

# Awareness: Community Support and Advocacy for Multilingual Families

## Video Transcript

**Note:** Transcripts from this video are machine generated. Please contact the WIDA Client Services Center at [help@wida.us](mailto:help@wida.us) for accommodation needs or questions.

Hi, I'm Madison Leach. I'm an assistant principal at an elementary school, and I am going to share the story about how our school community has been building deeper, more authentic partnerships through something we call community asset and resource mapping.

This work really began about seven years ago when I was an ELD teacher and I was working with our principal. We asked ourselves, and were reflecting on the question, "How do we make sure every family sees themselves reflected, respected, and welcomed in our school community?"

Over the course of seven years, the principal and I have worked hard to develop partnerships in our community, from local nonprofits to food pantries, county organizations, and health clinics. We've built an organic network of support for our families to build roots in our community. When we stepped back and started to see some of the themes emerging from our work over the past several years, we noticed that our networks branched from a few different themes.

So, we grounded our approach in really four foundational areas: support for newly arrived families, health and wellness, basic needs, and academic opportunity. And we knew this work had to center around our community and the people who live and work in it. Because creating a school community where all students and families thrive means building on the cultural strengths, the funds of knowledge, and the lived experiences of our families. There are many different types of capital, including social capital, which connects us to resources and information, and helps us to build strong relationships.

So, we used backwards planning, thinking not only about which supports were missing, but what assets our community already held. And that mindset shift was huge.

Instead of seeing gaps, we saw richness. We listened. We asked families questions like, "What organizations do you trust? Where do you feel most seen and supported?"



**WIDA**<sup>TM</sup>

[wida.wisc.edu](http://wida.wisc.edu)

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

WIDA is housed within the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.  
© 2025 Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, on behalf of WIDA

Who are your cultural touchstones? Who or what is missing from our school events?" Some of our most meaningful insights came not from formal meetings, but from conversations in the parking lot, in the car line, family events, and from us distributing meals in the neighborhood.

The process is and was collaborative and relational, and that's at the heart of community responsive practice. We've discovered so much over the past seven years: small businesses that families own, faith communities that they belong to, cultural organizations that they participate in. And we're not just collecting this information; we're actively building with it.

Today, we regularly collaborate with over 25 organizations, and these include health and mental wellness providers who understand our family's cultural contexts, educational programs that celebrate multilingual learners, and organizations and local advocates that work to ensure access and advocacy for all. And we bring everyone together through events we call Community Resource Nights. These events are multilingual, family-centered events that reflect the full diversity and all of the assets of our community. This journey has shaped how we show up every single day. We've trained our front office staff to be culturally and linguistically welcoming. We've revised signage, hired more multilingual staff, added language access supports, and created spaces where all families feel like they belong.

Our community asset map is living, breathing, and evolving just like our families. And because we're guided by what families tell us matters to them, we're always growing and changing. That's what community looks like beyond the classroom. It's shared power, it's honoring identity, and it's building a school that mirrors the brilliance of the community that it serves.

We're seven years in. We've come a long way, but I still feel like we're just getting started.

Thanks for listening.



**WIDA**<sup>TM</sup>

[wida.wisc.edu](https://wida.wisc.edu)

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

WIDA is housed within the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.  
© 2025 Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, on behalf of WIDA