

Sycamore Ambassadors

Serving Families and Building Community



Sycamore Advisory Commission

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Goals and Agenda

Project Goals

- Investigate - Is the current Ambassador program model sustainable?
- Determine - How does SCS best use resources while still providing useful and compassionate services to families?

Agenda

- Introduce Ambassador Program
- School Demographic Data
- Stakeholder Feedback
- Legal Responsibilities
- Trending Demographic Data
- Solutions & Recommendations

KEY TERMS

- EL - student identified as an English Learner (by Language Usage Survey) - often referred to as ESOL, ELL, ESL, Multilingual Learners (ML)
- Language Usage Survey - required step in student enrollment; used to identify the native home language of enrolling student and language spoken at home
- EL Families - parents or guardians of a SCSD student who is identified as EL

What is Sycamore Ambassadors?



Ambassadors' History



- Began at Symmes in 2017 because of lack of carnival volunteers.
- Volunteers and administration realized they needed to better engage all families.
- Ensuring English Learner families felt included in this outreach was vital for the Symmes community.

Ambassadors was Born

- Symmes realized that family-to-family engagement was crucial to creating a volunteer pipeline.
- Engagement = Community and Connection



Meet Jackie Ogden

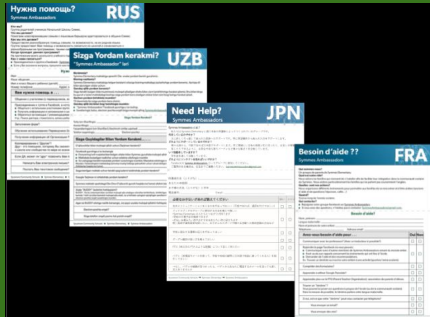
- Spearheaded Ambassador Program at Symmes. Oversaw its growth and coordinated all projects.
- In 2020, expanded Ambassadors to every school in Sycamore.
- Organizes quarterly meetings between all Ambassador representatives, District Assistant Superintendent, and head ESOL teacher.
- [Jackie's Ambassador Presentation and Overview](#)



Events, Education, Outreach



Connecting to Resources



Need Help Sheets



students and families to a

"MONTGOMERY 101" & SUPPORT NIGHT EVENT

Current and new Montgomery families are invited to learn more about the Ambassadors program, the resources available at Montgomery Elementary, and what to expect in the fall.

Thursday, May 26, 2022
Stop In From 6 to 7 p.m.

Olde Montgomery Apartments Leasing Center Parking Lot
7450 Village Drive

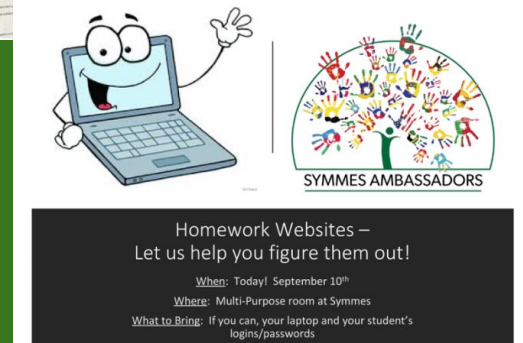
Stop by the check-in table to receive a token for a free treat!

Questions? Contact MTAmbassadors@sycamoreschools.org

Help Nights



Welcome Packet



Homework Websites –
Let us help you figure them out!
When: Today! September 10th
Where: Multi-Purpose room at Symmes
What to Bring: If you can, your laptop and your student's logins/passwords

Kindergarten Orientation



Educational Events

Cultural Heritage Night

Ambassadors create a welcoming and safe place.

