



**BEST PRACTICES  
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- Lessons from the Field -

## Welcoming Newcomer Students

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*Wednesday, March 13, 2024 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET*  
*Transcript*

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**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Good afternoon and thank you for joining us at today's webinar. Our webinar titled today is Welcoming Newcomer Students, and we appreciate having you with us today. On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, we're pleased to welcome you, and we're so excited about this webinar. In fact, as a statement of importance about this topic, we have over 1,900 people registered for this event for every state in the United States, plus Washington DC, four United States territories and 11 other countries around the world. We expect more people to log on shortly and thank you again for joining us. This webinar is part of our lessons from the field webinar series. The webinar series highlights effective tools, techniques, and topics that are on the top of educators' minds.

You may access recorded webinars from the series on the webinar webpage, the series webpage, which is now being posted in chat. As always, as you participate, if you have additional strategies that are working for you, please do let us know. You may reach out to the [bestpracticesclearinghouse@ed.gov](mailto:bestpracticesclearinghouse@ed.gov) to share those ideas or contact us directly at NCSSE. Our work is stronger together when we all share effective techniques and strategies that work for students. We want to be sure that you take notes that the content of this presentation does not necessarily represent the policies or views of the United States Department of Education, nor does it imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of ED.

My name is Cindy Carraway-Wilson, and I'm a training specialist with National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, or NCSSE, and I will be the moderator for this webinar. NCSSE is funded by the Office of Safe Supportive Schools within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. We hope that you'll visit us at our website to learn more about the tools and resources that we have to offer at NCSSE. To give you a sense of what the website looks like, a screenshot of our homepage is on the right, and on the left are a few of our more commonly accessed resources. We also share and post latest resources

and events coming out of the field via social media. So please do follow us. This webinar is being recorded.

All materials that you see today, including the slides, any referenced resources, the recorded version of the webinar, and other items, will be available on the event webpage within this website. And in fact, some of those items, including the slides and the speaker bios, have already been posted. Please also note, as I said earlier, you may access previous versions of lessons from the field sessions by visiting the webinar series webpage, which is listed here and posted in chat. Now, just a quick roadmap of what we're going to be covering today. After we finish up with our logistics, we will hear a welcome from Ms. Montserrat Garibay from the U.S. Department of Education, who will welcome us and share why it's so important to ensure that newcomer students and their families are welcomed and engaged in our schools.

Then, we will move into our context-setting speakers, who will provide us an overview of what is happening at the Office of Refugee Settlement... Resettlement and the resources that they have to offer. And we'll also hear about immigration trends and the importance of recognizing the journeys that newcomers sometimes take to enter the United States and how, for some of our students, those journeys may require that we use trauma-informed practices. In the panel, we will hear from... have a variety of opportunities to hear from student and practitioners about strategies they either experienced or are actively using to engage newcomer students and to provide services to ensure that whole student health and achievement.

After a brief context... closing of content delivery, we will move into the Q&A section, where you again get to hear our speakers and panelists respond to questions from you, our audience. So please be sure to use that Q&A button in your Zoom control panel to post your questions and comments. Now, it's my great pleasure to introduce Ms. Montserrat Garibay, the Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director of the Office of English Language Acquisition at the United States Department of Education.

**Montserrat Garibay:**

Thank you. Good afternoon. Buenas tardes. Again, my name is Montserrat Garibay, and I am the Assistant Deputy Secretary for the Office of English Language Acquisition. This issue is dear to my heart. I myself was a newcomer over 30 years ago. I arrived in Austin, Texas, as a 12-year-old, not speaking a word of English, undocumented, and full of hope to start a new life. And my ESL teacher, Mrs. Hernandez, welcomed my sister and I to the public education school system. And I am forever grateful to all the educators that supported my family and I. Education can truly transform the lives of our students. And I am the living proof that when we as a country embrace newcomers and provide them with a strong support, we can be productive community members in our society.

Thank you again for joining us today on this important webinar. As newcomer students come to our communities and schools, we most welcome them and raise the bar on how we support them. It is important to know that perceptions

about students rely a great deal on how we talk about them, and sometimes, labeling students as newcomer creates perceptions about their capacity to meet academic and social demands in the learning environment. So we must rethink what we say and how we talk about newcomer students. Let's remember that the term newcomer is a temporary designation that we are imposing on students and families arriving in our school communities because we have assumed that there are prerequisites, information, and resources they need upon their entry to success in the education system we have designed.

It is important then to focus all discussions about newcomers on the processes that need to be in place to support them. And because newcomers are diverse academically, economically, linguistically, and socially, we must engage educators from all roles and responsibilities in engineering the school environment that meets these very diverse needs. Newcomer students have incredible potential and can reach the same ambitious goals that are in place for all student. And it is our job as educators to develop that potential as we design a more responsive learning environment. Over time, as we orient newcomer students into our systems, we get to know students much better, and we can describe them with increasing knowledge and accuracy as members of our communities who have valuable assets and interest to grow.

We can frame students' growth and their needs precisely rather than in vague generalized terms. At that point, the term newcomer no longer serves a purpose. The Office of English Language Acquisition released a Newcomer Tool Kit and an English Learner Family Toolkit in multiple language to exactly support our newcomer students. Please make sure to check out our website and download the Newcomer Tool Kit and the English Language Acquisition... and the Family Toolkit. Thank you again so much to the panelists who are joining us today to share the strategies and resources that will help our newcomer students and families. Muchas gracias. Now I pass it back to you.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. Montserrat, thank you so much for those words. I love the fact that you remember your teacher from when you were 12 years old, that really speaks to a level of connection and power and emphasizes why it's so important for teachers to be able to engage as soon as a student walks in the door.

I also appreciate that you are important reminder about the language we use and the power that language holds. Now, I'd like to welcome our next speaker, Ms. Megan Ritter, who's coming from the Office Refugee Resettlement in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and she'll talk to us about what ORR is doing and share a few resources with us that could be helpful. Megan.

**Megan Ritter:** Thanks so much, Cindy. As was mentioned, my name is Megan Ritter, and I am the National Strategic Outreach Lead for Refugee Programs within the Office of Refugee Resettlement. So the Office of Refugee Resettlement or ORR sits within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. I plan on moving through the slides very quickly today, but you'll have an opportunity to see them in the future, so don't panic if I'm just moving right ahead. So following influxes of refugees from Southeast Asia in the 1970s,

the Refugee Act of 1980 officially created ORR, as well as the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. ORR was established to ensure that refugees have resources and services, and support to successfully integrate into U.S. communities.

Now, over the 40-plus years that ORR has existed, ORR's mission has expanded to serve many different populations from around the world. Some of the populations that have been authorized by Congress have happened throughout the years, and Congress does determine eligibility for ORR programs and services. Some of our populations include refugees, asylees, Cuban Haitian entrants, victims of human trafficking, Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa holders, and most recently, Afghan and Ukrainian humanitarian parolees. Now, in this presentation, when I reference refugees, I'm really talking about all of those different populations. We also have a unique refugee foster care program that, in addition to those populations, also serve special immigrant juveniles. And then, ORR provides separate services to survivors of torture.

