

# GUIDELINES TO WORK WITH INTERPRETERS- TRANSLATORS

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WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS  
Title  
III/ESL Department

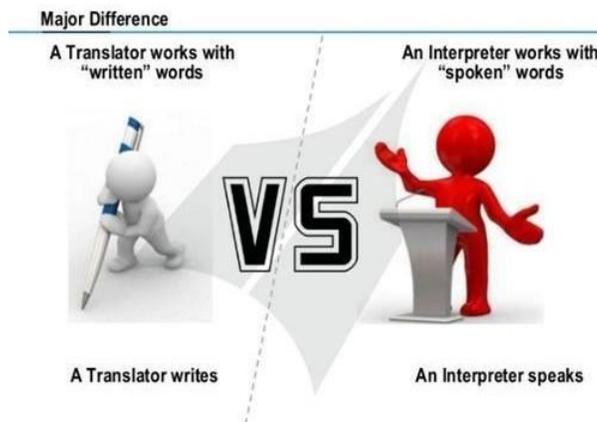
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The English Learner Department of the WS/FCS system assigns an EL Parent Engagement Manager to coordinate interpreters and/or translators for language services at district-wide and school level. One of the district priorities is to “Intentionally engage our parent and community partners in understanding, supporting and advocating for our district goals in service of students.” Therefore, to better serve the needs of our English Learner students, families, and school system personnel the EL Department has created a process to request interpretations and translations.

## What is the difference between an interpreter and translator?



### **INTERPRETER:**

An interpreter is a person who is proficient in two or more languages and is able to replace oral messages from one language with equivalent oral messages in another language. Interpreters bridge languages gap thus allowing people who do not speak the same language to communicate.

### **TRANSLATOR:**

A translator is a person who is proficient in two or more languages and is able to replace written information from one language with written information in another language. The term “translator” is reserved for those whose work is text-based.

## Scheduling an Interpreter

### Spanish

- Requests for a Spanish interpreter should be made through our online request system using the following link: <https://www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/Page/108970>
- Individuals requesting meetings with an interpreter should schedule them **at least three weeks in advance** to help ensure interpreter availability.
- Requests will be accepted/declined within 1-3 school days of being received.

### School based interpreters

- District interpretation should supplement school based interpretation when possible.
- Schools are encouraged to use qualified and skillful school designated interpreters to assist when possible. The EL Parent Engagement Manager will provide professional development opportunities throughout the year.
- In non-emergency situations please avoid using ESL, World Language, or other bilingual teachers for interpretation. Interpretation is a time intensive activity and can impact teachers' planning and instructional time.

## Other Languages

- Requests for an interpreter in another language should be made through our online request system using the following link: <https://www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/Page/108970>
- For languages other than Spanish, we contract with interpreters from outside the district when possible. This takes extra time. Therefore, individuals requesting a meeting with an interpreter in a language other than Spanish should send the request as soon as possible with a minimum notice of two weeks in advance.
- The EL Parent Engagement Manager will assist and schedule with the third party contractor to find an interpreter.
- Schools **should not** contact the third party contractor directly. If a school schedules a third party interpreter without the approval of the EL Parent Engagement Manager, the school will be responsible for interpretation costs incurred.

### **When working with an “in-person” interpreter:**

- Prior to the meeting, provide general information to the interpreter regarding the circumstances of the meeting and pertinent details that will aid the interpreter.
- Allow extra time for the meeting, as information will be stated twice.
- Introduce all parties.
- During the meeting, speak directly to the client (the parent or student). For example, ask the parent, “How can I help you?” instead of asking the interpreter, “Ask him/her how I can help him/her?”
- Speak in complete sentences.
- Speak clearly and slowly and avoid slang, educational acronyms, and jargon.
- Let the interpreter control the length of each segment and arrange beforehand for him/her to signal you/the client when to stop. The general rule is two sentences at a time.
- Do not talk with the interpreter and thus exclude the client.  
**Everything** that is said during a meeting must be interpreted.
- Explain clearly when the interpreter seeks clarification. Avoid long explanations as the client may feel excluded from the

conversation. (*Debriefing of the interpreter should be left for after the interview.*)

- **Avoid having side conversations while the interpreter is talking.** This can be distracting for the interpreter and the family members who need interpretation, leading to a loss of information.
- Some keys to effective communication across interpretation are checking for comprehension and encouraging full engagement of participants. Please be sure to check in with families regularly throughout the meeting to make sure they have a clear understanding of the material being discussed and that they have ample opportunity to contribute their own thoughts, concerns, questions, feedback, etc.
- Generally, the client and interpreter leave at the same time.

