Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Washington State Multilingual Learners: Policies and Practice Guide

2023

CHAPTER 8: NEWCOMER STUDENTS

Each year, Washington state welcomes students from a wide range of countries and circumstances. These students may have immigrated or are seeking refuge or asylum in our state. It is important for schools and districts to be prepared to receive newcomer students throughout the school year. The following guidance provides information on suggested programs and processes to support these newly arriving students.

Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylees

While school districts typically do not collect information on a student's immigration status, families may volunteer this information as they enroll students in school. Certain grants and additional services may be available to some groups of newly arriving students based on their immigration status. These groups are defined as follows:

- **Immigrant** – Any person who was not born in the United States and immigrated to the country. For school purposes, an immigrant student is one who was born outside of the United States and has not attended school in any state for more than three full academic years.

- **Refugee** – A person who is forced to leave their country and cannot return because of a fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a certain social group. They have crossed an international border to find safety in another country. Refugees are typically granted this status before entering the United States.

- **Asylee** – A person fleeing persecution, who presents themself at the US border, a port of entry, or is already in the United States. Asylee status is determined in the United States, and one may seek asylum regardless of the country one comes from or one's current immigration status.

- **Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Holder** – Certain individuals who worked with, or on behalf of, the US government in Iraq or Afghanistan and are at risk because of their association or service.

- **Humanitarian Parolee** – An individual who would otherwise be eligible for refugee or SIV status but was not able to complete their visa processing before entering. Humanitarian parole was granted to many Afghans for "urgent humanitarian reasons."[1] This status is also likely to be granted to Ukrainian people who entered as asylees.

For more information on immigration and supports for newly arrived students, see the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) Newcomer Toolkit.

Grant Support for Newcomers and Refugees

For schools or districts with a large or recent increase in the number of immigrant and/or refugee students, grant support may be available:

- **Immigrant Grant** – This grant provides additional state funding to districts that have experienced a recent increase in their newcomer population. OSPI reaches out directly to eligible districts in the winter of each school year. Districts complete a grant application to receive funds. No documentation of students' immigration status is required for this grant.

- **Refugee School Impact Grant** – This grant provides funding from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement and serves refugee students who have been in the United States less than three years. The grant is managed by School's Out Washington and requires districts to partner with a local community-based organization (CBO) to provide services that ensure refugee students' success. A focus on high academic performance, successful integration into the school community, and strengthening the skills and knowledge of parents, schools, and CBOs for the benefit of refugee children must be demonstrated. Documentation of students' status as refugees, parolees, or SIV holders is required.

- **Afghan Refugee Grant** – This new grant provides funding from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement specifically for Afghan refugees who arrived after July 31, 2021. The grant is managed by OSPI, and funds are distributed directly to school districts to support additional staffing, extended day academic and language support, professional learning, and family engagement for newly arrived Afghan students and families. Documentation of students' status as refugees or SIV holders is required.

Newly Arrived Students in Grades K-8

Newly arriving students in grades K-8 **should be placed in the age-aligned grade level**, regardless of the grade level or amount of schooling completed in their home country. School systems vary widely across countries, and school year calendars may not align to our typical US school year. Well-intentioned family members may request that a student be placed in a lower grade, but this should be discouraged as it is important for students to be placed with age-appropriate peers.

Newcomer students in grades K-8 benefit from the following practices:

- **Pre-Intake** – Before starting school, the family may need support with enrollment, obtaining required vaccinations, acquiring necessary school supplies, and transportation to and from school. Many districts provide in-person or phone interpretation at a family center or district office to assist the family with these needs.

- **School Orientation** – Newly arriving students may need support in their first days of school attendance. This assistance may entail help with finding their classroom(s), meeting their teacher(s), and learning basic routines such as where and when to use the bathroom, how to use automatic soap and towel dispensers, and how to navigate the lunchroom and playground. Assigning a student ambassador or buddy who speaks the student's home language can be an excellent way to help the student feel welcome and learn these routines quickly.

- **Early Instructional Activities** – Newcomers with little to no previous English instruction should be placed in either a specially designed class or group with an ELD teacher, specialist, or well-trained paraeducator (under the supervision of an ELD teacher) who can provide individual support on basic English skills. Lessons in the first days of arrival may include basic vocabulary, such as language about school, food, clothing, and personal interests, as well as greetings and useful phrases. Lessons in which students can share their own previous school experiences and compare/contrast with their new environment are both culturally responsive and helpful in building upon their prior knowledge.