An individual living in the U.S. who has been tortured in another country according to the statutory definition of torture and eligibility for our survivors of torture services are not dependent on a person's immigration status. So refugees and special immigrant visa holders are admitted through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and are resettled from overseas into U.S. communities. And they may be coming from refugee camps where they've lived their entire lives, or they may be coming from an urban setting, for example, some of the cities in Turkey. When they resettle here, they'll be received either by a local resettlement agency or through a private sponsor via the new Welcome Corps initiative. Other populations we serve have their own journey across the U.S. border and into our communities.

Our asylees may have been in the country for some time before receiving their asylum status, while many Cuban and Haitian entrants may have only just arrived. All of those populations have to find their way to service providers in order to know and access the services that are available to them, but ORR provides all of those eligible populations with long-term integration services beginning at the time of their eligibility. Now, ORR offers various resettlement services to facilitate that successful transition into life in the United States. We provide case management health and mental health services, English language assistance in classes, services specific to family, youth, and the elderly, as well as job readiness and employment services. And many are available to our refugees for up to five years after arrival in the United States.

And as mentioned, ORR also administers a unique foster care program for unaccompanied refugee minors that supports their direct care and helps them transition into adulthood. ORR administers all of these services through a very extensive private public grant recipient network, including states, replacement designees, national resettlement agencies, and their local offices and affiliates, as well as other faith-based ethnic and community-based organizations. Each state has a state refugee coordinator, and most have refugee health coordinators. Some also have refugee mental health coordinators. And these

positions are funded by ORR. We have specialized and targeted programming for certain parts, certain... to address specific needs of our populations.

And so one of those is our youth mentoring program, which supports 15 to 24-year-olds individual, educational, and career development goals. While our Refugee School Impact program, which I'm sure many of you are familiar with, funds activities which lead to the effective integration and education of refugee children. States and replacement designees receive grants to support impacted school districts for services to school-aged refugees and their families. This program was also recently expanded to serve families with younger children to address early childhood development needs. Oop, oop, oop. There we go. I did also want to mention that these funds may be subgranted to a state education agency, a local education agency, a local resettlement agency, or a local nonprofit, and it will depend on what state you live in.

Now, in order to ensure effective resettlement, ORR really believes in the need of meeting the whole family. So programs such as matching grant and refugee support services require family self-sufficiency planning as a service component to ensure that every member of the family has the best chance to fully integrate into their new communities. Support for mental health or emotional wellness continues to be a priority for ORR in order to help individuals really strengthen their ability to live productive lives here. Now, over the past few years, we've launched several new programs, including the Refugee Mental Health Initiative, which is a component of our Refugee Health Promotion Program, as well as several initiatives specific to supporting Afghans who arrived during Operation Allies Welcome.

So services to Afghan survivors impacted by combat or SASIC, as well as our USCRI Behavioral Health Project, which is specific to Afghans. We recently issued a new notice of funding opportunity to support trauma-based services for all ORR-eligible populations. And the STAR program, or Support for Trauma-Affected Refugees, will address pervasive effects of trauma related to conflict and displacement through an interdisciplinary and holistic approach. So that's really a big-picture view of ORR's program and services, how we operate, the services we provide. The children we serve, though the ones that are in your state, in your district, in your school, in your classrooms, are all going to be unique.

And so, to reiterate some of what's already been said, taking time to really find out about that child's journey and that child's current experience is really important and vital because the refugee children that are coming into your classrooms may have been forced to flee conflict and violence with only the clothes on their back, enduring treacherous journeys to seek safety elsewhere and outside of their home. Some refugees were born into refugee camps where their parents fled conflict decades ago. Meanwhile, here in your classroom, perhaps you might have families that are connected within the community to other families that have experienced something similar. But other families come, and they might be the only person from their country of origin or maybe are one of only a handful of newcomers.

All of these journeys and challenges and needs are not new to ORR's service providers. And we offer layers of support for these families. We encourage all state education agencies to connect with your state refugee coordinator. We encourage all local education agencies to connect with your local resettlement agency, and even the local resettlement agencies in your area that might not receive all of the funding we've talked about today are going to be great resources into how to connect to those programs and services. Lastly, I wanted to share about ORR's technical assistance provider, which is Switchboards. Switchboard is a one-stop resource hub for refugee service provider and equips providers with specialized technical assistance resources and training to appropriately address client barriers and needs.

Switchboards resources are available to anyone, and they also offer public-facing webinars. So we wanted to highlight a few resources that might be of interest. So the first one is an evidence summary on the impact of mentoring on social, emotional, and academic outcomes of youth from immigrant and refugee families. There is a fact sheet on understanding refugee trauma, a toolkit on supporting Afghan students in schools and youth programs, and a webinar on traumatic stress among refugee children and youth. There are also a few things coming up, and these are based... the quarters are based on our federal fiscal year, so apologies if that's a little confusing.

But next week, on March 20th, there is a public-facing webinar on Bullying, Prevention, and Response When Supporting Refugee students. And that will be accompanied by a guide. In quarter three, so that's April, May, June, there'll be a blog on Evidence-Based Protective Factors to Utilize in Schools. And then in the last quarter of the federal fiscal year, there will be two public webinars, one on Increasing Family Engagement and one that is geared a little bit more towards our refugee providers but on individualized education plans. And with that, I will thank you all and turn it back over to Cindy.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Wonderful. Thank you so much for all of that information. It's amazing how much you have to offer and the specialized populations that you've worked with, in addition to the generalized overall information. Thank you. So now it's my great pleasure to introduce our next speakers. We have two more folks coming up to set up context for us. Ms. Judith O'Loughlin and Dr. Brenda Custodio will be sharing their information coming up next. Brenda.

**Brenda Custodio:** Hi, and welcome. Both Judy and I have been English learner teachers for many years. And about eight years ago, we decided to join forces. We wrote a book on Students With Interrupted Formal Education. And during our research on that book, we were struck by how many of our students had faced trauma. So our second book, which is what a lot of this that we present today, will... the information will come from that on how teachers in the classroom can help support their students who have experienced trauma in their past. All right. So our agenda today is we're going to talk about trauma and the types of trauma that immigrants commonly experience. How can trauma impact learning in the classroom because we know it does? Is school the proper place to address issues?

And if so, how can we do that? How can a teacher be more trauma-sensitive, and what exactly would that look like? And then, we're going to finish with some suggestions for how a teacher can help a student build their own resilience, specifically using the I have, I am, and I can model, which we're going to share with you. Okay. So when we think about trauma, most of our immigrants who have experienced trauma, it might've been in one of three places or all three. First of all, it could be whatever caused them to have to leave their country in the first place. It could be war, poverty, gang violence, political unrest. It could be all of these. Something happened with the children and the families where they had to leave their home. You don't just get up and leave your country without some traumatic experience happening to you.

