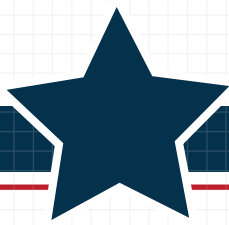


ENTREPRENEUR
GRANDMOTHER
MIGRANT RESEARCHER
IMMIGRANT
FRIEND RESIDENT
WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM
SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER
SISTER RESIDENT WORKER
INVENTOR POLICE OFFICER
COMMUNITY AMERICAN
ENTREPRENEUR
GRANDMOTHER
MIGRANT RESEARCHER NEIGHBOR
FRIEND RESIDENT
WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM
SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER
DREAMER
SISTER RESIDENT WORKER
INVENTOR POLICE OFFICER
AMERICAN
COMMUNITY ATHLETE
ENTREPRENEUR
GRANDMOTHER
MIGRANT RESEARCHER NEIGHBOR
TEACHER MOM
STUDENT
UNDOCUMENTED
VOLUNTEER RES
FRIEND RESIDENT
WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM
SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER
DREAMER
POLICE OFFICER
LEADER WORKER
STUDENT FATHER WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM
INVENTOR ATHLETE SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER
AMERICAN
SISTER RESIDENT WORKER
INVENTOR LEADER POLICE
DOCTOR MOM
DAD
ATHLETE VOLUNTEER
AMERICAN
COMMUNITY
ENTREPRENEUR
GRANDMOTHER
MIGRANT RESEARCHER NEIGHBOR
STUDENT FRIEND ENTREPRENEUR
UNDOCUMENTED INNOVATOR MOM GRANDMOTHER
VOLUNTEER RESTAURANT OWNER MIGRANT RESEARCHER
FRIEND RESIDENT
WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM
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STUDENT FRIEND
UNDOCUMENTED INNOVATOR MOM
VOLUNTEER RESTAURANT OWNER MIGRANT RESEARCHER
TEACHER

A BLUEPRINT FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

EDUCATION



A BLUEPRINT FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

ISSUE AREAS: Education, Access to Services, Parent Engagement, English Language Learners, Language Access

SUMMARY:

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE), the largest public school system in the United States, serves more than 1.1 million students daily in nearly 1,800 schools. Under the leadership of Chancellor Dennis Walcott, New York City schools are managed with a Children First philosophy, based on the core principles of leadership, empowerment and accountability. To support all students and their families, including immigrants and English Language Learners (ELL), the DOE maintains a Division of Family and Community Engagement and an Office of English Language Learners, which both identify challenges, implement programmatic and policy initiatives and provide support to schools across the City in their efforts to improve educational outcomes for all NYC DOE students.

OBJECTIVES:

- + Ensure that immigrant parents have meaningful access to their child's school
- + Provide opportunities for immigrant parents to access and influence decision-making structures in the school system
- + Enhance collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to effectively engage immigrant parents
- + Provide ELL-focused professional development opportunities across the spectrum, from paraprofessionals to content-area expert teachers to school and district leadership
- + Create material resources for schools to use with ELL students
- + Use data to target solutions toward high academic achievement for all ELLs
- + Engage parents of ELLs to make informed choices about their children's education

PART ONE: ENGAGING IMMIGRANT PARENTS IN EDUCATION

BACKGROUND

Abundant research shows that parental engagement in schools is a key factor in the educational success of children.¹ Parents who are involved in their children's education demonstrate to school personnel that parents are important partners who must be included in decisions about their children's education.² They also demonstrate to their children that they see education as important and are better positioned to help promote their cognitive development.³

Owing to a variety of factors, including limited English proficiency, lack of familiarity with the U.S. education system, work schedules, transportation issues and socioeconomic status, immigrant parents may experience difficulty formally participating in their children's education. Parents who do not speak English may not fully understand school policies or be able to express concerns to school personnel. Additionally, some immigrant parents may come from countries where expectations around the role of parents in education are vastly different, and they may not be aware of or comfortable with the type of formal participation that is often expected of parents in the United States. Finally, socioeconomic status can constrain parental involvement because of inflexible work schedules, inability to purchase "extras" to support their children's education and other related challenges.⁴

Schools must strive to learn and implement effective strategies to welcome and engage immigrant parents in their children's education, while recognizing that these parents may have myriad and diverse barriers to engagement. Finding creative ways to engage immigrant parents can improve academic outcomes for their children and promote a more inclusive educational culture for all.

"With more than 150,000 English language learners and 184 languages spoken in our public schools, we are always looking for ways to establish stronger partnerships with families in their native languages. It's about giving families the tools and resources to help prepare their children to be ready for life after high school, in college and careers."

- DENNIS WALCOTT, NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR

NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – DIVISION OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The NYC Department of Education, which serves more than 1.1 million students daily, is dedicated to creating and supporting partnerships between schools, families and the community. As a central resource for family engagement, the Division of Family and Community Engagement strives to involve parents as key partners in helping students succeed and become college and career ready. Through personnel in school buildings, such as Parent Coordinators, or offices, such as the Translation and Interpretation Unit, the Division of Family and Community Engagement works to ensure equal access to the programs and services of the NYC Department of Education and its nearly 1,800 schools for all parents, regardless of immigration status or proficiency in English.

