Open Doors for Multicultural Families

Family Feedback Report on Language Access in Schools

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About Open Doors for Multicultural Families

**Vision:** All culturally and linguistically diverse individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities and their families thrive in an inclusive society of their design.

**Mission:** We engage and partner with culturally and linguistically diverse individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities and their families. We use a cultural brokerage model to navigate services, provide specialized programming and advocate for systems change.

**Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank the FAMILIES who trusted us with their stories with the hope that change will come and all the students and families who have long been fighting for justice in our schools. We would also like to thank Communities of Opportunity and Stoltes Family Foundation for funding and believing in this work, the staff in the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Office of Education Ombuds who worked with us behind the scenes to support the Language Access Workgroup, Representatives Tina Orwell, Sharon Tomiko Santos, Senators Lisa Wellman, and Claire Wilson for championing for change and all of the community leaders and advocates for partnering with us.

To learn more about ODMF, please go to our website, read our Annual Report and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
# Table of Contents

About .............................................................................................................................................02
Acknowledgments ..........................................................................................................................02
Executive Summary ......................................................................................................................03
Background ....................................................................................................................................03
Brief History of Educational Language Access in Washington State .................................04
Family Feedback ............................................................................................................................05
  Who Attended the Parent Support Groups .................................................................06
  What Questions Did We Ask .........................................................................................07
  The Reality of Focus Groups .........................................................................................07
  Interpreters .........................................................................................................................08
  Special Education ..............................................................................................................10
  Communications with Schools/Districts .........................................................................12
  Attitudes of School Staff & District Staff .......................................................................14
  Virtual Learning ................................................................................................................16

Recommendations .......................................................................................................................18
What Are We Doing .....................................................................................................................19
Thank You .....................................................................................................................................19
Executive Summary

Families have a right to communicate with schools to support their children’s education. A family’s right to Educational Language Access, which is defined as meaningful two-way communication between families and educators, is protected by both state and federal laws. However, interpreters and translations are not reliably provided for families. As a result, students are not able to equitably access their education and realize their full potential. In 2019, passage of Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1130 led to the formation of a workgroup of diverse stakeholders. In 2020, the workgroup submitted policy recommendations to the Washington State Legislature that will, when implemented, improve Language Access in schools. Open Doors for Multicultural Families (ODMF) has routinely gathered family feedback on education and Language Access since 2015. Prior to the finalization of the workgroup’s policy recommendations, we again convened with families from diverse cultural backgrounds and compiled their stories in this report.

Background

Our public schools were designed to segregate children based on race and indoctrinate them into the dominant culture. Black children were sent to segregated and poor-quality schools¹. Native children were taken from their families and placed in boarding schools that stripped away Native culture and language². Further, Special Education programs were built to segregate children with disabilities who were then taught to lower educational standards³. These practices of excluding children based on race and disability continue today and lead to disproportionate outcomes at the federal, state and local levels in any data set examined.

According to a report by the U.S. Department of Education⁴ on 2017-2018 data, students with disabilities make up 16% of student body, but 80% who were physically restrained. While Black/African-American students are 15% of the student body, 18% are categorized as students with disabilities and 26% have been subjected to physical restraint. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction⁵ reports that while 56.6% of students with disabilities are placed in general education for 80-100% of the day, this percentage falls to 49% for students of color. Based on the 2012 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey⁶ (HYS) for Grades 8, 10 and 12, relative to white youth (25%), a larger percentage of youth of all other racial categories reported depressive feelings, and 31% of youth who reported depressive

feelings were failing academically. According to the 2018 data from the HYS\(^7\) for the same grade levels students with disabilities were more than three times as likely to seriously consider attempting suicide than their peers without disabilities. With all of this, it is no surprise that youth of color with disabilities are the least engaged in postsecondary opportunities, such as employment and higher education which leads to long-term and costly employment and health outcomes.

Within this system, the first defense against this system is the relationships that families can develop with their children’s educators. Language Access in our schools will provide families with qualified interpreters who understand educational terminology and translations of vital documents. Interpreters and translations are necessary for the basics such as a phone call with the school, understanding a school form, and a parent teacher conference. They are also critical for high stakes meetings such those related to Special Education services, bullying or discipline when a student’s education access and long-term trajectory are determined by services provided for them.

According to a report from the U.S. Department of Education\(^8\) 50 years of research has shown that family engagement has beneficial impacts on student grades, test scores, lower drop-out rates, and students’ sense of competence and beliefs about the importance of education.

