



South Carolina

EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETING CENTER

Project Report

(2021-2026)

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SCOPE OF SERVICES

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCSDE) contracted with Clemson University (Clemson) from June 1, 2021, to June 30, 2026 to implement the South Carolina Educational Interpreting Center (SCEIC). Due to Clemson University COVID-19 protocols, and after a national search, the SCEIC Project Director began employment with the SCEIC on 06 September 2022. With COVID-19 protocols, no staffing and limited resources in 2021-2022, there was little SCEIC activity for a six-month funding window.

The SCEIC managed four cornerstones of service outputs and maintained a general census of educational interpreters in South Carolina.

1. Assessments

The SCEIC provided educational interpreter skills and knowledge assessments by proctoring national Educational Interpreter Performance Assessments (EIPA) and the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment Written Test (EIPA: WT) throughout the state.

2. Education

To promote differentiated learning and targeted objectives, educational interpreters were segmented into one of three different tiers based-on their EIPA scores. The SCEIC further analyzed competencies data of all EIPA and EIPA:WT annual assessment results and made determinations on areas of professional development and educational need. In an effort to target learning, educational objectives were determined based-on the needs analyses and the SCEIC provided several professional education sessions per

academic year and offered an annual Educational Interpreter Immersion Institute.

3. Mentoring

Using the census regional model, the SCEIC used both face-to-face and at-a-distance mentoring using the Zoom platform.

4. Technical Assistance

The SCEIC provided technical assistance to the South Carolina Department of Education, local education agencies, individual educational interpreters and other stakeholders as needed.

These annual outputs were designed to achieve several short term and long term outcomes. Figure 1 identifies the inputs, outputs, and proposed outcomes of the SCEIC project.

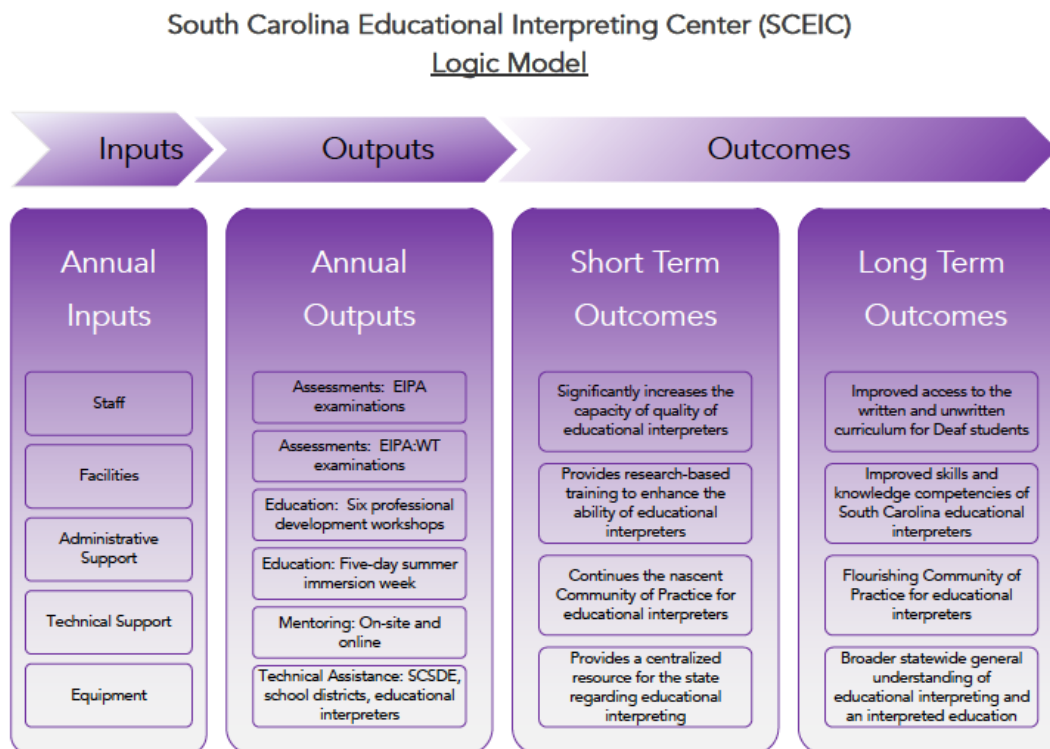


Figure 1. South Carolina Educational Interpreting Center Logic Model

The following sections report on the project's total outputs and then outcomes.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

Educational Interpreter Census

Self-reported survey data collected from South Carolina school districts (South Carolina Department of Education, 2016) indicated there were an estimated 135 educational interpreters serving students who are deaf across South Carolina.

Annually, the SCEIC sent a letter to each enrolled educational interpreter and school district special education administrators describing the SCEIC purpose and services and encouraging educational interpreters to enroll with the SCEIC. The SCEIC annually reviewed the number of enrolled educational interpreters by region and school district. This annual review noted educational interpreter shifts from active to inactive, new district hires, and educational interpreters moving between school districts.

The number of educational interpreters the census tracked fell between 69-112 educational interpreters working in the state. It warrants noting these figures are only an estimate as educational interpreters are not required to enroll with the SCEIC; as such these data are self-reported by either district administration or individual educational interpreters. Table 1 provides this annual census range.

