

Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee

Frequently Asked Questions

Multilingual/Language Development Department

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Introductions

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State Requirement

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Illinois Legislation

- Illinois School Code
  - Article 14C-10, Parent and Community Participation
    - School districts shall provide for the maximum practical involvement of parents of children in transitional bilingual education programs.
- Illinois Administrative Code (Title 23)
  - Section 228.30(c)(4), Parent and Community Participation
    - Each district or cooperative shall establish a parent advisory committee consisting of parents, legal guardians, transitional bilingual education teachers, counselors, and representatives from community groups.

BPAC Overview

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Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC) Overview

- **Represents** the interests of English learner (EL) students in Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program(s), their parents/guardians, and community members.
- **Ensures** the district recognizes these community voices and acts to meet their needs.
- **Advises** and **focuses** on helping bilingual parents and community members better understand bilingual programming.
- **Advocates** for the academic needs of EL students in TBE.

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Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC) Overview

- **Receives** a detailed overview of the bilingual programs.
- **Acquires** access to resources.
- **Encourages** involvement in the school district.
- **Strengthens** community investment in EL student outcomes.

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BPAC FAQ

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BPAC FAQ Document



BPAC FAQ document

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What are school district responsibilities in relation to a BPAC?

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1. What are school district responsibilities in relation to a BPAC?

Ensure the establishment of the BPAC.

Provide annual training needed to develop the BPAC in the language that the parent members understand. This includes:

Information on the basic requirements of the BPAC	Information related to instructional approaches and methods in bilingual education	Information about state and federal law related to students' participation and parents' rights	Accountability measures relevant to students in bilingual programs

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1. What are school district responsibilities in relation to a BPAC? State Requirements

State Requirements:

Establish a BPAC in compliance with state and federal requirements.

Provide annual training in the language understood by parent members.

Required topics for training include:

- Instructional approaches and methods in bilingual education.
- State and federal legal provisions related to EL students' participation and parental rights.
- Basic requirements of the BPAC.
- How to run formal meetings (e.g., setting an agenda, keeping minutes, etc.).

Ensure the BPAC is meeting at least four times a year to encourage active participation of parents.

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1. What are school district responsibilities in relation to a BPAC? State Requirements Continued

State Requirements:

Provide the BPAC with key documents for review, including:

- The Bilingual Service Plan
- The EL section of the Evidence-Based Spending Plan
- Other relevant documents, such as Consolidated District Plan or Title III applications

Include interpreters at each meeting to ensure meaningful access to non-English speaking parents or guardians.

Ensure transparency by accurately recording and maintaining meeting minutes, as well as keeping all relevant documentation readily accessible.

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1. What are school district responsibilities in relation to a BPAC? ISBE Recommendations

ISBE Recommendations:

Provide logistical and technical support to ensure that the BPAC has:

- A suitable space and materials for meetings.

Have a district representative attend each BPAC meeting to strengthen communication and collaboration with parents and the community.

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When is a district required to establish a BPAC?

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2. When is a district required to establish a BPAC?

State Requirement:

It is mandated that a school district establish a BPAC when:

- One (or more) attendance center(s) has 20 or more EL students who share the same home language in any grades from K-12.
- One (or more) attendance center(s) has 20 or more EL students who share the same home language in pre-K.
- The 20-plus number includes students with parent refusals.

ISBE Recommendation:

Once a BPAC is established, it is recommended that a district maintain the BPAC even if numbers fluctuate below 20.

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What are the responsibilities of the BPAC?

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3. What are the responsibilities of the BPAC?

BPAC Responsibilities:

Operate autonomously, elect its own officers, and establish internal rules and procedures in writing.

Receive training from the district to make informed decisions.

Meet a least four times per year.

Keep a record of all meeting minutes and file with the school district.

Review the district's program applications annually:

- Bilingual Service Plan
- Evidence-Based Spending Plan (English learner portions)

Participate in an advisory capacity by providing input on the planning, operation, and evaluation of the EL program.

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Who can become a BPAC member?

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4. Who can become a BPAC member?

Eligible for BPAC Membership:	**Parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in a TBE program or Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI)**
	Teachers
	School staff members
	Community members
Point of Emphasis:	**A majority of BPAC members must be parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the district's TBE program.**

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How many members are required for a BPAC?

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5. How many members are required for a BPAC?



Committee sizes will vary depending on the sizes of districts and the number of TBE programs represented, with a minimum of three members (majority of parents/guardians of children in the TBE program).



The BPAC consists of individuals who are representative of the various home languages of students receiving TBE services in the district, to the extent possible.

Does the BPAC need to have representatives from all languages that have a TBE program?

6. Does the BPAC need to have representatives from all languages that have a TBE program?

No, but it is recommended.

If the EL student enrollment number in the district's TBE program dictates the requirement for a BPAC, the district should attempt to include all the languages represented in the TBE program(s) as well as other languages of students receiving EL services in the district.

