



## 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 Belle Plaine Public School'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). 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

Belle Plaine Public School has adopted and aligned the school district's best practices and code of ethics with the recommended [Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Educational Interpreters of Spoken Language](#) provided by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Additional resources utilized by the district regarding the district's Language Access Plan can be found on the MDE [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

Belle Plaine Public School's language access plan provides a blueprint for bringing the district into compliance with state and federal language access requirements, including how the district will increase its capacity to address language service and resource needs identified. 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

Belle Plaine Public School provides comprehensive language assistance services to ensure multilingual students and families can engage fully with our educational programs. These services include:

- **Language Line:** A telephone-based service used for on-demand interpretation across a wide array of languages
- **Pocket Talk:** Device used to translate

- **Multilingual Word:** Contracted for in-person and scheduled video remote interpreting and document translation. ASL interpreting for meetings, conferences and public events for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- **American Indian Education Liaison:** Supports communication and educational programming for Native American families, ensuring culturally appropriate engagement.
- **Bilingual Paraprofessionals:** Support instructional services and assist in clarifying classroom expectations and communications between school and home.

Families and students can request language support at any time by contacting school staff or calling the district office. Staff are trained to initiate support services whenever a language need is observed.

## Implementation

The Language Access Plan is managed by the Director of Student Support Services, supported by a cross-functional **Language Access Team** that includes the Director of Teaching and Learning, ML teacher and cultural liaisons.

This team is responsible for:

- Contracting services (e.g., Language Line, Multilingual Word)
- Assigning interpreters
- Monitoring quality
- Promoting awareness of services
- Collaborating with community partners
- Training staff on proper protocols

## Identification and Assessment of Language Assistance Needs

The Home Language Questionnaire, registration data, and EL program intake assessments are used to determine language needs. Staff will:

- Document language preferences in the student information system
- Update records annually
- Consult with liaisons and community groups (such as the Migrant Education Program) to stay current on emerging needs

An annual review ensures services match the district's demographics and linguistic shifts.

## Timeline

- **Fall 2025:** Public board adoption
- **Fall-Winter 2025:** Staff training and family notification rollout
- **Spring 2026:** Mid-year review and stakeholder survey
- **Summer 2026:** Plan revisions and staff retraining (if needed)

- **2026-2027:** Annual review and continuous monitoring

## **Funding and Procurement**

Language access services are funded through a combination of:

- Special Education funding (IDEA)
- General Education Funds

## **Notice of Services**

Families are notified of available language assistance services through:

- School handbooks
- School District website
- Phone calls (with translated messages)
- Outreach by cultural liaisons

Reminders are provided prior to conferences, during enrollment, and annual events.

It is a requirement of Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32, Language Access Plan Required, that a district or charter's plan be included in their Parent Handbook.

## **Training for Staff**

All school staff receive training on:

- Legal obligations
- Identifying and responding to language needs
- Proper use of interpreters and translators
- How and when to contact support services (Language Line, Multilingual Word)
- Ethical and confidentiality standards

Cultural liaisons also offer training and support on community-specific practices and communication norms.

## **Plan Maintenance**

The Language Access Team will:

- Monitor use and satisfaction of services
- Track interpreter requests and response times
- Review translated materials for clarity and cultural relevance
- Collect feedback from families and staff

- Revise the plan every two years or sooner as needed

## Community Engagement and Partnership

Belle Plaine Public School partners with:

- Local tribal organizations
- Spanish-speaking community centers
- American Indian Education Committees
- Migrant services groups
- The district's Special Education Parent Advisory Council

These partnerships help improve service alignment and provide feedback loops via advisory councils and family engagement nights.

## Emergency Communication Protocol

In emergencies, translated alerts will be sent via:

- Automated texts and calls (with interpreter assistance)
- School messenger apps
- Spanish-speaking liaison, ASL interpreters, and other language services as needed

These channels will ensure real-time, multilingual updates for families during crises.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) Translation Services

AI tools such as Google Translate are used only for:

- Preliminary drafts
- Internal communication
- Flyers with **call-back contact info** for follow-up clarification

Final versions of vital documents are always reviewed by professional translators or bilingual liaisons for accuracy.

## 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

Telephone calls and in-person requests from individuals with language assistance needs are handled in the following manner:

- **In-person/Phone:** Staff (typically administrative assistants) use a language identification card or connect immediately to the Language Line or utilize the Cultural Liaison.
- **Written Correspondence:** Routed to bilingual staff.
- **IEPs and EL Programs:** Require professional interpreters— ASL Services, or in-house liaisons.

Language preferences will be documented in the district's student information system. This information will be updated annually.

Staff will inform individuals with language assistance needs about available services in the following ways:

- **In-person interpreters:** Scheduled via Multilingual Word or Cultural Liaison and requested by district administrative assistants.
- **Remote/phone interpreting:** Language Line is used district-wide by any staff member.
- **Translation:** Multilingual Word is used for key documents; bilingual Cultural Liaison or bilingual paraprofessional staff (informal documents) review for accuracy.

**Complaints:** Directed to the Director of Student Support Services and addressed within 10 business days. The Director of Student Support Services will follow up with the complainant to address and ensure complaints are resolved and resolutions are communicated to families in the manner that supports the linguistic needs of the individual(s).

## Contact Information

The following staff may be contacted regarding the specific linguistic needs of individuals within the district:

### **Mary Mesler**

Director of Student Support Services

(952) 378-2450

[mmesler@belleplaine.k12.mn.us](mailto:mmesler@belleplaine.k12.mn.us)

**Margot Hansen**

Director of Teaching and Learning

(952) 873-2403

**Brittany Olson**

EL Coordinator

(952) 873-2403

[bolson@belleplaine.k12.mn.us](mailto:bolson@belleplaine.k12.mn.us)

**Falynn Haynes**

American Indian Cultural Liaison

(952) 873-2403

[fhaynes@belleplaine.k12.mn.us](mailto:fhaynes@belleplaine.k12.mn.us)

**Olivia Alvarado Briones**

ML Paraprofessional and Interpreter

[oalvarado@belleplaine.k12.mn.us](mailto:oalvarado@belleplaine.k12.mn.us)

## Resources

[Language Access Procedure for Front Desk Staff](#)

[English Learner Disability Resources](#)

[Language Identification Chart](#)