



NATIONAL
CHARTER SCHOOL
RESOURCE CENTER
AT SAFAL PARTNERS

Engaging English Learner Families in Charter Schools

Safal Partners and Public Impact





NATIONAL
CHARTER SCHOOL
 RESOURCE CENTER
 AT SAFAL PARTNERS

The National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC) is dedicated to supporting the development of high-quality charter schools. The NCSRC provides technical assistance to sector stakeholders and has a comprehensive collection of online resources addressing the challenges charter schools face. The website hosts reports, webinars, and newsletters focusing on facilities, funding opportunities, authorizing, English learners, special education, military families, board governance, and other topics. The NCSRC is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and led by education consulting firm Safal Partners.

[National Charter School Resource Center](http://www.charterschoolcenter.ed.gov/) (<http://www.charterschoolcenter.ed.gov/>)



Safal, meaning “good outcomes” in Sanskrit, is a mission-driven strategy consulting firm that supports education reform efforts at the federal, state, district, and school level. We bring deep domain knowledge in the charter sector, human capital management systems, and next generation learning. Safal Partners’ clients include the U.S. Department of Education, leading foundations and non-profits, and state and district agencies.

[Safal Partners](http://www.safalpartners.com/) (<http://www.safalpartners.com/>)



Public Impact’s mission is to dramatically improve learning outcomes for all children in the U.S., with a special focus on students who are not served well. We are a team of professionals from many backgrounds, including former teachers. We are researchers, thought leaders, tool-builders, and on-the-ground consultants who work with leading education reformers.

[Public Impact](http://www.publicimpact.com/) (<http://www.publicimpact.com/>)

Authors

Safal Partners: Leona Christy; Public Impact. Juli Kim and Bryan C. Hassel

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank the many individuals involved in the production of this report: Mukta Pandit and Marina Walne of Safal Partners for their input and feedback, and Shreena Punwasi and Alyssa Wagoner of Safal Partners and Elaine Hargrave of Public Impact for their research and writing support. The authors would also like to thank Erin Pfeltz, Soumya Sathya, and Stefan Huh of the U.S. Department of Education for their guidance, as well as the multiple experts who were either interviewed by the authors or attended the English Learners Charter Schools Convening on April 28, 2014 in Washington, D.C. for their invaluable insight.

Safal: Christy, L., & Public Impact: Kim, J., & Hassel, B. C. (2014). *Engaging English learner families in charter schools*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Engaging English Learner Families: Charter Strategies

Recruitment and Enrollment

Communicating with English Learner families

Meeting needs of students and families

Funding Engagement Practices

Funding through general operating budgets

Funding through community partnerships

Additional funding strategies

Implications

Appendix

Bibliography

Endnotes

Engaging English Learner Families in Charter Schools

A guide for charter schools

Introduction

Emerging as one of the fastest growing demographic groups among school children in the country, English Learners (ELs) constituted 10 percent of public school students in the United States in 2010-11.¹ Research and practice suggest that greater family engagement with schools can be a critical lever for ensuring the academic success of these students.² However, involving EL families remains a challenge for schools.³ Research suggests that EL families' awareness of school options may be constrained by factors such as limited contact with social networks through which information regarding schools and school quality is exchanged, socioeconomic status, language barriers, and families' abilities to transport their children to school.⁴ Differing cultural perspectives about what constitutes family engagement, low family education levels, and lack of familiarity with U.S. school procedures can create challenges for EL families.⁵ Given the greater autonomy afforded to them, charter schools are well positioned to counterbalance these challenges by developing new strategies and making concerted efforts to engage EL families. Indeed, several charter schools – especially those with a mission-focus on ELs – have developed new approaches and practices targeted at meeting the needs of ELs and their families.⁶

- What strategies can charter schools use to engage EL families?
- How can charter schools fund these strategies?

This paper highlights several practices used by schools to engage EL families. To develop this report, we relied primarily on an extensive survey of literature, supplemented by interviews with leaders of charter schools that have successfully engaged EL families. Research into the effectiveness of specific strategies utilized by charters to engage EL families is limited. Therefore, while some of the highlighted strategies have been validated through rigorous academic research, others – identified by charter support organizations – have been showcased because of their innovativeness and the promise they hold.⁷ Several of the schools highlighted in this report for their use of EL family engagement strategies are also demonstrating significant achievement results with their EL populations. Available state data for four of the highlighted schools can be found in the Appendix. Finally, this report incorporates insights from a convening of charter sector stakeholders organized by the U.S. Department of Education to understand how charter schools can better serve ELs.⁸

This paper is targeted at charter school leaders and sector supporters who are interested in learning about, replicating, and building upon successful models of EL family engagement. In Section I of this paper, we highlight practices employed by charter operators to reach out to EL families and involve them in the activities of their charter schools. In Section II, we provide an overview of funding strategies utilized by schools to finance their family engagement efforts. Finally, in Section III, we discuss the implications of our findings. Additionally, in the bibliography, we identify a comprehensive set of resources addressing issues charter schools may face in meeting the needs of ELs.

