



# APPENDIX A: BILINGUAL EA GUIDE

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## ***Responsibilities of Bilingual Educational Assistants***

**B**ilingual Educational Assistants (EAs) are assigned to every school to support academic instruction and family/school communication. They are a strong asset to every school, bringing their culture, native language and educational background to the students and the school community. As required under No Child Left Behind, their services to the schools supplement not supplant the regular instructional process.

In the ELL Programs, there are two categories of bilingual educational assistants:

- Bilingual Educational Assistant Level I (Classroom Assistant)
- Bilingual Educational Assistant level II (Home-School Liaison)

### ***Bilingual Educational Assistant Level I***

As specified in the job description, the main functions of the bilingual EA level I are to provide **academic assistance** and **interpretation** in the classroom. This group of EAs need to spend a large portion of their time in the classroom to assist students with their academic and interpreting needs.

#### **Administrative expectations**

- Work with faculty and staff cooperatively and positively.
- Follow building policies and procedures.
- Ensure confidentiality and maintain professional ethics.
- Encourage and model appropriate learning behavior.
- Establish close and supportive relationships with students.
- Support teachers by engaging in active instruction and classroom management.

#### **Classroom expectations**

- Engage students in cooperative learning.
- Assist students in making connections.
- Help students in the process of investigating and questioning.
- Elicit prior knowledge.
- Promote pride in language and cultural differences.
- Communicate high expectations.

### ***Bilingual Educational Assistant Level II***

The primary responsibilities of the bilingual EA level II are similar to those of the bilingual EA level I, with the addition that a bilingual EA level II also serves as a contact person for families and the community. These EAs spend a portion of their time in the classroom to assist students with academic assistance and interpreting needs. They also serve the school to promote communication and understanding between the school, families, and community by assisting in translating school informational flyers or notes and interpreting at school gatherings or events.

### **Community and family expectations**

- Encourage parents' participation in school groups and events.
- Encourage community members' participation in school groups and events.
- Seek community agencies to support the school.
- Encourage school staff to be involved in community activities and social events.
- Seek parents' support for school projects, events, or other activities.
- Facilitate the communication between parents, community, and school.

### **Language and cultural expectations**

- Interpret in the classroom, at school events, and during school conferences.
- Translate school notes to parents or vice versa.
- Provide explanation of the student's home culture to school staff.
- Validate students and parents' life experiences.
- Promote pride in languages and cultures.
- Validate students and parents' educational values.

## ***Translation guidelines for bilingual EA level II***

The following is a list of sample documents that school staff may ask a bilingual EA II to translate. Note that translation by a bilingual EA II may not exceed one page or 200 words in English. Any documents longer than this must go to Translation Services.

- Letters or flyers about school events, including conference reminders, book fair announcements, open house notices, Kindergarten Roundup events, Grandparents' Day, Family Fun Nights, or carnivals and other fundraising activities
- Sports-related notices or announcements
- Letters or flyers on after school programs
- Administrative information
- Monthly school updates, provided they are less than one page long
- Site Council updates or announcements
- Letters from the school nurse
- Letters from the school library
- Parent surveys, if less than one page long
- School uniform information
- Conference information
- Home visit reports
- School Performance Information
- Teacher or staff notes to families
- Letters from a teacher requesting a conference or meeting
- Letters from parents to school staff

## ***Schedule & Checklist of Responsibilities***

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of “No Child Left Behind” (ESEA) requires administrators to keep records of an educational assistant’s or teacher assistant’s duties while serving students. Bilingual EAs’ time is precious; therefore, advance planning on how to best use the time is important. Through the use of this form, both the EA and teacher can develop a clear understanding of the bilingual EA’s job responsibilities and expectations. The mainstream/ELL teacher should review the duties with the bilingual EA. This form needs to be completed in the fall or any other time where changes to an EA’s schedule involve working with a new teacher.

Please make photocopies of this form and distribute it as follows after all signatures are procured: teacher(s), EA, principal, and EA coordinator.

Educational Assistant’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Time/Period	List location of EA — Teacher, class, room number (if only one day completed, schedule is the same for entire week)				
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

We have discussed the job responsibilities/expectations on the next page of this form.

Teachers’ Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

EA’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

The following is a list of possible duties that a bilingual educational assistant can perform while he/she is assigned to work with students in your classroom. Please read them and determine which of these duties you would like the bilingual EA to perform during the time that he/she is scheduled to work with your students.