Project Census Numbers

	2020	2023	2024	2025	2026
Number of Educational Interpreters	130	93	89	69	112

Table 1. Project census numbers

Assessments

The EIPA is a nationally recognized, psychometrically valid and reliable instrument, specifically designed to evaluate the two-way aspects of interpreting necessary to support language and cognitive development in elementary and secondary classroom settings (Schick & Williams, 1999, 2001). Educational Interpreter samples are assessed using a standard Likert scale from zero (no skills) to five (advanced) against 38 specific competencies across four major domain areas.

An Educational Interpreter with a skill profile around 3.0 or 3.5 is still not providing complete access to the information being conveyed (Cates & Delkamiller, 2021). Schick & Williams (2004) report that such interpreters are making numerous errors, omissions and distortions in his or her interpretation. Typically, these errors occur throughout the interpretation; the interpreter does not simply represent the most important information, omitting only what is less important. Basically, a child who has an interpreter functioning at this level is not receiving the same information as his or her hearing peers (Schick & Williams, 2004, p. 192). It is only until an educational interpreter has near an EIPA 4.0 that Deaf students are able to demonstrate any learning (Cates & Delkamiller, 2021).

Educational interpreters demonstrating a performance level less than an EIPA

3.0 were assigned to Orange Tier I. These educational interpreters

demonstrate only basic sign vocabulary and these limitations interfere with communication. Lack of fluency and sign production errors are typical and often interfere with communication. The interpreter often hesitates in signing, as if searching for vocabulary. Frequent errors in grammar are apparent, although basic signed sentences appear intact. More complex grammatical structures are typically difficult. Individual is able to read signs at the word level and simple sentence level but complete or complex sentences often require repetitions and repairs. Some use of prosody and space, but use is inconsistent and often incorrect. An individual at this level is not recommended for classroom interpreting

<https://www.classroominterpreting.org/EIPA/performance/rating.asp>

Again, these individuals are holistically unqualified and should not be permitted to interpret.

Educational interpreters earning between 3.0-3.4 on an EIPA assessment were assigned to Green Tier II, these interpreters can

demonstrate knowledge of basic vocabulary, but will lack vocabulary for more technical, complex, or academic topics. Individual is able to sign in a fairly fluent manner using some consistent prosody, but pacing is still slow with infrequent pauses for vocabulary or complex structures. Sign production may show some errors but generally will not interfere with communication. Grammatical production may still be incorrect, especially for complex structures, but is in general intact for routine and simple language. Comprehends signed messages but may need repetition and assistance. Voiced translation often lacks depth and subtleties of the original message. An individual at this level would be able to communicate very basic classroom content but may incorrectly interpret complex information resulting in a message that is not always clear. An interpreter at this level needs continued supervision and should be required to

participate in continuing education in interpreting.

<https://www.classroominterpreting.org/EIPA/performance/rating.asp>

Blue Tier III educational interpreters achieved between 3.5-3.9 and are generally able to demonstrate some

broad use of vocabulary with sign production that is generally correct.

Demonstrates good strategies for conveying information when a specific sign is not in her/his vocabulary. Grammatical constructions are generally clear and consistent, but complex information may still pose occasional problems. Prosody is good, with appropriate facial expression most of the time. May still have difficulty with the use of facial expression in complex sentences and adverbial non-manual markers. Fluency may deteriorate when rate or complexity of communication increases. Uses space consistently most of the time, but complex constructions or extended use of discourse cohesion may still pose problems. Comprehension of most signed messages at a normal rate is good but translation may lack some complexity of the original message. An individual at this level would be able to convey much of the classroom content but may have difficulty with complex topics or rapid turn taking

<https://www.classroominterpreting.org/EIPA/performance/rating.asp>

All educational interpreters with an EIPA 4.0 or above or national certification were considered Highly Qualified and can generally demonstrate

broad and fluent use of vocabulary, with a broad range of strategies for communicating new words and concepts. Sign production errors are minimal and never interfere with comprehension. Prosody is correct for grammatical, non-manual markers, and affective purposes. Complex grammatical constructions are typically not a problem. Comprehension of sign messages is very good, communicating all details of the original message. An individual at this level is capable of clearly and accurately conveying the majority of interactions within the classroom

<https://www.classroominterpreting.org/EIPA/performance/rating.asp>

To achieve the annual outputs and outcomes, the SCEIC provided varying levels of individual interventions as summarized in Figure 2.

