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LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

District196.org /LanguageAccess

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DISTRICT 196 LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

More than 100 languages are spoken in homes in District 196. Spanish and Somali are the most common after English, with about 9% of families speaking one of these two languages.

In District 196, we are committed to ensuring that every family has equitable access to information. Our Language Access Plan is designed to remove language barriers and empower families who prefer to communicate in a language other than English to engage in their children's education. This plan supports our diverse community by ensuring families can participate in school communications, events, and decision-making processes, creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

This Language Access Plan is intended to align with Minn. Stat. § 123B.32, The Americans with Disabilities Act, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which require school districts to provide/utilize processes and procedures that effectively assist students and adults who communicate in a language other than English. The Language Access Plan provides information about the Language Access tools, processes, and resources available for students, families, and staff in District 196.

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DEFINITIONS

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters: Trained professionals who facilitate communication between individuals who use American Sign Language and those who use spoken language. They adhere to professional standards and are certified as required by Minnesota Statute 122A.31.

Bilingual staff are fluent in multiple languages but are not trained interpreters. They can assist with simple tasks (helping with forms/relaying basic messages) but should not interpret or be pulled from primary duties.

English Language Development (ELD) is a program in District 196 that provides academic English language support to multilingual learners.

English Learner Student (EL) is a student whose primary language is not English and requires language support.

Interpretation is rendering a spoken or signed communication from one language into another.

Language Access Plan is a written document that describes how our district will provide services, processes and procedures to render effective language assistance to students and families who prefer to communicate in a language other than English.

Language Services facilitate communication between speakers of a language other than English in a timely and meaningful way.

Multilingual Learner is a broad category that includes students who were never identified for English Learner (EL) status, students currently receiving ELD instruction, and those who previously had EL status.

Preferred language is the language in which parents or guardians request services, resources, and communications from schools and the district.

Qualified interpreters are trained and experienced professionals who adhere to the National Code of Ethics and Standards. They possess the skills necessary to interpret in a school environment and have at least two years of experience with educational terminology and understand the Minnesota Code of Ethics and Standards.

Translation is the conversion of written text from one language into another while maintaining the original material's intended meaning. For languages that rely on an oral tradition (i.e., Somali), an oral interpretation may be used in place of a written translation.

Vital documents refer to materials essential to a family's ability to access District 196 services. Full definition

LANGUAGE IDENTIFICATION

Parents/Guardians: Preferred Language

During enrollment, parents and guardians specify their preferred language, which is recorded in their profile within the district's student information system. This enables schools to identify families who need language assistance and provide appropriate language services. Families can update their preferred language at any time in our Campus Portal for parents or by contacting their school.

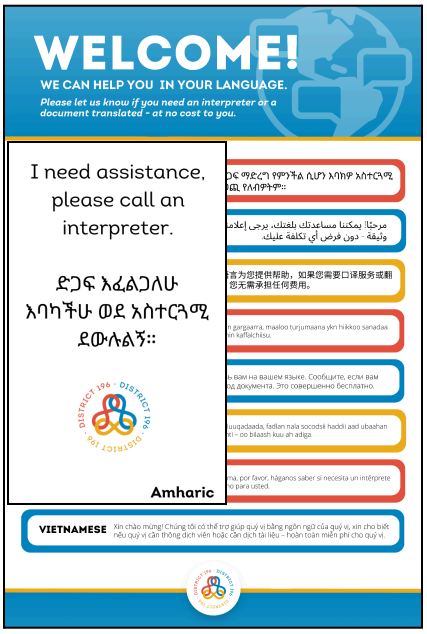
Students: English Learner (EL) Identification

All families complete the Minnesota Language Survey (MNLS) during enrollment, which identifies a student's language experiences through responses from parents or guardians. If the survey indicates a potential English Learner, the district

administers a state-approved language proficiency assessment to determine whether English language development services are needed and identify the student with EL status. Families are notified in the required timeline if their child qualifies for EL services using the District's Parent Notification Form. The notification includes the amount of time and type of EL service the child receives and shares the right to refuse service. Detailed information about ELD services in District 196 is available in our Language Instruction Education Program.

NOTICE OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

District 196 is proud to provide language services. Families are informed of language services through school newsletters, printed flyers, school/district handbooks, webpages, and e-newsletters. Examples include:



I Need Assistance Cards

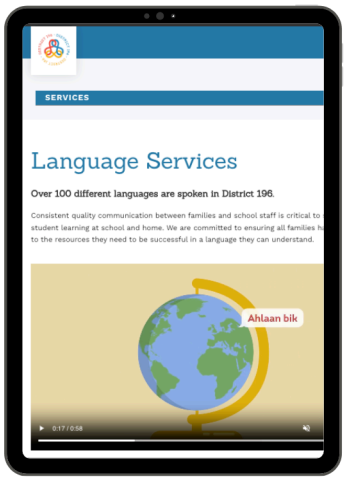
Schools offer small cards requesting assistance from an interpreter in the district's top eight languages.

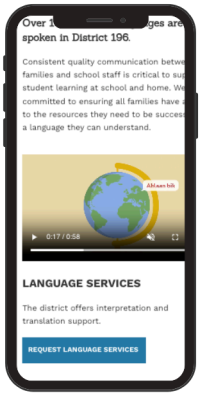
We Can Help You Posters

"Welcome posters" informing individuals of their right to request interpreters or translation services at no cost are posted near each school's main entrance.