- **Participation in Mainstream Instruction** – Newcomers can participate in and benefit from many instructional activities in the mainstream setting from the moment they begin attending school. Students who may have minimal English skills may enjoy feeling included and being part of the classroom community while listening to a read-aloud, following along with an instructional activity, and observing interactions with classmates. Classroom teachers may use strategies for multilingual learners, including visual supports, graphic organizers, choral responses, songs, and chants that allow newcomers to participate in content instruction while developing their English language skills.

- **Testing Accommodations** - Recently Arrived English Learners (RAEL) can skip one administration of state ELA testing in their first 12 months in U.S. schools. Newcomers must take state tests in math and science. Districts must plan for appropriate testing accommodations for the math and science tests to ensure accessibility for the student including stacked or sight translation in the student's primary language. See the Washington State Test Coordinators Manual available on the WCAP portal for more information.

High School Newcomers

Newly arriving students who are ages 14 to 18 should be placed in the grade that provides continuity with their prior schooling or at the age-appropriate grade if this will be their first high school experience. Students who are ages 19 or 20 at their time of arrival are usually placed in a traditional high school but may also request to participate in an Open Doors or other alternative program to accommodate any outside responsibilities they may have while continuing their education until graduation or age 21 (RCW 28A.150.220). Students who have completed a high school diploma in another country may still enroll in a Washington state high school as long as they are under age 21 and have not yet met the local and state graduation requirements. (See below for more information on Transcripts and Credit for Coursework from Other Countries.)

High School Students with Interrupted or Limited Education

A student who has missed six months or more of formal schooling prior to enrollment in a US school may be designated as a Student with Limited or Interrupted/Intermittent Formal Education (SLIFE). These students may have also experienced traumatic events due to political unrest, violence, or extreme poverty in their home countries. For newly arriving students at the high school level, SLIFE students may have different needs than other high school newcomers.

If a newly arrived high school student has experienced limited or interrupted/intermittent formal schooling, best practice is to place them in the age-appropriate graduation cohort. If a student's graduation year is lowered below the age-appropriate level when they enroll, there must be a plan in place so the student receives an education that "is age-appropriate, the content of the instruction relates to the core curriculum and is credit-bearing toward graduation or promotion requirements, and SIFE students have the opportunity to meet grade-level standards within a reasonable period of time." (DOJ, 2015, p. 50).

To determine what would be a "reasonable period of time" for students to reach grade level standards, proficiency levels in the student's primary language and any additional prior instructional language would be considered, but proficiency levels in English cannot be. Instead, educators should focus on identifying prior learning that could generate mastery credits, learning about the student's goals and strengths, and determining how literacy and numeracy can be developed through accelerated learning and spiral instruction.

The following practices are highly recommended for newly arriving SLIFE students:

- Use intake assessments and questionnaires to document prior academic history and identify which skills they already have that can be built upon in school.

- Provide extra English language development (ELD) services and individual support in the student's home language, if possible.

- Schedule students in newcomer classes and/or necessary academic support classes.

- Consider appropriate career and technical education (CTE) classes based on student interests and future goals.

- Use mastery-based crediting procedures to award credit for work and life skills.

- Collaborate with community-based organizations and local community colleges to provide additional resources and/or specialized programs.

Intake, Assessment, and Placement

A welcoming and efficient intake procedure is an important way to encourage belonging, foster academic success, and establish effective language development support at the high school level.

Intake

Intake processes for newly arrived multilingual high school students traditionally require partnership between the student, their guardians, the student's high school counselor, their certificated ELD teacher or language services case manager, and their community-based advocate, if they have one. An interpreter can provide interpretation for the student and family but may not serve as a member of the decision-making team. If a student arrives at their new school with documentation of a diagnosed disability or records of special education services in their prior school, a member of the school's special education team should also be part of the intake process.

Newcomers may arrive with or without documentation of prior schooling. Strong high school counseling and language support programs have processes and procedures in place for both situations. The following considerations can assist in designing and refining multilingual student intake processes:

Students who Arrive with Transcripts	Students who Arrive without Transcripts
- Placement can be made in the grade-level that provides continuity of academic history. - Official or unofficial transcripts* or grade reports can be reviewed by qualified staff if formal evaluation has not been completed. - Students may be placed in the next course in a series based on successful prior completion of equivalent courses.	- Placement can be made in the age-aligned grade level until formal records are available. If improper placement is identified upon receiving formal records, locally determined district procedures for grade-level adjustment should be followed. - Students should confer with their school counselor and/or transcript evaluator to determine placement testing needs and appropriate course placement. This process frequently requires collaboration between the student's high school counselor and a member of the school's or district's multilingual education team.

