



Student Handbook

2026-2027

Contact Information:

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Absence:

If your child will not be attending school, call the office at 507-333-6850 to report the reason why by 8:30am. If we have not heard from a family and a student is not in school, we will call to verify the student's absence.

After-School Plans:

If a student wishes to go home with another student, plans must be made in advance and both students must bring notes from home outlining the specific details. Parents must provide transportation when arrangements to visit a friend have been made after school, as Faribault Transportation does not allow students to ride to another student's house. We avoid calls during the day by students to make plans as it can lead to miscommunications and confusion.

In the event that your child is being picked up by someone other than a parent, communication needs to be sent to the office either via phone, email or note.

If your child is leaving school early, please let the office know, as soon as possible, via phone, email or note. An adult must come into school to pick up the student in person.

Behavior Expectations:

Our behavior plan provides an environment that ensures growth and success for each learner, in addition to promoting courtesy and respect. We expect the following:

- ☐ Treat yourself, others, and property with respect
- ☐ Work to the best of your ability
- ☐ Show self-control

While we teach reading and math, we also are teaching social skills and acceptable behavior. Behavior is a form of communication. We use Problem-Solving Plans (PSP) to talk through behavior that is unwanted, unexpected or unacceptable. This form then goes home where families complete a portion. Anytime we are working through a behavior, the goal is to teach a more acceptable approach. At the time of registration, the PSP chart is shared with families where our behavior expectations are more clearly defined.

Board of Directors:

As a charter school, we are governed by a seven-member board of directors composed of four teachers, two parents and one community member. The Board meets monthly in the media center and is open to the public. Their schedule can be found online, as well as the agendas and minutes.

Busing:

We contract with Faribault Public Schools for our busing services. They provide busing for students who reside within their boundaries. Families residing in districts other than Faribault will need to provide their own transportation to and from school at Nerstrand. If you have any questions or concerns about bus routes, pick-up times, etc please contact Transportation at 507-333-5121. Please do not park in the bus loading zone outside of the school from 8:00-8:15am and 2:30-2:45pm.

Conferences:

We value the partnership between school, parents and students. Once in the fall and once in the spring, we ask families (parents and

students) to come to conferences so we can talk about progress. During these two meetings, you will participate in goal setting and review academic progress. It is important that everyone engages so a student's academic and social journey can be the most successful. Report cards are sent home three times a year.

Curriculum:

We follow the Minnesota Academic Standards in our teaching. We are guided by the following curriculums:

- ☐ EL Open Up Resources for Language Arts, which meets the Science of Reading Standards
- ☐ Bridges in Mathematics for Math
- ☐ FOSS for Science
- ☐ Second Step for Social Emotional Learning, which happens once a week in CORE classrooms, plus time during Homeroom

Social-Emotional Learning is an important part of a student's academic journey and one that we value. Each day, just as students are learning about reading and math, they are also learning about emotional regulation, cooperation and how to be a good friend & student. The staff are trained in Responsive Classroom and it is our building-wide approach to working with students to help them grow and achieve their best both personally and academically.

We administer assessments throughout the year to our students to gauge their learning and what academic adjustments need to be considered. Annually, in the spring, our students in grades 3-5 take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) in reading, math and science (5th grade only). Three times a year, fall-winter-spring, all our students take FASTBridge tests in the area of reading and math to assess progress.

Daily Schedule:

Office Hours are 7:30-3:30

School day is 8:15-2:50

Morning Drop off occurs between 8:00-8:15am for bus and car riders, as well as walkers. Any student arriving after 8:30am needs to be escorted into school by an adult to check them in and sign-up for lunch.

Afternoon Dismissal starts at 2:35pm with our first bus. The second bus goes next. Finally, car riders and Regal Eagle Students are dismissed around 2:45pm.

Dress Code:

A correlation exists between good grooming, personal attire, personal/public respect and student achievement. Our dress code is designed to allow for student comfort, while maintaining an environment conducive to learning and appropriate for an educational setting. Please read our Dress Code Policy #504 for further details. Hats are not allowed in school except during special dress up days.

Emergency Closing of School:

Late starts, early outs and cancellation of school due to emergency conditions will come to you via your email. In addition, we will post on Facebook. Our school follows Faribault Public Schools since we participate in their transportation program. Annually, families submit to the office an “emergency dismissal” form. This form is absolutely necessary so we know where to send all our students in

the event of an emergency. If there is no form on record, students will follow their normal after school process.

In the event that we would have to leave our building (ex: due to a gas leak), our relocation center is Grace Lutheran Church.

Food (Lunch/Breakfast/Treats):

Our breakfast and lunch are provided to us by Taher through Faribault Public Schools. The cost of breakfast and lunch are free. If your child wants milk with their home lunch, that cost is \$.54. Cash or check (payable to Faribault Public Schools) are acceptable. There are two lunch choices each day. Students always have the option to bring lunch from home.

Students eat breakfast from 8:15-8:30am in their classrooms. Lunch is served from 11:30-12:20 with Prairie & Savannah eating/playing in one group and Woodlands in the other. Students either eat first, then go to recess or they do the reverse of that.

Each year, there is a form called Educational Benefits that we ask families to complete. While the main use for this form used to be free or reduced lunches which are obsolete since meals are free now, there are additional benefits available to schools. The main benefit to our school comes in the form of Compensatory Dollars (Title I Money) that we can use to help struggling students who need a little boost or keep class sizes low. The form will be in your back to school paperwork and we urge you to complete it.

Parents are not required to bring treats to school for birthdays or other special events, but we know many enjoy doing this for their children. In the event that treats are brought to school, they must

be store or bakery bought, not homemade. We do ask that you give consideration to your child's classroom if there happens to be a food allergy.