### **Translations & Interpretations:**

- Orally interpret information to students if needed.
- Translate written notes from and/or to families (not to exceed 200 words).
- Make phone calls to parents to relay information from school to home or vice versa.

### **Instructional Duties:**

- Work with students in small groups (directions need to be given by teacher).
- Assist students while working independently.
- Supervise students while working independently (discipline).
- Provide academic support to one or two students.
- Read aloud to students.
- Listen to students read aloud.
- Support students while working on writing/reading.
- Assist and support students while working on content instruction (science, social studies, math).
- Assist teacher with record keeping tasks relevant to classroom assignment or evaluations.
- Assist and supervise student(s) while going to assigned areas of the school (e.g. library, art classes, other).
- Organize educational materials for future instruction.
- Collect/research information at the media center/internet to support the teacher in future teaching activities.
- Be involved in student scheduling under the direction of the supervising teacher or counselor.
- Assist in supervising an assembly, field trip, or other duties.
- Supervise in a classroom alone, in a planned way, when the teacher is called away for a short time (e.g. 10 minutes).

### **Duties Not Allowed:**

- Be used as a substitute teacher or be left in a classroom without a teacher for a long time (e.g. more than 10 minutes).
- Be assigned classroom tasks such as making copies or stacking/shelving books during class time.
- Be given primary responsibilities to introduce and teach completely new concepts and skills.
- Be given primary responsibilities for working with students.
- Non-instructional duties such as breakfast, lunch, bus, recess in excess of 30 minutes per day.

## ***General Information***

### **Labor Agreements**

Newly hired employees are given a copy of the current contract. If you do not have the most current copy of your labor agreement, you should contact your union representative; that number is 651-222-7303. It is your responsibility to read and understand your agreement. All benefits/ conditions are negotiated by your union representatives; the ELL department has no control over your benefits. The labor agreement is also available on the web at [http://hr.spps.org/Labor\\_Agreements.html](http://hr.spps.org/Labor_Agreements.html)

### **Work Year for Ten-Month Educational Assistants**

EAs work a total of 182 duty days each school year. You must consult your principal about compensatory time for any hours that you work beyond the allocated days. Some days included in the total duty days are:

- State Teacher Conferences in October
- Up to four (4) evening conferences or events

### **Non-Student Contact Days**

Educational assistants are assigned five (5) flexible workdays within the work year for participation in program planning and staff development opportunities. These five (5) days shall occur during opening week and throughout the school year as determined by the building or program administrator. Notification of these scheduled workdays shall be provided to the employee prior to the beginning of the school year by the building administrator.

### **Work Day**

EAs are scheduled to work 7.5 hours daily of which 30 minutes is a paid lunch. There are no breaks in the work day. To maximize the bilingual skills of all ELL EAs, no more than 30 minutes a day may be allowed for bus, breakfast, or lunch duties or other similar assignments. This information was communicated to principals in previous years, and we will be distributing this information to principals again this year.

### **Split Assignments**

Positions that are split mornings in one school and afternoons in another school are entitled to 30 minutes lunch and 30 minutes travel time. In addition, these commuting EAs will also receive mileage reimbursement. For every mile driven between the two schools, you will receive 58.5 cents. In order to receive the reimbursement, a monthly mileage report needs to be completed and submitted to the ELL department by the first of the following month.

You can access and set up a mileage profile as well as complete mileage logs online at <http://mileage.spps.org/domino/html/mileage/sppsmileage.nsf>. You must contact Lydia Rodriguez at (651) 767-8232 if you need to obtain profile set-up information.

## **Time Reports**

EAs are paid on a two-week lag. This means that all EAs will submit payroll time reports as usual every other Friday; however, paychecks for hours submitted will occur two weeks following submission. All hours worked, including evening conferences, must be reported on the time reports.

All EAs should use the regular time reports. Additional copies may be requested by asking your school secretary.

Time reports must be completed and submitted biweekly to your principal. Please consult with your school secretary for instructions on when to turn in your time report.

## **Educational Assistant Benefits**

Please visit [http://hr.spps.org/Benefits\\_Summary\\_by\\_Union.html](http://hr.spps.org/Benefits_Summary_by_Union.html) and click on the appropriate title or hours which pertain to you. Any questions should be directed to the Benefits department at 767-8212.