* More information on official vs. unofficial records and transcript evaluation procedures can be found in the section on Transcripts and Credit for Previous Coursework below.

Newcomer students at the high school level benefit from the following intake practices:

- **Enrollment/Intake Checklists-** Different countries have different requirements and processes for enrolling in a new school. Students and their families benefit from having a translated printed list of the forms that will need to be filled out, documents that need to be submitted and how they are used, and any meetings and placement testing that will take place.

- **Immediate Enrollment-** Regardless of whether high school newcomers arrive at the end of the school year or without transcripts, they should be placed in appropriate classes and be assisted with accessing English language development (ELD) and other school support services as soon as possible.

- **ELD Teacher Participation in Student Scheduling -** Coordination between the ELD teacher and school counselor makes it easier to place students in classes that meet their language development needs and move the student towards graduation. This collaboration also ensures that students can feel comfortable asking questions and receiving help from the ELD teacher or case manager and the student's counselor.

- **Requesting Middle School Transcripts-** In many countries, middle school includes the equivalent of 9th grade in the United States. In Washington, students are also able to earn high school credit as early as 7th grade for courses that meet high school-level course standards (RCW 28A.230.090(4)). Requesting middle school transcripts can help educators identify students' strengths and areas of interest. It can ensure that students receive all the credits that are eligible for transfer to their new school.

- **High School and Beyond Plan-** The High School and Beyond Plan is a useful tool that can assist school counselors and other student support staff in learning about a student's interests and goals to identify possible pathways to graduation. For more information on the High School and Beyond Plan, see OSPI's [Graduation Requirements](#) webpage.

- **Orientation and the First Week of School-** High school newcomers come to Washington schools with a wide variety of experiences. It is important to make sure that students have printed copies of school maps with their classes and teachers listed, a printed copy of their schedule, and a list of any log-in information they may need to access school technology. Students may also need instructions for purchasing school lunches, locating bus stops, understanding school behavior expectations, typical adult language (such as corrective vs. attention-getting language), bell systems, and using lockers. It is also possible that newcomers have not had access to computers or programs such as Canvas or Google Classroom and will need assistance navigating these programs.

- **Peer Language Connections-** Pairing a student with other students who speak their language, or a closely related language, can help students learn how to get to their classes, navigate the cafeteria, and most importantly, build connections with their peers. This is one of the most effective support practices for newcomers. Peer mentors also benefit from being in a leadership role that supports their growth and development.

Assessment

Proper assessment procedures ensure that newcomers are appropriately placed in language services and content classes. However, there are some assessments that should be avoided or

that newcomers do not need to take. Newcomers and their families should be informed about which assessments they need to take and how the results of the assessments will be used.

English Language Proficiency Testing

The WIDA screener must be given within the student's first ten school days (WAC 392-160-015). The WIDA screener is the only approved way for a student to be identified as an Eligible Multilingual Learner and be enrolled in the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) (See Chapter 2: Identification and Placement of this Policies and Practices Guide). The test can also give insight into a student's strengths in English and which instructional strategies would benefit them. Strong ELD programs also track how quickly a student demonstrates increased capacity and proficiency in English using the student's screener score as a baseline to determine if a student would benefit from highly capable identification testing and/or advanced learning opportunities.

While best practice is for students to complete the screener prior to scheduling classes, in some cases, that may not be possible. There may be time constraints, or a student may have experiences that make it unwise to be subjected to a standardized test prior to meeting peers and support staff. Students may also first need assistance navigating computer programs before engaging in computer-based testing. When a schedule must be created prior to ELP screening, it is recommended that a trained ELD teacher or language specialist attend the scheduling meeting to do an informal screening and collaborate with the student's school counselor for initial class placements. Once this process has been completed, the ELD teacher or language specialist should then schedule the test with the student as soon as possible. Once the screener is given, class schedules can be adjusted, as needed.

