Effective Engagement of Emergent Bilingual and Immigrant Families

Dr. Cody Fernández
Executive Director for Secondary Multilingual
Students in Austin ISD

73,127

22,757

31%

5330

23%

Languages in Austin ISD

Over 100 languages represented

Top 5 languages:

- Spanish
- Pashto
- Arabic
- Vietnamese
- Arabic
Building a culturally competent approach to family engagement
Community Based, Multilingual Staff:
Prioritize hiring from the communities we serve to build language and cultural resources within our office.

Refugee Support Service Specialist
Refugee Family Liaison
Newcomer Family Liaison

Refugee & Newcomer Counselor
Refugee Family Liaison
Refugee Family Liaison
Newcomer Family Liaison

Languages Available
Dari, Pashto, Spanish, Urdu

How We Do This
Given the variation in literacy rates among parents, it is important to always use mixed-media messaging when communicating with families—most often this means verbal explanations.

- Group families by school to make announcements
- Send Progress Reports for students in need via voice note
- Send multiple reminders for events, groups, and meetings

How We do This: Utilize WhatsApp
Engaging with newcomer families means making daily communication accessible.

- Translations to **both parents and campus staff** to minimize confusion about campus policies and improve interactions
- Parent orientations provided in family’s home language

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<tr>
<th>DATE OF ABSENCE</th>
<th>Due to:</th>
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<tr>
<td>صادم پاسخ چیک کردن</td>
<td>ناراگی، بروز</td>
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<td>مهاینی</td>
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**NOTICE OF STUDENT ABSENCE**

دازده کوونکی دنه حاضریدو خیرتیا

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**STUDENT’S NAME, USING ENGLISH ALPHABET**

له نوونکی خمه غیر حاضری دی

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AISO STUDENT ID#</th>
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<td>دنه حاضریدو نیمه</td>
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**PLEASE EXCUSE HIM/HER FROM SCHOOL FOR THIS DAY.**

میرایی وکری راکامام دی ورخی نیاره له نوونکی خمه سمتلا یارمادی

**THANK YOU,**

مننه,

**PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE**

دودین / اسیریست لاسیک
This guide serves as both an internal guide for our staff as well as a training resource for campus staff.

- Practical tips to improve engagement and communication with newcomer families
- Highlights the strengths that newcomer families possess

How We do This:
Culturally Competent Professional Development
Engaging families successfully means innovating programs that are interesting and useful to newcomer families.

- Afghan Women’s Sewing Group
- GirlForward Mentorship Group
- CSA Vegetable Program
- 4ATC Foundation Verde Leaders Soccer Group
- Refugee Parent Advisory Group*
- Afghan Boys Cricket League*
Newcomer families possess many strengths that must be recognized and celebrated. They come with lots of “capital” that may not always be recognized in schools.

How We do This: Empowerment, Not Expectation

**RESISTANT CAPITAL**
The ability to challenge inequitable structures to transform them to serve more newcomer populations more equitably.

**NAVIGATIONAL CAPITAL**
Negotiating often complex, confusing institutions that are not designed with the needs of newcomers in mind.

**SOCIAL CAPITAL**
Utilizing community networks to achieve goals.

**ASPIRATIONAL CAPITAL**
Maintaining hope in the face of marginalization and daunting obstacles.

**FAMILIAL CAPITAL**
Leveraging community knowledge and traditions for emotional support and advancement.
Thank you!