## **Non-compensatory Leave of Absence**

If you are planning to take a leave, you must request in writing on the district's leave of absence form. This form is available at the Human Resources office by calling 767-8200 or on the web at [http://hr.spps.org/Leave\\_of\\_Absence\\_Forms.html](http://hr.spps.org/Leave_of_Absence_Forms.html). Leave requests take time to process; therefore, you should complete the form as soon as you know. **You cannot just take leaves; you must ask for one.** Questions about your leave may be directed to the benefits department.

## **How do I qualify for a salary lane increase?**

Please follow procedures as indicated in your Labor Agreement.

## **EA Professional Development**

The ELL department schedules trainings for bilingual educational assistants. Attendance is mandatory. Please check e-mail or the Weekly Facts for training updates. The Weekly Facts can be accessed by visiting [www.ell.spps.org](http://www.ell.spps.org).

## ***Code of Ethics for Bilingual EAs***

Like other education professionals, bilingual EAs must strictly observe appropriate ethical behavior while accomplishing their duties in the classrooms, school buildings or in the communities. In order to protect the rights of students and parents, it is important for all educational EAs to be aware of and practice appropriate ethical behavior. They must maintain confidentiality and protect and promote the rights of students to due process, dignity, privacy, and respect. Bilingual EAs must also demonstrate honesty, loyalty, dependability, cooperation, accountability, and a willingness to learn.

### **Accepting Responsibilities**

- Engage only in instructional and non-instructional activities for which you are qualified and trained.
- Communicate progress or concerns about a student only to his or her parents and community members or teachers directly involved with that student's education. Refer concerns expressed by parents, students, or others to the teacher(s) of that student.
- Recognize that the teacher has the ultimate responsibility for instruction and management and follow the prescribed directions. Help to see that the needs and interests of individual students are met.

### **Relationship with Students and Parents**

- Discuss a child's progress, limitations, and/or educational programs to parents only with the direction of the supervising teacher. Express differences of opinion with the supervising teacher in the absence of the students and parents.
- Discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel.
- Do not engage in discriminatory practices based on student's handicap, race, sex, cultural practices, or religion.
- Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents, and staff members.
- Be a positive role model.

### **Relationship with Teacher**

- Recognize the teacher you are working with as your supervisor.
- Establish effective communication and a positive relationship with the teacher. When a problem cannot be resolved, after many attempts with the teacher, administrator, or school personnel, utilize the school district's grievance procedures, as described in the educational assistant labor agreement.

### **Relationship with the School**

- Engage in behavior management strategies that are consistent with standards established by Saint Paul Public Schools, school buildings, or IEP (Individual Education Plan).
- Accept responsibility for improving your skills.
- Represent the school in a positive manner.

## *Tips and Tools for Working with English Language Learners*

### **Reviewing the Basics: Implications for Classroom Instruction**

- All children can learn.
- Students who feel successful and proud will achieve more in school.
- Students can't talk or write about what they don't know.
- Focus on making content comprehensible.
- Active and involved learning gives the best results.
- Multiple approaches to instruction reach more students more successfully.
- Parental and community involvement and recognition in schools leads to higher student achievement.
- Diversity enhances the education of all students.
- Realistic and high expectations greatly influence student achievement.
- It is hard and tiring work to learn and demonstrate knowledge in another language.

*-Mary Díaz, Hamline University*

### **Keep in Mind**

- Your students may not know their home language well.
- Whether your students have had formal educational experiences or not, they know many things. They need opportunities to show these skills.
- Encourage and recognize academic successes.
- In language development, the first language enhances second language acquisition.
- Many ELL students have some stressful situations in their lives.
- ELL students can be valuable multicultural resources for the entire school.
- Parents of ELL students may find school a frightening and intimidating place.
- ELL students can't talk or write about things that they are not familiar with.
- Differing past experiences produce different associations and assumptions.
- ELL students want to learn English well.

### **Additional tips for working with ELL students:**

- When checking for understanding, ask a question which would check student comprehension or ask the student to do something that would verify his/her understanding. For example, ask the child to 1) paraphrase what was said; 2) retell a story; and 3) retell steps to follow.
- Modify speech when understanding or comprehension is not demonstrated by the student. Find simple words, speak more slowly, but try to keep the language as natural as possible. Use natural intonation at normal speed as much as possible.
- Encourage conversation with peers.
- Concentration on ideas and concepts rather than on language forms, builds both more fully.
- Accompany verbalization with action when possible. Demonstrate meaning.
- Development of listening skills is more important in beginning stages than speaking; don't be worried about variation in length of delay.
- Language is learned best through activities. Language that is presented in context is more effectively learned than that which is presented in isolation.

