



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

RESOLUTION ON LANGUAGE SUPPORTS FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING FAMILIES

Presented and Adopted at a CEC15 Calendar Meeting on January 26, 2021 by a unanimous vote. Members present included: Camille Casaretti, Antonia Ferraro, Tia Schellstede, Kimmerly Scott, Bess Abrahams, Mark Bisard, Claudia Lechuga and Ivan Banda.

WHEREAS, New York City public schools exist to serve all the city's public school students;

WHEREAS, the Department of Education has two separate offices that exist to support Multilingual students and non-English speaking families: the Division of Multilingual Learners and the Office of Translation & Interpretation;

WHEREAS, leaders in those offices are working to expand and improve access;

WHEREAS, the Department of Education offers translation of their parent-facing website in close to 100 languages via Google Translate, and includes welcoming language on the home page regarding language access;

WHEREAS, parents have the right to receive information or communicate with a staff member at their school or Department of Education (DOE) office in their language;

WHEREAS, NYC schools are seeing more MLL students attending schools in higher concentrations than they have in the past, where currently 13 percent of NYC public school students are English Language Learners¹, and 15 percent of District 15 students are English Language Learners²;

¹ <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/doe-data-at-a-glance>

² <https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2019&instid=800000045191>

WHEREAS, students and their parents communicate in over 180 different languages, including sign language, and Chancellor's Regulation A-663³ requires language services in the nine most common languages other than English spoken by parents of New York City school children;

WHEREAS, MLL students and families who speak a language other than English will not be served well, and are at a disadvantage, if they cannot access or understand communications, publications, announcements, resources, meetings, and event invitations that come from the DOE, their school, their PA/PTA, their Superintendent or CCEC;

WHEREAS, Districts like D15, who are adopting Diversity Plans and embrace all types of students, require additional support for not only students but staff, where more teachers than before are trying to communicate with, and maintain relationships with families that do not speak English;

WHEREAS, robust parent engagement improves academic outcomes, and creates a welcoming community to all families;

WHEREAS, our teachers, parent coordinators and school leaders are working diligently to stay in regular contact with all of our families;

WHEREAS, if documentation and meetings are conducted only in English, non-English speaking families will likely not engage fully, will feel unwelcome, and will become disenfranchised, inevitably adversely impacting student success;

WHEREAS, further inequities exist, in that for non-English speaking students or family members to participate on a remote platform used for communication and teleconferencing, two devices are required to fully and actively participate in an online meeting: one device for interpreted audio and another for video;

WHEREAS, these language barriers and technology constraints place an undue burden on families that are already struggling;

WHEREAS, CEC15 is actively seeking input from underrepresented families, and trying to fill a vacancy on our Council for an ELL Representative for almost a year;

WHEREAS, candidates will not apply for the CEC ELL seat if they assume that CEC meetings will be conducted in English only;

³ <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/a-663-english>

WHEREAS even though every page on the NYC DOE website⁴ has a pulldown menu to select a language, the InfoHub page on Translation and Interpretation Unit⁵ is not translatable;

WHEREAS, the following documents, that directly impact family engagement, student support, and community empowerment, are available only in English:

Chancellor’s Reculations only in English: A-170 Home Instruction Services, A-190 Significant Changes in School Utilization and Procedures for The Management of School Buildings Housing More than One School, A-411 Behavioral Crisis De-Escalation Intervention and Contacting 911, A-418 Sex Offender Notification, A-443 Student Discipline Procedures, A-501 Promotion Standards, A-750 Child Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention, A-820 Confidentiality and Release of Student Records; Records Retention, A-825 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Disclosure of Information to Institutions of Higher Learning and the Military English, A-830 Anti-Discrimination Policy and Procedures for Filing Internal Complaints of Discrimination, B-801 School Based Budgeting, D-140 Process for the Nomination and Selection of Members of The Community Education Councils Including Filling Vacancies, D-150 Process for the Selection of Members of the Citywide Council on Special Education and the Citywide District 75 Council, D-170 Process for the Nomination and Selection of Members of the Citywide Council on English Language Learners Including Filling Vacancies, D-180 Extended Use of School Buildings

WHEREAS, the DOE hasn’t translated the following documents or webpages, limiting parent engagement and support, causing disruption with schedules, and limiting access to health information:

- The CCEC member application, only available in English and Spanish,
- The NYC DOE COVID Technical Support for Families website page⁶, only in English,
- Notification of school closures in mid November, announced only in English with no available translation until the next day, and
- The COVID exposure notifications from DOE, only in English.

⁴ <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/school-environment/hello>

⁵ <https://infohub.nyced.org/in-our-schools/translations/translation-and-interpretation>

⁶ <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/learn-at-home/technical-tools-and-support/ipads-and-laptops/technical-support-for-families>

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CEC15 asks the DOE to prioritize and complete translation of the above-mentioned Chancellor's Regulations before the end of this school year;

BE IT RESOLVED that the DOE send out future COVID-related information in all languages, on the same day;

BE IT RESOLVED that the DOE create pathways for school staff who speak, read, and write in languages other than English (LOTE), and whose LOTE abilities would benefit their school populations, be given a stipend to assist with in-house translation and interpretation;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Family Leadership Coordinators of each District assist their respective Presidents' Council, and that Parent Coordinators assist their PAs and PTAs with monthly meeting interpretation, interpretation of meeting minutes and flyer translations;

BE IT RESOLVED that the DOE provide training opportunities in language access initiatives not only to field support staff and administrators but to teachers and staff, as well as CCECs and their Administrative Assistants in computer software, such as Powerpoint and Microsoft Translate that provide closed captioning translation and flyer translation;

BE IT RESOLVED that translation and interpretation services be adequately funded so that CCECs may have interpretation services available to them at all open meetings;

BE IT RESOLVED that the current DOE Messages for Families page⁷ be used as the model for all future messaging, which is translated into ten languages and offers a sign language video;

BE IT RESOLVED that the DOE survey teachers, administration, and school staff to get feedback on needed language access and support to further communication with families, and report those findings to CCECs annually;

BE IT RESOLVED that DOE present findings of the following list to CEC15 as it relates to District 15 schools, including High Schools, D75 schools, and Charter Schools, if any, for the school years 2018-19 and 2019-2020:

- the number of distinct documents that have been translated into the covered languages and the general nature of such documents;
- the number of meetings at which it provides interpretation services and the languages for which it provides such services;
- its annual budget for language access services;

⁷ <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/news/chancellor-s-message-for-families>

- the number of Department employees who provide language access services on a full time basis;
- the number of times interpretation services are provided by telephone, and the language in which such services are provided;

AND BE IT RESOLVED that the DOE review, update, and amend Chancellor's Regulations A-663, Regulation of the Chancellor on Translations, last updated in June of 2009, including relevant services to support remote learning.

cc:

Mayor Bill DeBlasio
DOE Chancellor Richard Carranza
Deputy Chancellor Adrienne Austin, FACE
Executive Superintendent Karen Watts
Superintendent Anita Skop

This document is available in Spanish, Chinese and Bengali.

Spanish:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UDoQWuZY8PZAHCw2UXPmMhF7b7Vq0JJnDP6NYFSXIC0/edit?usp=sharing>

Chinese:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bamOzpHPoygrMmfV9nV-jLdi6wm9Tv7UAy37Uj6YLVY/edit?usp=sharing>

Bengali:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YNh4s_C0kzsLLTVSTpnzhUW25LDpuA6cHYMDYrvFFnY/edit?usp=sharing