

# Language Access Plan to Ensure Effective Communication with Multilingual Students and Families

## Section 1: Policy Directives

This section sets forth the laws, standards, and operating principles that will govern the implementation of Discovery Public School of Faribault's language access plan.

### Policy Foundation

#### Federal

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted as part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.
- Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) requires states and school districts to provide equal educational opportunity to students learning English by taking appropriate actions to overcome language barriers.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) upholds language access rights for bilingual families by requiring that students be tested in their home language and Individual Educational Plans (IEP) be written in the appropriate home language. IEP meetings must be conducted in the family's home language using a highly trained and qualified interpreter.

#### State

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32 states:

- Subd. 1. Language access plan required. Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, during a regularly scheduled public board hearing, a school board must adopt a language access plan that specifies the district's process and procedures to render effective language assistance to students and adults who communicate in a language other than English. The language access plan must be available to the public and included in the school's handbook.
- Subd. 2. Plan requirements. The language access plan must include how the district and its schools will use trained or certified spoken language interpreters for communication related to academic outcomes, progress, determinations, and placement of students in specialized programs and services; and how families and communities will be notified of their rights under this plan.
- Subd. 3. Regular review. The board must review the plan every two years and update the plan as appropriate.
- Minnesota Learning for English Academic Proficiency (LEAPS) Act of 2014, Chapter 272, H.F. No. 2397, Article 1. The law has three principal goals for all English Learner (EL) students: 1) academic English proficiency; 2) grade-level content knowledge; and 3) multilingual skills development.

## Definitions

**American Sign Language (ASL)** – A visually perceived language based on a naturally evolved system of articulated hand gestures and their placement relative to the body, along with non-manual markers such as facial expressions, head movements, shoulder raises, mouth morphemes, and movements of the body.

**Relay** – Telephone accessibility services to people who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or speech disabled.

**Screen Reader** – Software programs that allow blind or visually impaired users to read the text that is displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display.

**Interpretation** – The act of listening to a communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language). Interpreter must retain the same meaning as the original message without omitting information, summarizing or otherwise altering the message and without adding the interpreter's own thoughts or opinions.

**Interpreter** – A person who provides interpreting services.

**Simultaneous Interpretation Equipment** – Equipment that allow a group of people to listen through headsets to information interpreted into their primary language. This method is most appropriate for large group settings and meetings where multiple languages are being interpreted simultaneously.

**Language Assistance Services** – Oral, expressive, written, and technological supportive services that help students and families communicate effectively with school staff. These services ensure students and families can participate fully in school services, activities, and programs.

**Limited English Proficient (LEP)** – Individuals whose primary language is not English and who have limited ability to communicate effectively in English, including writing, reading, speaking, and listening comprehension. Federal law uses this term to refer to the intended beneficiaries of language access services.

**Emergent Multilingual Speakers** – Individuals whose primary language is not English and who have limited ability to communicate effectively in English but are in the process of developing their English language proficiency. Language access industry leaders and advocates prefer the use of this term when referring to the intended beneficiaries of language access services.

**English Learner (EL)** – A status assigned to students whose primary language is not English, who lacks the necessary skills to understand, speak, read, and write in English but are receiving English language development instructions in a public school or charter setting.

**Home Language** – The language that is most commonly used in the home by members of a family, or the language that parents use when speaking with their children.

**Primary Language** – An individual's native tongue or the language in which an individual most effectively communicates.

**Sight Translation** – The oral interpretation of a written document. This occurs when an interpreter reads a document and then provides a complete oral interpretation of the information that it contains.

**Remote Interpreting** – Interpreting that is provided via telephone or video call.

**Translator** – A person who provides translation services.

**Translation** – The restating of written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language).

**Vital Document** – Materials deemed vital to ensuring access to educational services, programs, and activities, or contain information required by law to translate or provide in audio format.

## Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) provides guidance on the Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Educational Interpreters of Spoken Language that can be viewed on the [English Learner Disability Resources](#) webpage. This guide is only available in English because it was intended for language access practitioners.

## Section 2: The Plan

### Overview

Discovery Public School of Faribault's language access plan provides a blueprint for bringing the district or charter into compliance with state and federal language access requirements, including how the district or charter will increase its capacity to address language service and resource needs identified in its self-assessment.

This plan is also a roadmap that will help staff navigate the process of setting deadlines, priorities, and identifying responsible personnel for policy and procedures development; hire, contract, assess, and ensure quality control of language assistance services; provide notice of services; provide training of staff; and conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

### Language Access Plan

#### Description of Services

DPS provides language assistance services on an at-needed basis. We have members on staff that assist with interpretation and translation for Spanish speakers. For other languages online translation services are used for documents and interpretation services are engaged when necessary.