I. Engaging EL Families: Charter Strategies

National charter school organizations and EL advocates suggest that the most effective family involvement strategies are those that: (1) recognize the diverse circumstances that may define EL families and communities and (2) attempt to build inclusive relationships based on information and common understanding.⁹ Successful school-based approaches also focus on identifying what schools can do for families rather than what families can do to support schools.¹⁰ Below, we highlight strategies that charter schools can use to: (1) engage families of ELs during recruitment; (2) communicate with families of ELs who may have limited proficiency in English; and (3) meet the educational needs of ELs and families on an on-going basis. We also highlight examples of charter schools that are using these strategies.¹¹

Recruitment and Enrollment

Several state laws include provisions pertaining to the enrollment of ELs in charters. For instance, states such as New York require charter schools to demonstrate “good faith efforts” to enroll ELs at levels comparable to or greater than the host district.¹² Other states, such as North Carolina and New Jersey, go even further, requiring charter schools to mirror the demographics of the surrounding school district.¹³ However, research regarding school choice suggests that EL families may be constrained by several factors that play a role in determining access to educational options. These include the strength of a family’s social network within the community through which information regarding schools and school quality is exchanged, socioeconomic status, language barriers, and families’ ability to transport their children to school.¹⁴ To successfully address these constraints, charter schools must start engaging EL families at the recruitment stage, even before ELs are enrolled in school. Anecdotal evidence also points to an additional barrier: EL families may not consider charter schools if they believe that charter schools do not offer adequate services to EL students and families. However, in the absence of EL enrollment, many charter schools may not see the need to invest in programs and services targeted at ELs. This “chicken and egg” problem is particularly pervasive in the early years of a charter school’s operation, requiring resolute efforts on the part of the charter school before it is addressed.

As a starting point, charter schools need to ensure that their marketing and outreach efforts are broad and inclusive and do not inadvertently exclude ELs. For instance, schools should plan their outreach campaign so that neighborhoods with significant EL populations are not left out. Schools that have enrolled a significant percentage of ELs have additionally adopted more proactive strategies that address location, language and information barriers. These include:

- Radio advertisements and fliers posted in neighborhoods and community centers with large EL populations, in languages understood by EL families.
- Information meetings and presentations at feeder schools and other community organizations (e.g., churches, community centers, etc.) that serve high concentrations of EL students and families. Accessibility by public transportation should be an important consideration in selecting meeting locations.
- Door-to-door solicitation and in-person outreach in neighborhoods with high concentrations of EL families with an emphasis on developing personal relationships.

- Collaborating with social service or other community agencies and institutions that serve EL families to disseminate information.

During the registration and enrollment process, EL families may need assistance to understand the process and complete forms. By partnering with agencies and institutions, schools can ensure that EL families receive necessary guidance and translation assistance.

Spotlight on practice

YES PREP Gulfton (*Houston, TX*)

The staff makes presentations at surrounding feeder schools and distributes bilingual fliers at community centers and apartment complexes.¹⁵

International Charter School (*Pawtucket, RI*)

The school advertises on local radio stations and distributes printed materials in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, the three primary languages spoken at the school.¹⁶

Match Community Day Charter School (*Boston, MA*)

The school requests and receives the enrollment list of traditional public schools in the area and mails materials to families of all kindergarten and first grade ELs in their primary language.¹⁷

Communicating with EL Families

Language can be a major barrier in communicating with families of ELs, many of whom may not be proficient in English. U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) policy requires schools to provide EL families with adequate notice of information that is provided to non-EL families, in line with the U.S. Department of Justice guidance (see Box on “Legal Obligations for Communicating With EL Families”).¹⁸ In addition, federal special education laws require that families of students whom charter schools recommend for special education identification, evaluation or placement be notified in their native language.¹⁹ To address the language barrier and comply with legal requirements, charter schools should make communication materials, including recruitment and post-enrollment documents, as well as marketing and outreach materials, available in the languages most commonly spoken by the EL communities that it seeks to serve.

Charter schools can adopt several practical steps to help ensure efficient and effective communication with EL families:

- Maintaining a comprehensive list of families needing language services, including the language in which assistance is needed, and making this list accessible to all school staff who may have contact with EL families. Since both ELs and non-ELs may have parents with LEP, it may be necessary to ask parents of all students about their preferred language of communication during the registration process.
- Ensuring that all important documents and notices are translated into the primary languages spoken in the school.
- Communicating to families that free interpreter and translator services are provided, since families often don’t know that these services are available to them.

- Adopting a written policy for school staff that details which documents have been and will be translated.
- Training school staff on how to request and work with interpreters and translators.²⁰



Legal Obligations for Communicating With EL Families

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA) provide guidance regarding schools' responsibilities towards ELs and their families. All public schools, including charters, are required by statute to develop policies to identify EL families and meaningfully communicate with them. In accordance with U.S. Department of Justice guidance, OCR considers four factors to determine the extent to which a school needs to have policies and practices in place for meaningful communication with EL families: (1) the number or proportion of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) families eligible to be served or likely to be encountered; (2) the frequency of contact with LEP individuals; (3) the nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the program, and; (4) the resources available and costs.

