

Guidelines for Use of Translation Tools in ASD Schools

Multilingualism is a valuable asset that enriches the educational experience for all students. Recognizing the importance of fostering an inclusive environment, these guidelines provide a framework for the judicious use of machine translation tools in K-12 schools. The overarching principle is to prioritize student inclusion and foster linguistic diversity, while also recognizing the potential benefits of carefully applied machine translation.

Students

Supporting Access to Instruction

“How are you making your lesson accessible to all the students in the room?”

Supporting Input - how students receive information

For all	For some
Visuals, diagrams, pictures, videos to illustrate content are required for all learners in acquiring knowledge and academic language • Technology tools: ◦ Slides, YouTube, AI image creation, Newline Engage, Google Input Tool Hands-on activities allow students to experience academic language in action • Technology tools: ◦ Coding robots, circuit engineering (e.g. LittleBits)	Translation of academic language or written translation - students need literacy skills and academic vocabulary in their home language in order for the following to be valid tools. It is important to note that most multilingual students in Auburn do not have literacy skills in their home language. Mainly at the secondary level, students can self-select the following. • Technology tools: <u>Snap&Read</u> - provides a text-to-speech service to bridge oral and written fluency Lexile scaling — <i>with intention</i> — should be used in conjunction with grade level text. It is important to know that lexile-reduction tools often eliminate critical academic vocabulary to which students need to be exposed. • Technology tools: <u>Snap&Read</u>, ChatGPT¹

¹ GPT-3.5 doesn't have specific training data for translation tasks and may not always capture the nuances and idioms of different languages as effectively as dedicated translation models. For critical or professional translation needs, it's recommended to use specialized translation services or models trained specifically for that purpose.
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In order to benefit from translation, students should have a high level of academic literacy in their home language, otherwise the preferred approach would be that students are learning academic vocabulary in English. In fact, presenting information in more than one language can increase the cognitive load for students. If the student is unable to access the meaning in either language, it could impact their ability and motivation to engage. As a public school, our civil rights obligations to multilingual students require that any class the student is in makes efforts towards increasing a student's English language proficiency.



Supporting Output - how students demonstrate learning

For all	For some
Repetition and intentional practice of words and structures, especially those used in academic settings, is essential for all students to master the language needed for academic success. - Technology tools: <u>FigJam/Newline Engage</u> - allow students to complete hyperdoc templates with scaffolded responses, and add/create their own images <u>Google Docs</u> - can also be used for worksheets, and can gather data over time through Forms and Sheets.	A dictionary/translation app can be helpful to some students (mainly at the secondary level) in self-scaffolding their work. - Technology tools: <u>Co:writer</u> - provides text prediction services to aid with grammar and scaffolding writing in English <u>Google Translate/AI</u> - can be used for single word or phrase translation <u>Google Input Tool</u> - supports conversion from international alphabets to Latin alphabet

Accommodations should be made with a thought partner — PLC group, ML teacher, or ML program administrators — to make data-informed decisions.

GLAD Training is available to all teachers in elementary settings. Contact Peter Lamb (plamb@auburn.wednet.edu) for more information.

SIOP training is available to teachers who wish to learn how to support language needs in their class. See Maeghan Bowman (mpbowman@auburn.wednet.edu) for more information.

Families/Community

When considering the need to provide language support to a family, the first step is to determine the family's preferred language of communication with school staff. Many families prefer to communicate with school staff in English, even though they use another language at home. It is important, then, not to assume that a family needs language support simply because their home language is not English. The preferred language is listed in the Skyward Family Tab.

Meetings and Home Visits

For families whose preferred language of communication with the school is not English:

- Pre-arranged meetings should be accompanied by an interpreter.²
- When interpreters are not available, or brief, but essential verbal communication is required, use the [Language Line](#) (Pacific Interpreters or Propio One).
- Machine translation apps may be acceptable for community members visiting the school office (e.g. parent pick-up, questions about student schedule, etc.)
 - Technology tools:
 - Google Translate
 - Microsoft Translator
 - AI chatbots (Gemini, ChatGPT)
 - Always exercise caution when using translation apps or AI tools, as the results may not be accurate, and quality of machine translation varies between languages, and among apps.
 - Currently, translation headsets and devices specifically for translation are not supported.

The following must be supported through professional interpretation and/or professional translations:

- Anything with legal ramifications: legal, programming, access, policies, health related, communication about student behavior or concerns.
- 5% Rule : Professional translations of critical communications must be created in all languages that represent 5% or more of the school community.
 - Translation of critical documents and interpreters for meetings/visits can be requested by completing request forms for [ASD Interpreter and Translation Services](#)

Written Communications

The following may be machine translated:

- Newsletters with updates and non-actionable information (“Updates from the fifth grade classroom,” “Picture day is next week,” etc.)
- Machine-translated documents should include a cover page with a disclaimer about the limitations of machine translation, and contact details for interpreters. [The Multilingual Learner department can provide this.](#)
- The English version should always be included with the translated document

When preparing information, staff should follow good accessibility practices:

- Ensure text is plain text (not rendered as an image, or in a flattened PDF)
- Text should be entered directly onto webpages, rather than in embedded documents where possible
- Any images containing text should have embedded alt text to transcribe the words
- Written in plain English, avoiding idioms, colloquialisms, and education-speak.
- Less is usually more: text-heavy communications have low readership.

² To request an interpreter or translation, please submit an interpreter or translation request to Interpreter Services at interpreters@auburn.wednet.edu

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Technology tools:

- Parent Square
- Skyward
- Email

 Concerns about Voice Translator Devices in the Classroom