DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NEWCOMER HANDBOOK
2019-20

Discover a World of Opportunity™
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INTRODUCTION

Newcomer students are an important part of Denver Public School’s student population. This population brings many strengths to our DPS community including individual cultures and backgrounds.

Every school in DPS can serve Newcomer students! Newcomer students can choose to attend their neighborhood school, a school they choose into, or a Newcomer Center. Because all DPS teachers are required to become ELA certified through the ELA Teacher Qualification Training Program, all students, regardless of language ability or school choice, will have a teacher who has the necessary training to help English learners participate, learn, and succeed.

To help address the unique needs of Newcomers, DPS has established five Newcomer Centers (one elementary, one middle, and three high school) strategically placed across the district to provide intense educational, linguistic, and social-emotional support to recently arrived students who meet the criteria to be considered a Newcomer. If families and students select a Newcomer Center, students are typically served at the center for one to two semesters in order to prepare them for participation in ELA-E or ELA-S classrooms. At this point, students may remain at this school or the school of their choice.

NEWCOMER DEFINITION AND ELIGIBILITY

A student must meet all three requirements in order to be eligible for Newcomer Center services and for ISA Teams to identify them as a Newcomer in Infinite Campus:

- Limited and/or interrupted formal schooling
  - Interrupted schooling is defined as 6 or more months of missed schooling.
  - Limited schooling may depend on the age of the student. Note: ISA Teams may identify a student as Newcomer in IC beginning in 1st grade.
- Scored 1.0-2.4 overall (NEP) on WIDA Screener or ACCESS assessments and may have limited native language literacy
  - If native language assessments are not available, conduct an informal interview with the student’s parents (see Potential Newcomer Parent Questionnaire) to determine if the student may have limited native language literacy.
- Has been enrolled in a school in the United States for fewer than two semesters throughout the course of their education

*If a student is slightly outside of the defined bullets above, but the school feels he/she would benefit from Newcomer services, please reach out to your ELA Network Partner to discuss eligibility to be identified as a Newcomer and receive services.

Newcomers vs. Beginning English Learners

It is a common misconception that if a student comes into DPS from another country or does not speak English that they are a Newcomer. In fact, this is not always the case. By definition, not all students who are at ACCESS Levels 1-2 or who have recently arrived to the US are Newcomers. Students with continuous schooling and literacy in their native language do not necessarily benefit from Newcomer programming, and are best instructed in an ELA-E or ELA-S classroom. Newcomer programming is intended for students with interrupted or limited schooling because of the intensive focus on social/emotional support and beginning level literacy/numeracy instruction. To determine whether a student is a newcomer, schools should follow the intake procedure found in the next section.
NEWCOMER IDENTIFICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

To best serve our Newcomer students, when a potential Newcomer registers at your school, please follow the intake procedure below.

Newcomer General Process Flow Chart

ISA Handbook for Schools

During the intake process, if a student is identified as a Newcomer, complete Newcomer Center Intake Form and email to Hope_Flores@dpsk12.org
NEWCOMER CENTERS IN DPS

A Newcomer Center is a school site that focuses on the needs of students with limited formal schooling by offering targeted academic skills, English language development, and social/emotional support to help students be successful in a formal school setting. Newcomer Centers help students navigate the expectations of American schooling, including the basics of classroom and school behavior and norms. Newcomer Centers are specially designed schools that pride themselves on low student-to-teacher ratios, specific targeted listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, and community wrap-around supports.

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<th>High Schools</th>
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<td>1551 S Monroe St.</td>
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Special Considerations for Newcomer Center Placement

When considering Newcomer Center placement for students, schools should consider the following:

- **Transportation:** Traveling across the district on a DPS or public bus may not always be the best-case scenario for students who are new to the United States, speak limited English, may be unfamiliar with school and/or public transportation, and who may have had traumatic experiences in their home country.

- **Elementary Students:** Transportation on a DPS bus is provided to a Newcomer Center if students live more than one mile from the Newcomer Center. If students do not live near a bus stop, they may have to walk up to a mile to reach one. Additionally, depending on where a student lives, bus travel time in the morning and afternoon could be significant. This should be taken into consideration when discussing Newcomer Center placement options with families.