Objectives:

- + Ensure that immigrant parents have meaningful access to their child's school in order to promote engagement
- + Provide opportunities for immigrant parents to access and influence decision-making structures in the school system
- + Enhance collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to effectively engage immigrant parents

MULTILINGUAL WELCOME SIGN

This multilingual welcome sign is placed at the entrance of each New York City public school building to assist limited English proficient parents and facilitate their access to school staff and information.



Welcome

For assistance please contact the Parent Coordinator (PC) or District Family Advocate (DFA) listed below.

لطلب المساعدة، المرجو الاتصال بمنسق شؤون الآباء (PC) أو الوكيل العائلي للمنظمة التعليمية (DFA) المذكور اسمهما أدناه.

সহায়তা পাওয়ার জন্য অনুগ্রহ করে নিচে উল্লিখিত প্যারেন্ট কোঅর্ডিনেটর (PC) অথবা ডিস্ট্রিক্ট ফ্যামিলি অ্যাডভোকেট (DFA) এর সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

如果您需要幫助，請聯絡下面列出的家長專員 (PC) 或者學區家庭權益倡導專員 (DFA)。

Pour toute assistance, veuillez contacter le Coordinateur des Parents (PC) ou le Défenseur des Familles (DFA) listé ci-dessous.

Si w bezwen ed tanpri kontakte Kowòdonatè Paran (PC) oswa Defansè Dwa Fanmi Distri (DFA) nou mete pi ba a.

도움이 필요하시면 아래 안내해 드린 학부모 코디네이터 (PC)나 학군 가족 대변인 (DFA)에게 연락하십시오.

За помощью обращайтесь к указанному ниже координатору по работе с родителями (PC) или окружному инспектору по работе с семьёй (DFA).

Para recibir ayuda, comuníquese con el coordinador de padres (PC) o el representante para las familias del distrito (DFA) cuyos nombres figuran a continuación.

براہ مہربانی مدد کے لیے ذیل میں درج والدین ربط دہندہ (PC) یا ضلعی خاندانی حمایتی نمائندے (DFA) سے رابطہ کریں۔

Parent Coordinator: (PC)

District Family Advocate: (DFA)

PROMOTING MEANINGFUL IMMIGRANT PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

STEP ONE >

ENSURE MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO SCHOOL BUILDINGS, STAFF AND INFORMATION

School systems that effectively engage immigrant parents ensure that parents receive timely information in the language they are most comfortable speaking, have access to their child's school building and school staff and have influence over decision-making processes that impact their child's education.



UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE AND DOCUMENTATION NEEDS OF PARENTS

Parents who are unable to communicate with school personnel in their preferred language may have difficulty acting on information that is critical to their child's academic success. Similarly, parents who are unable to enter their child's school building—because they lack a state-issued photo ID, which many schools require for entry—will have difficulty fully participating in school activities and events for parents, and therefore their child's education. It is critical that schools understand the languages spoken by the parents of their enrolled students as well as their translation, interpretation and documentation needs.

- + **Conduct surveys.** To assess the languages spoken by parents and students in each school, the NYC Department of Education (DOE) asks each family enrolling a child in the school system to fill out a questionnaire known as the Home Language Identification Survey. Originally intended to help identify ELL students, the survey is now also used to ensure that schools are able to communicate with families in the appropriate language. Using this survey, the DOE found that 95 percent of the limited English proficient (LEP) parents with children in New York City public schools speak one of nine languages: Spanish, Chinese, Bengali, Russian, Arabic, Urdu, Korean, French and Haitian Creole; thus, translating public-facing school documents into these languages on the front end improves access to school information for nearly all LEP parents. For the remaining 5 percent of LEP parents, who together speak more than 160 languages, the DOE provides translation and telephonic interpretation through private contracts with outside vendors.
- + **Review available data.** In addition to surveying families, or if conducting a survey is not possible, efforts to communicate with immigrant parents may be aided by a review of existing data (e.g., from the American Community Survey or U.S. Census) to identify the top languages spoken by immigrant communities in a given locality.
- + **Interview experts.** Community-based organizations that serve immigrant communities are a valuable source of information about community needs. The NYC Department of Education reached out to experts and advocates from CBOs to better understand the challenges immigrant and limited English proficient parents encounter in interacting with the school system.

EXCERPT FROM THE NYC DOE HOME LANGUAGE IDENTIFICATION SURVEY

1. In what language would you like to receive written information from the school?

بأي لغة تود استلام المعلومات المكتوبة من المدرسة؟

স্কুল থেকে লিখিত তথ্য আপনি কোন ভাষায় পেতে চান?

您希望從學校收到哪種語言的書面資訊？

Nan ki lang ou ta renmen lekòl la voye enfòmasyon ba w?

어떤 언어로 쓰여진 가정통신문을 학교로부터 받기 원하십니까?

На каком языке Вы предпочитаете получать письменную информацию из школы?

¿En qué idioma desearía recibir la información por escrito que envía la escuela?