#### **When working with a telephone interpreter:**

- Introduce yourself to the interpreter.
- Brief the interpreter; describe the telephone equipment you are using (conference telephone, dual handset, single telephone) and where you are.
- Introduce everyone present to the client and describe the purpose of the meeting.
- Limit your communication to sections of manageable lengths.

The general rule is two sentences at a time.

- Pause often to allow the interpreter to speak and expect the interpreter to interpret everything that is said by yourself and your client.
- Keep in mind telephone interpreters rely entirely on linguistic input. They have no visual cues (such as body language) to assist in the interpreting.
- Clearly indicate the end of the session to the interpreter.

**Telephone interpreting may not be appropriate if:**

- The meeting will be lengthy
- Visual aids are needed
- Documents are needed as references

**NOTE:** If you are having a conference call/telephone meeting, you must include this information when requesting an interpreter. This will allow the interpreter to be prepared for the conference and review/ask questions beforehand.

## **Meeting Cancellation/Changes**

Meeting cancelled by school:

- School must notify the interpreter with at least 3hrs before the meeting.
- **The notification can be made via email and telephone call to the person assigned as the interpreter for the meeting. In the event you do not know who is the interpreter assigned please email [nmartinez2@wsfcs.k12.nc.us](mailto:nmartinez2@wsfcs.k12.nc.us) to informed her of the cancellation.**

Meeting cancelled by parent:

- If a parent contacts the interpreter team on their own behalf to cancelled a meeting, the interpreter will notify the person who request the meeting as soon as possible.

## **Inclement Weather**

- If the WS/FCS are closed the interpreter will not attend the meeting.
- If the WS/FCS are in a delay/early release due to inclement weather if there is a meeting scheduled at the time of the delay/early release, the school staff **MUST** notify the Nareny Martinez via email/telephone call as soon as the announcement of the delay/early release has been made. if the meeting is going to be cancelled or reschedule.

## **Guidelines for Requesting Written Translation Services**

- Submit requests for translation to our translation request system using the following link at least **two to three weeks in advance**. <https://www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/Page/108971>
- Attach documents electronically. While we will make every effort to keep the formatting of documents the same, please understand that this is not always possible.
- If you request an updated translation of a previously translated document, **please clearly mark exactly what changes have been made to the English version**. This will allow for a more effective use of our resources and a faster turn-around time for you and our families.
- Estimated response times will be provided. Generally, most Spanish translations can be completed within two to three weeks if not sooner. Translations for other languages will take longer as we need time to contract with providers outside of the district.
- All requests are prioritized by the EL/Bilingual department staff according to the guidelines in this manual. The EL Parent Engagement Manager will be consulted as needed.

## **General Information Regarding Translating/Interpreting**

- All parents and community members across the district should have equal access to translation or interpretation services to the extent practical.
- Interpreters and translators provide communication from one language to another. They do not offer advice or opinions, nor judge the effectiveness or accuracy of the communication.
- All parties involved with translating and interpreting respect the need to be efficient and judicious in utilizing the resource. Relevant information will be translated. People working with interpreters must limit extraneous conversation and respect the needs of the interpreter at all meetings.
- Requests for translation/interpretation will be responded to in a timely fashion. Staff with emergency or time sensitive needs should expect direct communication related to expected turnaround times.

## **Prioritization of Interpretation/Translation Requests**

- Interpretation and translation requests may exceed available time.
- To ensure that the most critical needs are addressed, the district prioritizes requests as they are received.

- All requests are classified as either: emergency, high priority, or as time is available. Examples of the types of documents within each classification are listed below. Please note that all services may not be available in all languages. Services will be provided in Spanish whenever possible.

### **Emergency**

- School closure/dismissal or late-start
- Health emergency
- Crisis response
- Major disciplinary event

### **High Priority**

- IEP forms and meetings, including manifestation determinations
- Assignment office time sensitive information
- Expulsion forms and meetings
- Suspension forms and meetings
- Health alerts
- Truancy/discipline forms and meetings (issues requiring documentation or action such as suspension or expulsion)
- Group meetings or activities for parents who do not speak English
- Parent/teacher conferences

## **As Time is Available**

- Newsletter items
- Fieldtrip information beyond what is currently available on the field trip form
- Buildings and classroom events
- Updates of forms, applications and letters for convenience and are not inaccurate
- Events calendars

### **ESL Department contact information**

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