BEST PRACTICES FOR TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS

TRANSLATORS

PLAN
- Verify that the English document is the final version.
- Check for grammar, idioms, and unclear language.
- Clarify with the owner of the document.
- Make sure the document is received in an editable format.
- If the document includes metaphors, idioms, or jargon, clarify with the owner before starting.
- If there are illegible or blurry sections of text in the document, ask for clarification before starting the process.

EXPLAIN
- Explain that an accurate translation requires time and research. Rush jobs are subject to inadequacies.
- Be clear about your deadline and request more time if needed.
- Explain to the owner of the document that translations will potentially take up more space than the English versions.

TRANSLATE
- Make sure to know the intended audience for the translation.
- Read and understand the entire body of the text before you start the translation process.
- Check that information flows clearly and that all text and images are included.
- Make sure you are aware of previous translations about the same topic. Discuss terms and ensure consistency within the same school district.
- Convey messages and avoid word-for-word translations.
- Match the design and format as best as possible.
- Check for typographical errors.

AFTERWARDS
- Allow for adequate time to have the translation reviewed by a proofreader and for you to review their feedback.
- If a glossary is not available, create one after the fact to help you or other translators with documents in the future.
- Build your translation team to translate, edit and proofread documents. Involve multilingual families in the process!
- Collaborate and network with other translators.
LANGUAGE
- Use plain text, avoid jargon and technical terms, and always keep it as simple as possible while being mindful of the nuances of language.
- Avoid using metaphors, jokes, or colloquialisms that will not translate well.
- Imagine how the English content reads in another language or culture. Are there any idioms, jargon, and complex terms that can be eliminated or redefined?
- Highlight words that you do not want translated such as names of local organizations, programs, and other proper nouns. Federal agencies and programs, and names of community-based organizations that serve immigrant communities may already have approved translated names.

INFORMATION
- Keep the information simple and concise.
- Utilize infographics and images to help tell the story of what you are trying to convey.
- Incorporate storytelling when possible. Some communities can relate to stories or anecdotes when making decisions or asking for help.
- If possible, incorporate short and engaging video and audio messages.

GRAPHICS AND FORMAT
- Translators can work more efficiently with editable documents in formats such as Word.
- Keep in mind that the more graphics, images, tables or designs you have on your document, the longer the translation process will take.
- Remember that most languages tend to use more words to explain concepts than English. A translated document will usually be longer than the English version.
- Make sure graphics or photos are culturally appropriate. Ask for community input on the images to be used.

REVIEW AND SEND
- Give clear directions and reasonable deadlines to the translator.
- Send the translator the final version of your document with no edits, track changes or notes.
- Develop relationships with community organizations or family groups that can review translations done for your school.
- Send the finalized and formatted translated documents and the original English-language document to a reviewer.
- Inform the translator of edits/changes needed as recommended by reviewers.