And then the journey itself can be very traumatic. So for many of our students, they've had months or even years from the time they decided to leave their home... they end up in your classroom. And then, finally, some of our children are still experiencing trauma where they are today. It could be from a financial situation where they end up in a part of town where there's a lot of community violence. I've had students tell me that they had to spend the night on the floor because of bullets outside their apartment or their house. So those kinds of things are still impacting our children. And so what can we do about it? So we know that trauma is not the thing that happened. It's the effect of the event. So what can we do to help our students who have experienced these horrific situations? How can we help them to overcome this and be able to survive and thrive? So some people say, "Well, is school the right place? I'm not trained for this. I'm just a classroom teacher." Well, first of all, we hope you don't think of yourself as just a teacher. But whether you're trained as a counselor or a school psychologist or whatever, we know that there are things that you can do. So in our research, we found a gentleman named Joel Blaustein and he wrote what I have here on this slide. He said that the addressing of trauma in a school setting is not just a good idea, but he thought it was one of the best things that we can do for children. And the reason is school is specifically designed to create a welcoming environment. It's a place where our students feel safe. It's where somebody is watching out for them and watching them, looking at what's going on in their demeanor, their actions.

If we notice that something's going on, a teacher is somebody who can intervene. So he said school is probably one of the best places for our students. And they're with people they trust, which makes a huge difference for our children. Another person that we did some research with was Susan Craig. She wrote a book about adolescents and trauma. And she said, for adolescents, we need to think about the fact that this trauma actually is like holding their mind hostage. So these experiences that they have had actually impacts them to the point where their brain just shuts down. So for English learners, it could impact them in certain ways. First of all, it can definitely affect their ability to focus on language development because they've got other things on their mind. It can keep them from being able to concentrate like for long reading passages, they just can't keep their mind. Their mental energy is absorbed in just survival. It can impact their ability to write because in order to be able to write, you've got to be able to concentrate. You've got to keep your mind focused.

And if you've got other things going on, you just can't do it. And finally, it can even just impact them being able to sit still for periods of time. You may find children who just have to get up and walk around. They just physically cannot sit still any longer. So what are some of the manifestations of trauma that a teacher could see being carried out with our children? Well, first of all, there might be anxiety, fear, and worry about themselves, but also their family, especially if your family is undocumented. Is mom and dad going to be home when I get there? What's going to happen to me if they're gone? How am I going to survive? What about the violence that they're seeing in their neighborhoods? They think they left this horrible situation. They're in the US, things are going to be better. And then lo and behold, some other things happened to them. So is violence coming back? Am I going to be safe? Is my family going to be safe?

Teachers are the ones who can watch for these changes in behavior. We might see them suddenly jumping up and running around the room, hitting people, causing problems when they didn't do that before, what's going on? Or they could have the opposite effect. They could just freeze. They sit there and they're just almost like catatonic. They don't see what's going on around them. They don't care. Somebody who had really good grades all of a sudden, their grades are dropping. A teacher is the person who can be watching out for this and saying, "What's happening here? What can I do?" You may have children coming with headaches and stomach aches. And when the nurse talks to them, there's no physical cause for it. The cause is worry and fear. It could be an over or underreacting to noise. Fire alarms. I had students from war-torn countries that they thought it was an air raid and they were afraid. They may be afraid of physical contact. When you touch them, they jump. They have all kinds of triggers that go back to some of the experiences they faced in the past.

They may start talking about death or dying. In today's society, we have to really watch this. And if we see this happening, we need to talk to the family, talk to somebody in the school. We need to have a plan of what we're going to do if these things happen, instead of trying to react once it happens. They may have difficulty with authority and redirection because somebody's been in charge of their life and caused problems for them. What do I do now? How do I react to this? And so we need to help them to see that they have some control over their life and help them to do it in a positive manner. They may be re-experiencing that trauma with nightmares and daydreams. How can we help them with that? Hyperarousal, something just triggers them, and they jump at the least kind of noise. Or they may have the opposite, the emotional numbing, they just shut down.

So now that I've upset you and oh my God, these poor kids, what can we do for them? So that's what Judith's going to share with you, some ideas for helping these students to overcome what's happened to them and be able to become the people that we know they can be.

**Judith O'Loughlin:**

Okay. Hello everybody. Oops.



**Brenda Custodio:** Went too far.

**Judith O'Loughlin:** Yeah, it did it on its own. So how can we create a classroom that's sensitive to the needs of all children who are experiencing the things that Brenda described whether they're an immigrant or not? And what are the characteristics of the teacher who is trauma sensitive? So those are our questions. Well, a trauma-sensitive teacher is someone who has a support system in place before a crisis occurs and can plan for the unexpected. So you're not the be-all and end-all, but you have put together a team of people who work with you who are there to be ready to assist students who are in a traumatic state. Whether it is hyper arousal or they're numb or they're crying or they're talking about fears, and you want to have this in place and people that the students can turn to. You, yourself, and your team want to stay current of the political situations of the countries that the students you come from are in your classroom and in the classrooms in your school.

You want to know what's going on that's not just in their current environment, but what are they hearing about where they came from that's going to impact their daily life. You also, your team has to have a basic knowledge about religion, social, and cultural backgrounds of each of your students. This month is Ramadan, and you need to know about fasting and how that's going to impact the student's attention, ability to work in the classroom, his health, whether he feels faint, et cetera. So you want to know about things such as that, their religious practices for example. You want to be able to focus on social and emotional, as well as academic. As a teacher, your task is really to help them learn and understand, but they are there as human beings, and you want to be able to address the needs that they have beyond just the academic. And the social and emotional really either help or hinder the ability to learn academically.

Come on. Okay. A trauma-sensitive teacher is someone who sees students through a trauma-sensitive lens. They don't look at what's wrong with this child. The idea is to think about what is causing these issues. Not that he's doing something terrible and he's a very bad kid, but what made him do it and why is this happening at this moment? Yesterday, everything was fine. But today, he's really upset about something. What's happening? You want to create opportunities for the students to share their issues and express and work through their feelings in a safe and risk-free environment. And one of the things we talk about in our writing is about a morning meeting, which gives students the opportunity to talk about things that may have happened yesterday or fears about what they're going to do today or questions about their schedules or any kind of question that may come up that will hinder their ability to learn.

You want to be welcoming and open to all of your students. But at the same time, you want to provide structure and routines but not be inflexible. The structure and routines help them adjust to this new environment and you want to make sure that that's possible for them. So here are some more things about the role of the teacher. We are expected to be caring individuals. And everybody I'm sure on this webinar is a caring individual. You want to create an

atmosphere of safety and support that allows the child to reset his emotional equilibrium and build upon a secure foundation. We need to understand that, to some degree, what students have experienced and what types of situations might trigger those emotional responses. You want to be ready to understand what might happen and be ready for it when it does happen or ways to help it not happen.

We also need to realize that some academic or behavioral actions may be grounded in past learning experiences or past social experience. And you want to take that into consideration when you're reacting. It's not what's wrong with that child, but why is he or she behaving in this manner today and what can I do to help them go back to an equilibrium state? In extreme cases, we're not the be-all and end-all and we need to go beyond the classroom for help. And so you can only do what you can do within your environment and you will know and your team will know when you need to go for help beyond yourselves in the school. So we talk about, and I'm turning to what can be done. We talk about resilience in a lot of our writings. The definitions are these, to be able to jump up again. Not just to have the strength to stay the course, but to question it. Not just to survive but to thrive. And the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.

