**Language Support Handout**

*Teacher tips for Parent-Teacher Conferences*

*with bilingual families*

**BEFORE THE CONFERENCE**

* **Give parents a reminder call:** ParentLink messages can be recorded in other languages using the District’s Multilingual Educational Services Department.
* **Arrange for an interpreter; don’t rely on student translations:** Students my not feel comfortable interpreting for their parents, they may not know the appropriate vocabulary to interpret the educational information, and they may not necessarily be forthcoming if they don’t like the information being presented.
* **Create an interpreters’ schedule with other teachers**: Be aware that interpreters may have many classrooms to assist. If possible, collaborate with other teachers to establish an “interpreters’ schedule” and allow more time for translations.
* **Train interpreters and staff**: Train to ensure all people involved have the skills and understanding necessary to support the families. During this time, make sure the interpreter feels comfortable interpreting certain vocabulary words and understands the conference schedule.

**DURING THE CONFERENCE**

* **Speak with parents, not the interpreter:** Always make eye contact with and talk directly to the parent rather than the interpreter.
* **Speak evenly and pause frequently:** Speak at a measured pace (not slowly or more loudly) and pause often so the interpreter can translate a manageable amount of information.
* **Use simple documents in your explanation for visual support:** Bulleted lists, rubrics or calendars are examples.
* **Discuss educational plans and the parents’ expectations:** Invite parents to share their educational expectations by asking “What do you hope your child will learn this year?” or “What do you want your child to get better at?”
* **Offer translated information:** Simplify the effort by offering English on one side of documents and a second language on the other.
* **Leave time for parent questions:** Underscore the importance of ongoing communication between the home and the school. Provide the parents with ways that they can contact you and communicate their questions and concerns with the necessary bilingual support.

**AFTER THE CONFERENCE**

* **Send a thank-you note:** Opportunities for partnerships between parents and teachers is one of the most important results of conferences. Send a note home in the appropriate language to the parents and tell them how much you enjoyed meeting them and talking with their child, or make a call to the family within a few weeks of the conference to inform them about the positive progress you have noticed in their child.