

Language Access Plan

Purpose

This procedure guides staff in the provision of interpretation and translation services for parents and guardians identified with limited English proficiency.

Scope

This procedure applies to the Superintendent, administrators, staff, students and parents and guardians.

Procedure

1. The procedures in this Language Access Plan are intended to assist staff with establishing meaningful, two-way communication between the district programs and parents or guardians (“parents”) with limited English proficiency (LEP), and promote access for such parents to the programs, services, and activities of the district.
2. **DEFINITIONS**
 - 2.1. Persons with "**limited English proficiency**" ("LEP") are individuals who are unable to communicate effectively in English either verbally or in writing, or both, because their primary language is not English and they have not developed fluency in the English language.
 - 2.1.1. A person with LEP may have difficulty in one or more of four domains of language: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
 - 2.1.2. Staff are urged to remember that LEP may be context-specific; for example, a parent may have sufficient English language skills to understand, communicate and/or exchange basic information with a teacher, but they may not have sufficient skills to communicate detailed, specific information needed in a particular context, like an IEP meeting, a 504 meeting, or a student discipline hearing.
 - 2.2. "**LEP parents**" refers to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student or students enrolled in the district who have limited English proficiency, even if the student is proficient in English. This term does not include family members of the student other than their parents or guardians.
 - 2.3. "**Primary language**" means the primary language spoken by a student's parents, or the predominant language spoken in the student's home. Parents may have more than one primary language and/or dialect.
 - 2.4. "**Language services**" refers to a broad spectrum of services used or required to facilitate communication and understanding between speakers of different languages, and typically includes interpretation and translation services.

2.5. **"Interpretation"** means the act of contemporaneous communication between a speaker of English and a speaker of another language wherein the words of one person are communicated to others orally in a different language.

2.6. **"Translation"** means the written communication between a speaker of English and a speaker of another language where in the written words of one person are communicated to others in writing in a different language.

3. **PARENT IDENTIFICATION**

3.1. Upon student enrollment, schools will utilize a Home Language Survey and one-on-one interactions to identify parents who need language access services and the languages in which they may need assistance. The survey will be included in the enrollment packet provided to all parents, and a translated version (as available from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction) will be provided as needed.

3.2. Schools must determine within thirty (30) days of a student's enrollment the primary language spoken by the parents and, if such language is not English, whether the parent requires language services in order to communicate effectively with the school or district.

3.3. Schools will maintain an appropriate and current record of the primary language spoken by a student's parents in the student's cumulative file.

4. **PROVISION OF SERVICES: GENERAL GUIDANCE**

4.1. Each school or program office will provide free oral interpretation and written translation services to all LEP parents as needed to communicate effectively during any interaction with the district significant to the student's education.

4.2. All interpretation and translation will be provided by competent and fluent speakers of that language as demonstrated by certification of staff or the use of an approved vendor. The district will take reasonable steps to ensure that those offering interpretation and translation services have knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or concepts to be used in the communication at issue, and that interpreters have been trained in their role, the ethics of interpreting and translating, and the need to maintain confidentiality.

4.2.1. In the event that the district cannot provide an interpreter that is either certified or employed by a vendor to provide interpretation services after taking all reasonable steps to do so, the district will still take reasonable steps to ensure that the interpreter utilized is trained regarding the role of an interpreter, the ethics of interpreting and translating, and the need to maintain confidentiality.

4.2.2. If no interpreter can be present, district staff should utilize a language bank or other service, such as CTS Language Link, to communicate with parents.

- 4.3. Parents may voluntarily choose to decline the district's offer of an interpreter and choose instead to rely on an adult companion or relative for language and interpretation services, but school staff may not suggest this as an alternative to providing appropriate language and interpretation services.
- 4.4. Students and other minor children under the age of 18 may not serve as interpreters for school staff and parents during any formal or informal meeting or process.
- 4.5. **Interpretation Services**
 - 4.5.1. Whenever interpretation services are requested by the parents or when school/program staff can reasonably anticipate that services are necessary to meaningfully communicate, staff will utilize the service currently selected by the district for such purposes. Staff should contact the district administrative office for information about how to access services, and the district will make this information readily available.
 - 4.5.2. Interpretation services may be provided either at the location where the parent is seeking to communicate or by electronic means (telephone or video conferencing), whichever option the staff member, in collaboration with his/her supervisor, determines is the most efficient, effective and fiscally responsible.
 - 4.5.3. Upon three (3) days' notice that such services are needed, the district will provide interpretation services, as reasonably available, at public meetings organized or sponsored by the district (for example, board meetings).
- 4.6. **Translation Services**
 - 4.6.1. The district will provide a written translation of vital documents for each LEP group that constitutes at least five percent (5%) of the district's total parent population or 1000 persons, whichever is less. If the district is unable to translate a document due to resource limitations or if a small number of parents require the information in a language other than English such that document translation is unreasonable, the district staff should still provide the information to parents in a language they can understand, such as through oral interpretation of the document.
 - 4.6.2. "Vital documents" generally include those containing important information regarding a child's education, such as enrollment, student-specific information, academic performance, attendance and discipline policies, special services, parental permission for activities and programs, student handbooks, and complaint procedures.
 - 4.6.3. When document translation services are unavailable and/or cannot be done, such as in an emergency situation, the school or program will provide an attached notice to parents in the appropriate language that free translation or interpretation services are available and a list of resources.

5. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

5.1. District Administrators

- 5.1.1. The district will annually notify staff and parents of its language access policy and procedures concerning interpretation and translation services through school handbooks and informational posters.
- 5.1.2. The district will facilitate staff access to appropriate interpretation and translation services. Staff involved with registration and enrollment, certificated staff and other appropriate staff, as determined by the Superintendent or designee(s), should be cognizant of the rights of LEP parents to access services and take reasonable steps to learn the most meaningful and effective ways to communicate with LEP parents.
- 5.1.3. Staff will utilize the translated documents and templates, training resources and support information for school districts available on the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction website at www.k12.wa.us/Equity/Interpretation.aspx.

5.2. LEP Parents

- 5.2.1. District staff will take steps to ensure that, at the time of enrollment and other times as applicable, information regarding available interpretation and translation services and the district's complaint process is provided to any parent(s) when there is reason to believe that the student's parents may have LEP (for example, from results of home language survey or a parent's request for an interpreter). The district will take reasonable steps to provide information required by this section in the primary language spoken predominantly in the home.
- 5.2.2. To the extent practicable, the school offices and district website(s) should provide information in locally applicable languages concerning the rights of parents to translation and interpretation services under federal and state law and how to access such services.

Supporting Documentation

4218F1-Accessing Interpretation and Translation Services

4218F2-Language Identification Flashcard

4218F3-Tips for Working with Telephone Interpreters

4218F4-General Tips and Tools for Working with LEP Individuals (U.S. Dept. of Justice)

4218F5-Important Document to Translate Notice

We Can Help You in Your Language! – OSPI poster

Home Language Survey – OSPI; available in 37 languages

www.lep.gov

Document History

Action:	Date:
New	March 21, 2018
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Revised	