

HB 106 -- LANGUAGE MILESTONES FOR HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN

SPONSOR: Barnes

This bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to develop language developmental milestones from existing norms for children from birth to 12 years of age that have been identified as deaf or hard of hearing. DESE must develop a parental resource for monitoring and tracking children through the milestone stages toward American Sign Language (ASL) and English literacy. The components of the parental resource are outlined in the bill and DESE is required to disseminate the resource to parents of deaf and hard of hearing children.

The bill further requires that DESE select and disseminate tools or assessments for educators to assess the language and literacy development of children and the bill provides specific guidance on the format, age range of development, and appropriateness for such tools or assessments.

Children that are in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) that do not demonstrate progress in expressive and receptive language skills as measured by educator tools or assessments must have the lack of progress explained in detail with specific strategies, services, and programs recommended by the IEP or IFSP team.

The bill provides that DESE shall establish an advisory committee of 16 members as outlined in the bill, before March 1, 2024, to solicit input from experts on the selection of the language development milestones as outlined in the bill. Before June 1, 2024 the committee will make recommendations to DESE, and DESE shall select the milestones before July 1, 2024.

Annually, starting with the 2024-25 school year DESE must produce an annual report that is specific to language and literacy development of children who are deaf or hard of hearing including, but not limited to, children who are deaf or hard of hearing and have other disabilities, from birth to 12 years of age relative to peers who are not deaf or hard of hearing.