The Atlanta Board of Education believes that the diversity of languages and cultures that form the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) community enriches us all. The Board actively encourages all families, including non-native English speaking families, to be empowered participants in their children’s education. Students and families who speak languages other than English at home benefit the entire district by adding to the richness of the educational experience. Atlanta Public Schools is a welcoming school district.

In order to be inclusive of all families, APS must foster an environment in which parents and other caregivers have the opportunity to be active participants in the life of our schools, regardless of the language they speak at home.

The district must provide high-quality communication support services to families who speak languages other than English so that those communications are equal to the communications provided in English. Such services shall be available free of charge to all district parents, staff and students.

All district staff must be aware of:
- How to access translation and interpretation services
- The resources and support available from the school and/or district for language access services

School-based and district-level administrators and designated support staff, as well as instructional staff, must be trained in the school’s role in facilitating the provision of language access services to non-English speaking parents and students.

Identification
The district must use all reasonable efforts to identify the parent’s preferred language for every student’s family upon enrollment. Information about home language will be included in the student and parent profile within the student information system. That data is used by schools to determine the need for interpretation or translation services.

Parents who speak a language other than English may request translation and interpretation services for school-related communications at any time.

The district shall ensure that appropriate means of communication are established once it is known that a parent/guardian, for any reason, may not be able to understand written communications from school or oral communications made during conferences related to the student’s program, assessment, progress or school activities.

Translation
Translation is the conversion of written information from one language into equivalent information in another language.

At a minimum, written translation will be provided of critical district documents (paper and online), in the top 5 languages of the district, that are otherwise provided to English-speaking parents. For school-based documents, translation is to be provided from and to English, in Spanish and in any other language deemed appropriate by the school. This does not include classroom-level newsletters, syllabi or other documents.

Written translation services will be provided for any other requested languages to the extent practicable. Where it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, documents will be orally translated for such parents. Parents may respond to school documents either in English or their primary language.

A school shall use its best efforts to work with the district’s Office of ESOL & World Languages to provide translation and interpretation services as available and appropriate for the school community. Schools must provide information in the
front office and any parent center regarding parent access to the district’s translation and interpretation support services and how parents may request these services.

Interpretation
Interpretation relies on the spoken word. It refers to the process of orally rendering communication from one language into another language.

In the case of families whose primary language is a non-written language, whenever feasible, interpretation shall be arranged in order to provide language accessible information.

Any interpreter used by the district shall be a neutral party and shall communicate everything said during the conversation. Interpreters shall not omit or editorialize on the content of the conversation they are translating. Schools shall make sure interpreters understand their role and the requirement that they keep information confidential. Interpreters must be approved by and meet all credential and training requirements established by the Office of ESOL & World Languages.

Interpretation services must be provided where necessary to enable parents and guardians to participate in school-based as well as district-wide programs and activities, including but not limited to:

a. Meetings of the Atlanta Board of Education
b. Parent conferences, information meetings and activities
c. Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings
d. Student disciplinary hearings
e. All communications concerning referral, assessment or placement of students for special education, including Student Support Team (SST), IEP and Section 504 meetings

Use of children as interpreters
Translation and interpretation services will be performed by appropriate and competent individuals only. Schools may not rely on or ask students, siblings, friends or untrained school staff to translate or interpret for parents.

The Superintendent shall establish a procedure whereby parents/guardians may request an interpreter and shall inform parents/guardians about this procedure.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

Adopted: XX/XX/2019

See also:

Board Policy BBBB  Equity
Board Policy BBFA  School Governance Teams
Board Policy BC   Board Meetings
Board Policy JAA  Equal Educational Opportunities

Legal citations:

O.C.G.A. 20-02-0156  Program for limited English proficient (LEP) students
Rule 160-4-5-.02  Language Assistance: Program for English Learners (ELs)
42 USC 2000d  1964 Civil Rights Act
20 USC 1703  Denial of equal educational opportunity prohibited
29 USC 794  Nondiscrimination under Federal grants and programs
20 USC 1400  Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004
20 USC 1701  Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974