

FOURTH ANNUAL



# Ohio Family Engagement

— LEADERSHIP SUMMIT —

Setting the Table Together:

**JOY** and  
**POWER** in  
**PARTNERSHIPS**

SEPTEMBER 22,  
**2023**

Hosted by the Ohio Statewide  
Family Engagement Center



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

CENTER ON EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT

# **ENGAGING NEW AMERICAN FAMILIES WITH SCHOOLS**

---

September 2023



# History

---

- During COVID 19, when schools were shut down, the participation of EL learners dropped drastically.
- Accurate information on file, language barrier, and the digital divide were among the biggest barrier to connect with New American, refugee immigrant families
- CCS created a task force to engage families and ensure students are receiving the support that they need.
- ETSS was a partner focused on engaging EL learners



# Family Engagement Program

---

- ETSS Family Engagement Program serves as a bridge between school districts and families.
- Bilingual Family Engagement Liaisons provide, linguistically and culturally supportive services to families
- Byworking closely with school districts, BEL's ensure that New American families are aware of, understand, and receive the services and support needed for the success of their child/children in the school setting.





# Bilingual Engagement Liaisons

---

- Speak the languages of the families
- Understand the challenges of the integration process
- Come alongside families to advocate for services
- Ensure New American families are aware of the resources available to them inside and outside of schools
- Advocate in schools and at the district levels, for equitable services



# Areas of support

---

- Enrollment
- Attendance
- Parent portal
- Parent teacher meetings
- School/district event
- Check and connect calls
- Home visits
- Linking to services





# Means of communication

---

- Phone calls
- Messages on Viber, Whatsapp, and so on.....
- Home visits
- Meeting at schools/public spaces

# Relationship with school district

---

- Contract with school district
- School district requests the needed languages
- ETSS hires, trains and facilitates the work
- Family Engagement Program customization





# Family Engagement Program

---

- Operates with the understanding of.....
- EL learners and their families understanding of the school system is very much different than the American schools and system
- The journey to the US and the integration process is very much difficult and ongoing
- Families are very resilient and want the best for their child/children
- Liaisons are not just telling families what to do, we are coming along families to support them in their effort to support their children's school journey





## Family Engagement Program

- Its not just language translation, it's the trust and connection that is built with families
- The goal is to come alongside families to advocate for themselves
- Advocating for culturally competent services within schools
- Collaborate with districts in reducing attendance issues and implementing any other district initiatives





---

## Takeaways

Understanding the challenges

The challenges comes with challenges

Connection with families

Connection with schools

Serve as a bridge between families and school

Work collaboratively for the success of students



# A mental journey into the unknown

---

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine you've just landed in a foreign country. The signs at the airport are in a script you can't decipher. The announcements over the loudspeaker are in a language you don't understand. You have your children with you, and they look up to you for guidance, but you're as lost as they are.

You manage to find your way to a new home in a new city. Now, it's time to enroll your children in school. You walk into the school building, and it's like stepping into another world. The forms, the policies, the procedures—everything is in a language you can't understand. You feel a knot tighten in your stomach. You're overwhelmed, anxious, and you feel utterly alone.

Open your eyes. This is the reality for many families who come to our district with little to no understanding of English.

---



# Who Am I?

- My name is Blaise Nkubito and I am a Bilingual Liaison for the School District
- I assist families that speak French, Kinyarwanda (and a related language called Kirundi)
- Here to bridge the gap between non-English speaking families and the school system.