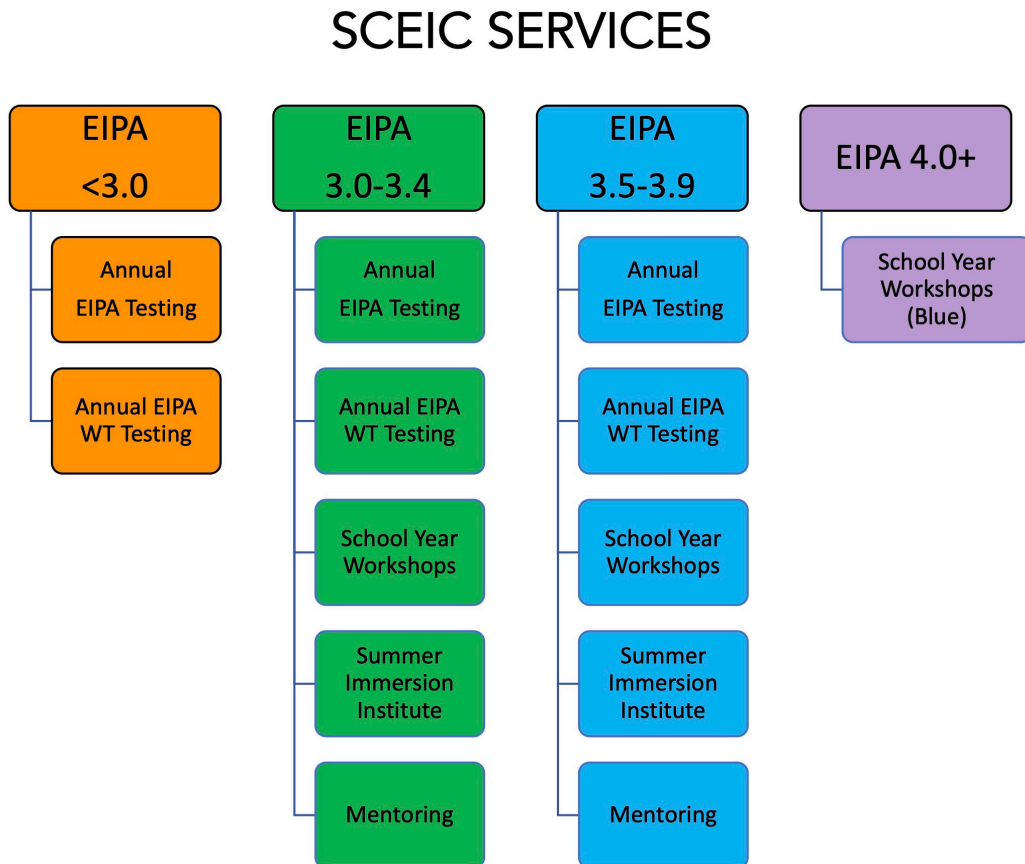


Figure 2. Tier Needs and Services

Assessments

EIPA Performance Assessments

The SCEIC provides a number of restricted EIPA testing slots per year and Table 2 shows the number of EIPA examinations administered each year.

Number of EIPA examinations administered per year

Year	Number of EIPA examinations administered
2023	24
2024	21
2025	24
2026	41
Total	110

Table 2. Number of EIPA examinations per year

Since its inception in 2016, the SCEIC has administered 368 EIPA examinations.

EIPA: Written Assessments

Educational interpreters must also be knowledgeable about their role, responsibilities, educational theory, the impact of an interpreted education on the student and their obligations as members of the education team (Patrie & Taylor, 2008). Further, educational interpreters should also know information about language development, reading, child development, the IEP process, hearing loss and hearing aids, Deaf culture, signed language, professional ethics, linguistics, and interpreting (Schick & Williams, 2004, p. 194). To assess this knowledge, essential to working with children, Schick, with the assistance of a variety of experts in the field, created the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment: Written Test (EIPA: WT).

Validity evidence for the EIPA: WT stems from content analyses and consists of 176 questions addressing information educational interpreters should know in the following core domain areas: (a) Student Development, (b) Cognitive Development, (c) Language Development, (d) Education, (e) Interpreting, (f) Linguistics, (g) Medical

Aspects of Deafness, (h) Sign Systems, (i) Tutoring, (j) Guidelines for Professional Conduct, (k) Culture, (l) Literacy, (m) Roles and Responsibilities, and, (n) Technology (Boystown National Research Hospital, n.d., EIPA content standards). Table 3 outlines the number of EIPA:WT examinations administered by year.

Number of EIPA:WT examinations per year

Year	Number of EIPA:WT examinations administered	Percentage Passing WT
2023	6	86%
2024	5	60%
2025	17	65%
2026	19	47%
Total	47	

Table 3. Number of EIPA:WT examinations per year

Since its inception, the SCEIC has proctored 163 EIPA WT examinations.

Education

Since 2022, the SCEIC has hosted 46 professional development opportunities for educational interpreters each ranging between 8-10 hours. These include SCEIC education sessions and the Educational Interpreter Immersion Week.

Learning objectives for each education sessions were selected based on SCEIC EIPA annual results. These objectives also aligned with the national empirical findings (Johnson, Brown, Taylor & Austin, 2014; Schick, Williams & Kuppermintz, 2005; Brown & Schick, 2011; Patrie & Taylor, 2008). Table 4 identifies each performance competency and the number of educational sessions that addressed each specific

competency by year.

