

ELPAC Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Districts and Schools

What is an ELPAC?

An ELPAC is an English Learner Parent Advisory Council. ELPACs are made up of parents and guardians of current and former ELs (English Learners). ELPACs can provide advice and insight on topics that are important to ELs in their school or district community.

What are the duties of an ELPAC?

ELPAC duties include (but are not limited to):

- Providing advice to the district or school regarding its English Learner Education programs;
- Meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning and development of programs designed to improve educational opportunities for ELs;
- Participating in the review of school improvement plans and district improvement plans as the plans related to ELs; and
- Reviewing proposals by the school district to offer a new instructional program for ELs.

Why are ELPACs important?

ELPACs are a key element of effective family engagement for ELs in Massachusetts. Building strong school-family partnerships with the families of ELs will help parents engage in the education of their children and allow schools to better serve ELs. In Massachusetts schools, ELs can acquire English and succeed academically while maintaining their unique cultural and linguistic identities. ELPACs are an important tool to help make that happen.

Which schools or districts are required to establish ELPACs?

According to the LOOK Act of 2017, the following schools or districts are required to establish ELPACs:

- School districts or charter schools operating a language acquisition program for ELs serving 100 or more ELs or in which ELs comprise at least five percent of the school district's or charter school's population, whichever is less;
- Schools designated as underperforming or chronically underperforming and operating a program for ELs.

School districts and schools that are required to establish ELPACs must annually notify parents of ELs in writing of the opportunity to participate in the ELPAC. Districts should provide notification to parents in a language they can understand.

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Who leads an ELPAC?

Effective, self-sustaining ELPACs that are parent-led will be the most successful partners for promoting meaningful school-family engagement. Each ELPAC will write bylaws that establish officer roles and define their responsibilities.

How can my school or district assist our ELPAC?

Your school or district can assist ELPACs in their operations and activities by helping to schedule meetings, recruit parents, and facilitate information sessions. Schools and districts can also help ELPAC members build capacity as leaders and support the formation of partnerships between the ELPAC and other community or school organizations.

How can we encourage parents and guardians to participate in our ELPAC?

Building a foundation of mutual respect and trust will encourage parents of diverse backgrounds to participate in ELPACs. Offering interpretation services and childcare during meetings are good ways to build that foundation. The ELPACs in Districts and Schools course provides detailed guidance for strategizing ways to boost participation in your school's ELPAC.