

# **Duluth**

## **Public Schools**



# **Language Access Plan**

[www.isd709.org/language](http://www.isd709.org/language)

# DULUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

Duluth Public Schools is committed to ensuring that every family has equitable access to information. Our Language Access Plan is designated to remove language barriers and empower families who prefer to communicate in a language other than English to engage in their children’s education. This plan supports our diverse community by ensuring families can participate in school communications, events, and decision making processes, creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

More than 27 languages are spoken in Duluth Public Schools homes. Spanish and Mandarin are the most common after English. Visit [isd709.org/language](http://isd709.org/language) for more information about our language services.

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## PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

This Language Access Plan is intended to align with [Minn. Stat. § 123B.32](#) and [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), which require school districts to provide/utilize processes and procedures that effectively assist students and adults who communicate in a language other than English. The Language Access Plan provides information about the Language Access tools, processes, and resources available for students, families, and staff in ISD 709.

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# DEFINITIONS

**Bilingual staff** are fluent in multiple languages but are not trained interpreters. They can assist with simple tasks (helping with forms/relaying basic messages) but should not interpret or be pulled from primary duties.

**English Language Development (ELD)** is a program in ISD 709 that provides academic English language support to multilingual learners.

**English Learner (EL)** is a student whose primary language is not English and requires language support.

**Interpretation** is rendering a spoken or signed communication from one language into another.

**Language Access Plan** is a written document that describes how our district will provide services, processes and procedures to render effective language assistance to students and families who prefer to communicate in a language other than English.

**Language access** refers to services and resources that enable timely and meaningful communication between English speakers and those who speak other languages.

**Multilingual Learner** is a broad category that includes students who were never identified for English Learner (EL) status, students currently receiving ELD instruction, and those who used to have EL status.

**Preferred Language** is the language in which parents or guardians request services, resources, and communications from schools and the district.

**Qualified Interpreters** are trained professionals who follow the National Code of Ethics and Standards to facilitate communication between individuals who do not share a common language.

**Translation** is converting written text from one language into written text in another, maintaining the original material's intended meaning. For languages that rely on an oral tradition (i.e., Somali), an oral interpretation may be used in place of written translation.

**Vital documents** refer to materials essential to a family's ability to access ISD 709 services. [Full definition.](#)

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## LANGUAGE IDENTIFICATION

### Parents/Guardians: Preferred Language

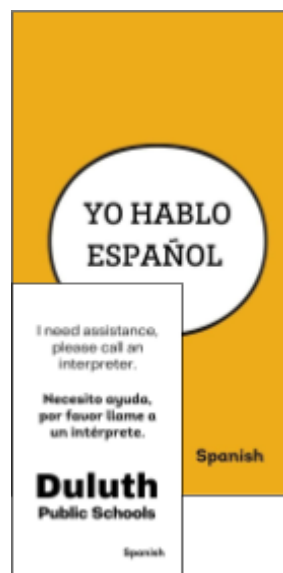
During enrollment, parents and guardians specify their preferred language, which is recorded in their profile within the district's student information system. A flag is placed on the student's profile that an interpreter is needed, enabling staff in schools to support families who need language assistance and provide appropriate services. Families can update their preferred language at any time by contacting their school or updating their language in Infinite Campus's Parent Portal by going to Settings > Contact Preferences. This will change their preferred language in ParentSquare.

### Students: English Learner (EL) Identification

All families complete the Minnesota Language Survey (MNLS) during enrollment, which identifies a student's language experiences through parent or guardian responses. If the survey indicates a potential English Learner, the district administers a state-approved language proficiency assessment to determine whether English language development services are needed and identify the student with EL status. Families are notified in the required timeline if their child qualifies for EL services using the District's Parent Notification Form. The notification includes the amount of time and type of EL service the child receives and shares the right to refuse service. Detailed information about ELD services can be found at the [ISD 709 English Language Development webpage](#).