Students and parents can request assistance through the main office or any staff member. Students who have IEPs and their parents can also request assistance through their Case Managers and the Special Education office. Requests can be made in person, via phone, and/or email. Once a request has been made the appropriate staff member will contact them with next steps.

#### Implementation

DPS's Language Access Plan will be implemented by the administration and office staff; they will be responsible for overseeing, developing, and modifying the language access plan, and establishing and implementing operation procedures. Bilingual staff will also support as needed.

Administrative staff are responsible for training staff on the language access plan and resources available for staff to ensure language access for families and the public. Information about language access services will be promoted on the school website.

### **Identification and Assessment of Language Assistance Needs**

DPS will determine specific language assistance needs and preferences through a form provided to families at the beginning of each school year.

Office staff will gather the data and enter it into the student management system. Administrative staff will review the data to determine if any additional resources are required or if changes need to be made to the language access plan.

### **Timeline**

#### ***By January 1, 2026***

Update JMC with primary language data and communication preferences

Provide training to staff on how to use translation services available

Add language access services information to enrollment packet

Update student handbook with the language access plan

#### ***By May 1, 2026***

Add question(s) about language access to the end of year family survey

Translate end of year family survey

#### ***By August 2026***

Develop training and train staff on language access services and how to work with multilingual families

#### ***2026-27 School Year and Beyond***

Discuss at Annual school board meeting at the end of the school year to determine if updates or changes to the plan are needed

### **Notice of Services**

It is a requirement of Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32, Language Access Plan Required, that a district or charter's plan be included in their Parent Handbook.

Beyond the Student/Parent Handbook that is distributed annually, DPS will advertise and notify students and families about language assistance services via email. This will include information about available language assistance services and how they can request services. For those members of the public that do not receive email, the information will be available on the DPS website and in the school office. People can request services in the office or by calling or emailing the school

## **Training for Staff**

Training on the language access plan and how to work with multilingual families will take place each year during the back to school training days, annually.

## **Plan Maintenance**

**Discovery Public School of Faribault** will monitor the effectiveness of the plan by annual reflection meetings, and family surveys. The administrative staff, with the support of bilingual staff, will review and if appropriate, modify the language access plan.

## **Community Engagement and Partnership**

DPS is seeking to find community partners to help with the growing multilingual speaking student population. We will continue to build our program and look for community partners to help better meet the needs of our multilingual learners.

We will use parent and community feedback in our annual survey to help AFSA better serve our multilingual families. As our multilingual population grows, we need to grow as a district.

## **Emergency Communication Protocol**

DPS will follow our Crisis Management Plan and provide translated copies as needed. In cases where it is necessary to contact families in other emergency circumstances, DPS will use the preferred communication method as provided by families.

# **Section 3: Procedures**

## **Overview**

This section sets forth guidelines and steps for staff to coordinate, gather data, and deliver uniform services to students, families, and community members.

## **Procedures**

Staff will respond to telephone calls and in-person requests from individuals with language assistance needs, including the needs of those who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or speech disabled through the front office. The front office will determine what the need is and respond accordingly. The front desk staff has access to the student service system that will have the appropriate language information necessary to make sure the needs are met.

DPS will include primary home languages, and language access preferences in the student management system (SMS). This information will be collected via a form provided each year in the back to school forms and entered in the SMS by office staff.

Individuals and families with language assistance needs will be informed about available services through the DPS website and information available in the office in each building.

Families will be asked to complete a form each fall that indicates their preferred language and format for communication. For enrolled students and families this information will be included in the student management system.

When contacted by an individual with language assistance needs, staff should access the student management system to determine the appropriate method to respond to the communication.

When a DPS staff member needs to procure an in-person interpreter service they will contact administration. Administration will use district personnel to interpret or contact an outside agency to help with interpretation on an as needed basis.

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When translating documents, staff will use professionally translated documents when possible, (i.e. Minnesota Department of Education, Federal Department of Education, Standard Response Protocol, etc.). In cases where a professionally translated version of the document is not available EL and bilingual staff will assist.

If there are any complaints about language access, families are welcome to bring the issue directly to DPS's office staff/director.

Bilingual staff will support language assistance services when possible, but their first responsibility is to their defined job duties.

DPS will continue to evaluate our student population to better meet their needs. Administration evaluates the school's professional development on an annual basis to meet the needs of our students and families. DPS understands that we need to continue to ensure we give equal opportunity to all our families.

## Contact Information

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