



TO: School Board Members

FROM: Peter Mau, Assistant Superintendent

DATE: May 4, 2026

SUBJECT: Approval of Language Access Plan

BACKGROUND

School District 197 is committed to ensuring that all students, families, and community members have equitable access to district information, services, and educational opportunities. As the linguistic diversity of our community continues to grow, the district has expanded its use of interpretation and translation services to better support families who communicate in a language other than English.

Currently, the district utilizes a variety of tools and services to support language access, including LanguageLine for on-demand phone interpretation in more than 240 languages, TalkingPoints for two-way multilingual communication between staff and families, ParentSquare for mass communication with auto-translation, and districtwide translators and interpreters who provide written translations and in-person interpretation services.

In Spring 2024, new state legislation was enacted requiring school districts to formalize language access practices. In response, School District 197 engaged in a multi-phase development process that included staff training, a comprehensive review of current practices, and input from a Language Access Review Team. This work resulted in the development of a formal Language Access Plan, which is being presented to the School Board for approval for the first time.

The proposed Language Access Plan establishes a coherent framework for how the district will provide timely, meaningful, and equitable access to information for families. It aligns with Minnesota Statute 123B.32 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, both of which require school districts to implement effective processes to support individuals who communicate in languages other than English.

The plan outlines expectations for the use of trained or certified interpreters in key educational interactions, including those related to academic progress, program placement, and specialized services. It also includes enhancements to current services, such as the development of an on-call interpreter model and district-specific training for multilingual staff serving as interpreters.

Administration recommends approval of the Language Access Plan to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements and to strengthen the district's commitment to equitable family engagement.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of Independent School District No. 197 that the Language Access Plan be approved as presented.