



Superintendent's Circular

NUMBER:
FAM-08

Version 01

- **TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES**

This Circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded to a subsequent version.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The “Parent Communications” section of the Successor Settlement Agreement between the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) outlines the services that must be provided to ensure meaningful language access for our BPS families. The Office of Language Access, formerly the Translation and Interpretation Unit (T&I), was established to implement and coordinate interpretation and translation services throughout BPS to centralize and standardize language access across the district. The Office of Language Access strives to provide meaningful language access to limited and non-English proficient constituents via qualified, trained, and professional interpreters and translators.

REQUEST PARAMETERS

The Office of Language Access handles 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

With every request, the Office of Language Access will determine whether the services sought are the most appropriate to fulfill the specific language access need and may tailor the request accordingly. Fulfilling requests for translation and interpretation of non-essential information is at the discretion of the Office of Language Access and is contingent on availability.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY QUALIFIED AND BILINGUAL STAFF

The district is charged with providing qualified and trained translators and interpreters to ensure families have meaningful access to information. As such, the Office of Language Access discourages the use of non-approved professionals with bi/multilingual skills, save for in exceptional circumstances. In addition, the use of computers/machines to translate is strongly discouraged.

REQUESTING TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

All services are requested and managed through the district's online translation and interpretation request platform. Please be aware that the Office of Language Access can only support Boston Public Schools' requests placed through the Office of Language Access online platform to comply with the City of Boston's procurement regulations and processes. To that end, any language access work performed outside of the district's established translation and interpretation protocol will be at the requester's expense.

Schools should designate one primary and one alternate point of contact for submitting their translation and interpretation requests. In addition, the point of contact (1) is responsible for answering logistic questions about events, (2) will serve as the contact for interpreters, (3) will provide informational materials for interpreters before scheduled events, and (4) will clarify written content and receive the written translations. Lastly, this person must also promptly fill out the post-service survey.

For district staff, designated central office employees may request translation and interpretation services. Similarly, the

central office requester serves as the point of contact for that service. This could entail (1) answering logistics questions about events, (2) contacting on-site/virtual interpreters, (3) providing informational materials for interpreters prior to the event, (4) clarifying written content/materials, and (5) receiving the written translations. This person must also promptly fill out the post-service survey.

FULFILLING REQUESTS FOR TRANSLATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

For translations, requesters should allow a *minimum of 2 weeks*, bearing in mind that larger jobs will, correspondingly, take longer to complete. As rush/short notice jobs do occur, please specify on the request form if the translation needs expediting. *Expediting is at the discretion of the Office of Language Access.*

For in-person interpretations, the more advance notice given, the easier it is to secure interpreter services. Please submit a request a *minimum of 2 weeks* before the service date. For American Sign Language (ASL), a *minimum of 3 weeks* is recommended to secure services. As rush/short notice jobs do occur, please specify on the request form if the service needs to be expedited. *Interpreter assignment is based on availability and not guaranteed.*

Emergent requests outside of the Superintendent's and Communications offices that need to be expedited will be completed in a timeframe at the discretion of the Office of Language Access.

CANCELLATIONS OF SERVICES

The Office of Language Access must be notified immediately of any appointment cancellation in which an interpreter (i.e., oral, ASL) has been scheduled. A 48-hour notice of cancellation is required for ASL. For oral interpreter services, we require a 24-hour notice of notice of cancellation. Please be aware that if you fail to cancel within the designated timeframes, the district will be charged for the services you requested. This can lead to inefficient utilization of our limited funds and resources, which we strive to avoid. To cancel interpreter services, please submit via interpretations@bostonpublicschools.org. If you are canceling translation requests, please do so as early as possible via translations@bostonpublicschools.org.

TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Schools have the option to utilize the on-demand LionBridge Telephonic Interpretation service that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, in more than 350 languages. Telephonic interpretation is the oral transmission of a message from one language to another via telephone. It is typically conducted in consecutive mode, meaning the interpreter will translate the message after the speaker has stopped speaking.

This service should be used for instances when parent communication is not pre-scheduled, e.g., a parent stops by a school, a school must contact the parent of a sick/injured student, etc. When essential information is discussed, please ensure that an interpreter or translation of relevant documents is requested in advance.

The Office of Language Access will monitor calls and usage to

ensure adherence to district protocols. Schools and/or central office departments will be notified of usage restrictions due to non-adherence, which will be at the discretion of the Office of Language Access.

TALKING POINTS

Schools have access to TalkingPoints, which is a two-way multilingual family engagement platform allowing educators and administrators the opportunity to communicate with families in their native language (including English speakers) via the web, mobile, or text messages.

- TalkingPoints equips educators and administrators with a platform for collaborative communication and analytics around family engagement and student progress to increase student potential for long-term success.
- The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, in more than 100 languages.¹
- It removes the need for educators to provide parents with their personal cell phone numbers.

ASSISTANCE

For further information, including but not limited to detailed

¹ At present, the platform doesn't support Caboverdiano; however, a simplified version is currently being piloted at the Orchard Gardens Elementary School. The simplified version supports outgoing one-way messaging/announcements to families only. Additional functionality will be considered based on pilot results.

translation and interpretation policy and procedures, tutorials (i.e., How to Submit a Request, Request Platform User Guide, School-Based Administrator Training Webinar), and school and parent resources/materials to support your school-specific language access efforts, please refer to the Office of Language Access website at

<https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/translation-interpretation>.

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