Special Topics in English Learner Programming Monthly Webinar

English Learner Family Engagement Practices

July 11, 2019
Anika Harris
Welcome to OSSE’s Special Topics in English Learner Programming Webinar for July 2019!

English Learner Family Engagement Practices

Anika Harris, professional development specialist
Objectives

This monthly webinar series will cover a wide array of topics pertaining to English learners (ELs), English language acquisition, and EL program administrative and instructional activities.

Federal education policy provides that family engagement be an activity that is meaningful and culturally respectful and fosters students’ learning and development\(^1\). LEAs with successful EL family engagement initiatives focus on building the capacity of families and staff to create home-to-school partnerships that support students in a systemic manner.
Objectives

This month’s webinar provides an opportunity to reflect upon past experiences engaging the families of ELs and plan for EL family engagement in the upcoming school year. During this webinar, participants will:

• Examine and identify weaknesses in their current EL family engagement practices;

• Learn family engagement practices designed for families of ELs; and

• Plan a continuous EL family engagement program that leads to improved EL academic achievement.
Reflection on Current Practices
A well-founded relationship between a family and a school is:

- A key component of student success (Weiss, López, & Rosenberg, 2011).
- Based on understanding and respecting how families support their EL student’s learning (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013).
- Created when families have a voice in establishing the school’s vision for family engagement (Caspe, Lopez, Chu, & Weiss, 2011).
Is your LEA’s EL family engagement program aligned with the statements below?

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Communication is at the heart of family engagement.

Communication is made up of four domains:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

Multiple domains are used for the purposes of engaging families.

In a linguistically diverse city like DC, communicating with all families at your LEA requires intentional proactive planning.
ELs in DC speak 89 different languages, with the most commonly spoken being:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Language</th>
<th>% of ELs who speak it</th>
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<td>Spanish</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>French</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
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Data Source: 2017-18 LEP Enrolled EdFacts report, based on 2017-18 Enrollment Audit
Choose the Scenario that Reflects a Welcoming Environment for Families of ELs

A. LEA XYZ has a process to identify limited English proficient (LEP) parents. The process revealed that families will need support in Spanish, Amharic, and French. The LEA has developed processes to provide language support in those three languages to ensure families have the same access to information as native English-speaking families.

B. LEA XYZ has a process to identify LEP parents. The process revealed that families will need support in Spanish, Amharic, and French. The LEA has not developed processes to provide language support in Amharic or French, so it offers support to families who communicate in Spanish only.
The school provides information about programs, services, and/or activities in a language parents understand as much as possible.

How does your LEA gather information about families’ language support needs?

Who is that information shared with?

What does your LEA do with that information?
Appropriate and competent translators or interpreters *must/should* have proficiency in target languages; ease of written and oral expression; knowledge of specialized terms or concepts; as well as be trained on their role, the ethics of interpreting and translating, and the need for confidentiality.

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School Readiness Reflection Tool Area 15.2

The school has procedures and systems in place to provide interpreters for parents if needed and/or requested.

What does language support look like at your LEA?

When is written support (translation) needed? Spoken support (interpretation)?

Who provides the support? What is their level of language proficiency in the communication domain being supported?

Does your LEA have the budget to sustain the requisite level of language support for the entire school year?
True or False?

State Education Agencies (SEAs) and LEAs have an obligation to communicate meaningfully with LEP parents and to notify LEP parents adequately of information about any program, service, or activity called to the attention of non-LEP parents.
School Readiness Reflection Tool Area 15.3

_The school conducts outreach to engage parents of ELs in regular school functions and meetings._

How does your LEA ensure it reaches out to parents of ELs?

What school functions and meetings are parents of ELs invited to participate in?

How well are parents of ELs attending these school functions and meetings?
School Readiness Reflection Tool Area 15.4

The school provides training opportunities to parents to increase their participation in their children’s education.

What opportunities does your LEA offer?

Is there an opportunity to increase parents’ participation in their children’s English language development?

How well attended are the opportunities?
School Readiness Reflection Tool Area 15.5

*The school keeps records of all parental involvement activities.*

When does your LEA evaluate these activities?

How does your LEA evaluate these activities?
EL Family Engagement: Planning Ahead
Is your LEA’s EL family engagement program aligned with the statements below?

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What school-related information do parents need to participate in their child’s education?

