



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

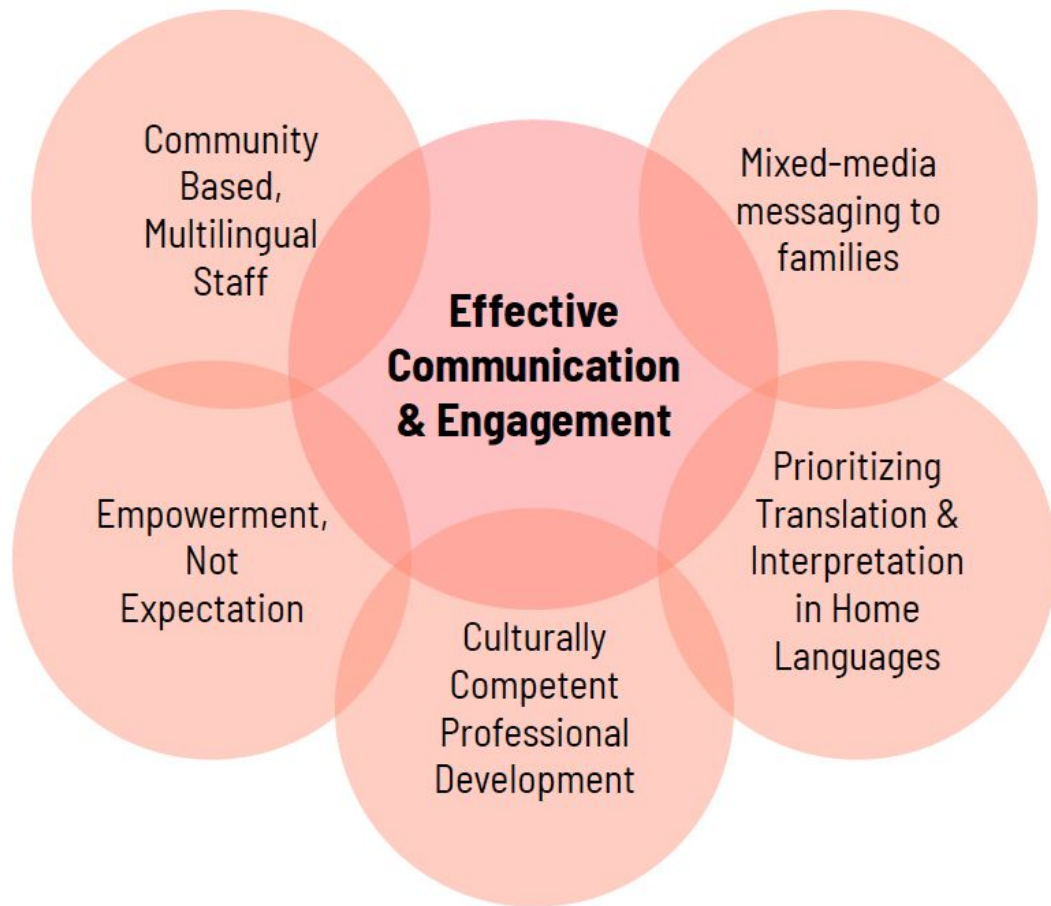
Over 100 languages represented

Top 5 languages:

