



Nerstrand Elementary School's Language Access Plan to Ensure Effective Communication with Multilingual Students and Families

Section 1: Policy Directives

This section sets forth the laws, standards, and operating principles that will govern the implementation of Nerstrand Elementary School's language access plan.

Policy Foundation

Federal

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted as part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.
- Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) requires states and school districts to provide equal educational opportunity to students learning English by taking appropriate actions to overcome language barriers.
- 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.

State

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32 states:

- Subd. 1. Language access plan required. Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, during a regularly scheduled public board hearing, a school board must adopt a language access plan that specifies the district's process and procedures to render effective language assistance to students and adults who communicate in a language other than English. The language access plan must be available to the public and included in the school's handbook.
- Subd. 2. Plan requirements. The language access plan must include how the district and its schools will use trained or certified spoken language interpreters for communication related to academic outcomes, progress, determinations, and placement of students in specialized programs and services; and how families and communities will be notified of their rights under this plan.
- Subd. 3. Regular review. The board must review the plan every two years and update the plan as appropriate.
- Minnesota Learning for English Academic Proficiency (LEAPS) Act of 2014, Chapter 272, H.F. No. 2397, Article 1. The law has three principal goals for all English Learner (EL) students: 1) academic English proficiency; 2) grade-level content knowledge; and 3) multilingual skills development.

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). The 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 lack 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

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.

Section 2: The Plan

Overview

Nerstrand Elementary School's language access plan provides a blueprint for bringing the charter school into compliance with state and federal language access requirements, including how the charter will increase its capacity to address language service and resource needs identified in its self-assessment.

This plan is also 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.

Language Access Plan

Description of Services

Nerstrand Elementary School offers interpretation (American Sign Language, translator for events such as conferences, concerts, graduation, etc). A request for these services can be made through the administrative assistant via email at dana@nerstrand.charter.k12.mn.us or phone at 507-333-6850.

The administrative assistant will work with professional organizations to provide appropriate interpretation services that are requested. Families are asked to give ample time to the administrative assistant in which to find an interpreter or translator. The interpreters or translators will meet the families at the events in which they are requested and provide their services throughout the entirety that their child is involved.

Implementation

Nerstrand Elementary School board, administration and staff are responsible for the implementation of this language access plan and updating as appropriate.

Board	Ensure the Language Access Plan is being implemented
Administration	Ensure families and staff know about the Language Access plan via email, in person, trainings and website; ensure services are in place when appropriate
Administrative Assistant	Schedule Interpretation Services for required events
Teachers	Work with families and interpreters/translators during events so important information is communicated both ways

Identification and Assessment of Language Assistance Needs

Nerstrand Elementary School will determine a families Language Assistance needs by first identifying if a family is multilingual via their MN Language Survey that is completed with their school enrollment paperwork. If they indicate multiple languages, the administrative assistant will ask if they need language assistance services and what those might include.

ASL Interpreter	A qualified interpreter will be provided from a professional company that the school will contract with to provide services for events such as conferences, concerts, graduation, etc.
Translator	A translator will be provided from a professional company that the school will contract with to provide services for events such as conferences, concerts, graduation, etc.

Timeline

Nerstrand's Language Access Plan is in effect as of the date the board adopts it. Nerstrand will review this plan every two years and when a situation arises in which it is not addressed in this plan.

Notice of Services

Nerstrand Elementary School will post the Language Access Plan in the following locations:

Student Handbook, Staff Handbook, School Website, Back to School Email to Families and in Board Packet when it was approved.

The School will work with families who need Language Access services to arrange for those services. Families are encouraged to speak to the administrative assistant about all events in which they need Language Access services as soon as possible so there is ample time to make arrangements.

It is a requirement of Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32, Language Access Plan Required, that a charter's plan be included in their Parent Handbook.

Training for Staff

Nerstrand Elementary School will train its staff on Language Access services during a staff meeting in September of each school year. During that time, staff will be made aware of services available and how to refer a family who might have a Language Access need.

Plan Maintenance

Nerstrand Elementary School will closely monitor how the Language Access services work with families by seeking their feedback. Should services not be adequate, the school will work to address the deficiency in a timely manner and to the satisfaction of both the families and the school. This plan will be updated as needed and as required every two years.

Community Engagement and Partnership

Nerstrand Elementary School will work with our families to seek their input with respect to meeting their needs when it comes to Language Access services. When services are needed, the school will work closely with those in our community to find the best available resources to provide those services. Family input will be sought after.

Emergency Communication Protocol

Nerstrand Elementary School will communicate promptly and effectively with parents in the case of emergencies, transportation scheduling changes, ill children, etc. Communication will come via email in most cases, except if your child is ill, in which case we will call you. For our ASL families, when a child is ill, we will communicate via text.

Section 3: Procedures

Overview

This section sets forth guidelines and steps for staff to coordinate, gather data, and deliver uniform services to students, families, and community members.

Procedures

When a family requests Language Access services, they will be directed to speak to the administrative assistant who will make appropriate arrangements.

Nerstrand Elementary School uses the MN Language Survey to track Language Access. The administrative assistant tracks the services needed for families who require certain language access.

Nerstrand Elementary School communicates our Language Access plan in a variety of ways including: Student Handbook, Staff Handbook, School Website, Back to School Email to Families and in Board Packet when it was approved. The School will work with families who need Language Access services to arrange for those services.

Nerstrand Elementary School will use professional contracted service companies for interpreting, telephone or video interpreting services and written interpretation services. Should we have a family that needs these language accesses, they should be referred to the administrative assistant to arrange for that.

Nerstrand Elementary School will handle Language Access complaints through its Executive Director. Any concerns should be directed to her. Those involved will

work together to solve the concerns so communication can be restored efficiently and as effectively as possible.

Contact Information

Executive Director, Nicole Musolf

nmusolf@nerstrand.charter.k12.mn.us

507-333-6854

Resources

Administrative Assistant, Dana Jans

dana@nerstrand.charter.k12.mn.us

507-333-6850