



South St. Paul Public Schools **Language Access Plan**



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SSP Language Access Plan

South St. Paul Public Schools is committed to providing clear, equitable, and meaningful communication with all families. Guided by the district's core values and a shared responsibility to serve a diverse community, this Language Access Plan is designed to remove language barriers and ensure that families, caregivers, and students can fully access district programs, services, and activities, regardless of their preferred language or level of English proficiency.

This plan outlines the systems, processes, and supports in place to provide effective language assistance, including interpretation and translation services. Its purpose is to promote clear and consistent communication between staff and families, support meaningful family engagement, and ensure that all families have the information they need to participate in and understand their child's educational experience. Through this commitment, South St. Paul Public Schools affirms its responsibility to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment where every family feels respected, informed, and supported.

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Language Access Review

The South St. Paul School District Language Access Plan is guided by federal and state laws that protect the rights of students and families who communicate in languages other than English. These laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Minnesota Statutes section 123B.32, and the Minnesota Learning for English Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act. Together, these requirements ensure equitable access to educational programs, services, information, and meaningful communication through appropriate language assistance, interpretation, and translation services.

Definitions

Interpretation

The act of listening to a communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language). The 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 allow 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.

English Learner (EL)

A status assigned to students whose primary language is not English, who lacks the necessary skills to understand, speak, read, and write in English but are receiving English language development instructions 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.

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).

Language Assistance Services and Resources

The District provides a variety of language assistance services and communication tools to ensure meaningful access for students, families, and community members who communicate in languages other than English. These resources support interpretation, translation, and multilingual communication across District programs, services, and activities. Translation services are available for requested documents in most languages, and the District proactively translates many vital documents into Spanish, including the Student Handbook and other essential family communications.

Community and Cultural Language Support

Cultural Liaisons support communication between schools and families by providing interpretation, translation, and cultural support services that help families access information, participate in school activities, and build meaningful partnerships with their child's school. All school sites have a Spanish-speaking Cultural Liaison on staff. The District also employs a district-wide Native American Liaison who supports students and families by fostering cultural connections, strengthening family engagement, and providing assistance with Ojibwe language access when needed.

Contracted Interpretation Services

The District utilizes contracted interpreters to support communication with families who speak languages other than English. Interpreters may be provided for conferences, open houses, special education meetings, disciplinary meetings, and other school-related events when language assistance is needed.

Propio Language Services is the District's contracted provider for interpretation and translation services. Propio offers on-demand telephone interpretation, video remote interpretation, and document translation in a wide range of languages. District staff may use Propio to communicate effectively with students, families, and community members who have limited English proficiency, helping ensure equitable access to information, programs, services, and educational opportunities. Propio supports the District's commitment to providing meaningful language access and meeting federal and state language access requirements.

Translation and Communication Tools

Digital Communication Translation: ParentSquare is the District's primary family and staff communication platform, used to send school and District information through email, text messages, phone notifications, mobile app messages, and other communication channels. ParentSquare includes built-in translation features that allow families to receive messages in their preferred language and set language preferences within their account. The platform enables the District to communicate important updates, alerts, reminders, and emergency notifications promptly and effectively, helping ensure that all families have timely access to critical information. This functionality supports the District's commitment to equitable communication and meaningful language access.

Website Translation: Weglot is the District's website translation platform, used to provide multilingual access to online content. Weglot automatically translates District website pages into multiple languages and allows users to select their preferred language when accessing information online. This tool helps improve accessibility for families and community members who speak languages other than English by providing timely access to important District news, resources, forms, and program information. Weglot supports the District's commitment to equitable communication and meaningful language access for all stakeholders.

Language Identification Assistance- Language identification posters are available at each school's front office to help individuals identify their preferred language and connect with appropriate interpretation or translation services.

Notice of Language Services

South St. Paul Public Schools will inform students, families, and community members about available interpretation, translation, and language assistance services through enrollment materials, the District website, ParentSquare communications, school handbooks, and other District and school communications.