Examples of School-related Information

- School choice
- The EL program
- Report cards
- Special education services
- Registration and enrollment
- Gifted and talented/Advanced Placement/IB programs
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Notices of nondiscrimination
- Grievance procedures
- Permission slips
- Extracurricular activities
- Parent handbooks

Source: https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap10.pdf
The LEA may:

• Determine if staff are trained and qualified to provide effective language assistance
• Obtain qualified interpreters and translators if staff is unqualified
• Obtain qualified interpreters and translators to minimize the impact to bilingual staff regular duties
• Use a language phone line to provide real-time telephonic interpreting
The Language Access Act, as amended in 2014, identifies those entities that are covered by the act and their responsibilities to provide language access.

Please consult with your lead administrator to determine if your LEA is a covered entity.

The Language Access Program of the DC Office of Human Rights assists members of the public and DC government employees. [https://ohr.dc.gov/service/language-access-program-information-portal](https://ohr.dc.gov/service/language-access-program-information-portal).
Qualified and trained staff are interpreters and translators, including staff acting in this capacity who:

- Are proficient in the target languages
- Have knowledge of specialized terms or concepts in both languages
- Are trained in the:
  - Role of an interpreter
  - Ethics of interpreting and translating
  - Need to maintain confidentiality

The LEA may not assign students, siblings, friends, or untrained staff to be translators or interpreters, even if they are bilingual.
Is your LEA’s EL family engagement program aligned with the statements below?

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This mandate can be achieved by creating a welcoming environment that welcomes families of different cultures.

What are some characteristics of this type of environment?

When ELs and families “see themselves.”

- Flags
- Photos
- Books and Lessons
- Staff “faces”
- School Activities
The Title I mandate can also be achieved by making a personal connection with families.

How can LEAs make this connection with families of ELs?

- Face to face
- Personalized email
- Personalized call
- Repeated efforts
- Use language support if needed
- Keep interactions positive
- Find common ground
A welcoming environment and a personal connection are two ingredients that make it easier to conduct outreach to engage parents of ELs in regular school functions and meetings.

Another ingredient is spreading the message about the function or meeting.

- Multilingual fliers
- Strategic placement of announcements
- Strategic timing of announcements
- Designating a point of contact for more information
- Responding to barriers
- Strategic timing of the event
- Providing language support for the event
### School Readiness Reflection Tool

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[Delivering Education Services to English Learners, p. 8](https://osse.dc.gov/node/1277996)
Two-way communication streams allow for effective, respectful, and responsive information-sharing.

**One-way communication:** Teacher holds parent-teacher meeting. Teacher explains the classroom rules and consequences. Teacher asks parent, “Any questions?”

**Two-way communication:** Teacher holds parent-teacher meeting. Teacher sets up conversation about classroom behavior expectations by asking parent what he/she thinks good behavior looks like in the classroom and what expectations parent has for their child. Then teacher offers rules and consequences. Finally, teacher and parent co-plan how child will mind the rules including what support and reinforcement the parent can offer at home.
Parent Training

Consider the needs of families who may not understand the US education system.

Parent training can include workshops on:

• Using school websites to check their child’s progress
• How to get the most out of parent-teacher conferences
• Standardized testing
• Special education services
• Scholarships and the college application process.

What other workshop ideas do you have?
Parent Training

Consider workshops to help parents support their child’s academic and English language development.

Parent training can include workshops on:

- Computer literacy to help parents help their child with assignments that require the use of computers
- Supporting reading even if the family is not literate or has low literacy skills
- Helping their child prepare for a presentation, i.e., science fair project
- Using the home language to support English language development
- Building numeracy skills outside the classroom.

What other workshop ideas do you have?
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Delivering Education Services to English Learners, p. 8 (https://osse.dc.gov/node/1277996)
A sustainable and continuous EL family engagement program requires thoughtful planning. One aspect to be planned is record-keeping.

Create a plan for tracking the following for each engagement opportunity:

- Who conducted outreach?
- When outreach was conducted?
- Which outreach methods were used?
- What language support was offered?
- What time/day the opportunity took place?
- How many EL parents were in attendance?
Record-keeping allows your LEA to conduct meaningful reflection around your EL family engagement practices.

Reflection may reveal

- Which outreach methods work
- Scheduling the families favor
- Locations the families prefer
- Gaps in language support
- Which engagement methods work
- Which activities/ideas families are applying
Use the School Readiness Reflection Tool as a planning document.