EIPA Competencies State Mean and Education Sessions Addressing the Competency						
DOMAIN	COMPETENCY	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
ROMAN I	A Stress Important Words	2	5	7	4	18
	B Affect/Emotions	2	2	2	3	9
	C Register	2		2	4	8
	D Sentence Boundaries	1	2	1	3	7
	E Boundaries Indicated	1	4	2	1	8
	F Non-Manual Markers	2		2		4
	G Verb Directional/Pronominal	3		4	1	8
	H Comparison/Contrast	3	2	9	1	15
	I Classifiers	4	11	8	1	24
	J Grammar	6	2	5	7	20
	K Eng. Morphological Marking	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	L Mouthing					
ROMAN II	A Signs	1	18	7	2	28
	B Fingerspelling/Numbers	2	20	4	2	28
	C Register	1	18	8	3	30
	D Non-Manual Behaviors	2	26	10	3	41
	E Rate, Rhythm, Fluency	1	18	7	4	30
	F Sentence/clause Boundaries	1	20	8	1	30
	G Sentence Types	1	20	11	1	33
	H Emphasize Important Words	2		2	5	9
	I English Word Selection	2			2	4
	J No Extraneous Sounds	1			1	2
ROMAN III	A Amt Sign Vocab		28	6		34
	B Signs Made Correctly		28	11		39
	C Fluency		28	9	2	39
	D Vocab with System		2	3		5
	E Key Vocab Represented	1	5	7	4	17
	F F/S Production	1	5	5		11
	G Spelled Correctly	1	2	1		4
	H App Use of Fingerspelling	1	2	6	3	12
	I Numbers	1	2		2	5
ROMAN IV	A Eye Contact	1				1
	B Whole V-S	7	6	7	1	21
	C Whole S-V	4	1		1	6
	D Decalage V-S		5	2	1	8
	E Decalage S-V				1	1

F	Principles of Discourse Mapping	5	2	8	2	17
G	Who Speaking	2			1	3

Table 4. EIPA Competencies & Education Sessions Addressing the Competency

In all, the SCEIC coordinated statewide registration, attendance records, certificates of attendance and participant summative assessments for each educational session. Table 5 identifies the number of education events, hours of professional development, and the number of attendees by year.

Education Events and Attendees

Year	Number of Education Events	Professional Development Hours	Number of attendees
2023	12	96	30
2024	12	140	42
2025	10	121	42
2026	12	87	47
Total	46	444	161

Table 5. Education Events and Attendees

Since its inception, the SCEIC has provided 136 education events encompassing 1,239 hours of professional development.

Mentoring

The SCEIC provided mentoring services for educational interpreters using the Zoom platforms for both Tier II: Green and Tier III: Blue educational interpreters. Mentoring addressed: engaging in guided self-assessments and designing a tailored professional development plan (and addressing specific discrete competencies. Table

6 outlines the number of educational interpreters and hours per year of mentoring the SCEIC provided.

Mentoring Services Participants and Hours by Year

Year	Number of Educational Interpreters	Hours
2023	17	65
2024	10	78
2025	5	36
2026	8	45
TOTAL	40	224

Table 6. Mentoring Services Participants and Hours by Year

In addition to mentoring, the SCEIC also hosted four Community of Practice symposiums each year which met synchronously by Zoom for five weeks. Each session met for 12-27 hours in total. Topics were selected by participants and the SCEIC made these symposia available each year except for 2025 as there was a lack of participant interest.

Community of Practice Participants and Hours by Year

Year	Number of Educational Interpreters	Hours
2023	108	30
2024	147	30
2026	10	72
TOTAL	265	132

Table 7. Community of Practice Services Participants and Hours by Year

Taken together, the SCEIC has provided 355 hours of mentoring and Community of Practice symposia which were attended by 304 participants.

Since its inception, the SCEIC has provided over 869 hours of mentoring services.

Technical Assistance

In addition to general contact with school districts to promote SCEIC services and testing dates, the SCEIC has provided technical assistance for the Office of Special Education Services and several districts throughout the state. Most technical assistance focused on the following key areas:

- Addressing inquiries regarding an Educational Interpreter's role
- Clarifying misinformation and inquiries about interpreter qualifications and the South Carolina Interpreter Act
- Clarifying the requirement for the EIPA:WT even for nationally certified interpreters
- Describing the SCEIC
- Discussing the EIPA and the EIPA:WT
- Districts and agencies asking about turnaround times for the EIPA performance results
- Extensive *South Carolina Educational Interpreter Regulation* guidance
- Publishing *Educational Interpreter Survey* results
- Published and promoted SCEIC White Papers addressing:
 - *Deaf Students and FAPE*
 - *Educational Interpreters and FAPE*
 - *Educational Interpreters are NOT Communication Facilitators*
 - *Improving Educational Interpreter Competencies*
 - *What is a Language Facilitator*

– *Why Educational Interpreter Credentials are Vital*

- I Ready Testing and interpreting accommodations
- Inquiries from districts about educational interpreting pay scales
- Promoting SCEIC services, events and activities
- Providing interpreting resources for students of different backgrounds and cultures
- Recruiting educational interpreters and addressing vacancies
- Registering educational interpreters
- Requests for observation and mentoring from district personnel
- Several data requests from the Office of Special Education Services
- Sharing Supreme Court Decisions and their impact on an interpreted education
- Student assessment for spatial referencing and mapping

OUTCOMES

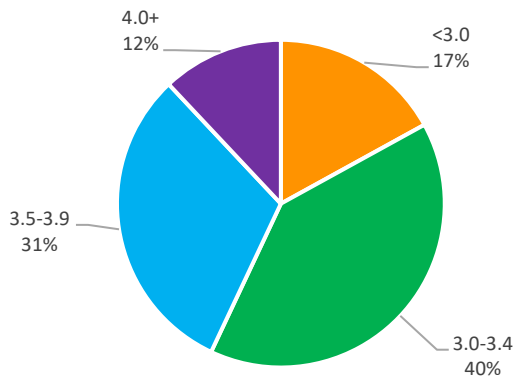
Assessment Outcomes

EIPA: Performance Assessments

Following national standards and using the EIPA as an overall benchmark to determine the capacity and qualifications of educational interpreters, it becomes readily apparent the qualifications of educational interpreters have improved over the life of the SCEIC project. Figure 3 showcases the mean state EIPA increase by score range between 2020 and 2026.