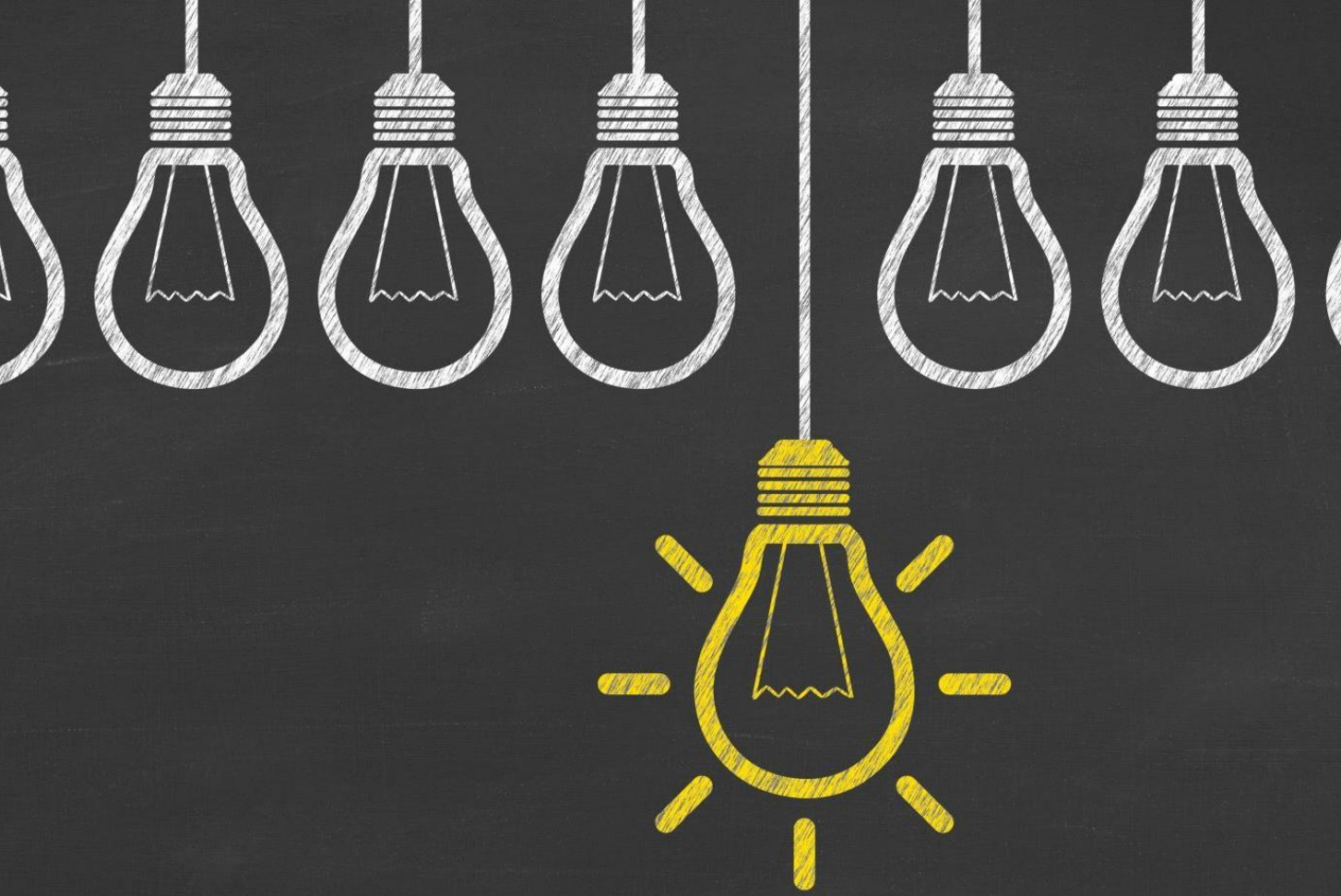




# The Language Barrier

- Language is not just a set of words, but a bridge to understanding and opportunities. The role of a bilingual liaison is crucial in bridging this gap.
- Language barriers can lead to misunderstandings
- A lack of support can result in academic struggles for students





# Cultural Differences

- Understanding the nuances of a new culture is challenging. A bilingual liaison helps in making this transition smoother for families.
- Cultural differences can create feelings of isolation
- A lack of support can result in academic struggles for students

A pair of black-rimmed glasses is resting on a stack of books. A red ribbon bookmark is visible in the foreground. The background is blurred, showing more books and a wooden surface.

# How the Liaison Helps

- Facilitate communication between school staff and parents for a more inclusive educational environment.
- Assist with school enrollment.
- Explain academic programs and extracurricular activities.
- Provide guidance on vaccination and health requirements.
- Connect families to community resources that can assist with daily living needs.



# Success Stories

---

- Success story of a mother and her 3 kids who moved from Guinea in June 2022, fleeing from violence of human rights.