Point To Your Language Signs

The top eight languages in our district are represented. Posters at each school's front desk also allow individuals to indicate their language, enabling staff to arrange appropriate language services immediately.





Language Services webpage: Help families to access interpretation and translation support for school-related communication. It also helps families understand their rights and the procedures for requesting language services.

English Language Development webpage: Find information about English Learning identification, entrance and exit procedures, and other frequently asked questions.

Cultural Family Advocates webpage: Learn how Cultural Family Advocates support families with diverse needs.

Spanish/Somali Resource Pages: Spanish and Somali are the most common languages in District 196. Therefore, we have dedicated webpages for Spanish-speaking (Recursos en español) and Somali-speaking families (Khayraadka oo Somali) to provide essential information and resources, including:

- Forms to request an interpreter or assistance
- Calendars and maps
- Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook
- Enrollment procedures
- Health/mental health resources
- Nutrition services information
- Transportation information
- English Learner program information
- Guides to help parents use school platforms

INTERPRETATION

Interpretation from qualified language interpreters and certified American Sign Language Interpreters is available for communications related to academic outcomes, progress, determinations, and placement of students in specialized programs and services, as well as conferences, enrollment, informational meetings, and more.

District 196 offers options for interpretation: on-demand—Over-the-phone interpreting (OPI), scheduled or on-demand video remote interpreting (VRI), and in-person interpreting (spoken or ASL).

HOW TO ACCESS INTERPRETATION SERVICES

The Staff Portal includes:

- A list of qualified freelance interpreters and approved local interpreting companies
- Step-by-step instructions for booking/using interpretation services
- Guidelines, ethics, and standards

Families can request an interpreter:

- By contacting their school or through our online Interpreter Request Form

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.

It is not recommended to use on-demand phone or video interpretation services for Individualized Education Program (IEP), sensitive subject meetings, 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.

TRANSLATION

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: District 196 uses ParentSquare email, voice, and texting services that provide automated translation in more than 120 languages. ParentSquare is a primary translation tool for all district staff. School staff can:

- Send information in families’ preferred languages (via email, phone, and text).
- Allow families to choose their preferred language for viewing communications.
- Send and receive two-way text messages in the family’s preferred language.

HOW TO ACCESS TRANSLATION SERVICES

The Staff Portal includes:

- A list of approved local translation companies
- Guidelines, ethics, and standards
- Step-by-step instructions for translation services

Families can request a translation:

- By contacting their school

Important Guidance:

- Reliance on unapproved automated translation tools (such as Google Translate) is not recommended.
- When families cannot read written materials, oral interpretation will be provided.
- For direct districtwide multilingual communications needs, please email: language.services@district196.org

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

District 196 staff are responsible for ensuring meaningful and timely access to information in individuals' preferred languages. This includes principals, assistant principals, teachers, office staff, counselors, cultural family advocates, school nurses, district staff, and all other personnel. District 196 Regulation (801.12AR)

STAFF TRAINING | Training to prepare staff to support multilingual families includes:

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

SPECIALIST SUPPORT | District 196 has designated roles to support multilingual families:

Multilingual Communications Specialist: District 196 employs a Multilingual Communications Specialist to ensure effective communication with families who prefer communication in a language other than English by:

- Coordinate districtwide interpretation and translation services to ensure families and staff receive timely, accurate language support.
- Identify and prioritize key communications and documents for translation to support equitable access for families.
- Collaborate with schools and departments to plan language access for meetings, events, and written communications.
- Build staff understanding, tools, and systems that promote equitable family engagement across the district.
- Serve as a connector and advisor to staff supporting multilingual families, facilitating cross-department alignment on language access practices.

English Language Development (ELD) Professionals: Highly qualified, ELD-licensed teachers provide multilingual learners with 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 better understand and meet the needs of multilingual learners.

Cultural Family Advocates (CFAs)*: District 196 employs Cultural Family Advocates 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, CFAs ensure essential information is shared effectively in the family's preferred language.
- Supporting Multilingual Families: CFAs partner with schools to support the needs of multilingual families. CFAs foster a welcoming and inclusive environment where all families feel supported and connected.
- Promoting Cultural Understanding: By educating school staff about the cultural backgrounds and unique experiences of multilingual families, CFAs help create a more inclusive, culturally responsive school community.

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

LANGUAGE ACCESS COMMUNICATION

District 196 actively shares the Language Access Plan to ensure families and staff are aware of it and have the training and resources to use it effectively.

Community: Districtwide communications such as newsletters, emails, and websites.

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

Families: Language services are offered to families who indicate a language other than English as their preferred language. Information about Language Services is shared with all families through newsletters, printed flyers, and in school handbooks and on our language services website. The Language Access Plan is included in the district's Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook.

LANGUAGE ACCESS REVIEW

District 196 continuously reviews and evaluates the Language Access Plan to ensure it effectively meets the needs of our community.

Feedback on language services is collected from families and staff through surveys, focus groups, and meetings, providing valuable insights to refine and enhance the plan. The plan will be reviewed and updated by the District 196 School Board every two years.

We value your input on our language access services and are committed to providing high-quality support. If you have feedback or suggestions for improvement, or if you experience challenges accessing services, please contact us via email at language.services@district196.org or by mail at District 196 District Office, 3455 153rd St. W., Rosemount, MN 55068.