Content Area Testing

Math is the most common content area where a need for placement testing arises during intake for newcomer high school students. Math placement testing relies on the concept of threshold skills and mathematical practices and therefore, should be administered by a math teacher or a language specialist familiar with math testing and standards. Placement tests that are designed specifically for newcomer students often include limited English and instead rely on technical drawings, predictable formatting, and, when possible, are available in the student's primary language to eliminate linguistic barriers. These can be formal written tests or informal conversations to gauge math proficiency and problem-solving processes.

World Language Testing

It is also recommended that testing for World Language Competency and qualification for the Seal of Biliteracy be completed as soon as possible. World Language Competency testing not only creates an opportunity for students to earn additional credits but also provides valuable information on the student's primary language abilities. ELD and content area teachers can use this information to evaluate the effectiveness of providing primary language support and/or access to advanced class placement. Please visit OSPI's World Languages website for information on available assessments by language.

Recently Arrived English Learners (RAEL) can skip one administration of state ELA testing in their first 12 months in US schools. Newcomers must take state tests in math and science. Districts must plan to provide appropriate testing accommodations for the math and science assessments to ensure accessibility for students who need them. See the Washington State Test Coordinators Manual available on the WCAP portal for more information.

Course Placement

New student schedules are made based on prior academic experience and graduation requirements balanced by student interests and strengths. Placement in the appropriate multilingual education model and designated ELD is part of a student's language development plan and must be determined by a certificated ELD teacher or language services case manager.

Newcomer students at the high school level benefit from the following placement practices:

- **Placement in Dual Language Programs when Available-** High school dual language programs support students with achieving high levels of academic success. Classes that meet graduation requirements and are accessed in the student's strongest language are critical for student success while they develop their English language skills. Dual language programs are especially impactful when they are taught in the student's primary language (such as Spanish or Vietnamese) or a language in which the student had prior schooling (such as students who were taught in Spanish in Mexico or Guatemala and have a primary language of Mixteco or K'iche').

- **Credit for Previous Coursework** – Students with previous high school-level coursework in their home country should have their transcripts evaluated to identify opportunities for transfer credits. Students may also qualify for mastery-based credits (also referred to as competency-based credits), including world language credit, as explained above. Each district has discretion over which courses to accept for transfer credit.

- **Individualized Schedules-** Students who arrive from other school systems may take classes outside of their grade level so that they do not repeat courses or so that they can meet graduation requirements regardless of when they enter Washington schools.

Transcripts and Credit from Other Countries

All high school students must have a transcript that contains the student's ***entire academic history*** (WAC 392-415-070), including those courses that a student did not complete, high school classes taken at the middle school level (RCW 28A.230.090(4)), and any high school-level courses taken within or outside of the United States.

There is no standardized process for transcript evaluation in Washington - the decision to accept credits is locally determined. Districts must decide how to award credit for prior coursework and should have clear policies and procedures to grant transfer credits for domestic and foreign

transcripts. Because of the complex and technical nature of evaluating international transcripts, it is suggested that districts create procedures, including who will complete, coordinate, and oversee the evaluation process.

Official vs. Unofficial Documents

Official transcripts or school records are signed, sealed documents received directly from the sending school's registrar or obtained directly from the student and family. Documents that have been opened, are photocopies, or do not have a signature from the sending school's representative are not official documents. Unofficial documents can also include grade reports and printouts from online student or family access systems.

Many high school newcomers are unable to provide official transcripts. There is no law that states that a district cannot accept unofficial documents. However, districts should be sure that any unofficial documents are verified as authentic and accurately reflect the student's academic history. Districts should also state clearly in their policies and procedures if and how any unofficial documents will be used. If only unofficial, unverified transcripts are available, districts should consider adopting and implementing a competency or mastery-based crediting policy to reduce barriers to graduation. This policy should be applicable to all students.

Translation vs. Evaluation

Transcript translation and transcript evaluation are two different processes. Transcript translation is a word-for-word version of a non-English document rendered in English. Transcript evaluation is a process that results in a list of courses eligible for transfer credit by determining equivalency between courses taken outside the district and those offered within it.

Transcript Evaluation Process

While transcript evaluation can be a complex process, accurate transcript evaluations can ensure students are on the path toward on-time graduation and help staff members recognize the student's skills.

Since evaluation determines if foreign coursework meets state and locally determined graduation requirements, transcript evaluation should be completed by staff who are familiar with the district's course catalog and Washington state graduation requirements and have training in transcript evaluation and their district's transfer credit policies. These staff members are usually school counselors and/or school registrars but may also be district translators, migrant graduation specialists, or language specialists who have received specific training to be transcript evaluators.