So we all have had to build our own resilience as learners and as educators and in our own family lives and in our school lives to be resilient to things that are difficult for us. And so there's a lot of resilience research out there that talks about what resilient children feel that they were in control of their own circumstances, their own achievements and successes, and they see themselves as the orchestrators of their own fate. And that's one of the things you want to work on with the student is how you can build the resilience in the learner. And we talk about a few things in our writing about this. So these are three strategies to increase resiliency in newcomers and these are also practices that teachers model and build upon. It comes from the research of Edith Grotberg, who was in the Netherlands when she wrote this research. And she wrote it really for native English speakers. And in many instances, it has now been adapted for working with English learners.

So strategy one is called the I have model. And it's a model in which the student and the teacher look at how to build strongly relationships with the newcomers and with their families, so that the students can see who they have in their environment that can help them when they need help. So I have this group of people that are there for me when I'm distressed, confused, worried or upset, and they can come and help me with my needs. The second strategy is called the I am, and Edith Grotberg wrote about the power of the narrative. Writing about who I am, where I am today, who I hope to be in the future helps students to really realize what strengths they already have modeled by the teacher in writing her own I am. And then practiced over time to add to the who I am at this moment. And that moment in time changes as the student grows and changes too.

And finally, strategy three is I can. I can use problem-based models of instruction as a teacher. And I can model those problem-based models of

instruction for my students to adapt and take over and have ownership of what I can do. And then students can also write about or make lists about what they can do now and what they hope to do in the future. So here are some examples. For Grotberg's I have and for immigrant children especially, it provides them with an understanding that they're surrounded by people who they can turn to and trust and who believe in me. At the same time, I have people who will set limits for me. And so that I know that within a certain amount of the limitations, I can still be a strong learner and socially and emotionally secure.

I have people who will support my learning and help me to work towards my own learning goals. And then I have people who are there for me when I am sick, in danger, worried, confused, or need support to learn. So that's the I have piece. And that I have grows over time. And students can plot that on a map that they draw of who they can turn to in their community. They can use diagrams and webs and so forth to keep adding to their I have. For Grotberg's I am, an immigrant child, it provides them with understanding that I'm growing. I'm growing both inside and out every day. That I'm not static, that I'm growing and changing and learning. And I'm a person who people can like, and they can trust. I do respect myself and I respect others. I'm responsible for the things that I do. I'm strong and can share my strengths with others. I'm happy to feel empathy and show concern for others. So I'm in a community of other people and I'm taking care of myself, but I'm also reaching out to others.

And over time, I will keep growing inside and out. And finally, for I can, and this is one of my favorite pictures, take that T off. Grotberg's I can means I can speak with someone about things that frighten or worry me. I can learn to problem solve on my own with or without support. And this is where the teacher comes in problem solving with support until the student can take ownership of his own problem solving. I can use self-control to stop doing something before it's wrong or could be dangerous to myself or to others. I know when to figure out when talking to someone would help before acting. And that's very important just to really be able to put the brakes on and say, "I really need help. I need to talk to someone." And seek help when needed and know where to find help. And that's where your team comes in to reach out to help the student.

And students can write about this as well as part of the I have, I am, I can. Who are the people I can turn to? What can I do on my own to take care of myself and when I'm stressed or in need to solve problems? Sorry. Okay. All right. Here are our closing thoughts. Trauma-informed support for the immigrant students. First of all, it means creating a physically and emotionally safe classroom that students feel when they come into your environment. The environment is safe for them. They can talk about what they are concerned about, their educational worries, their social worries, they're in a safe environment where sharing what their needs are is something they can do and feel confident that it's safe. And that the teacher and other students in the environment are there to help. Be predictable as a teacher, create predictable routines and transitions from activity to activity. That predictability creates that sense of safety for the student. You want to build trust to follow through when you make promises

because that's part of that feeling safe and secure. To be transparent and honest with explanations when changes are unavoidable.

When you work in a school system, you think you're going to do something one day and all of a sudden, the whole schedule changes or there's a fire drill or there's going to be an early dismissal. And changes are just unavoidable and they're part of life. So you also want to empower the learner to offering him choices so that everything's not set totally in stone, that you have choices for your work and your responses, but they're in a parameter of the activity. And so there are choices, but they know that they have to follow through with their assignments and so forth. Do not punish students when you're aware that their behaviors are connected to trauma symptoms. You want to really put on the brakes for yourself and say, "Why is he acting this way? He wasn't this way yesterday. What happened between yesterday and today that made him act in a way that's inappropriate in the school?"

And help students to understand that their triggers and how to choose positive responses. A lot of these activities and more come from a book that we've written for the University of Michigan Press on supporting English learners who are facing trauma. Thank you.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Thank you so much for all of that information. The resources that were mentioned in your presentation are definitely in the chat. Lots of icons continuing to come up our right-hand side, so that's a wonderful thing. And now, what I'd like to do is I'd like to welcome onto the stage the remaining members of our panel today. So joining Judith and Brenda will be Mr. Geovanni Mendez, who's a student in California. Dr. Sara-Jean Lipmen, also from California Unified, Ms. Angelina Ross, who's a principal for the International Newcomer Academy in Fort Worth, Texas. And Ms. Sary Portillo, who is the Multilingual Family Engagement manager out of Denver Public Schools. Welcome everyone and thank you all so very much for joining us today for our panel conversation.

We're going to go ahead and let go of the slides for now. And we're going to go through a series of questions where we can talk about how all of you are implementing in the schools. I'd like to begin with you, Sara-Jean. You described when we talked, when we first met, you described so many different ways that you're working in your schools to connect newcomer students to a variety of resources and also to the school community and to de-stigmatize the accessing of those resources. I'm hoping that you can tell our audience today about some of the approaches you're using.

**SJ Lipmen:** Hello everyone. Yeah. Hi. So I'm in LA Unified and I'm school-based. And there's a number of things that we've done. The first one is I would say without shame, I reached out to every single person on our staff and every single community member that I could think of and just cold calling and asking, what kind of resources do you have? And then we tried to centralize them because everybody has their connections, everybody has their network, but we all should be working together as a school site. And so we frame it within Maslow's

hierarchy. I think Brenda said it earlier that a kid can't pay attention in class if they're stopped by trauma and all of that. So we try to set it within Maslow's hierarchy that we make sure that all of their needs are met. And so things like breakfast, lunch, and snacks when they leave school are really important.

