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# LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

[District196.org /LanguageAccess](https://District196.org/LanguageAccess)

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# DISTRICT 196 LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

**More than 100 languages are spoken in District 196 homes.** Spanish and Somali are the most common after English, with about 9% of families speaking one of these two languages.

**In District 196, we are committed to ensuring that every family has equitable access to information.** Our Language Access Plan is designed to remove language barriers and empower families who prefer to communicate in a language other than English to engage in their children’s education. This plan supports our diverse community by ensuring families can participate in school communications, events, and decision-making processes, creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

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## PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

This Language Access Plan is intended to align with [Minn. Stat. § 123B.32](#) and [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), which require school districts to provide/utilize processes and procedures that effectively assist students and adults who communicate in a language other than English. The Language Access Plan provides information about the Language Access tools, processes, and resources available for students, families, and staff in District 196.

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# DEFINITIONS

**Bilingual staff** are fluent in multiple languages but are not trained interpreters. They can assist with simple tasks (helping with forms/relaying basic messages) but should not interpret or be pulled from primary duties.

**English Language Development (ELD)** is a program in District 196 that provides academic English language support to multilingual learners.

**English Learner (EL)** is a student whose primary language is not English and requires language support.

**Interpretation** is rendering a spoken or signed communication from one language into another.

**Language Access Plan** is a written document that describes how our district will provide services, processes and procedures to render effective language assistance to students and families who prefer to communicate in a language other than English.

**Language Services** refer to various services and resources facilitating communication between speakers who communicate in a language other than English, in a timely and meaningful way.

**Multilingual Learner** is a broad category that includes students who were never identified for English Learner (EL) status, students currently receiving ELD instruction, and those who used to have EL status.

**Preferred language** is the language in which parents or guardian request services, resources, and communications from schools and the district.

**Qualified interpreters** are trained professionals who follow the National Code of Ethics and Standards to facilitate communication between individuals who do not share a common language.

**Translation** is converting written text from one language into written text in another, maintaining the original material's intended meaning. For languages that rely on an oral tradition (i.e., Somali), an oral interpretation may be used in place of written translation.

**Vital documents** refer to materials essential to a family's ability to access District 196 services. [Full definition](#)

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## LANGUAGE IDENTIFICATION

### Parents/Guardians: Preferred Language

During enrollment, parents and guardians specify their preferred language, which is recorded in their profile within the district's student information system. This enables schools to identify families who need language assistance and provide appropriate language services. Families can update their preferred language at any time by contacting their school.

### Students: English Learner (EL) Identification

All families complete the Minnesota Language Survey (MNLS) during enrollment, which identifies a student's language experiences through parent or guardian responses. If the survey indicates a potential English Learner, the district administers a state-approved language proficiency assessment to determine whether English language development services are needed and identify the student with EL status. Families are notified in the required timeline if their child qualifies for EL services using the District's Parent Notification Form. The notification includes the amount of time and type of EL service the child receives and shares the right to refuse service. Detailed information about ELD services in District 196 can be found in our [Language Instruction Education Program](#).

# NOTICE OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

District 196 is proud to provide language services. Families are informed of language services through school newsletters, printed flyer, and school/district handbooks, webpages, and e-newsletters. Examples include:



## I Need Assistance Cards

Each school has small cards requesting assistance in the district's top eight languages. Families can present these cards to request language services.

## We Can Help You Posters

Signs informing individuals about their right to request interpreters or translation services are posted near each school's main entrance.

## Point To Your Language Signs

The top eight languages in our district are represented. Posters at each school's front desk also allow individuals to indicate their language, enabling staff to arrange appropriate language services.

**Language Services webpage:** Request language services and view the District 196 Language Access Plan.

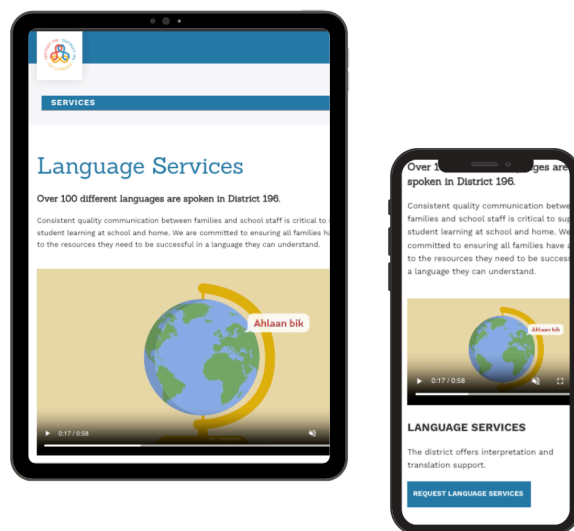
**English Language Development webpage:** Find information about English Learning identification, entrance and exit procedures, and other frequently asked questions.