## The Impact - Statistics

- 72% increase in student attendance among non-English speaking families during the pandemic, in just 2 months!
- 100% of families report feeling more comfortable interacting with the school thanks to our assistance.





Christine C Gould <cgould@columbus.k12.oh.us>

To: Blaise P Nkubito



Tue 12/13/2022 8:07 PM

Thank you so much for reaching out to this family. Your efforts are truly appreciated!

Thank you,  
Christine Gould



Blaise P Nkubito

That means a lot to me, thank you! Thank you also for the good work that you do. Sincerely, **Blaise Nkubito** *Bilingual liaison in partnership with Columbus City Schools Columbus City*

Wed 12/14/2022 8:01 AM



Christine C Gould <cgould@columbus.k12.oh.us>

To: Blaise P Nkubito



Wed 12/14/2022 8:10 AM

Seriously though, you have worked tirelessly with this family. We at Avalon have emailed and called you A LOT for your assistance and you were always there, even into the late night hours working with us to help this family. I/we truly appreciate you!! I'm sure the families do as well. When we can all work together amazing things can happen!

Thank you again!!  
Christine Gould



ETSS AND CCS

# SPANISH BEL

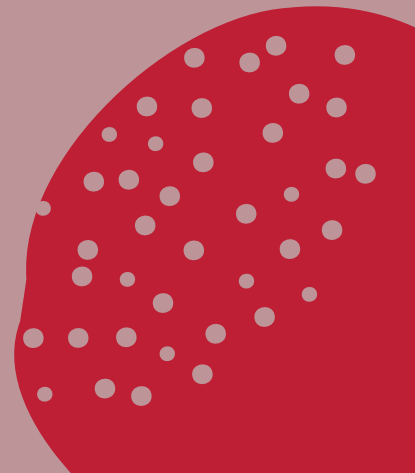
Verónica Ochoa-Morales



ETHIOPIAN  
TEWAHEDO  
SOCIAL  
SERVICES



**COLUMBUS**  
CITY SCHOOLS

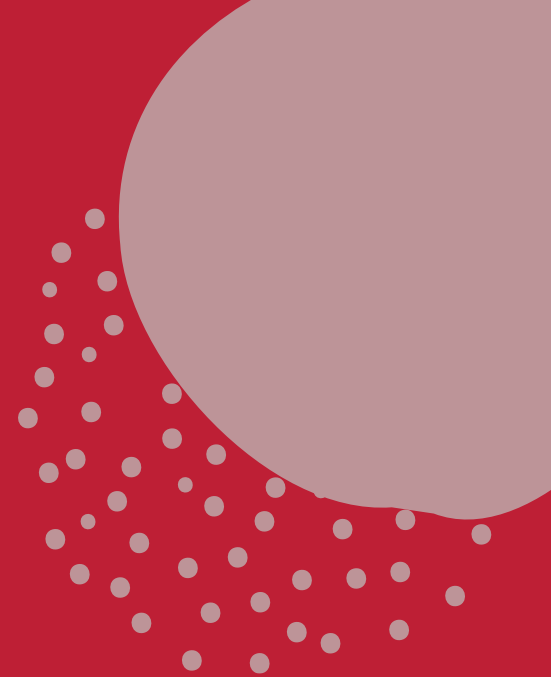




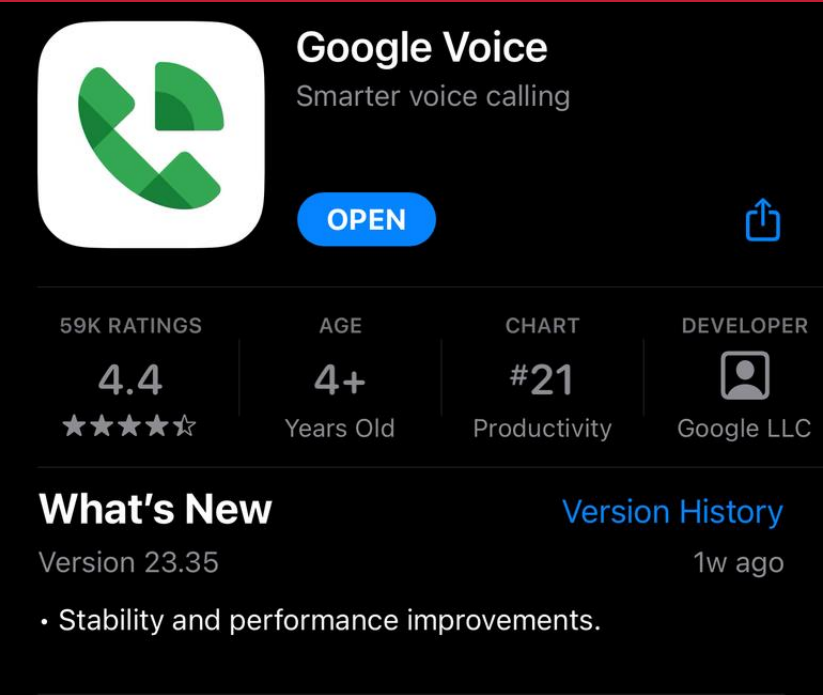
# Daily Responsibilities as a Spanish BEL

## MAIN FOCUS

- Reach out to families that have made contact during and after hrs.
- Contact families from list provided by CCS
- Answer emails and accept referrals from CCS staff
- Check for availability for CCS events or any other type of request
- Document under PLP in IC and
- Complete daily documentation forms



# Main Communication Platforms



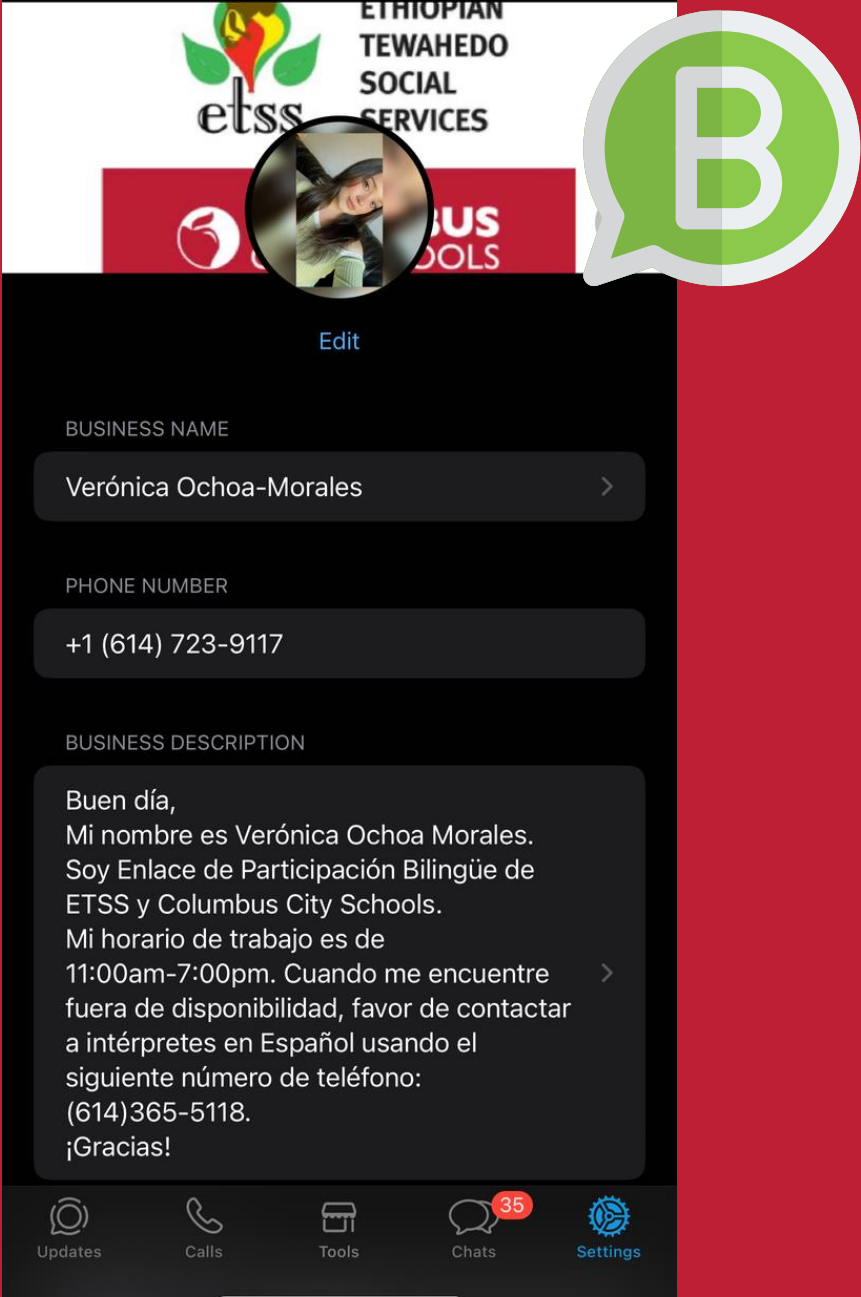
**Google Voice**  
Smarter voice calling

