

Families as Advocates: Advocating For My Multilingual Learner

As a multilingual family, advocating for your child means that you have the right to be informed, involved, and respected as equal partners in your child's language development, learning, and other aspects of their education. This resource offers topic areas and sample questions for parents and families to ask educators and is meant to strengthen their advocacy efforts. It was created with input from families like yours who shared their priorities when it comes to advocating for their children. You can choose the topic areas and questions most relevant to you and add other questions if needed.

Fostering Two-Way Communication, Language Access, and Engagement

You have the right to clear, consistent, reciprocal, and accessible communication between you and your child's school. It is also important that you feel welcome and included. This section offers questions for you to use to advocate for two-way communication, language access services, and engagement in schools.

Two-Way Communication

1. Is there someone at the school or district who works directly with families and/or communities? If so, how can I contact them?
2. How often should I expect to hear from teachers or the school, and how can I reach out when I have questions or concerns?
3. What are the best ways for the school and I to share information and stay connected?

Language Access

1. Does the school and/or district offer translation and/or interpretation services?
2. How can I request an interpreter when I need to communicate with the teacher or have a meeting with someone at the school?

Engagement

1. Is there anything important I should know about how things work at school?
2. What opportunities are available for me to actively collaborate with the school and/or community partners? (For example, helping to plan events and activities, being involved in decision-making, or joining school improvement efforts.)
3. What opportunities are available for families to share feedback, collaborate with school staff, or connect with other families at school and in the community?

Supporting Student Learning, Academic Growth, and Nurturing Well-Being

You have the right to understand how your child is being supported at school, both in the classroom and beyond. This section offers questions for you to use to advocate for your child's language and learning goals and for a safe, inclusive environment where every student can thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

Academic Support and Opportunities

1. Who can I go to if I have questions about the school or classroom curriculum, instruction, language programming, or class placements?
2. Who can I go to if I have questions about or need support with my child's academic progress, language development, or classroom concerns?
3. What opportunities are available for me to collaborate with the school and support my child's learning at home and in the classroom?
4. Where can I find information about academic resources, extra support, or opportunities like scholarships and college or career preparation for my child?

Well-Being and Support Services

1. How does the school create a welcoming environment for multilingual students and help them feel safe, included, and supported socially and emotionally?
2. How does the school address bullying and harassment in the school community?
3. How does the school support students who are experiencing stress at home?
4. How does the school collaborate with community organizations to support multilingual students and families?
5. Are there mental health services available to students at school or in the community, and how might they be accessed?
6. How can I learn about the extracurricular activities available to my child?

What other questions do you have? Use the space below to add other questions you'd like to ask educators.