

BILINGUAL PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Multilingual/Language Development Department

Introductions

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A Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC)

INTRODUCTION

- **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.

105 ILCS 5/14C-10; Ill. Admin. Code title 23, 228.30 (c)(4)

Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee

INTRODUCTION

- **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.

[105 ILCS 5/14C-10](#); [Ill. Admin. Code title 23, 228.30 \(c\)\(4\)](#)

BPAC FAQ Document



[BPAC FAQ DOCUMENT](#)

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.

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

Required

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.

- Accountability measures of academic achievement relevant to student's bilingual programs

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.

Interpreters and translators at each meeting to ensure meaningful access to non-English speaking parents or guardians.

Transparency and documentation by accurately filing meeting minutes and ensuring documentation is readily available when needed.

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

Recommended

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

- A suitable space and materials for meetings.

A district representative attends each BPAC meeting to strengthen communication and collaboration with parents and the community.

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

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.**

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

3. What are the responsibilities of a BPAC?



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 a copy with the school district.

3. What are the responsibilities of a BPAC?



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 evaluations of the EL program within the district.

4. Who can become a BPAC member?



Parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in a TBE program or Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI)



Teachers



School staff members



Community members

***Please Note:** A majority of BPAC members must be parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the district's TBE program.

5. How many members are required for a BPAC?

***Please Note:**
A majority of
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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.

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



Yes. 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.

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



Yes. 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).



The committee may include:

Teachers

School staff members

Community members



Community members may include parents or guardians of non-EL students who are enrolled in two-way dual language programs.

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



Yes.

However, the majority of the BPAC membership must be parents/guardians of students who are currently enrolled in the TBE program(s).

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

Share your BPAC successes





Questions

10. Is the BPAC's role advisory? Does the BPAC have the authority to approve or disapprove district plans?



Yes. The role of the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee is exclusively advisory. The BPAC does not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the school district or to approve or reject the district's plans.



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.

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.

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.



These funds can be used to provide:

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.



Title III funds should be used to **supplement** and **enhance** language instruction programs for English learners, not to replace funds or activities that the district is obligated to provide.

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**, so it collaborates with the district to improve bilingual education without assuming an administrative or decision-making role within the school system.

12. What does it mean to function autonomously?



Make internal decisions about the committee's structure, leadership, and activities.



Organize meetings and establish rules and procedures without the need for district approval.



Independently advise and make recommendations on bilingual programs.

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

The BPAC is considered established when the committee has consistent membership.

This includes parents/guardians of EL students enrolled in TBE program(s) who actively participate in leading and autonomously managing the committee.

This also involves electing officers and creating documented internal rules, guidelines, and procedures.

A BPAC must:



Elect its own officers.



Create and document its internal rules, guidelines, and procedures.

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

No. It is **strongly recommended** that the BPAC president be a parent or guardian of a student who is currently enrolled in a TBE program.

While district school personnel can be the president of a BPAC, it is **strongly discouraged**.

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.

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 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.



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."

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?



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



As students' proficiency out of English learner services, current BPAC leadership may no longer qualify under that requirement and additional BPAC members may need to be found in order to maintain compliance.

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.

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

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.

Low BPAC attendance? Here are some suggestions:

Contacting parents by phone

Have BPAC meetings at school events

Provide childcare and/or food

Ask parents that are already members to each bring 1-2 more parents to the next meeting

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Additional Questions?



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Thank you