D 219

Niles Township High School District 219

Language Access Plan

Supporting Effective Multilingual Communication







D219 Language Access Plan

(rev. August 2026)

More than 70 languages are spoken in Niles Township High School District 219.

The D219 Language Access Plan is grounded in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. These laws require school districts to provide meaningful access for students and adults who communicate in a language other than English.

Further, D219 families have the right to:

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

To ensure clear and equitable communication to all families, the D219 Communications Department coordinates translation (written) and interpretation (spoken) services. This plan outlines tools, procedures, and resources that support multilingual students, families, and staff at Niles Township High School District 219.

Background

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)
The Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) requires schools to support students learning English by helping them 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

In April 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice issued updates to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), requiring public entities—including schools—to ensure their digital content is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Illinois State Requirements

Illinois Language Equity and Access Act (2024)

The Illinois Language Equity and Access Act (2024) sets goals for students with limited English proficiency (LEP) and their families:

1. Support academic English proficiency.
2. Provide access to grade-level content.
3. Support family and community engagement through language access.

Identifying Language Preferences

D219 determines parent and guardian language needs using:

1. Family/parent enrollment data (home language self-reported)
2. U.S. Census information for the District
3. Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) data and District demographic statistics
4. Records of interpretation and translation requests

The District uses this information to identify the most commonly used languages and communication modes in our community and to plan appropriate language access services.

Tools and Resources to Provide Language Access

D219 staff will use the following resources to reduce or remove language barriers for families in our school community:

Family Liaisons

Our Family Liaisons are trained interpreters and translators who support multilingual families in commonly spoken languages after English. They provide support in the following languages: Arabic, Assyrian, Gujarati, Hindi, Korean, Spanish, and Urdu.

The Liaisons also help families feel included and empowered to engage in their children's education by:

- Facilitating communication - Acting as a vital link between families and school staff, to ensure important information is shared effectively in the family's preferred language.

- Supporting the school-home partnership - Helping multilingual families navigate the school system, offering resources, and fostering an inclusive environment where all families feel supported and connected.
- Promoting cultural understanding - Educating school staff about cultural backgrounds and unique experiences of multilingual families, to help create a more culturally responsive school community.

For more information, visit the Family Liaisons page on the D219 website.

>> WHEN TO USE

For the Family Liaison languages, D219 staff should complete the Family Liaison Contact Form first to:

- Schedule IEP meetings with parents/guardians who speak the Liaison languages
- Translate emails or written communication to families
- Attend designated events to help build connections and positive relationships with families
- Supporting other translation or interpretation needs

IMPORTANT GUIDANCE

- Staff must use the Family Liaison Contact Form to request services so that we may gather data and follow up if needed.
- Calendar invitations to Family Liaisons are welcome and encouraged, but invites are in addition to the Contact Form (not instead of).
- Family Liaisons provide services through staff requests; families do not have access to the Contact Form.

The Language Line

For languages not supported by Family Liaisons, staff may use The Language Line for phone or video interpretation and document translation. Administrators have access codes and guidance for these services.

>> WHEN TO USE

- Phone calls with parents in languages not spoken by Family Liaisons
- Situations requiring immediate access to professional interpreters

IMPORTANT GUIDANCE

Staff may not rely on untrained students, siblings, friends, or staff to interpret or translate. Students and untrained adults should not act as intermediaries in parent/guardian communication, as it may lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication.

Pocketalk and Sentio

Pocketalk provides quick, two-way translation for conversations. Staff may contact their building administrator for the department locations of Pocketalk devices.

Pocketalk Sentio supports presentations or meetings for one-way translation in multiple languages. For event requests, staff should complete the Pocketalk Sentio Request Form with at least 5 school days' notice.

>> WHEN TO USE

- **Pocketalk:** brief in-person interactions or immediate interpretation needs when Family Liaisons or the Language Line are not readily available
- **Pocketalk:** translation of a form (using the device's camera) if the form is not immediately available in multiple languages.
- **Sentio:** large meetings, school-wide events or presentations

ParentSquare

ParentSquare includes translation tools that allow families to view messages in their preferred language.

>> WHEN TO USE

- Newsletters, mass notifications, and routine communications
- Emails or text messages to parents/guardians

Website Translation (Weglot)

D219 website content can be translated in 100 languages via Weglot. District and school departments oversee their content and should review their pages regularly to ensure the public has access to the most up-to-date information.

>> WHEN TO USE

- The website is a 24/7 resource for families anytime, anywhere. The search function helps web visitors find information quickly and easily.
- Emails should link to relevant information, such as instructions, resources, or supporting information. This also helps increase ADA compliance.

AI Translation Tools

AI translation tools (like Magic School or Brisk) may be used only for brief, non-critical translations, such as:

- Quick understanding of simple sentences.

- Informal or general information.
- Non-vital communications where accuracy is not required.

CRITICAL LIMITATION

Do **not** use AI tools for vital communications or documents affecting a parent's ability to participate in their child's education. All formal or critical documents (enrollment, registration, report cards, disciplinary communications, IEP documents) must be professionally translated. Staff should not rely on unapproved automated tools for these vital communications.

What are vital documents and communications?

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
- Student/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

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All staff, including teachers, counselors, administrators and office personnel, are responsible for ensuring meaningful and timely access to information in families' preferred languages. Staff should use the approved tools and resources provided by the district.

Professional Learning Opportunities

Staff can receive training and resources on:

- Pocketalk, Sentio, and ParentSquare

- Family Liaison services
- Language Line codes and procedures
- Guidelines for AI translation tools and plain language practices

District Contact

For questions regarding the Language Access Plan or language access resources, D219 staff may contact the Communications Department at communications@d219.org.

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Acknowledgment

Niles Township High School District 219 acknowledges Edina Public Schools (Minnesota) whose Language Access Plan inspired the structure of our plan.