The following table outlines the transcript evaluation process and includes sample resources and considerations to help school staff conducting the transcript evaluation process identify equivalencies and grant transfer credit.

Step 1: Verification of Records		
Resources Needed	**Process**	**Considerations**
Student transcripts or academic records Sending school's contact information (This may be located within the header or footer of the transcript or may need to be located online.) School staff familiar with the language in which the transcript is written or a professional interpreter	1. Match the student's name on the transcript to the student's provided identification. 2. Verify that the sending school is a recognized/ accredited school through the school's website and/or governing body. 3. If transcripts are not received directly from a sending registrar, call or email to verify the authenticity of the transcript with the sending school.	Students frequently arrive with end-of-year documents rather than an official transcript. In these cases, it is helpful to have information from the sending school to assist in aligning local course requirements with the previous school's course timeline. The student and their family cannot verify records themselves or serve as an interpreter when calling the school. OSPI's webpage on Interpretation and Translation provides more information and resources that may assist districts that need support with minority languages or languages new to their schools.
Step 2: Translation		
Resources Needed	**Process**	**Considerations**
Qualified translator Student transcripts or academic records	1. Identify a trained, qualified translator or transcription service. (Translation may not be completed by the student or a family member.) 2. Obtain an exact translation of the transcript or academic record, including headers and footers, charts as rendered in the original document, school names and addresses, and any handwritten comments.	Digital or machine translation, such as services like Google Translate, can only be used if a qualified translator reviews, edits, and verifies that the rendered document accurately reflects the source document. OSPI's webpage on Interpretation and Translation provides more information and resources that may assist districts that need translation support. Creating a translated and similarly formatted copy of the transcript will ease the evaluation process.

Step 3: Evaluation		
Resources Needed	**Process**	**Considerations**
Translated student transcripts or academic records A guide to international school systems (i.e., UNESCO's National Education System Profiles) Website for the sending school's governing body (i.e., Secretaría de Educación, Gobierno de Puebla). Sending school's website. OSPI's Learning Standards and Instructional Materials website State Course Codes	Determine if the transcript is from a public, parochial, or international school. For each block of courses, determine if transferring courses are year-long or are aligned with certain grading periods (i.e., quarters, trimesters, semesters) and assign a US grade level and grading period equivalent while maintaining the dates provided. Then, for each course: a. Using the school's or school governing body's website(s), identify the standards for each course. b. Compare the standards covered in the foreign course to the WA state standards to determine areas of equivalency. If no equivalency exists, it is ineligible for transfer. c. Using the Washington state course codes/descriptions, assign an equivalent course code. d. Determine the grading scale used on the student's transcript and assign grades aligned with your local grading scale.	*Schooling Systems:* Public schools in other countries may be part of a national or a regional system or be attached to large public universities. Parochial and other schools may not follow the same grade level and term systems of public schools. Many follow a system that aligns to the religious order overseeing the school. English and American international schools may follow a UK or US system of grade progression. IB World Schools are all aligned with the IB educational program. In some countries, even when in-person schools are managed regionally, virtual schools may be managed by the federal educational authority. *Grade Level Settings:* It is common for 9th grade to be the final year of "middle school" in many countries. In systems that include grade 9 equivalent courses in a middle school, course standards for 9th and 10-12th grade courses are usually found in different places. In many other countries, students in grades 10 through 12 attend school in multiple settings, such as vocational schools or college preparatory programs. It is important to identify the setting in which a student took

	e. Determine the number of eligible transfer credits for each course based on grades earned.	each course to identify which standards to use during the evaluation. *Grading Systems:* Schools using a 10-point grading scale have final grades that mirror the percentage earned in the course (i.e., 8.9= 89%). In some educational systems, an earned grade of "5.0" or "50%" is a passing grade but may not be the equivalent of a passing grade in a Washington school. If a student did not pass a course that has a local equivalent, it must still be included on the student's transcript. These courses would be evaluated with credits listed as "0.0."

Step 4: Transcription

Resources Needed	Process	Considerations
Original and translated student transcripts or academic records Completed transcript evaluation OSPI's website on [High School Transcripts](#)	1. Verify that the translation and evaluation are complete. 2. Enter the evaluated courses into the student's official transcript. 3. Print three copies of the transcript– one for the student, one for the cumulative file, and one for the student's school counselor. 4. Document completion of transcription on the evaluation form (if applicable).	All academic history must be entered on the student's transcript in the order taken. Based on the transcript evaluation, follow your district's review process to ensure that the student is in the correct grade level based on their academic history.

