
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 312

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION WORKING GROUP AND CONCERNING CURRICULUM GUIDANCE FOR AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to establish the American Sign Language (ASL) education working group with at least eight members to make recommendations to SDE on (1) curriculum guidance for ASL instruction, (2) teacher certification standards based on standards set by the ASL Teachers Association and the ASL Proficiency Interview, and (3) guidance to educator preparation programs in the state for (a) expanding ASL and interpretation education programs and (b) incentives to become an ASL educator.

The working group must have a representative from (1) SDE, (2) the Aging and Disability Services Department, (3) the Labor Department, (4) the Office of Higher Education, (5) the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, (6) the American School for the Deaf, and (7) the Connecticut Association of the Deaf. It must also include at least one ASL instructor who teaches in a public school in the state.

Starting by January 1, 2028, SDE must annually report to the Education Committee on the working group's progress.

By July 1, 2030, SDE must issue the ASL instruction curriculum guidance described in the bill to each local and regional board of education to ensure consistent implementation of ASL as part of the world languages curriculum required under state law. By law, world languages includes ASL if it is taught by a qualified instructor who is supervised by a certified teacher.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027, except the requirement to issue curriculum guidance is effective July 1, 2026.

WORKING GROUP DUTIES

The bill requires the working group's recommendations to address:

1. ASL instruction curriculum guidance that includes aligning the curriculum with nationally recognized proficiency frameworks;
2. teacher certification standards based on standards set by the ASL Teachers Association and the ASL Proficiency Interview, including (a) establishing a proficiency benchmark, (b) recognizing an alternative certification pathway for native ASL users and interpreters, and (c) reciprocity with ASL teaching certifications from other states; and
3. guidance for educator preparation programs in the state on (a) expanding ASL and interpretation education programs; (b) creating educational incentives, such as tuition support, credit enhancement, or alternative route programs; and (c) establishing bridge, endorsement, or alternative programs for native ASL users and certified interpreters seeking teacher certification.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference - APP
Yea 45 Nay 0 (03/16/2026)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 51 Nay 0 (04/01/2026)