Cultural diversity is thriving in Washington state. 1 in 7 Washington state residents is an immigrant or refugee. More than 200 languages are spoken in students' homes and 85% of school districts serve students with non-English home languages.

Year after year, students of color underperform on achievement tests and are disciplined at higher rates. Despite the urgent need to improve student outcomes, many immigrant and refugee families have difficulty communicating with their children's schools. To enable all communities to support their children's education, families need to learn their rights and schools need the tools to engage all families.

It's not only the right thing to go, but it's the law!

What do we need?

Language Access: Meaningful two-way communication between school staff and families

School ↔ Family

Why?

Language Access promotes Family Engagement

Student growth is supported at school and at home

Improving student outcomes will reduce Educational Opportunity Gaps

How HB 1130 / SB 5606 will enable families to communicate with schools

HB 1130 / SB 5606 will provide the Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction with the staffing capacity to implement and monitor Language Access in schools in consultation with community advocates and diverse families. To address the shortage of qualified interpreters, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges will convene a workgroup including interpreters, educators, language access experts and families to create a curriculum for interpreters.

Educate school staff and families
- Inform families about their rights.
- Create a technical assistance program for school staff on how to request an interpreter or translated materials and work with interpreters.

Monitor school progress
- Ensure schools identify families in need of language support.
- Determine whether interpreters are provided when needed using the robust documentation built into the Special Education system.

Build the pool of qualified interpreters
Create a curriculum for interpreters so that they understand the terminology of schools and can promote effective communication.

What can legislators do?

Voice your support for diverse families!

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