

Language Access Plan

To Ensure Effective Communication with
Multilingual Students and Families



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More than 70 languages are spoken in Edina Public Schools. Spanish and Somali are the most common after English.

This Language Access Plan follows Minnesota Statute § 123B.32 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which require school districts to provide processes and procedures that effectively assist students and adults who communicate in a language other than English. This plan provides information about the language access tools, processes, and resources available for students, families, and staff in Edina Public Schools.

Federal Requirements

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects students and families from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.

Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA)

Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) requires our district to help students learning English overcome language barriers.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) For students with disabilities:

- Students are tested in their home language when needed
- Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) are written in the family's home language
- IEP meetings are conducted in the family's home language with a qualified interpreter

Minnesota State Requirements

Minnesota Statutes, Section 123B.32

Starting in 2025-2026, our school board must create a language access plan that:

- Uses trained interpreters for important conversations about your child's academic progress and special programs
- Informs families about their language access rights
- Is reviewed and updated every two years

Minnesota LEAPS Act of 2014

Minnesota LEAPS Act of 2014 Sets three goals for students learning English:

1. Academic English proficiency
2. Grade-level content knowledge
3. Multilingual skills development

Family Rights

Families have the right to:

- Receive information about your child's education in your home language
- Have an interpreter for important meetings about your child
- Participate fully in your child's educational experience

Definitions

Term	Definition
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.
Interpretation	The act of listening to a communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language).
Qualified interpreter	Trained professionals who follow the National Code of Ethics and Standards to facilitate communication between individuals who do not share a common language.

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.
English Learner (EL)	A status assigned to students whose primary language is not English and require Language support.
Multilingual Learner	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	The language in which parents or guardians request services, resources, and communications from schools and the district.
Remote Interpreting	Interpreting that is provided via telephone or video call.
Translation	The restating of written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language).
Vital Document	Refers to materials essential to a family's ability to access Edina Schools services. Full definition as defined by the US departments of Justice and Education .

Language Identification Procedures

Edina Public Schools will determine parent/guardian language needs through the following procedures:



Enrollment Survey

Upon registration, parents/guardians will identify their preferred language and method of communication. This survey is translated into the following language(s), common in our community:

- Spanish
- Somali

Enrollment staff are trained in procedures for accessing qualified interpreters to help parents complete enrollment paperwork if needed.



Student Information System

The preferred language and method of communication of parents/guardians will be visible to all staff in Infinite Campus Edina Public Schools Student Information System.



Teacher Communication

Teachers are encouraged to inquire about communication preferences in their own communication with families.

Tools and Resources to Provide Language Access

School staff will use the following resources aimed at removing language barriers for families in our school community:

TransAct Parent Notices

TransACT provides written forms or notices required by ESSA, translated into Spanish, Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Vietnamese, and Karen. All Minnesota districts and charter schools can utilize the TransACT website with free access. Individuals within the district can activate their free account at:

<https://minnesota-doe.parentnotices.com>

WHEN TO USE

- Required ESSA parent notifications

Professional Document Translation

Edina Public Schools proactively translates many vital documents into Spanish and Somali, including district policies, regulations, and procedures.

Vital documents [as defined by the US Department of Justice and Education.](#)

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: Edina Public Schools 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

WHEN TO USE

- Formal documents requiring a signature from parents
- Frequently circulated documents such as registration and enrollment forms, student code of conduct, report cards, etc.

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.

Professional Interpreter

Edina Public Schools contracts with several services to help staff with live interpreted communication with families. **Please contact the designated front office staff in your building to secure an in-person interpreter.** Teachers and other district staff should not directly contact vendors.

WHEN TO USE

- District-wide initiatives or meetings
- Parent/teacher conferences
- MTSS/Child Study/IEP Meetings

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.

Telephone and Video-Remote Interpretation Services

Edina Public Schools offers three options for interpretation: Over-the-phone interpreting (OPI), scheduled or on-demand video-remote interpreting (VRI), and in-person interpretation.

WHEN TO USE

- Phone calls home
- Parent/teacher conferences

IMPORTANT GUIDANCE

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.

AI Translation Tools: Usage Guidelines

Appropriate Use Cases

AI translation tools should be limited to brief, non-vital translations only. These tools are suitable for:

- Quick understanding of simple sentences or short paragraphs
- Informal content, like newsletters or general information
- Non-critical communications where perfect accuracy is not essential
- Getting the general meaning of basic text

Critical Limitation

Never use AI translation tools for vital translations. Federal law requires schools to provide professional translation services for all vital information to Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents. Vital documents and communications include:



EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND SERVICES

- Enrollment and registration materials
- Special education evaluations, IEP meetings, and related services
- English learner program notifications and services
- Gifted and talented program information
- Report cards and academic progress reports

- Student discipline policies and procedures
- Parent-teacher conference communications



LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS

- Grievance procedures and nondiscrimination notices
- Parent handbooks and school policies
- Permission forms for student activities
- Legal notices and official school communications
- Any document that affects a parent's ability to participate in their child's education

Why This Matters

AI translation applications have significant limitations:

- They translate primarily word-by-word rather than contextually
- Important nuances and cultural meanings are often lost
- Complex sentence structures may be misinterpreted
- Technical or specialized terminology may be incorrectly translated
- Context-dependent phrases may be translated literally rather than idiomatically

Legal Requirements for Schools

Under federal civil rights law, schools must:

- Provide effective language assistance to English Learner families
- Use appropriate and competent translators and interpreters
- Never rely on students, siblings, friends, or untrained school staff for translation
- Provide services that are free to parents
- Maintain confidentiality in all translated communications

Schools that use AI translation tools for vital communications may be violating federal law and parents' civil rights.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Edina Public Schools staff are responsible for ensuring meaningful and timely access to information in individuals' preferred languages. This includes principals, assistant principals, assistant directors, teachers, office staff, counselors, cultural liaisons, school nurses, district staff, and all other personnel.

Staff Training

Training to prepare staff to support multilingual families includes:

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

Specialist Support

Edina Public Schools has designated roles to support multilingual families.

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 Liaisons*

Edina Public Schools employs Cultural Liaisons 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, cultural liaisons ensure important information is shared effectively in the family's preferred language.
- **Supporting Multilingual Families:** Cultural Liaisons partner with schools to support the needs of multilingual families. Cultural Liaisons 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, Cultural liaisons help create a more inclusive and culturally responsive school community.

**Cultural Liaisons are not professional interpreters or translators. In emergencies, a multilingual liaison may provide limited language support; however, this does not replace the use of the district's interpretation and translation resources.*

Language Access Communication

Edina Public Schools actively shares the Language Access Plan to ensure families and staff are aware and have the training and resources to use it effectively.

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 the district website.

Staff

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

Language Access Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the department of educational equity and multilingual learner programming as part of the yearly Title III program evaluation process to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with evolving needs and best practices.

District Contact

If you have any questions about the Language Access Plan, please contact us via email at Frannie.Becquer@edinaschools.org.

For questions regarding the language needs of specific students or families, contact your school's ELD teacher/staff member or the school's main office.