- Try to be consistent in giving directions. Keep directions simple.
- Use as many visuals as possible. Real objects should be used whenever possible. Begin with the concrete experiences and progress to the abstract. Example: an apple, a plastic apple, a picture of an apple, a drawing of an apple, a mental image of an apple.
- Model new words or structures 2-3 times before asking the student to repeat them.
- Avoid excessive use of slang.
- Avoid excessive use of idioms with beginning ELL students.
- In the early stages of second language acquisition, perfect pronunciation should not be expected due to interference from the primary language. The student will speak more freely if not overly corrected. There are times for immediate correction such as when you are practicing specific grammatical forms. Other times it is better to simply make a note of the error(s) such as when the student expresses his/her ideas. Help the student with the error at an appropriate time.
- Keep things moving. Vary the activities. Use a brisk tempo in order to keep the student's interest and attention.
- Give lots of positive feedback. Let the student know immediately that their responses are correct.
- Introduce new vocabulary using known structures (sentence patterns).
- In doing sentence pattern drills, accept a correct plausible answer. If the answer doesn't contain the desired pattern, repeat the question.

## *Suggestions for Interpreters at Teacher Conferences*

### **Before You Start**

- Be sure you know what you are expected to do. If it is not clear, ask.
- Learn possible vocabulary and expressions ahead of time.
- Decide how you will interpret certain common phrases that might not have exact translations so they will always be the same.
- Greet the teacher or teachers you will work with. Tell the teacher your name and the language that you will interpret.
- **ASK THE TEACHER TO READ THIS SHEET.**
- Explain to the teacher that you will translate what the speaker says. If the teacher wants an explanation or opinion, the teacher should ask for it.
- Ask the teacher to speak with short sentences and to pause after every two or three sentences so you can interpret.
- Familiarize yourself with the report card/evaluation system prior to the conference.

### **During the Session**

- Be sure that the teacher explains your role as an interpreter to the parents. They should understand that you are not involving your own opinions or thoughts. You are only repeating what the teacher says.
- Be sure you are seated so that the parents and teachers can see each other and talk to each other.
- Use the same pronouns that the speakers use. (For example, if the teacher says, "I am happy to meet you." do NOT say, "She is happy to meet you." You should say in the other language, "I am happy to meet you.")
- Do not talk to the teacher in front of the parents without interpreting it for them. Other discussion should be after the parents leave.
- Do not talk for a long time with the parents without interpreting the conversation for the teacher.
- Tell the teacher if you are related to or know the parents well. Also tell the teacher if you feel that the interpreting situation is uncomfortable for you.

### **After the Session**

- After the parents leave, you can have a discussion with the teacher and give opinions if the teacher asks for them.
- Ask the teacher to explain any words or ideas that were not clear so that you will not have problems the next time.
- If there is any important information that you think the teacher should have, give it to the teacher. It should be clear that this information is your opinion or that it is information that was NOT said.
- Ask the teacher if you should do anything differently.
- If necessary, remind the teacher about using short sentences and pausing between every two or three sentences so that you can interpret.

-Mary Díaz, Hamline University

## *Suggestions for Teachers When Working with Interpreters*

- Always try to make the time, whenever possible, to meet before a session in order to discuss the topic; ask and answer questions, give the interpreter time to go over key vocabulary words and to explain clearly what the session is for and what information you hope to gain.
- Try to obtain general cultural information about the language/cultural group that you will be working with in order to be able to put the information from the session in appropriate cultural context.
- Remember to pause at appropriate intervals so that the interpreter can accurately remember and express the current phrase.
- Remember to speak with and direct yourself to the other person(s) in the conversation rather than the interpreter. Body language is also part of the exchange.
- Make it very clear when you want a personal opinion of the interpreter. This is different than interpreting and should be requested and stated as a separate thing. Opinions are usually best given at the post-session briefing.
- Keep grammatical constructions simple and short. Remember that there are differences in grammatical constructions between languages.
- Remember that many things do not translate directly from language to language.
- Avoid the use of idioms when possible.
- Try to avoid abstract words such as "maliciousness," "wit," "loving," etc., which indicate feelings qualities or properties that may or may not have the same meaning when translated directly which may be difficult to convey, and/or which may need an excessive amount of explanation to convey the exact meaning.
- Do not use professional jargon. Explain your terms clearly and simply.

