

Language Access Plan

Centennial School Board



CENTENNIAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT 12

CONNECTING. ACHIEVING. PREPARING.

What is Language Access?

Language access means providing individuals who communicate in a language other than English with **timely and reasonable access to the same information and services** as English-speaking individuals.



Minnesota Statute 123B.32, Section 22:

Subd. 1. **Language access plan required.** Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, during a regularly scheduled public board hearing, a district 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 disability. The language access plan must be available to the public and included in the school's handbook.

Minnesota Statute 123B.32, Section 22:

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, and 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 programs 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.

Minnesota Statute 123B.32, Section 22:

Subd. 3. **Regular review.** The board must review the plan every two years and update the plan as appropriate.

Purpose

The global pandemic revealed **gaps and limitations in language access** practices, particularly demonstrated through the routine use of bilingual staff, cultural liaisons, educators, and bilingual paraprofessionals to provide interpreter services. The pandemic revealed that these practices **perpetuate educational inequities for bilingual students and will undermine statewide learning recovery efforts.**

Federal Law

Title VI of the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, 42 U.S.C. §2000 et seq.; Title VI, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., 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.

U.S. Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA); Federal law requires states and school districts to provide an equal educational opportunity to students learning English. States and districts must take “appropriate action” to “overcome language barriers.”

Trained vs Certified

- ❖ A **certified interpreter** is one who has passed a certification exam for spoken languages administered by an independent entity. Exam includes a rigorous language proficiency assessment in English and the target language. Only the courts and healthcare system have certification programs specific to their industries.
- ❖ A **trained interpreter** is one who has completed a training program in interpreting. Some programs are free and some cost a fee. These programs typically do not include language proficiency assessments in English and the target language.

Impact on Staff

Bilingual staff may continue to provide interpreter services, ideally only once all options outlined in a language access plan to secure a trained/certified interpreter have been exhausted.

Bilingual staff may request to complete an interpreter training program or an interpreter certification program, and schools are strongly encouraged to cover the cost.

District Systems Accountability Committee

**Presented to the District Systems Accountability
Committee at the April 15th meeting.**

Questions