- **Middle School Students:** DPS Transportation is provided to a Newcomer Center if students live more than 2.5 miles from the school.

- **High School Students:** A public bus pass is provided to students through RTD for students who live more than 2.5 miles from the Newcomer Center. Depending on where a student lives, bus travel time in the morning and afternoon could be significant.
Siblings and Family: Students who are new to the country may not have a support system of friends and/or teachers at their new school. Families may want to keep siblings, cousins, relatives, neighbors, and/or other acquaintances at the same school site. Schools should ensure they are placing students at the school that will best serve the students and honor the family’s preferences for placement.

Parent and Student Choice: Newcomer students and families are often new to the enrollment process of American schools when they arrive in DPS. Because of this, schools should take proper measures to ensure that the families are treated with respect and compassion, that they understand their choices, and that they are in agreement with the placement decisions made for their child. As a choice district, all students and their parents in DPS have the right to attend any school, which means that every school in DPS must be prepared to serve all students, regardless of educational background, language levels, or native language.

ELA-E Classrooms: If a Newcomer chooses to stay at their neighborhood school (and it is not a Newcomer Center), it is the responsibility of the school to provide all services and supports that a Newcomer needs to be successful.

ELA-S Classrooms: If a Newcomer is a Spanish-speaker, and wishes to receive instruction in Spanish and English, parents should ensure students are enrolled in a TNLI school where native language instruction is offered and select Option 1 on the Parent Permission Form (PPF) to be enrolled into an ELA-S classroom. ELA-S classrooms are taught by teachers who are fluent in Spanish and are specially trained to teach students English, while maintaining their Spanish language. As students learn more English, the proportion of English instruction increases, which leads to literacy in both languages.
FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL SUPPORTS
FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

Tips for Welcoming a Newcomer Family

● Contact translation/interpretation services at 720-423-3767, if necessary
● Be sure the family has important school information which may include:
  ○ A school calendar
  ○ Bell schedule
  ○ Bus route and schedule
  ○ Copy of student’s class schedule
  ○ Free and Reduced Lunch Forms
  ○ Parent-teacher conference dates
  ○ Teacher contact information
  ○ Counselor and family liaison contact information
● Utilize DPS Multilingual Document Repository
● Consider scheduling a home visit to get to know the student and the family’s culture

Welcome Kits

DPS Welcome Kit for Newcomers include a welcome template, school information take-home sheet, and interview assessment translated into the top 9 languages in DPS - Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, French, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Tips for Welcoming a Newcomer Student

The most important goal of the first weeks of school for a Newcomer student is to make him or her feel welcome, comfortable and safe. Here are a few tips to consider when welcoming a Newcomer student:

● Pair the new student with a buddy in the class who can help them with routines. If there is a student in the class who speaks the same language, this is ideal. If there is a student in another class or grade level, find a time during the day when these students can meet.
● Be sure the student knows one teacher to whom they can always go for help. This is especially important in middle and high school.
● Take time to give the student a tour of the school and the classroom. Use gestures to explain what happens in each place on the tour.
● Newcomer students should be informally assessed on basic skills including letter identification, formation and sounds, basic vocabulary, number identification and number sense, etc. Reach out to your ELA Network Partner for more information on assessment.
● Newcomer students should be exposed to grade-level standards and tasks with scaffolding while also receiving instruction on basic skills and any gaps identified through assessment.
● For curricular resources and strategies, see information in the next section.
CURRICULAR RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES FOR NEWCOMERS

Curricular Resources for Newcomer Students

● First 30 days Newcomer Lessons - ESL Library
● Newcomer Scope and Sequence from National Geographic Inside Curriculum
● Useful websites:
  ○ eslibrary.com
  ○ readworks.org
  ○ newsela.com
  ○ bit.ly/nyplenglish
● Contact your ELA Network Partner to check out the following resources:
  ○ literacy, math, science, and social studies center-based basic skill activities
  ○ high-interest, lower reading level (hi-lo) leveled texts

Classroom Strategies to Support Newcomer Students

● Implement best practices for language instruction during both ELD and content areas
  ○ Best practices during dedicated ELD: PERMS
  ○ Best practices during content areas (ICLD): SERVE
● Newcomer best practices checklist and resources
● Newcomers: What to do / What not to do
● Differentiating for Students at Level 1