Project Beginning

2020



Project End

2026

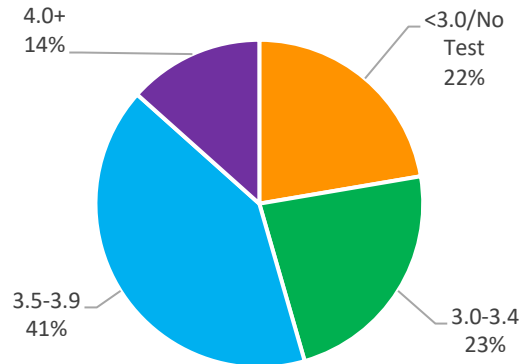


Figure 3. EIPA distribution: Project beginning and project end

Outcomes indicate the Orange cluster, those with no test or scoring below an EIPA 3.0 still remains high as numerous school districts still hire educational interpreters without any credentials (an increase of 5%). The Green cluster, those scoring between

3.0-3.4 has been reduced by 17% as those interpreters moved to the Blue cluster (those scoring between 3.5-3.9) seeing an increase of 10%. Lastly, the Purple cluster of interpreters scoring above an EIPA 4.0 has also increased by 2%.

In terms of the mean statewide EIPA score, at the beginning of both funding cycles of the SCEIC project, the mean statewide EIPA score was 3.2. At the beginning of the second funding cycle the mean was 3.4. At the end of this funding cycle the mean is 3.5. Figure 4 showcases the mean state EIPA increase by year.

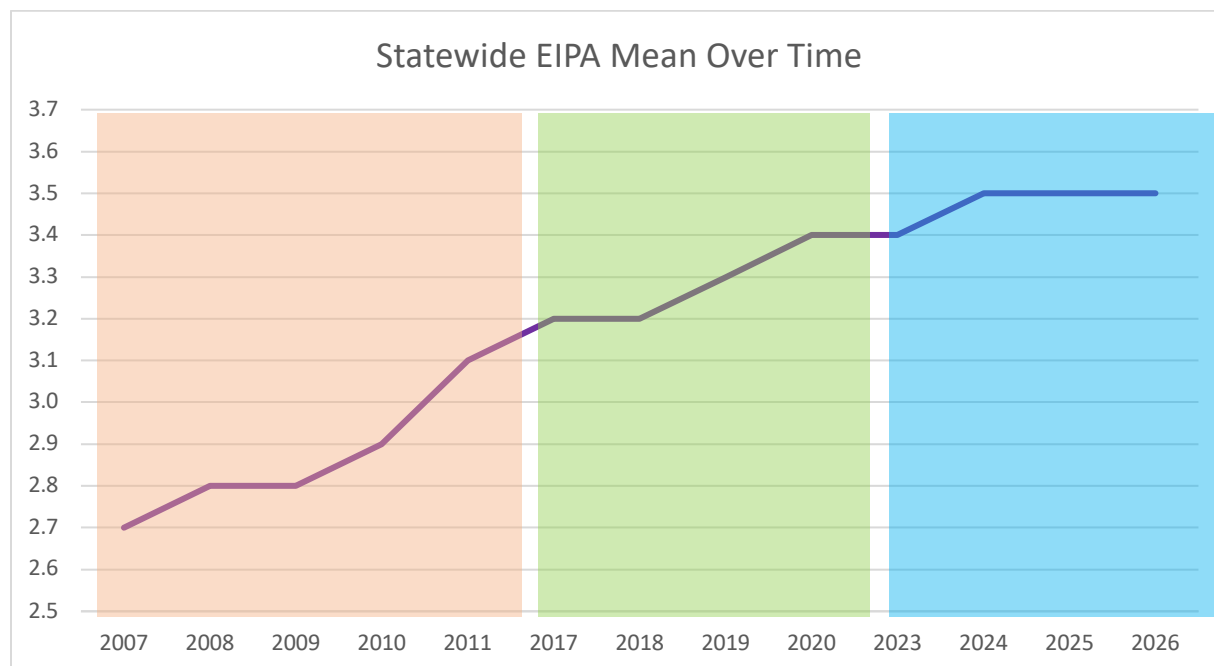


Figure 4. Mean EIPA Scores by Year

In all, using the Educational Interpreter census data, 12% of educational interpreters have not taken any EIPA assessment with the SCEIC, and an additional 10% have scored less than an EIPA 3.5.

