

Iowa Educational Interpreter FAQs

August 2009

Audience:

*Administrators (AEA/LEA);
Educational Interpreters;
IEP Teams, including Parents*

Q: Do I need to have a license in order to interpret in Iowa?

A: Yes. On July 1, 2005 the Iowa law went into effect which requires every person providing interpreting or transliterating services to be licensed.

It is the responsibility of each interpreter to become familiar with the licensing requirements and subsequent updates. The Iowa Board of Professional Licensure website is <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/licensure/>. Under 'Page navigation' select 'Board of Sign Language Interpreters and Transliterators' and click 'go.'

Q: Are there exceptions to the licensing law?

A: There are exceptions to this law as stated in Chapter 154E.4 EXCEPTIONS.

1. A person shall not practice interpreting or transliterating, or represent that the person is an interpreter, unless the person is licensed under this chapter.
2. This chapter does not prohibit any of the following:
 - a. Any person residing outside of the state of Iowa holding a current license from another state that meets the state of Iowa's requirements from providing interpreting or transliterating services in this state for up to fourteen days per calendar year without a license issued pursuant to this chapter.
 - b. Any person from interpreting or transliterating solely in a religious setting with the exception of those working in schools that receive government funding.
 - c. Volunteers working without compensation, including emergency situations, until a licensed interpreter is obtained.
 - d. Any person working as a substitute for a licensed interpreter in an early childhood, elementary, or secondary education setting for no more than thirty school days in a calendar year.
 - e. Students enrolled in a school of interpreting from interpreting only under the direct supervision of a permanently licensed interpreter as part of the student's course of study.

Regarding b. above, educational interpreters who work in religious schools that receive government funding must be licensed.

Regarding d. above, see the Substitute Educational Interpreters document for more information.

Q: I need to renew my temporary license. Tell me what to do.

A: It is the responsibility of each interpreter to become familiar with the licensing requirements and subsequent updates. The licensure's current process allows interpreters to have a temporary license (those who have not passed a test) for two, biennium periods.

To find the date you were licensed, go to www.licensediniowa.gov search for your name, and note the 'Issue Date.'

Q: I took the EIPA. When will I get my results?

A: It now takes 120 days to receive your results.

Q: I took the EIPA and am awaiting the results. What happens if I do not get a 3.5? Can I try again at another time or do I have to be a currently working interpreter to take the test again?

A: You do not need to be a currently working interpreter to take the EIPA test again. Your EIPA results will suggest areas for improvement. It would be in your best interest if you worked on these areas for improvement before taking the test again. The TASK-12 organization provides EIPA test to thousands of interpreters yearly. They have found that interpreters who take the test again in less than a year typically don't make huge gains in EIPA scores. Also, they have found that if there is no intervention (training), there will be no improvement in score.

Q: I was recently married and changed my last name. Do I have to notify the licensing board?

A: Yes. You are required to submit name changes and mailing address changes to the Bureau of Professional Licensure. Licensees must notify the board of a change of name or current mailing address **within 30 days** after the change occurs. Failure to notify the board of changes may result in your license being placed on inactive status.

Q: I moved recently. Do I have to notify the licensing board?

A: Yes, you are required to submit name changes and mailing address changes to the Bureau of Professional Licensure. Licensees must notify the board of a change of name

or current mailing address **within 30 days** after the change occurs. Failure to notify the board of changes may result in your license being placed on inactive status.

Q: How do I get my EIPA score to the licensing board so that I can prove that I am ‘licensed by examination?’

A: Once you receive a score of 3.5 or higher on the EIPA, you are eligible to have your licensure status changed from “temporary” to “licensed by examination”. The licensing board must receive the EIPA score directly from Boys Town. An ‘authorizing release’ is located online at www.idph.state.ia.us/licensure/links.asp?board=ihl. That information will ensure that your score is sent to the licensing board. You must then follow up with the licensing board.

Q: How do I register for the EIPA?

A: Go to the Training and Assessment Systems for K-12 Interpreters (TASK-12) website at <http://www.task12.org/>. On the right side of the webpage, click on ‘EIPA Registration.’ Since Iowa is a part of the TASK-12 organization, Iowa educational interpreters can test in most any state listed. Occasionally states may limit their testing to local interpreters, as Iowa has done to accommodate Iowa testers for required licensure.

Q: How do I prepare to take the EIPA?

A: The website www.classroominterpreting.org has a wealth of information about the EIPA test and preparation. Also see the FAQs on www.task12.org.

The Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD) Resource Library and Deaf Services Commission of Iowa (DSCI) have materials at www.iowaschoolforthe deaf.org/ (go to Community and Professional Resources, then click on “Resource Library”) and www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/ds/ (click on ‘library’).

Boys Town Press has four Educational Interpreting Practice DVDs available, two at the elementary level and two at the secondary level. Both are in Pidgin Signed English (PSE). See www.boystownpress.org/Scripts/prodList.asp

Q: How do I know which test I take? What are ASL, PSE and MCE?

A: The following descriptions are taken from the TASK12 website under FAQs. You must determine which best describes what you use and select accordingly.

American Sign Language (ASL) is a language of signs separate from English. ASL has its own unique grammatical structure. ASL signs are those generally used by the Deaf

community. Raters expect to see non-manual markers, use of classifiers and space during the Interpretation.

Pidgin Sign English (PSE) is using ASL signs in English word order. PSE can use ASL structure at times and the interpreter is not penalized by the rater for doing so. Raters expect to see non-manual markers, use of classifiers and space during the interpretation. English is not consistently mouthed, although key words may be mouthed. Markers are not used. PSE has also been called Contact Sign Language or Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE).

