

BlueSky Online School Language Access Plan

This Language Access Plan follows Minnesota Statute § 123B.32 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which require school districts to provide processes and procedures that effectively assist students and adults who communicate in a language other than English or require additional assistance due to disability. This plan provides information about the language access tools, processes, and resources available for students, families, and staff at BlueSky Online Charter School

Federal Requirements

- *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs receiving federal funding.
- *Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA)* requires actions to overcome language barriers so English learners have equal opportunity.
- *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.

Minnesota Statutes, Section 123B.32

Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, our school board will adopt a Language Access Plan that:

- Uses trained interpreters and translations tools for important conversations about a student's academic progress, placement, and participation in specialized programs or services, including special education and individualized education programs (IEPs).
- Informs families and communities about their language access rights.
- Establishes a process for families to appeal or request changes if their language access needs are not met.
- It is reviewed every two years and updated as needed.

Minnesota LEAPS Act of 2014 Sets three goals for students learning English:

1. Academic English proficiency

2. Grade-level content knowledge
3. Multilingual skills development

Family Rights

Families have the right to:

- Receive information about your child's education in your home language
- Have an interpreter for important meetings about your child
- Participate fully in your child's educational experience

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 allows 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

BlueSky follows MDE guidance for interpreter standards and aligns with national professional codes of ethics for spoken language and ASL interpreters.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) provides guidance on the Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Educational Interpreters of Spoken Language that can be viewed on the [English Learner Disability Resources](#) webpage. This guide is only available in English because it was intended for language access practitioners.

Language Identification

- Language Identification
 - During enrollment, parents/guardians specific language that is spoken at home.
 - Staff are trained on how to access qualified interpreters to help parents complete enrollment paperwork if needed
 - Student Information System: The families language is visible to staff on the students powerschool dashboard for staff to see.
 - Staff Communication - Staff are encouraged to ask families about their communication preferences.
- Students: English Learner (EL) Identification
 - All families complete the MN Language Survey during enrollment
 - A state-approved language proficiency assessment to determine whether English language development services are needed will be given
 - Previous Access scores will be reviewed.
 - Parents will be notified if their student will be qualified for EL services
- Staff Communication
 - Use of qualified interpreters during Intake Meetings, IEP meetings, Conferences, phone calls between staff and families are encouraged.

Tools & Resources Available

To help families at BlueSky overcome language barriers, staff will use the following resources to access the translation services needed.

TransAct ParentNotices:

TransACT provides written forms or notices required by ESSA, translated into Spanish, Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Vietnamese, and Karen. All Minnesota districts and charter schools can utilize the TransACT website with free access. Individuals within the district can activate their free account at:

<https://minnesota-doe.parentnotices.com>

When to Use:

- Required ESSA parent Notifications

Professional Documentation

Document translations are available for requested documents in most languages. BlueSky Charter School also proactively translates many vital documents including district policies, regulations, and procedures.

Vital documents as defined by the [US Department of Justice and Education](#)

To request additional documents to be translated contact *Danielle Sanders- Office Manager*

When to Use:

- Formal documents requiring a signature from parents
- Frequently circulated documents such as registration and enrollment forms, student code of conduct, report cards, etc.

IMPORTANT GUIDANCE

- Reliance on unapproved automated translation tools (such as Google Translate) is not recommended.
- When families cannot read written materials, oral interpretation may be necessary.

Website Translation:

- Families can also use a web browser translation tool (e.g., Google Translate) to view information in their preferred language.

Interpretation

BlueSky contracts with several services to help staff with live interpreted communication with families. BlueSky staff are able to set up meetings directly with the vendors. BlueSky offers over the phone (OTP) and video-remote interpretation services (VRI).

Contact *Danielle Sanders- Office Manager* if you have questions about BlueSky services.

