

## **LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN**

### **I. Purpose**

Intermediate School District 917's Language Access Plan is designed to ensure compliance with state and federal language access requirements and alignment with our district core values, particularly communication, equity, diversity, and empathy. The goal of this plan is to remove barriers and increase access for students and adults who communicate in a language other than English or require additional assistance due to a disability to meaningful information sharing and collaborative discussions with students and families about student progress and performance, program placements, services, individualized education program process, and decision-making. Per MN Statute 123B.32, this plan provides 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.

### **II. The Plan**

#### **A. Language Identification**

- During enrollment, parents and guardians specify their preferred language and it is recorded within the student information system. This information can be updated by contacting the school. Schools use this information to identify language services.
- All families complete the Minnesota Language Survey (MNLS) during enrollment.

#### **B. Use of Trained or Certified Spoken Language Interpreters for Communication to Ensure Meaningful Participation in the IEP Process for Families Who Communicate in a Language other than English or Require Additional Assistance Due to a Disability**

- ISD 917 uses a variety of tools and strategies to meaningful information sharing and collaborative discussions with students and families about student progress and performance, program placements, services, individualized education program process, and decision-making, including:

- Professional Interpreters (i.e. remote and in-person) are available for communications related to conferences, special education meetings and communications, and phone conversations between staff and parents/guardians.
  - For in person meetings, staff members can request interpretation for a parent/guardian meeting by contacting your program administrative assistant and provide the date, time, location, and meeting purpose.
- Written translation (Prior Written Notices)
- ASL Interpretation at events
- TransAct
- Language Line
- Translation of online enrollment is available in Infinite Campus. From the 'User Menu' (top right-hand corner of the screen), select 'Language' to change the language that will be displayed. The translations available include Somali and Spanish. This is only available on enrollment forms.
- Translation of the district website is available by clicking "Language" at the top of the screen and choosing the family's preferred language.

C. Notification of Family Rights and Communications

- The Language Access Plan will be included in all student and staff handbooks/culture guides and published on the district website. Families can request services by contacting the program administrative assistant at their child's school.

D. Communications

- This document will be included in all student and staff handbooks/culture guides and published on the district website.

E. Identification and Assessment of Language Assistance and Accommodation Needs

- During enrollment, parents and guardians specify their preferred language and any accommodations needed due to disabilities. These are recorded within the student information system and can be updated by contacting their child's school. Schools use this information to identify language and disability services.

- All families complete the Minnesota Language Survey (MNLS) during enrollment.
- F. Emergency Communication Protocols
  - In the case of emergencies, such as severe weather, emails will be sent out to parents/guardians in English, Spanish, and Somali, via Infinite Campus.
- G. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Translation Services
  - When the district uses AI to translate documents and flyers, these materials will provide a call back number so students and parents can contact someone at the school if they have questions.
- H. Implementation
  - The Executive Director of Students Services and Director of Teaching and Learning will be responsible for overseeing, developing, and modifying the language access plan, and establishing and implementing operational procedures.
- I. Appeal Process
  - If a family/guardian faces challenges with any of the above or have feedback/suggestions for improvement, they can contact the Executive Director of Student Services at [melissa.schaller@isd917.org](mailto:melissa.schaller@isd917.org).
- J. School Board Governance
  - The ISD 917 School Board will review this plan every two years and update as necessary.

### **III. Definitions**

- A. 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.
- B. Relay – Telephone accessibility services to people who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or speech disabled.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.

- E. Interpreter – A person who provides interpreting services.
- F. 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.
- G. 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.
- H. 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.
- I. 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 setting.
- J. 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.
- K. Primary Language – An individual's native tongue or the language in which an individual most effectively communicates.
- L. 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.
- M. Remote Interpreting – Interpreting that is provided via telephone or video call.
- N. Translator – A person who provides translation services.
- O. Translation – The restating of written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language).

- P. 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.

**Legal References**

Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 123B.32, subdivision 1

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964