

INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION
LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

DATE: OCTOBER 13, 2025
FROM : LUZ ROLDAN
TO: ALL SPANISH TRANSLATORS/INTERPRETERS
RE: STYLISTIC RECOMMENDATIONS

In an effort to standardize District translations, the following terms and grammatical conventions are strongly encouraged when performing translation and post editing, including Machine Translation Post Editing (MTPE).

Dates and Numbers

Dates and numbers shall coincide with the North American style to minimize confusion in translations as follows:

- Commas and periods: use comma for thousands, period for decimals.
- Natural vs Ordinal numbers when referring to Grade Levels use Grado 6 versus 6.º grado.
- For dates, use the same formatting as source whether it is spelled out or numerical. When using numbers, use the MM/DD/YYYY or MM/DD/YY formats.
- Table, Excel Sheet Column and Row Headings that have limited space should follow abbreviated English format in Spanish, and if an acronym is used, keep consistent.
- The quantity billion in English should be expressed as mil millones in Spanish.
- No metric system conversion, mirror source format.

Alternatives for False Cognates, Calques and Idiomatic Expressions

1. False cognates: when leveraging automated translation, refrain from leaving false cognates and calques and opt for natural Spanish phrasing and optimal word choice. See examples below.

FALSE COGNATES:

Teacher banked time

Machine Translation (MT): *tiempo **bancado** de maestros*

MT Post Edit (MTPE): tiempo reservado para capacitación de maestros

Allocated funds

MT: *fondos **alocados***

MTPE: fondos asignados

Parents or guardians

MT: *padres o **guardianes***

MTPE: padres o tutores legales

The school serves 400 students

MT: la escuela ***sirve*** a 400 estudiantes

MTPE: la escuela presta servicio a 400 estudiantes

Elementary school

MT: escuela ***elemental***

MTPE: escuela primaria

Seal of Biliteracy

MT: Sello de **Biliteracia**

MTPE: Sello de Alfabetización Bilingüe

CALQUES (LITERAL TRANSLATIONS)

Example: English Language Artes

MT: **Artes de Lenguaje en Inglés**

MTPE: Lengua y Literatura en Inglés

Senior graduation ceremony

MT: ceremonia de graduación de **personas de la tercera edad**

MTPE: ceremonia de graduación de último año de preparatoria

Example: Once in the lunch line, she joined the line and a student from her classes joined her in line.

MT: Una vez **en la línea** del almuerzo, se **unió a la línea** y un estudiante de sus clases se **unió a ella** en la línea.

MTPE: Cuando llegó a la fila del almuerzo se formó y un estudiante se formó detrás de ella.

Example: after school

MT: después **de la escuela**

MTPE: después del horario escolar

Example: ...was able count to 100

MT: **fue capaz de contar**

MTPE: pudo contar

Example: ...copy from the board

MT: copiar de la **Junta**

MTPE: copiar del pizarrón

Example: She is able to tell time **to the hour** and half

MT: Puede **decir la hora** que es en hora o en media hora.

MTPE: Puede indicar la hora en punto o a la media.

Example: An aggressive approach to learning (cognate is context dependent here)

MT: un enfoque **agresivo** en el aprendizaje

MTPE: un enfoque dinámico en el aprendizaje

Example: Award letters (for college scholarships, loans, etc.)

MT: Cartas de **galardones**

MTPE: Cartas de otorgamiento

Example: Learning Mindfulness Techniques

MT: **Aprendiendo** Técnicas de Atención Plena

MTPE: Aprendizaje de Técnicas de Atención Plena

2. Idiomatic expressions

Automated translation is not perceptive of idiomatic expressions, so it is the translator's job to adapt the language in post edit review to reflect a reader friendly and understandable phrasing to improve understanding. This is a vital step in the MTPE process. Below is an example:

Example: Student would benefit from...

MT: ...*se beneficiaría de...*

MT Post Edit: ...*le sería conveniente...OR...le sería de beneficio*

Capitalization

1. For proper nouns, capitalize all major words when spelling out acronyms.

Example: SLD, *Discapacidad Específica de Aprendizaje*

However, when used in context, they need not be capitalized.

