



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Language Access Advisory Committee 2025

Authorizing Legislation: RCW 28A.183.070

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Language Access Advisory Committee (LAAC) was established in 2022 by [HB 1153](#) and codified in [RCW 28A.18.070](#) to continue the work of the 2020 and 2021 [Language Access Workgroups](#) by guiding, monitoring, and making recommendations on the following topics:

- a) The effectiveness of language access policies, procedures, and programs.
- b) Family and community engagement, with a focus on multicultural families, families whose students have multiple barriers to student achievement, and families least engaged with their schools.
- c) The definition of "qualified interpreter."
- d) Supply of and demand for interpreters.
- e) Training for interpreters.
- f) Credentialing requirements for interpreters, including a code of professional conduct.
- g) Grants to cover nonstate controlled interpreter credentialing costs.
- h) Language access and language access service data collection and analysis.
- i) Evidence-based practices regarding language access, including best practice for using state and federal funding to provide language access services.

The information below lists the recommendations made by the Committee in the 2025 report.

Topic 1 The effectiveness of language access policies, procedures, and programs

The Committee recommends that Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) publish guidance for school and district staff which communicates basic information about language access, why it is important, and how to ensure these rights.

Topic 2 Family and community engagement, with a focus on multicultural families, families whose students have multiple barriers to student achievement, and families least engaged with their schools

2A: Public Posting of Language Access Rights: The Committee recommends that OSPI publish WACs requiring all local education agencies (school districts) to post notice of language access rights in each school building in a location visible to parents, families and staff to inform them of their right to a qualified interpreter.

2B: Written Notice of Language Access Rights: The Committee recommends that OSPI provide districts with a translated template and guidance on the implementation of [ESHB 1296 Sec. 501.\(2\)\(s\)—Promoting a safe and supportive public education system](#)

Topic 3 Credentialing requirements for interpreters, including a code of professional conduct

The Committee recommends that OSPI publish WACs establishing a code of professional conduct for interpreters serving in educational settings outside of the classroom.

Topic 4 Language access and language access service data collection and analysis

The Committee recommends that OSPI develop and implement a process to follow up with districts that report to CEDARS meetings with a value of, "Interpreter was requested, district was unable to provide."

INTRODUCTION

The Language Access Advisory Committee was established in 2022 by [HB 1153](#) and codified in [RCW 28A.18.070](#). As required by [RCW 28A.18.070](#) Sec. 6., this report shares the progress of the committee to date in fulfilling its charge. This report builds on the 2024 report of the committee, as well as the work of the 2020 and 2021 [Language Access Workgroups](#). The 2024 report of the committee and additional information can be found on [their website](#).

In the scope of this committee, language access includes plans, policies, procedures and services meant to establish meaningful, two-way communication between the district and school and families and communities with limited English proficiency, who are deaf, blind or need other communication assistance, and promote access for those individuals to the programs, services, and activities of the district and school. It is limited to language access services delivered in education settings outside of the classroom and does not include in-classroom supports for students.

The recommendations presented in this report are intended to address systemic barriers and are meant to improve access to and quality of language access services. The committee believes that students are best served when their families and communities are able to serve as partners in their education. Language access makes this possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Topic 1: The Effectiveness of Language Access Policies, Procedures, and Programs¹

Recommendation 1

The LAAC recommends that OSPI publish guidance for school and district staff which communicates basic information about language access, why it is important, and how to ensure these rights. The document should be:

- User-friendly;
- Use plain language;
- Be 1–2 pages long; and
- Include links to other resources.

See [Appendix A](#) for a summary outline prepared by the committee.

This guidance should be shared through an official OSPI bulletin including a statement affirming the language access rights of students, families, and school staff in Washington State and acknowledging the threats to these rights made by the current Federal administration. It should be shared with school and district staff through trainings, agency newsletters, and other communications.

The current guidance documents provided by OSPI are available for family and community members and district staff, but none are written with school staff in mind, who may not be familiar with language access at all. This type of resource will help support district language access coordinators, who are charged with training school staff, as well as staff at schools and districts that do not have a language access coordinator. Education and awareness are key to an effective language access program.

