

ISD #709

Language Access Plan

Adelle Wellens and Jackie Otway

OUR MISSION

Every student, every day will be empowered with learning opportunities for growth, creativity and curiosity, in preparation for their future in a global community.

OUR VISION

Duluth Public Schools provides an academically engaging, safe and inclusive environment with high expectations and responsible use of resources.

OUR CORE VALUES

Learning



Developing a love of learning through life-long inquiry.

Excellence



Having high standards for all through accountability, integrity and authenticity.

Equity



Creating conditions of justice, fairness and inclusion so all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential.

Collaboration



Working in partnership with staff, families, students and community.

Belonging



Providing a welcoming and accessible environment where everyone feels safe, seen and heard.

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.

123B.32 LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN.

Subdivision 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

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 the Infinite Campus 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](#).

Communication Support

I Need Assistance Cards

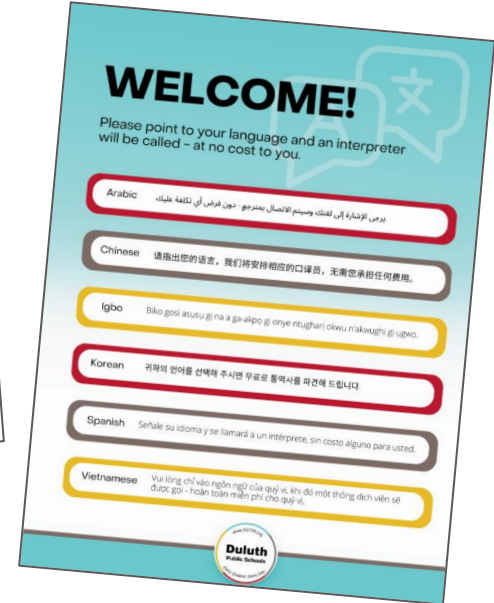
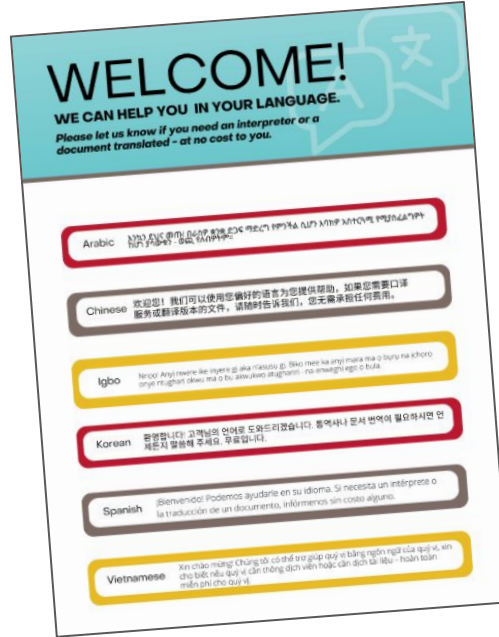
Each school has small cards requesting assistance in the district's top eight languages. Families can present these cards to request language services.

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.



Resource Web 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 and Translation Services

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).

An interpreter request form is posted in the district website under the English Language Development (ELD) program page. Staff and families can request an interpreter here. Currently ELD teachers receive this notification and request interpretation services through Clarity For All.

To improve access to interpretation services, instructions for requesting an interpreter directly through Clarity for All are provided, along with recommendations and guidelines for ethical and equitable use.

Website and Digital Communication Translation is available through Alboum Translation. Families can request document translation by contacting their school or school counselor.



Support for Staff and 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.
- **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.
- **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.



Questions?

- Any questions?
- Comments?
- Concerns?
- Feedback?