آپ اسکول سے کس زبان میں تحریری معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہیں گے؟



EXPAND AND ENHANCE LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT PARENTS

To coordinate and respond to the language access needs of immigrant parents, the NYC Department of Education created a central Translation and Interpretation Unit that oversees all translation and interpretation requests for the City's nearly 1,800 schools. The DOE Translation and Interpretation Unit maintains a robust service that responded to more than 20,000 telephonic interpretation requests in over 160 languages in the 2011-2012 school year, yet the fundamental goals and activities of the Unit are scalable to the needs of other cities and contexts.

- + **Scale programs to suit district size.** Although the NYC DOE is able to respond to translation and interpretation requests for nearly any language because of its size and budget, not all school systems around the country may be in a position to provide this comprehensive service. Such a resource takes time to build, can be costly and is often an afterthought for districts stretched to provide other essential educational services. However, eliminating language barriers to parent engagement can provide a tremendous benefit to students and schools as a whole.
- + **Start small.** One way to start a translation and interpretation program is to designate one or two positions to be responsible for coordinating requests for language assistance, working with external providers such as private translation services or community-based providers and coordinating with bilingual staff to help provide translation or interpretation when available.
- + **Grow gradually and build support.** In order to grow a translation and interpretation program so that it covers as many language needs of immigrant and limited English proficient parents as possible, it is important to:
 - + Get buy-in from school leadership. High-level administrators are in an excellent position to support and advocate for translation and interpretation services.
 - + Analyze the school district's demographics to identify the languages spoken by most students and their parents and then identify what key documents should be translated into those languages.
 - + Prioritize the recruitment of bilingual and multilingual staff members.
 - + Recognize that proactively translating essential documents before a request is made is efficient, saves money and helps more parents access important information in a timely fashion.



ENSURE ACCESS TO SCHOOL BUILDINGS FOR ALL PARENTS, REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS AND DOCUMENTATION

Parents who are uncomfortable or afraid to enter school buildings because of cultural perceptions or due to their immigration status will have greater difficulty actively participating in their children's education, which may negatively impact their children's chances of academic success. Schools must identify and remove all barriers to parent participation and actively seek to engage immigrant parents both in and out of school.

- + **Identify barriers to access.** Undocumented parents may have difficulty entering school buildings because they don't have identification required to allow access, such as a photo ID issued by the federal or state government. Additionally, limited English proficient parents may have difficulty entering the school building or communicating their needs to school staff.
- + **Examine policies around documentation and identification.** Through an agreement with the New York Police Department and the NYC Department of Education, foreign IDs, such as consular IDs and passports, constitute acceptable forms of identification for entering school buildings. Parents without such IDs may use alternative forms of ID and can be escorted from the front office to their child's classroom.
- + **Host events for parents outside school buildings.** Another way to accommodate parents is to hold important school meetings outside of school buildings and in locations immigrant parents are already comfortable using such as community and faith-based organizations serving immigrant populations, community centers or libraries. This allows all parents to attend without having to show identification or go through other potentially intimidating security procedures. Learning more about school opportunities in these safe locations may also help immigrant parents be more comfortable engaging with the school system in the future.

ENTERING THE SCHOOL BUILDING

In New York City, limited English proficient parents have access to "I Speak..." cards, which help them indicate their preferred language to school staff.



PROMOTE ACCESS TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND RESPONSIVENESS TO THE CONCERNS OF IMMIGRANT PARENTS

Schools may have existing mechanisms for reaching parents, disseminating information and improving access to school information and school functions. Rather than creating entirely new roles for staff to inform and serve immigrant parents, providing additional training and professional development to individuals in these positions can help them be more effective and inclusive. Another useful way to enhance the participation of immigrant parents, and to respond to their needs and concerns, is to make sure they are included on governing bodies at the school, community and citywide levels. Studies have shown that when parents who represent the diversity of their communities participate on school governing bodies, teachers gain more cultural competence, which translates into better reading and math scores for their students.⁵



PROVIDE TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FRONT-LINE STAFF ON ENGAGING IMMIGRANT PARENTS

An important first step in ensuring that schools can respond appropriately to the needs of immigrant parents requires identifying staff members who interact and train immigrant parents to specifically engage and respond to their unique concerns.

- + **Identify staff members that interact most with parents.** The NYC DOE Parent Coordinator is a school-level position aimed at engaging families in order to increase parental involvement with the schools. Parent Coordinators ensure that parents know they are valued stakeholders in the school community. Additionally, at every school, school safety agents are often the first staff members to greet parents entering the building, and it is critical that they also understand school policies around engaging immigrant and LEP parents.
- + **Identify the language skills of staff members.** It can be useful to identify the language skills among staff already working within the school system and thus use existing human resources to reach parents. Additionally, schools may work to recruit applicants for teaching positions who have language skills that are in high demand.
- + **Provide ongoing training.** Every year, Parent Coordinators are trained in the DOE's language access procedures so they can best serve limited English proficient parents in the school system. Bilingual and multilingual Parent Coordinators are also encouraged to go through the NYCertified training process (refer to Language Access blueprint), which involves a formal assessment of language abilities as well as training in translation and/or interpretation, to ensure their ability to effectively communicate with parents.
- + **Designate staff to assist with outreach.** Parent Coordinators help schools reach parents with information on various NYC DOE initiatives such as universal pre-Kindergarten and special programs for immigrant parents.
- + **Partner with other agencies and organizations.** Parents are an important audience for numerous agencies and organizations—not just the school system. Inviting external partners to share updates about important initiatives with Parent Coordinators helps simultaneously achieve the objectives of multiple agencies. For example, the NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs conducted trainings for Parent Coordinators to teach them about a school-based citizenship initiative aimed at encouraging more public school parents to become U.S. citizens. For the NYC DOE, helping parents naturalize aligns with its goals of promoting parent engagement and family well-being, which contribute to better outcomes for students.

