

Language Access

The following procedures are intended to implement Policy 4218, establish meaningful, two-way communication between the District and parents with limited English proficiency (LEP), and promote access for such parents to the programs, services, and activities of the District. Language access in the Bellevue School District will adhere to the principles of an effective language access program for culturally responsive, systematic family engagement, which are:

- **Accessibility and equity.** This means that schools provide access to all; effective communication is a priority and is woven into the design of all programs and services.
- **Accountability and transparency.** This means that the language access program and decision-making processes at all levels are: Open, accessible, and usable to families; readily available; continuously improved based on ongoing feedback from families and staff; and regulated by a clear and just complaint process.
- **Responsive culture.** This means that schools are safe, compassionate places where each family's opinions are heard, needs are met, and contributions are valued. School staff are humble and empathetic towards families.
- **Focus on relationships.** This means that schools seek to understand families without judgment on an individual level, building trust through respectful relationships that recognize the unique strengths that each family and student possesses.

A. Definitions

1. LEP refers to "limited English proficiency".
2. "Primary language" means the primary language spoken by a student's parent or guardian, or the predominant language spoken in the student's home. Parents may have more than one primary language and/or dialect.
3. "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.
4. "Interpretation" means the process of understanding and processing a spoken or signed message and then faithfully sharing in another spoken or signed language.
5. "Interpreter" means an individual in a public school that interprets for students' families, students, and communities in educational settings outside the classroom, as defined in RCW 28A.150.010.
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.
7. "Qualified Interpreter" means an interpreter who interprets effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively using necessary specialized vocabulary.

B. Parent Identification

1. Upon student enrollment and periodically through a student's education, schools will utilize a survey to identify parents who need language access services and the languages in which they may need assistance. The survey will be translated into the most common languages spoken in the district and will be included in the standard enrollment packet provided to all District parents.
2. Schools must determine within thirty (30) days of a student's enrollment, the primary language spoken by the parent of each student enrolled in the school, and if such language is not English, whether the parent requires language services to communicate effectively with the school or District.
3. Schools will maintain an appropriate and current record of the primary language spoken by a student's parents, and such record will be available to the District.

C. Interpretation and Translation Services

1. Each school and District office will, consistent with this policy and procedure, provide free oral interpretation services to all parents who require language services to communicate effectively during any interaction with the District significant to the student's education. Additionally, each school and District office will provide free translation of vital documents as required below in Section 8.
2. All interpretation and translation will be provided by competent and fluent speakers of that language as demonstrated by certification or similar means. The District will take reasonable steps to ensure that interpreters and translators have the knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or concepts to be used in the communication at issue, and that they have been trained in the role of an interpreter or translator, the ethics of interpreting and translating, and the need to maintain confidentiality.

If 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 must 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.

3. Parents may voluntarily choose to decline the District's offer of an interpreter and choose instead to rely on an adult friend/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. 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. The District will facilitate staff access to appropriate interpretation and translation services to communicate with parents and guardians who have requested communication in a language other than English consistent with federal and/or state law and this policy and procedure. If

no interpreter can be present, District staff should utilize a language bank, resource line or online service to communicate with parents.

The following interpretation and translation services are currently available in the District:

Oral Interpretation

The Multilingual Learner Department is responsible for providing translation and interpreting services to students and their families. The following are examples of where oral interpretation is provided:

- Open houses
- Curriculum nights
- Grade-level transition
- Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences
- Parent/family meetings, including those for Special Education and Section 504
- Parent/family phone calls

Oral Interpretation Requests

Interpretation can be scheduled for parent/family meetings, evening activities, and phone calls to families. Before requesting outside oral interpretation, *Synergy* should be checked to confirm the correspondence/home language and place a phone call to the family to confirm the need for an interpreter.

For oral interpretation requests, please send requests to:

General Interpretation Requests	language.access@bsd405.org
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Include the following information in your request:

- Student name or Event
- Language(s)
- Meeting Date and Time
- *Teams* Meeting Link – if the meeting will be by Microsoft *Teams*
- Person Making Request and School Making Request
- Meeting Location
- Reason for Meeting

Language Line/Quick Phone Calls

For brief (20 minutes or fewer) phone calls or emergencies (i.e., health or medical emergency, suspensions/expulsions, etc.), the District has access to on-demand telephonic interpretation services through *LanguageLine Solutions* for brief phone calls. Calls should be made by District staff to (9) 1-855-585-2296 and will require the school code information available with the school office manager. *LanguageLine* can also be used through Microsoft *Teams* meetings, as can closed captioning and automated translation for immediate needs. If a more extended meeting/conversation is needed and the issue is not emergent, please access an interpreter through the standard process above.

For more information on requests for oral interpretation, see 4218P Exhibit A, Request for Interpretation and Translation.

Written Translation

The district maintains translations of vital documents, as referenced in Language Access Policy 4218, on the Bellevue School District website for each LEP group that constitutes at least 5 percent of the District's total parent population or 1000 persons, whichever is less.