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DIVISION OF TEACHING & LEARNING
Professional Development Training Opportunities
The Division of Teaching and Learning’s (TAL) Professional Development Team works to deliver responsive systems of professional learning and high-quality technical support to District LEAs and schools. The team supports a wide range of topics and interventions through professional development, direct LEA/school-based support, the facilitation of communities of practice, and through city-wide convenings.
<table>
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<th>I have a question about...</th>
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<tr>
<td>Training and Technical Assistance Manager</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jenye.Fletcher@dc.gov">Jenye.Fletcher@dc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Acquisition Standards and Instruction</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jennifer.Norton@dc.gov">Jennifer.Norton@dc.gov</a> <a href="mailto:Anika.Harris@dc.gov">Anika.Harris@dc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilingual Education</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Santiago.Sanchez@dc.gov">Santiago.Sanchez@dc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy and English Language Arts Standards and Instruction</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Ashleigh.Tillman@dc.gov">Ashleigh.Tillman@dc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM Integration and Early STEM Education</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Lauren.Allen@dc.gov">Lauren.Allen@dc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Education (Secondary Transition, Inclusion, IEP Quality)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jennifer.Carpenter@dc.gov">Jennifer.Carpenter@dc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 504, Response to Intervention, Child Find, Student Support Teams</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Angela.Awonaike@dc.gov">Angela.Awonaike@dc.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support, School Climate, Restorative Justice</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jessica.Dulay@dc.gov">Jessica.Dulay@dc.gov</a> <a href="mailto:Nakanya.Magby@dc.gov">Nakanya.Magby@dc.gov</a> <a href="mailto:Kristian.Lenderman@dc.gov">Kristian.Lenderman@dc.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>School Turnaround and School Improvement</td>
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All professional development training opportunities, including registration links, are announced one to two months ahead of time in OSSE’s weekly newsletter, the [LEA Look Forward](osse.dc.gov/events) and on the [OSSE Events Calendar](osse.dc.gov/events).
Weekly newsletter containing important information and announcements:

- Start of school updates
- Updates to relevant laws and policies
- Grant opportunities
- Reminders of key dates & deadlines
- Professional development opportunities

Subscribe to receive the weekly newsletter in your inbox each Wednesday by sending a request to OSSE.Communications@dc.gov.

View recent versions on OSSE home page under “Newsletters” www.osse.dc.gov or www.osse.dc.gov/newsroom/newsletters
The updated publication *Delivering Education Services to English Learners: Policies and Procedures for Administrators, Instructional Leaders, and Teachers in the District of Columbia* is now available for download.

The School Readiness Reflection Tool is found in Appendix E of OSSE’s publication *Delivering Education Services to English Learners*.

OSSE’s EL website is [www.osse.dc.org/page/english-learners-els](http://www.osse.dc.org/page/english-learners-els).

On-site technical assistance and EL program support is available! Contact Anika.Harris@dc.gov or Jennifer.Norton@dc.gov.
OSSE hosts a monthly Special Topics in English Learner Programming webinar broadcast on the second Thursday of every month. The next webinar will take place **Thursday, Aug. 8, 2019**. Register here: [https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3932149749356688651](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3932149749356688651).

Pearson will facilitate its Foundational SIOP Training on **Monday – Wednesday, Aug. 5-7, 2019**. K-12 teachers will gain practical skills to collaborate, share, and implement lesson plans that incorporate all eight components and 30 features of SIOP in order to teach content while developing students’ academic and social language. Register here: [https://osse.dc.gov/event/foundational-siop-training-improve-academic-outcomes-english-learners](https://osse.dc.gov/event/foundational-siop-training-improve-academic-outcomes-english-learners).

Save the Date! Authors Persida and William Himmele present The Language-Rich Classroom on **Friday, Sept. 13, 2019**. Based on their book of the same name, the workshop provides K-12 teachers their five-part research-based framework to help ELs attain greater language skills and deeper content comprehension.
OSSE EL Contacts

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Jennifer.Norton@dc.gov

Professional Development and On-Site EL Program Support
Anika Harris
Professional Development Specialist, English Language Acquisition (K-12)
Division of Teaching and Learning Anika.Harris@dc.gov
Thank you!