credentialing changes, and future education setting specific credentials are developed, the list of recognized qualifications must be updated.



Sign Language Interpretation Qualifications

Tier 2 and 3 sign language interpreter credentials are based on two existing qualifications, the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). The EIPA is a test used to assess the skills of sign language interpreters who support students in the classroom. In settings outside of the classroom, interpreting for adults, the Committee recommends that Tier 2 interpreters have a score of 4.0–5 on the EIPA. Tier 2 interpreters should also be a minimum of age 21, have a bachelor’s degree (BA) in interpreting or in any subject in combination with an associate’s degree (AA) in interpreting. They should also participate in the mentorship program provided by the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth (CDHY) and receive ongoing professional development.

Tier 3 requires that an interpreter be certified by the RID, the national American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation certification. In certain situations, such as when the interpretation is needed for another sign language other than ASL, a team of interpreters including one RID certified and one Certified Deaf Interpreter may be required.

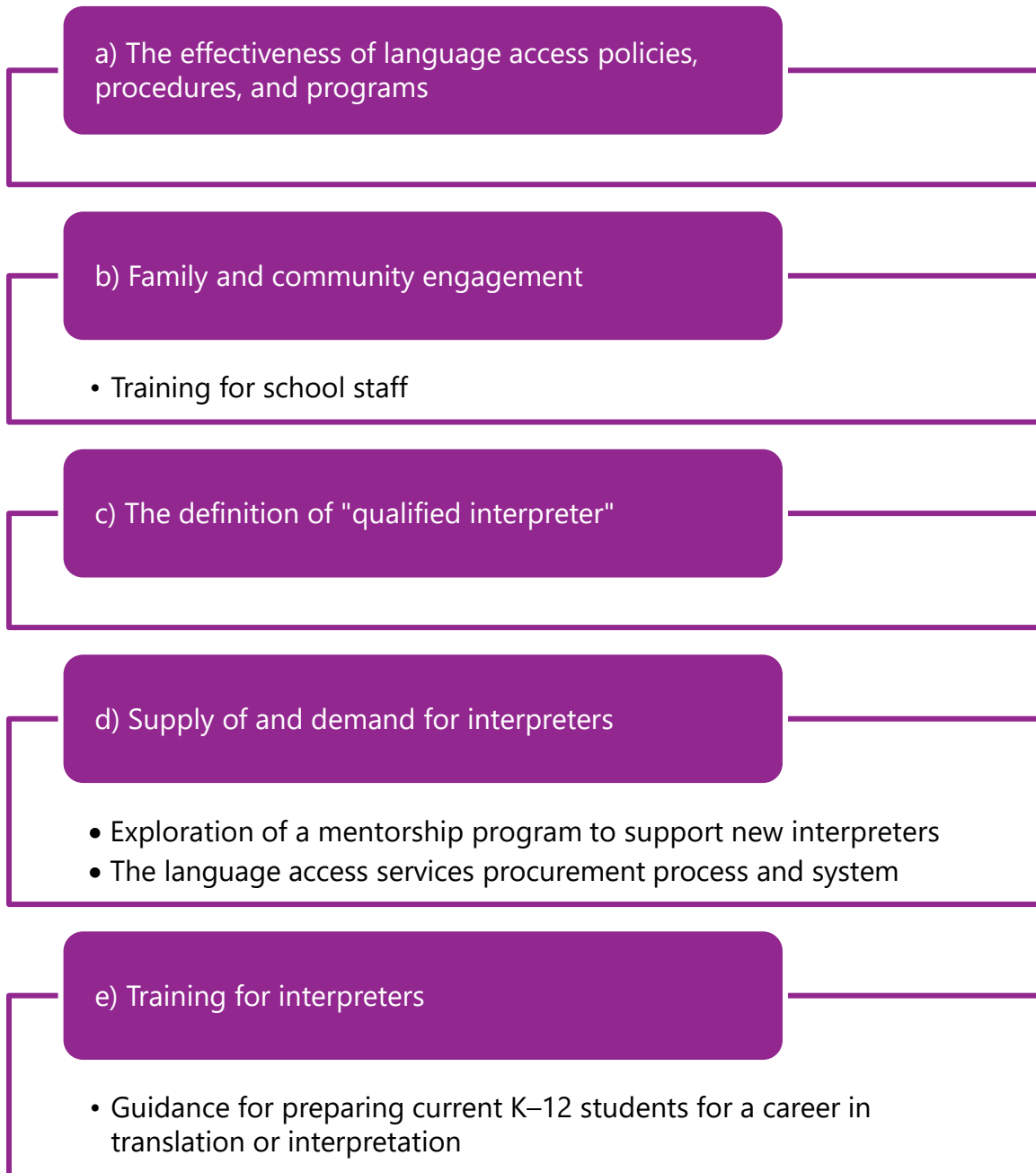




Future Work

This report represents the work of the initial convening of the Language Access Advisory Committee. Committee members have committed to the next term and will be shifting focus to the next set of recommendations on the remaining topics charged by [RCW 28A.183.070](#). Members have identified these topics of interest and importance:

Figure 3. Future Work Topics





f) Credentialing requirements for interpreters, including a code of professional conduct

- Establishing a professional code of conduct and a complaints/grievance process

g) Grants to cover nonstate controlled interpreter credentialing costs

- Funding sources for support of existing bilingual school and district staff who provide language access services

h) Language access and language access service data collection and analysis

- Review of the first year of data collection at the state level

i) Evidence-based practices regarding language access, including best practice for using state and federal funding to provide language access services.

- Best practices for conducting meetings with interpretation
- Best practices for use of technology including generative artificial intelligence tools.

Conclusion

The Language Access Advisory Committee respectfully submits these 2024 recommendations to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board, the Governor, and the Legislature with the sincere hope that they be considered for the implementation and improvement of language access for parents, families, and communities served by our public schools. The changes started by the passing of [HB 1153 \(2022\)](#) began important work at both the state and local levels. The current 2024–25 school year represents the second year of implementation with Language Access Coordinators for most districts and the first year of full data collection. Each school and district is beginning at a



different place with varying levels of process and procedure, leadership and financial support, and volume and diversity of needs. It will take continued dedication of funds, guidance, collaboration, and time to get to full implementation. Essentially, HB 1153 and the work monitored by this Committee, represents a step towards ensuring the established rights of parents and families are fulfilled, with a long road ahead that will need ongoing maintenance.

The Committee would like to thank all the community advocates, who continue to keep this work in the forefront of minds and hearts, and the students and their families who we serve, for their continued resilience, perseverance, and strength.