

Education for Equity and Social Justice: Newcomer Center

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Abstract

This presentation will focus on the creation, development, and implementation of a Newcomer Center for immigrant students within a large North Texas school district.

Topics discussed will be: funding, eligibility criteria, curricular programs, specialized staff, and community outreach/partnerships.

Objectives: To promote academic success for immigrant students, build language proficiency in English, provide community resources for family literacy, and to establish partnerships with community organizations.

Content: Due to the demographic changes in the state of Texas and its impact on public schools, a statement of need was presented to the district administrators for the establishment of a Newcomer Center. The presenter will share creative ways of attaining funding for a Newcomer Center. She will describe the implementation of a curricular program, which is designed to promote academic success regardless of previous educational experiences. Also, explain students' eligibility and exit criteria for the Newcomer program. Most critically, she will share the struggles and successes of staffing a Newcomer Center and the criteria necessary for specialized staff. The presenter will conclude by highlighting the importance of establishing community partnerships and outreach networks for the continue growth of a Newcomer Center.

Newcomer programs offer recent immigrant students an emotionally safe educational atmosphere that fosters rapid language learning, acculturation, and enhancement of self-esteem. Such programs may be organized as a school within-a-school, or outside at a separate site that would feed into the local or home school.

Content

- Funding
- Eligibility and Exit Criteria
- Curricular Programs
- Specialized Staff
- Community outreach/partnerships

Objectives of a Newcomer Center

- Promote academic success for immigrant students
- Build language proficiency in English
- Provide community resources for family literacy
- Establish partnerships with community organizations

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Rationale

- Growing population of NES
- High mobility factor
- Specialized faculty trained to meet all educational needs of ELL students

Funding Sources

- ***District Budget (State Compensatory)***
 - Office operations
 - Teacher materials
 - Student Travel
 - Computer lab supplies
 - Substitutes
 - Faculty Salaries
- ***Title I***
 - Students' books and general supplies
 - Technological equipment
 - Staff development
 - Parent Involvement
- ***Title III***
 - Student supplies
 - Reading kits
- ***Grant Funds***
 - Improving Teaching and Learning
 - 3 year grant for Saturday Family Enrichment Center – literacy in English for Newcomer students and their families
 - Staff development services and technological services
- ***EL-Civics Adult Education Grant***
 - Adult literacy classes
 - Workplace skills
 - Citizenship classes
 - Pre-GED preparation in Spanish

Eligibility Criteria

- Student is identified as a speaker of other language through Home Language Survey
- The student is tested orally
- ITBS norm-referenced test might be given depending on oral test score
- A score of NES qualifies the student

Exit Criteria

- 2 year maximum attendance
- Based on test scores students may return to home campus at midyear or end of one year
- Students may return to home campus based on teacher recommendation
- Two Test Batteries
 - Public Release RPTE
 - Public Release TAKS

- Oral Language Test

Testing Instruments Used

- IDEA oral language test
- ITBS reading & language
- IPT reading
- RPTE
- TAKS

Curriculum and Instruction

Vertical alignment of curriculum

- Lesson planning focusing on TEKS
- District TAKS timelines
- State adopted textbooks and materials written specifically for ESL students
- Curriculum and Instruction

Horizontal alignment of curriculum

- Integrated lesson planning by academic teams
- Vocabulary development and reinforcement across content areas
- Monitoring of implementation of scope and sequence

The Center operates on a block schedule

- Students are placed on entry level or transitional academic teams depending on the amount of time in U.S. schools and test scores
- Students attend ESL and Math classes daily

Networking meetings with home campuses to discuss:

- Number of transitioning students
- Academic needs
- Affective filter accommodations
- Scheduling and credits

Extended Day Program

- Weekly tutorials
- Computer technology
- Credit recovery for high school students
- Extracurricular activities

Family Enrichment Program

- Classes for parents and students
- Focus on English literacy and daily living skills

Extensive Staff Development

- Technology
- ESL strategies and Sheltered Instruction
- TAKS focus
- Literacy issues
- Parent Community Involvement

Curriculum Materials

- Technology – *Rosetta Stone, ELLIS, Fast ForWord, Light Span, Discover, and Novanet*
- Literacy – *Focus on Reading, SRA, Dolch Word Kit, Oxford Dictionaries*
- Language Development – *Grammar in Context, Language of Literature, Making Connections*
- Oral Proficiency – *Side by Side*

Teaching Staff

- Two entry level teams
- Six members each
- Five elective teachers
- Two transitional-level teams
- Five members each

Administrative Staff

Coordinator/Principal

- Create master schedule
- Organize/maintain budgets
- Textbooks/inventory
- Student discipline
- Teacher/paraprofessional evaluations

- Campus plan research and development of special programs
- Legal documentation
- Curriculum development

Counselor

- Student/Family counseling
- Special Education referrals
- Testing Coordinator
- Scheduling
- Peer mediation coordinator
- Supervision of Teaching Assistants

Family Outreach Specialist

- Family resource information and referrals (CPS, medical, Job Corps)
- Informational parent meetings
- Multicultural Academic Olympics
- District assistance to home campuses regarding needs of immigrant families

Immigrant Transition Specialist

- Provides comprehensive academic advising for students grades 9-12
- Determines prior schooling, evaluates foreign transcripts, and issues credits
- Prepares extensive database of students' academic records and test scores
- Provides staff development for home campus teachers on sheltered issues

Paraprofessionals

- School Secretary
- Enrollment Data Clerk
- Attendance Clerk
- Family School Representative
- Campus Technology Manager
- 9 Teaching Assistants

Newcomer Center Profile

- Student Population: 373
- Languages Spoken: 17
- Countries Represented: 23
- TEA rating: Acceptable
- 98% low SES
- 50% of students enrolled transition to home campus yearly

***"No one can be
Authentically human while
He prevents
Others from being so"***

Paulo Freire