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LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

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Purpose



Orting School District recognizes that the population eligible for services includes individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Deaf / Hard of Hearing (DHH). This plan affirms our belief and value of strong family partnerships. Schools must communicate with all parents in a language they can understand. This includes meaningful communication of essential information including but not limited to policies and procedures, language assistance, safety plans, special education and related services, IEP and Section 504 meetings, grievance procedures, annual notices, registration and enrollment, report cards, conferences, and handbooks.



Definitions



Limited Language Proficiency (LEP)

For the purposes of Orting’s Language Access Plan, limited English proficient (LEP) persons are individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English.

Interpreter

An interpreter is a trained professional who is a neutral third party with the language fluency, interpretation skills, knowledge in specialized content areas and technical terminology to effectively communicate between two or more parties who do not share a common language.

Interpretations

Interpretation is the process of orally rendering a spoken language or signed communication from one language into another.

Translation

Translation is the written text converted from one language into written text in another language. All vital documents must be translated.

Machine Translation (MT)

Machine Translation or automated translation is a process when a computer software translates text from one language to another without human involvement. This should be utilized for informal conversations only. Google Translate is an example of this tool.

Deaf

Deaf (with an uppercase ‘D’) refers to an identity with its own culture, language and diverse communities; ‘deaf’ refers to a physical condition.

Hard of Hearing (HOH)

Hard of Hearing refers to individuals that utilize their residual hearing through the assistance of hearing devices or hearing aids.

All OSD families who are LEP or Deaf/HOH are entitled to language services at no cost. Orting School District shall provide free language assistance services to LEP or Deaf/HOH individuals as necessary or whenever an LEP or Deaf/HOH person requests language assistance services. Orting School District will inform LEP and Deaf/HOH populations that language assistance services are available free of charge.

Staff should not use minors, under the age of 18, to communicate with their parents who are LEP or Deaf/HOH, except for the limited purpose of identifying language or communication around scheduling of an appointment or contacting an interpreter.

Data Collection & Case Management System



The district tracks LEP person's language and need for interpreter services through Home Language Survey and Skyward Data.

Any language access issues should be raised to the language access coordinator who will discuss with the internal LEP Working Group any issues requiring review or action.

Language Access Protocol



Walk-in and Telephone

Identify the person's language. If the person cannot tell you his/her language, accompany the person to the Language Access Pamphlet/Sign prominently posted in each school office. Ask the person to look at the posted languages and identify his/her language. If the person cannot find his/her language or cannot read, please call LANGUAGE LINE, and the operator will assist you in determining which language the person speaks. Front office staff can also utilize POCKETALK PLUS VOICE/TEXT TRANSLATOR in each front office.

If the individual is Deaf or Hard of Hearing

In person meeting with the parent/community member and an appropriate sign language interpreter is necessary for in depth conversations and extended service.

Meeting with individuals who are LEP and DHH

1. Contact DYNAMIC LANGUAGE at least 2 days prior to the meeting
2. Introduce yourself to LEP individual and the interpreter.
3. Conduct a pre-visit conference with the interpreter. This can be conducted with the parent present unless sensitive issues need to be discussed. In the pre-visit conference, the staff member will (1) establish the style of interpretation for the meeting, (2) ask the interpreter for feedback if terms are not easily translated or not culturally appropriate, (3) indicate where the interpreter will sit, and (4) establish the context and nature of the visit.
4. Talk to the LEP individual and not interpreter. Only address the interpreter if asking a question directed to him/her, and when doing so, tell the individual why you are consulting with the interpreter.
5. Conduct a post-visit conference with the interpreter after the parent has left if you have any concerns about the interview. This is an opportunity to address sensitive cultural issues that may affect the individual. Also, it can help determine if there was any difficulty in interpreting.

Translations



The district is required to provide translations of vital documents. Vital documents currently include:

- Registration- Spanish
- Special Education Forms- All 14 District Languages
- Section 504 Parent Rights-Spanish
- Student Attendance Procedures
- Health Services Forms related to IHPs and health related exclusions

When sending an official letter to an LEP individual, DYNAMIC LANGUAGE will translate letters into the individual primary language. Some LEP individuals who are unable to read, they may prefer to receive letters in English to facilitate communication with others who may be assisting them. To request translation of any vital document or letter, please fill out the Effective Communication and Interpreter Request form and contact the Student Support Office. DYNAMIC LANGUAGE requires at least 1 week to complete the translation.