Topic 2: Family and community engagement, with a focus on multicultural families, families whose students have multiple barriers to student achievement, and families least engaged with their schools²

Recommendation 2A. Public Posting of Language Access Rights

The LAAC recommends that OSPI publish WACs requiring all local education agencies (school districts) to post notice of language access rights in each school building in a location visible to parents,

¹ [RCW 28A.18.070](#) Sec. 2(a).

² [RCW 28A.18.070](#) Sec. 2(b).

families and staff to inform them of their right to a qualified interpreter.

The public notice must:

- Use simple language;
- Include the statement: "Ask if you need an interpreter. You have the right to one;"
- Reference the appropriate state and federal laws in a footnote and the [OSPI Equity and Civil Rights: Interpretation and Translation Services](#) webpage; and
- Be translated into the top five languages of the district and include a QR code link to additional translations and instructions on requesting additional translations.

OSPI should provide districts with a sample translated poster that has bold letters and is visually appealing, and is customizable to each district, providing information on how families can request a quality interpreter and provide feedback about an engagement. OSPI should monitor district compliance during Program Review and Support (PRS).

By posting the notice of rights publicly, staff, students and family members will be reminded of the right to language access services. Family members can also refer to the poster to indicate that they need services and to find contact information for requesting services. Providing a template to districts will help them save time and money in implementation.

Recommendation 2B. Written Notice of Language Access Rights

The LAAC recommends that OSPI provide districts with a translated template and guidance on the implementation of [ESHB 1296 Sec. 501.\(2\)\(s\)—Promoting a safe and supportive public education system](#).

In Section 501(2)(s) of [ESHB 1296 \(2025\)](#) it states that parents have the right to "...receive annual notice of the public school's language access policies and services, the parents' rights to free language access services under Title VI of the civil rights act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000d, et seq., and the contact information for any language access services under RCW 28A.183.040."

To aid in implementation, the committee recommends that OSPI provide translated template notice language similar to the sample comprehensive nondiscrimination statement.³ The template should be:

- Written in plain language;
- Reference the applicable laws and rights of parents;
- Provide links to existing resources; and
- Be customizable to each district, providing information on how families can request an interpreter and provide feedback on the quality of language access services.

Guidance for districts should include when and how to provide the annual notice.

³ Available at: [Notification Requirements, Staff Training, and Outreach Materials](#)

Topic 3: Credentialing Requirements for Interpreters, Including a Code of Professional Conduct⁴

Recommendation 3

The LAAC recommends that OSPI publish Washington Administrative Codes (WACs) establishing a code of professional conduct for interpreters serving in educational settings outside of the classroom.

The code should apply to all spoken and signed language interpreters who provide language services in educational settings outside of the classroom, including but not limited to interpretation on behalf of education staff, the student's family, and representatives of advocacy or community-based organizations. See [Appendix B](#) for a proposed Code of Professional Conduct prepared by the committee.

A professional code of conduct includes values and tenets that are established by rules or regulations and enforced by an organization or regulatory body. Authority to establish and enforce this code of conduct comes from [RCW 28A.183.080](#) Sec. 6:

Once a code of professional conduct for interpreters is established, the superintendent of public instruction has the power to issue, suspend, and revoke interpreter credentials to which the code applies and to take other disciplinary actions against interpreters to which the code applies.

The LAAC was unable to come to a consensus on the list of values to be included in the code. All committee members supported inclusion of values 1–5:

- Confidentiality;
- Professionalism;
- Accuracy;
- Impartiality and Neutrality; and
- Competence.

Members were not in agreement on inclusion of the 6th value, Advocacy. More time would be needed for members to address this issue and reach a conclusion.

In addition to establishing a complaint and disciplinary process, a code of professional conduct for interpreters serving in educational settings outside the classroom would serve as an educational tool for school and district staff and families on what to expect from a professional interpreter and for new interpreters or those transitioning to serving in educational settings.

