



ELL BEST PRACTICES APPENDIX C

Planning for Districtwide Language Access Services

Identify Your District’s “Major” and “Lower Incidence” Languages

Use your student information system to create a code for ELL students and families, indicating both ELL status and language spoken.

Use a home language survey to identify every ELL parent and guardian in the district. Note how many languages are spoken and the size of each corresponding population. Enter ELL status into the student information system.

“Major” refers to the top languages spoken in the district. School districts must provide the full array of language access for all major languages.

- Prepare in advance by translating all essential district-level documents and school-level documents.
- Have interpretation staff prepared in advance of teacher conferences and other school events to which families are invited.

“Lower Incidence” refers to less frequently used languages. Less than 5 percent of district population is a useful threshold.

- Districts can offer interpretation only for lower incidence languages.
- Create a standard handout in all relevant languages advising parents of how they can request interpretation of written materials or an interpreter to help them communicate with staff. Distribute the handout to every ELL family during their enrollment and registration. Post signs in high-traffic areas (front doors and front office, for example) about the availability of and process for requesting interpretation.

Utilize Appropriate Staff

- Prepare a list of approved staff or outside contractors available for interpretation or translation, and circulate it to all schools.
- Ensure every principal and vice principal knows how to access these services.
- If your district contracts with a professional company, circulate its contact information and list of languages the company can translate to all principals, assistant principals, and registrars.
- Local universities may have a program that will certify bilingual people as interpreters.

Do rely on:

competent staff trained in interpretation;
the services of a language line; or
a professional interpretation company.

Do not rely on:

bilingual staff or volunteers;
the student themselves;
other students;
bilingual family members;
hired interpreters that the family brings with them;
free internet translation services; or
speaking English more slowly or loudly.

Make Report Cards Inclusive

Have the bank of teacher comments translated so that parents can understand the report card.

Plan for Common Scenarios and Big Events

Make sure you have protocols in place that make ELL families feel welcome for the following common school situations:

- ➔ Registration and enrollment
- ➔ Calls from non-English speakers to the main office
- ➔ Calls from the nurse to a family when a student gets sick
- ➔ Major orientation activities or teacher conferences

Consider organizing a district-level bilingual parent advisory committee that can provide feedback about the district's language-access capabilities.