



## Language Access Plan to Ensure Effective Communication with Multilingual Students and Families

### Section 1: Policy Directives

This section sets forth the laws, standards, and operating principles that will govern the implementation of Alexandria Public Schools' language access plan.

#### Policy Foundation

##### Federal

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted as part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. It prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.
- Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) requires states and school districts to provide equal educational opportunity to students learning English by taking appropriate actions to overcome language barriers.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) upholds language access rights for bilingual families by requiring that students be tested in their home language and Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) be written in the appropriate home language. IEP meetings must be conducted in the family's home language using a highly trained and qualified interpreter.

##### State

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32 states:

- Subd. 1. Language access plan required. Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, during a regularly scheduled public board hearing, a school board 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. The language access plan must be available to the public and included in the school's handbook.
- 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, determinations, and placement of students in specialized programs and services; and how families and communities will be notified of their rights under this plan.
- Subd. 3. Regular review. The board must review the plan every two years and update the plan as appropriate.
- Minnesota Learning for English Academic Proficiency (LEAPS) Act of 2014, Chapter 272, H.F No. 2397, Article 1. The law has three principal goals for all English Learner (EL) students: 1) academic English proficiency; 2) grade-level content knowledge; and 3) multilingual skills development.

## Definitions

**American Sign Language (ASL)** – A visually perceived language based on a naturally evolved system of articulated hand gestures and their placement relative to the body, along with non-manual markers such as facial expressions, head movements, shoulder raises, mouth morphemes, and movements of the body.

**Relay** – Telephone accessibility services to people who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or speech disabled.

**Screen Reader** – Software programs that allow blind or visually impaired users to read the text that is displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display.

**Interpretation** – The act of listening to a communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language). An interpreter must retain the same meaning as the original message without omitting information, summarizing or otherwise altering the message and without adding the interpreter's own thoughts or opinions.

**Interpreter** – A person who provides interpreting services.

**Simultaneous Interpretation Equipment** – Equipment that allows a group of people to listen through headsets to information interpreted into their primary language. This method is most appropriate for large group settings and meetings where multiple languages are being interpreted simultaneously.

**Language Assistance Services** – Oral, expressive, written, and technological supportive services that help students and families communicate effectively with school staff. These services ensure students and families can participate fully in school services, activities, and programs.

**Limited English Proficient (LEP)** – Individuals whose primary language is not English and who have limited ability to communicate effectively in English, including writing, reading, speaking, and listening comprehension. Federal law uses this term to refer to the intended beneficiaries of language access services.

**Emergent Multilingual Speakers** – Individuals whose primary language is not English and who have limited ability to communicate effectively in English but are in the process of developing their English language proficiency. Language access industry leaders and advocates prefer the use of this term when referring to the intended beneficiaries of language access services.

**English Learner (EL)** – A status assigned to students whose primary language is not English, who lack the necessary skills to understand, speak, read, and write in English but are receiving English language development instruction in a public school or charter setting.

**Home Language** – The language that is most commonly used in the home by members of a family, or the language that parents use when speaking with their children.

**Primary Language** – An individual's native tongue or the language in which an individual most effectively communicates.

**Sight Translation** – The oral interpretation of a written document. This occurs when an interpreter reads a document and then provides a complete oral interpretation of the information that it contains.

**Remote Interpreting** – Interpreting that is provided via telephone or video call.

**Translator** – A person who provides translation services.

**Translation** – The restating of written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language).

**Vital Document** – Materials deemed vital to ensuring access to educational services, programs, and activities, or that contain information required by law to translate or provide in audio format.



# ALEXANDRIA Public Schools

## Our Mission

To achieve educational excellence and to inspire a life-long passion for learning.

## Our Vision

To be an extraordinary school district that tailors learning for each child, by working together!

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## Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) provides guidance on the Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Educational Interpreters of Spoken Language that can be viewed on the [English Learner Disability Resources](#) webpage. This guide is only available in English because it was intended for language access practitioners.

## Section 2: The Plan

### Overview

Alexandria Public Schools' language access plan provides a blueprint for bringing the district into compliance with state and federal language access requirements, including how the district or charter will increase its capacity to address language service and resource needs identified in its self-assessment.

This plan is also a roadmap that will help staff navigate the process of setting deadlines, priorities, and identifying responsible personnel for policy and procedures development; hire, contract, assess, and ensure quality control of language assistance services; provide notice of services; provide training of staff; and conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

### Language Access Plan

#### Description of Services

Alexandria Public Schools utilizes TransAct for transferring documents  
320-762-2141

SpEd Forms – translation of IEPs and IFSPs  
866-796-1848

GVS Spanish language Solutions, LLC  
320-288-9784

Deaf Services Unlimited  
800-930-2580

Language Banc  
612-588-9410

Rhyen Buettner  
Haitian/Creole Interpreter  
320-298-7010

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### Alexandria Public Schools - ISD #206

## **Implementation**

The Director of Student Support Services and members of the Language Access Committee will be responsible for overseeing, developing, and modifying the language access plan, and establishing and implementing operational procedures. The Director of Student Support Services will work with Building staff (Secretaries/Administration), MARSS/Welcome Staff, EL staff, and staff within the Student Support Services to implement operations and procedures.