Typical FAQs & Requests from Sycamore Families

- Registration
- Translation Services
- Technical Assistance
- Academic Services (intervention, testing, gifted programming, grades)
- Extracurricular Activities (sports, PTO events, after school, theater, Champions)
- Financial Assistance (Operation Give Back, Free and Reduced Lunch)
- Explaining “Other” School Documents & Information



Ambassador Communication with Families

- Email
- Ambassadors Facebook pages (by building)
- School newsletters & flyers
- Grassroots initiatives
 - PTO hosted building events



Roadblocks for Communication

- Ambassadors cannot initiate contact due to FERPA privacy issues
- Language barriers/school documentation is dominantly English



Meet Mrs. Matray and Hear Her Story

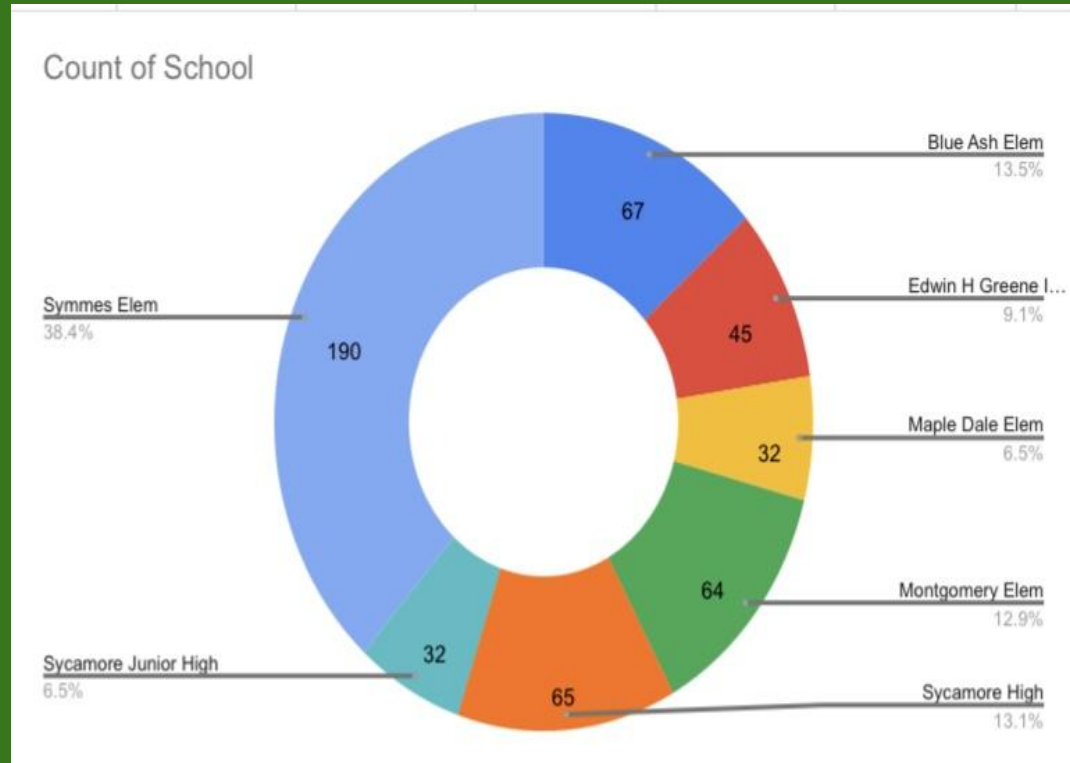


Engagement
=
Community +
Connection

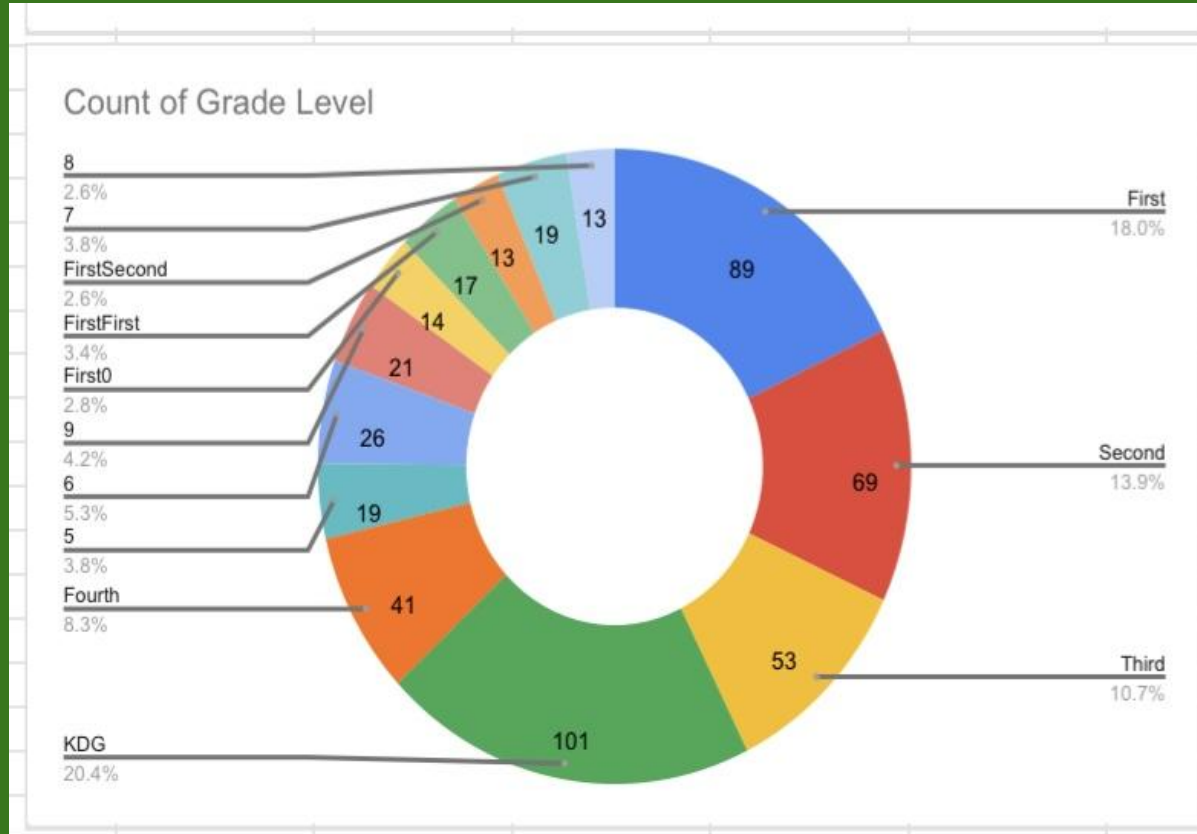
Demographic Impacts



Building Breakdown



Grade Breakdown



Different Ambassador Models

Individual schools decide their own need

Symmes Elementary has more EL needs than the other buildings at this time; however, Symmes still has some of the same “welcome” needs as the other buildings.

- What happens when the students transition to the intermediate level, junior, and high school?
- How does it change from EL to a welcome to new families?
- How do we address these differences?
- Is Ambassadors a one-size-fits-all?

Research



External Primary Research

- 2 out of 14 schools replied to survey: Olentangy and Solon City Schools.
- Both schools rely on district personnel for all EL interactions.
- Olentangy Meadows employs a stipend “Diversity Coordinator” to help create community between their diverse populations.

Key Take-A-Way: The Ambassador parent-to-parent model appears unique. Maintaining it requires district resources, the outcomes are beneficial for families throughout their time in the district.

Online research yielded similar results. Most districts are responding to the growing EL population with district-led programs. We could not readily find any volunteer groups with the supports at the level Ambassadors has offered Sycamore.

[Benchmarking Data](#)

ESOL Teachers

How do Sycamore ESOL
teachers view Ambassadors?

Disconnection

Survey sent to all district ESOL teachers

Three responses received

Anecdotal data collected included:

- Who are the Ambassadors?
- What do Ambassadors do?
- How can they help us?
- Would love to connect

School Principals

How do school principals view
Ambassadors?

