EMPOWERING MULTILINGUAL FAMILIES

Chair: Katherine Rodela

The study utilizes a case study approach to explore how a non-linguistically diverse suburban school district communicates and engages with multilingual families’ and the families’ experiences and perceptions of the district’s efforts. The study is grounded in Critical Race Theory including the use of counterstories and composite narratives, and specifically utilizes Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth framework to highlight the strengths and cultural capital of families. Members of multilingual families, such as parents or guardians (e.g., grandparents, aunts, etc.) were invited to participate, with those who agreed were interviewed and asked to share their experiences and perceptions of district communication efforts and opportunities afforded for engagement within the district. Information shared by family members was developed into a composite narrative and shared with identified district and building administrators, allowing for reflection on their own experiences in relation to the shared experiences and perceptions of multilingual families within the district. This study provides the opportunity for researchers and educators to learn about the experiences and perceptions of multilingual families in a suburban school district and the ways in which they have been engaged and supported or further marginalized. In addition, the study explores and identifies changes that can occur at a systems level that support the dismantling of processes and practices that are exclusionary in the promotion of the development of inclusive practices that engage, draw upon, honor and value the knowledge, culture, and experiences of multilingual families.