

# **Educational Services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind Children in Washington State: Stakeholder Views**

**Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee**

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# Legislative Study Direction

“hire a meeting facilitator to conduct a series of meetings with a broad group of stakeholders to examine the strengths and weaknesses of educational services available to deaf and hard of hearing children throughout the state.”

“develop recommendations that would establish an integrated system of instructional and support programs that would provide deaf and hard of hearing children with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to be successful in their adult lives and the ‘hearing’ world of work.”

ESSB 6386, §607(12), Laws of 2006  
Emphasis added

# Stakeholder Views

## System weaknesses:

- Lack of coordination.
- Limited availability of professional expertise and services, particularly in rural areas.
- Widespread use of unqualified educational interpreters.
- Inconsistent provision of information and services.

Results of system weaknesses: inadequate services, social isolation, and poor academic outcomes for many students.

# Stakeholder Views

Some programs are viewed as strengths:

- Washington School for the Deaf
- Washington Sensory Disabilities Services at OSPI
- A few local schools/programs

However, there is no systematic way to ensure that all deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind children connect with needed services.

# Institute Recommendation

To reduce service gaps, direct a state agency to coordinate and oversee the quality and outcomes of local, regional, and statewide schools and programs that serve deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind students.

Full report available at: <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/07-06-2201.pdf>