# NOTICE OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

Duluth Public Schools is proud to provide language services. Families are informed of language services through school newsletters, printed flyers, Student Handbook and webpages. Examples include:



## I Need Assistance Cards

Each school has small cards requesting assistance in the district's top eight languages. Families can present these cards to request language services.

## We Can Help Posters

Signs informing individuals about their right to request interpreters or translation services are posted near each school's main entrance.

## Point To Your Language Signs

The top eight languages in our district are represented. Posters at each school's front desk also allow individuals to indicate their language, enabling staff to arrange appropriate services.

## English Language Development webpage

Find information about English Language Learner identification, request language services, entrance and exit procedures, and other frequently asked questions.

## Spanish & Mandarin Resource Pages

Spanish and Mandarin (Standard Chinese) are Duluth Public Schools' most spoken languages after English. Therefore, we have decided webpages for Spanish-speaking and Mandarin-speaking families to provide essential information and resources, including:

- Forms to request an interpreter or assistance
- How to translate the website instructions
- Student Handbook
- Enrollment procedures
- Health and mental health resources
- Nutrition services information
- Transportation information
- English Learner Program Information
- Guide to School for Families New to the Country
- District Calendar
- Guides to help families use school platforms (Canvas, Parent Portal, ParentSquare)

# INTERPRETATION

Interpretation from qualified interpreters is available for communications related to academic outcomes, progress, determinations, and placement of students in specialized programs and services, as well as conferences, enrollment, informational meetings, and more.

**Duluth Public Schools offers interpretation through** over-the-phone interpreting (OPI), scheduled or on-demand video-remote interpreting (VRI), and in-person interpreting (spoken and/or ASL).

Clarity Interpreting Services is available online at [clarity4all.com](https://clarity4all.com) and 24 hour phone services available at 218-340-6526.

For interpretation in American Sign Language (ASL), contact Julie Guddeck or fill out our [interpreter request form](#).

## How to access interpretation services

### Staff who need an interpreter:

1. **Assess the Need:** Determine the specific event details (date, time, location, duration) requiring an interpreter.
2. **Connect with Clarity For All:** Submit a request through the Clarity Interpreting Services online portal at [clarity4all.com](https://clarity4all.com) or using the [Clarity for All Interpreter Request Form](#).
  - a. **Urgent/Short Notice:** For immediate needs, call their 24-hour phone service at 218-340-6526.
3. **Provide Details and Confirm:** Clearly provide all necessary information about the interpretation needed to Clarity for All. Ensure you receive a confirmation of your booking.

### Families can request an interpreter:

- In-person or through our online [interpreter request form](#).

### Important Guidance:

- **Reliance on untrained students, siblings, friends, or staff to interpret is not acceptable.** Students and untrained adults should not act as intermediaries in parent/guardian communication, as it may lead to misunderstandings.
- **Request in Advance:** Provide as much notice as possible to the interpreter and family in need of services.
- **Be Clear and Complete:** Give accurate details (date, time, location, purpose, language) when requesting services.
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** Treat all interpreted information as private.
- **Communicate Changes:** Inform Clarity for All immediately of any cancellations or changes.
- **It is not recommended to use on-demand phone or video interpretation services for Individualized Education Program (IEP) or student behavior meetings.** To ensure accuracy and clarity, in-person interpreters or scheduled video calls with interpreters from our approved interpretation providers should be used.

# TRANSLATION

## Website Translation

Families can view all district and school websites in their preferred language by changing their preferred language in their browser settings or by selecting their language on the website by clicking the universal translation button on the top right of the webpage. The website chatbot “Learn with EmpowerED” will respond in the language the person uses to ask their questions.

## Digital Communication Translation

Duluth Public Schools uses ParentSquare for family communication. This tool:

- Sends information in families’ preferred language (email, text, call, app notification)
- Allows families to choose their preferred language for viewing communications and respond to those communications in their preferred language.
- Enables staff to communicate with families easily in their preferred language.