**100% agree that Ambassadors would
benefit from training and knowing
more about district resources for EL
families**

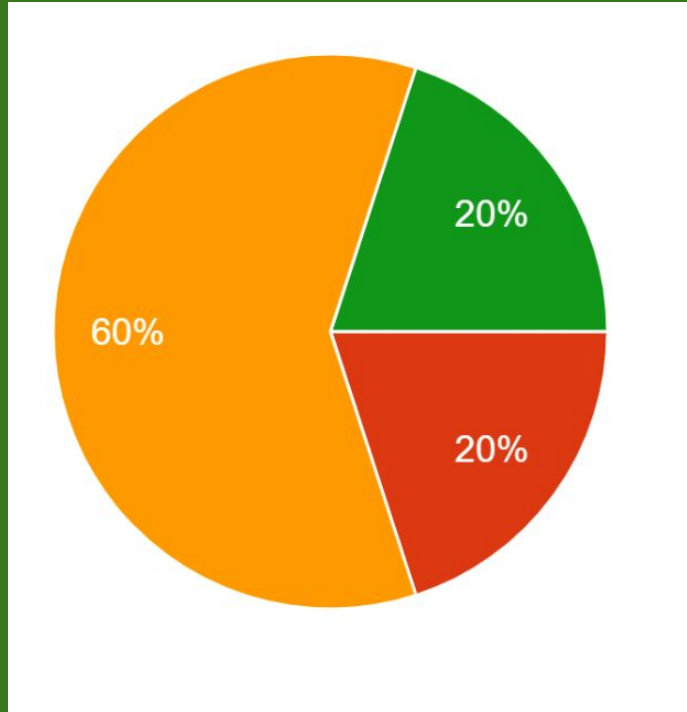
Challenged by the INCREASE in EL students and families (see demographics slide). They'll take the extra help!

- New & Kindergarten Families
- Symmes

Concerns as to the sustainability of the Ambassadors as a PTO volunteer program

- Scope creep
- Increase demand
- Volunteer fatigue & turnover, lack of participation

Does the Current Ambassadors Program Meet the Needs of Your Building?



- Yes - Needs a few tweaks to be more successful
- Sometimes - Needs more than volunteers to be successful
- No - Needs more support than a volunteer program

There needs to be clarification as to whether the goal is to help EL families or support new families

Principals Support Ambassadors & Have Different Needs



1. Volunteer Inconsistency
 - a. Burn-out & age-out
 - b. Knowledge transfer
 - c. Commitment & interest
2. Capacity
 - a. Enrollment - all
 - b. Enrollment - increases in EL population
3. Building Demographics
 - a. Kindergarten & new families
 - b. Elementary & Greene vs. 7-12
 - c. Symmes large EL population
4. District Resources
 - a. Translation request process
 - b. Website resources
 - c. Volunteer training

Sycamore Translation Services & Tools

- Pocket Translator - requires item in hand (google translator on cell phones works similarly) - helpful to use on phone when not using the telephonic translation option
- Telephonic Translation - one pager for directions, easy to use, service provider doesn't always have languages needed readily available
- Video Conferencing - same issue as telephonic translation, used mostly for academic conferences.
- In-Person Professional Services - same issue as telephonic, but this also requires pre-planning. Use of internal Google.doc directs requests to ESOL Director*. Time required to set up and coordinate. **Teachers and principals would benefit from greater awareness of this resource and preferred SOP by ESOL Director*

[Affordable Language Services](#), [Accuracy Now](#)

Program Roadblocks

Scope Creep is the #1 Issue



What Causes Scope Creep???