When to Use

- Parent/teacher conferences
- Welcome/intake meetings
- IEP meeting

IMPORTANT GUIDANCE

Use of untrained students, siblings, friends, or staff to interpret is not acceptable. Students and untrained adults should not act as intermediaries in parent/guardian communication, as it may lead to misunderstandings.

HOW TO ACCESS INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Staff who need an interpreter

1. Determine the type of service you need
 - a. On-demand over the phone or zoom
 - b. Scheduled call or zoom
 - i. Scheduled ASL
2. Refer to [Translation Tools & Resources](#)
3. Contact Danielle Sanders for account setup or any questions

[Working with Interpreters: Information for Teachers](#)

State required documents are usually translated and found on various state websites.

- Statewide testing <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/tests/TranslatedDocuments/>
- Educational Benefits Application <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/FNS/SNP/proc/App/>
- Parental Rights under IDEA <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/sped/rights/>

Families can request an interpreter

- Through our online [interpreter request form](#)
- By contacting Danielle Sanders- Office Manager

Staff Training

- In person training
- Step-by Step guides/video trainings
- New staff onboarding

Specialist Support

BlueSky Charter School has designated roles to support multilingual families

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (ELD) PROFESSIONALS

Highly qualified, ELD licensed teachers provide multilingual learners additional instruction in English language development to ensure students can access grade-level content knowledge.

Comprehensive support includes:

- Specialized Instruction: Teach targeted lessons to strengthen multilingual learners' English skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Progress Monitoring: Monitor and report students' language development and academic growth, ensuring their progress receives support and recognition.
 - Family Support: Help multilingual families navigate the school system by offering resources and guidance to reinforce learning at home.
 - Professional Learning: Provide teachers and school staff with strategies and resources to understand and meet the needs of multilingual learners more effectively.

AI Translation Tools/Guidelines

Appropriate Use

AI translation tools should be limited to brief, non-vital translations only. These tools are suitable for:

- Quick understanding of simple sentences or short paragraphs
- Informal content, like newsletters
- Getting the general meaning of basic text

Unacceptable Use- Federal law requires schools to provide professional translation services for all vital information to Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents.

- **Educational Rights and Services:** Enrollment and registration materials, IEP meeting and Special Education Evaluations, report cards, progress reports and/or EL program notifications.
- **Legal and Administrative Documents:** Parent handbooks, school policies, permission forms for students, legal notices. Any document that affects a parent's ability to participate in their child's education.

Legal Requirements for Schools

Under federal civil rights laws, schools must:

- Provide effective language assistance to English Learner families
- Use appropriate and competent translators and interpreters
- Never rely on students, siblings, friends, or untrained school staff for translation
- Provide services that are free to parents
- Maintain confidentiality in all translated communications

Schools that use AI translation tools for vital communications may be violating federal law and parents' civil rights

Language Access Communications

BlueSky Charter School actively shares the Language Access Plan to ensure families and staff are aware and have the training and resources to use it effectively

- **Community:** Newsletters, website, and emails
- **Staff:** All staff receive training through professional development sessions, video tutorials, and detailed step-by-step guides
- **Families:** Language services are offered to families who indicate a preferred language other than English. The Language Access Plan will be included in the student Handbook.

Language Access Review

BlueSky will seek ongoing feedback throughout the year. The Administrative Team will review and update the Language Access Plan annually in the spring. The BlueSky Board will conduct a biannual review of the plan

Appeals progress:

If a family/guardian faces challenges with any of the above or have feedback/suggestions for improvement, they can contact dan.ondich@blueskyschool.org or send a letter to

BlueSky School Language Services

2051 Killebrew Drive St 500

Bloomington MN 55425

District Contacts:

If you have questions or concerns about the Language Access Plan contact.

Danielle Sanders

School Operations Manager

danielle.sanders@blueskyschool.org

Dan Ondich

Principal

dan.ondich@blueskyschool.org

Resources

- Minnesota Department of Education: English Learner Resources
- U.S. Department of Education: OCR Guidance on Language Access