Families may request language assistance services at no cost by contacting their child's school, the Educational Services Department, or the staff member coordinating a meeting or event. Interpretation and translation services are available for enrollment, parent-teacher conferences, special education meetings, school events, and other school-related communications and activities.

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32, this Language Access Plan will be made available to the public and included in the District's Family Handbook.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Translation Services

In accordance with the District's Translation and Interpretation Guidelines, South St. Paul Public Schools may use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automated translation tools, such as Google Translate and similar services, to support the timely translation of routine communications, informational materials, website content, flyers, and other non-legal documents. Automated translation tools are intended to supplement, not replace, professional translation and interpretation services.

The District will continue to utilize qualified interpreters and professional translation services when accuracy is critical, including for special education documents, disciplinary matters, student placement decisions, and other high-impact communications. Whenever practicable, AI-generated translations should be reviewed by a staff member for appropriateness and accuracy prior to distribution.

When automated translation tools are used, translated materials should include a contact phone number or other means for families to obtain assistance or clarification. Automated translations must also include the following disclaimer in the target language: "This document was translated using an automated translation system."

Identification and Assessment of Language Assistance Needs

South St. Paul Public Schools is committed to identifying and responding to the language assistance needs of students and families. The district will continue to strengthen its processes for identifying preferred languages, determining appropriate interpretation and translation services, and evaluating the effectiveness of those services.

The district will use available enrollment data, family communication preferences, staff input, and community feedback to better understand language needs and guide continuous improvement. As systems and resources evolve, SSPPS will continue to enhance its data collection practices, strengthen partnerships with families and community organizations, and improve equitable access to district programs, services, and communications.

In the meantime, families or staff needing interpretation or translation services should contact the child's school, Educational Services Department, or a staff member coordinating a meeting or event, who will work to coordinate appropriate language assistance and connect families with available resources.

Staff Training

The district is committed to providing accurate, consistent, and culturally responsive language support. To ensure this, staff involved in language access services receive training aligned to district expectations and best practices.

Cultural Liaisons

Cultural Liaisons receive targeted training in interpretation and translation practices, as well as in their broader liaison role. This includes guidance on maintaining accuracy, confidentiality, and supporting effective communication between schools and families.

Language Proficiency Expectations

To ensure high-quality interpretation, individuals providing interpretation on behalf of the district must demonstrate language proficiency. Spanish-speaking liaisons and any staff members serving as interpreters are required to pass a district-approved proficiency assessment prior to providing interpretation services.

Use of Qualified Interpreters

The district prioritizes the use of trained and qualified interpreters for school-related communication. Bilingual staff may only serve in an interpreter role if they have met proficiency requirements.

Access to Additional Language Support

For languages not supported by district liaisons, the district partners with outside agencies to provide interpretation and translation services. These services are available via phone, video, or in-person, depending on the situation and availability.

Ongoing Training Needs

The district will continue to identify training needs related to language access, including interpretation protocols, cultural responsiveness, and use of translation/interpretation tools. Additional training opportunities will be provided as needed to ensure staff are equipped to effectively support multilingual families.

Language Access Review

South St. Paul Public Schools is committed to reviewing and updating this Language Access Plan at least every two years, or more frequently as needed, to ensure continued compliance with federal and state requirements and to meet the evolving needs of students, families, and the community. The review process will consider changes in student demographics, family and community feedback, language access service usage, emerging best practices, and updates to applicable laws and regulations. Through ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement, the District seeks to ensure that language assistance services remain effective, accessible, and responsive, supporting meaningful communication and equitable access to educational programs, services, and opportunities for all families.

If You Have Questions or Need Additional Assistance

Families who need interpretation, translation, or other language assistance services are encouraged to contact their child's school, Cultural Liaison, teacher, or the Educational Services Department. If you are not receiving information in a language or format that works for you, please contact us so we can provide appropriate support.

South St. Paul Public Schools is committed to ensuring that all families have equitable access to information, services, and opportunities to participate in their child's education.

Contact Information

The Educational Services Department is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the South St. Paul Public Schools Language Access Plan and coordinating language assistance services across the District.

Questions regarding this Language Access Plan or requests for language assistance services may be directed to the Educational Services Department:

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