## **Identification and Assessment of Language Assistance Needs**

The EL staff and teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will work with the Director of Student Support Services to determine language assistant needs of students in written translation, oral interpretation, or remote versus in-person assistance. The EL staff will work with the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning to assess students' language levels and further work with the Director of Student Support Services to meet needs. The teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will work with individual education planning teams (IEP teams) and the staff within Student Support Services to meet the needs of students identified as needing American Sign Language (ASL). In addition, community resources within Douglas County will be utilized to assess additional support for families.

## **Timeline**

This plan will be reviewed annually. It will be revised, if needed, based on data collected by the Student Support Services department during its delivery of information and services to limited English speakers throughout the year. This language Access Plan is available on the Alexandria Public Schools website.

## **Funding and Procurement**

General education funding will be utilized for services to meet the needs of students identified as EL. In addition, state and federal special education funding will be utilized per students' individual education plans (IEPs), per qualification for services.

## **Notice of Services**

Per Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32, Language Access Plan Required that a district simplified plan be included student handbook and district calendar with link to the expanded document on the Alexandria Public Schools website.

Student and family language assistance can be requested during teacher-parent meetings, Individual Education Planning (IEP) meetings, parent advisory council meetings and enrollment meetings.

Notices will be posted in building offices with directions to access office staff.

## **Training for Staff**

Staff are trained in district policies at the beginning of each school year and when completing new staff on-boarding within the Alexandria Public Schools.

## **Plan Maintenance**

The district will update the plan on a yearly basis and examine policies and procedures that are relevant to the plan.

## **Community Engagement and Partnership**

The Alexandria Public Schools will engage community partners through school board meetings, building parent advocacy groups, connections through families and EL staff, and partnerships with Douglas County Social Services.



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## Emergency Communication Protocol

The Alexandria Public Schools Communicates Emergency situations through Blackboard messages that can be translated into other languages. In addition, information is provided to local broadcasting agencies for weather-related emergencies.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) Translation Services

AI is used to translate documents and flyers; the documents will include a call-back number for additional clarification of information.

## Section 3: Procedures

### Overview

This section sets forth guidelines and steps for staff to coordinate, gather data, and deliver uniform services to students, families, and community members.

### Procedures

#### VERBAL CORRESPONDANCE

Building Front Desk staff:

1. Identify the customer's primary language. Ask the individual to identify his/her language with a Language Identification Card provided by the front desk staff.
2. Move the customer to a place where he/she can communicate without interruption. Escort the individual into an available conference room.
3. Set up interpretation services for the customer by placing a call to the Language Banc at 612-588-9410 using a conference phone.

Calls from Non-English-Speaking Customers:

1. Identify the customer's primary language. When a non-English speaking individual calls in, ask him or her if they can identify the language they are speaking for you.
2. Connect with the Language Line. Let the caller know you will be connecting them to an interpreter service, and it may take a few moments, during which time they will be placed on hold.

Individuals will be informed of language assistance through posters in each building, phone calls, and through the welcome center (located at the District Office).

Staff will identify language needs through viewing posters in buildings, welcome center procedures, and individual conferences with families, students, and staff.

## **WRITTEN CORRESPONDANCE**

District written communication (emails, letters, correspondence) will be translated into the identified language per customer (family, student, staff, community members, etc.) request.

## **INTERPRETER SERVICES**

Building-level staff will procure interpreter students with the assistance of the Director of Student Support Services Administrative Assistant. The Deaf Services Unlimited will be utilized when an in-person option is not available.

## **TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS**

Documents will be translated per customer request with the assistance of the district's contracted agencies, AI within Sped Forms, and language access through the website. In addition, Transact will be utilized to provide documents for building and district procedures.

## **CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS**

Concerns or complaints can be directed to the Department of Student Support Services.

## **PROGRAMS**

Alexandria Public Schools has an English Learner program available at each building. The district has one full-time teacher of EL and one part-time teacher. In addition, the district collaborates with the Runestone Area Education District for part-time teacher and paraprofessional support. Each student identified as EL has an individual plan identifying needs, accommodations, and services. The plans are accessible through the student management system and provided to parents/guardians yearly.

## **Contact Information**

Michelle Bethke-Kaliher, Director of Student Support Services. [Mkaliher@alexschools.org](mailto:Mkaliher@alexschools.org), 320-762-2141 (X4297). Rose Krick, Student Support Services Administrative Assistant. [Rkrick@alexschools.org](mailto:Rkrick@alexschools.org), 320-762-2141 (X4298).

## **Resources**

Access the website for additional resources. [www.alexschools.org](http://www.alexschools.org)