



January 17, 2023

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

RECOMMENDATION:

That the School Committee approve the creation of a 1.0 FTE Certified Educational ASL Interpreter position. The proposed annual salary range for the new position is \$58,078 to \$66,375. The position will be a full time, 10 month position. The funding source for this new position will be through the reduction of a 1.0 FTE reserve (vacant) paraprofessional position. **The net impact on the FY 2023 Adopted Budget is \$0.00.**

DESCRIPTION: CRLS has two full-time American Sign Language teachers who are Deaf and require interpretation to participate in a variety of required meetings and activities. A detailed workplace accommodation plan for both ASL teachers lists events throughout the year that require interpretation. The proposed new position will provide the required interpretation services for these staff members. ***See attached supplemental information for additional details***

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Each year as part of the budget development process, the district budgets reserve teacher and paraprofessional positions in order to respond to enrollment required staffing needs. Reserve positions remain vacant until a need is identified. Currently the district has 2.0 FTE reserve paraprofessional positions and 1.7 FTE reserve teacher FTEs remaining. As part of this proposal, the district will decrease the number of remaining reserve paraprofessional positions by 1.0. Each reserve paraprofessional position is budgeted at \$37,000 in FY 2023. This budgeted amount is sufficient to fund this position's salary for the remainder of the current fiscal year. The full year salary will be budgeted in FY 2024.

SUPPORTING DATA

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY: Section G, File GCA..."All professional staff positions in the school district will be created initially by the School Committee..."

BUDGET REFERENCE:

Account Code	Salaries, Wages and Benefits	FTE
51116- Paraprofessionals Salaries	(\$37,000)	(1.0)
51117-Other Full-Time Salaries	\$37,000	1.0
Net Change	\$0	0.0

Respectfully Submitted,

Victoria L. Greer, PhD
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 Superintendent of Schools

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Certified Educational ASL Interpreter

Background & Justification:

CRLS has two full-time American Sign Language (ASL) teachers who are Deaf and require interpretation to participate in parent conferences, IEP meetings, required faculty, department and other meetings. CRLS has offered ASL for eight years. Since the CRLS ASL program continues to see increased student enrollment, a second ASL teacher who initially taught at HSEP has now moved to CRLS. A detailed workplace accommodation plan exists for both ASL teachers that lists events throughout the year that require interpretation.

Currently, the World Language Coordinator and CRLS staff collaborate with CPS Human Resources to request ASL interpreters working with the Massachusetts Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH). The process of requesting interpreters and having them arrive on time to complete their assignment has had mixed success. MCDHH maintains a list of approved interpreters, and so far, during the 2022-23 school year, our requests have been unfilled 30% of the time, even with 4-6 weeks advance notice. When the assignments are taken, it is often a different interpreter each time, with a wide range in skill level. When we have less than six weeks' notice to schedule an interpreter, our requests go unfilled 80% of the time. The FCC provides access to interpreters through Google Meet, Zoom and video phones, however this is not intended as a permanent, long-term solution and the quality of interpreting is very poor on these platforms, resulting in confusion and miscommunication. The high rate of unfilled CRLS interpreter requests is especially a problem with impromptu conversations that cannot be scheduled weeks in advance, e.g. a student who is struggling and needs a check-in with teachers. Since there are so many unfilled interpreter requests each year, the current CPS HR budget allocation to cover this cost does not reflect the true cost of fully implementing ADA accommodations for the two Deaf CRLS teachers.

Having an interpreter on staff is a common approach that districts utilize to address the difficulty in scheduling interpreters, and this results in improved instruction overall since the interpreter will allow teachers to communicate more consistently with parents, Deans, special educators, guidance counselors and others. During the time when the interpreter is not needed for a meeting, the interpreter will provide direct instructional support in the ASL classroom.