⁴ [RCW 28A.18.070](#) Sec. 2(f).

Topic 4: Language Access and Language Access Service Data Collection and Analysis⁵

Recommendation 4

The LAAC recommends that OSPI develop and implement a process to follow up with districts that report to CEDARS meetings with a value of "Interpreter was requested, district was unable to provide."

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) report whether an interpreter was requested and provided for meetings reported in the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) including initial Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, annual IEP meetings and exclusionary discipline reengagement meetings. LEAs may report that an interpreter was requested but the district was unable to provide one, although no other details are provided. The purpose of the follow up is to determine if there was a pattern related to type of meeting or language requested, what the resulting solution was (ex. rescheduling meeting or changing meeting venue), and what additional resources are needed to address challenges in language access service procurement. The initial follow-up process should include conversations with district and school staff to determine the barriers schools face to providing interpreters. The process should be supportive of schools, not punitive. A summary of the common themes discovered by OSPI should be shared with the committee to help inform future recommendations.

⁵ [RCW 28A.18.070](#) Sec. 2(h).

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The LAAC recognizes that the precarious state of current affairs, including limited state and local budgets, possible federal funding cuts, and threats to long-established civil rights make for an uncertain future. The Committee must stay committed to its charge to guide and monitor language access and language access services for students' families, students, and communities in K–12. Future areas for review and recommendations include:

- Supply of and demand for interpreters;
- Grants to cover nonstate controlled interpreter credentialing requirement costs;
- Evidence-based practices regarding language access, including best practice for using state and federal funding to provide language access services.⁶

In the coming years, access to timely, accurate, and accessible communications will only become more essential to ensuring an educational system that serves all students in Washington and their families. Therefore, sustainable resources are necessary to continue the work of the Committee and the OSPI Language Access Technical Assistance Program.

⁶ [RCW 28A.18.070](#) Sec. 2.

BACKGROUND

About the Language Access Advisory Committee

Charge

The Language Access Advisory Committee was established in 2022 by [HB 1153](#) and codified in [RCW 28A.18.070](#) to continue the work of the 2020 and 2021 [Language Access Workgroups](#) by guiding, monitoring, and making recommendations on the following topics:

- The effectiveness of language access policies, procedures, and programs;
- Family and community engagement, with a focus on multicultural families, families whose students have multiple barriers to student achievement, and families least engaged with their schools;
- The definition of "qualified interpreter;"
- Supply of and demand for interpreters;
- Training for interpreters;
- Credentialing requirements for interpreters, including a code of professional conduct;
- Grants to cover nonstate controlled interpreter credentialing costs;
- Language access and language access service data collection and analysis; and
- Evidence-based practices regarding language access, including best practice for using state and federal funding to provide language access services.

Committee Membership

Required committee membership roles are outlined in [RCW 28A.183.070](#) to include representatives from:

- Spoken and sign language services users.
- Community organizations that provide direct services to non-English speaking families.
- Interpreters for students' families.
- Interpreter preparation programs.
- Advocacy organizations.
- Schools and school districts.

Table 2. Currently Serving Language Access Advisory Committee Members

Member Name, Title, Organization	Community Representing (according to RCW 28A.183.070)
Mohammed Akmoosh Freelance Interpreter, English & Arabic	Interpreters for students' families
Holly Bocchi Family & Community Partnership Coordinator Clover Park School District	Schools and school districts
Milena Calderari Waldron Certified Interpreter, Spanish & English 1671 Interpreters United	Advocacy organizations
Fanny Cordero Certified Interpreter & Translator, Spanish, English & French	Interpreters for students' families
Lin Crowley SPS Co-Chair/Program Director Asian Pacific Islanders Coalition	Advocacy organizations
Emani Donaldson Advocacy and Civic Engagement Program Manager Open Doors for Multicultural Families	Community organizations that provide direct services to non-English speaking families
Matt Dressen Preparation and Credentialing Policy and Grant Specialist Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB)	Non-voting
Helen Eby Certified Interpreter & Translator Spanish & English	Interpreters for students' families
Becky Engel Professor American Sign Language Clark Community College	Interpreter preparation
Angela Jovel Community Leaders Advocate	Language services user
Waiyan Winnie Lee Community Leaders Advocate	Language services users
Tami Lentz Certified Interpreter, Spanish & English	Interpreters for students' families