Example: El equipo considera que reúne los requisitos para los servicios de educación especial debido a que tiene una discapacidad específica de aprendizaje.

2. In long translations (2+ pages), only translate the acronym the first time it appears and in parenthesis add the English acronym itself and "por sus siglas en inglés", as in the case of the acronyms for offices, meeting groups, programs etc. After the definition, proceed to use the English acronym.

Example: *La Evaluación de los Indicadores Dinámicos de las Habilidades Básicas de Alfabetización (DIBELS, por sus siglas en inglés) se utilizó para evaluar al estudiante....*

La evaluación DIBELS....

For shorter documents, like a flyer or text messages with limited text space, mirror English source.

Example: Join LACES for a Fun Fall Festival!

¡Únase a LACES en un Divertido Festival de Otoño!

3. Capitalize all main words in proper nouns, except prepositions and articles.

Example: Community Advisory Committee

Comité Asesor Comunitario

Los Angeles Unified School District's Board of Education

Junta de Educación del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Los Angeles

4. Capitalize names of programs when the text specifically identifies them as programs

Example: ESY - Extended School Year

Año Escolar Prolongado (ESY, por sus siglas en inglés)

Example: The student is eligible for the Extended School Year.

El estudiante califica para el programa del Año Escolar Prolongado.

Example: The student is eligible for Speech and Language Services.

El estudiante califica para recibir los Servicios de Habla y Lenguaje.

5. Capitalize names of courses and fields of study.

Example: The student took Math, History, Algebra I, and Science.

El estudiante tomó Matemáticas, Inglés, Historia, Álgebra I y Ciencias.

6. Capitalize the major disciplines (branch of knowledge or learning) when the text is referring to them.

Example: *Soy licenciado en Biología.*

Ha estudiado Filosofía.

La Psicología ha sido vital en los últimos tiempos.

When referring to a subject in general, it does not need to be capitalized:

Example (No capitalization)

Me gustan las matemáticas de este curso.

Titles/Names

Please use the following guidelines to localize proper nouns.

1. For school types use: *Primaria, Intermedia, Preparatoria*.
For group levels (primary and secondary): *nivel primario and nivel secundario*.
For post-secondary: *educación postsecundaria*.
For continuation schools: *escuelas de continuación*
For opportunity schools: *escuelas de segunda oportunidad*
For SPAN schools: *escuelas de configuración atípica/escuelas SPAN*

2. When translating the names of schools just add escuela or escuela [type of school] to the name of the school in English as follows.

Example: 59th Street Elementary School

Escuela Primaria 59th Street OR..... Escuela 59th Street Elementary

In some cases, the name of the school includes an adjective as an integral part of the name. In such cases, we suggest the following:

Example: The Accelerated Charter School

Escuela The Accelerated Charter School

3. For LAUSD offices, please translate the office name in the first instance and use the acronym, if given, thereafter. Additionally, please refrain from using the acronym in Spanish for names, for example Ed. Code should not be C.E. (Código de Educación) but instead the entire name: *Código de Educación*.

Example: Division of Adult and Career Education (DACE)

División de Educación para Adultos y Carreras Profesionales (DACE, por sus siglas en inglés)

California Department of Education (CDE)

Departamento de Educación de California (CDE, por sus siglas en inglés)

4. Bibliographic citations, whether in text or in bibliography/references, should remain in English.
Example: Tenth grade students will study the works of John Steinbeck, specifically his novel *Grapes of Wrath*.

Los estudiantes de décimo grado estudiarán las obras de John Steinbeck, específicamente su novela Grapes of Wrath.

Example: During the workshop, parents read a chapter of the book *Beyond the Bake Sale*, by Anne Henderson.

Durante el taller, los padres leyeron un capítulo del libro titulado Beyond the Bake Sale, escrito por Anne Henderson.