**OPEN**

59K RATINGS: **4.4** ★★★★★  
AGE: **4+** Years Old  
CHART: **#21** Productivity  
DEVELOPER: Google LLC

**What's New** [Version History](#)  
Version 23.35 1w ago

- Stability and performance improvements.



**ETHIOPIAN TEWAHEDO SOCIAL SERVICES**  
**etss**

**BUS SCHOOLS**

**WhatsApp Business Profile**

**Verónica Ochoa-Morales**

**+1 (614) 723-9117**

**BUSINESS DESCRIPTION**

Buen día,  
Mi nombre es Verónica Ochoa Morales.  
Soy Enlace de Participación Bilingüe de ETSS y Columbus City Schools.  
Mi horario de trabajo es de 11:00am-7:00pm. Cuando me encuentre fuera de disponibilidad, favor de contactar a intérpretes en Español usando el siguiente número de teléfono: (614)365-5118.  
¡Gracias!

**WhatsApp Bottom Bar:** Updates, Calls, Tools, Chats (35), Settings

# Staff Referrals and Assistance Solicitation

**Subject:** A message for help

Hello to the Spanish speaking BELs!

I hope you had a good summer. I'm guessing your school year is off to a busy start. I know mine is!

I have worked with two families already (using someone at the school who happens to speak enough Spanish and Google Translate) to get them set up and accessing their Parent Portal accounts. Both of the families need to do the annual update in the portal and upload their proof address since they have moved. Neither family had the required documents with them when they got to school so I was limited in how much we could do. I need some help for both of these families.

At least one of the families really needs someone to meet with them at the home. The mother does not drive and does not feel comfortable taking the COTA bus (I tried to suggest it because it would be short walks to/from bus stops and an easy straight shot down Cleveland Ave). It took the mother and child an hour to walk to the school from the house on Tuesday when they showed up. Until transportation/school assignment is worked out this student is not attending school.

Good Morning,

Are you able to check in with this family and make sure there are no barriers to attendance? This student has missed 1-3 days each week so far.

Let me know, thank you!

Good Afternoon,

Are you able to reach out to mom for this student to get information on which school she is enrolled at?

Thank you!

Hi Veronica!

Hope you're doing well and that you had a good summer! Hopefully you're still one of our ETSS liaisons.... You had contacted a family for me last year student [REDACTED]. The girls have not shown up yet for school this year and I was hoping you'd be able to reach out to the family and see if everything is ok? Maybe they have moved or enrolled the girls in a different school, but we're not sure. Just let me know if you're able to help

😊 thanks so much!

Hello Ms. Ochoa-Morales!

I hope this email finds you well and that you and your family are doing well, also.

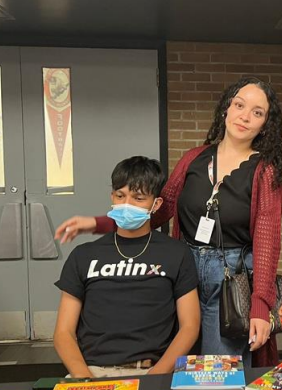
[REDACTED] MS is holding its annual Open House on Wednesday, August 30 from 5-7pm. I was wondering if you were available to come assist with Annual Updates for our Spanish-speaking families? If not, would there be any other Bilingual Engagement Liaisons who might be available to come?

