

### Guidance for Planning a Secondary Newcomer MLLs/ELLs Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model that Builds College and Career Readiness

**The goal of any Secondary Newcomer program is to support MLLs/ELLs with fewer than 1-3 years in the United States as they progress toward English proficiency and full inclusion into the schools' academic program.**

Newcomer program models are built on a foundational instructional language development approach that specifies how high-quality academic standards-based integrated content and language development will be delivered throughout the MLL/ELL's day. Instruction is anchored in the district's research-informed language development approach and aligned to the *Key Principles of Effective ELL Instruction* and New York State's Next Generation Learning Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and the Bilingual Common Core Progressions. As Short & Boyson (2012) note, "There is no one set model for a Newcomer program. Elementary, middle and high school newcomer students exhibit a variety of characteristics and thus programs must be carefully designed to meet their needs" (3).

Therefore, Newcomer programs need to be efficient in providing Newcomer MLLs/ELLs with the differentiated and comprehensive services that address their particular language, literacy, and academic demands. Newcomer programs must be designed to maximize MLLs/ELLs integration into general education classrooms while addressing their unique needs. Newcomers may be literate in their home language or may have limited literacy in both their home language and English; they may have had interrupted schooling or faced other challenges as immigrants or refugees.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) have outlined the legal requirements for programs serving MLL/ELL students in the *Dear Colleague Letter (DCL)*. These guidelines include avoiding the unnecessary segregation of MLLs/ELLs. Research has shown that when placed at length in segregated settings, MLLs/ELLs may be at risk of school failure, delayed graduation, and negative self-concept (Gandara & Orfield). For this reason, the DOJ and Department of Education require programs serving MLLs/ELLs to focus on increasing their inclusion by limiting the duration of self-contained Newcomer programs (generally to one year) and regularly evaluating students' progress to allow expedient and appropriate transitions out of the Newcomer programs throughout the academic year. Therefore, all MLL/ELL programs need to be carried out in the least isolated manner, allowing MLLs/ELLs to participate with their non-MLL/ELL peers in standards aligned grade-level curriculum, extracurricular activities, and other subjects such as physical education, art, music and Career and Technical Education courses. Furthermore, to implement an educationally sound and effective Newcomer program, districts/schools must ensure that MLLs/ELLs have access to the same academic standards and curriculum as their non-MLL/ELL peers, and that they are integrated with their English-

speaking peers, except where programmatically necessary. A strong Newcomer program will address the following essential features:

- 1.** A foundational instructional language development approach that specifies how high-quality academic standards-based integrated content and language development will be delivered throughout the MLL/ELL's day with literacy enrichment in English and home language
- 2.** Strategic staffing to address the needs of Newcomers on their journey to graduation
- 3.** Avoidance of unnecessary segregation and has a program structure that can accommodate mid-year entry of students that allows flexible, individualized movement through Newcomer and general education course offerings
- 4.** Articulation and adherence to clear exit criteria and ongoing, intentional assessment to determine readiness for program exit with follow-through
- 5.** Intensive social-emotional supports that draw on strategic community and family partnerships
- 6.** Intentional, well-orchestrated structures that afford opportunities for Newcomers to work collaboratively with more advanced MLLs/ELLs and native English speakers
- 7.** SIFE support including structures, programming, and instruction that accelerate language, literacy and numeracy skills
- 8.** Professional learning sessions on curriculum development and instructional strategies for all teachers of Newcomers including English and home language literacy, ENL and content area teachers

Educating Newcomers to meet standards and be college and career ready, particularly those who arrive with significantly interrupted formal education (SIFE) and low levels of literacy in their native language, is no small challenge. Yet, there are schools that have graduated all types of Newcomers and their exemplary practices are captured in a recent report by Understanding Language at Stanford University, *Schools to Learn From: How Six High Schools Graduate English Language Learners College and Career Ready*, <http://ell.stanford.edu/content/schools-learn>. This guidance report addresses the requirements put forth jointly by the Department of Justice and the Department of Education found in the “Dear Colleague” letter addressed to leadership in states and districts. The report is enriched by examples of practices implemented by schools that have graduated significantly high percentages of all typologies of MLLs/ELLs to be college and career ready. The report also presents the essential features for high quality Newcomer programs for MLLs/ELLs and their components as well as examples for district/school consideration. Guiding questions to assist with planning can be found under Newcomer ELLs Program Planning Tool—Essential Features.

Creating an inclusive school community requires creating and sustaining school structures and processes that ensure Newcomers are not only welcomed when they first arrive but that they are also provided with the information and support they need to continue thriving in the school environment. This includes a broad spectrum of supports, from initial entry through the learning of rigorous academic content to transitioning to a mainstream program or to postsecondary options in education and careers.