Step 5: Retention		
Resources Needed	**Process**	**Considerations**
Completed transcript evaluation packet, including: ● Original transcripts or academic records ● Translation of original documents ● Evaluation process forms (if applicable) ● Completed Washington state transcript	1. File the student's original records, any translations, evaluation forms, and a copy of the updated transcript in the student's cumulative file. 2. Submit a copy of completed evaluation forms to the student's high school counselor to assist in class placement and graduation tracking. 3. Give a copy of the completed transcript to the student/ student's guardian for their records.	Some registrars also keep a copy of transcript evaluation packets completed by year for their own records or for auditing purposes. If a school's language support program has a case management model, the student's case manager may benefit from a copy of the packet. School counselors should review any current or future schedules when they receive a copy of the completed transcript to verify that no courses will be repeated.

Some of the frequent errors made when determining equivalency are listed below:

Error	Correct Equivalency	Reason for Equivalency
ELA credit given for English as a Foreign Language	01008 English as a Second Language	Foreign language classes do not meet CCSS grade level ELA standards
Assigning two semesters of study with the same grade for year-long courses	Transcribe as a year-long course	On final transcripts, all high school coursework must be listed with the duration of the course and grading periods listed in order, as taken.
No credit given for courses that have term grades or term exams but no final grade	Partial credit given with a correctly evaluated number of credits and grades earned if the course has a district-approved equivalency	Many districts award partial credit to students based on the following statutes: ● RCW 28A.300.542 (Students experiencing homelessness) ● Chapter 13.34 RCW (Definition of a dependent) ● Chapter 13.32A RCW (At-risk youth or children in need of services)

Transfer Credit Policies

All decisions about which previous international coursework is eligible for transfer must be made based on the local district's policies and procedures.

Districts may consider the following recommendations:

- **Mastery-Based or Competency-Based Crediting Policies and Procedures:** Strong master-based crediting policies and procedures can help districts with confusion that may arise from unofficial transcripts or school records that cannot be verified. These policies can help reduce barriers to graduation for newcomer and highly mobile students. Mastery- based crediting may be a critical process in awarding students with credit for their demonstrated proficiency in ELA and math if transcripts are not available.

- **Clearly Designated Transcript Evaluators:** When transcript evaluators are clearly identified in district policy, procedures, and job descriptions, it can reduce the confusion in a complicated process and help the transcript evaluation process move faster.

- **Databases of Identified Equivalent Courses-** Maintaining a list of commonly used course equivalencies can assist in the transcript evaluation process. If a district, or group of districts, maintains such a list, it is important that it be reviewed periodically to ensure that the list remains valid.

- **Manual Review of Transcripts for Students with International Academic History Who Transfer from Other US Schools-** Verifying previous translations and evaluations of international transcripts can ensure that students are receiving all the credits for which they are eligible.

Pathways to Graduation

Multilingual learners who enter high school between the ages of 14 and 20 need assistance with developing a clear pathway to graduation regardless of when they enter Washington schools. It is important that the appropriate school staff map out the courses that a student needs to graduate. When staff develop a course-taking plan, they must consider the individual needs of students, their English language skills, and prior courses they have taken.

Content-Based (Sheltered) Instruction Program

Schools that regularly receive newcomer students at the high school level may benefit from implementing a content-based or sheltered instruction program that provides specially designed courses for newcomer students to develop English language skills and earn core content credits in a setting specifically tailored for them. These classes can ease students' transitions into their new environment and make content accessible for newcomer students. Below is an example of a content-based instruction program for students who arrive in 9th grade:

9th Grade (1st year)	10th Grade (2nd year)	11th Grade (3rd year)	12th Grade (4th year)
Beginning ELD	Intermediate ELD	Advanced ELD (may generate ELA credit)	Elective (Arts/CTE/WL)
EL Reading & Writing*	10th Grade ELA	11th Grade ELA	12th Grade ELA
EL HS Math (as determined by placement test or first course in series)	Next math course in series	Next math course in series/ Advanced Math	Advanced Math
EL Biology/EL Science**	Chemistry (or Biology)	Physics	Advanced Science (or Elective)
EL World History* (or PE/Health)	PE (or World History)	US History	Government/Other S.S. Elective
Elective (or PE) (Arts/CTE/WL)	Elective (Arts/CTE/WL)	Elective (Arts/CTE/WL)	Elective (Arts/CTE/WL)

* Only one section of ELD can be used to meet most college entry ELA requirements. Additional years of ELD may complete HS graduation requirements as determined locally but are not CADR.
** See EL Content Courses below.

