Helping Newcomer Immigrant and Refugee Students Register for Secondary School

A clear, comprehensive secondary school registration process can ensure that newcomer immigrant and refugee students receive appropriate supports, credits, and course placements. Newcomer immigrant and refugee students bring assets, such as emerging bilingualism,\(^1\) that can benefit themselves and their U.S.-born peers,\(^2\) but they may also face systemic barriers depending on their unique history with formal education, English proficiency, and potentially traumatic home country experiences. Schools can uplift these strengths and reduce barriers by implementing a registration process that is thorough, culturally sensitive, and grounded in an asset-based approach. The registration process outlined below is based on peer-reviewed research.

### Secondary School Registration Process for Newcomer Immigrant and Refugee Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS</th>
<th>COLLECT AND ANALYZE records and transcripts</th>
<th>SCREEN AND ASSESS students to identify needs and meet federal and local legal requirements</th>
<th>DETERMINE PLACEMENT and services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Process students’ records for name, birthdate, vaccination records, and proof of residency</td>
<td>Review prior school data to assign appropriate credit, grade, and program placement</td>
<td>Interview students and families about education history and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate transcripts to award credit for previous work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Screen for trauma and connect to other service providers as needed</td>
<td>Determine if students’ formal education was interrupted or inconsistent</td>
<td>Assess home language literacy and identify transferable skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assess for gifted and talented programs and disabilities</td>
<td>Administer home language survey to determine if students speak a language other than English</td>
<td>Transfer and award competency-based credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Determine grade and course placements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Identify and provide services and support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This infographic was prepared under Contract ED-IES-17-C-0009 by Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest, administered by Education Northwest. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

This infographic draws from the REL Northwest toolkit Welcoming, Registering, and Supporting Newcomer Immigrant and Refugee Students. Review the toolkit for additional resources on registering newcomer immigrant and refugee students, as well as welcoming and supporting them and their families, in U.S. secondary schools.
Resources to Support the Registration Process

Identifying each newcomer immigrant or refugee student’s unique strengths and needs can ensure that they receive the right credits, placement, and supports. The resources below can contribute to a thorough and equitable registration process for all newcomer immigrant and refugee students and families. These resources were selected from the REL Northwest toolkit Welcoming, Registering, and Supporting Newcomer Students.

Getting It Right: Reference Guides for Registering Students with Non-English Names | REL Northwest

Correctly record students’ names in all school files and databases with this guide featuring details on naming conventions in 11 languages.

Evaluating Foreign Transcripts: A Resource Guide for School Districts | Department of Education

Understand country-specific transcript conventions to award students accurate credit for academic work completed in their home country.

Competency Testing Process for Districts | Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Award competency-based credit for knowledge of world languages by using a testing process like this one from Washington state.

Special Education Assessment Process for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Students | Oregon Department of Education

Assess culturally and linguistically diverse students for special education services, taking care to follow special considerations outlined in this guide.

Screening and Assessment | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Screen for trauma and mental health symptoms with this assessment tool and mental health measures translated by various refugee groups.

References


February 2021