



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF  
BUDGET AND PROGRAM PLANNING

## Fiscal Note 2025 Biennium

**Bill information:**

HB0619 - Generally language assessment laws for deaf and hard of hearing children (Keogh, Connie )

**Status:** As Introduced

- Significant Local Gov Impact     
  Needs to be included in HB 2     
  Technical Concerns  
 Included in the Executive Budget     
  Significant Long-Term Impacts     
  Dedicated Revenue Form Attached

### FISCAL SUMMARY

	<u>FY 2024</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2025</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2026</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2027</u> <u>Difference</u>
<b>Expenditures:</b>				
General Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Special Revenue	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,578	\$25,962
<b>Revenue:</b>				
General Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Special Revenue	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,578	\$25,962
<b>Net Impact-General Fund Balance:</b>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

**Description of fiscal impact:** HB 619 directs the Department of Public Health and Human Services (department) to collaborate with the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to select language development milestones and to develop and distribute a resource for parents to use to monitor language acquisition of deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

### FISCAL ANALYSIS

**Assumptions:**

1. HB 619 directs the Department of Public Health and Human Services (department) to collaborate with the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to select language development milestones and to develop and distribute a resource for parents to use to monitor language acquisition of deaf and hard-of-hearing children.
2. The bill also establishes a language development advisory committee and requires the department to provide administrative support to the committee. The department is directed to implement an assessment tool based on recommendations from the committee and expands the population to be assessed from deaf and hard-of-hearing children aged birth to 3 years to deaf and hard-of-hearing children aged birth through 8 years. The

department will incur costs for staffing the committee, providing for language services for committee meetings, and implementing the assessment tool.

3. Based on the requirement that the advisory council must have at least two members who are deaf or hard of hearing, the department anticipates providing qualified sign language interpreter services for advisory committee meetings per 49-4-507, MCA. Interpreter services are estimated to cost \$800 (\$100 per hour) annually based on the meeting frequency requirements identified in the bill.
4. Section 2(7) attaches the committee to the department for administrative purposes in order to provide staff support. Based on other similar administrative duties, it is estimated that staffing the advisory council will require 10% of an existing program specialist position for committee support. This will come at an opportunity cost to the department by displacing other currently assigned work and will be absorbed by the department.
5. There is a current tool administered by Part C contracted family support specialists for children aged birth to 3 years. Based on the costs of administering current tools, the department anticipates the annual cost to administer an assessment for the expanded age group would be \$20,800 (10% of the contracted family support specialist @ 20.00/hour for \$4,160 per contract) to assess, monitor, and prepare individualized family service plan (IFSP) using the tool.
6. Section 5(4)(a), requires an assessment to be administered to each child twice per year (one initial assessment and one update) by qualified professionals via one of five existing contractors. Section 5(2)(b) also directs the assessment tool to be used by a "qualified professional." Generally, an occupational therapist, school psychologist, or a master's degree level social worker would be required to administer the assessment at an estimated professional rate of \$60.00 per hour. The agency estimates 60 assessments being conducted annually, taking approximately an hour each, for a total annual cost of \$3,600. The estimated rate of \$60.00 per hour is based on an average hourly benefit rate for different types of qualified professionals.
7. Department costs of this legislation would be paid by funding from the department's Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part C funding.
8. DPHHS will compile and submit the annual committee report.
9. This bill is effective July 1, 2023, and terminates June 30, 2025, therefore, costs are only estimated for each year of the 2025 biennium.

**Office of Public Instruction**

10. The Office of Public Instruction estimates 62 children would need to be tested per year at a cost of \$250 per assessment which would be paid by local school districts.

**Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB)**

11. MSDB is not responsible for assessing students that are not campus students on the Great Falls campus.
12. MSDB estimates they would need five assessments per year at a cost of \$250 each. The agency will absorb the costs with the current budget authority.

	<u>FY 2024</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2025</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2026</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2027</u> <u>Difference</u>
<b><u>Fiscal Impact:</u></b>				
<b><u>Expenditures:</u></b>				
Operating Expenses	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL Expenditures</b>	<u>\$25,200</u>	<u>\$25,200</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

<b><u>Funding of Expenditures:</u></b>				
General Fund (01)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Special Revenue (03)	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL Funding of Exp.</b>	<u>\$25,200</u>	<u>\$25,200</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

<b><u>Revenues:</u></b>				
General Fund (01)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Special Revenue (03)	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL Revenues</b>	<u>\$25,200</u>	<u>\$25,200</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

<b><u>Net Impact to Fund Balance (Revenue minus Funding of Expenditures):</u></b>				
General Fund (01)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Special Revenue (03)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Effect on County or Other Local Revenues or Expenditures:**

**Office of Public Instruction (OPI)**

1. The OPI estimates the expansion of the age range to age 9 will add 62 children per year that must be tested.
2. While the final tools used will depend on the work of the language development advisory committee, the OPI estimates the additional assessment testing will cost school districts \$250 per test for a total of \$15,500. In addition, school districts will have to provide administrative support for the testing.

**Technical Notes:**

1. The bill states the committee will provide a list of approved tools, but the bill does not state who will purchase the approved tools and provide training to implement them.

 <hr/> Sponsor's Initials	3-1-23 <hr/> Date	 <hr/> Budget Director's Initials	2-28-23 <hr/> Date
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