Features and considerations of this model:

- **ELD Courses** – Newcomer students will generally need an ELD course to support their English language development for the first 3 years they are enrolled unless they enter with prior English skills. ELD courses can only generate ELA credit if they meet grade-level ELA standards. Higher-level ELD courses may be designed to meet ELA standards, especially language, speaking, and listening standards.

- **ML Content Courses** – If feasible, students may also be scheduled into sheltered ML core content classes in their first year of attendance. These classes are ideally taught by a content teacher and co-taught or supported by an ELD teacher and/or ELD or bilingual paraeducator. Content courses can also be set up with a "toggle" course code that allows students to generate elective credit if they are not yet able to meet grade-level content standards because of limited language skills and/or limited academic experience. These courses could be repeated to generate content credit the following year.

- **Credit for Previous Coursework** – When building a program for newcomers, consider that students with previous coursework in their home country may have different course progressions based on the courses they have taken previously.

- **Core Content in the 2nd Year and Beyond** – As students move into mainstream courses in their 2nd year and beyond, they may continue to need support to

access content and continue to develop their English skills in content areas. ELD classes in the 2nd year and beyond may be designed to provide academic language support. It is also recommended that core content teachers receive professional development on strategies to support intermediate and advanced multilingual learners. Students may also be scheduled into clustered, reduced-size classes to provide extra support and attention.

- **Students with Disabilities** – Multilingual students with disabilities benefit from placement in a content-based instructional program. Instructional methods and supports that meet their language needs frequently provide opportunities for support as dictated by the student's IEP and facilitate coordination of services between content, language, and special education teachers.

Keep in mind that all students generate basic education funding through their attendance and should be supported using basic education funds. Supplemental services such as an ELD co-teacher or bilingual paraeducator supporting multilingual learners may be funded from the TBIP.

Supportive Mainstream Program

For schools that have small numbers of newcomer students at the high school level, newly arrived students may need to be served in the Supportive Mainstream model. If possible, an ELD class which may serve one level or various levels together can provide an environment that eases students' transitions and provides academic language support for students who are in mainstream classes for most of their day. Below is an example of a Supportive Mainstream model for newcomer students who arrive in 9th grade:

9th Grade (1st year)	10th grade (2nd year)	11th grade (3rd year)	12th Grade (4th year)
Beginning ELD (or mixed ELD class)	Intermediate ELD (or mixed ELD class)	Advanced ELD (or mixed ELD class)	Elective (Arts/CTE/WL)
9th Grade ELA (with support)	10th Grade ELA (with support)	11th Grade ELA	12th Grade ELA
EL HS Math (as determined by placement test or first course in the series)	Next math course in series	Next math course in series/ Advanced Math	Advanced Math
Biology (or other Science)	Chemistry (or other Science)	Physics (or other Science)	Advanced Science (or Elective)
PE/Health	World History	US History	Government/Other S.S. Elective
Elective (Arts/CTE/WL)	PE or Elective (Arts/CTE/WL)	Elective (Arts/CTE/WL)	Elective (Arts/CTE/WL)

Features and considerations of this model:

- **ELD Courses** – For students in a Supportive Mainstream model, ELD services are still required and necessary. In a mixed-level ELD class, the EL teacher can engage in individual or small group activities to differentiate instruction to meet student needs. Working closely with core content teachers to preview or review academic language from other content classes can also be helpful. If it is not possible to enroll students in an ELD class, the EL teacher or paraeducator can "push-in" to ELA and other content classes to provide support.

- **ELA with Support** – Students who do not have access to a specialized ELD course or are simultaneously enrolled in an ELA course may need modified assignments. Using a less complex text to address the same standards, using a text in the student's home language, or providing other ways to access text (multimedia, shorter versions, etc.) can allow students to participate fully while making the class more accessible and supportive.

- **Content Courses** – Similar to the Content-Based Instruction model, core content classes for newcomer students can be set up with a "toggle" course code that allows students to generate elective credit if they are not yet able to meet grade-level content standards because of limited language skills and/or limited academic experience. These courses could be repeated to generate content credit the following year.