TRAINING FOR ALL STAFF

In New York City, even school safety agents are trained to know the City's language access policy, and they are provided cards to help them assist limited English proficient parents with free translation or interpretation services.

العربية বাংলা 中文 English Français Kreyòl Ayisyen 한국어 Русский Español اردو

Attention School Safety Agents!

Having difficulties communicating with a limited-English-proficient parent at your school?
Call the DOE's Translation and Interpretation Unit to get an interpreter over the phone.

718-752-7373

Services can only be requested by NYCDOE staff. This number should not be given directly to parents.

NYC Department of Education
Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

العربية বাংলা 中文 English Français Kreyòl Ayisyen 한국어 Русский Español اردو



PROMOTE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL-LEVEL BODIES THAT ENGAGE PARENTS

Beyond the one-on-one work of Parent Coordinators with immigrant parents, schools can also improve parental involvement by making sure that school-related groups, meetings and events for parents are accessible to and productive for all families. This often requires providing translation and interpretation services through the school district or through volunteers.

- + **Promote language access at meetings.** Parent Teacher Organizations or Associations (PTOs or PTAs) are among the most traditional ways for parents to formally participate in their children's education. However, if meetings are only held in English, and if information is only provided in English, limited English proficient parents won't be able to meaningfully participate. Without recognition of these challenges on the part of school staff, immigrant and LEP parents may not feel welcomed, included or able to influence decisions even if they do attend.
- + **Provide translation through volunteers.** Although PTOs can request in-person interpreters for their meetings through the NYC DOE Translation and Interpretation Unit, bilingual or multilingual parents, other local volunteers, or staff from community-based organizations CBOs might also be able to provide further assistance as translators and interpreters.



ENSURE REPRESENTATION OF DIVERSITY IN COMMUNITY-LEVEL AND CITYWIDE EDUCATION BODIES

In order for the experiences and perspectives of immigrant parents to be heard at the highest levels of school administration, they must actively participate on existing councils and bodies that provide access to school officials and set policy, and thus efforts should focus on recruiting them to join such opportunities. For the NYC DOE, parental engagement goes beyond the classroom and school building to include the larger community. Through Community and Citywide Education Councils (CEC), parents have a direct line to the Chancellor of the public schools, a key channel of communication and influence.

- + **Councils engage parents in policy decisions.** Community and Citywide Education Councils are deliberative bodies that help to shape educational policies and priorities in their districts. CEC members are parent volunteers who provide hands-on leadership and support for the public schools in their neighborhoods. Designed for parents to meet directly with the staff from the DOE, these Councils need to have members who are immigrant parents so that their interests and concerns are heard and addressed.
- + **Recruit immigrant parents to decision-making bodies.** Recognizing low participation rates among immigrant parents on the CECs, these groups began tailoring their recruitment efforts to attract recent arrivals to their ranks. Increasing the representation of immigrant parents allowed them to voice their concerns and enabled the DOE to better respond.
- + **Councils facilitate communication with the highest levels of the DOE administration.** Members of the CECs have direct access to the Chancellor of NYC DOE through the Division of Family and Community Engagement (FACE). Liaisons from FACE attend monthly CEC meetings and can relay parents' concerns to the Chancellor.
- + **Make translation available at meetings.** Members of the CEC can also request interpretation and translation for their meetings from the DOE Translation and Interpretation Unit.
- + **Parental involvement on CECs can strengthen communities.** According to a report by Advocates for Children of New York, a legal and advocacy organization that protects children's education rights, immigrant parents can develop key civic leadership skills through participation in school activities that strengthen not just those schools, but entire communities as well. Immigrant parents can develop important skills including exercising their voice, setting agendas, creating policies, making decisions and meeting with government representatives. Such experience can lead to broader political participation.

"In a system of 1.1 million students, it is imperative that we create opportunities for engagement that reflect the diversity and needs of all our families. We want to offer many resources for families of English Language Learners to help support their children's learning."

