



# PLANNING FOR LANGUAGE ACCESS FOR MULTILINGUAL FAMILIES



## WHAT IS A LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN?

A Language Access Plan is a document that details how your district and school will provide communications that are equitable and accessible to multilingual parents/guardians.

[Language Access Plan Exemplar](#)

## WHY PLAN FOR LANGUAGE ACCESS?

### Language access is required by law

The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) clearly state that schools must communicate information to multilingual parents/guardians in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of parents who are proficient in English.

[Clear directives from the OCR and DOJ include:](#)

- Schools must have a process to identify multilingual parents/guardians [Resource](#)
- Schools must communicate with the parents/guardians in a language they understand
- Schools must provide language assistance programs to multilingual parents/guardians even when the children are proficient in English
- Schools must use qualified interpreters and translators

**Language access empowers families and creates opportunities for increased parent engagement and student success. Multilingual learners flourish when school staff engage with families in respectful and affirming ways.**

[WIDA ABCs of Family Engagement](#)

## WHO DOES THE WORK OF LANGUAGE ACCESS?

Create a Language Access Team consisting of key collaborators- administrators, teachers, other staff, parents. This team will complete the steps to identify needs, solutions to meet each need, create a timeline for implementation, create a language access budget, locate funding sources, notify and train all staff, and identify who will implement and carry out each aspect of the plan. This team will create the Language Access Plan document and the school board will need to approve it.

## PLAN FOR MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

Bring key collaborators together and inventory the languages needed and the types of communication that your district and schools engage throughout the year. This inventory will guide you in language access planning.

**Remember that two-way communication pathways are essential.**

Consider all potential communication. For example:

- Enrollment and all required paperwork
- Meetings, including IEP meetings
- Phone calls
- Robo calls/texts/emails
- Scheduling meetings
- Website and social media
- Report cards
- Health, wellness, and mental health communications
- Sports and extracurricular announcements and sign up
- Special event announcements
- Emergencies

## ARRANGE FOR LANGUAGE RESOURCES

Your district and school will choose from a variety of options to meet your two-way communication needs. **Decisions, contracts and agreements should be completed ahead of time- before the need for interpretation and translation arises.**

[See a list of service providers.](#)

- Professional translation service
- Professional interpreting services
  - phone, zoom and in-person
- Two-way messaging app
- Consider adding a language facilitator role