- **Credit for Previous Coursework** – Students with previous coursework in their home country may be able to skip courses they have already taken or qualify to earn mastery-based credits.

- **Clustering** – When possible, clustering newcomer students within the same classroom can allow schools to provide extra support. Similarly, pairing students with a classmate who speaks their language can be supportive as they continue to develop English skills.

- **Students with Disabilities** – Multilingual students who receive both newcomer ELD and specially designed instruction can have difficulty fitting in all the classes and supports they need and are entitled to in a Supportive Mainstream program. Regular collaboration between the educators responsible for specially designed instruction and English language development can support proactive decision-making and coordinated services to meet the needs of their students in this setting.

Dual Language Program

Dual language programs are an excellent placement for newly arrived high school students who speak the target language of that program. Dual language programs allow students to develop their academic skills in content classes taught in their own language while also developing English language proficiency. It is important to ensure that the dual language program is set up

to allow newcomer students access to the available classes in their home language while also allowing participation in necessary ELD classes. Below is an example of a newcomer dual language schedule in a Spanish/English Dual Language Program for a student who arrives in 9th grade:

9th Grade (1st year)	10th Grade (2nd year)	11th Grade (3rd year)	12th Grade (4th year)
Spanish Language Arts or AP/IB Spanish	Spanish Language Arts or AP/IB Spanish	Spanish Language Arts or AP/IB Spanish	Spanish Language Arts or AP/IB Spanish
Beginning ELD or 9th Grade ELD/ELA for DL	10th Grade ELA for DL	11th Grade ELA for DL	12th Grade ELA for DL
PE/Health	Spanish World History	Spanish US History	Spanish Government/ Other S.S. Elective
Spanish HS Math (as determined by placement test or first course in series)	Next math course in series	Next math course in series/ Advanced Math	Advanced Math
EL Biology/EL Science	Chemistry	Physics	Adv. Science
Elective (Arts/CTE)	PE or Elective (Arts/CTE)	Elective (Arts/CTE)	Elective (Arts/CTE)

Features and considerations of this model:

- **Balance of Languages –** To be considered dual language programs at the middle and high school level, students should have a course in language arts in both languages each year and at least one core content area taught in the non-English language (CAL Guiding Principles). Strong programs support newcomer students with a minimum of two and a maximum of four courses taught in the student's primary language to ensure effective support for both languages.

- **Core Content Taught in Languages Other than English –** Any core content courses such as history, science, or math that are taught in the newcomer students' language can provide students with an excellent way to build on their prior learning and generate core content credits while also focusing on developing their English proficiency.

- **Electives in the Language Other than English –** Electives that are language-rich, such as Drama, Translation/Interpretation, or Careers in Teaching, can provide newcomer students with the opportunity to develop strong language skills while also enabling students to earn Arts or CTE credit towards graduation.

- **Students with Disabilities** – Placing newcomer students with disabilities in dual language programs provides strong academic and linguistic support when the student has a personal or academic history with the partner language. It is important that goals are set, and progress is monitored for both languages when communication, reading, or writing goals are part of the student's IEP.

Newcomer Programs

Newcomer programs are explicitly designed for students facing challenging transitions as they adjust to new environments and into their new schools. These programs provide safe environments that help orient students to the US school system and assist with the development of basic English communication skills during their first 6 to 18 months in the country. These programs may offer classes that are similar to Content-Based (Sheltered) Instruction models for half or more of the school day. Transportation may be provided to the program. Districts able to offer a newcomer program model must carefully consider how to address the possible impacts of segregation. For this reason, full-day newcomer models are not recommended.

Alternative Learning Environments

All newcomer students, regardless of their prior schooling and age of entry, should be offered a pathway to complete a full high school diploma. However, some students who arrive at an older age may have unique needs and obligations outside of school, particularly if they are SLIFE. These students may prefer to enroll in Open Doors or other alternative learning environments. School counselors and ELD teachers should be aware of these alternative options and work with newly arrived SLIFE students to allow students and their families to make an informed choice and develop an individualized plan to meet their needs.

Notes & Resources

[1] National Immigration Forum; https://immigrationforum.org/article/explainer-humanitarian-parole-and-the-afghan-evacuation/

The USDE Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) Newcomer Toolkit is designed for staff who work directly with newcomers, immigrants, asylees, refugees, and their families and provides additional information, professional learning activities, and resources.