- JESSE MOJICA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DIVISION OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CREATE AND ENHANCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION WITH OTHER CITY AGENCIES OR INTERNAL OFFICES

- + **Identify overlapping goals and priorities.** If, for example, a particular academic department wants to increase enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, it helps when parents understand the benefits of such courses and can encourage their children to participate. This parental buy-in is easier to obtain with assistance from the office that has the most knowledge and experience engaging parents. Thus, these two departments could collaborate to strategize about how to reach parents, especially immigrant parents, and thus promote AP enrollment.
- + **Share knowledge.** Those within the DOE who have the most expertise in parental involvement should routinely share their training and experience throughout the school district and with other city agencies that hope to increase parent participation in their programs. One way some DOE divisions have taken advantage of the expertise of colleagues is to have the Division of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) review communications to families before sending them out. FACE can help other departments create communications that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and effective.
- + **Collaborate.** In conjunction with the Office of English Language Learners, FACE created a video for immigrant and limited English proficient parents whose children are autistic. The video, which focused on helping these parents recognize the signs of autism and know how to get help for their children, highlighted the experiences of other families, perspectives of therapists and provided information on referrals to other organizations such as Autism Speaks. The video was dubbed into nine languages.



WORK WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND IMMIGRANT PARENT CONCERNS AND RESPOND TO NEEDS

Just as internal partnerships are important to maximize the effectiveness of DOE initiatives, partnerships with outside organizations and agencies that are shaped around shared goals can further extend the DOE's reach and ability to serve immigrant parents.

Examples of NYC DOE community partnerships:

- + **Learning Leaders.** Learning Leaders works with NYC DOE schools to enable parents to support their children's educational experience by increasing their knowledge, skills and confidence. The organization provides workshops to inform parents about the public school system, help them facilitate learning at home, and provide opportunities for them to further their own personal and educational development.

- + **New York Immigration Coalition.** The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) – an advocacy organization that promotes immigrants’ full civic participation, fosters their leadership and provides a unified voice and a vehicle for collective action for New York’s diverse immigrant communities – came together with the NYC DOE to create Family Resource Centers (FRC), a measure aimed at assisting immigrant students and their families and promoting school-based parent engagement. One resource center was opened in each of New York’s five boroughs.
- + **Internationals Network for Public Schools.** INPS runs 17 International High Schools across New York City that serve recently-arrived foreign born students who score in the bottom quartile on English language tests at the time they are admitted to the school system – their students come from more than 100 different countries and speak more than 90 languages, and more than 90 percent receive free or reduced lunch. INPS schools combine expert practitioners and innovative approaches in small schools with integrated language development and academic content while also focusing on building student and family capacity for integrating into American society.



NEW YORK IMMIGRATION COALITION – FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS

The New York Immigration Coalition recently worked with the NYC Department of Education to create Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in five public schools across New York City, a measure aimed at assisting immigrant students and their families and promoting school-based parent engagement. The FRCs provide the following types of services:

- + **Consular IDs and passport services.** Immigrant parents are able to go to the FRCs to obtain these documents. The NYC DOE and the New York Police Department now recognize consular IDs and passports as acceptable forms of identification for entering school buildings.
- + **Parent workshops.** The FRCs offer workshops focused on financial literacy, financial planning for college and college readiness. Staff at the centers can also help facilitate immigrant families’ access to banking services so they can begin to save for their children’s college education.
- + **College guide.** The NYIC created a college guide called “Your Children Can Go to College... Yes They Can!” Developed to help immigrant parents understand the college readiness process and begin to help their children prepare for college, the guide is easy-to-read and accessible to those parents generally unfamiliar with college application procedures in this country.

PART TWO: SUPPORTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS {ELLS}

BACKGROUND

English Language Learners are the fastest-growing segment of the student population in the United States. Over the past decade, the number of ELLs enrolled in public schools increased by more than 50 percent, from 3.5 million in 1998 to more than 5 million in 2011.⁶ The growth of the ELL population is also concentrated in Southeastern states—like Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina and Tennessee—that have only recently become immigrant gateways and may therefore have fewer resources and supports for immigrant communities and English Language Learners.⁷

Due to the challenges of learning a new language as well as the lack of supports, English Language Learners are far more likely to have difficulty meeting national academic standards than their non-ELL peers. In 2009, only 12 percent of ELL students scored “at or above proficient” on the fourth grade mathematics section of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—a nationally representative assessment of what American students know and can do in core subjects—as compared to 42 percent of non-ELL students, and the gap widened for students in the 8th grade. Similarly, fewer than 1 in 10 ELLs met reading standards on the NAEP in 2009.

Despite facing similar challenges, ELLs are not a monolithic group; some are immigrants, whereas others were born in the United States. They represent various socio-economic levels and have varied educational backgrounds. As such, there is no one model that will ensure academic success for all ELLs, and schools must use data-driven analysis to figure out a diversity of programs to match the diversity of ELLs. With ELLs now representing more than 1 in 10 public school students across the country, school systems and educators must find ways to support these students and ensure their success.

