

SECTION 9

PARENT/GUARDIAN STUDENT NOTIFICATION AND RIGHTS



SECTION 9

PARENT/GUARDIAN STUDENT NOTIFICATION AND RIGHTS

Home-School Communication

From the time a student registers, Broward County Public Schools makes every effort to inform and orient parents to the System through the use of materials translated into the district's three predominant languages: Haitian-Creole, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Bilingual social workers, ESOL Instructional Facilitators, bilingual school psychologists, and district trained language assessors provide support services to students and parents. Schools can also request the assistance of interpreters and translators from the Multicultural, ESOL and Program Services Department (see Appendix S).

Interpreters assist at parent conferences, ESE staffings, ELL Committee meetings, and other pertinent meetings where heritage language assistance might be needed.

The Multicultural, ESOL and Program Services Department offers training for interpreters and users of interpreter services to work together effectively in serving ELLs and their families.

The Multicultural, ESOL and Program Services Department employs full-time translators who translate district forms and documents that are sent home in the district three most predominately spoken languages: Haitian-Creole, Portuguese, and Spanish. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Code of Student Conduct Books
- Registration Packets
- Elementary Report Cards and Inserts
- Elementary Interim Reports
- Parent Conference Forms
- Alternative Education Forms
- Title I Forms
- Early Childhood Packets
- Pre-K Brochures
- Health Forms
- Summer School Packets
- Privacy Act Form
- ESE Forms
- Early Intervention Forms
- Individual Translations Requested by Schools
- Magnet Program Forms and Brochures
- Gifted / Advanced Academics Brochure
- Gifted Forms

Parents of ELLs should receive information from schools via translated mailings, phone calls in their native language, and school meetings using translators. Schools with a high population of ELLs should translate their newsletters so that parents can be informed of the current school events.

Use of a Language Other than English

Students who speak a language other than English may not be subjected to disciplinary action because of the use of their heritage language. Schools must assure students and parents that no disciplinary action will be taken for the use of a language other than English.

ELL Parent Involvement

The Parent Outreach Office

The Parent Outreach Office serves as a liaison between the Multicultural, ESOL and Program Services Department and the parents, students, schools, district departments and community. District staff, parents, and community agencies can contact this department to receive valuable information on district and community programs and services for ELLs and families. This office is also responsible for disseminating information to parents and the community about NCLB, AYP, Parent Choice, and SES.

The Parent Outreach Office also coordinates workshops for bilingual parents that provide orientation to the school district, information on assessments, tools for parents to assist their students at home, and information on high school and post secondary options.

Staff members who speak Spanish, Haitian-Creole, and Portuguese can assist those who are ELLs.

Parent Leadership Council

The establishment of a district Parent Leadership Council is a mandate of the Consent Decree. In Broward County, the Parent Leadership Council is known as the **ESOL Leadership Council** as created by Board Policy 1.23, adopted 11/13/01.

The ESOL Leadership Council must be composed primary parents of ELLs and have members representing multi-ethnic backgrounds. Representatives to the council consist of ELLs, parents, principals, teachers, and community representatives with support from the Multicultural, ESOL and Program Services staff. The council meets on a monthly basis from September to May. Invitation flyers translated in Spanish, Haitian-Creole, and Portuguese are sent to all schools for dissemination to all ELLs. In conformity with the Sunshine Law, notices of meetings are also publicized in local newspapers.

In addition, The *ESOL Leadership Council* serves as a member on the Area Advisory Councils as well as on the District Advisory Council. It also meets with the District Superintendent and has standing on every School Board Agenda to provide official reports to the School Board. The District Superintendent has also provided for representation of parents of ELLs on Superintendent Committees and Task Forces.

The *ESOL Leadership Council* is the vehicle for the representation of parents of ELLs. Within the Consent Decree, the ESOL Leadership Council's specific duties are to:

- promote educational programming and academic achievement of ELLs
- participate in leadership training and orientation offered by the District Multicultural, ESOL and Program Services Department to address ESOL Program monitoring issues, parent involvement procedures, and opportunities to be represented on existing school and district advisory committees
- collaborate with the school system in the development of policies, curriculum, programs, budget, and legislation
- provide input on the ELL District Plan before it is submitted to the State for approval

The **ESOL Leadership Council** promotes parent representation at its regular monthly meetings and the formation of ESOL parent groups at every school by encouraging them to submit ELL parent candidates to the Parent Outreach Specialist of the Multicultural, ESOL and Program Services Department for leadership training. The ESOL Leadership Council, in collaboration with the Multicultural, ESOL and Program Services Department, also accomplishes the following:

- serves as liaison support to parents, schools, and community by promoting receptivity, acceptance, and awareness of multicultural issues;
- informs parents of their rights and responsibilities to assure and encourage active participation in their child's education;
- collaborates with the school district in the development of policies, curriculum, programs, budget, and legislation;
- serves as a forum for concerns and issues, with direct input to the Superintendent and School Board, through permanent standing on their agenda;
- provides awareness of the Broward County School Board's perception of parental involvement and the many facets thereof; and
- secures transition and permanent participation in all regular school groups, especially on School Advisory Councils, PTAs, PTOs and School Advisory Forums.

Q & A Section 9: Parent/Guardian Student Notification and Rights

Q: Are there any organizations that the parents of ELLs can participate in to become more involved and proactive in ESOL education in Broward County?

A: Yes. The ESOL Leadership Council was created by Broward Policy 1.23 and adopted on 11/13/2001. This council is composed primarily of parents of ELLs and has members representing multicultural backgrounds. The ESOL Leadership Council is the vehicle for the representation of parents of ELLs and has regular monthly meetings.

Q: Where can parents of ELLs go to seek information on district and community programs and services for ELLs and their families?

A: The Parent Outreach Office serves as a liaison between the Multicultural, ESOL and Program Services Department and the parents, students, schools, district departments and the community.