Member Name, Title, Organization	Community Representing (according to RCW 28A.183.070)
Alfonso López Director of Hispanic/Latino Relations Wenatchee School District	Schools and school districts
Minh Nguyen Family Advocacy Program Coordinator Open Doors for Multicultural Families	Community organizations that provide direct services to non-English speaking families
Michael Nguyen Program Manager, Educator Credentialing Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB)	Non-voting
Nasue Nishida Lobbyist—Government Relations Washington Education Association (WEA)	Advocacy organizations
Taralynn Petrites American Sign Language Program Coordinator Central Washington University	Interpreter preparation
Rebecca Pinzon Language Access Coordinator Highline School District	Schools and school districts
Joana Ramos Co-Chair—WASCLA Board of Directors Washington State Coalition for Language Access (WASCLA)	Advocacy organizations
Kimberley Scott-Olson Teacher of the Deaf and Language Access Advocate	Interpreters for students' families
Erin Sullivan Outreach Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth	Language services users
Karina Vanderbilt Director of Multilingual Services Puget Sound Educational Service District ESD 121	Schools and school districts
Liliana Villanueva Community Leaders Advocate	Language services user

Member Name, Title, Organization	Community Representing (according to RCW 28A.183.070)
Heather White Interpreting Department Supervisor Washington School for the Deaf, Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth	Interpreters for students' families
Charlene Williams Mediated Education Liaison Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth	Interpreter preparation

Table 3. Alternate Members

Member Name, Title, Organization	Community Representing (according to RCW 28A.183.070)
Melissa Klindtworth, Educational Interpreter Mentor Coordinator, Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth	Interpreter preparation
Moses Perez, Director of Advocacy & Civic Engagement, Open Doors for Multicultural Families	Community organizations that provide direct services to non-English speaking families
Jesus Torres, Language Access Facilitation Manager, Spokane Public Schools, WASCLA Alternate	Advocacy organizations

Committee Staff

As required by [RCW 28A.183.070](#), LAAC is staffed by the language access technical assistance program at OSPI which in 2024–2025 included (alphabetical):

Matthew Frizzell, Assistant Superintendent, Office of System and School Improvement, OSPI

Michele Lovell, Language Access Program Supervisor, Office of System and School Improvement, OSPI

Heather Rees, Research and Policy Development Program Manager, Government Relations OSPI

Diane Stead, Executive Assistant to Matthew Frizzell, Assistant Superintendent Office of System and School Improvement, OSPI

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Committee would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the team of spoken and sign language interpreters who make the meetings possible and accessible. You set an example of quality and professionalism. Thank you.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Language Access Civil Rights Summary Outline

Language Access Rights for All

Introduction

This guide provides an overview of the right to language access in schools for school and district staff. Under state and federal law, all parents have the right to information about their child's education in a language they can understand. Providing meaningful, equitable language access to students and their family members who have language access barriers is not only a civil right, but will help students, because student outcomes improve when families are engaged in their student's education. Educators and administrators need access to language access services to connect and engage with the families of their students, regardless of the language skills of the students. The right to free public education and language access services is not changed by immigration status.⁷

What is Language Access?

Language Access includes plans, policies, procedures and services meant to establish meaningful, two-way communication between the district and school and families and communities with limited English proficiency, who are Deaf, blind or need other communication assistance, and promote access for those individuals to the programs, services, and activities of the district and school.

Definitions

Interpretation: The act of listening, understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken communication in one language (source language) and then faithfully orally rendering it into another spoken language (target language) while retaining the same meaning.⁸

Translation: The process of converting written text from a source language into an equivalent written text in a target language as fully and accurately as possible while maintaining the style, tone, and intent of the text, while considering differences of culture and dialect.⁹

Any student may have parents or guardians who need language access services regardless of the language proficiency of the student and is not limited to multilingual learners.