Projected Tier Intervention Results

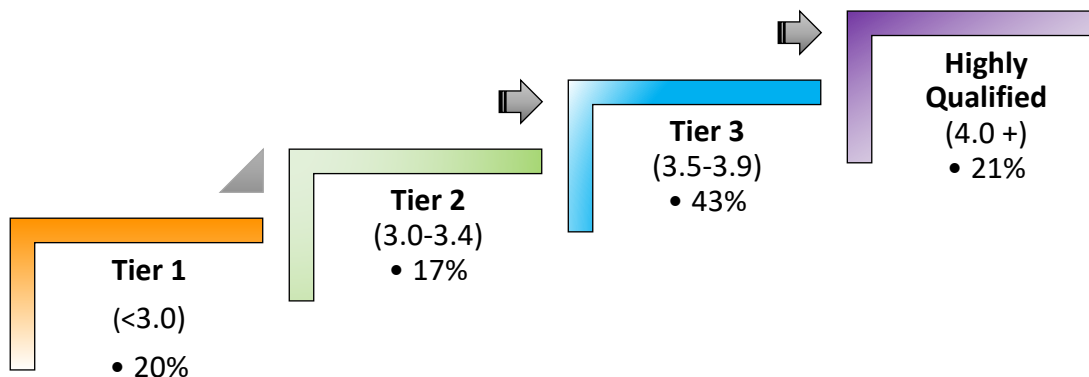


Figure 5. Projected Tier Intervention Results

The SCEIC projected there would be 20% of Educational Interpreter performing below an EIPA 3.0 and 17% between an EIPA 3.0-3.4. We also projected 43% of educational interpreters would be performing between EIPA 3.5-3.9 and the remaining 21% above an EIPA 4.0. At that time, Educational Interpreter regulation was not on the landscape.

Actual Tier Intervention Results

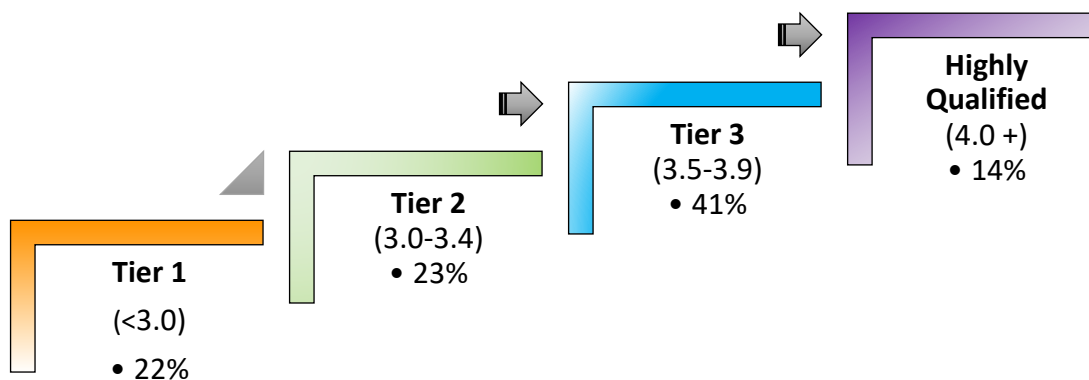


Figure 6. Actual Tier Intervention Results

At the end of this project, there are 22% of educational interpreters working below an EIPA 3.0; this includes those that have not taken any type of EIPA assessment with the SCEIC. We underestimated this by 2% and this is often the result of school districts continuing to hire those without any type of credential. Such educational interpreters are not able to provide access to a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and will not be able to work per regulation effective in Fall 2026.

The SCEIC projected 17% of educational interpreters would be performing between EIPA 3.0-3.4. There are 23% of educational interpreters working in this range, and the SCEIC underestimated this by 6%. Such educational interpreters are not able to provide access to an LRE and will not be able to work per regulation effective in Fall 2026.

There were a projected 43% of educational interpreters to be between an EIPA 3.5-3.9, yet 41% are at that current level. This was an underestimation of 2%.

Lastly, the SCEIC anticipated 21% of educational interpreters to perform above an EIPA 4.0 however, only 14% are actually at this level. This is an underestimation of 7% and often due to highly qualified educational interpreters leaving the field.

These data suggest while the entire population mean has improved over time, there remains much work to be done.

EIPA: Written Assessments

Since 2021, the SCEIC has proctored 47 EIPA: WT examinations. Of the 112 educational interpreters working in the state, 63% have passed the EIPA:WT.

There is a strong correlation between those passing the EIPA:WT and the Educational Interpreter’s EIPA score. Among those scoring above 3.5, 94.7% passed the EIPA:WT; those scoring below an EIPA 3.5, the pass rate was 77.8%.

Approximately 25% of the 112 educational interpreters in the state have not taken the EIPA:WT with the SCEIC.

Education Outcomes

In terms of specific competencies that comprise effective interpreting in an educational setting, we also note general improvements in educational interpreters’ performance across the state. Table 8 documents specific EIPA competency means, education sessions targeting that competency and mean change over time.

State EIPA Competency scores, education sessions, and mean change

ROMAN	Competency	2022 Mean	2023 Mean	2024 Mean	2025 Mean	2026 Mean	Ed. Session	Mean Change
I	A. Stress Important Words	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	18	0.1
	B. Affect/Emotions	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.3	9	0.0
	C. Register	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1	8	0.2
	D. Sentence Boundaries	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.5	7	0.1
	E. Boundaries Indicated	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	8	0.3
	F. Non-Manual Markers	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.0	4	0.5

