

**House File 2349 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 2349

BY JACOBSEN

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act establishing the language equality and acquisition for  
2 deaf kids task force.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — LANGUAGE EQUALITY AND  
2 ACQUISITION FOR DEAF KIDS TASK FORCE.

3 1. The director of the department of education shall convene  
4 a language equality and acquisition for deaf kids task force  
5 for the purposes of doing all of the following:

6 a. Developing a resource for parents and guardians to  
7 monitor and track deaf or hard-of-hearing children's expressive  
8 and receptive language acquisition using American sign language  
9 or English, or both, and developmental stages toward English  
10 literacy.

11 b. Developing a framework for assessing children who are  
12 deaf or hard of hearing to determine their competencies in  
13 language and literacy skills for the purpose of ensuring they  
14 have the opportunity to achieve kindergarten readiness in an  
15 equitable manner. The framework shall consider children with  
16 congenital or acquired hearing loss, unilateral and bilateral  
17 hearing loss, all degrees of hearing loss from minimal to  
18 profound, and all types of hearing loss. When conducting  
19 analysis and making recommendations relative to the framework,  
20 the task force shall be impartial with regard to the language  
21 and modalities used to teach children who are deaf or hard of  
22 hearing.

23 2. The task force shall do all of the following:

24 a. Review and make recommendations relative to existing  
25 tools or assessments for educators to use to assess the  
26 language and literacy development of children who are  
27 deaf or hard of hearing. The tools or assessments must be  
28 standardized, norm-referenced, and validated and designed to  
29 do all of the following:

30 (1) Track such children's expressive and receptive language  
31 and cognitive abilities compared to peers who are not deaf or  
32 hard of hearing.

33 (2) Be used to establish or modify a deaf or hard-of-hearing  
34 child's individualized education program or individualized  
35 family service plan.

1     b. Determine how often the tools or assessments reviewed  
2 pursuant to paragraph "a" should be used for children from  
3 birth to age five.

4     c. Identify language development milestones for  
5 children who are deaf or hard of hearing by consulting with  
6 professionals trained in the language development and education  
7 of such children. The milestones shall be evaluated by the use  
8 of existing formalized, evidence-based assessments and designed  
9 for all of the following uses:

10     (1) As a resource by which parents, guardians, and educators  
11 can monitor and track such children's expressive and receptive  
12 language acquisition.

13     (2) To ensure that such children meet developmental  
14 milestones toward English literacy.

15     d. Identify procedures and methods for reporting language  
16 acquisition, assessment results, milestones, assessment tools  
17 used, and progress of such children to parents and guardians  
18 and to teachers and other professionals involved in such  
19 children's early intervention and education.

20     e. (1) Identify any changes to current state law or  
21 administrative rule deemed necessary to implement the  
22 recommendations of the task force.

23     (2) Recommend measures designed to ensure that state law  
24 and state and local policies adequately address the language  
25 developmental needs of such children.

26     f. Make any recommendations on any other related issues the  
27 task force deems appropriate.

28     3. The task force shall consist of nineteen voting members  
29 appointed by the director of the department of education in  
30 consultation with the state school for the deaf, the area  
31 education agencies, and the director of the department of  
32 public health, as follows:

33     a. One parent or guardian whose child is deaf or hard of  
34 hearing and proficient in American sign language and English.

35     b. One parent or guardian whose child is deaf or hard of

- 1 hearing and uses only spoken English.
- 2 c. One teacher of children who are deaf or hard of hearing  
3 whose expertise is in curriculum and instruction in American  
4 sign language and English.
- 5 d. One teacher of children who are deaf or hard of hearing  
6 whose expertise is in curriculum and instruction in English.
- 7 e. One early intervention specialist who works with infants  
8 and toddlers who are deaf or hard of hearing and use American  
9 sign language and spoken English.
- 10 f. One administrator of an early intervention program for  
11 children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- 12 g. One administrator of a school-age program for children  
13 who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- 14 h. One speech pathologist with experience working with  
15 children who are deaf or hard of hearing on the development of  
16 spoken English, with or without the use of visual supplements.
- 17 i. One school psychologist with experience working with  
18 students who are deaf or hard of hearing and with knowledge  
19 in conducting and interpreting cognitive assessments for such  
20 students.
- 21 j. Two representatives of an association that advocates to  
22 enhance the quality of life for Iowa children who are deaf or  
23 hard of hearing.
- 24 k. One licensed or certified mental health professional who  
25 works with children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their  
26 families.
- 27 l. One adult who is deaf or hard of hearing and is  
28 proficient in American sign language and English.
- 29 m. One adult who is deaf or hard of hearing who uses spoken  
30 English, without visual supplements.
- 31 n. The director of the department of public health or the  
32 director's designee.
- 33 o. The coordinator of the early hearing detection and  
34 intervention program of the department of public health or the  
35 coordinator's designee.

