

Federal Expectations for a Language Assistance Program

Planning for District-Wide Language Access Services

- ➔ Prepare in advance – Identify District’s “Major” vs. “Lower Incidence” languages
 - a. Use your student information system to create a code for LEP students and parents, indicating both LEP status & language spoken.
 - b. Use the Home Language Survey: identify every LEP parent or guardian in the district. Note how many languages are spoken, and the size of each corresponding population. Enter LEP status into the student information system.
 - c. “Major” – Top languages spoken in the district. District must provide the full array of language access on every front.
 - Prepare in advance by translating **all** essential district-level documents and school-level documents.
 - Have interpretation staff prepared in advance.
 - d. “Lower Incidence” – less frequent languages – less than 5% of district population is a useful threshold.
 - Districts can offer interpretation only.
 - To ensure parents know to ask for interpretation help, create a standard handout in all relevant languages advising parents of how they can request interpretation of written materials and/or when they need to communicate with staff.
- ➔ Utilize Appropriate Staff –
 - a. Do: rely appropriate, competent staff trained in interpretation and/or obtain the services of a language line and/or professional interpretation company.
 - Prepare a list of approved staff and/or outside contractors available for interpretation and/or translation, and circulate to all schools.
 - Ensure every principal and vice principal knows how to access the services.
 - If the District contracts with a professional company, circulate to all principals, assistant principals, and registrars information about how to contact the company and what languages they can interpret. In SE Louisiana, 1-World Language is a known vendor.
 - Loyola University New Orleans offers a program for bilingual people to become certified interpreters.
 - b. Don’t: rely on bilingual staff or volunteers; the student themselves; other students; bilingual family members or hired interpreters that the family brings with; free internet translation services; or, by speaking English but more slowly or loudly
- ➔ Post signs in high-traffic areas of every school about the availability of and how to request interpretation (school’s front doors; in the front office)
- ➔ Distribute written information on how to request translation or interpretation services to every LEP parent or guardian during their enrollment & registration
- ➔ For report cards, in advance have the bank of teacher comments translated so that parents can understand the report card.
- ➔ Prepare for common scenarios or big events:
 - Protocol for registration & enrollment;
 - Protocol for when non-English speaker calls the main office;
 - Protocol for when the nurse needs to call home because the student gets sick;
 - Plan in advance for major orientation activities and/or teacher conferences
- ➔ Consider organizing a district-level Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee that can provide feedback about the district’s language access capabilities.

