

# Multilingual Family Night

**Whitehall City Schools**

**Whitehall, OH | Franklin County**

## Initiative Type(s):

Family engagement and support services

## Community Partner(s):

Community-based mental health treatment provider; A board of health of a city or general health district; Nonprofit organization with experience serving children

## Description of Initiative:

Whitehall City Schools, located in Franklin County, identified a need to increase family engagement and assist students and families who were new residents of Whitehall and in many cases had recently arrived to the United States. To ensure that these families were connected with school enrollment personnel, Whitehall City Schools partnered with community organizations to hold a Multilingual Family Night at Whitehall Yearling High School. The district invited trusted community organizations, as well as interpreters for Spanish and Amharic speakers.

## Initiative Benefits:

To increase the awareness of the family supports in the community, the district invited English Language Learner teachers and support organizations (including Ohio Guidestone, the YMCA, The Center of Hope, Heart of Ohio Family Health and the Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Service Agency) to Multilingual Family Night. Families learned about the mental health, physical health and material resource assistance resources available to them in the community. English Learner teachers noted that the targeted approach made the beginning of the school year smoother than in previous years when staff spent the first weeks of classes ensuring families and students had the supports needed to succeed. This program increased the likelihood of success for students and families and ensured that multilingual families had true access to the resources and supports available to them.

## Essential Staff and Partners:

Essential partners included Enrollment Center personnel, English Language Learner teachers, Ohio Guidestone, the YMCA, The Center of Hope, Heart of Ohio Family Health and the Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Service agency.

## Action Steps to Get Started:

The idea of having a Multilingual Family was conceived by an English Language Learner teacher in one of Whitehall City School District's elementary schools. Setting up a process for hearing feedback and identifying emergent needs was pivotal for this initiative. Additionally, partnering with external organizations to increase our reach helped the district succeed.

## For More Information:

Doug Shoemaker, Director of Support Services and Community Relations  
shoemakerd@wcsrams.org

**NOTE: Student Wellness and Success Funds were used for this initiative.**