

Northshore School District

BOARD POLICY

No. 4218

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LANGUAGE ACCESS

The Board of Directors is committed to improving meaningful, two-way communication and promoting access to District programs, services, and activities for students and their parents or guardians and families. The Board recognizes that individuals who are multilingual and developing fluency to communicate in the English language are assets to the community. It is crucial that the District seek to address language barriers and do so free of charge. To that end and as required by law the District will develop and adopt a plan for implementing and maintaining a language access program that is culturally responsive, provides for systematic family engagement developed through meaningful stakeholder engagement, and is tailored to the District's current population of students and families who are multilingual and still developing fluency to communicate in the English language.

At a minimum, the District's plan for a language access program will adhere to the principles of an effective language access program for culturally responsive, systematic family engagement, which are:

- **Accessibility and equity.** This means that schools provide communication and language access to all students and families; two-way communication is a priority and is woven into the design of all programs and services.
- **Accountability and transparency.** This means that the language access program and decision-making processes at all levels are: open, accessible, and usable to families; readily available; continuously improved based on ongoing feedback from families and staff; and regulated by a clear and just complaint process.
- **Responsive culture.** This means that schools are safe, compassionate places where each family's opinions are heard, needs are addressed, and contributions are valued.
- **Focus on relationships.** This means that schools seek to understand families without judgment, building trust through respectful relationships that recognize the unique strengths that each family and student possesses.

The Northshore School District will implement its Language Access Program by the 2023-2024 school year.

Identification of Families Needing Language Access Services

The District will accurately and in a timely manner identify parents or family members of students that are multilingual and still developing fluency to communicate in the English language and provide them information in a language they can understand regarding the language service resources available within the District.

Oral Interpretation

The District will take reasonable steps to provide multilingual parents, guardians, or family members that are developing English proficiency with oral interpretation of materials or information about any program, service, and activity provided to school families. The District will provide such services upon request and/or when it may be reasonably anticipated by District staff that such services will be necessary.

Written Translation

The District will provide written translation of vital documents for each family in their preferred language. Written translation will occur when the communication language constitutes at least five percent of the District's total parent or guardian population or 1000 persons, whichever is less. For purposes of this policy, "vital documents" include, but are not limited to, those related to:

- enrollment, registration, application, and selection;
- report cards;
- student rights and responsibilities;
- special education and related services, Section 504 information, English Language Development services and McKinney-Vento services;
- policies and procedures related to school attendance;
- requests for parent and guardian permission in activities or programs
- parent or guardian rights around language access;
- school closure and emergency information; and
- any other documents notifying parents or guardians of their rights under applicable state laws and/or containing information or forms related to consent or filing complaints under federal law, state law, or District policy.

If the District is unable to translate a vital document due to resource limitations or if a small number of families require the information in a language other than English such that document translation is unreasonable, the District will still provide the information to parents or guardians in a language they can understand through oral interpretation.

Staff

The Superintendent will designate a staff member to serve as the Language Access Coordinator, who will monitor and facilitate compliance with state and federal laws related to language access. The Language Access Coordinator's name and contact information will

be shared so parents or guardians, school staff, and community members may contact them to inquire about language access services.

All school administrators, particularly those who have the most interaction with the public, such as registrars and enrollment staff, certificated staff, and other appropriate staff as determined by the Language Access Coordinator, will receive guidance on meaningful communication with parents or guardians or family members with multilingual skills that are developing English proficiency, best practices for working with an interpreter, how to access an interpreter or translation services in a timely manner, language services available within the District and other information deemed necessary by the Language Access Coordinator to implement the District's language access plan and program.

Appropriate district staff, as determined by the Language Access Coordinator, will also receive guidance on the interaction between this policy and the District's Public Information Program policy.

The District and district staff will continue to provide effective communication for students' families who are deaf, deaf and blind, blind, hard of hearing, or need other communication assistance.

Cross References:	2110 - Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program
	3210 - Nondiscrimination
	4100 - Community Relations - Public Information Program
	4105 - Community Relations - Website Accessibility
	4220 - Community Relations - Title 1 Parent Involvement

Legal References:	Chapter 28A.155 RCW Special Education
	Chapter 28A.642 RCW Discrimination prohibition
	Chapter 49.60 RCW Discrimination – Human Rights Commission
	Chapter 392-400 WAC Pupils
	WAC 392-400-215 Student rights
	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Management Resources:	2022 - June
	2019 - July Policy Issue
	2016 - July Issue
	OSPI website: Interpretation and Translation Services