- Spanish
- Pashto
- Arabic
- Vietnamese
- Arabic

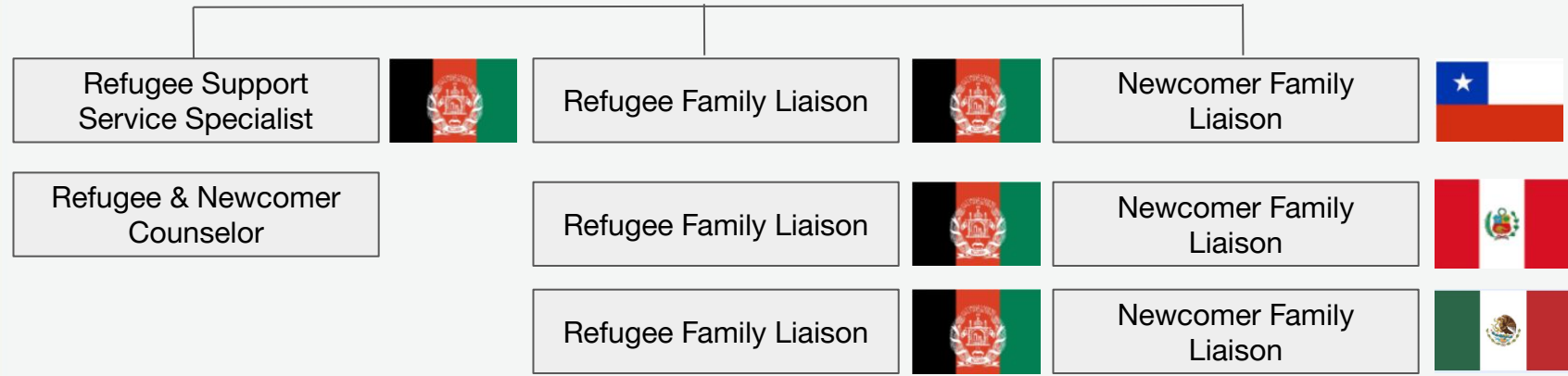


Building a culturally competent approach to family engagement



Community Based, Multilingual Staff:

Prioritize hiring from the communities we serve to build language and cultural resources within our office.



Languages Available
Dari, Pashto, Spanish, Urdu

How We Do This

How We do This: Utilize WhatsApp

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



NOTICE OF STUDENT ABSENCE

د زده کونکو د نه حاضریدو خبرتیا

WAS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL ON:

STUDENT'S NAME, USING ENGLISH ALPHABET

د زده کونکي نوم

له ښوونځي څخه غیر حاضر به وی

AISO STUDENT ID# د زده کونکي د پیژندنې شمیره

DATE OF ABSENCE د نه حاضریدو نیټه

DUE TO: مناسب بکس چیک کړئ: CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX: لدی امله

- SICK: FEVER, VOMITING ناروغ: تبه، کنگي
- RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE دیني مراسم
- DENTAL APPOINTMENT دی غاښونو ماینات
- DOCTOR APPOINTMENT د ډاکټر ملاقات
- OTHER: PLEASE EXPLAIN

نور: مهرباني وکړئ تشریح کړئ

PLEASE EXCUSE HIM/HER FROM SCHOOL FOR THIS DAY.

مهرباني وکړئ زما ماشوم د دې ورځې لپاره له ښوونځي څخه مستثنا وپشماری.

THANK YOU,

مټنه،

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

د والدین / سرپرست لاسلیک

How We Do This:

Prioritize Translation of Commonly Used Documents

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**



How We do This: Culturally Competent Professional Development

SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENT OF REFUGEE & NEWCOMER FAMILIES

*A Guide for Campus Staff
Austin Independent School District*

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

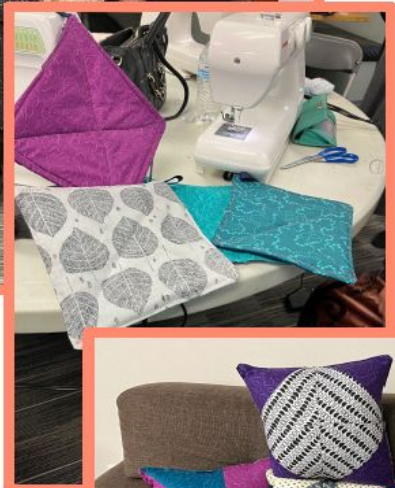


How We do This:

Culturally Relevant Program Offerings

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*



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

How We do This: Empowerment, Not Expectation

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



Thank you!