## HOW TO ACCESS TRANSLATION SERVICES

### Staff who need translations:

- Translation services are available by request for required documents in most languages.
- Alboum Translation Services will translate documents for a reasonable fee.
  - <https://alboum.com/>
  - (571) 765-3060
  - [info@alboum.com](mailto:info@alboum.com)
- State required documents are usually translated into 10 different languages. They can be found on the various state websites.
  - Statewide testing: <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/tests/TranslatedDocuments/>
  - Educational Benefit Application: <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/FNS/SNP/proc/App/>
  - Parental Rights under IDEA: <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/sped/rights/>

### Families can request translation:

- By contacting their student’s school or school counselor.

### Important Guidance:

- Reliance on unapproved automated translation tools (such as Google Translate) is not recommended.
- When families cannot read written materials, oral interpretation may be necessary.

# SPECIALIST SUPPORT

Duluth Public Schools staff are responsible for ensuring meaningful and timely access to information in individuals’ preferred languages. This includes principals, assistant principals, teachers, office staff, counselors, cultural family advocates, school nurses, district staff and all other personnel.

Duluth Public Schools has designated roles to support multilingual families.

- **English Language Development (ELD) Professionals:** Highly qualified, ELD licensed teachers provide multilingual learners additional instruction in English language development to ensure students can access grade-level content knowledge. Comprehensive supports include:
  - **Specialized Instruction:** Teach targeted lessons to strengthen multilingual learners’ English skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
  - **Progress Monitoring:** Monitor and report students’ language development and academic growth, ensuring their progress receives support and recognition.
  - **Family Support:** Help multilingual families navigate the school system by offering resources and guidance to reinforce learning at home.
  - **Professional Learning:** Provide teachers and school staff with strategies and resources to understand and meet the needs of multilingual learners more effectively.

- **Integration Specialists:** Duluth Public Schools employs Integration Specialists to support our diverse community, helping families feel included and empowered to engage in their children's education.
  - **Program Support:** Integration Specialists at all site levels will provide support in Culturally Responsive in-school learning opportunities, increased student-to-teacher connections, goal monitoring and Career & College Readiness access experiences and support.
  - **Academic Support:** The Integration Specialists will provide academic and cultural enrichment support to the students on their roster that are aligned with the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Plan based on the identified needs of each school site.
  - **Family Engagement:** Integration Specialists serve as a liaison between home and school with a focus on intentional relationship building with families/caregivers and will support diverse family engagement based on the identified needs of each site.
- **Adelle Wellens, Communications Officer:** Adelle Wellens is the district's website administrator and is in charge of the district wide communication platform, ParentSquare. She has worked with Alboum Translation Services in the past.

## LANGUAGE ACCESS COMMUNICATION

Duluth Public Schools actively shares the Language Access Plan to ensure families and staff are aware and have the training and resources to use it effectively.

- **Community:** District wide communications such as newsletters, emails, and websites.
- **Staff:** All staff receive training through professional development sessions, video tutorials, and detailed step-by-step guides.
- **Families:** Language services are offered to families who indicate a preferred language other than English. Information about Language Services is shared with families through newsletters, printed flyers and posters, and the Student Handbook.

## LANGUAGE ACCESS REVIEW

Duluth Public Schools continuously reviews and evaluates this Language Access Plan to ensure it effectively meets the needs of our diverse community.

Feedback on the language services is collected from families and staff through surveys, focus groups, and meetings, providing valuable insights to refine and enhance the plan. The plan will be reviewed and updated by the Duluth School Board every two years.

We value your input on our language access services and are committed to providing high quality support. If you have feedback or suggestions for improvement, or if you experience challenges accessing services, please contact us at [info@isd709.org](mailto:info@isd709.org) or by mail at Duluth Public Schools, 709 Portia Johnson Dr., Duluth, MN 55811.