Gum is only allowed in school on special occasions, such as during MCA testing and will be provided to the students by the school. Please do not send gum to school with your child.

Pop should not be sent to school with students except on Movie/PJ day, which is a very special treat. If you send a home lunch with your child, please send another beverage choice.

Health Office:

Our school has a health paraprofessional who takes care of medication distribution, ill and injured students. If your child becomes ill during the day, we will contact you to arrange for a pick-up. If you cannot be reached, someone from your emergency contact card will be called.

While not an all inclusive list, the following are reasons not to send a child to school.

- ☐ Fever (must be fever free for 24 hours without medication)
- ☐ Vomiting
- ☐ Diarrhea
- ☐ Cough that is disruptive
- ☐ Strep Throat
- ☐ Other things not listed; call if you have questions to discuss case by case situations

Students in grades 1, 3, 4 & 5 will be screened annually for vision and hearing. Additional students may be tested if requested by parents or school staff.

Homeroom:

Multiaged homeroom classes (K-5) work with teachers in areas such as community building, self-esteem, conflict management, current events, careers and the study of world cultures. Homeroom meets twice a week on Tuesday & Thursday. Tuesday is Spotlight day, which means one student in each Homeroom shares their poster and items from home with their peers while being recorded. Families are welcomed to come and watch their child when they are in the Spotlight. At the end of each child's tenure at NES, they get all their Spotlight recordings. In addition, Spotlight students get to have lunch with the principal. Homeroom is a regular part of our schedule and an important aspect of our family atmosphere. Siblings are assigned in the same Homeroom except in very rare cases.

Kindergarten:

Starting kindergarten is the beginning of a wonderful academic and social journey that will span multiple years. Registration for kindergarten will begin in January of the year your child will attend. That spring, we will host a Kindergarten Parent Night to welcome in new families and complete paperwork. Prior to school starting, during back to school workshop week for teachers, kindergarten families will come to Kinder-Go-Round, which are 1:1 scheduled meetings with the teacher. Students can become more familiar with the classroom, staff and a small assessment will take place during that time.

All students need to have a pre-school screening done prior to starting kindergarten. Any child between 3-5 can be screened. Screening takes approximately one hour. Bring completed screening paperwork to our office at the time of registration.

Medication Guidelines:

We have a health para who administers all prescription and nonprescription medication to students, including cough drops. Medications must be sent to school in their original containers labeled with the student's name, directions for administration and accompanied by the Health History Form. To protect them, students are not allowed to self-administer medications.

Multiage Groupings:

At our school, we believe in multiage classrooms. Our groups are as follows:

- ☐ Kindergarten.....Prairie
- ☐ First Grade.....Prairie
- ☐ Second and Third Grade.....Savannah
- ☐ Fourth and Fifth Grade.....Woodlands

Our Prairie Friends are in stand alone, grade level classrooms, except during Homeroom, which is multiage for everyone. Savannah and Woodland students are multiaged during the day except for reading and math. During those instructional times, they are grade level.

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO):

The mission of the PTO is to provide an effective partnership in the enrichment of educational experiences for children at our school. These areas include, but are not limited to, in and out of school programs, fundraising and field trips. Meetings are held monthly in the school media center. All parents are encouraged to attend.

Parties:

Celebrations are fun and at the elementary level, they are some of the best days students remember. Our classrooms will do some type of celebrations, which can include games, food, crafts, etc., on the following days:

- ☐ Harvest Parade (Halloween); all school
- ☐ Thanksgiving Feast for K-1
- ☐ Valentine's Day; all school

Look to the teacher's Weekly Peek for more details about these events and opportunities to participate.

Recognition:

Students who demonstrate their commitment to our behavior plan could receive "I Got Caught" slips from adults observing their positive behavior. Slips then go into Homeroom drawings for a small prize like a pencil, notebook or sticker. We hold bigger drawings monthly/quarterly.

Regal Eagles After School Club:

Regal Eagles is open nightly when school is in session. Children engaged in play, homework and outside activities. A daily snack is provided. All other information regarding Regal Eagles can be found in their handbook. If you wish to register your child for Regal Eagles, please speak to the office.

School Supplies:

For many years, our school has used community school supplies in the classrooms. This approach leads to a more communal, cooperative and engaged classroom. As such, families do not

purchase the majority of their child's school supplies. Instead, they pay a fee of \$30.00 for the year and that covers your child. Families do provide a backpack, gym shoes and typically one folder.

In addition, we charge a \$25.00 technology fee. While we are not a 1:1 school, we do have a device for every child come testing time. There is time devoted, specific to learning in each classroom, to being on a device. For example, K-1 spends time during their Guided Reading rotations on Reading Eggs, which helps children with their phonics development. Our 4-5 graders spend time writing papers on their devices during certain times of the year, as research is important at that age.

In total, families are asked for \$55.00 at the beginning of each year to cover both per child.

Secure Building:

Our building is locked daily when students are in school. If you come during the day, please enter through our locked front door, by the elephant, where you will be let in by staff. You will then sign in and be given a visitor sticker.

Staff Structure:

Our dedicated staff is experienced and love being a part of the NES community. We have six general education classrooms that each have a special education paraprofessional as part of their team. Our special education department is made up of two teachers and includes all services such as OT, Psych and Speech. We have daily PE, as well as weekly music, library and art. Our team also includes an administrative assistant, cook, counselor, custodian, executive

director and librarian, plus all our contracted providers. Should you wish to get ahold of them, their contact information can be found on our website.

Appendix A:



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

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