- Unrefined scope of “Help!”
- “Shouldn’t say YES; can’t say NO!”
- Capacity (increased EL)
- Access to resources (making them up as they go)



Solutions



Let's Try to Solve the Problem



Additional District Collaboration +
Effective Translation Services + Standard
Operating Procedures =
Refined Ambassador Program Scope

+

(hope for a sustained future)

(more quality time for family connections)

(less strain & more interest)

Working Together Is Top Priority

District

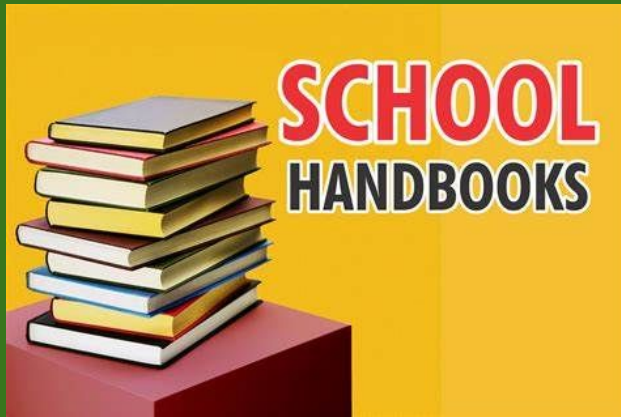
- Spearhead collaboration for Assistant Superintendent, Principals, ESOL Director, and Ambassadors
- Address registration challenges
- Improve awareness of existing translation services and train all impacted staff and teachers on SOP
- Provide means for translation of all outbound school communication for teachers, PTO, and administration (ex. standardize a translatable template for community flyers via google docs).

PTO Volunteer Ambassador

- Partner with school administration as top priority (each building has own needs)
- Work with district & PTOs to increase volunteer efforts (Volunteer10 concept)
- Host culture & community resource events
- Relay parent translation requests to District assigned point-person
- Push out PTO and school communication

Immediate Needs: Focus on Two

Review district documents and website and ensure in a language that families can understand



Evaluate translation services & review process to make accessible to all teachers and families



CPS English-Language Learners

Home About Us Parent Information Schools Support Services Volunteer Contact Us

Support Services » Services Provided by ELL

Services Provided by the Office of Second Language Acquisition

English-Language Proficiency Screening
As required by law, the Office of Second Language Acquisition staff administers an English proficiency assessment to children who have indicated a language other than English is spoken by a parent/guardian, student or caregiver in the home. The assessment results are shared with the child's parent or guardian along with an explanation of which Cincinnati Public School would best meet the child's needs.

➔ [More about English-Language Proficiency Screening](#)

Educational Plans for Success
Children identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) are limited in the listening, speaking, reading or writing skills in English that would allow them to successfully participate in academic classes. The ELL staff develops an educational plan for these children which helps teachers customize the child's instructional program to meet their needs and afford the best possible opportunity for success.

➔ [More about LEP Plan](#)

Translation / Interpreters Services*
The Office of Second Language Acquisition provides interpreters to help families with school-related meetings; understanding school-related procedures such as discipline, calendars, and closings; as well as completing school-related documents such as food-service, transportation applications and health forms.

*ELL provides Translation / Interpreters Services for school-related issues only.

Tutors
If a LEP student needs additional help with classwork or learning English, the parent or the school may request an ESL volunteer tutor. ESL volunteer tutors are members of the community who give their time to help English language learners in CPS schools.

➔ [More about Tutors](#)

Cultural Programs
To provide a well-rounded, culturally diverse education, the Office of Second Language Acquisition staff plans and assists with cultural programs such as our Children's Day celebration and Fun with Science Camp.

Community Support and Resources
ELL students have a higher success rate in school when parents and families feel at home in the community. The Office of Second Language Acquisition staff provides information about community resources, health-care services and social-service agencies that help non-English speaking families adjust. Ask staff members for information about free adult English classes.

English Classes for Adults
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is designed for adults who do not speak English as their native language. Interactive, small-group, large-group, and computer-based instructional activities are offered to emphasize skills in reading, writing and conversational English.

