

Easthampton Language Access Plan

The following procedures are intended to establish meaningful, two-way communication between the District and parents with limited English proficiency (LEP), and promote access for such parents to the programs, services, and activities of the District.

A. Definitions

1. Persons with “limited English proficiency” (“LEP”) are individuals who are unable to communicate effectively in English either verbally or in writing, or both, because their primary language is not English and they have not developed fluency in the English language. A person with LEP may have difficulty in one or more of four domains of language: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Staff are urged to remember that LEP may be context-specific—e.g., a parent may have sufficient English language skills to understand, communicate and/or exchange basic information with a teacher, but they may not have sufficient skills to communicate detailed, specific information needed in a particular context, like an IEP meeting, a 504 meeting, or a student discipline hearing.
2. “LEP parent(s)” refers to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student or students enrolled in the District who have limited English proficiency, even if the student is proficient in English. This term does not include family members of the student other than their parent(s) or guardian(s).
3. “Primary language” means the primary language spoken by a student’s parent or guardian, or the predominant language spoken in the student’s home. Parents may have more than one primary language and/or dialect.
4. “Language services” refers to a broad spectrum of services used or required to facilitate communication and understanding between speakers of different languages, and typically includes interpretation and translation services.
5. “Interpretation” means the act of contemporaneous communication between a speaker of English and a speaker of another language wherein the words of one person are communicated to others orally in a different language.
The District will take reasonable steps to utilize interpreters who have demonstrated language proficiency through certification or who are employed by a particular vendor or service contracted to provide interpretation services.
6. “Translation” means the written communication between a speaker of English and a speaker of another language where in the written words of one person are communicated to others in writing in a different language.

B. Parent Identification

1. Upon student enrollment and periodically through a student's education, schools will utilize the Home Language survey to identify parents who need language access services and the languages in which they may need assistance. The survey will be translated into the most commonly known languages spoken in the district and will be included in the standard enrollment packet provided to all District parents.
2. Schools must determine within thirty (30) days of a student's enrollment the primary language spoken by the parent of each student enrolled in the school, and if such language is not English, whether the parent requires language services in order to communicate effectively with the school or District.
3. Schools will maintain an appropriate and current record of the primary language spoken by a student's parents, and such record will be available to the District.

C. Interpretation and Translation Services

Interpreter and Translation Services: EPSD offers interpreter and translation services to any student or caregiver whose primary language is not English AND has identified that they wish to have an interpreter and/or translation. The district shall inquire and offer, in the primary language, these services. The district does not assume that caregivers want an interpreter translation, but instead collaborates with caregivers so they best understand their rights and option.

Parents will be made aware of interpretation and translation services via these pathways:

1. If a parent indicates on the Home Language Survey that a language other than English is spoken by the parent(s) and/or student, the district will call the parent (using Lionbridge or other telephonic interpretation system if appropriate) to inform them of the interpretation and translation services we offer.
2. Annually, we will promote our communication app, Remind, and its preferred language capabilities. Our Family Engagement Coordinator will ensure that all families have selected a preferred language in Remind, so all district/school communications are electronically delivered to families already translated into the language of their choice. Then, communications will be made regularly through Remind to promote our other interpretation and translation services.
3. The district will maintain a voicemail box for Spanish (the predominant spoken language other than English in Easthampton), so families can leave messages in Spanish. Calls will be returned by a staff member using Lionbridge.
4. The district will host Family Education nights and invite families who listed a language other than English on their Home Language Survey to teach them how to use automatic

translation on the district/school websites and how to use Google Translate for other websites that are not automatically translated.

Services contracted by the district for interpretation and translation:

- *Face to face (in-person meetings or zoom): Contracted Agency (Transfluenci)*
- *Translation: Contracted agency (Transfluenci)*
- *Telephonic interpretation: Contracted Agency (LionBridge)*

The Special Education Office manages translation and interpretation services for essential information. The following list provides examples of Essential Information requiring translation and interpretation:

- IEP/504 meetings
- Report cards for students
- Academic progress reports for students
- Enrollment/Registration documents
- Disciplinary process information
- Permission slips/forms for District and School activities and programs
- Applications for activities requiring parental consent
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Open-houses
- Parent Handbooks
- Public Health and Safety information
- Documents on academic planning/options
- Screening procedures needing students'/parents' language backgrounds, the process for refusing all/some ELL services
- Written information on parents'/students' rights and responsibilities
- Written information on services and benefits available to parents and students

Each written translation requires at least 2 weeks to complete. For requesting in-person interpreters, 2 weeks advance notice is required. Please be mindful of this when placing requests, calculating at least 14 days prior to the due date/date of service. In the event of a rush request, please indicate as much on the form and provide the reason for expediting the request.

To request an interpreter or translation, please contact the Administrative Assistant to the Director of Special Education at 413-529-1500 ext 129.

Monitoring requests

All requests shall be monitored via email with the Administrative Assistant to the Director of Special Education.

Written translation is submitted via encrypted electronic email to the contracted agency. Interpreter requests are made via email to the Administrative Assistant to the Director of Special Education. They make phone and email contact with the contracted agency. Once confirmation with the agency is made, the Administrative Assistant to the Director of Special Education provides confirmation to the district staff making the request.

1. Each school and District office will, consistent with this policy and procedure, provide free oral interpretation services to all parents who require language services in order to communicate effectively during any interaction with the District significant to the student's education.
2. All interpretation and translation will be provided by competent and fluent speakers of that language as demonstrated by certification or similar means. The District will take reasonable steps to ensure that interpreters and translators have the knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or concepts to be used in the communication at issue, and that they have been trained in the role of an interpreter or translator, the ethics of interpreting and translating, and the need to maintain confidentiality.

