



# Professional Development



Continued professional development is a necessary part of growth for educational interpreters, teachers, administrators, and other employees. Educational interpreters are required to maintain their associate licensure by presenting documentation of their coursework and other professional development activities to their school's local professional development committee (LPDC). The renewal of the five-year license can be obtained by completing six semester hours of coursework or 180 contact hours related to the area of licensure, as approved by the LPDC of the employing district.

## Renewal of Associate License

As interpreters evaluate their needs and goals for professional development, their options should not be limited just to classes that stress the movement of their hands or the actual process of facilitating communication. There are several other areas that should be considered for individual growth as an educational interpreter in a school setting.

*Knowledge and Skills Needed by Educational Interpreters* (see page 5) may be used as a guide to assist interpreters in identifying needed areas of professional development. Each interpreter will need to submit his or her individual professional development plan (IPDP) to the LPDC for review. The LPDC will review the interpreter's IPDP to ensure that identified goals and strategies are relevant to the needs of the school district, the school, the students, and the interpreter. Documentation of attendance at activities, classes, or other training opportunities relevant to the goals and strategies outlined on the interpreter's IPDP must be maintained.

In developing the IPDP, importance is placed on showing the relationship between these professional endeavors and the interpreter's assignment and job responsibilities in the school setting. For example, taking computer classes could help to improve the interpreter's understanding of specialized vocabulary for use in accurate interpreting, while also helping him or her to better use e-mail to communicate with other personnel in the program and school.

### Licensure Reference

The following information has been excerpted from Ohio's *Teacher Education and Licensure Standards* (Ohio Department of Education, 1999):

#### Professional or Associate License Renewal (OAC 3301-24-08)

- (A) The professional or associate license is valid for five years and may be renewed by individuals currently employed in a school or school district upon verification that the following requirements have been completed since the issuance of the license to be renewed:
- (1) Six semester hours of coursework related to classroom teaching and/or the area of licensure; or
  - (2) Eighteen continuing education units (one hundred and eighty contact hours) or other equivalent activities related to classroom teaching and/or the area of licensure as approved by the local professional development committee of the employing school or school district.
    - (a) Each public school district and chartered nonpublic school shall appoint a local professional development committee to oversee and review professional development plans for coursework, continuing

education units, or other equivalent activities. The local professional development committee shall be comprised of teachers, administrators and other educational personnel, and a majority of the members of the local professional development committee shall be practicing classroom teachers. School districts shall have the option of collaborating with other districts or educational service centers in establishing and completing the work of the local professional development committee. Chartered nonpublic schools shall also have the option of collaborating with other schools in establishing and completing the work of the local professional development committee.

- (b) Whenever an administrator's coursework plan is being discussed or voted upon, the local professional development committee shall, at the request of one of its administrative members, cause a majority of the committee to consist of administrative members by reducing the number of teacher members voting on the plan.
- (c) Each educator wishing to fulfill the license renewal requirements is responsible for the design of an individual professional development plan, subject to approval of the local professional development committee. The plan shall be based on the needs of the educator, the students, the school, and the school district.
- (d) Each school district shall establish a local appeal process for educators who wish to appeal the decision of the local professional development committee.
- (e) Coursework or continuing education units or other equivalent activities may be combined.

**Options** Professional development can be provided in a variety of ways through one or a combination of the following:

- Interpreter training programs
- Inservice training
- Workshops and conferences
- Independent study and action research
- College courses
- Content area updates
- Collaboration and team building
- Activities that improve technology skills
- School or program committees related to issues in the area of hearing impairments

**Activities** Additional professional development activities may include

- Training for interpreter certification (RID, Inc./NAD)
- Development of skills to assume non-interpreting responsibilities (e.g., tutoring, sign language instruction, supervision of interpreters)
- Training for interpreting at various educational and development levels and with special populations (e.g., students with hearing and visual impairments)

- Training for interpreting in various language modes (e.g., oral interpreting, voicing, ASL, forms of Manually Coded English, cued speech, and deaf-blind interpreting)
- Activities that result in a greater understanding of the academic and social development of students who are hearing impaired
- Development of skills for communicating and collaborating with parents and/or general and special educators
- Improvement of skills in academic areas to broaden knowledge in subject areas being interpreted
- Broadening knowledge of deaf culture
- Understanding the roles of an educational interpreter as a member of the school and IEP team
- Development of basic knowledge in the education of students with hearing impairments and foundations of education
- Involvement in professional interpreter organizations and conferences

## Resources

A variety of useful resource materials focusing on retention and refinement of interpreting skills is available for training purposes. These are available and can be obtained through the area special education regional resource center (SERRC), the Ohio School for the Deaf (OSD), the Ohio Chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (OCRID), the Ohio Resource Center for Low Incidence and Severely Handicapped (ORCLISH), the Ohio Resource Center for Deafness (ORCD), and the Great Lakes Area Regional Center for Deaf-Blind Education (GLARCDBE). See *Appendix B* for additional information on resources in the area of educational interpreting.

## Rank or Level

Based on local personnel policies, there may be opportunities for promotion into roles such as lead interpreter, interpreter mentor, interpreter coordinator, and interpreter supervisor. Advancement opportunities foster job satisfaction and motivation for continuing professional development and longevity of employment.

Opportunities should be present for professional advancement of educational interpreters through salary and wage increments that are based on local personnel policies. Compensation or other rewards can also be offered based on academic degree, national interpreter certification, membership in interpreter organizations, and seniority.