Washington public schools' ability to effectively communicate with students and their family members who have language access barriers plays a vital role in reducing educational opportunity gaps.

**Brief History of Educational Language Access Legislation in Washington State**

Our educational system is resistant to change. While State and Federal laws protect the families right to Language Access in federally funded programs, including schools, advocates in Washington state have persevered for years because families are not receiving consistent communication in their native language. The following timeline marks key events that have brought us closer to meaningful change.

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In 2014, *House Bill 1709* was passed and partially vetoed. What resulted was a *Language Feasibility Study* published by the Office of Education Ombuds. As a part of this, ODMF Families were gathered for Focus Group to demonstrate the language access barriers that students with disabilities and their families experience.

In 2015, the Washington State School Directors Association (WSDDA) developed a statewide *Language Access Policy* and *Procedure*. However, we have learned that without staffing and robust accountability measures, these policies remain as pieces of paper and families continue to receive inadequate or no interpretation and translation services.

In 2019, *Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1130* was passed which convened a *Language Access Workgroup* that has now made *final policy recommendations* for the implementation of Language Access Plans not only for Limited English Proficient, but for Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Visually Impaired and Deafblind families. Implementation will require investments in school staff who can implement Language Access Plans, monitor school performance and hold schools accountable.

In 2020, Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee *Annual Report* and the Office of Equity Task Force Report both emphasize the importance of Language Access.

This report comprehensively documents the feedback that Families provided on Language Access, some of which was included in the *2020 Language Access Workgroup Report* to the Legislature.

**Family Feedback**

"*When I get emails, they're only in English, and when I try to get them translated, I am ignored or never answered. I went into the school one time to get some documents translated into Spanish. The principal treated me very badly and told me, 'This is the USA, English, English, English.' And then the other staff present began to laugh and make fun of me.*" - Spanish speaking parent

At ODMF, family engagement and partnership are at the core of how we operate. Since our founding in 2009, we have utilized a cultural brokerage model that pairs families with a direct support staff who comes from a similar cultural background and speaks their language. The perceptions of disability are highly culturally-determined and individuals and families can engage more meaningfully when they work with staff who have a shared understanding of disability. Our bilingual and bicultural direct support staff, including our team of Family Support Specialists (FSS, pictured below), help families navigate complex systems, including Special Education, and connect
them to services. Among their many responsibilities, the FSS work with a Leader to coordinate a monthly Parent Support Group (PSG) that is now conducted virtually. The PSGs are held in the families’ native languages and provide an opportunity for families to share their experiences, support each other, and learn how to support themselves and their children.

The Advocacy and Civic Engagement and Family Support Teams collaborated to gather direct feedback from families in September 2020. We solicited feedback on parent & family experiences with their schools in the Chinese, Amharic/Tigrinya, Somali and Latino PSGs.

Each PSG was scheduled for a two-hour period and was facilitated in English and the native language (s) of our participants.

**Who Attended the PSGs?**

25 Mandarin and/or Cantonese-speaking family members

9 Somali speaking family members

25 Amharic and/or Tigrinya-speaking family members

12 Spanish-speaking family members. Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Costa Rican, Venezuelan & Salvadorian cultures were represented
What Questions Did We Ask?

At each session, we asked our parents and families two questions. To avoid making any assumptions that families have challenges, we intentionally kept the questions broad and open-ended.

1. What experiences have you had with the schools?
2. What would be helpful to communicate with schools?

The Reality of Focus Groups

Focus Group and Listening Session Exhaustion
Many families expressed frustration with having to share the same experiences again and again without seeing any noticeable change. Often, in the same year families are asked the same questions on the same topic by different organizations. While it was exciting to attend their first Focus Groups and Listening Sessions, they are tired of giving the same answers and seeing no change in the systems. Families would like to know how their feedback was used, what change came from it and how their experiences will improve as a result.

Workload on Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
Many CBOs, including ODMF, are asked to host Focus Groups and Community Listening Sessions throughout the year without adequate compensation for the cost to host the event, which includes staff time. CBOs need to be financially compensated for the staffing time necessary to:

1. **Plan** - determine outreach plan and coordinate internally, invite families, coordinate interpreters, coordinate childcare and food
2. **Conduct** - welcome families and interpreters, fill out paperwork for stipends, facilitate discussion, support participants and clean-up
3. **Follow-up** - Complete stipend paperwork and mail checks to families and interpreters, compile feedback and meet with external partner to explain feedback, report back to families on how feedback was used.

