

Qualifications and Guidelines for Use of Translators and Interpreters Wisconsin Student Assessment System

The Assessment Accommodations Matrix for English Language Learners provides information regarding the allowable accommodations that translators and interpreters may provide for English language learners taking the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) or the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities (WAA-SwD). This document is intended to help districts in selecting highly qualified translators or interpreters to administer the Wisconsin assessments. **Translation** is the rendering of a written text from one language (source language) into another language (target language). **Interpretation** is the immediate communication of language from the source language into the target language. Interpreters should be used to provide sight translations¹ for either the WKCE or the WAA-SwD.

Suggested Qualifications of Translators and Interpreters

Preference should be given to individuals with Bachelor's Degrees in Modern Languages or a certification in either translation or interpretation. When this is not possible, translators and interpreters should have the following qualifications:

1. Mastery of the target language and dialect
2. Familiarity with both cultures
3. Extensive general and academic vocabulary in both languages
4. Ability to express thoughts clearly and concisely in both languages
5. Familiarity with the Wisconsin education system

Translators and interpreters should participate in all aspects of staff training related to test administration and test security, with additional training on the guidelines described below.

Guidelines for Translation and Interpretation

1. Test directions, questions, and answer choices should be read to students using direct interpretation. Care should be taken not to alter the intended meaning of the text.
2. While content may be converted into simplified English, this can sometimes alter the intended meaning of the text. Only simplify words that are not related to content or vocabulary. Example (Grade 5 WKCE Released Mathematics Item) of a simplified English test item:

The sales receipt below shows the groceries that José purchased from the supermarket. What is the estimated cost of José's groceries?

Simplified English: The receipt below shows the food that José bought from the store. Estimate how much money José spent on the food. **Note:** *It is important that "estimate" remain in this test item because it is part of the standard which is being tested.*

When providing sight translations¹ or scripted oral translations, it is critical to maintain a neutral voice and not provide any hints of the possible correct answer. Care must also be taken to not inadvertently provide cues through body language.

¹Sight Translation is the oral, on-the-fly rendering of test directions, items, or both from English into a student's native language. This type of accommodation differs from scripted oral translation in that instead of reading from a script, the test administrator orally translates as he or she reads. This "on-the-fly" interpretation also distinguishes sight translation from written translation. (Stansfield, 2008).