Since the BPAC has an advisory role in the development of bilingual programs, it is important that the language needs of all EL students are equitably considered, as well as the social factors that influence their learning.

Do most BPAC members have to be parents of EL students currently enrolled in a TBE program, or can they be parents of a non-EL student?

7. Do most BPAC members have to be parents of EL students currently enrolled in a TBE program, or can they be parents of a non-EL student?

BPAC Parent Members:

Any parent of an EL student may be a member of the BPAC, but the BPAC majority must consist of parents or legal guardians of students currently enrolled in the TBE program(s).

In addition to parents of EL students enrolled in TBE or TPI, the BPAC may also include teachers, school staff members, and community members.

Parents or guardians of non-EL students who are enrolled in two-way dual language programs would be considered community members.

Can parents continue as BPAC members after their child/children exit services?

8. Can parents continue as BPAC members after their child/children exit services?

Yes.
However, the membership status of parents whose children have exited services would change to that of community members.

The district must recognize changes in BPAC members' status and take appropriate steps to ensure that a majority of BPAC members are parents or guardians of students currently enrolled in the TBE program(s).

What is the role of the BPAC in a two-way dual language program?

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9. What is the role of the BPAC in a two-way dual language program?

BPAC Role in a Two-Way Dual Program:

The BPAC's role is to represent and advocate for the needs of EL students enrolled in a TBE program who are being served in a two-way dual language program.

The list of action items that fall under the role/responsibilities BPAC are otherwise unchanged.

Parents/guardians of non-EL students in dual language program(s) can serve as community members on the committee.

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Questions?

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What is the role of the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee? Does the BPAC have the authority to approve or disapprove district plans?

10. What is the role of the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee? Does the BPAC have the authority to approve or disapprove district plans?

BPAC Advisory Role:

The role of the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee is exclusively advisory.

The BPAC's primary responsibility is to advise and provide recommendations based on the needs of the bilingual community and students enrolled in TBE programs.

The BPAC does not have the authority to make program decisions on behalf of the school district or to approve or reject the district's plans.

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A BPAC member can:

Offer valuable insight into the district's bilingual programs

Explore new opportunities that can benefit the community

Present suggestions and findings to district leaders for consideration

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Can the BPAC meetings be financed with Title III funds?

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11. Can the BPAC meetings be financed with Title III funds?

Yes.

Title III funds may be used to fund BPAC activities if they are supplemental and aligned with the purposes of the program.

Title III funds may be used to provide the following:

- Complementary activities for the participation of parents, families, and the EL community.
- Cultural events that promote bilingual education.
- Guest speakers and strategies that strengthen the learning of EL students.

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What does it mean to function autonomously?

12. What does it mean to function autonomously?

Operating autonomously means that the BPAC operates independently, without being under the directive of the school district.

However, although the BPAC is autonomous in its operation, its role is advisory. It collaborates with the district to improve bilingual education without assuming an administrative or decision-making role within the school system.

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12. What does it mean to function autonomously? Key Points

An Autonomous BPAC:

- Makes internal decisions about the committee's structure, leadership, and activities
- Organizes meetings and establishes rules and procedures without the need for district approval
- Independently advises and makes recommendations on bilingual programs

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The BPAC must function autonomously once established. When is a BPAC considered to be established?

13. The BPAC must function autonomously once established. When is a BPAC considered to be established?

A BPAC is considered established when:

- The committee has consistent membership consisting of parents/guardians of EL students enrolled in TBE program(s)
- The members actively participate in leading and autonomously managing the committee.
- The committee has elected officers and created documented internal rules, guidelines, and procedures.

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Can the district's school personnel, such as principal, bilingual program director, and superintendent, be the president of the BPAC?

14. Can the district's school personnel, such as principal, bilingual program director, and superintendent, be the president of the BPAC?

Although school district personnel have served as BPAC presidents, this practice is strongly discouraged.	It is strongly recommended that the BPAC president be a parent or guardian of a student who is currently enrolled in a TBE program.

Does a BPAC need to have a bylaw or a written standing rule and procedure for the election of officers and to conduct its business?

15. Does a BPAC need to have a bylaw or a written standing rule and procedure for the election of officers and to conduct its business?

Yes.
The BPAC must establish rules and procedures autonomously, which shall include the creation of bylaws.

All BPAC meeting minutes shall be recorded and filed with the district to ensure transparency and the continuity of its work.

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Should BPAC meetings be open to the public? Are school districts required to notify the EL parents of BPAC meetings and share the agenda?

16. Should BPAC meetings be open to the public? Are school districts required to notify the EL parents of BPAC meetings and share the agenda?

The application of this law may vary by district, so it is recommended that districts consult with their attorneys to determine whether their district's BPAC meets the definition of "public body."	The actions and deliberations of a public body must be conducted in a transparent and accessible manner, according to the Open Meetings Act. It is state policy that citizens be notified in advance and afforded the right to attend all meetings.