Translation: Based on these four factors, schools may draw up a list of important documents that they will translate in the languages of their major EL groups and translate those documents into other languages as needed or requested. Schools must ensure that qualified, professional translators translate all significant communications and documentation. Translations may summarize key points of an English-language document, instead of translating the entire document. Documents translated could include:

- General information about the school: e.g., school policies, student/parent handbooks, field trip notices, invitations to school events, bus schedules
- Specific information about the families' own children: e.g., discipline notices, report cards, class schedules
- Parental forms: e.g., emergency contact cards, special education forms

Interpretation: A school may also find that it can provide meaningful access to EL families by orally interpreting a particular document, instead of translating it in writing. Additionally, caregivers can be provided with an interpreter during meetings that are specifically about a child. Generally, it is not appropriate to use friends or family members, particularly children, to interpret, unless the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) person needing interpretation makes such a request. Ideally, charter schools should have professional interpreters readily available for both scheduled and unscheduled parent visits to the school. At a minimum, charter schools should provide qualified interpreters for all teacher-parent meetings.

A point of note is that federal law prohibits public schools, including charters, from requesting information on application or enrollment forms that may dissuade or discourage families from enrolling their children. Schools may not request information with the purpose or result of denying access to public schools on the basis of race, national origin, or EL status. While a district or charter school may require students or their parents to provide proof of residency within its attendance area or a birth certificate to ensure age eligibility requirements, it may not inquire about the immigration status of a child nor deny enrollment for lack of a social security number.²¹

Schools should proactively identify resources from both within and beyond the school community that can provide translation and interpretation services as needed. While translators and interpreters need not be certified, it is important to ensure that they are qualified to provide the necessary language assistance services and that questions related to confidentiality or conflicts of interest are avoided.

Spotlight on practice

Inwood Academy (*New York City, NY*)

Staff members at the school use text messages and automated voice messages translated in Spanish to communicate with families. Additionally, interpreters are present at every school meeting, and parts of the school website are in both Spanish and English.²²

Folk Arts Cultural Treasures Charter School (*Philadelphia, PA*)

Since the school serves a large number of ELs, it relies on in-house translators and interpreters to provide language assistance to EL families. The school translates significant school documents, offers a translation phone line service, and provides interpreters for report card conferences and at school events.²³

Meeting Needs of Students and Families

Research has demonstrated that meaningful parent involvement in schools leads to higher levels of student achievement, improved school attendance, higher graduation rates, larger enrollment in post-secondary education and students with positive attitudes about school.²⁴ Family involvement can also help students be more engaged with school and motivate them to work harder. However, information gaps and language and cultural barriers can dissuade EL families and school staff from engaging with each other. Some schools have made a concerted effort to understand and address these barriers. For instance, Folk Arts Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS), a Philadelphia charter school that serves a student population that is predominantly of Asian origin, has moved away from traditional family engagement strategies like bake sales and read aloud volunteers. Instead, the school's engagement model prioritizes home visits and frequent conversations with the family (in person and over the phone) to strengthen relationships with families and students. Recognizing that many EL families may come from cultural milieus that discourage questioning or criticizing schools, FACTS has developed finely tuned questions and an interview style that builds trust and elicits feedback from parents. Other strategies that focus on building community and connections between schools and families and creating a welcoming environment for families include:

- Hiring family advocates or coordinators as part of the school-based staff.²⁵
- Establishing partnerships with community-based organizations that have long-standing relationships with immigrant families in their community and leveraging those relationships to provide services that meet the needs of EL families.
- Providing programming for family members, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes; study groups on parenting topics; and workshops focused on topics of particular interest to EL families. Topics can include understanding American public school system

processes, engaging with Parent Teacher Associations, parental rights, social services, and filing OCR complaints.

- Embedding cultural knowledge into traditional school strategies aimed at increasing family involvement and validating and capitalizing on cultural differences.²⁶
- Identifying roles that EL families can play at school, including speaking about their native countries or participating in a cultural exchange program,²⁷ as ways of acknowledging cultural traditions and values as strengths that can be incorporated into the school program.²⁸
- Encouraging parent-to-parent efforts by, for example, developing a cadre of parent leaders who serve as liaisons between the school and the surrounding community.

Central to the model adopted by some of the schools profiled in this report is the belief that bilingual students are an asset to the school and should be integrated within the school community. This belief goes a long way toward addressing the stigma that some ELs perceive about their status, which in turn can encourage EL families to participate in activities tailored for them.

