

Planning Parent-Teachers Conferences for Non-English Speaking Parents



Designate a Point Person

Each school needs one person coordinating all conferences. This is particularly helpful in schools with many interpreters on the day of conferences, so that they have someone to report to and are fully utilized. Occasionally, the point person is the bilingual facilitator, but this is not recommended as they each serve multiple schools. More appropriate is a secretary or other person appointed by the principal.

Determine the Number of Families Needing Interpreters

- Log into *PowersSchool SMS*
- Students whose parents require an interpreter are designated by a  next to the contact name.
- To display the language needed, click *Contacts*, hover over the blue symbol, and then click on the hour glass.
- Identify siblings, so parents do not need to come to the school more than once.
- For each teacher, group together all students whose parents will need interpretation.

Federal Law requires that we offer Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents with interpretation services for parent-teacher conferences.

Schedule Conferences

- Interpreted conferences take longer. If possible, schedule additional time.
- Consider the time interpreters need to travel from class to class.
- Create a master schedule with Excel. It may be useful to make it available on the shared drive and/or to post it in the main office.

Request the Interpreters Needed

- Determine the overall number of interpreters needed in each language (in addition to any bilingual facilitators who have agreed to work at your school that day). AACPS typically dispatches over 100 interpreters during conferences with none to spare, so please arrange the schedule in such a way that interpreters are never sitting around with nothing to do.
- Put in the request for the interpreters as early as possible! Many schools start requesting interpreters in August for the first round of conferences.

Contact Parents

- Create a conference appointment letter (translated by the bilingual facilitator) for international parents that won't give them the option to reschedule, but will encourage them to attend the

conference. For example, *"In order to ensure an interpreter is available for your child's conference, it has been scheduled at..."*

- Send the appointment letter home by mid-October so parents are provided with enough time to arrange their schedule. It is also helpful to provide parents with a letter about conferences that they can show their employer.

Other Tips

- Some schools modify the times of conferences, due to the number of available interpreters on the main conference days. For example, some schools start conferences the week before and these schools also schedule conferences after Thanksgiving break.
- Schools with many international parents usually need all of the time allowed for conferences (all day Monday and half day Tuesday).
- Do not schedule IEP meetings during conference time as interpreters are not likely to be available.
- Consider modifying the model of conferences. Some schools offer more of an "open house" where all teachers are in the cafeteria for a particular time frame. This provides a more flexible schedule for parents and reduces the number of interpreters needed.



Requesting Interpreters

Enter requests on *Fluency* or complete the *Interpreter Request Form* (*Intranet>Forms>Interpreters*).

Direct questions about hourly interpreters to Judy Smallwood at jsmallwood1@aacps.org or 410-222-5416.