



Quick Reference Guide: State Level Effective Family Engagement

Promoting Effective Family Engagement in Multiple Languages

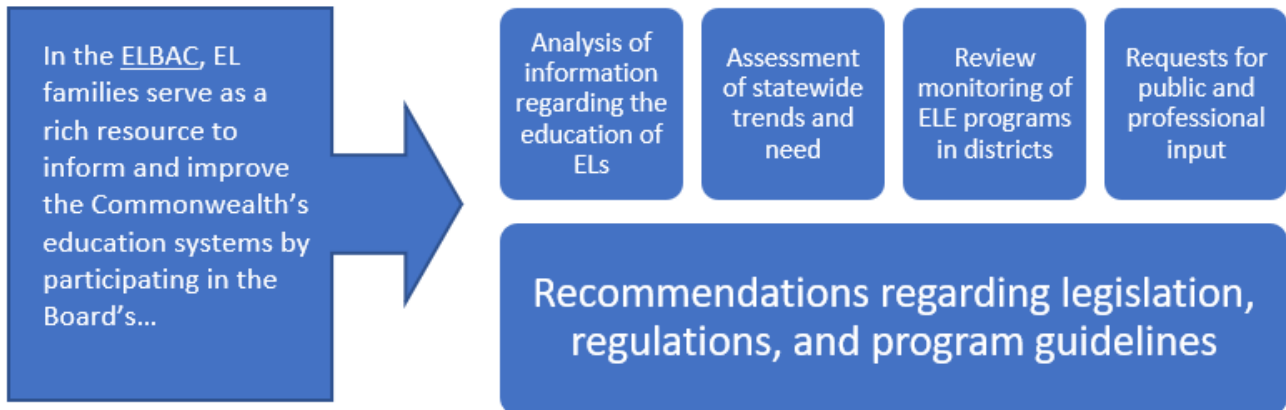


The Department provides resources for districts and families in multiple languages with the goal of effectively engaging families of ELs to make informed decisions about their children’s education and contribute to the success of their schools.

Collaborative partnerships among schools, families, and community organizations are crucial to student engagement and success. State education agencies can better integrate the needs of ELs and their families across the entire state agency. Therefore, the Department takes important steps to promote effective [family engagement](#), such as by having families of ELs participate in the state’s [English Learner/Bilingual Education Advisory Council](#) (ELBAC) and other available [councils](#). To further support districts and families, the Department provides [resources in multiple languages](#) with the goals of

effectively engaging families of ELs in making informed decisions about their children’s education and contributing to the success of their program and schools. These resources support communications in the most spoken languages in Massachusetts related to the different stages of initial identification, assessment and placement in an ELE program.

- Watch some of our EL families discussing the importance of the schooling experience in the short video [Fulfilling Our Promise: Snapshots of English Learners and their Families](#)



Resources to Honor Students’ Cultures and Languages in the Learning Environment

The Department identifies resources and strategies districts can use to include and honor students’ cultures in the curriculum and learning environment.

Local households in diverse communities across the state bring a wealth of linguistic, cultural, and experiential assets to our schools. Seeing language and culture as valuable resources and incorporating these assets into teaching and learning helps to provide a rich curriculum and a positive, affirming school environment for ELs and all students. This approach also serves to challenge biases, develop ELs’ independence, and encourage agency in learning. When students see their linguistic and cultural identities nurtured, they feel respected as members and contributors to their learning environment. The Department models best practices by honoring students’ languages and cultures, and disseminating resources and strategies that districts can use in the curriculum and learning environment. For example:

- Provide guidance and data on Bilingual program models, native language resources and supports, and the Seal for Bilingual Literacy
- The [Collaboration Tool](#) prompts all educators of ELs to collaborate and share insights, knowledge, and expertise about students’ linguistic, cultural, and academic backgrounds as they consider next moves in planning instruction.
- Licensure courses such as the SEI Endorsement, SEI Six Standards Coaching courses, and ongoing professional learning courses developed by the Department, such as *Expeditions in Collaborative Practice: The Collaboration*

Tool and Multilingual Learners introduce educators to strategies for addressing the languages and cultures of students right in their classrooms, collaboration strategies and sustained coherence in programs.

