

Selected Knowledge Base on Translation Services for Schools and Districts

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Summary of Knowledge Base

Overall, findings of this review suggest that translation services, when used appropriately and when accompanied with professional development and support, can help schools effectively communicate with all families.

- *Understand Needs:* Schools and districts must first understand their specific students' and families' language needs and preferred methods of communication in order to select a service that best meets those needs.
- *Partner with Community Organizations and Members:* Community organizations may be able to provide interpreters, print translations, or recommendations of other translation services. Further, community-based individuals may be able to provide insight into the culture of the community and be able to help identify and address additional needs.
- *Support and Professional Development:* Teachers, students, and families need scaffolded support in understanding how to best utilize translation services, especially in remote learning environments. Introducing new translation services to teachers should be accompanied by appropriate PD.
- *Connect Through Multiple Means:* Teachers and school staff should connect with parents through multiple means, including written, verbal, and visual. Connecting with students and families via video can be particularly useful during remote learning, as families can pick up on visual cues.
- *Establish Strong Family Partnerships:* Using translation services and connecting frequently with families in their home language can build strong family-school relationships and can help create an inclusive environment where students and their families feel valued and welcome.

Peer-Reviewed Articles and Reports

<i>Citation</i>	<i>Methodologies</i>	<i>Findings</i>
<p>*Lake, V. E., Beisly, A. H. (2019). Translation apps: Increasing communication with dual language learners. <i>Early Childhood Education Journal</i>, 47, 489-496.</p>	<p>While no specific methods are provided, this article discusses aspects (overview, positive features, and limitations) of three apps: Speak and Translate; Microsoft Translator; and Google Translate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each of the three apps discussed have been shown to be helpful in facilitating interactions with children in their home language - By supporting the home language, teachers show their Dual Language Learners (DLLs) and native English speakers that every child’s home language is important and welcome in the classroom - Using translation apps can help teachers talk to their students, build relationships with children and families, and support bilingualism - Most teachers and children are already familiar with technology, but will need further instruction, and sometimes motivation, to begin implementing translation apps - Considerations when choosing translation apps: available technology; platform availability; languages needed; app features needed; and cost
<p>*Rodriguez-Castro, M., Salas, S., & Benson, T. (2018). To Google translate or not? Newcomer Latino communities in the middle. <i>Middle School Journal</i>, 49(2), 3-9.</p>	<p>This article utilizes a series of vignettes surrounding the sort of communicative mishaps (between school staff and parents) the authors have witnessed across the middle schools they serve. The authors then provide a brief description of the “PROSE” strategy for middle school teacher leaders to implement when providing written communication to students and families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are multiple reasons why computer-generated translations cannot replace human translation (written) or simultaneous interpretation (spoken) - The acronym PROSE stands for print (P), readability (R), organization (O), structure (S), and ease (E) - the PROSE checklist is a deliberate strategy for increasing readability of school-to-home communication for all students and it has potential applications for framing communication using translation software - As useful as Google Translate is, automated translation lacks the attention to nuance that communication with parents requires - Along with any translated written communication, there should be a specific phone number or hotline where parents can speak with someone in their native language should they have questions or concerns about what is happening at school or what is not happening at school

<i>Citation</i>	<i>Methodologies</i>	<i>Findings</i>
		- In taking on the challenge of communicating with newcomer families, the authors urge middle grade teachers and teacher leaders to seek out and enlist community support
Sperling, J. (2011). <i>Communicating more for less: Using translation and interpretation technology to serve limited English proficient individuals</i> . Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.	This report provides an overview of several commonly used translation and interpretation technologies. It aims to assist language access practitioners in understanding and identifying which systems would best meet their agency's language access needs.	- The examples provide a starting point for practitioners seeking to better understand the nature and availability of technologies that can assist in meeting translation and interpretation needs - Individual agencies require language access solutions tailored to the unique features of their service delivery system--for example, the volume of clients to be served, the languages they speak, and the nature, length, and frequency of exchanges with them

Translation Services: Websites and Additional Information

The services mentioned below serve as examples that came up in the initial search of the literature and related materials. There are many services available; this table provides insight into a few services as examples of what is available.

<i>Name of Service and Link</i>	<i>Description & Considerations</i>
Google Translate	- Google's free service instantly translates words, phrases, and web pages between English and 100 different languages - Besides translating a text, Google Translate's Snap feature instantly translates images of text using a camera - The Talk feature enables users to have live bilingual conversations - The Google Translate Chrome extension can translate an entire webpage - This service, however, does translate word for word and may not take the whole meaning of the sentence into consideration
TalkingPoints	- Effective March 20th, all schools and districts who are high-need will be able to have free access to TalkingPoints for Schools and Districts.

<i>Name of Service and Link</i>	<i>Description & Considerations</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TalkingPoints for Schools and Districts provides school-wide and classroom-wide messages, so all the staff in the school can communicate with families in their own languages, reporting and analytics so you can see how remote learning is going from an administrators’ perspective, and downloads/export reports on school/educator-parent engagement. - The TalkingPoints app allows teachers to write a text message in English and the message is translated into one of 100 languages for families according to their native language. The family receives the message as a text on their phone without downloading the app. - Here for you: TalkingPoints Resources for Teachers and Families for COVID19 and Remote Learning
<p>TransACT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TransACT is advertised as “a leader in cost effective & accurate translation services for schools for preparing for ESSA, parent letters, notices and forms” - It offers an unlimited, district wide subscription to translated parent notifications that meet federal parent and family engagement requirements - Provides access to standard EL school-to-home notices in an easy-to-use, online format. - Certified translators with education industry experience translate any document.
<p>Albom Translation Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Translates school forms, student and parent handbooks, testing materials, flyers, newsletters, letters, surveys, press releases, presentations, and entire websites. - Provides translation and over the phone interpretation for more than 100 school districts in 18 states across the country - Translation and Interpretation for Schools
<p>Telelanguage: Education Interpretation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offers free support materials to support your staff in communicating with both interpreters and Limited-English proficient populations - Provides cultural awareness training - Telelanguage Telephonic Interpretation and Video Remote Interpretation give educators on-demand access to professional interpreters 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year - Telelanguage written translation services are 100% human translation

Parking lot of additional and related information

- Examples of district and state services and guidelines
 - [Baltimore County Public Schools’ Guidance for Communication with Families Who Speak Limited English during Covid-19 School Closure](#)
 - Maine DOE [Translator and Interpreter Services](#)
 - Seattle Public Schools’ Translation and Interpretation [Guidelines](#), including a list of local translation agencies
- Resources from Colorín Colorado
 - Distance Learning for ELLs: [Making Family Partnerships Work](#)
 - [Working with community organizations to support ELLs](#)
- [Information](#) for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Parents and Guardians and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them - USDOE and USDOJ

Review methods:

This document summarizes a review of research, evaluation, resources, and stakeholder knowledge related to the topic of translation services for schools and districts. Databases used for conducting this review included Google Scholar and ERIC. Literature from peer-reviewed, scholarly journals was reviewed (noted with an asterisk), along with reports on translation services from reputable institutions. Given the nature of this topic, this review also includes information on specific translation services as well as information from trustworthy organizations on best practices for communicating with multilingual families. The search also resulted in translation and communication guidelines and plans for various states and districts. Search terms used include but are not limited to: “Translation services” AND “schools” AND “districts”; “Translation services schools”; “translation services k-12 school districts”; “translate education families.”