Support Services
We're Here to Help — Students and their families who speak languages other than English are welcomed to Cincinnati Public Schools. [More about our services.](#)

Upcoming Events
[Click here for CPS Upcoming Events](#)

[Click here for CPS News](#)

[See District Calendar](#)

Have a Question?
You may find the answer you are looking for in our [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)

➔ [See Our FAQs](#)

CPS Website

I am CPS.org

EL Family Landing Page

Districts across the nation are experiencing increases in EL population. Initiatives appear district-led and not managed by volunteers.

- Specialized Department - Office of Second Language Acquisition (Cincinnati Public Schools)
- Initiatives - interpretation and translation services, tutors, welcome events, culture programs, community resources, and English classes for adults.
- EL menu easily accessible on district website.

Develop a District Game Plan for Volunteering

Centralize efforts to build volunteer programs (see CPS process)

- Establish requirements
- Volunteer registration form
- Background check
- Volunteer credentials
- Building will contact to coordinate

Showcase Volunteer Initiatives

- District Facebook Campaign
- District Newsletter
- Volunteer Recognition Awards



Imagine if every family volunteered ten hours each year....

Let's Take Steps to Protect Ambassadors Fortify Volunteer Efforts by Working Together



1. Establish written expectations of the Ambassadors program & identify a gap response for volunteer vacancy or program dissolution. Identify each building's needs and coordinate with Assistant Superintendent and ESOL Director.
2. Include the district's plans to support EL families in our upcoming strategic plan rewrite for addressing the growing needs of the EL population (focus on Symmes & grades K-2).
3. Continue to evaluate and identify communication solutions. Develop a translation request process and consider including a landing page specifically for EL families (See CPS EL Welcome Center page - <https://ell.cps-k12.org/>). Give Ambassadors access & use that process to ensure consistency/tracking.

Moving Beyond Today. If It's Not a Volunteer...Then Who Is It?

- Operational Solution - It will take time and man-power to establish plans, SOPs, and develop initiatives to address the needs of our district's EL families using existing resources. This means planning meetings with district and building stakeholders, ESOL team, and Ambassadors.
- Building Solution - no one argues that the needs at Symmes are currently the most pronounced in our district. Keep efforts localized until they grow more evenly throughout the district and consider utilizing a building employee and either provide a stipend for an existing teacher or reduces his/her workload and assign a duty to serve as a building Diversity Ambassador.
- District Solution - regularly evaluate if a centralized point-position should be made to take the Ambassadors program to the district level to address the ever-growing EL population.

With district guidance and support, Ambassadors will continue to be integral for building a strong Sycamore Family.



Resources



Ambassador Created Branded Assets

- Welcome Packet (partial)
- Trifold Pamphlet
- Business Cards

Future SAC Projects Identified

1. Research education delivery models for large EL populations (cluster classes for EL students, full day Kindergarten for all identified EL, additional classroom supports for set EL class count thresholds) to see if any of these changes will help to connect families and students and condense the needs of families. Review the volunteer programs at schools like CPS to put District-approved volunteers into the classroom to assist EL students.
2. Identify issues with volunteerism decline. Review other school models for volunteer programs and recruitment. Evaluate possible efforts to institute a Volunteer 10 program for all families.

Strategic Plan Areas for Addressing EL Population

- Population & Demographic Data Review
- Stakeholder Surveys
- Review & Update District Policy for EL Families
- Increase Teacher Supports (encourage EL endorsement)
- Address Website Limitations
- Standardize Translatable School Communication
- Implement Robust Translation Services

Other School Research, Resources, Helpful Links

Communication with Parents in Languages Other Than English - Link for Georgia Department of Education - a GREAT Flow chart for districts.