## *Tools and Ideas for Working with Parents of ELL Students*

### **What parents of ELL students should know about learning English**

- Your children don't need to stop using and learning your home language in order to learn English.
- Children who know their first language well will learn English better and more easily.
- You can teach your children many important things at home in your home language that will help them to do better in school.
- If you are proud of your home language and culture it will help your children. They - and you, too - can be successful in more than one language and cultural setting. Being able to communicate in each language is a valuable skill.
- Talk to your children, tell them stories, teach them to express their thoughts and feelings in your home language and it will help them to do this better in English. Encourage other members of your family to do this, too.
- If you know how to read, read to your children in your home language. It is good for your children to see you read for pleasure, for work and for useful information in any language that you can. It will help them to learn to read in English better.
- Some extra school activities that may not seem like serious study can actually be very good activities for your children to practice their English. Sports, music and school clubs are good for practicing English. It is good for your children to practice English with children their age both in school and playing outside of school.
- Children that are able to listen, speak, read and write in their home language will learn these things more easily in English.
- It may take between 5–7 years for children to learn academic English.

### **Some ways that parents can help their children**

- Talk to your children, tell them stories, describe things in detail and in order.
- Ask your children questions and listen to their answers. Ask why. Then discuss your respective points of view.
- Show that you are interested in books and printed things. Tell stories from picture books. Talk about pictures in books and magazines and other printed things. Show the front and back, beginning and end of books, and top and bottom of pages. Have a special place in your house for books and other printed things.
- Give your opinions to your children and ask them to express their opinions.
- Ask your children to read to you in any language.
- Take your children to the public library and spend time there with them. Ask the librarian to help them find books on topics of their interest or to read them a story.
- Tell your children that it is important to read. They need to know that you think it's important.
- If you don't read, try to learn to read (in any language). Your children will be helped by your example. Ask your child's school if they have reading classes for parents. Ask a friend or relative to help you a few minutes every day.
- Have written materials in your home. Examples could be: library books, newspapers, magazines about things you and your children like, comic books, children's storybooks, letters, notes and catalogues.

- If you have only a few things to read in your home, trade and share reading materials with friends, family, and neighbors. You can also ask your school librarian and your child's teachers to borrow books.
- Turn off the television sometimes and ask your children to read or write for a while.
- Let your children stay up 5–10 minutes later if they use that time to read before bed.

### **Ideas for involving ELL parents**

- Send a welcome letter home at the beginning of the school year in the parents' first language, giving details of the beginning of school and offering details about how and when they can be in contact with the school in their first language.
- Post friendly directional signs at the front entrance of the school in languages the parents can understand.
- Send school communications home in a language the parents can understand.
- Translate written communications.
- Send taped messages home for parents who do not read.
- Have a bilingual person make periodic friendly telephone calls to the home to see if there are any comments and concerns, making it very clear that this is routine and that their children have done nothing wrong.
- Schedule tours of the school with bilingual staff.
- Provide maps of each school with important information translated.
- Initiate as a school project a video tour of the school that parents can see in their homes, using ELL and mainstream students as narrators.
- Provide interpreters for parent conferences and all school functions for ELL parents.
- Produce a periodic newsletter for ELL parents, and all school staff, translating it into the languages of the parents and offering important school information as well as highlighting students, parents and program events.
- Invite ELL parents to visit their children's classrooms or for a school assembly to give a demonstration or performance.
- Have first language printed materials (children's books, magazines, newspapers, community information) in a Parent Resource Room and help parents feel comfortable using them and checking them out to read themselves and to their children.
- Have a bilingual person available for telephone calls to the school at certain regular hours every week and be sure parents know that they can call and speak to someone who will understand them easily and be able to get answers to their questions.
- Assist in arranging transportation and child care for school functions whenever possible.
- Offer school news in the parents' first language at a regularly announced time on a local radio station.
- Offer school news in the parents' first language regularly in a local newspaper column.
- Start a buddy system with mainstream parents to help new ELL parents initially become familiar and comfortable with the school and understand procedures.
- Compile a cookbook with recipes in two languages with recipe donations from parents and make it available to all staff and the community.
- Remember that many of the above suggestions will enhance your school's or district's involvement with multicultural educational experiences for all students.
- Generate other good ideas at staff meetings.