In the event that the District cannot provide an interpreter that is either certified or employed by a vendor to provide interpretation services after taking all reasonable steps to do so, the District must still take reasonable steps to ensure that the interpreter utilized is trained regarding the role of an interpreter, the ethics of interpreting and translating, and the need to maintain confidentiality.

Communications with parents are in clear and commonly understood words and are in both English and the primary language of the home if such primary language is other than English. Any interpreter used in fulfilling these requirements is fluent in the primary language of the home and familiar with education procedures, programs, and services. If the parents or the student are unable to read in any language or are blind or deaf, communications required by these regulations are made orally in English with the use of a foreign language interpreter, in Braille, in sign language, via TTY, or in writing, whichever is appropriate, and all such communications are documented.

If the district provides notices orally or in some other mode of communication that is not written language, the district keeps written documentation (a) that it has provided such notice in an alternate manner, (b) of the content of the notice and (c) of the steps taken to ensure that the parent understands the content of the notice.

3. Parents may voluntarily choose to decline the District's offer of an interpreter and choose instead to rely on an adult friend/companion or relative for language and interpretation services, but school staff may not suggest this as an alternative to providing appropriate language and interpretation services.

Students and other minor children under the age of 18 may not serve as interpreters for school staff and parents during any formal or informal meeting or process.

4. The District will facilitate staff access to appropriate interpretation and translation services in order to communicate with LEP parents consistent with federal and/or state law and this policy and procedure.

5. District staff will be informed of when and how to access interpretation and translation services available within the District and the administrator responsible for ensuring the availability of such services. To request an interpreter or translation, please contact the Administrative Assistant to the Director of Special Education at 413-529-1500 ext 129.

6. District administrators, including those involved with registration and enrollment, certificated staff and other appropriate staff as determined by the superintendent, will receive guidance and information regarding:

- a. the rights of LEP parents under state and federal law to language access services provided by the District;
- b. the importance of meaningfully and effectively communicating with LEP parents;
- c. the most effective ways to communicate with LEP parents regarding the District's available language services;
- d. the importance of utilizing competent translation and interpretation services when communicating with LEP parents;
- e. the availability of translation and interpretation services within the District, whether through in-person interpretation, telephonic services, online services, or video-conferencing;
- f. the mechanisms and processes for accessing translation and interpretation services when working with LEP parents, including ensuring the correct language service is being accessed, checking LEP parent understanding once interpretation has commenced, and proper vetting of translations for audience-appropriate content; and
- g. the process for reporting concerns or complaints.

7. Interpretation Services: Whenever requested by a parent or whenever school staff or District officials can reasonably anticipate that interpretation services are necessary to meaningfully communicate with parents regarding important information about their child's education or school activities, the District will provide interpretation services in accordance with this procedure.

Such interpretation services may be provided either at the location where the parent is seeking to communicate or by electronic means, such as telephone or video conferencing. Upon three days' notice that such services are required, the District will provide interpretation services at public meetings organized or sponsored by the District (e.g., School Committee meetings).

8. Translation of Student-Specific Documents: Parents/guardians shall be provided written translation of notices or documents containing essential information in a language they can understand in a timely manner. Essential information includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Information about special education matters arising under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (e.g., Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 meetings);
 - b. Report cards and other academic progress reports;
 - c. Information about the disciplinary process;
 - d. Requests for parent/guardian permission for student participation in District/school sponsored programs and activities;
 - e. Promotional materials and announcements distributed to students that contain information about school and District activities for which notice is needed to participate in such activities (e.g., testing, activities requiring an application, parent-teacher conferences, open houses);
 - f. student-parent handbooks, upon request;
 - g. Documents concerning enrollment or registration;
 - h. Documents concerning academic options and planning;
 - i. Documents concerning screening procedures requesting a student's language background and a parent's/guardian's preferred method of communication;
9. Alternatives to Immediate Translation: When translation for a document otherwise required to be translated is unavailable or cannot be done, such as in an emergency situation related to public health and safety, a school or District office will provide information initially in English with interpretation and/or translation to follow as soon as practicable

D. Providing Information to Parents

1. District staff and parents will be annually notified of this policy. Staff will be regularly provided written guidance regarding how and when interpretation and translation services should be accessed and such guidance will be updated as needed to reflect available services.
2. Parents will also be annually notified regarding the process for filing complaints through the District's nondiscrimination policy and procedure if they believe that such services have not been appropriately provided.
3. The District will take steps to ensure that, at the time of enrollment, information regarding available interpretation and translation services and the District's complaint process is provided to any parent (s) when there is reason to believe that the student's parent(s) may have LEP (e.g., results of home language survey, a parent's request for an interpreter). The District will take reasonable steps to provide information required by this section in the primary language spoken predominantly in the home.
4. Schools and District offices will post in a conspicuous location at or near the primary entrance to the school or office a sign in primary languages spoken in the District concerning the rights of parents to translation and interpretation services and how to access such services.

5. To the extent practicable, the District website will provide information in designated languages concerning the rights of parents to translation and interpretation services under federal and state law and how to access such services.

E. The Collection and Analysis of LEP Data

1. The District will periodically collect and analyze data related to LEP so as to assemble a list of primary languages spoken predominantly in the homes of students and their parents. Such information will help to ensure the provision of appropriate language access services and assist the District in effectively planning and budgeting for services necessary to communicate with students and their parents.
2. Such data may be collected by parent surveys.