## Secondary Newcomer Program MLL/ELL Strategic Academic and Literacy Support Model Planning Guidance Tool: Essential Features

### Essential Feature 1:

The foundational instructional language development approach specifies how high quality academic standards-based integrated content and language development will be delivered throughout the MLL/ELL's day with literacy enrichment in English and home language.

#### Components include:

- a. The school's language development approach is aligned to the district's college and career readiness standards, instructional foci, course offerings, assessments, and other essential school features;
- b. Content area teachers work with English as a New Language (ENL) and Bilingual Education instructors to integrate content, analytical practices, and language development within their unit and lesson planning;
- c. Teachers consistently use appropriate scaffolds across classrooms to support students' language development and strategies to foster autonomy; and
- d. Schools leverage the cultural and language assets of MLLs/ELLs to strengthen students' language and academic development simultaneously, through using resources from more than one language to make content meaningful and comprehensible for students.

#### Examples from Successful Schools

- School anchors the program in the district's language development approach and its foundational instructional framework that specifies how high-quality academic standards-based integrated content and language development will be delivered throughout the MLL/ELL's day.
- School designs a comprehensive and cohesive schooling experience which centers on the linguistic and cultural assets of Newcomer MLLs/ELLs and the vision of graduating them college and career ready.
- Leadership includes all staff and faculty in the design process by regularly sharing goals and vetting design elements as they are being developed to ensure understanding of and commitment to the Newcomer vision and the necessary shifts to support the students.
- School uses the district's language development approach of integrating content, analytic practices, and language development.
- School community creates integrated learning goals for both content and language development in each course and enacts these merged goals throughout instructional practices.
- Teachers strengthen MLLs/ELLs' language and academic development simultaneously by using resources from more than one language to make content meaningful and comprehensible for students.
- Across classrooms, teachers consistently use appropriate scaffolds to support students' language development and strategies to foster autonomy.
- School community has cross-disciplinary and cross-grade literacy expectations for grades 9-12. The instructional team views this as a shared responsibility for students' literacy development. Courses include English as a New Language, English language arts, history/social studies, science, mathematics, and other technical subjects. They use an integrated model of literacy in which reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language are taught together. These modes of expression mirror the process of communication.
- School community's project-based learning is done *in class*. This is especially useful for Newcomer or beginner MLLs/ELLs who may not have the resources or know-how to conduct research on their own as they transition into a new school system. As students progress, the work for projects becomes increasingly independent. Teachers make sure to identify a set of skills that students should be working on towards mastery during the project. Lessons are centered on highlighting the skills that are necessary to complete each task along the way. Since all projects have multiple tasks that build to the final deliverable, teachers collect intermediary work as students move forward with completing the project tasks. This allows teachers opportunities to assess student understanding and provide feedback to help students produce a high-quality product.

## Essential Feature 2:

Strategic staffing addresses the academic and social needs of Newcomers on their journey to graduation.

### Components include:

- a. Recruitment, interviews, onboarding and mentoring seek to secure candidates that are committed to work towards the goals of the Newcomer program; and
- b. Teachers of Newcomers MLLs/ELLs have:
  1. Knowledge of content, language development, literacy development in English and another language, pedagogy, and formative assessment practices for MLLs/ELLs;
  2. Ability to create a classroom culture of mutual respect and learning;
  3. Knowledge and experience in working with MLLs/ELLs;
  4. A commitment to continuous learning and improvement; and
  5. A commitment to the success of the Newcomers beyond their established roles and responsibilities.

### Examples from Successful Schools

- Leadership recruits a team to design and implement the Newcomer Program. The team includes representatives from counseling, the academic core as well as teachers with language development and literacy expertise.
- School community hires staff members, including leadership, who are immigrants and Former MLLs/ELLs, speak students' home languages, and/or have significant international travel experience.
- School collaborates with teacher preparation institutions in recruiting diverse teacher candidates who have the potential to succeed with Newcomer MLLs/ELLs.
- School seeks dually-certified teachers in ENL and content areas.
- School seeks literacy experts in multiple languages.
- School community ensures all school staff have appreciation of and sensitivity to cultural diversity.
- School involves the community in the vetting of candidates.
- School has candidates teach a demonstration lesson with Newcomer MLLs/ELLs.
- School has candidates meet with the Newcomer Program Team.
- The school funds many teachers to work extended hours. Teachers identify students' needs to tutor students, including all Newcomers. During Saturdays and semester breaks, teachers hold tutorials and offer intensive one-on-one and small-group help for students who need additional academic support.
- Teachers and staff members are often seen working with students who may be struggling with the coursework or challenged with how to express themselves through multiple literacies or to feel understood in and out of the classrooms. With these academic support structures in place, students build confidence in their classes and feel prepared to take the state assessments. When the students know that there are so many adults supporting them and they feel like they are part of a community that will not let them "slip through the cracks," they become fully committed to their academic success.