Spotlight on practice

Namaste Charter School (*Chicago, IL*)

The school employs a full-time bilingual parent coordinator who runs a family center at the school that provides services such as counseling in Spanish.²⁹

Raul Yzaguirre School for Success (*Houston, TX*)

The school employs a full-time parent coordinator for family programming, including GED courses, ESL classes, and weekly parenting classes.³⁰

The El Sol Science and Arts Academy (*Santa Ana, CA*)

The Academy offers a wellness center that provides family services including health care, ESL and citizenship courses, pro bono legal services, and evening adult programming in partnership with a local non-profit.³¹

Match Community Day Charter School (*Boston, MA*)

The school organizes over 20 family engagement events every year. All families receive weekly calls from tutors and monthly calls from teachers. Additionally, a third of the school's students are selected for family visits every year. Family engagement is tracked through the Student Information System, and teachers are held accountable for their engagement efforts.

II. Funding EL Engagement Practices

Charter schools potentially face great challenges reaching and engaging EL families. Although they have more freedom to innovate, charter schools may not necessarily have access to the communication and community engagement resources available to district schools. Single campus charter schools may, in particular, feel constrained by the lack of resources, since they do not have the option of spreading costs and functions across many schools. Charter schools thus need to show creativity and persistence not just in outreach and engagement practices, but also in identifying funding streams to support these activities.

Funding Through General Operating Budgets

Overall operational budgets may provide some or all support of outreach and engagement activities. At the Inwood Academy in New York City, New York, where the school's mission has always included a focus on parent engagement, the school budgets several thousands of dollars each year to support parent engagement services and activities. School funds provide for communication resources, including a robo-call system that sends out automated phone calls, text messages, and voice messages in Spanish and English to inform families about events and other happenings at the school. In addition to the initial software expense, the robo-call system costs \$2.50 per student per year, which Inwood Academy's Community Engagement Coordinator and co-founder Christian Guerrero³² considers a cost-savings in terms of staff time. The school budget also covers printing of all school recruitment, enrollment, and other school materials (e.g., a weekly bilingual newsletter) in both Spanish and English, door-to-door recruitment, a Spanish version of the school's website,³³ and professional translation services and audio headgear for EL families needing real-time translation at monthly parent meetings.

Funding Through Community Partnerships

El Sol Sciences and Arts Academy in Santa Ana, California relies primarily on leveraging community resources to provide services and educational programming for its EL families. In 2009, the El Sol Family and Children Center (FCLC) opened as a partner to the school to provide integrated health services, and education and social services (including English language and job skills training classes) to school families and the surrounding community. The Center grew out of an earlier pilot program funded by an area foundation that relied on a model of health and education service delivery provided by active professional retirees. According to Center director, Monique Daviss,³⁴ the 2009 Great Recession revealed the intense need for these services by school families. Consequently, the foundation that funded the pilot convened area community service agencies to explore their willingness to provide services onsite at El Sol, the underlying idea being that these agencies were already providing services to needy populations and the school could provide a ready audience to help them reach their clients. Leveraging the school's partnership with the convening foundation, the school secured community partners without promise of funding from either the foundation or the school. Brokering the trust it had developed in the community, El Sol was able to grow a client base for these services among families with students at the school. Word of mouth and the school's reputation subsequently helped generate clients outside the school community.

As these services and programs are provided onsite after school hours, El Sol has not had to build new facilities. Nor has the school provided financial support or sought grants to sustain the

provision of these services at the school. Rather, community agency partners have relied on their own funding or received grants to continue their work at El Sol. For example, in partnership with an area free clinic, the school houses an onsite Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) to serve uninsured students, their families and other community members. A modular, funded by an area hospital, currently serves as the FQHC and will be replaced by a 4000-foot onsite wellness center financed through FQHC funds. In partnership with an area community college, night-time adult education classes, including ESL, are held at the school. A local food bank distributes food at El Sol once a month to El Sol families and the broader community. According to Sara Flores,³⁵ Center Director of Community Life and Early Childhood Education, these services would not be provided absent open-minded school leadership and charter school autonomy.

Additional Funding Strategies

In addition to the two strategies outlined above, charter schools may also rely on traditional sources of funding (e.g., grants from local foundations or businesses, operational funds, or Title I or Title III funds) as well as explore creative possibilities such as the following:

- *Forming cooperative ventures with other charter schools to share costs for translation and interpreter services, media outreach and provision of other family services:* The cooperative model has been used successfully by charter schools to support special education and related services (e.g., pooling resources to purchase equipment, hiring a specialist who serves several schools).³⁶ By spreading these costs over two or more schools, charter schools may be able to afford a more robust engagement strategy. Multi-school cooperatives may also be able to apply for and receive federal, state, or philanthropic grants that would be difficult to win, or too expensive to apply for and manage, for a single school.
- *Using low-cost agents for outreach:* For example, schools could recruit and train volunteers from their own bilingual staff, students, and families to engage other EL families in the community, or mobilize service-oriented volunteers from local colleges and universities who speak the languages of EL families. Schools could also seek school staff or parents with fundraising experience to search for grants.³⁷
- *Using technologies that can make outreach more affordable:* With cell phones and smartphones becoming increasingly ubiquitous, for example, outreach campaigns using low or no cost social media mechanisms are increasingly viable.
- *Forming partnerships with or securing sponsorships from community organizations or companies that share a school's interest in serving EL families and are willing to subsidize costs in return for sponsorship acknowledgment or ready access to the school community:* While schools should take care to avoid becoming advertising vehicles, carefully thought out sponsorships can defray costs schools would otherwise have to incur and also extend a school's marketing and potential donor engagement reach to a partner's or sponsor's audience. Like El Sol, schools can simply offer local community organizations free space on school grounds to bring their services to EL families or provide opportunities at meetings to inform parents about their services.³⁸