⁷ See OSPI guidance [Protections for Immigrant Students in Washington's K-12 Public Schools](#)

⁸U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2023, October 5). Plan for Providing Access to Benefits and Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency. Limited English proficiency plan. <https://www.usccr.gov/limited-english-proficiency-plan>

⁹ Ibid.

Why is it a Civil Right?

- The right to language access services is protected by both state and federal laws.
- Discrimination on the basis of national origin, which includes language, and disability, is prohibited by Chapter 49.60 RCW – Washington Law Against Discrimination and Chapter 28A.642 RCW – Washington Equal Educational Opportunity Law.
- On the Federal level, language access is a civil right.¹⁰ The Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA) Section 1703(f) requires school districts to take action to overcome barriers to students' equitable participation which includes communicating meaningfully with non-English-speaking or limited-English-speaking parents and guardians of ELL students by providing written or oral translations of important notices or documents. The Supreme Court decision in *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974) requires schools to take affirmative steps to ensure that language barriers do not exclude limited-English proficient persons from effective participation in benefits and services. Additionally, individuals with disabilities, including communication disabilities like those who are Deaf, blind, or hard of hearing, are ensured equitable access by federal law.¹¹

What Language Access Looks Like in Schools

- Schools must communicate with all parents in a language and format they can understand. This includes notifying limited-English proficient parents—in a language they can understand—about all programs, services, and activities that are called to the attention of other parents. This can look like:
 - Translations of enrollment and other forms;
 - Translated newsletters, flyers, and notices;
 - ASL interpretation at community events;
 - Interpretation for IEP meetings and parent/teacher conferences; or
 - On-demand interpretation available by phone.

How Can Schools Make Sure That Families Have Language Access?

- All school districts must have a Nondiscrimination policy (model policy #3210). [RCW](#) also requires that some districts have a Language Access Plan ([policy #4218](#) and [procedure 4218P](#)).¹²

¹⁰ See Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

¹¹ See Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974.

¹² [OSPI BULLETIN NO. 040-24 Language Access](#)

- Who is responsible? Your district has a [Civil Rights Coordinator](#) and may also have a Language Access Coordinator, Liaison or other designee¹³. This person, or persons, serves and collaborates with any building points of contact for language access services. Comments and complaints from staff and families should be directed to this contact.
- Parents/guardians, as well as staff, can make requests for language access services. Your district should provide information on how you can:
 - Request an interpreter for a meeting;
 - Request remote interpretation over the phone or video;
 - Request translation of information or documents; and
 - Utilize other language access tools and services.
- Your district must collect the language each family prefers to communicate in.¹⁴ You should be able to find this information in your district's Student Information System.

Monitoring and Compliance

- Districts must submit data collected on language preferences and services provided to OSPI¹⁵ as well as review, update, and publish, at least annually, information about the school district's language access plan, policy and procedures, and language access services, including the need for, and spending on, language access services.¹⁶
- Districts are monitored for compliance with Civil Rights laws through Program Review and Support.¹⁷

Tips and Guidelines

- [Contact your Civil Rights Coordinator](#) to submit a complaint or concern.
- Use of machine translation and AI is gaining popularity and should be approached with caution and consideration about the content and subject matter. Using free web-based automatic translators (e.g. Google Translate, Linguee, Microsoft translate) is appropriate only if:
 - The translated document accurately conveys the meaning of the source document, including accurate translations of technical vocabulary; and

¹³ See requirements in [RCW 28A.183.040](#).

¹⁴ [RCW 28A.183.050](#)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ [RCW 28A.183.040](#)

¹⁷ See [OSPI Program Review & Support webpage](#) for details.