Staff can use GOOGLE TRANSLATE for informal letters and communication only.

Quality Assurance of Language Services



- Annually, the Equity and Student Outcomes Executive Director will meet with LEP parents to evaluate the effectiveness of the Language Access Plan.
- Annually review languages spoken in the school district to determine what vital documents will be translated.

Outreach to LEP Families

- DYNAMIC LANGUAGE will translate all vital outreach documents. Special Education forms are translated through IEPO.NLINE.
- Brochure and website will include a notice of the availability of free language services and interpreters.

Implementation & Compliance

At least once every two years, the district will conduct a needs assessment of the most frequently encountered languages, using updated Skyward demographic data and home language surveys.

Internal LEP Working Group

- Orting School District will institute an LEP working group with diverse participation from support and advocate staff.
- Language Access issues will be included on staff meeting agendas quarterly.

Training

1. **Orting School District's Language Access Plan** is part of each school's handbook, posted on the internet, and provided as a hard copy to staff members at hiring.
2. **Annual training to staff** will be provided on how to assess an individual's language needs, how to access language services, how to use interpreters to effectively communicate with LEP and Deaf/HOH parents and any other relevant topics regarding language access issues.
3. **New staff training** will be provided on the Language Access Plan and provide guidance on how to effectively communicate with LEP and Deaf/HOH parents as part of orientation.

Grievance Procedure

Any language access issues should be raised to the Language Access Coordinator.

GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WHEN USING AN INTERPRETER

This guide provides some suggestions that may make parent interviewing, facilitating by interpreters, easier, more efficient, and more effective.

A qualified interpreter brings language skills, interpretation ability and cultural sensitivity.



TIP! Recognize the value of an interpreter's advice that a question or statement may not be appropriate. The interpreter may have suggestions of how to reword a question to improve communication with the parent.

Speaking English does not mean thinking in English.



Allow the interpreter time to restructure information in his or her mind and to present it in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

Meet with the interpreter before and after a session



This resolves comments and clarification issues that arise during interviews. (*Examples:* emotional parents, confusion about a certain topic, cultural differences.)

TIP! Feel free to request the interpreter's advice on the best way to present issues, information, or questions to the parent.

Speak directly to and make eye contact with the parent using first person.



TIP! Remember that everything you say will be interpreted as it is said, so avoid statements like "tell her" (the parent) or "ask him".

Use the interpreter as you would a telephone.



Do not ask the interpreter to meet alone with the parent to prepare any documents or to discuss the case. The interpreter is your intermediary to communicate with your parent.

Avoid needless legalese, and wordiness.



TIP! Use simple sentence constructions and plain English that laypeople can easily understand. Avoid vague, generalized statements or questions when you want to elicit information. Interpreters may ask you to clarify some terms in order to interpret the meaning accurately.

Adjust your vocabulary level to that of the LEP community member.



TIP! Use concrete examples and visual images to express complex policy concepts. Breaking down legal concepts and using one sentence per idea will give you better control of the interview and will make interpretation easier.

Language is better understood when spoken *slower* and *louder*.



Plan ahead for the additional time needed to communicate with a parent through an interpreter.

Make use of any knowledge of the LEP person's language you may have at appropriate times.



Such as when greeting a parent. Many parents see your attempt as a gesture of friendliness and caring.

Relax and take your time.



TIP! The parent may be nervous. Keep in mind that to the parent, you and the interpreter are strangers.



Important Reminders



English is a rather direct and economical language.



Other languages, such as Spanish and some Asian languages, can be more figurative or indirect, and may require extra words to express meaning.

Be patient. Do not expect a literal translation.



Legal concepts or terms may not have exact equivalents in another language. Even when they do, the parent may not be familiar with the words. Therefore, sometimes a longer conversation is needed in a foreign language to communicate a seemingly simple point.

TIP! Encourage the interpreter and parent to ask questions.

Listen attentively to the parents' answers.



The interpreted answers will alert you to misunderstandings, miscommunication or errors on the part of the parent or the interpreter. It will also help you evaluate whether a clarification is necessary.

TIP! Make it a habit to think of legal ethics, consequences, and responsibilities. What if you missed or misunderstood an important fact? Is the parent expressing themselves as fully as they would in his or her own language?

TIP! Ask the parent to “teach back” important concepts or tasks that you ask the parent to do in order to ensure the parent’s complete understanding.