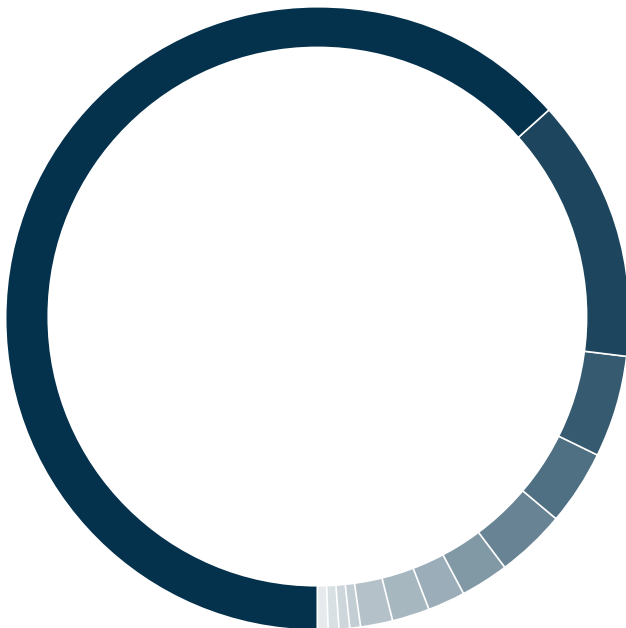
“By targeting supports, providing rigorous core academics, and focusing on academic language development and literacy in the native language and English, schools can unlock the potential shown in the successful outcomes of former ELLs at all levels of schooling. Schools that nurture multi-linguistic skills create academic and cognitive benefits for their students, and make schools richer places to learn, placing them at the heart of stronger, more responsible communities for our youngest new citizens.”

- DIVERSE LEARNERS ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS: THE PERFORMANCE OF NEW YORK CITY'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – OFFICE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS {ELLS}

The diversity of New York City’s student body reflects the City’s status as an immigrant gateway, with approximately 18 percent of students born outside the United States, representing nearly 200 countries or territories.⁸ Over 41 percent of students come from households in which English is not the primary language and nearly 15 percent of students are English Language Learners.

TOP 12 ELL LANGUAGES



- Spanish (63.2%)
- Chinese (13.6%)
- Other (5.2%)*
- Bengali (3.9%)
- Arabic (3.6%)
- Haitian Creole (2.5%)
- Russian (2.1%)
- Urdu (1.9%)
- French (1.5%)
- Punjabi (0.6%)
- Albanian (0.6%)
- Korean (0.5%)
- Uzbek (0.5%)

*151 Languages are represented in this group.

Within the NYC Department of Education, the Office of English Language Learners is dedicated to serving the needs of ELL students and providing equity and access to an excellent education for ELLs, former ELLs, immigrants and their families. The office focuses on creating a rigorous learning environment that is focused on academic achievement, language development and cross-cultural support through professional development, parental involvement and the creation of material resources and targeted solutions for schools.

CHILDREN FIRST REFORMS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS:

In 2003, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and then-Chancellor Joel I. Klein introduced a plan to improve instructional quality and academic rigor for ELL programs, which includes seven directives that encompass aspects of program and curriculum development, staffing and professional development, evaluation administration and outreach.

To ensure that ELLs engage in rigorous academic activities that promote conceptual and linguistic development in all disciplinary areas, a coherent plan for change includes:

1. Improving instruction of English Language Learners by aligning all programs for ELLs with the comprehensive core curriculum in mathematics and literacy
2. Appointing 107 new instructional support specialists to support teachers and drive best practices into classroom with ELLs
3. Creating a new ELL Teacher Academy to provide rigorous professional development for teachers of ELLs
4. Providing coherent, system-wide language allocation guidelines for all programs for ELLs
5. Implementing effective monitoring and assessment for programs for ELLs
6. Holding schools and principals accountable for improvement in the academic achievement of ELLs
7. Improving the communication with parents and families of ELLs through Parent Coordinators at the school

Objectives:

- + Provide ELL-focused professional development opportunities across the spectrum, from paraprofessionals to content-area expert teachers to school and district leadership
- + Create material resources for schools to use with ELL students
- + Use data to target solutions toward high academic achievement for all ELLs
- + Engage parents of ELLs to make informed choices about their children's education

SUPPORTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS {ELLS}

STEP ONE >

CENTRALIZE EFFORTS TO SUPPORT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

While instruction of English Language Learners occurs at the school level, it is important for education department administrators to provide clear policy direction to school leaders, as well as resources to successfully implement programs and promote academic achievement. The NYC Department of Education's Office of English Language Learners supports school leaders in serving ELLs through the articulation and implementation of department-wide policies and initiatives, professional development opportunities, targeted funding for ELL programs, technical assistance and replication of successful solutions and pilot programs.



CREATE A CENTRAL CLEARINGHOUSE OR DESIGNATE AN OFFICE OR INDIVIDUAL TO CHANNEL RESOURCES, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OTHER SUPPORTS TO SCHOOLS AND PARENTS

Creating a central office or clearinghouse at the department level assists in the creation of comprehensive and coherent policies for implementation of ELL programs. School leaders can turn to this central authority for guidance, resources, technical assistance and other supports as they work to design and implement effective programs serving ELLs.