We destigmatize a lot of kids accessing these resources and just even asking questions of all of the staff at school by something as simple as having candy in all of our offices. It means that they can come and drop by and say hello, and we know that they're okay and we can see their faces. But they could stop by to just get candy, or they could stop by and say, "Oh, and I remember I needed to talk to you about this, this, and this thing." And if it becomes something that's very simple, but it means that we have that point of contact and they don't have to go out of their way to find us. There's also things as we have massive resources and people that we can refer to in terms of medical, dental, vision, legal aid is a huge one, obviously. Access to transportation resources. And then we also make sure that the kids see leaders that are like them. So we have things like our newcomer buddy system where brand new kids come in and somebody who's maybe been here for six months or a year or two is their new buddy and shows them around in the school. So it's not just an adult on campus, but it's another kid who has had their kinds of experiences. We have kids who have graduated, come back and talk to them about some of the challenges they faced and being very brutally honest, but also some of the ways that they overcame it. We have just lots of opportunities for leadership as well, so trying to hit all of those points of Maslow's hierarchy.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. Thank you so much for all of those examples. Geovanni, when we spoke, hello. When you spoke, you had mentioned that you came into school as a newcomer student, but I know from talking to Sarah Jean and talking to you that you've got things going on in your life and great plans. I'm hoping that you can tell us a bit about your experience coming into the school. What was it like to enter the school and what did you need to engage in your education in your school community?

**Geovanni Mendez:** Okay. When I just came to school, I was scared because it was everything, new language, people, places, and it was so hard. I remember that I didn't understand any word from the teachers, and teachers used to ask other students to translate me so I could understand what they were trying to say, but I don't remember that I got some help from tutoring. I took an extra class after school of English. I also took two ELLD classes and a lot of students were helping me. I remember also too that I, what makes me stay in school and was being with people that are similar to me, like newcomers.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. So it sounds to me that you had a lot of resources, but you also had a community, other people like you that you can be with and adults in the school community that were there to be supportive. And I know that I didn't ask you this question, but it's in your bio. What's your plan post graduation?

**Geovanni Mendez:** I want to be a doctor.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Yes. Excellent. All right, thank you so much for that. I'd like to go head over to you, Ms. Angelia. When we spoke, I was so impressed with the level of diversity in your school in Texas and you talked about creating classroom cultures really where you encourage students to take educational risks. Can you tell us a little bit more about how you engage our young newcomer students?

**Angelia Ross:** Of course. So currently we have about 482 newcomers, 34 different countries and 12 different languages all in one building. And so when we talk about the classroom culture, it has to start with the school culture as well. I always say that culture trumps everything. And so if students do not feel welcomed into the school, they're not going to be able to thrive in the classroom. And so what we do at INA is that we intentionally design the culture and we also communicate to adults how do you show up for students and how we're supporting our newcomers.

And so that's a campus-wide practice. We also look at how are we providing a safe environment for students. The majority of our students are bused. And so once they step off that bus, we have someone at the door welcoming them in, smiling, how is your day, giving them a fist bump, just making them feel like this is their second home. We also really focus on building community. We have advisory classes where all the students have at least one teacher to be their mentor. We teach them how to goal set. We do team building and we also have student leaders on the campus so that if they do not go to an adult that they at least can go to another student. So then we transfer into instruction. You have to be able to scaffold and design lessons that support students and that has an avenue into the context.

And so when we're looking at scaffolding in the lesson design, we focus on six different things. We have modeling, providing examples for students, bridging and making connections for the concept to the students. Every student comes with a previous background, they're very, very smart students. And so bridging those connections is very important. Having a schema building, finding relationships with the concepts that you're teaching and then also having metacognition development. Then we look at scaffolding for the environment. Continuity and coherence is clear and kind. Being clear is kind to all students. So I was talking about supportive environment designed within the classroom as well. And then the flow.

When students are in the classroom and they're provided with a challenge, you have to provide them the same supports. If they do not have the supports, they tend to not engage and not participate. So when you're designing the lessons in the classroom, think about this is the challenge, what are the supports I'm going to provide for all students? And then what is the goal and communicating that goal to students. And then lastly is making sure that you have a hand over takeover. We don't want to be the keepers of the learning, and so we want to make sure that we're building autonomy for those students to take over the learning and the ownership of that.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** That was such great detail. So thank you so much for providing all that. And I love the fact that you started with culture trumps everything because you're right. If there's not a culture that pulls people in, then it's going to be harder for folks to participate in all those clear steps that you have to engage. Thank you. And Ms. Sary, I'm coming over to you now. When we spoke, we were really interested and excited to hear about the district level approaches that you were taking in Denver Public around being able to engage your newcomer students and their families. I'm hoping that you can take a few minutes to tell us about some of those approaches.

**Sary Portillo:** Hi, thank you so much for having me. Of course. So I'm going to, most of these strategies that I'm going to be talking about is what we are currently doing. As many of you know, Colorado has received many newcomer families from our southern border. And so some of the strategies that I talked to you about Cindy was how do we proactively find the students? How do we go out and do the outreach and not wait for these students to come to us to seek assistance? And so one of the first things that we did is when we knew that there was an influx coming, we didn't know where, who, what. And so we went out, we went out, we made connections with the city and county of Denver. We were given green light to start visiting some of the shelters where the newcomer families were arriving to.

And so my plan was we are going to go to them instead of waiting for these students to come to us. We have been going out to the shelters for over a year now. In addition to shelters, we also receive referrals from our partner resettlement agencies. And so our goal is really just to offer warm and welcoming environments for these families, think about students first and really dig deep into our DPS core values of having that positive adult and student experience. With our visits, we have accomplished to register over 3000 students in the last couple of months.

We are offering welcome events. In these welcome events, we have provided spaces in our schools for us to register students, complete the WIDA testing for them and get them set up for their first day of school. We think about what barriers these families might have. We make sure we have transportation taken care of so that these families can get to the schools. We make sure we have childcare, we feed them. And so just really think about what barriers there are currently in existence and what can we do as a district to make sure that we overcome those barriers.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. And I remember that when we spoke, you talked about how these welcoming events definitely achieve the goal of having students be registered and come into schools. But you also mentioned how it created because of the welcoming events being group events, created a culture or a community among the different families too, which I think is super important and sends a great message to those families. So thank you so much.

**Sary Portillo:** Absolutely.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** All right, excellent. The next question is going to be a question to several of you, and I'll call your names as I am welcoming you to the mic. So we know that many of our young people and their families have experienced traumatic events either before leaving their home countries, on their way to the US or after arriving or all the above as Brenda and Judy said. One of the things that I'd like to ask each of you to talk about is how you adjusted programming or added specific approaches that allow that trauma-informed practice model to be elevated in your schools. And then Angelia, I'd like to begin with you on this one.

**Angelia Ross:** So one of the things that we do is welcoming our parents is that we have an orientation. A lot of times when students come in to the school, they're usually just kind of put into the classroom and then we don't see anything about it anymore. But at INA we welcome not only the student but the parent. We have the orientation for that, everything that we send out or that we can send out is in their own language so that they feel welcomed and part of the community. And then we also have several different events where we are in collaboration with Catholic Charities to support on parenting, what to expect in Americanized school, whether rules and policies. And we also have an open door policy for our parents to come anytime that they want. We have a translator for, the district provides us, so we can probably translate in all of the languages, which makes them feel a bit more at ease and makes them have a voice.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. Thank you so very much for those examples. And Sarah Jean, would you like to go next and add to that?