16. Should BPAC meetings be open to the public? Are school districts required to notify the EL parents of BPAC meetings and share the agenda? Meeting Notifications

BPAC Meeting Notifications:

It is recommended that EL parents be notified of BPAC meetings to encourage participation in the BPAC and to develop a pool of potential BPAC leadership.

The majority of the members of the BPAC must be parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the district's TBE program.

As students exit from English learner services, current BPAC leadership may no longer qualify under that requirement and additional BPAC members may be needed in order to maintain compliance.

When a district has TBE programs in multiple languages in different attendance centers, is the district required to have more than one BPAC?

17. When a district has TBE programs in multiple languages in different attendance centers, is the district required to have more than one BPAC?

No. A single BPAC must be established at the district level.	However, it is recommended that the committee include representatives from various TBE programs in the schools where these services are offered.

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17. When a district has TBE programs in multiple languages in different attendance centers, is the district required to have more than one BPAC? Considerations

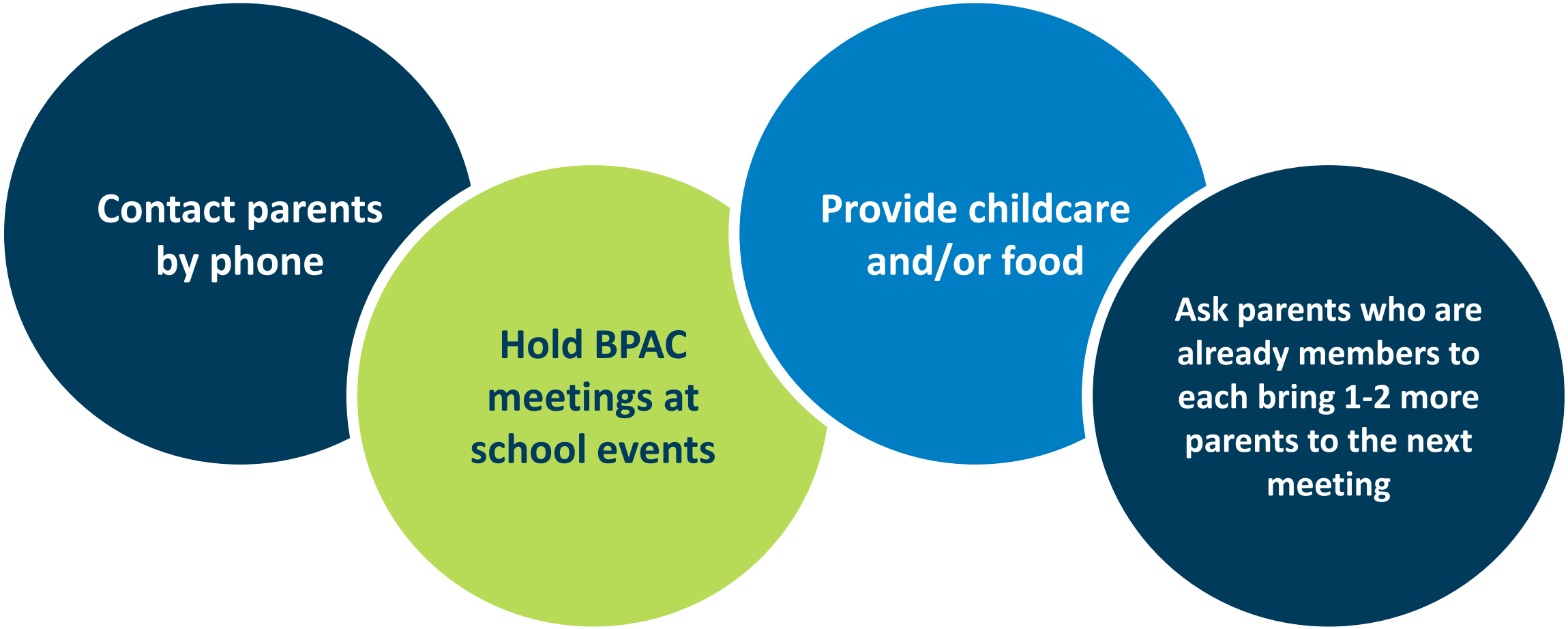
Depending on the district's size, the following options may be considered:

School-level parent committees: These can focus on the specific needs of each school community and provide information and recommendations to the district's main BPAC.	Multiple district-level BPAC meetings: A district may host additional meetings to accommodate the different languages and language needs of committee members.

This allows for equitable representation of all language communities without the need to create multiple BPACs within the same district.

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Low BPAC attendance? Here are some suggestions:



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Resources

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Connect With the Department

Multilingual Webpage

Assigned Consultant Listing

Subscribe to ISBE Emails

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Multilingual/Language Development Department Resources Webpage

Professional Development

Language Learning Standards

Legislation and Rules

ISBE Guidance Documents and Letters

English Learners in Illinois Statistical Report

Organizations

For Parents

Refugee and Immigrant Students

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Contact Us

Our team is here to help!

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