Manually Coded English (MCE) is a category of sign systems that includes Signed English and Signing Exact English (SEE II). Raters expect to see consistent use of the morphological markers associated with the system used, whether Signed English or SEE II. Raters expect to see English being mouthed all the time while signing, with the exception of appropriate use of non-manual markers. The raters do expect to see the incorporation of some classifiers and use of the signing space to represent verb agreement, pronouns, to indicate locations of referents, cause and effect statements, etc.

Q: I work in a rural area. How do I stay connected with other interpreters?

A: Frequent access to a computer is a necessity. The Iowa State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (ISRID), the affiliate chapter of the national Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), provides two conferences yearly, Fall and Spring. You can earn CEUs by attending local conferences. Membership has its advantages. See the ISRID website at www.iowastaterid.org

Marsha Gunderson, State Consultant, also sends information via email. Contact her to ensure your email address is included (mgunderson@iowaschoolforthe deaf.org).

Q: Our interpreter cannot renew her license and has not taken the EIPA. Can we call her an aide, paraprofessional or teacher associate and rehire her next year?

A: If a person performs interpreting or transliterating in the course of his/her job, then he/she is considered an interpreter under the law, regardless of job title.

The school can rehire the person in a different position – not as an interpreter or as a person who interprets or transliterates in the course of his/her job.

All interpreters are mandatory reporters and must report unethical actions to the board. Interpreting without a current license is unethical and illegal.

Q: We are a school who has had a difficult time finding interpreters. If we lose our interpreter due to not passing this test, what do we do?

A: Educational interpreting is a fast growing occupation and nationally, as well as in Iowa, the need is greater than the supply. See the document “Hiring Interpreters” for specific hiring information.

Reconvene the IEP meeting to discuss all available options. This is the time to think beyond the box.

- Does the student have a 4th grade reading level or above? If so, would speech-to-text services be appropriate?
- Is the student soon ready to transition to college or the world of work? What are the student’s goals?
- Does the student have fluent expressive sign language skills? If not, what other options could be appropriate to help the student express him/herself?
- Is the student’s Reading level two years or more below peers? A resource or self-contained class with a teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing could provide more remediation throughout the day than itinerant services can provide.
- Are there other schools in the area providing interpreter services that could collaborate to better meet the needs of students, including need for social and emotional development with like peers?
- Can the student be transported daily to another school to receive interpreting services?
- Is the Iowa School for the Deaf an appropriate option for the student?

Q: What is the state going to do to help us when we lose our interpreter?

A: The Department of Education is required to ensure that highly qualified personnel work in Iowa schools. Highly qualified educational interpreters must hold an Iowa license.

The Department of Education has provided the EIPA test since the early 1990’s and when the test was standardized beginning January 2000. Information about training opportunities has been widely disseminated. The Department of Education has long collaborated with Iowa State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Deaf Services Commission of Iowa, AEAs, Iowa School for the Deaf and others to bring affordable, high quality continuing education to Iowa. During the 2007-08 school year, a total of 40 hours of continuing education was provided in Iowa. Skill development CDs were purchased that provide continuing education from any computer at any time. A comprehensive plan including test taking strategies, mentoring, skill development and language immersion weekends has been developed and once funded, will be implemented.

Before licensure became law, many educational interpreters attended state focus group meetings to provide input on minimum competencies needed by all interpreters. Once

licensure was instituted in 2005, information about licensure has been disseminated via email to the AEA Educational Audiology and Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Educational Services Leadership Group, Teachers of Students Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Educational Interpreters and Iowa Hands and Voices parent group.

During 2009-10 and 2010-11, the AEAs and Department of Education are collaborating to provide 1) test preparation training 2) a mentoring program 3) specific skill training and 4) language immersion activities. Educational interpreters will receive email information about the training.

Q: I've heard the EIPA test is too hard. Why do we give a test that no one can pass?

A: The stimulus-version of the EIPA has been given nationally since January 2000. The interpreter watches a videotape of a classroom situation and interpreters that in front of a video camera. The interpreter also watches a signed conversation between an interviewer and student and voices what the student says. The videotape of the interpreter is evaluated by trained evaluators at Boys Town National Research Hospital EIPA Diagnostic Center. Evaluators rate each interpreter according to a rubric. The interpreter receives a score between 0.1 and 5.0, with 5.0 being high. The majority of states that require a 'score' require a 3.5. Recently, states have begun to require a 4.0. Iowa initially proposed to require a 4.0. Due to public input, the minimum, entry-level required score was dropped to 3.5.

The Training and Assessment Systems for K-12 Educational Interpreters (TASK-12), of which Iowa is a member, has given over 3,000 tests in the past six-and-a-half years. Approximately 38% have passed with a level 3.5 or above. "No one can pass" is simply not true. Deaf and hard of hearing students' education depends on qualified interpreters. The EIPA is a valid and reliable test. Interpreting in classrooms is a difficult task. The EIPA was developed to ensure that children who rely on interpreting services have quality interpreting to allow them to receive a Free, Appropriate, Public Education.

Q: Why do I have to sign up so early to take the EIPA?

A: There is only one national center, Boys Town National Research Hospital which evaluates EIPA tapes. Iowa is a member of the Training and Assessment Systems for K-12 Educational Interpreters, a partnership of 14 states. TASK-12 provides educational interpreters the opportunity to evaluate their skills with at least two sites yearly in each partner state. Educational interpreters in member states can take the EIPA in most any TASK-12 state. Exceptions are sometimes made, as when Iowa had to restrict testing slots because of licensing deadlines.

TASK-12 must report to Boys Town the number of tests to be evaluated the first of the month prior to testing. This means that all September slots must be filled by August 1st. Any slots that TASK-12 is not using then are released for states who arrange for their own local testing. The EIPA is a national test.

Please address additional questions to Marsha Gunderson at
mgunderson@iowaschoolforthe deaf.org