

Oxnard School District
Guidelines for Translation
&
Interpretation Services

April 2019

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Agreement Form for Translators and Interpreters

All staff that the school site or District department relies on for translation and/or interpretation must complete and sign this form once a year. This includes office staff, teachers, parent liaisons, site administrators, teachers and volunteers.

By signing below, I acknowledge receiving and reviewing the “OSD Guidelines for Assuring Quality Translation and Interpretation Services.”

Full Name (please print)

School Site/District Department Position

Language(s) for Translation Language(s) for Interpretation

Signature Date

All agreement forms must be completed, signed and returned by September 1st annually, to the Assistant Superintendent Educational Services.

I. INTRODUCTION

In order to standardize the delivery of translation and interpretation services that the Oxnard School District's (District) schools and District Office provide to limited English proficient (LEP) parents/guardians, the District has prepared the following guidelines to assist administrators, teachers, and staff members who provide translation/interpretation services to LEP families, and those who rely on translation/interpretation to communicate with LEP families.

These guidelines include the ethics and responsibilities of qualified translators and interpreters in an education setting, and **all individuals who are providing translation/interpretation services must follow these guidelines.** Qualified bilingual employees who provide translation or interpretation services do more than simply translate words; they relay concepts and ideas between languages. They must thoroughly understand the subject matter in which they work to adequately convert the information from one language, known as "the source language," into another, the "target language." They must remain sensitive to the cultures associated with their languages of expertise and maintain confidentiality at all times.

Also included in these guidelines are frequently asked questions regarding required services and attachments to help inform parents of the availability of free translation and interpretation services.

II. TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS DEFINED

It is important to note the difference between a translator and an interpreter. Although some people do both, interpretation and translation are two different skills. Each requires a distinct set of abilities and talents, and some people find they are better suited for one or the other.

Translators convert written materials from one language into another. Ideally, they have excellent writing, analytical, and editing skills. Translators' assignments vary in length and subject matter. Translators will initially review the complete document and then research unknown words, organizations, programs, or acronyms as needed. The internet provides many helpful resources.

Translating is more than substituting a word with its equivalent in another language. Sentences and ideas must be translated to read with the same consistency as the source document so that the translation reads as though it originated in the target language. For this reason, free translations offered by many websites are not accurate translations and must be reviewed by a qualified translator. Translations provided by websites often times cannot discriminate expressions such as "walk the talk," "think out of the box," "beyond the talk," "joyful learners," or "it takes a village." Translators must be aware of any cultural references that may need to be explained to the intended audience, such as colloquialism, jargon, and other expressions that should not be translated literally. Web-based or translation software without human intervention can bring negative consequences. For example, the word "disabled" is sometimes translated into Spanish as "*minusválido*," which has a negative connotation among persons with disabilities. The acceptable word is "*discapacitado*," which correlates better with the word "disabled." "*Minusválido*" means "invalid" and is considered insulting by many people with disabilities.

Every city and every district in this country has their own characteristics, programs, and lingo. We are providing an English/Spanish glossary of terms related to our District's educational system in order to standardize expressions of common use within the District.

The Glossary of Educational Terms is available from the Educational Services Department.

Interpreters convert one spoken language into another. This requires interpreters to pay close attention, understand what is communicated, and express thoughts and ideas clearly in both languages. Interpreters have strong research and analytical skills, mental dexterity, and an exceptional memory. It is also critical that interpreters are well prepared before providing interpretation services. Interpreters should be notified ahead of time about the subject matter and provided all available documents and speech text. It is also recommended that interpreters arrive at the meeting place at least 15 minutes before the event starts to become familiar with the topic that the speakers will cover. The preparation process includes creating and reviewing a list of common words and phrases associated with the subject.

The two common types of interpretation used by the District's interpreters are: simultaneous and consecutive.

Simultaneous interpretation requires interpreters to listen and speak at the same time. In simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter begins to convey a sentence being spoken while the speaker is still talking. This allows meetings to be conducted without interruptions, because the presenter can speak continuously. Simultaneous interpretation is convenient when the time is constrained, such as a planned workshop or a seminar. In most cases a head set will be required for those needing translation. (In situations where only a very small number of people need translation, it may be equally effective for a translator to sit with them and translate the speaker.) The District will provide headset equipment upon request to any school site that needs them.