5. If the text directs the reader to write, call, physically go to a specific organization, department, agency, etc., whether it is part of the District or not, the name and address should not be translated.

Example: Please send your comments to:
Superintendent of Schools, LAUSD,
333 S. Beaudry Ave, 24th Fl.
Los Angeles CA, 90017

Envíe sus comentarios a:
Superintendent of Schools, LAUSD,
333 S. Beaudry Ave, 24th Fl.
Los Angeles CA, 90017

6. When translating a list of names of non-District organizations, agencies, events etc., they should remain in English, and a translation could be added next to it in brackets. Once the term has been defined, continue using it in English throughout document.

Example: Head Start [programa preescolar estatal]
Blue Cross [proveedor de cuidados médicos]
Medi-Cal [programa estatal de ayuda médica]
Partnership for Los Angeles Schools [alianza para las escuelas en Los Ángeles]

Text in Other Languages

Documents may sometimes include text in other languages that prompt the source language text to be kept for improved reader understanding. In these cases, it is best to keep the source language word/s in italics and provide the translation in brackets, if possible.

Example: “The student was able to read the following CVC words: bat, cat, net and set, but was not able to decode the following nonsense words: yim, pid, vut and lup.”

Translation: El estudiante pudo leer las siguientes palabras CVC en inglés, *bat, cat, net, set* [murciélago, gato, red, conjunto] pero no pudo descifrar las siguientes palabras sin sentido en inglés *yim, pid, vut, y lup*.

Example: The students in the AP Government course will learn the concept *E pluribus unum*.

Translation: Los estudiantes del curso de Gobierno AP aprenderán sobre el concepto *E pluribus unum*.

Inclusive Language

Whenever possible, please use inclusive language in translation. While the gender neutral (*lenguaje igualitario*) practice of replacing “a” or “o” for e as in empleados = empleades is gaining momentum, use other language devices and word choice to achieve language inclusivity.

1. Masculine singular/plural by default for translations unless gender is specified in the document or requested by client.

Example: All parents were asked to talk with an elbow partner.

Se les pidió a todos los padres de familia que hablaran con su compañero a lado.

The teacher Ms. Smith asked the class to write about the weekend.

La Mtra. Smith, le pidió a la clase que escribieran sobre el fin de semana.

2. The formal **usted** is the default form of speech for District communications, as opposed to the *tuteo* form. Please keep that in mind as most District literature and documents are widely distributed and web published. However, whenever documents, flyers, communications are meant for students, we can use the *tuteo* form.

Example: Your comments and ideas are always welcomed.

Siempre se le da la bienvenida a sus comentarios e ideas.

¡Don't forget to submit your college application before the deadline!

¡No olvides entregar tu aplicación para las universidades antes de la fecha de vencimiento!

3. Use “estudiante” whenever possible even in instances when the English word “child” is used.

Example: The child was able to complete the work independently.

El estudiante pudo terminar su trabajo escolar de manera independiente.

Parents are their children's first and lifelong teacher.

Los padres de familia son el primer maestro y de por vida de su estudiante.

4. For neurodivergent people, please use people-first language, even if English does not.

Example: The disabled parent requested an accommodation to participate in the meeting.

El padre de familia con discapacidades solicitó una adaptación para participar en la reunión.

Localized Language and Terms for LAUSD

1. Use the following for our District name:

Los Angeles Unified School District – Distrito Escolar Unificado de Los Ángeles

LAUSD – LAUSD (avoid using it with the article “El LAUSD”)

LA Unified – Distrito Unificado de Los Ángeles, Distrito Unificado de L.A.

The District – El distrito

2. Translation of the word "level", as in "performing at grade level":

Example: "desempeño correspondiente a su grado escolar."

Or when translating phrases such as "she is able to answer basic comprehension questions at the fourth-grade level":

Example: *Pudo contestar preguntas básicas de comprensión al nivel correspondiente al cuarto grado escolar.*

The concept of level also applies to the following terms used to describe student's academic skills.