Digital Inequity, COVID-19 Workload and Staffing
As you read through the report, you will notice that the Mandarin, Cantonese and Spanish speaking families provided more robust feedback than Somali, Amharic and Tigrinya speaking families. This difference reflects families' ability to navigate digital platforms, enhanced workload on staff to provide COVID-19 Emergency Assistance, and staffing available to support families.
The following table provides a breakdown of these factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Group</th>
<th>Digital</th>
<th>Staffing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese and Mandarin</td>
<td>Proficient at Zoom, Online survey open for 1 week after PSG to collect additional feedback</td>
<td>4 Support Staff: Trilingual external facilitator, 2 trilingual interpreters (staff and external), bilingual intern captured feedback during event and translated feedback from online survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Previous experience with Zoom with intensive staffing support</td>
<td>6 Support Staff: 5 bilingual ODMF Staff (3 facilitators and 2 support), 1 interpreter. Facilitators included bilingual ACE Team Staff who encouraged families to share by explaining the impact of their stories in advocating for change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>Limited proficiency with Zoom</td>
<td>1 bilingual staff served as interpreter and facilitator. Limited staffing due to enhanced workload necessary to provide COVID-19 Emergency Assistance to families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amharic and Tigrinya</td>
<td>Limited proficiency with Zoom</td>
<td>1 trilingual staff served as facilitator and interpreter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After completing these four feedback sessions, **five common themes** were identified:
1. Interpreters
2. Special Education
3. Communications with Schools & Districts
4. Attitudes of School & District Staff
5. Virtual Learning

1. **INTERPRETERS:**

Qualified interpreters are essential to communication. ESHB 1130 defined qualified interpreters as “someone who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptive and expressive using any necessary specialized vocabulary.” This means that the interpreter must understand the language of schools, including matters related to Special Education, discipline and truancy, and be able to communicate these in both English and the family’s native language. Interpreters must also understand the cultural context of words. Many families do not have reliable access to interpreters.

**The following is direct feedback from the families broken out by PSG:**

**Mandarin & Cantonese**
- The interpreter arranged for my teacher-parent meeting was sick, and the teacher found another interpreter who speaks only a particular dialect of Chinese. I could only understand one tenth of that meeting. The school should have canceled and rescheduled this meeting.
At an IEP meeting, the school did not hire a translator [interpreter] for me but rather had a teacher assistant to translate for me. This TA did not communicate my needs well and spoke from his/her perspectives. When I questioned the TA, he or she refused to translate for me and left the meeting. There should be a translator [interpreter] at schools so that we can always communicate with the teachers.

Should there be a third-party organization that is responsible for arranging interpreters?

Language matters. More importantly, we need people who understand our culture to help us. There should be a team of interpreters that come from a diversity of backgrounds. They not only speak our language but also have knowledge in Special Education. Whenever parents have concerns, they can go to the team, which would then be responsible for negotiation with schools.

We need interpreters who considers the standpoints of us.

In previous meetings, the interpreters could not communicate my message accurately.

Interpreters and parents might not have conflicts of interests, and it prevents interpreters from providing accurate translation for parents.

Do we have a channel to file complaints when interpreters are not qualified?

Medical and insurance companies are able to hire interpreters to translate in online meetings. Is it possible to have more qualified interpreters work online?

Interpreters were late

Interpreters can be racists sometimes

My interpreter does a poor job of translating for me. She says that my English is good. However, because teachers speak too fast, I could not understand them.

I hope that the school would provide us professional interpreters for meetings

Compassion is an important quality required of interpreters.

Can the government provide us with interpreters who understand our culture?

I am not sure whether these interpreters would keep the information of my child confidential. Would schools sign contracts with interpreters to make sure of this?
Somali
- 99% of the time they use a language line and the interpreter does not speak fluent Somali or sometimes even fluent English
- Need people who can understand their culture and be aware of who they are

Amharic/Tigrinya
- Interpreters are not always qualified and can be confusing to understand
- Past interpreters have not been fluent in English and have lacked professionalism

Latino
- The interpreters use English periodically and can't seem to interpret correctly.
- When I had a meeting with my son, I asked for an interpreter. The person who was helping me, was probably 30% proficient. When I asked them for a certified professional, they told me they had none that were certified and they couldn't do anything for me.
- It would be helpful if we had interpreters that knew both English well and my language well too. They usually are strong in one area and really bad in the other.
- I would like really good interpreters. The one I used was really bad. I want someone who knows how to do it. Or even over the phone, like they do it at the clinic.