- The [Next Generation ESL MCU Project](#) provides tools, templates, and implementation strategies developed by the Department and a field-based working group of content and language educators and leaders. The project provides curricular templates that support educators to consider sociocultural dimensions, language development, and academic background as part of the teaching and learning cycle.

Guidance, Training, and Oversight for Local Support of Family Engagement

The Department provides guidance, training, and oversight to districts in order to build their capacity to work with families of ELs to support their children’s learning (e.g., guidance on the establishment of an [English Learner Parent Advisory Council](#), best practices including research-based family engagement and dual capacity buildings).

Research has shown that when families are engaged in their children’s education, students are more likely to earn higher grades, attend school regularly, take rigorous courses, and graduate ready for college, career, and civic engagement. The Department provides research-based guidance, training, and oversight that prompts districts to work with families of ELs in culturally and linguistically sustaining ways, and to build capacity to view families through an asset-based lens as partners and collaborators who support student learning and the success of our schools.

Multilingual and Multicultural Families: a rich resource to inform and improve education systems

As educational agencies collaborate with families in a mutual exchange of knowledge and skills to support students, school systems maximize learning outside of school hours, where students spend most of their time.

The Department creates a strong framework to guide and monitor districts and schools in their efforts to engage families of ELs and develops a compendium of resources/programs that increase family engagement. Providing districts with templates for newsletters and communications to send to families maximizes the implementation of such recommendations, and helps families make informed decisions about their children’s education. Sample themes might include:

- information for families to identify different types of support at school
- information in multiple languages on the creation of an English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) and how to be involved in the duties of the council in districts
- concrete suggestions of activities that reinforce learning at home
- book recommendations appropriate to students’ developmental levels
- information on how to access support as needed for completing homework
- current and upcoming curriculum topics

Actions-at-a-Glance: Family Engagement

Family Engagement: What can educators at the state level do?

- Actively recruit families to engage in state-level policy processes through the [ELBAC](#) and other [councils](#).
- Ensure meaningful communication with multilingual families [in a language they can understand](#)
- Notify EL families of information about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of non-EL parents
- Support local development of biliteracy and bilingualism as a goal of the educational system through [bilingual education](#) and other initiatives such as the [Seal of Biliteracy](#)
- Promote the use of home language supports in schools
- Guide districts to form partnerships with families of ELs to establish [English Learner Parent Advisory Councils \(ELPACs\)](#) to support the success of ELs
- Guide districts to provide families with translations and interpreters as necessary
- Guide districts to ensure that families of ELs receive the same access to family engagement as all families in the district

Planning Resources

DESE Practical Tools and Resources

[Cultural Proficiency: A Strategy to Address Equity Gaps in Students’ Achievement and Learning Experiences](#) This document

summarizes the experience of nine Massachusetts districts that established professional learning networks to pilot the Massachusetts Equity Plan. Three districts chose cultural proficiency as a strategy to address some of the equity gaps they identified

[Family Community and Engagement](#) This page will direct you to family and community engagement resources.

[Fulfilling Our Promise: Snapshots of English Learners and their Families](#) This video features EL families discussing the importance of the schooling experience

[Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council: Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals \(Tool\)](#) This tool/rubric helps educators self-assess and reflect on current level of family engagement.

DESE Guidance

[Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals](#) This document offers guidelines and research-based practices for the engagement of families, schools, and communities in supporting equitable learning opportunities for students.

[Guidance for Defining and Implementing Two-Way Immersion \(TWI\) Programs](#) This guidance provides ideas for how educators in TWI programs can engage with parents and community members (p.14).

[Guidance for English Learner Parent Advisory Councils](#) This guidance provides information about ELPACs, principles for effective EL family engagement, and examples of specific actions and strategies for teachers, schools and districts.

[Guidance for Implementing the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy](#) assists districts with implementing the seal of biliteracy regulations to recognize graduates who attain high functional and academic levels of proficiency in English and another language.

[Guidance for Sheltered English Immersion \(SEI\) Programs](#) This guidance provides examples of districts implementing Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) programs, including scenarios showcasing a new student intake process (Scenario 1, p. 2-3) and family engagement at the school level (Scenario 6, p. 19-21) as well as related resources.

[Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Language Learners](#) This guidance provides information about requirements for parental communication across ELE program procedures and resources to support communication with parents (see Appendix A: Home Language Survey, Appendix B: Parent Notification Form, and Appendix P: Parental Engagement).

