

Satisfying Compliance Monitoring Findings with Software: A School District's Experience in Oklahoma





Introduction

School districts have an important job when it comes to educating the youth of our nation, but they must do so while also maintaining compliance with federal requirements. There are many laws and regulations that school districts must comply with, and sometimes, in the midst of making sure all students are being well-educated and cared for, unaddressed compliance issues result in monitoring findings.

It is important for school districts to maintain compliance when it comes to parent communication. ESSA went into full implementation in the 2017-2018 school year. That means that the 2018-2019 school year will be the first year that school districts are monitored for compliance with ESSA. If a district is monitored and found to be out of compliance with parent communication requirements, the district will be required to develop a solution. It is best to be proactive about parent communication, rather than waiting for a government agency to require compliance.

Parent communication can be a challenge for many school districts, especially districts with large populations of students who are English Language Learners (ELLs). When a school district is unable or unwilling to take, or is even unaware of, the steps to ensure continued communication with all parents, it's possible, and even likely, that if monitored, the school district will receive a monitoring finding related to parent communications under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and/or Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In most cases, satisfying the requirements of Title VI will also satisfy corresponding requirements for (ESSA).

The Problem

In 2010, a school district in Oklahoma learned the hard way that parent communication requirements are an important part of federal monitoring inquiries. These requirements state that school districts must maintain a certain level of communication with all parents, including communicating in the language of Limited English Proficient (LEP).

In this particular district, there were thousands of ELLs during the 2009-2010 school year, meaning thousands of LEP parents were not being properly notified by the school district and the schools their children attended.

After the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) investigation, the school district was found to be out of compliance regarding communicating to parents in a language they could understand. The district was given a certain period of time to develop a plan for effectively notifying LEP parents of school programs and activities. This included “the use of various services, such as onsite translators/interpreters, telephonic translators/interpreters, and translation programs,” per the letter the district received from OCR.



The Solution

The district made the decision to implement a parent engagement solution which ultimately resulted in the receipt of a Voluntary Compliance Resolution. In the resolution, the district agreed to implement several services that would allow it to translate important notices and documents into priority languages, allowing school personnel to properly communicate with all parents — including LEP parents.

TransACT Parent Notices was among the services the district chose to implement, allowing staff to communicate with parents in priority languages. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Oklahoma school district and others across the United States are able to comply with requirements that mandate communication with parents about certain topics and happenings in the school district. Diagnostic compliance surveys are available to give district personnel guidance regarding what types of notifications would be required, and who should receive them.

How a TransACT Parent Notices Subscription Helps

The average school district is typically required to produce notices for LEP parents in roughly three to five different languages in addition to English. Writing and translating documents alone creates enormous risk that a school district without a parent engagement solution is:

-  Over-spending on translation services
-  Omitting the delivery of required parent notifications unintentionally
-  Sending notifications inconsistently
-  Sending translations that are inaccurate or unclear

With a subscription to TransACT Parent Notices, district administrators can proactively ensure that clear, consistent communication is being delivered to parents in compliance with 21 categories under ESSA, including:

-  Parent and family engagement
-  Teacher and paraprofessional qualifications
-  School support and improvement
-  Direct student services



A subscription also provides access to interpretation services and custom translations at a significant cost savings to standard interpretation and translation services. To learn more about how a TransACT Parent Notices Subscription can help your district, [request a demo today.](#)

Compliance Self-Evaluation Checklist

- Is your school district able to provide accurate and compliant communication to all parents in a language they can understand?
- Are letters sent home missing components due to inability to translate?
- Are letters translated into the languages of LEP parents or are interpretation services provided if it is not practicable to provide written translations?
- Are letters in languages other than English sent home?
- Are required notifications going out at the right time of the school year?
- Are principals and staff aware of all parent notification requirements?



If you answered no to any of the above questions, [contact TransACT](#) and find out how Parent Notices can benefit your district today.

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