**SJ Lipmen:** Yeah, so we have, as I said, lots and lots of resources. One of the things that, we are a secondary school, so we're dealing mostly with teenagers and young adults. And one of the things that we have is a closet. It's kind of set up like a Ross or a Marshall's. And so we have it that they can go in there and there's clothes and stuff. But one of the things that they're most, go most quickly whenever we get donations are stuffed animals. And you'd be surprised how many of our teenagers and young adults want these things. And I think it's a safety thing. Another thing that we developed is every classroom has a mindfulness corner because so many of our teenagers are working and are still dealing with other responsibilities that most teenagers we don't think of. And so no questions asked. They can go to the corner and they can hang out. Or a teacher can tell them, you know what, I think we're having a rough day, do you want to go to the corner?

And so having that be something that they can initiate or that our teachers can initiate so that they can find the space for themselves and they can learn to self-regulate and all of that. And again, there's no stigma around it. It's actually kind of cool to go to the corner. We also do a lot of celebrating the smallest things. Celebrating is really important. A lot of our students need that celebration or that recognition of some really of the smallest things. And also the biggest things are, all of our students, in addition to, I don't want Geovanni to know this necessarily, but all of our students graduating in addition to getting honor cords for their GPAs or whatever it is, they also get a special sash for being a newcomer and making it to that path of graduating. And I mean, they know



about it already, but it's just something that we make sure that they know, that we recognize that they've had extra hurdles in being there, and therefore we want to celebrate their assets and the fact that they're being so successful, they're not just surviving, but hopefully now they're thriving.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. Thank you so much for that. And Sary, would you like to add to it and talk a little bit about how you're implementing some trauma informed practice?

**Sary Portillo:** Yes. Just as you were saying previous, I think one of the most important aspects is to build community between our newcomer families. And that's the best number one go-to, right? These moms have gone through so many things, the dads and the students themselves. So just building that community, introducing one to another. And also representation does really matter, especially when it comes to trauma-informed practices. We always think this child might need a special service, but we don't know what that family's culture might be like if it's okay for that family to be referred to a mental health specialist or to speak to even the counselor.

And so just, we do a lot of PD around trauma-informed practices. We partner with our mental health department. I just really try to let teachers know. I know that it was mentioned before, but having teachers know about the culture, what is appropriate, what is not appropriate, and if something is not appropriate, what are other ways that we can address those barriers using native language staff in the building that might be able to communicate with the family and the students using other resources or other practices that are used within the family's culture for this.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. Thank you so much for all those examples. It's wonderful to have those alternatives. And then Ms. Judy, would you like to add anything?

**Judith O'Loughlin:** Yeah, just a little bit. One of somebody wrote in the chat about not forgetting about school counselors and social workers, and I think that the model that I talked about, the "I have, I am, I can" can also be developed with the school team counselors, psychologists, and particularly the social workers, especially if they're bilingual, to help families understand what resources they have out there, who they are, how they can succeed in their current situation. So I think that's acknowledging Christy McCoy who mentioned that to me in the chat, I think that's an important thing to think about.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Yeah, absolutely. And using some of these models like that particular approach with the family as well. And just hearing you talk about it, I could hear that the family could work together to create a narrative about who they are in this moment and who they become here now. Right? That's amazing. All right, Mr. Giovanni, I'm coming back over to you now. So I know that you're working with I think a few other students and that you're planning to go to Washington DC to talk to some individuals there about the needs and interests of newcomer students. What key approaches or resources would you tell the school personnel and community providers who are with us today that are essential for helping newcomer students and new immigrant students to succeed in school?

**Geovanni Mendez:** I think I would say to invest in metacognitive skills because I think teachers should learn how to approach and understand young people, especially newcomers. I think they can learn a lot of strategies to teach because for newcomers it is so hard to learn. First they need to learn the language and I think they should have strategies. For me, what works for me is to learn by repeating things, let's say so that I am going to learn something new. Tomorrow I will learn something new and the day after tomorrow I will learn something new. So maybe at the end of the week I will forget what I learned on Monday. So I think teachers can make a little review at the end of the week, so students keep in their mind what they have learned and they learn by repeating and increasing their knowledge.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Yeah, absolutely. So kind of what I heard you say, please tell me if I'm on target, is that teachers need to have a lot of different strategies, but what I heard implied in what you said was they also need to know the individual students in their space, in their classroom. Because for you, having that review and having that repetition is really helpful and another student may need something else. Is that what you were saying?

**Geovanni Mendez:** Yeah, they should know how to approach each student.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Yeah, absolutely. Excellent. All right. Thank you so very much for that. I think we have space for one more question. This is a question about the community partners. So several of you, when we spoke, you talked about having a lot of work that you're doing with your community providers. And one of the messages that we want to give out to all of our listeners is you're not in this alone. You can't do this alone. You need help from the community. So I'd like to hear from each of you, if you can spend maybe a minute talking about how you engage community partners in the work of welcoming your new immigrant newcomer students and supporting their families. And Sary, I'd like to start with you on this one.

**Sary Portillo:** I guess. So in Denver Public Schools, we have six DPS community hubs where we already have a plethora of community partners involved in providing basic needs and educational opportunities for adults and various other resources for families. But one of the things that I would like to add is just the tremendous support that we have received from Denver city residents, the amount of moms and dads and families that have volunteered with our new arrival families. It fills my cup just to see how much support these families have given to our newcomer families and new arrivals. And so I would like to see that continue and to be replicated across districts, across cities because it is truly powerful when people come together and help as a community. I think that's one of our greatest resources.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Now, Sary, just as a quick follow up question, did you intentionally recruit those families who stepped forward or was that a happy accident?

**Sary Portillo:** It was a happy accident and sometimes media doesn't portray a lot of the happy or the good things going on. But thanks to the media, a lot of families stepped

up. A lot of families have stepped up and a lot of families are contributing in making sure that these families are getting settled in, they're moving into their new homes, they're like mini case managers going around all of our new citizens.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** That's wonderful. So then the message then for our audience might be to listen to the media and then making sure that you're putting your voice out there also to encourage folks to come in and step into that and be able to provide support. Thank you. And Angelina, would you like to add?

**Angelia Ross:** Yes. Just like Sary said, it is very important to just kind of get out there in the community and tell your story, tell your vision, and tell your needs. At INA, we have about 13 different partners from the universities to our churches to Catholic Charities..., and that's all about us just knocking on the door and just telling the needs of our school. Why does it support the newcomers within the community and specifically with Fort Worth and our vision and needs. And just by doing that, we've gotten so much resources. We have a care closet, we have supplies donated. We provide wraparound services. We had a doctor volunteer her services for free eye exams and free glasses. And that's just about getting out there and supporting the needs of the newcomers and believing in your vision and your mission of your school or your program.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** That's amazing. To be able to get that level of resources is pretty phenomenal. Thank you so much for sharing. And then Sarah Jean, would you like to add to that?

