

Wadena-Deer Creek ISD 2155

Language Access Plan to Ensure Effective Communication with Multilingual Students and Families

Section 1: Policy Directives

This section sets forth the laws, standards, and operating principles that will govern the implementation of Wadena-Deer Creek's language access plan.

Policy Foundation

Federal

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted as part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.
- Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) requires states and school districts to provide equal educational opportunity to students learning English by taking appropriate actions to overcome language barriers.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) upholds language access rights for bilingual families by requiring that students be tested in their home language and Individual Educational Plans (IEP) be written in the appropriate home language. IEP meetings must be conducted in the family's home language using a highly trained and qualified interpreter.

State

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32 states:

- Subd. 1. Language access plan required. Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, during a regularly scheduled public board hearing, a school board must adopt a language access plan that specifies the district's process and procedures to render effective language assistance to students and adults who communicate in a language other than English. The language access plan must be available to the public and included in the school's handbook.
- Subd. 2. Plan requirements. The language access plan must include how the district and its schools will use trained or certified spoken language interpreters for communication related to academic outcomes, progress, determinations, and placement of students in specialized programs and services; and how families and communities will be notified of their rights under this plan.
- Subd. 3. Regular review. The board must review the plan every two years and update the plan as appropriate.
- Minnesota Learning for English Academic Proficiency (LEAPS) Act of 2014, Chapter 272, H.F. No. 2397, Article 1. The law has three principal goals for all English Learner (EL) students: 1) academic English proficiency; 2) grade-level content knowledge; and 3) multilingual skills development.

Definitions

American Sign Language (ASL) – A visually perceived language based on a naturally evolved system of articulated hand gestures and their placement relative to the body, along with non-manual markers such as facial expressions, head movements, shoulder raises, mouth morphemes, and movements of the body.

Relay – Telephone accessibility services to people who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or speech disabled.

Screen Reader – Software programs that allow blind or visually impaired users to read the text that is displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display.

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.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) – Individuals whose primary language is not English and who have limited ability to communicate effectively in English, including writing, reading, speaking, and listening comprehension. Federal law uses this term to refer to the intended beneficiaries of language access services.

Emergent Multilingual Speakers – Individuals whose primary language is not English and who have limited ability to communicate effectively in English but are in the process of developing their English language proficiency. Language access industry leaders and advocates prefer the use of this term when referring to the intended beneficiaries of language access services.

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.

Sight Translation – The oral interpretation of a written document. This occurs when an interpreter reads a document and then provides a complete oral interpretation of the information that it contains.

Remote Interpreting – Interpreting that is provided via telephone or video call.

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).

Vital Document – Materials deemed vital to ensuring access to educational services, programs, and activities, or contain information required by law to translate or provide in audio format.

Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) provides guidance on the Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Educational Interpreters of Spoken Language that can be viewed on the [English Learner Disability Resources](#) webpage. This guide is only available in English because it was intended for language access practitioners.

Section 2: The Plan

Overview

Wadena-Deer Creek's language access plan provides a blueprint for bringing the district or charter into compliance with state and federal language access requirements, including how the district or charter will increase its capacity to address language service and resource needs identified in its self-assessment.

This plan is also a roadmap that will help staff navigate the process of setting deadlines, priorities, and identifying responsible personnel for policy and procedures development; hire, contract, assess, and ensure quality control of language assistance services; provide notice of services; provide training of staff; and conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Language Access Plan

Description of Services

SpEd Forms - translation of IEPs and IFSPs

866-796-1848

Freshwater Education District - Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Visually Impaired

218-631-3505

Toni Kraska - Spanish language interpretation

218-632-2171

Google Translation Services - written communications

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) - Spoken language interpreters, American Sign language interpreters, and other supportive services

651-785-4064.

Implementation

The Superintendent and members of the Language Access Committee will be responsible for overseeing, developing, and modifying the language access plan, and establishing and implementing operational procedures. The Superintendent will work with Building staff (Secretaries/ Administration), MARSS, EL staff, and staff within the Student Support Services to implement operations and procedures.

Identification and Assessment of Language Assistance Needs

The EL staff and Freshwater Education Deaf and Hard of Hearing staff will work with the Building Principals to determine language assistant needs of students in written translation, oral interpretation, or remote versus in-person assistance. The EL staff will work with the Building Principals to assess students' language levels and further work with the Superintendent to meet needs. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing staff will work with individual education planning teams (IEP teams) and the staff within Student Support Services to meet the needs of students identified as needing American Sign Language (ASL). In addition, community resources within Wadena County will be utilized to assess additional support for families.

Timeline

This plan will be reviewed annually and will be revised as necessary. This Language Access Plan is available on the Wadena-Deer Creek Public Schools website.

Funding and Procurement

General education funding will be utilized for services to meet the needs of students identified as EL. In addition, state and federal special education funding will be utilized per students' individual education plans (IEPs), per qualification for services.

Notice of Services

It is a requirement of Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32, Language Access Plan Required, that a district or charter's summary plan be included in their Parent Handbook. A complete copy of Wadena-Deer Creek's Language Access Plan is available on the Wadena-Deer Creek Schools website.

Training for Staff

Staff are trained in district policies at the beginning of each school year and when completing new staff on-boarding within the Wadena-Deer Creek Public Schools.

Plan Maintenance

The district will update the plan on a yearly basis and examine policies and procedures that are relevant to the plan.

Community Engagement and Partnership

Wadena-Deer Creek Public Schools will engage community partners through school board meetings, site teams, PTO groups, connections through families and EL staff, and partnerships with Wadena County Human Services.

Emergency Communication Protocol

Wadena-Deer Creek Public Schools communicates emergency situations through JMC messages that can be translated into other languages. In addition, information is provided to local broadcasting agencies for weather-related emergencies.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Translation Services

AI is used to translate documents and flyers; the documents will include a call-back number for additional clarification of information.

Section 3: Procedures

Overview

This section sets forth guidelines and steps for staff to coordinate, gather data, and deliver uniform services to students, families, and community members.

Procedures

Verbal Correspondance

Building Front Desk staff:

1. Identify the customer's primary language. Ask the individual to identify his/her language with a language Identification Card provided by the front desk staff.
2. Move the customer to a place where he/she can communicate without interruption. Escort the individual into an available conference room.
3. Determine appropriate point of contact for translation services (i.e.: internal staff, Freshwater or MDE)

Calls from Non-English-Speaking Customers:

1. Identify the customer's primary language. When a non-English speaking individual calls in, ask him or her if they can identify the language they are speaking for you.
2. Let the caller know you will be connecting them to a translation resource (i.e.: internal staff, Freshwater, MDE), and it may take a few moments, during which time they will be placed on hold.

Written Correspondence

District written communication (emails, letters, correspondence) will be translated into the identified language per customer (family, student, staff, community members, etc.) request.

Interpreter Services

Building-level staff will procure interpreter students with the assistance of the Superintendent.

Translation of Documents

Documents will be translated per customer request with the assistance of the district's contracted agencies, AI within SPED Forms, and language access through the website.

Concerns/Complaints

Concerns or complaints can be directed to the Superintendent.

Programs

Wadena-Deer Creek Public Schools has an English Learner program available at each building. The district has one part-time teacher. In addition, the district collaborates with the Freshwater Education District for part-time teacher and paraprofessional support. Each student identified as EL has an individual plan identifying needs, accommodations, and services. The plans are accessible through the student management system and provided to parents/guardians yearly.

Contact Information

Lee Westrum, Superintendent 218-632-2176

Resources

Access the website for additional resources: wdc2155.k12.mn.us