In summary, when exploring and considering funding engagement strategies, charter schools should consider all resources and potential partnerships available to them in their communities and how these may be leveraged to support EL engagement and services.

III. Implications for Policy and Practice

As the numbers of ELs in charter schools grow, greater family participation can provide a significant source of support for students and teachers. Schools that have successfully engaged EL families have approached the task with a worldview that recognizes and appreciates the diverse skills, experiences and knowledge that these families bring. In this paper, we have attempted to highlight some of the innovative approaches and practices that charter schools have pioneered to increase family engagement. Based on our discussion, we pose the following considerations for charter school leaders and developers as well as policymakers on this important set of issues.

Considerations for Charter School Leaders and Developers

- What programmatic elements and services are needed in order to recruit ELs and engage their families?** The examples of charter schools that have successfully recruited ELs show that while outreach is necessary, it is often not sufficient. In order to recruit and engage EL families, schools need to ensure that they have programs and services in place that appeal to and meet the needs of ELs and their families. The flexibility afforded to charter schools provides them with the unique opportunity to innovate and adopt approaches targeted at ELs. If longer school days or school weeks, certain academic programs, particular after school activities, or specific kinds of enrichment would help bring EL students to their schools and help them succeed, then charter schools have the autonomy they need to make those changes. The various examples highlighted in this paper provide a starting point for charter schools interested in better serving ELs to think about what programmatic elements they might include to help bring ELs to their schools and help them succeed.
- What support systems does the staff need in order to meet the needs of EL families?** Teachers and other school-based staff often appreciate the importance of school-family collaboration. However, their efforts are often hamstrung by a lack of resources or by language and cultural barriers. It is therefore important that school leaders, including principals and members of the governing board, demonstrate visible support for greater EL family engagement through school policy and practice and reinforce their commitment through staffing and resourcing decisions. While schools can consider hiring specific personnel to communicate with EL families, all teachers should be encouraged to see family engagement not as an add-on, but as a core element of their work. Aligned with this approach, school leaders should adopt school-wide and teacher-specific goals for family engagement and track efforts to ensure accountability.
- What resources are available to provide services to EL families within their schools?** In this paper, we have highlighted several strategies that charter schools should explore as they seek to engage EL families. In particular, creatively leveraging existing community resources stands out as an option that is available to all charter schools. In many communities, schools are just one of many agencies that have responsibility for EL families. Social service agencies, the faith community, parks and recreation departments, health services, and other organizations also have roles to play. If these services are provided well, they can help students come to school better prepared. With that in mind, charter schools may be well served by actively reaching out to these agencies and fostering collaboration and coordination of efforts. These could range from relatively simple efforts (e.g., ensuring that school families know about the array of offerings in the community) to more ambitious

projects (e.g., agencies working together actively to coordinate services for specific families).

- **How can charter schools ensure that EL families have access to information about their school and their students' performance?** Charter schools need to take steps to ensure that families of ELs have the clear, actionable information they need to be actively engaged in their students' education. The task is easier when the school serves large numbers of ELs with the same native language. However, communicating with EL families from different communities and speaking multiple languages can make the provision of translation and interpretation services a logistical challenge. Charter schools may find it beneficial to join forces with each other and with other schools on meeting this need. For example, if the state is implementing a new assessment, schools could work together to provide explanations in multiple languages, rather than each school individually creating such materials.

Considerations for Policy Makers

- **How can the charter sector identify, recognize and disseminate effective models of engagement with EL families?** Charter schools are seen as engines of innovation, and in the area of engaging EL families, a few charters have evolved exciting new approaches and practices. However, these strategies remain isolated in individual schools, with few transferred to the wider sector, let alone to traditional public schools. Policy makers and the key stakeholders in the sector must reflect on the data, resources and systems needed in order for promising advances to emerge, be validated through data, and become a catalyst for change, leading to better services across the board for ELs and their families.
- **How can state laws and authorizer policies adequately support engagement of EL families by charter schools?** While engagement is largely a matter of school-level practice, state policymakers and authorizers can have an impact on how well charter schools reach out to and involve families, including EL families. In their application processes, authorizers commonly ask applicants to show evidence that they have reached out to, and can show demand from, the families they intend to serve. Authorizers could review these requirements to ensure they adequately prompt applicants to include EL families in these activities. Policymakers can ensure that families everywhere, including EL families, have access to high-quality and easily accessible information about their schools' performance that will empower families to make good choices and hold schools accountable for their children's education.