	G. Verb Directionality/Pronominal	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.5	8	0.4
	H. Comparison/Contrast	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2	15	0.5
	I. Classifiers	2.4	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	24	0.6
	J. Grammar	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.6	20	0.8
	K. Eng. Morph Marking	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	L. Mouthing	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.9	4.9	-	0.4
ROMAN I MEAN		3.1	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	-	0.2
II	A. Signs (Recognition)	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.4	28	0.3
	B. Fingerspelling/Numbers	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.8	28	0.4
	C. Register	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.9	30	0.1
	D. Non-Manual Markers	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	41	0.2
	E. Rate, Rhythm, Fluency	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.2	30	0.2
	F. Sentence/Clausal Boundaries	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.1	30	0.2
	G. Sentence Types	2.7	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1	33	0.4
	H. Emphasize Important Words	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.8	9	0.1
	I. English Word Selection	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2	4	0.4
	J. No Extraneous Sounds	2.7	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.2	2	0.5
ROMAN II MEAN		2.8	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	-	0.3
III	A. Amount of Sign Vocabulary	4.5	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.8	34	0.3
	B. Signs Made Correctly	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	39	0.3
	C. Fluency	4.9	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7	39	(0.2)
	D. Vocabulary Consistent	4.2	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	5	0.5
	E. Key Vocabulary Represented	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.6	17	0.5
	F. Fingerspelling Production	4.0	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.4	11	0.4
	G. Spelled Correctly	4.1	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	4	0.6
	H. Appropriate Use Fingerspelling	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.3	12	0.3
	I. Numbers	4.7	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	5	0.2
ROMAN III MEAN		4.1	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4	-	0.3
IV	A. Eye Contact	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4	1	0.2
	B. Whole English to Sign	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.2	21	0.4
	C. Whole Sign to English	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.9	6	0.3
	D. Decalage English to Sign	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.9	8	0.2
	E. Decalage Sign to English	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.8	1	0.3
	F. Principles of Discourse Mapping	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.3	17	0.5
	G. Indicating Who Speaking	2.8	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.2	3	0.4
ROMAN IV MEAN		2.6	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	-	0.4

Table 8. EIPA Competency Scores by Year

It warrants noting many of the latter Roman IV competencies cannot be addressed until the other Roman competencies have been mastered. The focus on

specific competences is believed to have contributed to significant mean EIPA score improvements over time.

Mentoring Outcomes

Anecdotal participant reports indicate mentoring was a valuable, warmly received approach to not only improving the skills but also motivating educational interpreters. Educational interpreters appreciated the opportunities to have a personal skills diagnostic and a tailored professional development plan designed for them. We believe mentoring individual educational interpreters contributes to improved EIPA scores. We also believe providing landmark texts to educational interpreters has contributed to improved understanding of the educational interpreters' role, ethics, challenges, and pass rates on the EIPA:WT.

Technical Assistance Outcomes

As deafness is a low-incidence population, resources to support the provision of services to Deaf students around the state are minimal yet very needed (Fitzmaurice, 2017). The SCEIC argues the provision of intense technical assistance yields a larger effect (Dunst, C., Annas, H., & Hamby, D, 2019) and significantly improves school districts' understanding of the importance of high-quality services and promotes a better statewide understanding of educational interpreting and the impact of an interpreted education.

Overall Short Term Outcomes

As outlined in the SCEIC proposal, the following overall short term outcomes were achieved.

Significantly increased the capacity and quality of educational interpreters

The SCEIC demonstrably increased both the capacity and quality of South Carolina's educational interpreters over the 2021–2026 funding cycle. The statewide mean EIPA score rose from 3.2 at the start of the funding cycle to 3.5 by project's end. The Green Tier (EIPA 3.0–3.4) was reduced by 17%, with those interpreters advancing into the Blue Tier (3.5–3.9), which grew by 10%. The Purple Tier (EIPA 4.0+) also saw a 2% increase. These gains were achieved through 107 EIPA performance assessments, 47 EIPA Written Test administrations, 46 professional development events totaling 444 hours, and 223 hours of individualized mentoring — representing a sustained, multi-pronged investment in interpreter quality statewide.

Provided research-based training to enhance the ability of educational interpreters

All SCEIC education sessions were grounded in empirical evidence. Learning objectives were selected annually based on disaggregated EIPA competency data and aligned with the national research literature (Schick, Williams & Kupermintz, 2005; Johnson, Brown, Taylor & Austin, 2014; Patrie & Taylor, 2008). Over the project's life,

46 professional development sessions were offered across four years, each running 8–10 hours. Areas of greatest instructional focus — such as classifiers (24 sessions), non-manual behaviors (41 sessions), and grammar (20 sessions) — directly corresponded to competencies where South Carolina interpreters showed the greatest need. Mean competency scores improved across all four EIPA domains, with Roman Domain IV showing a mean change of +0.4 and grammar improving by a full 0.8 points.

Continued the nascent Community of Practice for educational interpreters

The SCEIC sustained an active Community of Practice (CoP) for educational interpreters through synchronous, multi-week Zoom-based symposia. Across 2023, 2024, and 2026, the CoP engaged a combined 265 participants for a total of 132 hours of collaborative professional dialogue. Topics were participant-driven, fostering ownership and relevance. While a 2025 session was not held due to insufficient interest, the CoP resumed strongly in 2026 with 72 hours of programming. Combined with individual mentoring, the SCEIC provided over 355 hours of mentoring and CoP activities, contributing to a professional culture of growth and collegiality among educational interpreters statewide.

