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 Hastings 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.
- 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 or require additional assistance due to a disability. 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, such as special education and related individualized education programs under section 125A.08; ensure meaningful participation in the individualized education program process by families where the family speaks a language other than English or has a disability themselves; how families and communities will be notified of their rights under this plan; and a process to appeal the accommodations of the access plan if needs are not met.
- 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

Hastings Public Schools' language access plan provides a blueprint outlines how the district meets 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 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

Hastings Public Schools utilizes the following for language assistance services:

Language Line

- When to Use: Phone calls home
- Important Guidance: It is not recommended to use on-demand phone or video interpretation services for Individualized Education Program (IEP) or student behavior meetings. To ensure accuracy and clarity, in-person interpreters or scheduled video calls with interpreters from our approved interpretation providers should be used.

In-Person Interpreters (when available)

- Please contact the designated front office staff in your building to secure an in-person interpreter. Teachers and other district staff should not directly contact vendors.
- When to Use
    - Parent Teacher Conferences
    - District-Wide Initiatives or Meetings
    - MTSS/Child Study/IEP Meetings

- Important Guidance: Reliance on untrained students, siblings, friends, or staff to interpret is not acceptable. Students and untrained adults should not act as intermediaries in parent/guardian communication, as it may lead to misunderstandings.

Translated Messaging

- The district is selecting a new two-way translated messaging tool. Once adopted, it will send information to families by email and text in their preferred language and let staff send and receive text messages in that language.
- Until the new tool is in place, staff should use Language Line for calls home and contact their building's front office for help with written communication in a family's language.

TransACT

- TransACT provides written forms or notices required by ESSA
- All Minnesota districts and charter schools can utilize the TransACT website with free access. Individuals within the district can activate their free account at: https://minnesota-doe.parentnotices.com

Additional Resources

- The Hastings Public Schools website is also available in English and Spanish.
- Students and families may request assistance at any time through the main office, or through their child's teacher(s).

Special Education and IEP Meetings

For special education evaluations, IEP meetings, and any communication about a student's academic outcomes, progress, determinations, or placement in specialized programs and services, the district will use trained or certified interpreters from its approved providers. On-demand phone interpretation is not used for these meetings.

To support meaningful family participation in the IEP process, case managers will schedule an interpreter when the meeting is set, allow extra meeting time for interpretation, share key documents in the family's language before the meeting when possible, and check with the family at the end of the meeting that their questions were answered.

Families with Disabilities

The district provides communication support to students and adults who need additional assistance due to a disability. This includes American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for meetings and school events, Relay services for phone calls, and documents in formats that work with screen readers. Families can request these supports through the main office in their child's building.

Vital Documents and Languages

The district translates vital documents, such as enrollment materials, special education notices and IEP documents, discipline notices, and required ESSA notices, into the most common home languages in the district. As of the 2026–27 school year, the most common home languages other than English are Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Amharic, Mandarin. Families who speak other languages can request sight translation of any document through the main office.

English Language Development (ELD) Professionals

Licensed ELD teachers provide multilingual learners additional instruction in English language development to ensure students can access grade-level content knowledge. Comprehensive support includes:

Specialized Instruction - Teach targeted lessons to strengthen multilingual learners' English skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Progress Monitoring - Monitor and report students' language development and academic growth, ensuring their progress receives support and recognition.

Family Support - Help multilingual families navigate the school system by offering resources and guidance to reinforce learning at home.

Professional Learning - Provide teachers and school staff with strategies and resources to understand and meet the needs of multilingual learners more effectively.

Implementation

The Director of Teaching and Learning, as well as the Director of Communications, will be responsible for overseeing, developing, and modifying the language access plan, and establishing and implementing operational procedures. Families and staff with questions about this plan can contact the Director of Teaching and Learning at 651-480-7011 or ahodges@isd200.org.

Identification and Assessment of Language Assistance Needs

The district will review the languages spoken by families each year to determine needs and make adjustments as to interpreter availability.

Upon registration, parents/guardians will identify their preferred language and method of communication.

Enrollment staff are trained in procedures for accessing qualified interpreters to help parents complete enrollment paperwork if needed.

The preferred language and method of communication of parents/guardians will be visible to all staff in Infinite Campus.

Teachers are encouraged to inquire about communication preferences in their own communication with families.

Notice of Services

Hastings Public Schools will notify families via the Family Handbook, as well as at back to school events, and registration, about the availability of interpretation services. The district will reach out to families prior to conferences to schedule with interpreters, and make available translation services for any parent advisory council meetings as requested.

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

Concerns and Appeals

Families who feel their language access needs have not been met, or who disagree with the language assistance provided, may appeal using the following steps:

1. Contact the building principal, who will respond within 5 school days.
2. If the concern is not resolved, contact the Director of Teaching and Learning at 651-480-7011. The Director will review the concern and respond in writing within 10 school days.
3. If the family is still not satisfied, they may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent, whose decision is final at the district level.

Families may raise a concern in their preferred language, and the district will provide an interpreter at no cost at every step. Families also have the right to file a complaint with the Minnesota Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Training for Staff

Hastings Public Schools reviews the Language Access Plan with staff prior to each school year as part of Workshop Week. Staff hired after the school year begins review the plan as part of their onboarding.

Plan Maintenance

The Hastings Language Access Plan will be reviewed annually for languages offered in-person, use of services, and family familiarity with the availability. Modifications will be made as appropriate. As required by Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32, subdivision 3, the School Board will also review the plan every two years and update it as appropriate. This plan was adopted by the School Board on November 18, 2026. The next scheduled board review is Fall 2028..