- The translation is reviewed and edited by someone qualified to do so.¹⁸

¹⁸ U.S. General Services Administration. (2025, March 27). Introduction to translation technology. Digital.gov.
<https://digital.gov/resources/introduction-to-translation-technology/>

Additional Resources

[Free OSPI Canvas training modules for interpreters in education.](#)

[OSPI BULLETIN NO. 064-22 RE: New Requirements Related to Language Access Legislation](#)

[Resources For School Districts: Civil Rights in Washington Schools – Interpretation and Translation](#)

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, & U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. (2015, January). [Dear colleague letter: English learner students and limited English proficient parents.](#)

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, & U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. [Information for Limited English Proficient \(LEP\) Parents and Guardians and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them](#)

Appendix B: Code of Professional Conduct—LAAC Subcommittee on Spoken Language Interpretation

Authority/Charge

The authority to establish this code of professional conduct is established in [RCW 28A.183.080](#)

Credentialing requirements for interpreters:

Sec. 6. Once a code of professional conduct for interpreters is established, the Superintendent of Public Instruction has the power to issue, suspend, and revoke interpreter credentials to which the code applies and to take other disciplinary actions against interpreters to which the code applies.

Definitions

Code of professional conduct: A set of rules for the behavior of members belonging to the same profession (practitioners). The rules are indications of which actions are required, forbidden or permissible.

Dual Role Employee: An employee of the school or district who assumes the task of part-time interpreting in educational settings outside of the classroom, in addition to serving another primary role in the school or district. This individual may have been tested for language skills and/or trained as an interpreter.

Educational settings outside of the classroom: Include meetings, gatherings, and events related to the delivery of public education services and held outside the delivery of instruction to students. These settings may be onsite or off-site, in person or virtual, and students may or may not be present.

The most common situations in which an interpreter may be needed for limited English proficient families include:

- Front desk communications;
- In-school health care delivery;
- IEP meetings;
- Parent–Teacher Conferences;
- Enrollment Activities;
- Disciplinary Hearings;
- School Site Meetings; and
- Community Presentations.

Family: Family refers to adults who are parents (biological, adoptive, foster), and other adult caregivers of a student, including: grandparents, legal or informal guardians, whether related or

unrelated; and adult siblings, as well as students who are considered emancipated youth such as unaccompanied minor immigrants.¹⁹

Interpreter: Means a spoken language or sign language interpreter working in a public school, as defined in [RCW 28A.150.010](#), to interpret for students' families [...] in educational settings outside the classroom.²⁰

Qualified interpreter: Means an interpreter who can interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively using any necessary specialized vocabulary until the office of the superintendent of public instruction and the Washington professional educator standards board establish a different definition in rule making.²¹

Limited English Proficiency: Persons with "limited English proficiency," are individuals who are unable to communicate effectively in English either verbally or in writing, or both, because their primary language is not English, and they have not developed fluency in the English language. A person with limited English proficiency may have difficulty in one or more of four domains of language: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Staff are urged to remember that limited English proficiency may be context-specific, e.g., a parent may have sufficient English language skills to understand, communicate and/or exchange basic information with a teacher, but they may not have sufficient skills to communicate detailed, specific information needed in a particular context, like an IEP meeting, a 504 meeting, or a student discipline hearing.²²

Primary Language: means the primary language spoken by a student's parent or guardian, or the predominant language spoken in the student's home. Parents may have more than one primary language and/or dialect.²³

Source language: The original language of the writer or speaker.²⁴

Target language: The language of the receiving reader or listener.²⁵

¹⁹ Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs. (n.d.). Family engagement. Youth.gov.
<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/family-engagement>

²⁰ RCW 28A.183.010 Definitions. (2022). <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.183.010>

²¹ Ibid.

²² Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA). Language Access Procedure 4218P. (2022)
<https://wssda.box.com/s/j1os5tqp50qqfjpmwcewshcutjwfj6lu>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts. General Rule 11.2 Code of Professional Responsibility for Judiciary Interpreters. (July 17, 1987).
https://www.courts.wa.gov/court_rules/pdf/GR/GA_GR_11_02_00.pdf

²⁵ Ibid.

Preamble

Language access is a civil right for all students' families in the State of Washington, helping students meet the state's basic education goals under RCW 28A.150.210 and resulting in a decrease in the educational opportunity gap because student outcomes improve when families are engaged in their student's education.