**Cultural Family Advocates webpage:** Learn how Cultural Family Advocates support families with diverse needs.

**Spanish/Somali Resource Pages:** Spanish and Somali are the most common languages in District 196. Therefore, we have dedicated webpages for Spanish-speaking ([Recursos en español](#)) and Somali-speaking families ([Khayraadka oo Somali](#)) to provide essential information and resources, including:

- Forms to request an interpreter or assistance
- Calendars and maps
- Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook
- Enrollment procedures
- Health/mental health resources
- Nutrition services information

- Transportation information
- English Learner program information
- Guides to help parents use school platforms (Schoology, SeeSaw, EduTrack Connect, PayPams, Infinite Campus)



# INTERPRETATION



Interpretation from qualified interpreters is available for communications related to academic outcomes, progress, determinations, and placement of students in specialized programs and services, as well as conferences, enrollment, informational meetings, and more.

**District 196 offers three options for interpretation:** Over-the-phone interpreting (OPI), scheduled or on-demand video-remote interpreting (VRI), and in-person interpreting (spoken and/or ASL).

## HOW TO ACCESS INTERPRETATION SERVICES

### The Staff Portal includes:

- A list of qualified freelance interpreters and approved local interpreting companies
- Step-by-step instructions for booking/using interpretation services
- Guidelines, ethics, and standards

### Families can request an interpreter:

- In-person or through our online [Interpreter Request Form](#)

### 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.

**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.

# TRANSLATION

Translation services are available for requested documents in most languages. District 196 also proactively translates many vital documents into Spanish and Somali, including district policies, regulations, and procedures.



**Website Translation:** Families can view all district and school websites in their preferred language by selecting the "select language" option on the home page.

**Digital Communication Translation:** District 196 uses email and texting services that:

- Send information in families' preferred languages (via email and text).
- Allow families to choose their preferred language for viewing communications.
- Enables staff to send and receive text messages in the family's preferred language (Currently, only available for EL-identified students and families.)

## HOW TO ACCESS TRANSLATION SERVICES

### The Staff Portal includes:

- A list of qualified translators and approved local translation companies
- Guidelines, ethics, and standards
- Step-by-step instructions for translation services

### Families can request a translation:

- By contacting their school

### Important Guidance:

- Reliance on unapproved automated translation tools (such as Google Translate) is not recommended.
- When families cannot read written materials, oral interpretation may be necessary.
- Direct districtwide communications needs to [languageservices@district196.org](mailto:languageservices@district196.org)

# STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

District 196 staff are responsible for ensuring meaningful and timely access to information in individuals' preferred languages. This includes principals, assistant principals, teachers, office staff, counselors, cultural family advocates, school nurses, district staff, and all other personnel. District 196 Regulation ([801.12AR](#))

## STAFF TRAINING | Training to prepare staff to support multilingual families includes:

- In-person workshops
- Step-by-step guides
- Video tutorials
- New staff onboarding

## SPECIALIST SUPPORT | District 196 has designated roles to support multilingual families:

**Multilingual Communications Specialist:** District 196 employs a Multilingual Communications Specialist to ensure effective communication with families who prefer communication in a language other than English by:

- Coordinating interpreter and translation services district-wide.
- Managing systems for requesting and archiving translations.
- Identifying key communications for translation to support families.
- Leading a multilingual communications committee to enhance engagement.
- Providing expertise in multilingual communication strategies.

**English Language Development (ELD) Professionals:** Highly qualified, ELD licensed 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.

**Cultural Family Advocates (CFAs)\*:** District 196 employs Cultural Family Advocates to support our diverse community, helping families feel included and empowered to engage in their children's education. Their work includes:

- Facilitating Communication: Acting as a vital link between families and school staff, CFAs ensure important information is shared effectively in the family's preferred language.
- Supporting Multilingual Families: CFAs partner with schools to support the needs of multilingual families. CFAs foster a welcoming and inclusive environment where all families feel supported and connected.
- Promoting Cultural Understanding: By educating school staff about cultural backgrounds and unique experiences of multilingual families, CFAs help create a more inclusive and culturally responsive school community.

*\*Cultural Family Advocates (CFAs) are not professional interpreters or translators. In emergency situations, a multilingual CFA may provide limited language support, however, this does not replace the use of the district's interpretation and translation resources*

# LANGUAGE ACCESS COMMUNICATION

**District 196 actively shares the Language Access Plan to ensure families and staff are aware and have the training and resources to use it effectively.**

**Community:** Districtwide communications such as newsletters, emails, and websites.

**Staff:** All staff receive training through professional development sessions, video tutorials, and detailed step-by-step guides.

**Families:** Language services are offered to families who indicate a preferred language other than English. Information about Language Services is shared with all families through newsletters, printed flyers, and in school handbooks. Information about the Language Access Plan is also included in the Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook.

## LANGUAGE ACCESS REVIEW

**District 196 continuously reviews and evaluates the Language Access Plan to ensure it effectively meets the needs of our diverse community.**

Feedback on language services is collected from families and staff through surveys, focus groups, and meetings, providing valuable insights to refine and enhance the plan. The plan will be reviewed and updated by the District 196 School Board every two years.

We value your input on our language access services and are committed to providing high-quality support. If you have feedback or suggestions for improvement, or if you experience challenges accessing services, please contact us via email at [languageservices@district196.org](mailto:languageservices@district196.org) or by mail at District 196 District Office, 3455 153rd St. W., Rosemount, MN 55068.