The goal is not just to complete the Annual Update with families, but also to show them HOW to do it themselves. Would you consider recording a brief video that we could share with families and post on our website and/or send via Class Dojo?

I have included our Leadership Intern, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on this email, since she is working with us this year and I wanted to introduce you.

Please let me know your thoughts. Thank you!

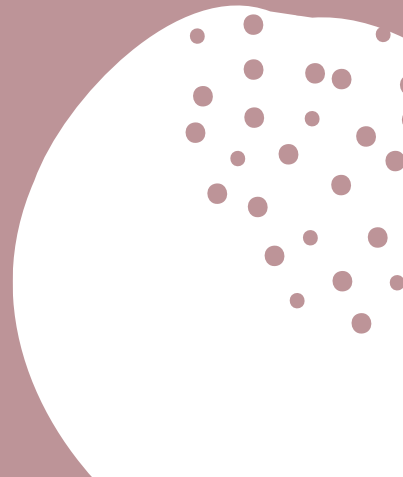






# What are the current situations my families are experiencing?

- Language Barrier
- Attendance concerns
- Transportation issues
  - Yearly updates
- Parent Portal accounts
- Assistance finding a job
- Need of community resources
- Enrollment of new students



34	The Engagement Department	Lee Cole	8/19	9:00-1:30	Fort Hayes Ce
35	The Engagement Department	Lee Cole	8/19	9:00-1:30	Fort Hayes Ce
36					
37	Salem ES	Nikki Myers	8/24	4:45-6:45	4040 Carr
38	World Language MS	Jennifer L Geisfeld	8/30	4:45-7:45	320 East Dom
39	World Language MS	Jennifer L Geisfeld	8/30	4:45-7:45	320 East Dom
40	World Language MS	Jennifer L Geisfeld	8/30	4:45-7:45	320 East Dom
41	Buckeye MS	Sarah Young	9/19	6-7pm	2950 Person

# CCS (Other) Requests

## Sheets

CCS/School Events ✓

Home Visits/Attendance

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Parent Meetings

Parent-Teacher Conferences



Google Sheets



# PLP (IC) and Daily ETSS/CCS Forms

### Contact Log Detail

**Module \***  
PLP

**Contact Date/Time \***  
09/19/2023 10:15 AM

**Contacted \*** Select at least 1 contact and/or enter other contact(s)

Contact(s)  
Select contacts...

Other Contact(s) (Limit 100 characters)

**Contact Type \***

**Contacted By**  
Ochoa-Morales, Veronica

**Details:** (Limit 5000 characters)

### CCS FEP Family Contact Form

Bilingual Liaisons: Please complete this form for each outreach attempt made and/or service rendered for a student.

veronica.ochoa.m [Switch account](#)

Not shared

\* Indicates required question

**Parent/Guardian Name \***

Your answer

**Parent/Guardian Contact Number \***

Your answer

Is this the first time you have had contact with this parent/guardian about this specific **\***

### FEP-CCS-ETSS Daily Summary Form

This form should be completed at the end of every work day.

gmail.com [Switch account](#)

\* Indicates required question

**What is your name? \***

Th

Ah

Ve

Mè

Ru

He

Je

To



Estimado Padre/Tutor,

En las Escuelas de la Ciudad de Columbus, nuestro objetivo es que cada estudiante alcance su máximo potencial para continuar la educación, servir en el ejército, ir a la universidad, iniciar un negocio e ingresar a la fuerza laboral como aprendiz de por vida. La asistencia diaria es una parte clave para alcanzar ese potencial.

Las ausencias excesivas se definen como 38 o más horas en un mes, 65 o más horas en un año. Según la Ley de Ohio, las ausencias de su hijo (a) se han definido como excesivas. Teniendo esto en cuenta, la Ley de absentismo escolar del estado de Ohio ahora requiere que se envíe esta carta para informarle que su hijo ha cumplido o superado estos límites.

