LANGUAGE SERVICES HISTORY

Since ESL’s inception, JCPS has been committed to providing language support to help the district communicate with international students and families. For many years, facilitating interpretation and translation requests, was incorporated into the duties of one ESL staff member. However, due to growth in demand, facilitating requests eventually became the sole responsibility of that person, with sporadic help from clerical and substitute staff.

In 2005-06, we began tracking the number of language support requests. We have experienced significant increases in the number of requests each year. Our records indicate that in 2005-06, we received 662 requests. In 2016-17 we received 3879 requests, indicating a 485% increase! In an on-going effort to provide adequate language support for students and families, the district responded to the request of the ESL Academic Program Consultant, by providing more funding, and 3 additional staff members, solely for facilitating language support. And thus, the present day Language Services Division was established.

As a result of the increased resources, among other improvements, Language Services has been able to implement an automated scheduling system, to replace the antiquated, hand written request form. We have provided professional interpretation training for JCPS bilingual instructors. We have decreased the lead time needed to provide language support for families. We have also established an ever growing library of translated documents, available to every JCPS employee, district-wide. We are increasing awareness of language support services, via written communication, and by partnering with other JCPS departments, schools and local agencies.

At present, we rely on four main sources to provide language support for our students and families. TransACT offers translation in 20 different languages. ESL employs 139 full time Bilingual Associate Instructors, who interpret and translate in 25 different languages. Catholic Charities provides interpretation and translation in 42 different languages. Language Line Solutions offers telephone and video interpretation in 240 different languages.