2. SPECIAL EDUCATION

In Washington state, 18.2% of students have disabilities (2019 OSPI Report Card from (data.wa.gov). Students with disabilities who receive Special Education services in the form of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or have a Section 504 plan are a protected class of students. They and their families have rights delineated by the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act of 2004 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. At least once a year, school staff and families must convene for an IEP meeting to determine the services and supports that the student will receive in school in order to receive educational benefits from school. These are high stakes meetings and parents/caregivers have a right to a qualified interpreter who is well-versed in the language of disabilities and Special Education so that they, with their child, can make critical decisions about their child’s education.
Family Feedback Report on Language Access in Schools

The following is direct feedback from the families broken out by each PSG:

**Mandarin & Cantonese**
- It is important that interpreters have knowledge in the terminology used in Special Education.
- My interpreter did not know what an IEP is, and I had to explain it to them.
- IEP meetings are typically short, and there is not enough time to fully discuss our perspectives since translation takes up time.
- I hope that the IEP papers can have Chinese versions.
- Because the IEP material was in English, we could not understand it and also the content of the meeting. Moreover, since we do not know English, we cannot communicate. It would help a lot if the material was in Chinese. Can we request documents to be translated into our language?
- Interpreters should have IEP training.
- Interpreters need to know the terminology used in Special Education, just like medical translators.
- Having interpreters was not helpful for me because they did not have any knowledge in Special Education or the needs of students with disabilities.
- Every district should have its own interpreters, who have knowledge in Special Education. Interpreters should arrive before the start of IEP meetings because they are typically very short and translation takes up more time from the meetings. Many important questions could not be discussed.
- Many of us Chinese families need language help in IEP processes, OT, and speech therapy. Can we get outside organization to provide interpretation?

**Somali**
- Even if the interpreter is fluent in both languages they don’t necessarily understand the school system ex: IEP

**Amharic/Tigrinya**
- IEP’s are not being translated

**Latino**
- I have had bad experiences especially with the IEPs, using codes that are hard to understand
3. COMMUNICATIONS WITH SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS:

Schools communicate information to families in multiple ways, via automated calls, emails, newsletters, mailings, one-on-one phone calls, and in-person conversations. Families receive information from the district, school and their children’s teachers that ranges from district-wide school closures to back-to-school nights where they gain knowledge on what their child is learning in class. Families must be able to understand all of this information in order to support their children’s education.

The following is direct feedback from the families broken out by PSG:

Mandarin & Cantonese

- I hope that school websites have audio translation in Mandarin, in addition to Cantonese.
- School announcements, voice mails, and e-mails are all in English. When I translate them using translation software, the phrases become incomprehensible or inaccurate.
- School staff typically give us the IEP draft on the day of the meeting. Even though my husband is a native speaker, we still have many questions that cannot be answered because the meeting lasts only 45 minutes. We need to review the materials several days before the meeting.
- It took a long time to schedule interpreters, making it difficult for me to receive feedback and information from the school in a timely manner. I cannot ask for help for my daughter timely.
- Prior to my second IEP meeting, I had requested for translated material but never received it for two years. When I asked the school about it, the teachers promised me again to mail it to my address. However, I still have not received it, and the teacher that I contacted left the school.
- Although the law mandates the rights to language access, qualified interpreters are extremely limited in schools.
- The attendance of interpreters needs to be guaranteed.
- Sometimes the school calls me, but there is no interpreter available for me.
- Important information should be given to us through emails so that I can use translation software. Parents and teachers must communicate regularly, especially when students experience special conditions.
- It is the best if all forms of communication including emails and calls can be translated.
I hope to be able to communicate with teachers whenever I would like to.
Establish online translation services that can be provided through phone calls.
I hope that there are more teachers who are bilingual.
Emails, calls, and all paperwork should have Chinese versions.
Schools should arrange interpreters whenever there is important information to be provided to us or in meetings.
I hope that they establish a group of staff who are responsible for communicating with schools on behalf of parents that speak English as a second language.
Without interpreters, I do not know if my child is receiving the help that he/she needs at school.
My child has just started college, and I feel like that communication with teachers at this point is more important than before. I hope that there are less language barriers in this process. His/her teachers report on the progress of the courses everyday through emails. This is really helpful, and I think they should continue doing it even when virtual learning ends.

