

SENATE No. 320

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Brendan P. Crighton

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to the training, assessment, and assignment of qualified school interpreters in educational settings.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Brendan P. Crighton</i>	<i>Third Essex</i>	
<i>Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Hampden</i>	<i>2/28/2025</i>
<i>Manny Cruz</i>	<i>7th Essex</i>	<i>2/28/2025</i>

SENATE No. 320

By Mr. Crighton, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 320) of Brendan P. Crighton, Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr. and Manny Cruz for legislation relative to the training, assessment, and assignment of qualified school interpreters in educational settings. Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 253 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to the training, assessment, and assignment of qualified school interpreters in educational settings.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting the
2 following new section:-

3 Section 37. Training, assessment, and assignment of qualified school interpreters in
4 educational settings

5 (a) The following words, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, shall have the
6 following meanings:

7 “Department”, the department of elementary and secondary education;

8 “Limited English proficient (LEP) person”, an individual who has a limited ability to
9 read, write, speak or understand English because the person uses primarily a language other than
10 English. This includes LEP parents or guardians of minor children, regardless of the children’s
11 LEP status;

12 “Interpretation”, the immediate oral rendering of an utterance from a source language
13 into a target language;

14 “Interpreter”, a person who has demonstrated language proficiency in English and at least
15 one other language and is readily able to interpret spoken language from English to the target
16 language and from the target language to English, and who also has knowledge and
17 understanding of the pertinent subject matter to be translated, the role of the interpreter in school
18 settings, and ethics and confidentiality with respect to interpretation;

19 “Parent”, a natural, adoptive, or foster parent of a child, a guardian, or an individual
20 acting in the place of a natural or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other
21 relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child’s
22 welfare;

23 “Specialized meeting”, a school district meeting requiring a high level of interpretation
24 skills including but not limited to discussion regarding: an Individualized Education Program
25 (IEP); a safety plan or behavioral intervention plan (BIP); matters regarding school discipline;
26 matters regarding special education due process; placement in an English Learner Education
27 (ELE) program; development of or changes to an Individual 504 plan; addressing bullying
28 complaints; or the use of physical restraint or seclusion of students;

29 “Standard meeting”, a parent conference, community meeting, or other school gathering
30 that does not have legal context.

31 “Tier 1 interpreter”, an interpreter whose language proficiency need not be formally
32 assessed;

33 “Tier 2 interpreter”, an interpreter who, after a formal assessment process to be
34 determined by the department, demonstrates an understanding of basic educational terminology
35 used in school settings, participates in ongoing professional development in interpreting, and
36 exhibits tier-2 competency pursuant to subsection 2 of this section and department regulations;

37 “Tier 3 interpreter”, an interpreter who, after a formal assessment process to be
38 determined by the department, understands specialized educational terminology used in school
39 settings, participates in ongoing professional development in interpreting, and exhibits tier-3
40 competency pursuant to subsection 2 of this section and department regulations.

41 (b) Consistent with the recommendations of the School Interpreters Task Force, as
42 authorized by section 81 of chapter 154 of the acts of 2018, the department shall: (1) develop and
43 administer a system for training, assessing, and determining qualifications of interpreters in
44 educational settings ensuring that tier 3 interpreters shall be used for all specialized meetings, tier
45 2 or 3 interpreters may be used for all standard meetings and tier 1 interpreters may be used
46 during spontaneous, unannounced meetings or communication scenarios that occur in schools
47 when a tier 3 or 2 interpreter is not available; (2) make available an educational course of
48 sufficient duration that includes coursework and field experience for tier 1, tier 2, and tier 3
49 interpreters, to support development of the key competencies and knowledge required of
50 interpreters in schools consistent with the courses developed by the department pursuant to

51 section 2A of chapter 102 of the acts of 2021; and (3) create a publicly accessible mechanism to
52 identify tier-3 interpreters for scheduled specialized meetings.

53 (c) The department shall adopt regulations necessary to administer a system for training,
54 assessing, and determining qualifications of interpreters in school settings to improve access for
55 LEP parents. Said regulations shall be consistent with the recommendations of the School
56 Interpreters Task Force, as authorized by section 81 of chapter 154 of the acts of 2018, and shall
57 include, but not be limited to:

58 (1) a process for assessing the language proficiency of interpreters seeking to interpret in
59 school settings, including required levels of competency necessary to obtain tier-2 and tier-3
60 interpreting status, with grandfathering allowed for school employees whose primary job
61 responsibility has been to serve as an interpreter for one or more years;

62 (2) required hours of supervised field experience for tier-3 interpreters; and

63 (3) procedures for implementation of the publicly accessible mechanism created pursuant
64 to subsection 1 of this section to identify and secure tier-3 interpreters for scheduled specialized
65 meetings.

66 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage; provided, however, that the
67 department may administer a phased implementation of the provisions of subsection (b) of this
68 act to a diverse number of school districts, subject to appropriation, and provided further that
69 final implementation of all sections of this act, including by not limited to the requirement that
70 tier 3 interpreters shall be used for all specialized meetings, shall take effect statewide when
71 certified as appropriate by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education in a report
72 to the general court.