



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

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### Section 1: Policy Directives

#### Policy Foundation

##### Federal

- **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** 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 school districts to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** requires IEPs and related services to be conducted and provided in the family's home language using qualified interpreters.

##### State

- **Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32**
  - Subd. 1: Requires a language access plan beginning in 2025-26.
  - Subd. 2: Requires trained/certified interpreters and family notifications.
  - Subd. 3: Requires biennial board review and updates.
- **LEAPS Act (2014)** promotes academic English proficiency, grade-level content knowledge, and multilingual skills.

#### 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 allows 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 lack 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**

River Bend Education District aligns with the Minnesota Department of Education's guidance on the [\*\*Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Educational Interpreters of Spoken Language\*\*](#).

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/sped/div/el/>

In addition, [\*\*TESOL's standards for teachers\*\*](#) support effective instruction and ethical engagement with multilingual learners and their families.

<https://www.tesol.org/professional-development/publications-and-research/research-and-standards/standards/>

[\*\*WIDA's Guiding Principles of Language Development\*\*](#) also contribute to River Bend Education District's ethical beliefs in practice. <https://wida.wisc.edu/resources/guiding-principles-language-development>

The [\*\*National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care\*\*](#) provides guidance for interpretation in schools for IEP meetings and sensitive family communications. <https://www.ncihc.org/ethics-and-standards-of-practice>

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## **Section 2: The Plan**

### **Overview**

River Bend Education District's Language Access Plan outlines the district's commitment to providing high-quality language access services for emergent multilingual students and families. This plan complies with federal and state requirements and serves as a roadmap for implementation, quality control, staff training, community collaboration, and ongoing evaluation.

## Language Access Plan

**Description of Services** River Bend Education District offers the following language assistance services:

- In-person and remote interpretation services (including video remote interpreting)
- Translation of vital documents (such as enrollment forms, IEPs, report cards, handbooks)
- Access to **LanguageLine** and **LinguaOne**
- Use of **Class Dojo** for family communication
- Access to **relay services** and **screen readers**
- **American Sign Language (ASL)** interpretation
- Simultaneous interpretation equipment for large group events

**Implementation** Oversight of this plan is led by the administration at River Bend Education District, in collaboration with:

- Building principals
- ML coordinator
- Special education case managers

Coordination with community partners and regional interpreters ensures the availability and effectiveness of services. The district promotes language access services through handbooks, signage, school websites, and at district events.

**Identification and Assessment of Language Assistance Needs** Language preferences are identified via home language questionnaires, intake interviews, and parent communications. Needs are reassessed annually and supported by collaboration with:

- Community cultural organizations
- ML program data
- Enrollment and registration feedback

## Timeline

- **Fall 2025** – Draft plan shared with school board and community partners
- **Winter 2025-26** – Staff training and procedural rollout
- **Spring 2026** – Systems finalized for launch in 2025-26
- **Summer 2026** – Plan added to handbooks and websites
- **Fall 2026** – Full implementation
- **2027 and beyond** – Biennial board review and updates

**Notice of Services** Families will be informed about language services:

- During student registration
- At parent-teacher conferences
- On school websites and newsletters
- Through translated versions of the Student Handbook upon request
- At events (e.g., board meetings, PACs) with available interpretation

## Training for Staff

- Annual staff training on procedures for accessing interpretation/translation
- Role-specific training for registrars, special education staff, and ML educators
- Resources shared via internal communication and PD sessions

## Plan Maintenance

- Reviewed every two years by district leadership and community stakeholders

- Ongoing feedback collection from families and staff
- Periodic audits of translation/interpretation quality

**Community Engagement and Partnership** The district partners with:

- Local cultural organizations and faith-based groups
- Regional MDE
- South Central Service Coop resources

**Emergency Communication Protocol:**

- **Infinite Campus** and **Google Translate** to issue multilingual emergency texts
- Pre-scripted messages available in major languages (Spanish)
- Interpreters available for follow-up calls
- Website alerts and social media posts with AI-assisted translation

**Artificial Intelligence (AI) Translation Services** AI services (e.g., Google Translate) are used to:

- Translate district-wide communications and flyers
- Post multilingual web content
- Provide immediate family text support. All AI-translated materials include a callback number for clarification and support

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## Section 3: Procedures

### Telephone/In-Person Requests

- Staff use cultural liaison from home district

### Tracking Language Preferences

- Infinite Campus student information system records home/primary language
- Office managers verify annually

### Informing Individuals of Services

- Signage and translated flyers in entryways
- Reminders during enrollment and conferences

### Identifying Language Needs

- Home Language Questionnaire
- Staff interviews with families
- Consultation with ML, special education, counseling, and/or social work departments

### Correspondence Response

- Use of translation apps for initial understanding
- Follow-up through contracted translators for written response

### Interpreter Procurement (In-Person/Remote)

- Through district-approved vendors
- Coordinated by office managers or ML coordinator

## **Translation of Documents**

- Documents prioritized based on legal requirement and family impact
- Community review with bilingual staff when possible

## **Language Access Complaints**

- Directed to building principal or Director of Teaching & Learning
- Parent rights to appeal shared on the district website and handbooks

## **Use of Professional Interpreters**

- Required for ML program meetings, IEP meetings, discipline hearings, placement changes, and evaluation summaries

## **Role of Bilingual Staff**

- Support document review for accuracy (if trained)
- Not required to interpret in formal meetings unless qualified and approved

## **Training and Monitoring**

- Ongoing access to MDE-sponsored training
- Optional support for community interpreter certification
- Staff monitored annually for language proficiency and service quality

## **Contact Information**

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## **Resources**

- [River Bend Education District Website](#)
- [MDE Language Center](#)