

## Educational interpreters have specialized responsibilities:

- Facilitate communication between deaf and hearing individuals.
- Relay information accurately to and from students who use sign language.
- Prepare for interpreting assignments by reviewing instructional information.
- Serve as a member of the educational team in planning students' programs.
- Collaborate with teachers concerning the physical environment, i.e. lighting, seating arrangement.
- Provide interpreting services for out-of-class activities during school day and after school for extra curricular activities, etc.
- Accept only those job tasks for which they are qualified.
- Participate in professional development opportunities in order to maintain skills and interpreter certification.
- Provide tutoring for students during free time or study hall per determination of the education team (IEP) or discussion with the IEP manager and under supervision of teacher.
- Teach sign language when appropriate.
- Provide information on deaf culture and deaf awareness issues.
- Educational interpreters must be trained and competent in both sign language and interpreting. Knowing "some" sign language does not qualify someone as an educational interpreter.
- Educational interpreters must be certified by a valid nationally recognized credentialing program such as those sponsored by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID).

For more information about  
educational interpreting contact:  
**North Dakota School for the Deaf**  
**Resource Center for Deaf and**  
**Hard of Hearing**  
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**Devils Lake, ND 58301**  
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Dr. Wayne Sanstead, Superintendent

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# Interpreters in Schools



# A Guide For Mainstream Educators

**North Dakota School for the Deaf**  
**Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

# Roles and Responsibilities in the Mainstream Classroom

## Interpreter Responsibilities:

- Keep all assignments, classroom and student-related information confidential.
- Refer questions (from family & friends) regarding the student's performance to the appropriate teacher or IEP manager.
- Render the signed message faithfully, maintaining the speaker's spirit and content.
- Arrive promptly at interpreting assignments.
- Wear appropriate clothing (plain colored tops) to prevent eye-strain for the student.
- Position self so student can simultaneously see both speaker and interpreter. Interpreter may follow teacher around the room during discussion and lectures to facilitate communication.
- Interpret teacher lectures, guest speakers, films, additional noises and other students' questions, answers, conversations, etc.
- Refrain from evaluating teaching methods or behavior management techniques.
- Sign information to student and read student's signed responses then voice-to-English student's replies.
- Ask for a word or phrase to be repeated for clarification when message is not understood.
- Should not assume role of disciplinarian. The teacher maintains authority for all academic and social issues. The interpreter should not be used as a substitute teacher or supervisor at any time.
- Refrain from assuming the role of discussion person during an interpreting situation.
- Report communication concerns regarding student to appropriate teacher or IEP manager.
- Serve as a liaison in providing information regarding the use of interpreter services to the teacher as well as other students and staff.
- Assist in maximizing the classroom environment to ensure visual accessibility for the student.



**The primary role of an interpreter is to facilitate communication between deaf and hearing consumers signing all that is said and voicing-to-English all that is signed.**

## Teacher Responsibilities:

- Assume educational responsibility for the student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- Discipline student in same manner as other students in the classroom.
- Help assure that the student has appropriate seating taking into consideration visual and auditory communication needs.
- Provide student with notes from lectures or ensure that appropriate note-taking services are provided.
- Allow extra time for student to observe signed messages so he/she has opportunity to answer questions and participate in classroom discussions. Call on student in the same manner as a hearing student.
- Inform interpreter in advance of special presentations or field trips.
- Furnish interpreter with class text books and other relevant instructional materials.
- Refrain from participating in personal conversations and discussions with interpreter during class time.
- Discuss educational concerns regarding the student with the student's IEP manager—not with the interpreter.
- Address the student in same manner as you would a hearing student. Make eye contact with student and speak directly to him/her rather than to the interpreter.



## Student Responsibilities:

- Arrive on time for class bringing needed supplies (paper, pencils, notebooks, text books, etc.)
- Complete his/her assignments/homework.
- Participate in class and pay attention to teacher through the interpreter.
- Discuss problems regarding classroom interpreter with the interpreter first, then the teacher or the interpreter's supervisor if necessary.
- Avoid unnecessary interruptions or conversations with interpreter while he/she is interpreting.
- Self-advocate—ask for a note-taker, tutor, or visually-accessible seating as needed.
- Ask interpreter and/or teacher for clarification of signs or vocabulary words that may be unfamiliar.
- Remember test days, homework, and other assignments. Do not rely on interpreter for reminders.
- Inform both teacher and interpreter about absences from class if known in advance.
- Refrain from chatting with interpreter during class time unless teacher allows others to chat as well.
- Sit in a position visually accessible to the interpreter.
- Learn to manage and understand interpreting accommodations (lighting, seating and scheduling support services) and self-advocate as needed.



**Both interpreters and teachers must follow ethical guidelines to protect students' privacy and access to educational opportunities.**