- + **Provide resources and technical assistance to schools.** A central office or staff member who oversees efforts to support ELL students should be charged with serving as an internal clearinghouse for information and expertise in working with ELL students, and should identify and develop resources and tools that school staff can use to effectively engage their students. Technical assistance should be provided on a regular and recurring basis, through training and information dissemination, as well as at the request of school staff and administrators.
- + **Coordinate professional development.** To ensure the quality and uniformity of policy and program implementation, and to promote effective strategies across the school system, the central office or clearinghouse should coordinate regular professional development for staff at all levels, from secretaries to teachers to department leadership, highlighting policies and practices that should be implemented to support ELL students.
- + **Collect and analyze data to identify and support the replication of best practices.** A central office or clearinghouse should also be responsible for collecting and analyzing system-wide data to identify successful practices at the school level that can be shared and replicated across the entire school system.
- + **Communicate directly with parents on behalf of school system.** To ensure responsiveness to the concerns and needs of parents and establish uniform policy across the school system, the central office or clearinghouse should maintain an open and direct line of communication with parents of ELL students. The clearinghouse or office should also develop resources and materials to proactively inform parents of their rights and responsibilities with respect to engaging with the school system.

BUILD ELL SUPPORTS AND EXPERTISE ACROSS DEPARTMENTS AND INTO ALL LEVELS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

ELLs do not interact only with English as a Second Language (ESL)/Bilingual Education teachers but with the entire school community, including administrators, paraprofessionals and other school staff. An effective school's organization and structure will ensure that all staff are trained to support ELL students and will create opportunities for collaboration and planning among teachers, school leadership and all stakeholders.



INTEGRATE SUPPORT FOR ELLS INTO SCHOOL CULTURE AND VISION

- + **Develop an inclusive school culture.** School leadership should have a clear school vision that includes high expectations for ELL student achievement supported by a purposeful plan of action leading to post-secondary options, including college. Schools should cultivate a culture of respect for diversity and an appreciation of all home languages and provide opportunities for teachers to learn about the cultural backgrounds of their students.
- + **Establish school-wide practices.** Schools should establish common practices focused on ELLs and should structure instructional program and course offerings to meet the specific needs of students.



SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT ALL LEVELS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

The responsibility of creating an inclusive and academically rigorous environment for ELLs requires all school staff to be invested, involved and trained to work with and support ELLs.

- + **Include leadership.** Principals are a key part of ELL-focused professional development offerings, as they set the agenda for their school and are a key support for ELL teachers. Effective schools have leaders who have developed strong background knowledge in the education of ELLs.
- + **Use multiple types of engagement.** Professional development should occur in a variety of ways—through conferences, workshops, webinars and other types of engagement—and should be available at all levels, including paraprofessionals, Parent Coordinators and school secretaries.
- + **Incorporate data.** The NYC Office of ELLs targets professional development opportunities using data, for example, by working with elementary schools offering ELL programs whose students are not testing out of ELL programs when they reach the middle school level.



FOSTER DEVELOPMENT OF ESL/BILINGUAL EXPERTISE ACROSS CONTENT AREAS

ELLs are expected to meet Federal, State and Local proficiency standards in content areas such as English Language Arts and Mathematics. With limited time to prepare students both for English language and content-area proficiency, it is crucial that teachers of ELLs be experts in both content area and ELL instruction.

- + **Recruit experts.** Engage in purposeful hiring of strong ELL specialists (bilingual and ESL) and subject-matter teachers (with backgrounds in bilingual education, literacy and/or ESL).
- + **Create professional development/certification programs for content-area experts.** In New York State, there is a current shortage of certified bilingual and ESL teachers. The New York State Education Department Office of Bilingual Education created the Intensive Teacher Institute in Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language program to train general education teachers already working in New York State public schools to work with ELLs. This fifteen-credit program, funded by the state, facilitates the certification process in bilingual education or English as a second language. New York City's Department of Education actively recruits content-area experts to receive their bilingual or ESL extension through this program, with an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) content experts.



PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION AMONG TEACHING STAFF

Teachers support and learn from each other in a way that recognizes the interdependency of language proficiency and content instruction. Schools should schedule time and programming so that reading, ESL and content-area teachers plan and deliver lessons in collaboration.

"We at the Office of English Language Learners (OELL) are very proud of the many accomplishments ELLs throughout the five boroughs made during the 2012-2013 school year.

It is important that ELLs have role models to identify with, and after whom they can model their own successes. To celebrate the achievements of recent ELL graduates and to motivate other ELLs, we have chosen to recognize a few Star ELL Grads, all of whom have met and surpassed the very high expectations they set for themselves.

To honor these graduates, and to motivate current ELLs, we have created posters, which will be mailed to high schools during the upcoming weeks. We are asking that principals display these posters, whether in the hallway, guidance office, or college/career center. Not only do the posters share the stories of a few truly amazing graduates, but they also provide valuable information for current and former ELL students and their parents."

DREAM, BELIEVE, SUCCEED!
Meet the Office of English Language Learners' Star Graduates

		
<p>Zhi Cong Ou William E. Grady Career and Technical Education High School Nominated by Tarah Frosini-Montalbano, Assistant Principal</p>	<p>Johanna Zumba Ralph R. McKee Career and Technical Education High School Nominated by Jennifer Miller, Guidance Counselor</p>	<p>Anthony Mftidi Academy for College Preparation and Career Exploration Nominated by Roberta Chacon, ESL Teacher</p>

NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

English Language Learners are not a monolithic group. First and foremost, each ELL is at a different level of English proficiency. ELLs come from different cultural, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. Some may have extensive content-area knowledge, while others may be Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). With such diversity, there is not a “one-size-fits-all” program that will provide academic excellence and rigor for all ELLs.



