

What You Should Know About the Denver Public Schools (“DPS”) Consent Decree

- ✓ English Language Learners (“ELLs”) have the right to **meaningfully** and **equally** participate in school.
- ✓ The DPS Consent Decree requires DPS to take specific steps to make sure that ELLs can learn English and grade-level content so all DPS students have an equal opportunity to participate in school.
- ✓ If your child is a Spanish-speaking ELL, you may enroll them in a program that provides native language instruction in Spanish while also teaching English. If your neighborhood school does not provide native language instruction, DPS will provide transportation to a school that does.

**ELLs (also called Multilingual Language Learners or “MLLs” by DPS) are students who are not proficient in English.*

You should talk to your school’s front office staff (like a secretary) if:

- 1) You would like to have an interpreter at school meetings, or
- 2) You would like to have your child’s school documents translated.

You should talk to your school’s principal if:

- 1) You have questions about the English language or native language support services at your child’s school, or
- 2) You think your child is not getting the services they need.

If you need more help after talking to your school, you can contact DPS’s Multilingual Education (“MLE”) Department by calling (720) 423-2040 or emailing ELAHotline_EGC@dpsk12.org

What are your child's rights under the Consent Decree?

DPS must identify all ELLs and offer them and their families certain services.

At school enrollment/registration:

- Your school must ask what language your family speaks at home, the language your child first learned, and the language your child speaks most often. This is called a Home Language Questionnaire (“HLQ”).
- The HLQ is available in English, Spanish, and many other languages. If you need a translated HLQ, ask your school’s secretary.
- If your HLQ answers show a language other than English, the school must screen your child to see if they are eligible for language services. While you wait to find out, the school must offer them temporary services.
- Your school must tell you about English language support services available at your and other schools.
- You get to pick your child’s English language program. You can change the program you pick at any time during your child’s enrollment.

DPS must provide English language services to help ELLs overcome language barriers.

During the school year, your child has a right to:

- A grade-appropriate English language program taught by qualified teachers;
- English language development instruction that teaches them how to read, write, speak, and understand English;
- Quality content and materials for ELL classes that are comparable to non-ELL classes; and
- Both English language services and disability-related services if the student is an ELL with a disability.

DPS must review grades, test scores, and teacher feedback to decide if ELLs are progressing. Your child’s school must update you on your child’s performance by sending you progress reports and holding parent/teacher conferences.

What are your rights under the Consent Decree?

- DPS must communicate with parents in a language you understand so that you have access to the same information as English-speaking parents. DPS must provide translation or interpretation from a qualified translator or interpreter and cannot use students, siblings, friends, or untrained staff for these services.
- DPS must translate or orally interpret documents that have District-or-school essential information into a language parents understand, even if your child is not identified as an ELL. This includes:
 - Registration forms
 - Report cards
 - Parent and student handbooks
 - Discipline notices
 - Permission slips for student activities
 - Special education and related services
 - Gifted and talented programs
 - Magnet and charter schools
 - Health and public safety

- Your school must have a Parent Advisory Committee (“PAC”) with members chosen by parents with children in the English language program. The PAC’s purpose is to give parents information about the program, increase communication between ELL parents and DPS, review implementation of the program, and listen to parent concerns. Your school must hold regular PAC meetings, tell you about these meetings so you can attend, and provide translation or interpretation services at the meetings.

To report a concern about DPS’s compliance with the Consent Decree:

DOJ Civil Rights Portal
<https://civilrights.justice.gov>

DOJ Community Outreach Mailbox
Community.DPS@usdoj.gov