Somali
- When we express our concerns in school we want to feel like we are being heard…. there is a cultural barrier here.
- It would be helpful if they send emails and text messages in both Somali and English
- I feel like the translations are being done through Google which is not providing correct translations
- Need to provide correct information on what school staff members to contact

Amharic/Tigrinya
- Special education students need more resources from school
- In person learning preferably one on one with a teacher
- Can't find written materials in Tigrinya

Latino
- For instance, they called a worker from the cafeteria to interpret for me. I let them use her until I could evaluate her ability to interpret. I quickly saw that she was not qualified and told the cafeteria worker she should not be doing this for the school. Because she was only telling me what the school wanted her to say. I think these interpreters should be professionals. Sometimes the school gets mad because you are asking for this help. They also wanted me to use this link to self-interpret.
Like I said, I can speak a little bit of English but not enough. I wish we had someone at our school to help me and my daughter with this. I wanted to know who her Special ED Teacher was, and still have not been able to find out. I would like all the school documents in Spanish. And when the school calls me, they leave voicemail with important information, but it's all in English; which I can't understand.”

I have tried to write to my children’s teacher to ask them for translation of documents, like the IEP, and they won’t answer me back.

My experience was that my child’s teacher, uses an App on his computer or phone, where he types in English and it translates it into Spanish, and he sends me the email in Spanish so I can understand and read it.”

4. ATTITUDES OF SCHOOL & DISTRICT STAFF:

Schools belong to the communities in which they are located. When families walk into the door, come to a meeting or reach out over the phone to support their children’s education, they must be welcomed and engaged as partners in their children’s education. Educators must recognize the strengths and cultural knowledge that families can share and work to communicate with them in their native language.

The following is direct feedback from the families broken out by PSG:

Mandarin & Cantonese

- Teachers tend to think that it is troublesome to deal with parents who do not speak English as their first language and neglect us. My child’s OP service was canceled without my approval. Did not accept my opinion.
- We are taxpayers, just like those who speak English as their first language. Schools should treat us and our children equally if not with more attention because we are minorities. However, I feel like that parents are ignored, neglected, and disrespected because we do not speak English.

Somali

- Schools are not consistent with bringing in an interpreter, feels like the school staff is feeling inconvenienced to provide one and makes parents feel less than.
- On multicultural day when it comes to Somali kids they are not being shown the same attention/respect as students of other cultures.
- When they go to schools they show up to their appointment on time, but once they sign in the school staff member will ignore them to help someone who is speaking fluent in English.
Amharic/Tigrinya
- Teachers don’t give parents materials in their native languages in a timely manner
- One parent felt like language was not a big issue for them and their child and that they feel as though the school is doing their best

Latino
- When I ask for an interpreter, they make you feel bad. I asked them to translate my son’s IEP and they told me they couldn't because over 30 languages are spoken in their district and this would be impossible to do for me.”
- When I get emails, they’re only in English, and when I try to get them translated, I am ignored or never answered. I went into the school one time to get some documents translated into Spanish. The principal treated me very badly and told me, “This is the USA, English, English, English.” And then the other staff present began to laugh and make fun of me. I then left the school and went to the district office. When I got there, I was asked as to why I was there. I explained to the person in the front office what happened at my son’s school and they would not do anything. I threatened to call the police and my lawyers if someone didn't help me. Finally, when they saw I was serious and would do it, the superintendent came downstairs to see me. I told my story again, and they assured me that my school could and would help me with what I needed. Upon returning to my sons’ school, they quickly adjusted and treated me a lot differently. But then my son faced retaliation from the staff there, and now my son doesn't want me to get involved with his IEP or talk with his school teachers about any issues going forward.
- On September 17th, I had a virtual meeting for my son with his teacher, and Raquel [ODMF] was with me. I asked if they could translate my son documents in Spanish, and they said they could not. They also said they could only get an interpreter for me, once a year. Their answer frustrated me. They have just been ignoring my need for help, but I am going to keep fighting for my 14-yr. old son. I have been fighting for the IEP (in Spanish) for a long time. They say they don’t have the people to do this for me. It's been the same story over all these years.
- The manager of my son’s IEP said I am too demanding. He said, I am the reason my son is so handicapped because I want everything perfect. I told him I just want the best for my kid. When my kid got an ‘F’, I wanted to meet again with him again. He said it wasn’t that he would make the changes to the IEP and that we did not have to meet. I told him that I desired to be present when making changes to my son’s IEP. He made rude comments like, “Do you know how much they pay me for this work?” To which I replied, then if this job is too much for you, go work at McDonalds. Cause I just want help for my son.
• My son and daughter did not want to go back to school because of how they treated them, after I complained. Now my kids don’t want me to talk for them. I want to know if there’s anyone else that can help me. There are non-Spanish Speakers in his school and they don’t like to get me interpreters; even by phone.