**SJ Lipmen:** Sure. So one of the things that I often say to the students is every resource we have came from the student. If they don't ask, we don't know. And also, they're the inspiration for everything that we do. We constantly are asking students, tell us what you need. Tell us what you want to celebrate. Tell us what, tell us what's going on, tell us all the things. And so that has led to this massive web of, similar to what some of the other people said, of all these resources, we are very lucky that we have an immigration lawyer here on campus because we realized that that was a big need. And so all of these resources have really just been asking and people responding, and we've been similar to what Sary said of surprised and felt. Hopefully, the students feel supported. We're also recognized that as a school, we're one of the few institutions that our newcomers really trust. And so it's our job to make sure to vet and to help and support that they find the right spaces in order to have those needs and desires met.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** I think that that's an incredibly important step that you put in there, is that vetting process, right? Just because of resources out there, it may not be a good resource for a particular family or a particular group of individuals from a specific space. You want to make sure it's culturally relevant and good quality services and what have you. So thank you for adding that vet step and then we're going to come over to you. Brenda, what would you like to add?

**Brenda Custodio:** I worked many years in a newcomer school in Columbus, Ohio, and we're a large refugee resettlement organization or area, and we worked with the three refugee resettlement groups that are here in our area, and they have helped so much with the... They would bring people into the school. They would also be a contact for if we had family issues because they would have case managers that would know what was going on with the family. So that was invaluable.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Right. Absolutely. And being able to access some of those resources that Megan spoke about earlier through that resettlement organization.

**Brenda Custodio:** Right.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Thank you so very much. I'm going to do a quick pause here. We are not done yet. In just a moment, we are going to go back to our Q&A. Sorry about that. I lost where I was for a moment. I want to thank everybody for participating so far in the webinar and for all of the questions, and most importantly, for those icons that you've been bringing up. I think that really helps to let our speakers know what's on your mind and the things that are really resonating with you. We want to remind folks that you have a couple places to go to get resources. So you can go to the [NCSSE safesupportivelearning.ed.gov](https://ncssle.org/safesupportivelearning.ed.gov), where we have all kinds of resources there.

In addition to all of the resources and the recording for this webinar, Best Practices Clearinghouse is another place to go for resources, and you can of course email us directly at [ncssle@air.org](mailto:ncssle@air.org) or call to ask questions or to see if you can get further assistance. In addition, we wanted to make sure that you are all aware of the additional webinars and events that we have coming up. So we have two more this month. Next week, we're doing a webinar in honor of Drug and Alcohol Facts Awareness Week, focusing in on understanding access and promoting safety, and how we can help you be safer with accessing online drugs. So we want to prevent that drug access. So it's all about prevention strategies and ways that we can help young people more safely navigate online.

Then March 27th, we have an anti-trafficking, anti exploitation strategies for students who may be more vulnerable, and in fact, one of the populations that we have a speaker coming in for is also a person who specializes in working with newcomer students. And then April 10th is the first of a set of miniseries focusing on addressing gun violence in our schools and gun violence in general, and things that we can do in our schools to try to help our communities be safer. So those are the big events that we have coming up soon. Going into the chat right now should be the feedback form, so that you can follow that link to provide us some input on how you think this webinar went.

We really do value the input that you provide us, and it is important for us to use to guide ongoing information that we share with you. And what I'd like for us to encourage you to do here is to go ahead and to click the link in a moment and fill out that form. We will leave the webinar up for a few more minutes after we close so that you can grab this link, which would be in chat at that

point. So now, I'd like to go ahead and jump back into our Q&A, and I'd like to welcome back in all of our speakers and analysts.

Okay, so we're going to pull questions from the audience, and we have a lot of questions that have come in that came in via registration, but they also have come in via our chat as well. And one of the questions that I'd like to begin with is going to go out to, let's see, it's going to go out to Sara. Can you tell us a little bit more about some instructional best practices for non-ESOL teachers that are needed to use to welcome newcomer students and to instruct them?

**SJ Lipmen:**

So one of the big things is that the way we look at it as a staff is everybody is a language teacher, not just our English teachers. And so it's really important that the practices that are used in our English teachers and our ELD or ESL classes is shared. They can share those best practices, and they may be the experts, but we all have to be integrating them. So if it's things as simple as sentence starters or vocabulary word walls, or things like that, that would be in an English room. Those should be replicated in other rooms, as well as having shared practices in all of our subject matters. So if you are using, we use the Freya model of language that also gets used in all of our classes, so that way the students, as Giovanni said, it's not just learning subject matter and language. They're also learning how to learn in our systems, and so we're making sure that we're trying to lower that threshold and replicating those scaffolds.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Oh, that sounds excellent. Thank you so much. Did anybody else want to add into that response?

**Angelia Ross:**

I do. I think one thing for both, for non-ESL teachers and ESL teachers, it's really important to understand how language is acquired and developed and how the L1 is actually supporting the L2. So how the native language supports the second language? Probably not in everybody's classrooms, but I've seen in places where the L1 is kind of admonished, it's like this is English only. Well, the student can't enter into the learning if they don't understand it within their own language first. So use that language as an asset. You use translanguaging in the classroom, it's different from translating. Translanguage is like, "Yes, they can communicate with someone who speaks the same language, but you're going to give it to me in English." And I feel that's how they feel more connected to what they're learning and more empowered and able to take risks within the learning.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** So I greatly appreciate that you brought that up and also that you brought up the term translanguaging because that was... When I saw that come in initially, that was a new one for me, and I had to kind of figure out what that meant, and being able to use the language, the first language, as a way of helping folks to understand that second language is not just, I imagine, an effective strategy, but it's also a very honoring strategy to be able to honor that language. Both languages have value. Thank you so much for that. Okay. I'd like to speak a little bit about, we have a question about removing the stigma of young people who are using some of the clothing closets or the mindfulness corners, or other kind of resources that you have. Folks would like a little bit more detail about specific

things that you may have done to remove those stigmas. Does anybody have ideas that you want to respond to?

**SJ Lipmen:** I'm happy to respond to that one. We make it fun, so it's not something that just those that need it, use it, but that everybody uses it. We have, for example, our closet is open every Tuesday and Thursday at lunch, and kids go shopping, and that's literally what we call it. You can go shopping in the closet, and so it becomes a more fun thing rather than, "Oh, you need this and you don't need this." For the mindfulness corners, it becomes... They're really beautifully decorated. It's something that some of our... When we first brought it in, we had an administrator that made fun of us and said, "It looks like a little spa in that corner."

And so it became something that was, again, something that is fun, positive, and isn't just for our newcomers, even though that's who it's geared towards, but it's for everybody, and it's a resource that is more positive and doesn't have a how dare you, or you need this and you don't need this. There's no judgment around it, but it's joyful. I would also add with our closet, our kids help organize it so it becomes something that is, they own it. It's not something that the adults do for them. They also bring clothes in, they've outgrown something, they bring it in or they help organize it, they play music. It becomes a little party of just even putting folding pants and things like that. So it's an ownership piece as well.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. That's awesome. Thank you so very much for bringing all those strategies up. And I know that a lot of these strategies really are so valuable for all students, so that's an important piece to keep in mind. All right, so we also have a question here about... It might be sort of similar to that translanguaging one that we just had, but there's a question about how might educators educate newcomer students with a variety of different languages, dialects, different levels of background of education and different school exposures in one class. Sara, can we start with you, and then I'm going to open it up broadly for ideas or strategies that you might have. Sara Jean.

**SJ Lipmen:** Oh, sorry, I didn't know if it was Sary or Sara Jean.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Sorry about that.