Consecutive interpretation starts after the speaker has verbalized several words or sentences. This kind of interpretation requires the interpreter to concentrate and have a good memory. Sometimes a speaker is unaware of the interpreter's challenges and may over extend his/her comments. In those cases, note-taking or shorthand ability is necessary. Usually this type of interpretation is used when the interpreter facilitates a "one-on-one" communication.

III. CRITERIA FOR A QUALIFIED TRANSLATOR

Staff serving as a translator at a school site, including bilingual paraeducators, and/or District Office must pass a written and an oral test administered by the Office of Human Resources in both source and target languages and receives a bilingual stipend. Each school will maintain a list in the school office of qualified translators and interpreters who are available at the site. Teachers who have a Bilingual, Cross-cultural, Language, and Academic Development (BCLAD) certification may also serve as translators.

Translators transfer written messages from one language to another, while preserving the fundamental cultural ideas and values. Therefore, translators should adhere to the following criteria:

1. Have complete knowledge of both the source and target languages and understand the diverse genres in both languages.
2. Write effectively in both source and target languages. S/he is well aware of different styles of writing and principles of editing in both source and target language. Factors like editing and proper punctuation usage increase the value and readability of the translation.

3. Understand the uses of various expressions, idioms, and specific vocabulary and become aware of diverse styles of writing, and social stratification of both source and target languages.
4. Know the sentence structure of indirect speech and different figures of speech in the source language like hyperbole, irony, and understatement.
5. Develop translation proficiency by using different sources such as bilingual dictionaries and encyclopedias.
6. Use consistent terminology by reviewing documents and referring to the Glossary of Educational Terms (available in English and Spanish).
7. Provide translated documents in a timely manner.

IV. CRITERIA FOR A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER

Staff serving as an interpreter at a school site and/or central office must pass a written and an oral test administered by the Office of Human Resources in both source and target languages and will receive a bilingual stipend. Teachers who have a Bilingual, Cross-cultural, Language, and Academic Development (BCLAD) certification may also serve as interpreters.

Interpreters convert verbal expressions from one language to another, while preserving the fundamental cultural ideas and values. Therefore, interpreters should adhere to the following criteria:

1. Have a general understanding of cultural concepts, usage and expressions of the source language being interpreted, including the dialects and accents of the source language.
2. Have the ability to interpret in a manner which reflects the educational level and understanding of the person whose primary language is other than English.
3. Possess oral communication skills between the source and the target language, including the ability to interpret complex questions, answers, and concepts in a timely, coherent and accurate manner.
4. Be familiar with educational terms and concepts.
5. Master the interpretation skills and knowledge base to quickly comprehend the source language and just as quickly re-express the information in the target language with fullness of meaning.
6. Be able to listen carefully and have immediate recall of information to instantly and accurately transfer it into another language.
7. Comprehend cultural differences to convey the appropriate meaning of culture-specific expressions.
8. Avoid personal conduct that could discredit the District, school, or themselves.
9. Maintain **confidentiality** by not disclosing any information obtained from interpreting duties.
10. Inform the parties of any difficulty in the observance of their ethical responsibilities or any effort by another to violate their ethical responsibilities.
11. Interpret everything said, accurately and faithfully without personal bias, and avoid even the appearance of partiality.
12. Do not give advice of any kind to any party and do not express personal opinions.

13. Speak in an appropriate volume and clarity for the interpreting situation.
14. Speak in the **first** person so that the person listening knows that interpretation is identical to the source language. For example, if the non-English speaker says, “I want to complain about the school transportation,” the interpreter should say, “**I** want to complain about the school transportation,” and not “**He said** he wants to complain about the school transportation.”

There may be occasions when the interpreter verbally translates a document to a non-English speaker (sight translation), especially if the non-English speaker’s primary language does not include written form (e.g., Hmong, Mixteco). **If possible, all documents to be used in the meeting should be provided to the interpreter in advance.** If the interpreter is unfamiliar with some of the words in the document, s/he should inquire about the meaning of the words. This is no reflection upon the interpreter’s ability, since s/he is not expected to know all the words in one language. Interpreters used in Special Education meetings will receive special training from the District to ensure familiarity with Special Education terminology and education terms that are frequently used in IEP meetings. The District’s Mixteco interpreters have created their own glossaries and binder with Special Education terminology and frequently used education terms.

V. GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS WITH INTERPRETATION

In order to ensure that LEP families have equal access to school site and District Office meetings, the following guidelines have been developed to help foster a successful and enjoyable experience for all.

Plan ahead – schedule an interpreter. The District employs interpreters and translators in Spanish and Mixteco and uses outside vendors for low-incidence languages. When you need interpretation services for parent meetings, including IEPs, SSTs, or any other parent conferences, please submit your request to the Educational Services Department. You will receive a confirmation of your request within two business days. However, if you DO NOT receive a confirmation, you must call or email Human Resources. Please try to provide at least 5 business days advance notice.

If your requests are urgent (48 hours or less) or if you have any questions regarding the services, please call Educational Services Department.

Before the meeting:

- ❖ Share with the interpreter the agenda and any documents related to the event in advance; this will facilitate an accurate interpretation (i.e., a text that will be read aloud at the event, power point presentation, discipline notices, special education assessments, etc).
- ❖ When reading literary fragments, reciting poetry or playing videos to illustrate a point, provide the text to the interpreters ahead of time to help them convey the full meaning.
- ❖ Notify interpreter(s) by phone or email of parking spaces at or near your site in case they need to unload and reload equipment.

- ❖ Notify the interpreter of the estimated number of people who will be needing interpretation. This will allow the interpreters to prepare their equipment.

During large parent meetings where sound systems and/or headsets will be used:

- ✓ Make sure that the sound system is working properly.
- ✓ If there is no sound system, remind speakers to speak slowly, clearly and loudly so that everyone can hear, including the interpreters.
- ✓ Invite the interpreters to make an announcement about their services at least 15 minutes before the event starts.
- ✓ If you are the presenter, ask the interpreter(s) if they can hear and see you clearly.
- ✓ Provide interpreters with a small table for handing out headsets to listeners.
- ✓ Have one of the school staff or a volunteer assist the interpreters in handing out interpretation equipment whenever possible.
- ✓ Do not ask the interpreters to perform tasks unrelated to their job, such as arranging chairs, passing out handouts, etc.
- ✓ Request the audience to avoid side conversations within earshot of the interpreters.
- ✓ Speak clearly and slowly when reading a text and pause at the end of each sentence or thought.
- ✓ Pause at sirens, school bells, or any loud noises because the interpreters can't hear over them.
- ✓ Have only one person speaking at a time.
- ✓ Repeat questions that people ask so everyone in the audience, including the interpreters can hear them.
- ✓ When using acronyms, say what it stands for (i.e., speaker should say "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" instead of "IDEA" or "No Child Left Behind" instead of "NCLB," etc.). Acronyms with no explanation are hard to understand; decoding them during simultaneous interpretation is extremely difficult.
- ✓ If an interpreter is working by him/herself, he/she will take at least a 10-15-minute break after 30-45 minutes of simultaneous or consecutive interpretation. (Remember that he/she is speaking for many people nonstop).

VI. INTERPRETATION PROTOCOL FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

When you have an urgent interpretation need (e.g., require interpretation services to be provided in less than 24 hours, in relation to a medical emergency or suspension), we recommend that you take the following steps:

1. ***Check availability of teachers who have a Bilingual Cross-cultural, Language, and Academic Development (BCLAD) credential or other bilingual staff that you rely on for interpretation.***
 - To help prepare for any urgent interpretation needs, all bilingual staff that you rely on for interpretation and/or translation must be qualified to provide these services (see above) and should review the District's *Guidelines for Assuring Quality Translation and Interpretation Services*. A list of their names must also be maintained in the main office and accessible to your teachers, staff members and parents.

2. ***Call the Educational Services Department if interpretation services are not available at the school site.***
 - The Educational Services Department will connect you to an available staff interpreter and they will provide the interpretation services over the phone.
 - When a staff interpreter is not available, the Educational Services Department will do their best to coordinate language services with an external vendor in a timely manner or locate an available bilingual staff in the District to assist you over the phone.

VII. PARENT RIGHTS AND OUTREACH TO PARENTS ON THE AVAILABILITY OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

All communications sent to parents from the District or any school site must be translated into Spanish – the major language other than English spoken by parents and families at all schools within the District. All schools and central office departments must also take reasonable steps to ensure that non-Spanish speaking LEP parents understand what is contained in communications conveyed to the parent community. The District identifies parents who need translation or interpretation through the District's student information management software system, where information from home language surveys and preferences provided by parents has been inputted. The District also provides translation or interpretation to any parent who requests it.