APPENDIX EL Achievement at Spotlight Schools

This paper highlights several practices used by schools to engage EL families. These practices have been showcased for their creativity at addressing the challenges of reaching out to and engaging EL families. Additionally, several of the schools highlighted in this report for their use of EL family engagement strategies have demonstrated significant achievement results with their EL populations. Available state data for four of the highlighted schools suggest that ELs attending these charter schools are generally outperforming their counterparts in the local district and state. The tables below present proficiency data for ELs on state tests as well as comparative district and state comparative EL performance data. Highlighted cells indicate test areas in which these charter schools are outperforming schools in the local district and state with ELs. Additional primary research has not been conducted on the effectiveness of the schools or the practices.

El Sol Science and Arts Academy in Santa Ana, California: 755 students, grades K- 8, 2012-13 school year; 69% EL.

	ELA School	Math School	ELA District, Santa Ana Unified	Math District, Santa Ana Unified	ELA State, CA	Math State, CA
2010-2011	54%	80%	37%	53%	39%	49%
2011-2012	51%	79%	38%	53%	41%	50%
2012-2013	47%	83%	35%	49%	39%	49%

Source: <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/Pages/Home.aspx> From AYP: English Learners, percent scoring proficient or above in English/Language arts and Math.

Namaste Charter School in Chicago, Illinois: 465 students, grades K-8, 2012-13 school year; 30% EL.

	Reading School	Math School	Reading District, City of Chicago	Math District, City of Chicago	Reading State, Illinois	Math State, Illinois
2010-11	n/a	n/a	44%	65%	49%	69%
2011-12	74%	86%	46%	67%	51%	70%
2012-13	47%	56%	27%	36%	27%	34%

Source: <http://webprod.isbe.net/ereportcard/publicsite/getsearchcriteria.aspx>, From AYP Status Report; percent of LEP students meeting or exceeding IL standards in math and reading. (Note: Cut scores in the Illinois Standards Achievement Test, ISAT, were raised in 2013).

Folk Arts Cultural Treasures School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: 477 students, grades K-8, 2012-13 school year; 17% EL.

	Reading School	Math School	Reading District, Philadelphia	Math District, Philadelphia	Reading State, PA	Math State, PA
2009-2010	41%	83%	28%	45%	25%	43%
2010-2011	33%	70%	26%	44%	24%	42%
2011-2012	46%	73%	15%	32%	18%	35%

Source: http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/school_assessments/7442 PSSA (PA System of School Assessment) Results. School level math and reading results. Disaggregated results by subgroup, EL. Data available only up to the 2011-12 school year.

Yes Prep in Gulfton, Texas: 780 students, grades 6-11, 2012-13 school year; 25% EL.

	Reading School	Math School	Reading District, Houston ISD	Math District, Houston ISD	Reading State, TX	Math State, TX
2010-11	84%	98%	76%	80%	73%	76%
2011-12	51%	79%	54%	64%	50%	58%
2012-13	57%	77%	52%	64%	52%	62%

Source: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/index.html> for 2012 and 2013; percent of ELL students passing STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) (Phase in 1 Level II is the passing standard). For 2011, TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) LEP students meeting reading/math standard.

¹ Note that district and state level data includes all students tested and may not be limited to just students in the grades tested at the individual schools.

² School Accountability Report Card, California Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.sarconline.org/SarcPdfs/5/30666706119127.pdf>

³ Report Card, Illinois State Board of Education, Retrieved from <http://iirc.niu.edu/School.aspx?schoolid=15016299025218C>

⁴ Pennsylvania School Performance Profile, Pennsylvania Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://paschoolperformance.org/Profile/7192>

⁵ Texas Academic Performance Report, Texas Education Agency, Retrieved from <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/2013/static/campus/c101845004.pdf>)

Bibliography

Arias, M. Beatriz & Morillo-Campbell, Milagros (2008). *Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times*. Education Policy Research Unit, Arizona State University.

Breseith, L., Robertson, K., & LaFond, Susan (2011). *A Guide for Engaging ELL Families: Twenty Strategies for School Leaders*, ¡Colorín Colorado!

Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) (2009). *Multiple Choice: Charter School Performance in 16 States*.

Clair, Nancy (2011). *Charter Schools and ELLs: An Authorizer and School Leader Guide to Educating ELLs*. National Association of Charter School Authorizers.

Education Commission of the States (2013). "School Accountability 'Report Cards.'"

Kahlenberg, Richard & Potter, Halley (2012). *Diverse Charter Schools: Can Racial and Socioeconomic Integration Promote Better Outcomes for Students*. Poverty and Race Research Action Council and The Century Foundation.

Lazarín, M. & Ortiz-Licon (2010). *Next Generation Charter Schools: Meeting the Needs of Latinos and English Language Learners*. Center for American Progress and National Council of La Raza.