A Guide for Engaging ELL Families: Twenty Strategies for School Leaders

<https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib07/ma01906464/centricity/domain/112/engaging-ell-families.pdf>

PTO Today: Diversity: Speaking the Language

<https://www.ptotoday.com/pto-today-articles/article/6209-diversity-speaking-the-language>

Ann Arbor Public Schools: Strategic Partnership

Volunteers <https://app.betterimpact.com/PublicOrganization/6a49961b-52cd-438d-9ab8-058e623d0e9e/Gvi/14dd25a3-e701-4dda-a3c8-23350e09b46e/1>

Cincinnati Public Schools EL Family Welcome Page - a designated place for EL families entering or who have questions or who need translation services.

<https://ell.cps-k12.org/>

Improve Communication to EL Families

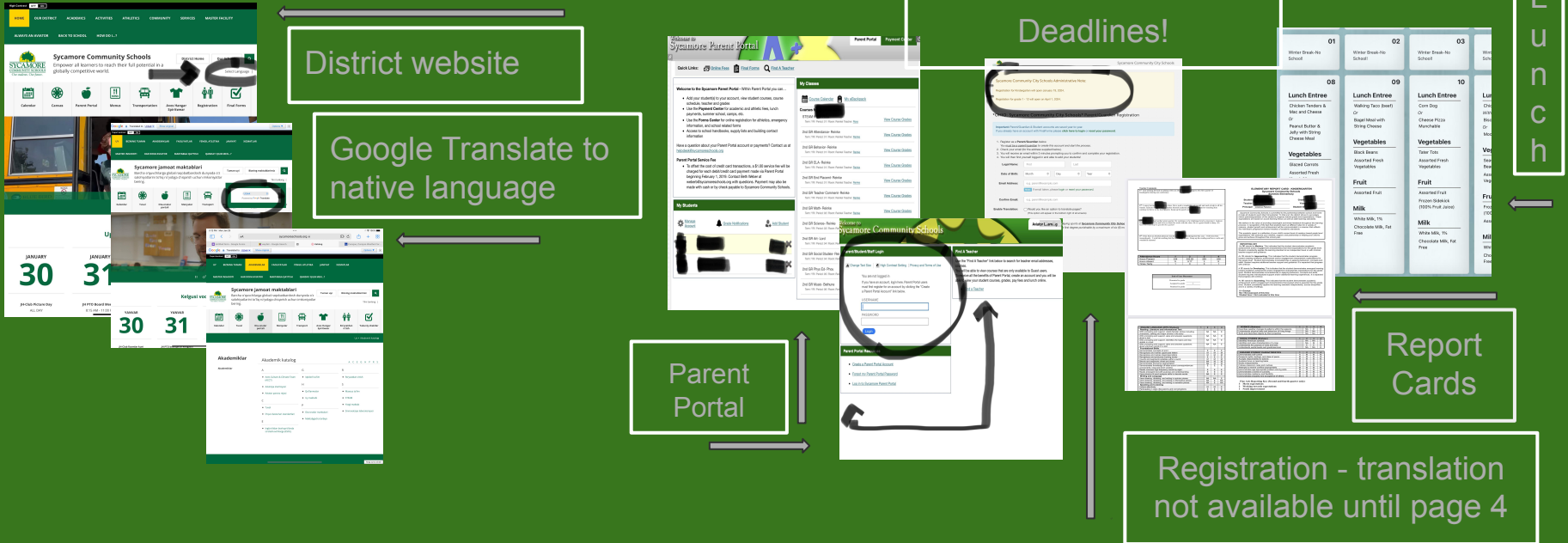
“Schools must communicate information to limited English proficient parents in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of parents who are proficient in English”

- registration & enrollment
- grievance procedures
- notices of school programs
- nondiscrimination
- language assistance
- handbooks

- report cards
- gifted & talented programs
- discipline procedures
- special education services
- permission slips
- conferences

Let's triple check to make sure these are adequately provided to all our families.
It will reduce the need for clarification by volunteers.

Translation Access on District Website



Improving communication for our EL families will alleviate much of the workload on Ambassadors and the District alike. Efforts to update the website, the addition of the communication tool Remind, and Canvas adoption are POSITIVE changes.