5. **VIRTUAL LEARNING:**
Now that our schools have transitioned to virtual learning, families are tasked with managing their children’s learning. This includes, knowing when a student should login to a virtual meeting, what the assignments are and when they are due, and helping children with their math, reading and writing. Virtual learning is even more challenging for families to manage if the information is not provided in their native language, they do not have the educational background to support their children, their children struggle with executive functioning and organizations, and their children have disabilities that require support from trained specialists (Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, etc.).

The following is direct feedback from the families broken out by PSG:

**Mandarin & Cantonese**
(No feedback offered on this topic during this PSG)

**Somali**
• Tutoring for students would be helpful
• Having issues with getting the support needed for their child from the district. District keeps using “lack of budget” as an excuse to justify lack of resources.
• Parents would love in person instruction because virtual school is hard for young children to understand and fully engage-in
• Teachers (regardless of if they’re special education or general) don’t understand that special needs children struggle to learn and remain focused during virtual learning
• Parents feel like they’re do not have the English language skills and resources to help their kids in their learning
• Parents don’t feel like a student should be penalized if they are not able to focus or participate during their online class

**Amharic/Tigrinya**
• One parent cannot login to the virtual classroom without her daughter's help but she is not always available for assistance…. English language skills keep her from helping her child on her own
Amharic/Tigrinya
- Assistance with how to use technology
- Even if parents can get students into their classroom’s parents are unsure of if they are receiving a quality education virtually
- Students struggle with the technology and it disrupts their learning
- Parents struggle to keep their students engaged in virtual classroom
- One parent had to stop working in order to help her child with school
- Parents feel like virtual schooling is not helping their students learn to their full ability and that an hour of online instruction is not enough

Latino
- Virtual learning is very hard for us. They did not give us a guide on how to teach our children. No Spanish instructions either. It’s very frustrating.
Recommendations

The following is a summary of key recommendations that we heard from families:

1. **Provide qualified and culturally competent interpreters.**
   Parents need interpreters who understand the language of the educational system, particularly of Special Education, and the cultural context of language.

2. **Provide translation of documents and school communications in families’ native language**
   Parents need access to school communications in their native language so that they can support their children. This includes translations of Individualized Education Programs, Section 504 Plans, and findings of student evaluations and student progress reports.

3. **Dedicate School Staff to Coordinate Language Access**
   To coordinate and hold schools accountable to provide Language Access, schools must dedicate staff who can train educators, connect with families, coordinate interpreters and translations and monitor if laws are being followed. Sample job descriptions for Language Access Coordinators at the school, district and state level are provided in the Language Access Workgroup Report.

4. **Ensure that all educators are trained in cultural competency**
   Linguistic and cultural diversity have tremendous potential to add to any school’s learning community. When educators are trained to effectively engage with diverse families and welcome them as key contributors into the learning communities, all students, families and educators’ benefit.

5. **Provide Digital Literacy Training**
   Many parents disclosed that they have educational and technology gaps that prevent them from effectively guiding and teaching their children in this era of virtual learning. On top of these barriers, they face all the language barriers noted above. By providing families with Digital Literacy Training in their native language, families can develop independence and learn how to help their children access their education.
What We Are Doing

Many parents and caregivers are ready to mobilize for systems change and want to be drivers in changing their school culture and procedures for communication and engagement. In February 2021, Open Doors for Multicultural Families is launching a Family Leadership Training funded by the Stoltes Family Foundation that is the first step to a comprehensive and sustainable plan for building family and self-advocate leadership and civic engagement capacity.

Thank You

We envision a future in which schools are universally designed so that all families are welcomed as partners in the education of their children and all children can feel a sense of belonging and learn to their fullest potential.

Thank you for taking the time to read the feedback that families have shared. If you have any questions or comments you would like to share, please reach out to us at Open Doors for Multicultural Families.

In partnership,

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