



Engage bilingual parents for kids' sake

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Other Voices

By

Patrick O'Donnell's article Thursday about the Cleveland Municipal School District captured the district's optimism for progress than can be made this school year.

Parent involvement is key to success and improvement in any school district. The Cleveland schools face different challenges than many of the surrounding districts in engaging parents. For example, approximately 11.5 percent of people over age 5 in Cleveland speak a language other than English at home. While some of these people are also fluent in English, many have limited English proficiency.

To effectively engage parents with limited English proficiency, the district must comply with its duties under federal law to provide interpreter services and translation of important written documents, such as special-education plans, school discipline notices, emergency contact forms and permission slips.

This year, the district's back-to-school mailer was available in both English and Spanish. The district's enrollment hotline flier was also provided in both languages. The district needs to continue expanding its efforts to communicate with parents who have limited English proficiency in a language they understand.

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