School-wide Structures to Support Newcomer Students

● Create collaboration models across teams and academic departments with teachers who all support Newcomer students. Consider:
  ○ release time for an ELD teacher to meet and co-plan with content area and/or grade level teams
  ○ finding a time when all teachers who have Newcomer students (especially siblings) across grade levels can meet to share resources, and discuss and plan for best practices
● Consider a separate ELD block for Newcomers and Level 1 students
  ○ Secondary Newcomers should receive a double-block of ELD in lieu of an English Language Arts class.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does DPS have Newcomer Centers?
DPS is home to a variety of students, including a number who benefit from Newcomer services. Students at our Newcomer Centers get the opportunity to develop basic literacy/numeracy skills, acquire basic academic knowledge, and receive targeted instruction related to cognitively demanding grade-level academic language proficiency while at the same time learning grade-level content knowledge.

A student is new to the country. They are automatically placed in a Newcomer Center, correct?
No, students must meet all criteria to be considered for Newcomer Center placement.

Are families required to opt into a Newcomer Center if they meet all three requirements?
No. As a choice district, families and students have the option to choice in or out of Newcomer Center programming. If a Newcomer chooses to stay at their choice school which is not a Newcomer Center, it is the responsibility of the school to provide all services and supports that a Newcomer needs to be successful.

I have a student who I believe is a Newcomer. What should I do?
Refer to the Newcomer Center Overview and intake procedure for information on enrolling Newcomer students. If a student is identified as a Newcomer, complete the Newcomer intake form and email to Hope_Flores@dpsk12.org. Please keep in mind that to enroll a student in a Newcomer Center, the student must meet DPS’ definition of a Newcomer. If a student does not qualify as a Newcomer, or turns down Newcomer Center offerings, the school of choice will serve as the student’s home school. All teachers in DPS are trained and prepared to teach students with low English proficiency through the ELA Teacher Qualification Program.

Can a Kindergarten student be a Newcomer?
A Kindergarten student can not be considered a Newcomer student.

Is there a difference between Newcomers and beginning level English learners?
Yes. Not all students who are at ACCESS Levels 1-2 are Newcomers. Students with continuous schooling and literacy in their native language do not necessarily benefit from newcomer programming, and are best instructed in an ELA-E/ELA-S classroom.
There is a Newcomer who chose into my school, but I don’t believe we are the right placement for him/her because I don’t believe we can support him/her as well as a Newcomer Center. What do I do?

As a choice district, all students and their parents in DPS have the right to attend any school, which means that every school in DPS must be prepared to serve all students, regardless of educational background or language level. While Newcomer Centers have the ability to offer additional supports and resources, it is ultimately up to students and parents which school they want to attend. If a Newcomer student chooses to stay at their home school, it is the responsibility of the school to provide all services and supports that a Newcomer needs to be successful.

How long does a student stay a Newcomer?

Students typically remain a Newcomer for two semesters, but the choice can be made at the school level to keep students enrolled as a Newcomer for an additional year. Newcomer Centers have their own plans for transitioning students out of Newcomer services and additional considerations must be made for high school students due to graduation requirements.

How does a Newcomer in a Non-Newcomer Center transition into mainstream classes?

Newcomer designation in IC drops off automatically after 1 school year (2 semesters). Individual schools determine when students transition to an ELA-E classroom.

What ELD classes should Newcomer take?

Secondary Newcomers should receive a double-block of ELD in lieu of an English Language Arts class. Elementary Newcomers should be placed in a Beginner ELD group or schools might consider creating a separate ELD group for Newcomers.

Do secondary students receive academic credit for Newcomer programming?

No, they receive elective credit.

How do I know if a student is a refugee/asylee/immigrant/etc?

Due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the Plyler vs. Doe (1982) case, DPS does not release any personal student information such as immigration or refugee status.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- For information and support regarding intake process and Newcomer Center placement, contact Hope Flores.
- For information and support regarding instruction, wrap-around services, and curricular materials and resources, contact Bethany Lauber.
- For all other support, please contact your ELA Network Partner.