

# **SECTION 9**

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN STUDENT NOTIFICATION AND RIGHTS**

**In this section, you will find information on the following:**

- Home-School Communication
- Use of a Language Other than English
- ELL Parent Involvement
  - The Parent Outreach Office
  - Parent Leadership Council
- Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### **Home-School Communication**

From the time a student registers, Broward County Public Schools makes every effort to inform and provide orientation for parents to our educational 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 community liaisons, 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 Bilingual/ESOL Department .

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

The Bilingual/ESOL Department employs full-time translators who translate district forms and documents 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
- Title I Forms
- Early Childhood Packets
- Pre-K Brochures
- Health Forms
- ESE Forms
- Early Intervention Forms

Parents of ELLs should receive information from schools via translated mailings, phone calls, texts, or emails in their native language (Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese), and school meetings using translators. Schools with a high population of ELLs should translate their newsletters in order for parents to 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 outside of a classroom setting where the teacher requests the use of English. 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 Bilingual Parent Outreach Office**

The Bilingual Parent Outreach Office serves as a liaison between the Bilingual/ESOL 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 on topics related to education.

The Bilingual Parent Outreach Office coordinates workshops for bilingual parents to provide orientation to the American school system, the Broward School District, assessments, tools for parents to assist their students at home, and information on high school graduation and College and Career Readiness.

The Bilingual Parent Outreach Office has expanded to include Outreach Centers at easier geographical access for easier geographical access.

### **Parent Leadership Council**

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

The ESOL Parent Leadership Council must be composed primarily of 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 ESOL staff. The council meets on a regular basis from September to May. Translated invitation flyers to meetings and other community activities are sent to the school ESOL contacts, parent emails, and phone links. In conformity with the Sunshine Law, notices of meetings are also publicized in local newspapers.

The ***ESOL Parent Leadership Council*** participates in District committees, meets regularly with ESOL Staff, and provides reports to the School Board and the District Superintendent.

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

- promote educational programming and academic achievement of ELLs
- participate in leadership training and orientation offered by the Bilingual/ESOL 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 Parent 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 Bilingual/ESOL Department for leadership training. The ESOL Parent Leadership Council, in collaboration with the Bilingual/ESOL Department, also accomplishes the following:

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

### **Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

**Q: Are there any organizations 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 serves as the PLC (Parent Leadership Council) according to the META Consent Decree and was named ESOL Leadership Council 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 Bilingual Parent Outreach Office serves as a liaison between the Bilingual/ESOL Department and the parents, students, schools, district departments and the community. Parents can access this office by phone at (754) 321-2951 or on the web at <http://bilingual-esol.browardschools.com>.