### Essential Feature 3:

Avoid unnecessary segregation and design a program structure that can accommodate mid-year entry of students and allows flexible, individualized movement through Newcomer and general education course offerings.

#### Components include:

- a. Master schedule and flexibility in course options accommodate students' strengths and needs and are aligned to school's language development approach and the Newcomer program's mission;
- b. Student learning opportunities are created in and outside of the classroom, beyond the traditional school day and academic calendar year; and
- c. Schools' curriculum and classes are designed with students' prior experiences and interests at the forefront. This includes support and services to meet the needs of Newcomers and SIFE. Learning opportunities leverage student interests that reinforce college and career readiness.

#### Examples from Successful Schools

- School community defines entry and exit criteria for the students in the Newcomer Program.
- School creates processes and structures to ensure that Newcomers have access to the entire spectrum of district course offerings, including gifted and talented programs, special education, advanced placement courses, career and technical education (CTE) and other programs or courses offered to general education students.
- School community eases the transition process for students exiting the Newcomer Program (e.g., classroom and school visits, field trips, student mentors, auditing a course, cross-program teacher meetings).
- School works on postsecondary options for high school Newcomers (e.g., connect with community colleges and trade schools, explore scholarship options, provide career education).
- School creates strategic community partnerships for students to expand extracurricular options and explore college and career opportunities.
- School works with the department in charge of special education to design an eligibility process for Newcomers suspected of having special education needs so that they can be identified and provided with an IEP (individualized Education Plan) within 1 year of enrollment.

#### Essential Feature 4:

Articulate and adhere to clear exit criteria and intentional ongoing assessments to determine readiness for program exit with follow-through.

##### Components include:

- a. School community has clear entry and exit criteria for Newcomers and SIFE;
- b. School community carries out a range of assessments that elicit knowledge about students' prior knowledge, literacy level in multiple languages, aspirations, growth, learning styles, and competencies that can be used to inform placement as well as teaching and learning decisions;
- c. Ongoing assessment practices feed into a larger framework and mindset of continuous improvement which values improving the quality of learning experiences for all students; and
- d. Summative assessments such as end of term tests and state assessments serve as major benchmarks that are aligned to the school's goals and mission.

##### Examples from Successful Schools

- Assessment practices allow teachers to adapt instructional materials to meet the strengths and needs of students.
- Teachers leverage formative assessment practices to promote continuous improvement, deepen understanding of both language and content-area learning, and to involve students in their own learning trajectory.
- School communities gather detailed data on students in order to inform decisions related to instruction, course offerings, and school structures. They gather data from a variety of sources (i.e., transcript review, home language literacy assessments, summative assessments from prior years, diagnostic assessments administered periodically throughout the year, state assessments, samples of student work, and information shared at student study team meetings or gathered through the course of interventions).
- School community works closely with students and their families, both formally through initial diagnostics and home visits, and informally through conversations and meetings throughout the year, to collect relevant information about the aspirations, background, needs, and strengths of each student and their family.
- School community values assessment for learning, teachers continuously use diagnostic and formative assessment practices to monitor student learning and inform instruction.
- Teachers elicit evidence of student understanding and language use through a variety of techniques, from Do Nows, exit slips, and quick writes to follow-up questions.
- The evidence from formative assessments is used to plan instructional supports to better meet students' needs, and to help students monitor and assess their own progress.
- School community uses a system of portfolio presentations to ensure that students have opportunities to engage in self-reflection and deeper learning.

## Essential Feature 5:

Intensive social-emotional supports draw on strategic community and family partnerships.

### Components include:

- a. School teams have deep understanding that academic and social-emotional learning for students work in symbiotic ways in promoting student engagement in learning and post-secondary outcomes (National Research Council, 2012);
- b. School-wide practices and policies attend to students' social-emotional well-being (e.g., intake interviews, home visits, advisory programs, counseling, and mental health services);
- c. Schools provide wrap-around services for families in need and their students (e.g., Newcomers and SIFE);
- d. Schools acknowledge their own strengths and limitations and are willing to engage in meaningful conversations and actions toward improvements in student learning. This includes involving families in the caring and learning work, while respecting their unique and diverse experiences;
- e. Schools coordinate with professional learning partners and community-based organizations so that the appropriate resources and opportunities are available to students, their families, and the school;
- f. Schools provide care, compassion and respect for students and families and value students' families for their unique and diverse experiences;
- g. Educators engage in consistent, meaningful, two-way conversations about student learning; and
- h. Schools equip students and their families with tools and resources, so they can serve as leaders and change agents within their own communities and as equal partners in school-based decision-making.

