



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 652**

February Session, 2026

Substitute Senate Bill No. 312

*Senate, April 16, 2026*

The Committee on Appropriations reported through SEN. OSTEN of the 19th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

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

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2027*) (a) The Department of  
2 Education shall establish an American Sign Language education  
3 working group that consists of (1) a representative from each of the  
4 following: The Departments of Education and Aging and Disability  
5 Services, the Labor Department, the Office of Higher Education, the  
6 Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, the American School for the  
7 Deaf and the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, and (2) at least one  
8 American Sign Language instructor who teaches in a public school in  
9 the state.

10 (b) The working group shall provide recommendations to the  
11 Department of Education regarding the following:

12 (1) Curriculum guidance for American Sign Language instruction

13 that includes, but is not limited to, aligning such curriculum with  
14 nationally recognized proficiency frameworks;

15 (2) Teacher certification standards based on standards established by  
16 the American Sign Language Teachers Association and the American  
17 Sign Language Proficiency Interview that include, at a minimum, (A)  
18 establishment of a proficiency benchmark, (B) recognition of an  
19 alternative certification pathway for native American Sign Language  
20 users and interpreters, and (C) reciprocity with American Sign  
21 Language teaching certifications from other states; and

22 (3) Guidance to educator preparation programs in the state  
23 concerning, but not limited to, the (A) expansion of American Sign  
24 Language and interpretation education programs, (B) creation of  
25 educational incentives, such as tuition support, credit enhancement or  
26 alternative route programs, and (C) establishment of bridge,  
27 endorsement or alternative programs for native American Sign  
28 Language users and certified interpreters seeking teacher certification.

29 (c) Not later than January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the  
30 Department of Education shall submit a progress report, in accordance  
31 with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint  
32 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
33 matters relating to education concerning the work of the American Sign  
34 Language education working group.

35 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) Not later than July 1, 2030, the  
36 Department of Education shall issue to each local and regional board of  
37 education the guidance developed pursuant to subdivision (1) of  
38 subsection (b) of section 1 of this act to ensure consistent  
39 implementation of the American Sign Language portion of the world  
40 languages curriculum required pursuant to section 10-16b of the general  
41 statutes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

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Section 1	<i>January 1, 2027</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Section 1(a), "which shall consist" was changed to "that consists" and in Section 1(b)(2), "includes, but is not limited to" was changed to "include, at a minimum" for clarity.

**ED**            *Joint Favorable Subst. C/R*

APP

**APP**            *Joint Favorable Subst.*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

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**OFA Fiscal Note****State Impact:** None**Municipal Impact:** None**Explanation**

The bill, which establishes an American Sign Language working group, has no fiscal impact as the working group has the necessary expertise to carry out the requirements of the bill.

**The Out Years****State Impact:** None**Municipal Impact:** None

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**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.

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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)