

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The district is committed to ensuring that all district-sponsored programs, activities, meetings, and services will be accessible to individuals with disabilities, including persons who have impaired hearing, vision or speech. The following procedure is intended to assist the district in taking appropriate steps to ensure that, related to such programs, activities, meetings, or services, any communication with students, families, applicants, participants, members of the public, and their companions with disabilities are as effective as communications with persons who have no disabilities. There is no fee or charge for the district to provide appropriate auxiliary aids or services.

Requesting Communication Aids or Services for a Program, Activity, or Event

Individuals who may need an auxiliary aid or service to participate in and enjoy the benefits of a program, activity, meeting, or event should contact the school or district office as soon as possible and no later than forty-eight (48) hours before a scheduled program or activity so that the district can make necessary arrangements. The district will make reasonable efforts to accommodate any requests made less than forty-eight (48) hours in advance of a program, activity, meeting, or event. For auxiliary aids or services specifically during a meeting of the Board of Directors, the request should be made directly to the office of the superintendent.

The district's website provides information on how to request auxiliary aids and services, ask related questions, or raise concerns. The following is the site for this information: skschools.org. If a person with a disability cannot access this format, this information will also be provided in an accessible format when necessary and upon request.

Determining an Appropriate Auxiliary Aid or Service

When the district provides an auxiliary aid or service necessary to ensure effective communication, the aid or service must be provided in an accessible format, in a timely manner, and in such a way as to protect the privacy and independence of any person with a disability. Determining an appropriate auxiliary aid or service must be individualized and made on a case-by-case basis, considering the communication used by the person with a disability; the nature, length and complexity of the communication involved; the content and the context in which the communication is taking place; the number of people involved in the communication; and the expected or actual length of time of the interaction(s). During this process, the district or school will give primary consideration to the auxiliary aid or service specifically requested by the person with a disability. "Primary consideration" means that the district will provide an opportunity for the person with the disability (or an appropriate family member) to request the aid or service that he or she thinks is needed to provide effective communication.

The district or school will honor the choice of the person with a disability unless:

1. The district or school can prove that an alternative auxiliary aid or service provides communication that is equally as effective as communication provided to a student without a disability; or
2. The district determines that such aid or service would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service, program, or activity, or would result in an undue financial and administrative burden to the district.

If the district refuses to provide a particular auxiliary aid or service for the reasons stated in number (2.) above, such determination must be made by the superintendent or the superintendent's designee who has the authority to make budgetary and spending decisions, after considering all resources available for use by the district in the funding and operation of the service, program, or activity. This determination must be issued in writing with the reasons for concluding that a requested auxiliary aid or service would cause such alteration or burden. Nevertheless, the district must take other steps that would not result in such an alteration or burden, but would still ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, the individual with a hearing, vision, or speech disability can participate in and receive the benefits or services provided by the district's program or activity.

If the district provides an auxiliary aid or service that is different than what is requested by the individual with a disability, the district will make a reasonable effort to provide notice to the requester in advance of the program, activity, meeting, or activity.

The district recognizes that communication and circumstances can change or evolve over time. If the communication with the person with a disability takes place over an extended period of time, the district or school should reassess the effectiveness of communications and seek regular feedback from the person with a disability.

For purposes of this procedure, "auxiliary aids and services" include a wide range of services, devices, technologies, and methods for providing effective communication, and may include:

1. Effective methods of making aurally-delivered information available to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, such as:
 - qualified interpreters (on-site or through video remote interpreting services)
 - note-takers
 - real-time computer-aided transcription services ("CART")
 - written materials
 - the exchange of written notes
 - telephone handset amplifiers
 - assistive listening devices
 - assistive listening systems
 - telephones compatible with hearing aids
 - closed caption decoders
 - open and closed captioning, including real-time captioning
 - voice, text, and video-based telecommunications products and systems, including text telephones (TTYs), videophones, and captioned telephones, or equally effective telecommunications devices
 - videotext displays
 - accessible electronic and information technology
2. Effective methods of making visually-delivered information available to individuals with visual impairments, such as:
 - qualified readers
 - taped texts
 - audio recordings

- Brailled materials and displays
 - screen reader software
 - magnification software
 - optical readers
 - secondary auditory programs (SAP)
 - large print materials
 - accessible electronic and information technology
3. Effective methods of enabling a person with a speech disability to communicate with the school or district personnel, such as:
- a word or letter board
 - writing materials
 - spelling to communicate
 - a qualified sign-language interpreter
 - taped texts
 - a computer
 - a portable device that writes and/or produces speech
 - telecommunication devices
4. Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices; and
5. Other similar services and actions.

Auxiliary aids and services will be provided for any school-initiated program, activity, meeting, or service, which may include:

- Parent/teacher conferences
- ESE/IEP/504 meetings
- Conferences or hearings involving student corrective action
- Planning meetings
- Interviews for district employment
- Staff Meetings
- Interactive meetings regarding accommodations
- Graduation ceremonies
- Field Trips
- School Performances or Sporting Events
- Board Meetings
- Website information, including on-line information regarding curriculum, policies, and Board materials and agendas.
- Reports of student grades and academic progress
- Parental alerts regarding school closures or events

Timely Manner

The district will determine an appropriate auxiliary aid or service as soon as possible following a request by a person with a disability and will likewise provide the auxiliary aid or service as soon as practicable. The district or school personnel working with the person with a disability (or an appropriate family member) will keep that person informed of when the auxiliary aid or service will be provided.

Interpreters

For purposes of this policy, a “qualified interpreter” means an interpreter who, via a video remote interpreting (VRI) service or an on-site appearance, is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. Qualified interpreters include sign language interpreters, oral transliterators, and cued-language transliterators. Interpreters certified to provide interpretation in court proceedings or during the delivery of health services are presumptively qualified to provide such services.

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act expressly prohibits the school or district from requiring an individual with a disability to bring another person to interpret for him or her. The district is prohibited from relying upon a person who accompanies a child or adult with a hearing, vision, or speech disability to interpret or facilitate communication except under two circumstances:

1. In an emergency involving an imminent threat to the safety or welfare of an individual or the public where there is no interpreter available, the school or the district may ask either a minor child or an adult to interpret or facilitate communication. In no other circumstances will the school or the district rely on a minor child to interpret or facilitate communication with a person with a disability.
2. Where the individual with the hearing, vision, or speech disability specifically makes the request, an accompanying adult may interpret or facilitate communication if the accompanying adult agrees to provide the assistance and the school’s reliance on the accompanying adult is appropriate under the circumstances.

Complaints and Compliance

The district has an ADA Coordinator who monitor’s the district’s obligations and compliance with Title II, and who is charged with investigating complaints of disability discrimination. Informal or formal complaints of disability discrimination should be made pursuant to the processes contained in Procedure 3210P (Nondiscrimination). Questions and concerns relating to communication with persons with hearing, vision, and/or speech disabilities may be directed to:

Will Sarett
Executive Director of Human Resources
Compliance/ADA/Title IX Coordinator
2689 Hoover Ave. SE
Port Orchard, WA 98366
360-874-7071

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