1 p. The director of the office of deaf services of the  
2 department of human rights or the director's designee.

3 q. The director of the department of education or the  
4 director's designee.

5 r. The superintendent of the state school for the deaf  
6 governed by the state board of regents or the superintendent's  
7 designee.

8 4. Four nonvoting ex officio members shall be appointed to  
9 the task force as follows:

10 a. Two members of the house of representatives, one each  
11 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and  
12 the minority leader of the house of representatives.

13 b. Two members of the senate appointed by the president of  
14 the senate and the minority leader of the senate.

15 5. When making appointments pursuant to subsection 3,  
16 preference shall be given, if applicable, to persons with deaf  
17 education certification or with early childhood education  
18 certification and experience working with children with hearing  
19 loss.

20 6. A vacancy in the membership of the task force shall be  
21 filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

22 7. The members of the task force shall elect a chairperson.  
23 A majority of the members of the task force shall constitute a  
24 quorum.

25 8. a. Public members of the task force shall serve without  
26 compensation, but are entitled to receive reimbursement for  
27 actual expenses incurred while engaged in the performance of  
28 official duties.

29 b. Legislative members of the task force shall be paid the  
30 per diem and expenses specified in section 2.10, subsection 6,  
31 from the funds appropriated under section 2.12.

32 9. The department of education shall provide staff support  
33 for the task force.

34 10. The task force shall submit its written report including  
35 any proposed legislative or administrative rule changes and

1 the task force's findings and recommendations to the general  
2 assembly not later than January 15, 2021.

3 EXPLANATION

4 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
5 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

6 This bill requires the director of the department of  
7 education to convene a language equality and acquisition for  
8 deaf kids task force, establishes the purposes and identifies  
9 the membership for such task force, and requires that the task  
10 force submit its report to the general assembly by January 15,  
11 2021.

12 The task force is charged with developing a resource  
13 for parents and guardians to monitor and track deaf or  
14 hard-of-hearing children's expressive and receptive language  
15 acquisition using American sign language or English, or both,  
16 and developmental stages toward English literacy, and for  
17 developing a framework for assessing children who are deaf or  
18 hard of hearing to determine the children's competencies in  
19 language and literacy skills for the purpose of ensuring they  
20 have the opportunity to achieve kindergarten readiness in an  
21 equitable manner.

22 The framework must consider children with congenital or  
23 acquired hearing loss, unilateral and bilateral hearing loss,  
24 all degrees of hearing loss from minimal to profound, and all  
25 types of hearing loss.

26 The task force must be impartial with regard to the  
27 language and modalities used to teach children who are deaf  
28 or hard of hearing and must review and make recommendations  
29 relative to existing tools or assessments for educators to  
30 use to assess the language and literacy development of such  
31 children; determine how often the tools or assessments should  
32 be used for children from birth to age five; identify language  
33 development milestones for children who are deaf or hard of  
34 hearing; identify procedures and methods for reporting language  
35 acquisition, assessment results, milestones, assessment

1 tools used, and progress of such children to parents and  
2 guardians and to professionals involved in such children's  
3 early intervention and education; identify any changes to  
4 current state law or administrative rule deemed necessary to  
5 implement the recommendations of the task force; and make any  
6 recommendations on any other related issues the task force  
7 deems appropriate.

8 The task force shall consist of 19 voting members appointed  
9 by the director of the department of education in consultation  
10 with the state school for the deaf, the area education  
11 agencies, and the director of the department of public health,  
12 and four nonvoting ex officio legislative members.

13 When making appointments of voting members, preference  
14 must be given, if applicable, to persons with deaf education  
15 certification or with early childhood education certification  
16 and experience working with children with hearing loss.

17 Public members serve without compensation, but are entitled  
18 to receive reimbursement for actual expenses incurred while  
19 engaged in the performance of official duties. Legislative  
20 members shall be paid the per diem and expenses specified in  
21 Code section 2.10. The department of education shall provide  
22 staff support for the task force.