Mansukhani, Sunil (2013). *Serving English Language Learners: A Toolkit for Public Charter Schools*. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

Multicultural Education, Training and Advocacy (META) (2009). *Charter schools and English language learners in Massachusetts: Policy Push without the Data*.

Sattin-Bajaj, Carolyn & Suárez-Orozco, Marcelo (2012). *English Language Learner Students and Charter Schools in New York State: Challenges and Opportunities: Report from the NY Governor's Leadership Team for High Quality Public Schools*. Center for School Change, Macalester College.

Tinkler, B. (2002). A Review of Literature on Hispanic/Latino Involvement in K-12 Education. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED469134.pdf>

Uro, Gabriela & Barrio, Alejandra (2013). *English Language Learners in America's Great City Schools: Demographics, Achievement and Staffing*. Council of the Great City Schools.

Zacarian, Debbie (2012). *Serving English Learners: Laws, Policies, and Regulations*, ¡Colorín Colorado!

Endnotes

¹ https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp

² August, D. & Hakuta, K. (1997). *Improving schools for language minority children: A research agenda*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; Henderson, A. & Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The Family is critical to student achievement*. National Committee for Citizens in Education.

³ Fuller, M.L. & Olsen, G. (1988). *Home-school relations*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon

⁴ Frankenburg, Erica et al (2011). *Choice without equity: Charter school segregation*. Education Policy Analysis Archives. Retrieved from <http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/779/878>

⁵ Arias, M. Beatriz & Morillo-Campbell, Milagros (2008). *Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times*. Education Policy Research Unit, Arizona State University. Retrieved from <http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/EPSSL-0801-250-EPRU2.pdf>

⁶ See e.g., Clair, Nancy (2011). *Charter Schools and ELLs: An Authorizer and School Leader Guide to Educating ELLs*. National Association of Charter School Authorizers. Retrieved from

http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/publications/Issue_Briefs/IssueBriefNo22_CharterSchoolsandELLs.pdf?q=images/stories/publications/Issue_Briefs/IssueBriefNo22_CharterSchoolsandELLs.pdf; ; Mansukhani, Sunil (2013).

Serving English Language Learners: A Toolkit for Public Charter Schools. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from

<http://www.publiccharters.org/publications/serving-english-language-learners-toolkit-public-charter-schools/>

⁷ The examples provided here were originally reported by other sources including Lazarín & Ortiz-Licon (2010) and Mansukhani (2013) and are attributed accordingly. The authors conducted no primary research on the effectiveness of the engagement practices or EL student performance for any of the examples provided.

⁸ English Learners Charter Schools Convening organized by the U.S. Department of Education on April 28, 2014 in Washington, D.C.

⁹ See, Clair, Nancy (2011). *Charter Schools and ELLs: An Authorizer and School Leader Guide to Educating ELLs*. National Association of Charter School Authorizers; Mansukhani, Sunil. (2013) *Serving English Language Learners: A Toolkit for Public Charter Schools*. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from

<http://www.publiccharters.org/publications/serving-english-language-learners-toolkit-public-charter-schools/>; Arias, M. Beatriz & Morillo-Campbell, Milagros (2008). *Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times*. Education Policy Research Unit, Arizona State University. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED506652.pdf>

¹⁰ Arias, M. Beatriz & Morillo-Campbell, Milagros (2008). *Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times*. Education Policy Research Unit, Arizona State University. Retrieved at <http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/EPSSL-0801-250-EPRU2.pdf>; Breseith, L., Robertson, K., & LaFond, Susan (2011). *A Guide for Engaging ELL Families: Twenty Strategies for School Leaders*, ¡Colorín Colorado!

¹¹ The examples provided here were originally reported by other sources including Lazarín & Ortiz-Licon (2010) and Mansukhani (2013) and are attributed accordingly. The authors conducted no primary research on the effectiveness of the engagement practices or EL student performance for any of the examples provided.

¹² New York law requires charter schools to “demonstrate good faith efforts” to enroll EL student populations comparable to or greater than the host districts’ EL enrollment figures. See N.Y. U.C.C. Law §2854 (2)(a). Retrieved from [http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/LAWSSEAF.cgi?QUERYTYPE=LAWS+&QUERYDATA=\\$\\$EDN2854\\$\\$@TXEDN02854+&LIST=LAW+&BROWSER=BROWSER+&TOKEN=11655118+&TARGET=VIEW](http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/LAWSSEAF.cgi?QUERYTYPE=LAWS+&QUERYDATA=$$EDN2854$$@TXEDN02854+&LIST=LAW+&BROWSER=BROWSER+&TOKEN=11655118+&TARGET=VIEW)

¹³ See e.g., North Carolina, N.C.G.S. § § 115C-238.29F(g)(5). Retrieved from http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_115C/GS_115C-238.29F.html; New Jersey, N.J. Rev. Stat. §18A:36A-8 (e). Retrieved from <http://law.justia.com/codes/new-jersey/2013/title-18a/section-18a-36a-8>

