



State Board of Sign Language Interpreters Board Special Meeting
Tuesday, August 5, 2025
Via Zoom

In Attendance

Board Members

Jacob Leffler, Community Member and Chair
Leslie Puzio, Community Member and Vice Chair
Susan Beaver, Community Member
Paige Franklin, DeafBlind Representative

Governor's Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GODHH)

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager
Diamon Halliburton, Administrative Assistant

Others

Ethan Sonnenstrahl, Assistant Attorney General
ASL/ English Interpreters
Community members (non-participating; viewers only)

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

The agenda was moved for approval by Vice Chair Puzio and seconded by Member Franklin; the motion carried. The minutes from the April 2 meeting were approved following a motion by Vice Chair Puzio and a second by Member Beaver.

Board's Updates

The Board reviewed and discussed proposed regulations for interpreter licensing. Chair Leffler gave a history overview of the regulations, explaining that they were established in late 2023 and had undergone revisions based on public comments. He clarified that there are three types of interpreter licenses (general, provisional, and provisional educational) and explained that while specialty licenses were considered but not implemented due to public feedback, the regulations were simplified to make them more accessible. The Board also addressed concerns about agency definitions, clarifying that schools, hospitals, and other local entities do not require

agency licenses.

Chair Leffler acknowledged that although they received a letter from the Maryland Association of Board of Educators (MABE), SBSLI did not have the authority to implement the requested changes.

The board discussed and approved a reduction in the fee for educational interpreter licenses from \$225 to \$180 for a three-year provisional license, with a two-year renewal fee remaining at \$150, by a motion made by Susan Beaver and seconded by Leslie Puzio. The board also agreed to prorate fees for interpreters who obtain national certification before the three-year period ends. The discussion focused on making the fee structure more affordable while maintaining a system that is divided evenly over the three years.

The board discussed allowing provisional license holders to work in educational settings with a mentor, but had mixed feelings about the proposal. Some members expressed concerns about the 3.7 EIPA score requirement and the potential impact on deaf children's access to language and interpreters in rural areas. The board debated whether to require a certified mentor for provisional license holders in educational settings or to allow them to work without such restrictions. They also considered the possibility of requiring provisional license holders to pass the EIPA written test and achieve a 3.7 score at renewal. The board acknowledged the shortage of qualified interpreters and the need to find a balance between maintaining high standards and ensuring access to language services for deaf children.

The Board discussed regulations for interpreter licensing, focusing on provisional licenses and educational settings. They debated whether provisional license holders should be allowed to work in educational settings, with some board members suggesting this was not currently permitted under the existing language.

The Board discussed regulations for provisional educational interpreters, focusing on licensing requirements. Vice Chair Puzio emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards for student access to language services, advocating for the EIPA certification only, while others supported a hybrid approach combining formal internships and mentorship programs. The Board agreed to propose new language in the regulations requiring formal internships and mentorship arrangements in educational settings..

The board discussed and approved regulations for interpreter licensing, focusing on General provisional licenses and provisional licenses for educational settings. They agreed that educational interpreters would need only a provisional educational specialty license, not a general provisional license, and established fees for both initial and renewal licenses, unless they want to work in multiple settings.. The board also approved a discounted fee structure for interpreters applying for both general and educational provisional licenses, with Chair Leffler suggesting a \$150 combined fee for renewals. After the AAG reviews the regulations, there

will be a 30-day public comment period, during which the board encourages feedback from both hearing and deaf communities.

The regulations was approved after AAG's review and edits by a motion made by Leslie Puzio and seconded by Susan Beaver.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.