

# Hutchinson Public Schools

*Excellence in Academics, Activities, and Character*

## 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 **Hutchinson Public Schools** 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.
- The 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

**Hutchinson Public Schools** will follow and adhere to the guidance provided by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) 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

**Hutchinson Public Schools'** language access plan provides a blueprint for bringing the district into compliance with state and federal language access requirements, including how the district will increase its capacity to address language service and resource needs. This plan is also a roadmap that will help staff navigate the process of setting deadlines, priorities, and identifying responsible personnel for policy and procedure 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

Resource	Description	When to use
Translation	<p>Translated copies of district documents are available in the district office and on the district website in the following languages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spanish</li><li>• Other Languages upon request</li></ul> <p>To request translation, contact the EL teacher at the respective building. Scheduling ahead is advised, but efforts will be made to accommodate urgent situations as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• District and school policies, documents, forms and records</li><li>• Documents requiring parent signatures</li><li>• Student academic updates</li><li>• School and classroom newsletters, events, and activities</li><li>• Special Education</li></ul>

<p>Interpretation</p>	<p>In-person interpretation services are available through district second-language speakers when possible.</p> <p>To request in-person interpretation, contact the EL teacher at the respective building. Scheduling ahead is advised, but efforts will be made to accommodate urgent situations as possible.</p> <p>Interpretation is available during staff hours per the school building schedule.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General School - family meetings</li> <li>● Individual Staff - family meetings and phone calls</li> <li>● Family Concerns</li> <li>● Bus communications</li> </ul>
<p>TransAct</p>	<p>TransACT provides written forms or notices required by ESSA, translated into Spanish, Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Vietnamese, and Karen</p> <p>All Minnesota districts and charter schools can utilize the TransACT website with free access. Individuals within the district can activate their free account at:  <a href="https://minnesota-doe.parentnotices.com">https://minnesota-doe.parentnotices.com</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● State-level documents and letters</li> <li>● General-purpose documents</li> </ul>
<p>Language Line</p>	<p>Language Line is a language services company that provides on-demand interpretation and translation. Audio interpreting/translating in over 200 languages and video interpreting in 36 languages.</p> <p>To request Language Line services, contact the Special Education Accountant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For Spanish language, contact our bilingual in-house staff whenever possible.</li> <li>● For other languages, Language Line can assist with phone calls, meetings, and written translation.</li> </ul>

\*Note: Students, siblings, friends, and untrained staff members are not considered qualified translators or interpreters, even if they are bilingual.

## Implementation

District administration, building administration, and EL teachers are responsible for overseeing, reviewing, and updating the Language Access Plan, and establishing and implementing operational procedures.

This Language Access Plan will be included on the district website and linked in the parent-student handbook. The Language Access Plan will be reviewed annually prior to the school year and any updates presented to the Board of Education for approval.

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

The Minnesota Language Survey is given to parents during the enrollment process to identify a student's language exposure. School staff will ask the parent/guardian if they need/prefer to have interpreted and translated information. Family preferred language is documented in the Student Information System (Infinite Campus). A spreadsheet is kept in the district that states which parent needs interpreter services and in what spoken and written language for further documentation.

## **Timeline**

ISD 423 Language Access Plan will be available as of the 2025-2026 school year. This plan will be updated annually to meet the needs of ISD 423 families.

## **Notice of Services**

It is a requirement of Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32, Language Access Plan Required, that a district's plan be included in their Parent Handbook. It will also be available online and upon request.

## **Training for Staff**

Training on the Language Access Plan is provided for all staff at new staff orientation and is reviewed annually in the employee handbook.

To request additional training or review procedures for effectively working with interpreters, staff should contact the building administrator.

## **Community Engagement and Partnership**

ISD 423 welcomes involvement and feedback from all families and community members in public district meetings, school events, and committees. The district will collaborate with community partners. This district will also link families to community resources and services as is helpful.

## **Emergency Communication Protocol**

The district will utilize Infinite Campus Messenger to notify families of emergencies such as weather-related school closures, scheduling changes and notices, public health announcements and event alerts. These notifications are in the form of email, telephone calls, and text messages. District interpreters make personal calls to families for health-related notifications. WhatsApp may also be used if other methods are not effective.

## **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Translation Services**

MDE recommends that when AI is used to translate documents and flyers, these materials should identify this method of translation and explicitly provide a callback number so students and parents can contact someone at the district office if they have questions.

## 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

The school is committed to ensuring effective communication with all individuals, including parents, guardians, students, and community members who have limited English proficiency or who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or speech disabled.

- Upon student enrollment, all families identify their home language in the Minnesota Home Language Survey. Families identifying a language other than English will be contacted to check their preferred language or form of communication for receiving school communications and information. This preference will be adjusted and revised based on family feedback.
- The district will document each family's language preference in Infinite Campus by creating a designated language preference flag. This flag will be used by staff to ensure that written and electronic communications are provided in the family's identified preferred language whenever feasible.
- Staff are responsible for reviewing language preference indicators in Infinite Campus before sending school communications and for following district procedures to provide translated or interpreted information as required.
- When receiving a telephone call from an individual who requires language assistance, staff shall promptly identify the communication need and access appropriate language services, such as a qualified interpreter or the Language Line service.
- For individuals who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or speech disabled, staff shall use appropriate communication methods, including The Language Line or other available supports (e.g., TTY, VRS, or captioned telephone services), in accordance with the individual's needs.
- The school district will proactively inform students, families, and community members with language assistance needs about the availability of free language assistance services. Information about these services will be provided in commonly spoken languages and in accessible formats through multiple methods, including enrollment materials, the district website, school handbooks, signage in school offices, and verbal notification when appropriate. Staff shall explain how to request these services and will take reasonable steps to promptly arrange appropriate assistance.
- Bilingual staff will be offered continuous education opportunities when available.
- All responses shall be respectful, confidential, and consistent with district procedures for providing language assistance services. Questions regarding appropriate response procedures shall be referred to a school administrator. Language Access complaints will be addressed promptly and will be rectified by providing adequate services to meet the needs of the families and the District.
- Any questions or challenges related to providing effective communication shall be referred to the school administrator.
- **Written Correspondence (Letters and Emails):**  
If correspondence is received in a language other than English, staff shall arrange for translation using district-approved translation services before responding. Responses shall be provided in the individual's

preferred language whenever feasible and in accordance with the language preference information documented in Infinite Campus or other district records.

- **Voicemails:**

When a voicemail is received in a language other than English or from an individual who requires communication assistance, staff shall use approved interpretation or relay services to understand the message and return the call. Returned calls shall include appropriate interpretation or auxiliary aids to ensure effective communication.

- **Timeliness and Quality of Response:**

Staff shall respond within standard district timelines and shall not delay or deny a response due to language or communication barriers. Students, family members, or untrained individuals shall not be used as interpreters or translators, except in emergencies when no other option is immediately available.

- **Documentation and Follow-Up:**

Staff shall document the need for language assistance as appropriate and follow district procedures to ensure ongoing communications are provided in the individual's preferred language.

When staff receive correspondence, including letters, voicemails, or emails, from an individual who has limited English proficiency or a communication access need, staff shall take timely and appropriate steps to ensure meaningful access.

## Contact Information

The Director of Special Services will oversee implementation of the Language Access Plan. Please contact the district office at 320-587-2860 to reach the Director of Special Services with any questions.

## Resources

Resources are available upon request.