



STEAM Academy 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 STEAM Academy'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). 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 allow 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

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

STEAM Academy's Language Access Plan provides a blueprint for bringing the district into compliance with state and federal language access requirements, including how the district will increase its capacity to address language services 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 personnel responsible for policy and procedures development; hire, contract, assess, and ensure quality control of language assistance services; provide

notice of services; training to staff; and conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Language Access Plan

Description of Services

STEAM Academy provides both oral and written language assistance services to ensure that families with limited English proficiency (LEP) have full and equitable access to school programs, services, and communications. Oral services include interpreters for enrollment, IEP/504 meetings, parent–teacher conferences, disciplinary proceedings, school events, and on-demand support for urgent or unexpected needs. Written services include translation of vital documents such as enrollment forms, report cards, IEP/504 plans, disciplinary notices, health and safety alerts, and other essential communications. These translations are routinely provided in the school’s most common languages (e.g., Somalian, Arabic, Oromo, Pashto), with additional languages available upon request. All services are provided by qualified professionals, supported by clear staff procedures, and reviewed annually to ensure accuracy, quality, and accessibility.

Implementation

The Director and the Family Liaison will serve as primary contact for families requesting language services, connect them with appropriate resources, and work with the academic team to support students and families needing academic translations. Also, the Director and the Family Liaison will lead, develop, and update the Language Access Plan, as necessary, with other building staff members to establish the operational procedures for its implementation

Identification and Assessment of Language Assistance Needs

STEAM Academy uses the Minnesota Language Survey, completed by families during enrollment, to identify the home language, preferred language for communication, and the need for translation or interpretation. This information is entered into the student information system and updated as needed. Families may also request language assistance directly through the school.

STEAM Academy provides a range of services to meet these needs, including written translations, oral interpretation (in-person, phone, or video), and sight translation when appropriate. Families are informed about these services prior to parent–teacher conferences and through postings on the school website and monthly newsletter. To remain responsive, STEAM Academy collaborates with the local community-based organizations and cultural community groups to determine the needs of its families and to ensure services are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Timeline

This plan will be reviewed annually. It will be reviewed and revised according to the data collection at the beginning of the school year and mid-year. This language Access Plan is available on the school website at www.steamacademymn.org.

Notice of Services

STEAM Academy is assured that all families are aware of the free language assistance services available to them and know how to request support. To meet this requirement, multiple methods will be utilized to notify students and families:

- Parent & Student Handbook: The Language Access Plan, or a summary of it, will be included in the annual Student & Family Handbook in compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32. It will also be included in all new-student enrollment packets.
- School Website: The full Language Access Plan (or summary) will be published on the STEAM Academy's website.
- Schoolwide Communications: When possible, schoolwide announcements, newsletters, and electronic communications will be issued in multiple languages or with links to translations.
- Parent Meetings and Events: At parent-teacher conferences, open houses, and families will be informed of the availability of interpretation and translation services and how to request them.

Training for Staff

Teachers and staff will be trained to direct families who request language services to the appropriate school contact so support can be arranged quickly and effectively.

Staff are trained in district policies and procedures at the beginning of each school year and as a new staff member, when hired, at orientation.

Plan Maintenance

STEAM Academy will review and update the plan on a yearly basis to be responsive to the needs of students and families. This process will be determined by data, policy and procedures, and the needs of students and families.

Community Engagement and Partnership

To remain responsive to the needs of the students and families, STEAM Academy

collaborates with the local community-based organizations and cultural community groups to determine the needs of its families and to ensure services are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

STEAM Academy also engages with its community partners through community events, board meetings, focus groups, teachers and staff.

Emergency Communication Protocol

STEAM Academy will ensure that all families, including those with limited English proficiency (LEP) (ie. mass notification system, translation tools, phone applications, website and social media) receive timely, accurate, and understandable information. Emergencies may include severe weather, safety threats, transportation disruptions, federal immigration enforcement activities, or public health announcements.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Translation Services

AI is used to translate documents and flyers; the documents will provide a call back number so students and parents can contact someone at the district or charter office if they have questions.

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.

Language Assistance Procedures

Step 1: Identify the Need

- Family/student requests help in another language OR staff identify a communication barrier.

Step 2: Notify the Contact

- Contact the front office and the message will be directed to the Director or Family Liaison.
- Emergency contact will be relayed to an appropriate staff member who can verbally speak the language.

Step 3: Choose the Service Type

- Oral/Spoken Interpretation
 - IEP/504 meetings, parent–teacher conferences, disciplinary hearings → Arrange a professional interpreter (in-person or remote).
- Written Translation
 - Vital documents (enrollment forms, report cards, health/safety alerts, IEPs, discipline notices) along with newsletters/flyers → May use AI-assisted translation, but must include callback number for clarification.

Step 4: Service Delivery

- Ensure the family is given the rights to an interpreter/translator in-order for the family to understand the message and conversation.

Step 5: Document the Service

- Teacher or staff documents the service (date, type, language) for future reference.

Contact Information

STEAM Academy
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651-236-8280
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Resources

Access the website for additional support services at www.steamacademymn.org