To that effect, the Legislature directed "the development and implementation of credentialing for spoken and sign[ed] language interpreters for students' families in educational settings outside the classroom, with the goal of creating a professional interpreter workforce guided by a code of ethics and standards of practice."²⁶ The purpose of this code is to establish core ethical principles for these interpreters to maintain high standards of professional conduct that promote public trust and confidence in the education system.

Applicability

All spoken and signed language interpreters who provide language services in educational settings outside of the classroom, including but not limited to interpretation on behalf of education staff, the student's family members of students, and representatives of advocacy or community-based organizations. It does not apply to "educational interpreters" who interpret signed languages in classroom settings as defined by [RCW 28A.410.271](#).

Concerning Dual Role Employees

Dual role employees must abide by this code of professional conduct when they are serving as an interpreter in an educational setting outside of the classroom.

Any person serving in the role of interpreter should decline to perform any other roles, such as community liaison, school counselor, psychologist, administrator, advocate, teacher, etc. during the interpreted encounter. If the school or district hires bilingual staff who fill multiple roles during their workday, it is still important that the person tries to avoid serving more than one role at a time when interpreting. Regardless of job title, the person who is called upon to interpret is responsible for maintaining the role, performance standards, and ethical responsibilities of an interpreter as described in this code of professional conduct.

Compliance

Interpreters who have been found to have violated the provisions of this code are subject to disciplinary action and/or any other sanction that may be imposed by law.

²⁶ Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1153. (2022). <https://lawfilesexternal.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1153-S2.SL.pdf?cite=2022%20c%20107%20s%206>

Values:

1. Confidentiality
2. Professionalism
3. Accuracy
4. Impartiality & Neutrality
5. Competence
6. Advocacy

Tenets

1. Confidentiality

Interpreters must not divulge privileged or other confidential information obtained in their professional capacity.

2. Professionalism

Interpreters are expected to be punctual, prepared, dressed appropriately for the occasion, and report any obstacles that might keep them from performing their interpreting duties successfully. They are expected to continually develop their skills and knowledge through continuing education related to interpreting and relevant subject matter information.

3. Accuracy

Interpreters convey the content and spirit of the original message into the target language, taking into consideration its cultural context, without altering it by means of addition or omission.

4. Impartiality & Neutrality

Interpreters must faithfully render the source message without allowing their own views to interfere. They must refrain from conduct that may give an appearance of bias and must disclose any real or potential conflict of interest to all parties as soon as they become aware of it.

5. Competence

Interpreters must not knowingly accept any assignment outside their skill level or language. To ensure this, interpreters must be informed about the subject to be discussed and the type of setting where the work will be performed.

If at any point, before or during an assignment, they have reservations about their ability to satisfy an assignment competently, they must immediately disclose this to all parties. In their professional capacity interpreters must not give advice or offer opinions, even if requested, or engage in any activity that may be construed as a service other than interpreting.

6. Advocacy

When the health, well-being, or dignity of a student and/or a member of their family is at risk, or when the student's access to education and/or educational outcomes are in danger of being compromised, interpreters in education may be justified in asking permission to act as a clarifier and advocate during the interpreted encounter, by providing information or referral regarding available interpreting or community resources without infringing upon consumers' rights.

Resources

The tenets of this Code of Conduct are modified from the following resources:

Department of Homeland Security Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. *Guidelines for interpreters* (2021). Retrieved from: <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/oaw-guidelines-for-interpreters.pdf>

Gaucha Translations. (2023, November 27). *What interpreters do and how they do it*. https://www.gauchatranslations.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/What-interpreters-do-and-how-they-do-it_2023-11-27.pdf

National Association for Educational Interpreters and Translators of Spoken Languages - NAETISL. *Code of ethics and standards of practice for educational translators and interpreters of spoken languages* (2020). Revised August, 2022: <https://naetisl.org/ethics-standards>

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2005). *NAD-RID code of professional conduct*. Retrieved from <https://rid.org/programs/ethics/code-of-professional-conduct/>.

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