**SJ Lipmen:** Yeah, so I think that going back to what was said earlier about being asset-minded, so really looking at how students can scaffold for each other. And it's not just those that have a strong academic background and those that may have been life or interrupted schooling, but those that have interrupted schooling are coming in also with extraordinary assets. And so making them the leader for those assets and really getting to know the students as individuals and therefore being able to raise up what each student is bringing into the room and celebrating that, using that capitalizing on it because the diversity should be something that we love. If they're all the same, then it's really boring as an educator, first of all. And second of all, we're not doing a service to the kids and learning how to live where we are.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. Thank you so much for that. Does anybody want to add to that?

**Sary Portillo:** I would like to add that we have a multilingual district advisory committee meeting on a monthly basis. And so we do bring all of the families of multilingual learners. We provide interpretation for all of the languages that are requested. And so that is one way that our district celebrates multilingual learners in the district-wide level. And we're always trying to find ways to just promote the diversity, embrace it, and try to not stigmatize it, right? It's a gift. And being bilingual is a superpower. So that's one of the things that we do all the time to try to embrace that.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** That's wonderful. Thank you so very much. And Judith, I saw you come off mute as well.

**Judith O'Loughlin:** Yeah, I'm going to talk about it from working in an elementary setting in which I had 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders, let's say together. And they had different levels. And basically, what I built around that was an overarching topic that we were exploring to learn English. And during that topic, the introduction of the topic was for everyone. And then I took the groups based on not so much on their grade level but on their language development level. And then they had different content work that they did related to the main topic and worked in pairs or triads, or whatever. And then, at the end of the period, I brought them all together, and we talked about what they had worked on and how it all fit into the main topic. It's kind of a work in progress where you have to really figure out how to make it work, but it does work where you're honoring what their language level is, and you're also helping them to learn more content and more language because they're interacting with their peers in a small group at first and then in a larger group.

So when I saw that question, that was the first thing I thought of that was the way that I would address that. Thank you.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. Thank you so very much. Yeah, absolutely. That's a great way of doing it because you also get that social component, the pairs, triads, and what have you. And then, Angelia, I also saw you come off mute.

**Angelia Ross:** Yeah, I was just going to piggyback on Judith, even though that's typically an elementary strategy, it works perfectly in secondary. My kiddos are 6th to 9th grade, and that's the exact strategy that we use. We get kids on the daily from January to February, we got over 100 kids, and so they're starting at different levels and in addition to our second-year unschooled refugees. And so it can't be a one size fits all. You have to, as Sara Jean said, know your students, know their educational background, talk to the parents, and then, when you're planning, make sure that you're planning for the student in mind and differentiating that instruction.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** That's excellent. And you should be getting in your chat also some ideas and toolkits from the Office of English Language Acquisition. So that should be going

out into your chat, and it's probably going to show some of these examples that Angelia and Judith and Sary, and everyone has just shared. So thank you very much for that. Now, let's go ahead and scoot to another question here. We have a couple more minutes. Another question that rose to the surface in our live audience is any suggestions that you might have for students that you might suspect are experiencing or have experienced a traumatic event or a series of events related to their refugee status, but their family might be more reluctant to receive, excuse me, social worker, other kind of mental health supports. Does anybody have any strategies that you use to try to help provide support in a way that's respectful of the family's wishes?

**Brenda Custodio:** Yeah, I can...

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Go ahead, Brenda, and we'll come back to you, Sary.

**Brenda Custodio:** We had a large Somali population, and a lot of them were very nervous about any kind of mental health assistance. So what we were able to do was United Way brought two caseworkers into the school, and actually had offices right there in the building. And the family was fine with that because, as long as it was in the school, I think Sara Jean mentioned that they trust the school, and then there wasn't the stigma of taking your child off to some kind of a counselor. We just said, "Your child needs some help. There's somebody to talk to." And they were fine with it. So that's something that really worked well with our students.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** Excellent. Thank you so much. Sary, would you like to jump in?

**Sary Portillo:** Yeah. What I was going to say is, first of all, relationship building, relationship building with the family, with the parents, with the student and relationship building takes time. It's not one day, and you're best friends forever. It's months, even years, worth of relationship-building strategies. But I think that once relationships are built, I would advise home visits. Once you have a strong enough relationship where you can do a home visit, start with home visits and also slowly educating the family of what the services could mean, what they look like, what the process is. Because a lot of newcomer families might not have this type of services in their home country. And so educating the family of what the services are, what the process is, what it means, how long they are, I think that can help get to a family where a place where they can make a decision that best meets their needs.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** And those home visits can be really wonderful as well, because it's a sense of privacy, it's a sense of sort of changing the turf, if you will, and that power dynamic that sometimes exists. Yeah, absolutely. Thank you. Anybody else want to add to that?

**Montserrat Garibay:** I would add that, well, we have our English Learner Family Toolkit, and it has six chapters, and it's a very useful tool for educators to kind of just think through what are some of the things that our families need to hear. And back when I



was a newcomer, there wasn't a toolkit for that, but I know that my teacher and the school district where I was, at was very thoughtful on making sure that they provided a specific information. So now that we are able here at the Office of English Language Acquisition have these English Learner Family Toolkit for educators, it really helps them think through what are some of the questions that sometimes we take for granted, even as simple things as how can students and parents are able to think of the extracurricular activities that are taking place in the school. I clearly remember when there was a track and field program in our school, and my mom thought that we needed to buy our shoes, and we just were very poor. We didn't have the access. And my teacher took it upon herself to explain to my mother what was that process?

So this English Learner Family Toolkit really walks you through the things that you need to know as an educator and also paraprofessional. And one of the great things about this toolkit is that it's available in different languages. So it can be a great tool for all educators.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** That's excellent. Thank you so much for that example as well. It's really helpful to know there's a toolkit, but also to hear the story that really demonstrates how that toolkit be so powerful and so impactful. And then, Sara Jean, I think I saw you come off of mute as well.

**SJ Lipmen:** I was just going to say that it's also really important to respect the cultural differences and that sometimes in cultures there are stigmas around things, and it's okay to explicitly say, I respect that this is the way it's done in X place and all that. And in the United States, we often do it this way, but it's okay, we're going to figure it out. We're going to work together to bridge it. And I think that explicitness of saying, "Okay, this is a resource that we have here, but it's okay." And also, it may just be that you need some space, it may need some time. All that is really learning and being responsive to the cultural needs of our communities.

**Cindy Carraway-Wilson:** So you put it out there as a smorgasbord or a buffet, and you step back and you say, "It's okay. You pick what you want." Yeah, that was wonderful, and I'm noticing we're one minute over. My apologies everybody. We have so many questions that have come in for this webinar. We didn't even scratch the surface, but we will send all of those questions to all of our speakers and to the Department of Education, and we may use those questions to guide our future products and webinars. So we appreciate them, and we'll be here for about five more minutes if you have more questions that you want to add, please do. Please remember to click that link to fill out our feedback form. And I would love to thank all of our speakers, our panelists. You all did an amazing amount of work and an amazing job. We so appreciate you, and look at all of these icons coming up the side. Thank you again to our audience for your participation, and have a wonderful rest of the day.