¹⁴ Frankenburg, Erica et al (2011). *Choice without equity: Charter school segregation*. Education Policy Analysis Archives. Retrieved from <http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/779/878>

¹⁵ Lazarín, M. & Ortiz-Licon (2010). *Next Generation Charter Schools: Meeting the Needs of Latinos and English Language Learners*. Center for American Progress and National Council of La Raza. Retrieved from http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2010/09/pdf/charter_schools.pdf

¹⁶ Lazarín, M. & Ortiz-Licon (2010). *Next Generation Charter Schools: Meeting the Needs of Latinos and English Language Learners*. Center for American Progress and National Council of La Raza. Retrieved from http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2010/09/pdf/charter_schools.pdf

¹⁷ Kahlenberg, Richard & Potter, Halley (2012). *Diverse Charter Schools: Can Racial and Socioeconomic Integration Promote Better Outcomes for Students*. Poverty and Race Research Action Council and The Century Foundation. Retrieved from http://tcf.org/assets/downloads/Diverse_Charter_Schools.pdf

- ¹⁸ See “Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons,” Department of Justice, (June 18, 2002) available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2002-06-18/pdf/02-15207.pdf>
- ¹⁹ See CFR 300.503. Retrieved from <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/34/300.503>
- ²⁰ Mansukhani, Sunil (2013). *Serving English Language Learners: A Toolkit for Public Charter Schools*. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/serving-english-language-learners-toolkit-public-charter-schools>
- ²¹ See *Joint Letter of the Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice and the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education* (May 6, 2011). Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201101.html>
- ²² Mansukhani, Sunil (2013). *Serving English Language Learners: A Toolkit for Public Charter Schools*. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/serving-english-language-learners-toolkit-public-charter-schools>
- ²³ Mansukhani, Sunil (2013). *Serving English Language Learners: A Toolkit for Public Charter Schools*. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/serving-english-language-learners-toolkit-public-charter-schools>
- ²⁴ August, D. & Hakuta, K. (1997). *Improving schools for language minority children: A research agenda*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; Henderson, A. & Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The Family is critical to student achievement*. National Committee for Citizens in Education.
- ²⁵ Sattin-Bajaj, Carolyn & Suárez-Orozco, Marcelo (2012). *English Language Learner Students and Charter Schools in New York State: Challenges and Opportunities: Report from the NY Governor's Leadership Team for High Quality Public Schools*. Center for School Change, Macalester College. Retrieved from <http://centerforschoolchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/ELL-Report-.pdf>
- ²⁶ Arias, M. Beatriz & Morillo-Campbell, Milagros (2008). *Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times*. Education Policy Research Unit, Arizona State University. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED506652.pdf>
- ²⁷ Breseith, L., Robertson, K., & LaFond, Susan (2011). *A Guide for Engaging ELL Families: Twenty Strategies for School Leaders*, ¡Colorín Colorado!
- ²⁸ Tinkler, B. (2002). *A Review of Literature on Hispanic/Latino Involvement in K-12 Education*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED469134.pdf>
- ²⁹ Mansukhani, Sunil (2013). *Serving English Language Learners: A Toolkit for Public Charter Schools*. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/serving-english-language-learners-toolkit-public-charter-schools>
- ³⁰ Lazarín, M. & Ortiz-Licon (2010). *Next Generation Charter Schools: Meeting the Needs of Latinos and English Language Learners*. Center for American Progress and National Council of La Raza. Retrieved from http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2010/09/pdf/charter_schools.pdf
- ³¹ Mansukhani, Sunil (2013). *Serving English Language Learners: A Toolkit for Public Charter Schools*. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/serving-english-language-learners-toolkit-public-charter-schools>; Lazarín, M. & Ortiz-Licon (2010). *Next Generation Charter Schools: Meeting the Needs of Latinos and English Language Learners*. Center for American Progress and National Council of La Raza. Retrieved from http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2010/09/pdf/charter_schools.pdf
- ³² Guerrero, Christian (2014, April 1). Telephone interview.
- ³³ <http://www.inwoodacademy.org/espanol/>
- ³⁴ Daviss, Monique (2014, April 1). Telephone interview.
- ³⁵ Flores, Sara (2014, April 1). Telephone interview.
- ³⁶ Gandhi, Allison et al. (2011). *Charter School Special Education Cooperatives: A Model for Supporting the Delivery of Services to Students with Disabilities in Charter Schools*. American Institutes for Research.
- ³⁷ Breseith, L., Robertson, K., & LaFond, Susan (2011). *A Guide for Engaging ELL Families: Twenty Strategies for School Leaders*, ¡Colorín Colorado!
- ³⁸ Breseith, L., Robertson, K., & LaFond, Susan (2011). *A Guide for Engaging ELL Families: Twenty Strategies for School Leaders*, ¡Colorín Colorado!