Federal Resources

[English Learner Toolkit](#) Each chapter of this guidance provides explanations of the civil rights and other legal obligations to ELs

[Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents](#) Chapter 10 of the English Learner Toolkit provides tools and resources for ensuring meaningful communication with limited English proficient parents, including a framework for family engagement activities that help establish partnerships for student success (Tool #1, p. 5), ideas to establish and maintain strong parental engagement in schools (Tool #2, p. 7), and resources for interpretation and translation (Tool #3, p. 8).

[Family Engagement Webinar Materials](#) The federal Office of English Language Acquisition offers a [webinar recording](#), [PowerPoint presentation](#), and [handouts](#) as an overview of EL family engagement, Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements related to EL family engagement, and OELA's EL Family Toolkit.

[Newcomer Tool Kit](#) The guidance designed to help U.S. educators; elementary and secondary teachers, principals, and other school staff who work directly with immigrant students—including asylees and refugees—and their families.

[Establishing Partnerships with Families](#) Chapter 5 of the Newcomer Toolkit discusses characteristics among newcomer families, as well as cultural barriers to school-family partnerships and ways to overcome them. It describes essential components of strong parent and family engagement; characteristics of quality programs; and examples of effective collaborative, sustained, and supportive partnerships with newcomer families.

[IES-Regional Educational Lab Program Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education](#) This is a resource for schools to build relationships with families and communities and to support families. Its goal is to increase school leadership and staff awareness of the process needed to increase family engagement, including activities that can help in PLC or PD settings.

[Schools' Civil Rights Obligations to English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents](#) This webpage includes information for students and parents, as well as Office of Civil Rights guidance and resources for education officials about their obligations to EL students and LEP parents, and added resources with related information.

[Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships](#) This framework presents a framework for designing family engagement initiatives that build capacity among educators and families to partner with one another around student success. Based in existing research and best practices, this report is designed to act as a scaffold for the development of family engagement strategies, policies, and programs. Boston Public Schools is one of three case studies in this document.

[Policy Statement on Family Engagement from the Early Years to the Early Grades](#) This policy statement provides recommendations to early childhood systems and programs on family engagement (p. 9 – 17). It recognizes how integrated family engagement requires providers and schools to engage families as essential partners when providing services that promote children’s learning and development, nurture positive relationships between families and staff, and support families.

[Resource Guide: Supporting Undocumented Youth](#) This guide provides a compilation of research and promising practices to help state and local efforts to support undocumented youth at the secondary (p. 9-16) and postsecondary school levels.

Other Featured Resources

[WIDA Focus Bulletin: Family Engagement](#) This focus bulletin raises awareness of the need for family engagement practices that take into consideration students’ academic achievement and language development. This resource can be used as a tool to support local family engagement practices.

[WIDA Focus Bulletin: Language-Focused Family Engagement](#) This focus bulletin introduces readers to the four pillars of Language-Focused Family Engagement and provides tools to help educators examine their local family engagement practices.

[WIDA Focus Bulletin: The Early Years: Asset-based, Language-Focused Family Engagement for Dual Language Learners](#) This focus bulletin describes the importance of asset-based family engagement with families of children who are ELs by presenting research and offering ideas for bridging the research to practice.

[Parent Institute for Quality Education \(PIQE\)](#) PIQE’s mission is to provide families with the knowledge and skills to partner with schools and communities to ensure their children achieve their full potential. PIQE is a national community-based organization dedicated to innovative educational reform by informing and motivating low-income and immigrant parents to become knowledgeable about how to navigate the school system and seek the educational opportunities available for their children. PIQE offers a variety of programs and workshops including but not limited to K-12 parent engagement in education program, early childhood development program, early K-3 literacy program, parent leadership development program, and teacher-parent engagement workshops.

[12 Ways School Leaders Can Support Immigrant Families](#) A short article that helps school leaders to support immigrant students and families. Includes videos and additional resources.

[Partnering with Parents to Support Immigrant and Refugee Children at School](#) This brief discusses considerations for partnering with families of immigrant and refugee students.

[Global Research Family Project](#) This project presents scientifically-based, practical tools to support and elevate the benefits of family engagement and connections across educational organizations, nationally and globally.

[Seven Research-Based Ways Families Promote Early Literacy](#) A research to practice brief available in English and Spanish.