ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

Language Access Services for Communication with
Parents and Guardians
Who Are Not Primary Speakers of English

1400
Procedure No.

May 29, 2018

Date

I. **PURPOSE:** To provide procedures and outline resources to provide professional, equitable, effective, and timely language access services for families in order to access information and vital communication from the school system.

II. **BACKGROUND:** Federal civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibit discrimination or exclusion of any person from programs on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, in collaboration with the United States Department of Justice provided guidance[1] and information for parents and guardians who are not primary speakers of English and for the schools and school districts that communicate with them.

Under this guidance, school districts must communicate vital information to parents and guardians who are not primary speakers of English in a language they understand, to allow them to make well-informed decisions about their children's education. Given the critical role parents play in seeking and securing educational opportunities for their children, the school system must seek to overcome the language barriers of parents and guardians through free language access services in the form of interpretation and translation, including in-person or telephonic interpreters.

III. **DEFINITIONS**:

   A. English Learners (ELs)- Students who cannot yet communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, and who are identified as requiring specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and their academic courses.

   B. Interpreting- The oral restating in one language of what has been said in another language. In successful interpreting, the intended message and its meaning are appropriately conveyed.

   C. Language Access Services- Delivery of language appropriate services to ensure meaningful access for parents and guardians.

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[1] *"Information for limited English proficient (LEP) parents and guardians and for schools and school districts that communicate with them",* U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division & U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2015).

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D. Parents and guardians who are not primary speakers of English- Refers to a parent or guardian whose primary language is not English.

E. Primary language- The language a person has learned from birth and is the basis for their sociolinguistic identity.

F. Translation- Translation refers to the conversion of written materials from one language to another. Translated materials transfer information from one language to another language, while maintaining the intended meaning of the original material.

G. Vital communications- Written and oral communication that includes, but is not limited to: program information and applications, discipline notices, consent forms, notices of rights, parent/teacher conferences, grading and reporting, and notices or letters that require a response.

IV. **PROCEDURES FOR LANGUAGE ACCESS RESOURCES**

The Language Access Office is a centralized resource within the school system that serves to facilitate appropriate language access resources for communication with families:

Language Access Office
Phone: 301-408-5511
Interpreting Inquiries: interpreter@pgcps.org
Translation Inquiries: translations@pgcps.org

A. **Language Interpretation Services**

1. The Interpreter Bank provides language interpreters and sign language interpreters for approved school activities to ensure that parents and guardians can participate fully in school meetings and events affecting their children.

   School staff and parents must arrange for interpreting services through the Fluency online scheduling system at least 72 business hours in advance for these pre-scheduled activities.

2. Approved activities for which interpreters can be requested include:

   - Parent/teacher conferences;

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- PTA meetings;
- Parent workshops;
- Back-to-school nights;
- Administrative conferences;
- SIT/SST meetings;
- Special Education assessments;
- IEP meetings;
- Home visits;
- Pupil personnel conferences;
- Suspension conferences;
- Expulsion hearings;
- Drug/alcohol conferences; and
- Other activities pre-approved by the Language Access Office

3. Language Link telephone interpreting is a service available for instances in which language access is needed immediately. Through this telephone service, staff is connected to a human interpreter for immediate communication on-site, or for third party calls to parents or guardians who are not primary speakers of English.

B. Translation Services - Systemic parent communication documents

Prince George's County Public Schools is committed to the provision of all systemic written parent communication, in a family's primary language, for those populations that comprise one or more percent of the total student population, or more than 1,000 students.

C. **Prohibition on Students Serving as Interpreters or Translators**

At no time should students serve as interpreters or translators for vital communication.

V. **RELATED POLICY AND PROCEDURES:**

Board Policy 0102 (Culturally Responsive Schools and Central Offices);
Board Policy 0103 Equity;
Administrative Procedure 4170, Discrimination and Harassment

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VI.   **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** This
Administrative Procedure originates with the Office of Equity and Access, and
will be updated as necessary.

VII.   **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** None. This is a new
procedure.

VIII.   **EFFECTIVE DATE:** May 29, 2018