

Family engagement through language access for multicultural families

Family engagement has long been identified as a key factor in students' academic success. When families actively participate by attending parent-teacher conferences, joining school events or simply talking about school at home, students benefit academically, socially and emotionally.

But how can we ensure meaningful engagement for multicultural families who are learning English?

The answer begins with equitable access to communication.



Language access: A cornerstone of family engagement

Through our Language Access Policy ([4218 Language Access - Diligent Community](#)), we are committed to providing equitable and culturally responsive two-way communication with our multicultural communities.

This policy ensures that families have full access to district programs, services and opportunities regardless of the language they speak.

Language is more than a tool for communication; it is the foundation of authentic partnership. By removing language barriers, we create space for families to engage meaningfully in their children's education.

"Thanks to interpreting services, I have been able to understand my student's academic progress and support my child's educational needs at home."

- Spanish speaking mom of a Redmond High School freshman student

Our in-house interpreter agency

LWSD is proud to have an in-house agency of carefully trained interpreters who provide services with an equity-centered lens aligned with our Family Engagement policy.

Our interpreter pool includes:

- **In-house interpreters (staff members):** LWSD staff members who provide interpretation services outside of their contracted work hours.
- **Guest interpreters (external contractors):** Professionals who offer flexible scheduling to meet the diverse needs of our schools and families.

As part of our commitment to excellence, we provide ongoing professional development throughout the school year. These training sessions ensure that our interpreters are well-versed in district policies, programs and services. We also invite specialists to present on relevant topics such as Special Education Services and Attendance, strengthening the quality and consistency of services provided to our community.

If we do not have the language you need in our in-house agency, we partner with qualified and approved local agencies to provide support.

Professional translation services

In addition to interpretation, our Language Access Policy includes translation services through approved

agencies. This ensures that vital documents and communications are accessible in families' home languages, further supporting equitable access to information.

How to request services

Interpreting services

- **By phone:** Parents/guardians can call their school and ask for an interpreter. The staff will put them on hold and connect an interpreter using our on-demand, over-the-phone interpreting services or they will call the parent back through our LWSD interpreters.
- **In person:** When parents/guardians come into a school building, they can point to their preferred language on the language poster found at the entrance of every school office. The school staff will connect an on-demand interpreter over-the-phone. *Pocketalk* devices can also be used for basic communication needs.
- **Email:** Parents can request interpretation services by sending an email to their student's teacher or principal for a scheduled meeting or event.

Translation services

- **Document translation:** Parents/guardians may request documents translated into their preferred language by contacting their student's school.
- **ParentSquare:** Parents/guardians are encouraged to download the ParentSquare app on their mobile device and register to receive communication from the district and the school in their preferred language.

Together, we can continue building strong partnerships with our multicultural families and ensure that every voice is heard and valued.

For more information visit our website: [Language Access - Lake Washington School District](#)