Notices to individual LEP parents/guardians about teacher conferences, IEPs, SSTs, disciplinary conferences or other important meetings will be in their primary language and will include information explaining to the parent/guardians how to request an interpreter. School sites will ensure interpreters for LEP parents/guardians are available for all such meetings unless the parents/guardians have notified them that an interpreter is not needed.

Upon parent request, IEPs, Section 504 plans, and SST notes and related documents will be translated into parents' primary language no later than 20 business days from the date of the request, unless the document is being translated into a low-incidence language or is unusually complicated, in which case the time for translated may be extended for no more than another 20 business days.

All schools and central office departments where parents frequently visit must post the following materials at each site to inform parents and guardians of the availability of free translation and interpretation services.

- ✓ ***Flyer Regarding Free Translation and Interpretation Services*** – the attached flyer must be posted in a location frequently viewed by LEP parents, e.g. the same bulletin board where ELAC agendas and minutes are posted, and in the main office so that it is also accessible to site staff. This poster should also be distributed at an ELAC and DELAC meeting. It is posted on the District’s website and included in the annual Student and Parent/Guardian Handbook.
- ✓ ***Primary Language Assistance Request Forms for School Sites and District Office Departments*** - forms in the appropriate languages must be available in the main office of each school site and in the reception area of appropriate central office departments. These forms should also be distributed at ELAC and DELAC meetings.
- ✓ ***Mixteco Parents*** – A significant number of our parents speak Mixteco and do not read. The site administrator must contact our Mixteco liaisons to visit with all Mixteco families at your school in order to ensure that they understand their rights to have interpreters with them at all parent meetings.

All schools are also required to incorporate LEP parent communication strategies into their academic plans. These strategies should address how the school will work to specifically engage and communicate with LEP parents.

- ✓ ***Complaints and Questions*** – Parents with concerns or questions will be encouraged to meet with the Principal to get their questions answered or concerns addressed. Site administrators will respond to parent requests to schedule a meeting within two school days in most cases and absent exigent circumstances and parent preferences otherwise, will schedule the meeting within five school days. If parents are reluctant to meet with the Principal, they will be informed that they may request a meeting with one of the District’s Assistant Superintendents (for Human Resources or Educational Services). UCP Complaint forms should be available in the main office of each school site, in the reception area of appropriate central office departments, posted on the District’s website and referenced in the annual Student and Parent/Guardian Handbook.

Servicios GRATUITOS de Traducción e Interpretación

FREE Translation and Interpretation Services

Los padres de familia/tutores legales pueden solicitar servicios individuales y gratuitos de traducción o interpretación en su escuela y/o en cualquier departamento del Distrito Escolar completando un **Formulario de solicitud de servicios gratuitos de traducción e interpretación**. El formulario puede completarse en su lengua materna y devolverse a la oficina principal de su escuela o al Departamento de Servicios Educativos localizado en 1051 South A Street, Oxnard, CA 93030.

Si usted tiene algún reclamo sobre los servicios de traducción/interpretación, puede completar un formulario de reclamos en su lengua materna y devolverlo al Departamento de Recursos Humanos localizado en 1051 South A Street, Oxnard, CA 93030.

Se pueden obtener todos estos formularios en las escuelas o en el Departamento de Servicios Educativos, y en la sección “Padres” del sitio web www.oxnardsd.org. Para más información o ayuda, puede llamar al 805-385-1501 X 2350 y dejar un mensaje.

No se debe emplear a intérpretes que no han sido calificados por el Distrito (esto incluye a estudiantes y otros niños), excepto en caso de emergencia.

Parents/Guardians may request free individual translation or interpretation services at their school site and/or at any School District department by filling out the **Free Translation and Interpretation Services Request form**. The form can be completed in your home language and returned to your school’s main office or the Educational Services Department located at 1051 South A Street, Oxnard, CA 93030.

If you have a complaint about translation/interpretation services, you may complete a complaint form in your home language and return it to the Human Resources Department located at 1051 South A Street, Oxnard, CA 93030.

All of these forms can be obtained at school sites or the Educational Services Department, and on the “Parent” page of www.oxnardsd.org. For more information or assistance, you may leave a message by calling 805-385-1501 X 2350.

Non-District qualified interpreters (including students and other children) may not be used for interpretation, except in emergency situations.