Written Translation Requests

District Written Translations:

Written translation can be provided for District wide communications. Please send your request to language.access@bsd405.org

Include the following information in your request:

- Final copy of the document to be translated in an editable format
- Language(s)
- Person making request and/or school making request
- Reason for request

Translation requests should be made at least five (5) business days in advance and must have the approval of an administrator.

School-Specific-Translations – Written communication to families can be provided using various technology applications. For brief messages to be sent immediately, the text application *TalkingPoints* may be utilized for two-way communication. The Bellevue School District student information system *Synergy*, and the *SchoolMessenger* application can provide automated translations to families that are longer and more urgent. Schools may also use bilingual staff to provide written translation, provided that the individual is on the approved translator list. Bellevue School District also has contracts for translation services through several outside vendors. Schools can request information for these contracted services at language.access@bsd405.org.

For more information on requests for written translation, see 4218P Exhibit A - Request for Interpretation and Translation.

5. District staff will be informed of when and how to access interpretation and translation services available within the District and the staff member responsible for ensuring the availability of such services. District staff are asked to forward any questions or concerns to language.access@bsd405.org, or to obtain information or assistance regarding interpretation and translation services.
6. District administrators, including those involved with registration and enrollment, certificated staff and other appropriate staff as determined by the superintendent, will receive guidance and information regarding:
 - a. The rights of parents and guardians who have requested communication in a language other than English under state and federal law to language access services provided by the District.
 - b. the importance of meaningfully and effectively communicating with parents and guardians who have requested communication in a language other than English.
 - c. the most effective ways to communicate with parents and guardians who have requested communication in a language other than English regarding the District's available language

services.

- d. the importance of utilizing competent translation and interpretation services when communicating with parents and guardians who have requested communication in a language other than English.
 - e. the availability of translation and interpretation services within the District, whether through in-person interpretation, telephonic services, online services, or video conferencing.
 - f. the mechanisms and processes for accessing translation and interpretation services when working with parents and guardians who have requested communication in a language other than English, including ensuring the correct language service is being accessed, checking parents and guardians who have requested communication in a language other than English understanding once interpretation has commenced, and proper vetting of translations for audience-appropriate content; and
 - g. the process for reporting concerns or complaints.
7. Interpretation Services: Whenever requested by a parent or whenever school staff or District officials can reasonably anticipate that interpretation services are necessary to meaningfully communicate with parents regarding important information about their child's education or school activities, the District will provide interpretation services in accordance with this procedure.

Such interpretation services may be provided either at the location where the parent is seeking to communicate or by electronic means, such as telephone or video conferencing.

Upon three (3) business days' notice that such services are required, the District will provide interpretation services for the top four (4) languages spoken in addition to English at public meetings organized or sponsored by the District (e.g., School Board meetings).

Upon five (5) business days' notice that such services for any other languages (included sign language) are required, the District will provide interpretation services for the top four (4) languages spoken in addition to English at public meetings organized or sponsored by the District (e.g., School Board meetings).

8. Translation of Student-Specific Documents: The District will take all reasonable steps to provide parents, in a language they can understand, a translation of any document that contains individual, student-specific information regarding, but not limited to, a student's:

- health;
- safety;
- legal or disciplinary matters; and
- entitlement to public education, eligibility for special education services, placement in the English Language Learner Program (ELL), the Highly Capable Program, accelerated courses such as Advanced Placement, or any other non-standard academic program.

9. **Alternatives to Translation:** When translation for a document otherwise required to

be translated is unavailable or cannot be done, such as in an emergency, a school or District office will provide notice to parents in appropriate language(s) that free translation and/or interpretation services are available and how to request a free translation or interpretation of the document.

D. Providing Information to Parents

1. District staff and parents will be annually notified of the District's language access policy and procedure. Staff will be provided written guidance regarding how and when interpretation and translation services should be accessed, and such guidance will be updated as needed to reflect available services.
2. To the extent practicable, the District website will provide information in designated languages concerning the rights of parents to translation and interpretation services under federal and state law and how to access such services.

E. The Collection and Analysis of LEP Data

The District will annually collect and periodically analyze data related to language access and language access services, including:

- The language in which each student and student's family prefers to communicate;
- Whether a qualified interpreter for the student's family was requested for and provided at meetings reported in OSPI's Comprehensive Education Data and Research (CEDARS) student data system.
- Other data on provision of language access services, as required by OSPI.

The District will submit the information collected as required by OSPI. Further, the District will provide an opportunity for participants in each interpreted meeting to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the interpretation and the provision of language access services.

Discrimination Complaints

Discrimination based on national origin, which includes language and limited-English proficiency, is prohibited. The language access liaison/coordinator will communicate with the district's Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator. Anyone may file a complaint alleging discrimination based on language or the district's failure to provide language access services using the complaint process outlined in the district's Nondiscrimination Procedure 3210P.

Date: 10.22

