



*The Pursuit of
Professional Excellence*

April 4, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The National Association of Interpreters in Education (NAIE) acknowledges that this is a challenging time for everyone. Advocacy efforts are needed now, more than ever, to ensure that students who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind (D/HH/DB) have continued access to education. While the current situation is not ideal, NAIE has compiled [resources](#) to support educational interpreters in this transition. Patience, flexibility, and continued dialogue with families, educators, and school districts will be essential during this time.

It can be difficult to put ourselves in the shoes of administrators who are addressing a multitude of challenges during this time. We must prioritize informing school districts about ways educational interpreters can contribute to communication access for thousands of D/HH/DB students as we adapt to virtual education. NAIE's **Memo of Guidance for Administrators: Continuing Educational Interpreting Services** can be shared to further validate the need for maintaining services.

When approaching administration, it will be most effective to do so from the standpoint of offering assistance, not only to the students with whom you work, but also to their peers, educators, families, and the program as a whole. Advocating for D/HH/DB students in ways that are tactful, respectful, and effective is critical.

Consider the following shifts when prioritizing your roles and responsibilities:

- **Preparation for interpreting-related tasks** such as securing resources, mastering technology, and consulting with educators and families regarding accessibility strategies
- **Simultaneous (real-time), consecutive (recorded), and on-call** interpreting for all audible and printed content, including opportunities for interaction and self-directed materials
- **Collecting and creating supplementary resources** in sign language, such as children's stories and novel chapters
- **Informal sign language instruction** and support for students, educators, and families
- **Assisting with other accessibility-related tasks**, such as captioning videos
- Participation in **professional development activities**

Once accessibility strategies have been established and successfully implemented, time at home can be used to contribute to larger projects such as: developing and/or updating interpreting-related policies and resources (e.g., educational interpreter handbook), participating in mentoring programs, and implementing customized professional development plans.

We want to emphatically reiterate our appreciation for your steadfast and unique support for students, educators, and families during this time. Through our [COVID-19 webpage](#), we will continue to provide guidance, relevant resources, and tools to continue your essential services. For state-specific considerations, please connect with your [NAIE State Ambassador](#) or consider becoming one yourself! For additional questions please contact info@naiedu.org.

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