MONITOR ELL STUDENT PROGRESS

Only through continuous and rigorous data collection and monitoring will schools be able to identify and address challenges for students with diverse backgrounds and needs.

- + **Conduct surveys.** The Office of ELLs collects a wide range of data using a Bilingual Education Student Information Survey (BESIS) and other tools.
- + **Continuously monitor ELL student progress.** Look at student work, formal and informal assessments, test results and other indicators on a continuous basis.
- + **Look at data according to subgroups.** With a diversity of subgroups within the ELL population, it is crucial that data collected must be disaggregated based on these subgroups: Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), long-term ELLs, students with disabilities, newcomer students, etc. It’s important to understand how different types of ELL students are progressing or falling behind, and monitoring these subgroups can help pinpoint specific challenges that need to be addressed.



USE DATA TO INFORM DECISION MAKING ON ELL PROGRAMS

Data collection and analysis is important to understand which ELL programs are working and for which subgroups of ELLs such programs are successful. This should inform decision making on what programs to offer, where such programs should be located and what language or other subgroups of ELLs they should focus on.

- + **Assess programs offered to ELLs.** The NYC Office collects data on the wide variety of ELL pilot programs offered throughout the Department, monitoring results and putting information on the Office’s website so that school leadership can make program decisions for their schools.
- + **Systematically adjust instructional planning based on a wide variety of evidence and data.** Adapt structure and systems to the specific needs of changing ELL populations and monitor effectiveness of varying strategies to support ELL students.



PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT SYSTEMWIDE

While it is crucial to engage parents of all students, it is especially important to target engagement to parents of ELLs, who may be limited English proficient themselves and may have doubts and misconceptions about ELL education. For example, some parents feel that ELL programs are a pathway to special education and their students will not receive a rigorous academic education in such programs, which should not be the case.

- + **Build ELL parent engagement into enrollment.** The NYC Department of Education created a “Know Your Rights” video for ELL parents that they view during the registration and enrollment process at their child’s school. This ensures that all parents are informed of the resources and supports available to them and their children at the start of the engagement with the school system.
- + **Create recurring opportunities to directly engage ELL parents.** Every semester, the NYC Office of ELLs holds a parent meeting in each borough to bring the Department to parents, covering topics such as “know-your-rights” trainings, the Common Core and other offices within the DOE that ELL parents are interested in, such as Enrollment. The Office also holds an annual daylong parent conference for all immigrant parents in the NYC public school system, including information on pathways to college, academic policies, literacy promotion and breakout sessions coordinated with advocacy groups and community-based organizations.

TAILORED PROGRAMS AND CHOICES FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

English Language Learners are not a monolithic group. First and foremost, each ELL is at a different level of English proficiency. ELLs come from different cultural, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. Some may have extensive content-area knowledge, while others may be Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). With such diversity, there is not a “one-size-fits-all” program that will provide academic excellence and rigor for all ELLs. Parents should be offered a choice between rigorous, successful programs, and the information needed to make that choice.

Here is a description of the three ELL program choices:

Transitional Bilingual Education

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs include all subject matter instruction in the students’ native language and English, as well as intensive instruction in English as a Second Language. As the student develops English proficiency using the strengthened knowledge and academic skills acquired in the native language, instruction in English increases and native language instruction decreases.

Dual Language Education

Dual Language (DL) programs provide a certain amount of time of instruction in English and a certain amount of time of instruction in the native language (e.g. Spanish, Chinese, Haitian Creole) as determined by the program model. Students of the native language are taught alongside English-speaking students so that all students become bicultural and fluent in both languages.

Freestanding English as a Second Language

Freestanding English as a Second Language (ESL) programs provide all language arts and subject matter instruction in English through the use of specific instructional strategies with supports in the native language.



IMPLEMENT SCHOOL-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

Schools should place high value parent and community involvement and take active steps to ensure that both are a part of the school's culture.

- + **Maintain regular communication.** Establish strong communication structures for parents (e.g., advisory teacher liaisons with parents, regular and sometimes daily communications, translations and interpretation services).
- + **Align parent engagement activities to school priorities and parent interests.** Have parental engagement activities aligned to school priorities and parent interests/needs (e.g., ESL, literacy, and technology classes, heritage recognitions, parents read in native language to children in the classroom, Family Math events).
- + **Collaborate with community based organizations.** Support strong collaborations with community-based organizations to extend learning and support to the whole child and family.

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CITIES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION aims to support the expansion of programs and policies that facilitate the economic, civic and cultural integration of immigrants across the United States. The NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) has provided and will continue to provide technical assistance and guidance to other municipalities in their efforts to support immigrant communities and encourages local governments to network and share best practices in this important field.

Blueprints for Immigrant Integration, as well as additional tools and resources, are available on nyc.gov/integration and will continue to grow over the coming months. Please feel free to write us and share feedback by contacting integration@cityhall.nyc.gov.

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Community Development



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