Provided a centralized resource for the state regarding educational interpreting

Throughout the project, the SCEIC served as the primary statewide hub for educational interpreting expertise, serving the South Carolina Department of

Education, local education agencies, individual interpreters, and other stakeholders.

Technical assistance addressed a broad scope of critical issues — including South Carolina interpreter regulation guidance, FAPE obligations, EIPA and EIPA:WT processes, interpreter role clarification, pay scales, and student assessment accommodations. The SCEIC also produced and distributed multiple White Papers on topics such as Deaf students and FAPE, interpreter credentials, and language facilitation, further cementing its role as the authoritative centralized resource for the field in South Carolina.

Overall Long Term Outcomes

As outlined in the SCEIC proposal, the following long term outcomes were achieved.

Improved access to the written and unwritten curriculum for Deaf students

Access to quality interpreting is directly linked to Deaf students' ability to access both the written and unwritten curriculum. Research indicates that only when an interpreter reaches an EIPA score approaching 4.0 do Deaf students demonstrate measurable learning (Cates & Delkamiller, 2021). The statewide mean of 3.5, while representing meaningful progress, signals that continued work is necessary. Positively, the Blue Tier (3.5–3.9) grew by 10% and the Highly Qualified Tier (4.0+) grew by 2%, meaning a greater proportion of Deaf students are receiving more complete access to

classroom content than at the project's outset. Incoming regulation effective Fall 2026 — which bars interpreters scoring below 3.5 or lack national certification or an EIPA:WT pass from working in classrooms — is expected to further protect students' right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Improved skills and knowledge competencies of South Carolina educational interpreters

Competency-level data confirm broad improvement across all four EIPA performance domains. Domain I (expressive language production) improved from a mean of 3.1 to 3.4. Domain II (receptive interpreting) rose from 2.8 to 3.0. Domain III (sign vocabulary and production) improved from 4.1 to 4.4. Domain IV (cognitive and discourse processing) showed the most notable growth, rising from 2.6 to 3.0 — a mean change of +0.4. On the EIPA: WT, 63% of the state's educational interpreter population has now passed, with a 94.7% pass rate among those scoring above EIPA 3.5. The correlation between mentoring, targeted professional development, and score improvement supports the effectiveness of the SCEIC's model.

Flourishing Community of Practice for educational interpreters

The SCEIC's Community of Practice grew meaningfully over the project period, expanding from 108 participants in 2023 to 147 in 2024. While participation in 2026 was smaller (10 interpreters), those participants engaged for a notably deeper 72 hours. Taken together with individual mentoring, over 869 hours of mentoring services

have been provided since the SCEIC's inception. Participant feedback consistently indicated that mentoring and the CoP were warmly received and valued not only for skill development but for professional motivation and identity. The CoP represents an ongoing infrastructure for collegial professional growth that can continue to mature beyond this funding cycle.

Broader statewide general understanding of educational interpreting and an interpreted education

Through extensive technical assistance, public White Papers, Supreme Court decision briefings, regulation guidance, and direct engagement with district administrators and state agency personnel, the SCEIC significantly elevated awareness of what educational interpreting is, why it matters, and what it requires. The SCEIC's arguments — backed by the research of Dunst, Annas & Hamby (2019) — indicate that intensive technical assistance has a larger systemic effect, improving districts' understanding of high-quality interpreter services. The forthcoming Fall 2026 regulation, shaped in part by the SCEIC's sustained advocacy and education, reflects this broader shift in statewide understanding toward ensuring Deaf students receive genuinely qualified interpreting services.

SUMMARY

Access to qualified educational interpreting personnel is a top priority for South Carolina districts and students who are Deaf. Clemson University with the South Carolina Department of Education have completed five years of services through the SCEIC. In terms of outputs, the SCEIC has identified the educational interpreting population through an ongoing census; assessed educational interpreters' knowledge and skills competencies; offered competency targeted education events and mentoring; and provided technical assistance.

The accrued evidence indicates much of the SCEIC outputs have resulted in well-defined short term outcomes as the SCEIC has significantly increased the capacity and quality of educational interpreters (mean EIPA 3.5 score) and provided 46 research based professional development sessions to enhance the abilities of educational interpreters; formed and supported a Community of Practice for educational interpreters; and providing a centralized resource to the state related to educational interpreting (staff and website).

As Cates and Delkamiller (2021) found, better skilled educational interpreters lead to better learning outcomes for Deaf students. These better learning outcomes translate into improved access to both the written and unwritten curriculum. For the 2021-2026 funding cycle, this report demonstrates the SCEIC has effectively fulfilled

the contracted outputs, yielded tremendously positive results for the proposed outcomes and done so in a fiscally judicious manner.

It is clear the SCEIC outputs have helped educational interpreters in South Carolina achieve improved outcomes such as demonstrating improved interpreting skills, showing mastery of key knowledge competencies and developing a Community of Practice. However, in an effort to move beyond *de minimus* education for deaf students, a continued, coordinated effort to continue leading educational interpreters into improved skills continues to be needed. Without ensuring educational interpreters are significantly more capable, the provision of FAPE is questionable (Musgrove, 2011; United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 1992). Again, while great progress has been made for South Carolina, there remains much work to be done.

"We want to ensure our children get the best interpreting services possible, so they are successful in school and in life."

John Payne, Deputy Superintendent, South Carolina Department of Education, 2016.

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