Si la asistencia de su hijo(a) cumple con alguno de los criterios descritos anteriormente, se creará un equipo para redactar un plan de éxito de asistencia. Usted es una parte vital de este equipo y será invitado a una reunión en la escuela para redactar este plan. Después de completar y monitorear el plan, si la asistencia mejora, usted y su estudiante evitarán que se presenten faltas injustificadas ante el Tribunal de Menores del Condado de Franklin y / o una recomendación de negligencia educativa a los Servicios para Niños del Condado de Franklin.

Recuerde: si su hijo(a) debe estar ausente debido a una enfermedad, asegúrese de notificar a la escuela. Aceptamos notas o llamadas escritas por los padres por hasta nueve ausencias. Si tiene preguntas o inquietudes, no dude en ponerse en contacto con la escuela.

Sinceramente,  
Director

# Family Losing its Hope

- Student officially attending school
- Transportation Department
- Project Connect
- School Social Worker assistance



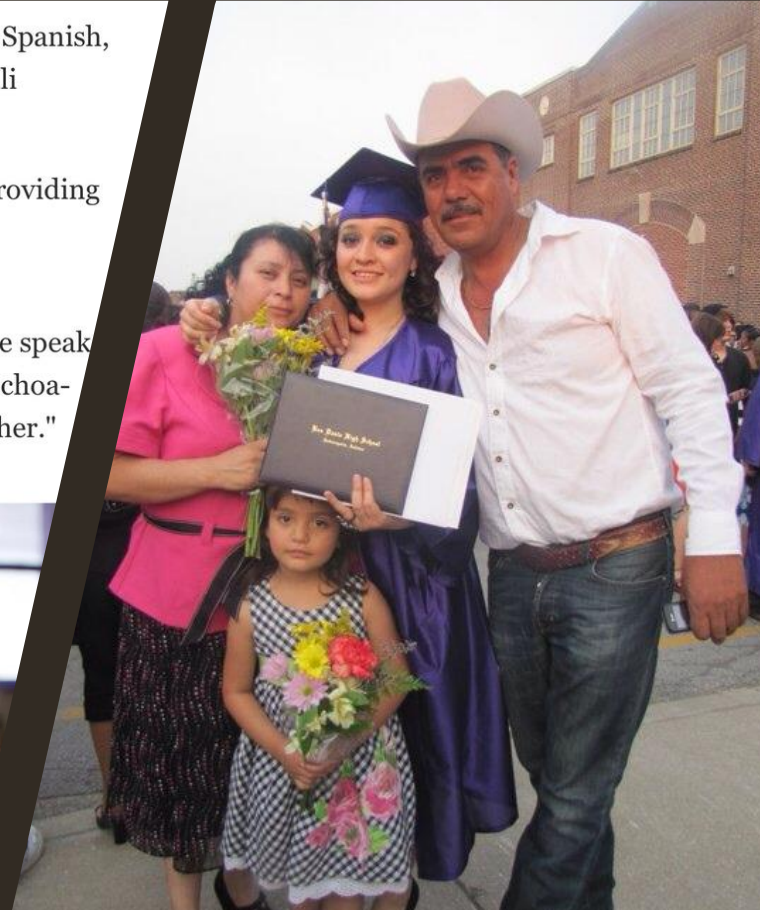
- Language barrier
- Help update address
- Parent Portal account
- Proof of address not available
- Families sharing same household
- Relying on someone else for transportation
- Excessive absences

# Family Engagement is Essential for Success

The liaisons, who are native speakers, speak Spanish, Somali, Maay Maay (Mai Mai), Arabic, Nepali and Kinyarwanda.

They say their role is much more than just providing translation services. It's about establishing relationships.

"We not only speak their language. I think we speak their culture. We understand their needs," Ochoa-Morales said. "We really understand each other."







## Contact

- Lilu Terefe
- Youth Program Manager
- [Lilu.terefe@ethiotss.org](mailto:Lilu.terefe@ethiotss.org)
- Office 614-252-5362
- <https://ethiotss.org/>

QUESTIONS

---





THANK YOU FOR WATCHING!

[OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu](http://OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu)



Ohio Statewide  
**Family  
Engagement  
Center**

—at The Ohio State University—



Ohio Statewide Family  
Engagement Center



[OhioSFEC@osu.edu](mailto:OhioSFEC@osu.edu)



[@OhioEngage](https://twitter.com/OhioEngage)