Performance=**desempeño** (for student/person, when discussing academic skill)

Performance=**presentación** (for student/person, when discussing artistic events)

Performance= **rendimiento** (for machine/technological output capacity)

Functioning = **rendimiento** (for age/grade equivalents)

Achievement= **aprovechamiento** (for student academic results)

Achievement= **logro** (for personal goals met, individual feat)

Other options for the terms above are available on the Glossary and might depend on source language context.

3. The translation of the word "range" presents difficulties because in statistical terms the most precise translation may be "gama", "intervalo", "amplitud" or other similar terms. However, the use of these terms could make the translation confusing to the reader.

Examples: The student is performing in the low average range.

El rendimiento del estudiante se encuentra en el nivel promedio bajo.

or

El estudiante se está desempeñando a nivel promedio bajo.

Juan is functioning within the low average to average range of ability.

Juan se está desempeñando a un nivel que varía entre promedio y promedio bajo en la gama de habilidades.

4. Translation of the words "percentage" and "percentile".
"Percentage" translates as "porcentaje" and "percentile" as "percentil". They are not synonymous.

Example: 50% of the students ranked in the 20th percentile in reading.

Un 50% de los estudiantes alcanzaron el percentil 20 en la prueba de lectura.

5. Translation of the word "refer" and "referral". The now accepted term can be referir and referencia. However, make sure to analyze the sentence to determine whether that is the best term or another can best fit the English meaning.

Example: The student was referred to the Dean's office.

Se refirió al estudiante a la oficina del decano de disciplina.

The parents were given a referral for counseling services.

Se refirió a los padres de familia a los servicios de orientación.

or I

Se le proporcionó una referencia al padre de familia para los servicios de orientación.

However, a different term must be used, such as remitir, in cases where reference is used:

Example: "The student was referred to the College Counselor to talk about obtaining a reference letter."

El estudiante fue remitido a la Oficina del Consejero Universitario para charlar sobre cómo obtener una carta de referencia.

6. The outline structure for documents, laws and other legislative documents such as the Education Code should be translated as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Title - Título | g. Clause- Cláusula |
| b. Chapter-Capítulo | h. Subclause-Subcláusula |
| c. Article-Artículo | i. Paragraph-Párrafo |
| d. Division-Parte | j. Tab-Inciso |
| e. Section-Sección | k. Item-Apartado |
| f. Subsection-Subsección | |

7. When using English typographical symbols and expressions, please adhere to the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| a. n# or no. - núm. | e. & - y |
| b. § - secciones | f. i.e.- es decir |
| c. e.g. -- p. ej | g. @ stays as @ |
| d. et seq. - et seq., y lo siguiente | h. # stays as # |

Term Consistency

To preserve clarity throughout a document, please avoid using interchangeable terms, even if the target language seems repetitive. For instance, opt for the term in bold letters throughout documents.

1.	alumno/a	estudiante
2.	amerindio, indio americano	nativos norteamericanos , pueblos originarios de Norteamérica, indígena americano
3.	asistentes	participantes (when referereng to attendees)
4.	centro escolar	escuela
5.	clima escolar	ambiente escolar
6.	coach	instructor (de maestros)
7.	compromiso	participación (for Engagement)
8.	concilio	Consejo
9.	convenio	pacto (for parent compact)
10.	expedientes	Registros
11.	hijo/a	estudiante
12.	hitos	etapas principales (development), logros (life milestones)
13.	letra de imprenta	letra de molde
14.	negro	Context dependent, afroamericano/afrodescendiente
15.	norma	estándar
16.	normas	estándares
17.	oficial	funcionario (unless referring to law enforcement officer)
18.	orden del día	agenda (unless Order or Business is used in the source language)
19.	profesor	maestro
20.	secundaria	preparatoria (as referenced in -Title/Names # 1)
21.	senior	sénior (when referring to job position titles, Sr. Office Tech)
22.	sitio de Internet	sitio Web
23.	sitio escolar	plantel escolar
24.	tutor	tutor legal

To see more terms, please see [Translations Unit Glossary](#).