### Examples from Successful Schools

- School community cultivates numerous beneficial relationships with families, partners and stakeholders to advance the mission of the program and secure the supports needed for Newcomer ELLs.
- School community coordinates intensive social-emotional supports to help students become healthy and thriving young adults while working toward academic success.
- School community starts social-emotional supports as soon as a student enrolls.
- School community welcomes families in from day one and shows them the support system in place for their children.
- Counselors and teachers gain an understanding of their students' varied histories (often as recent immigrants or refugees).
- School community respects students' experiences and they realize that students often need additional supports in navigating life in a new country.
- School community sustains social-emotional support for students through close counseling from adults, either through structured advisory programs or individualized mentoring relationships.
- School community connects students and their families with wrap-around services related to health, housing, food security, employment, and community resources.
- Teachers and counselors guide MLLs/ELLs in their whole development through systematic attention to their social-emotional well-being and skills—such as coping with trauma, failure, stress control, realistic and adaptive goal setting, planning, decision-making, and motivation.
- School community views families as crucial allies and takes extensive measures to involve families.
- School community has strong ties with the local community and the families of their students.
- School community forges lasting partnerships with external organizations that are carefully and purposefully selected to augment and improve the existing practices at the school.
- School community works strategically with community organizations to expand opportunities for students.
- School community partners with local colleges and universities to offer college-level courses, provide mentoring, internship opportunities, intensive college counseling and guidance.



## Essential Feature 6:

Intentional, well-orchestrated structures provide opportunities for Newcomers to work collaboratively with more advanced MLLs/ELLs and native English speakers.

### Components include:

- a. Master schedule and flexibility in course options accommodate students' strengths and needs and are aligned to school's language development approach and college and career readiness standards; and
- b. Student learning opportunities are created in and outside of the classroom, beyond the traditional school day and academic calendar year.

### Examples from Successful Schools

- School community builds dynamic, creative, and flexible school-wide structures that facilitate student success. These structures are not bound by the regular class period or school day.
- School community has flexibility with their master schedule to accommodate students' varied and immediate needs, notwithstanding the additional work this often entails.
- School community administers informal assessments each semester to gather up-to-date knowledge about MLLs/ELLs' progress in language development and content knowledge acquisition.
- School community does not track MLLs/ELLs into stock schedules by groups but has highly individualized programs based on a combination of students' language and subject-area needs.
- School community takes advantage of block scheduling and double-blocking for certain courses to provide sufficient instructional time where it matters most, such as a double block of English and ENL to give students time to develop their language proficiency and literacy skills. In most cases, block scheduling affords teachers more instructional time per student, more time on task, and smaller roster sizes per teacher to allow for more individualized attention per student and more time for critical thinking.
- Educators recognize that the school day does not provide enough time to help students meet their rigorous academic demands. They extend the school day through a combination of after-school tutoring, Saturday school, and summer time use.
- School community determines student and family needs and designs schedules and structures to meet those needs.
- School community provides consistency for students across their years by "looping," a strategy that provides students with consistency across their school years by having the same teacher(s) two or more years in a row.

## Essential Feature 7:

SIFE support including structures, programming, and instruction accelerate language, literacy and numeracy skills.

### Components include:

- a. Acceleration of foundational literacy and numeracy skills in multiple languages;
- b. Multiple and coordinated social-emotional supports and extended learning opportunities to support success in courses and to accelerate course completion rates;
- c. Asset oriented counseling and planning with attention to aspirations and goals; and
- d. Strategic and sustained family engagements.

### Examples from Successful Schools

- Counselor and/or teachers conduct initial intake interviews with students and families in their home language.
- School community sets academic and social goals for the students and designs a program to meet them.
- School community defines entry criteria and exit criteria for the SIFE students in the program.
- School community has family liaisons that speak the families' home language or come from similar cultural backgrounds.
- School community develops a separate literacy course or set of courses for students with interrupted educational backgrounds if the program has both preliterate and literate Newcomers.
- School community provides extra learning time through after-school, summer school, Saturday school, and/or vacation institutes.
- School community determines student and family needs and designs schedules and structures to meet those needs.
- School community optimizes student engagement, learning, and effort through creative scheduling and rigorous coursework.
- School community provides consistency for students across their years by "looping," a strategy that provides students with consistency across their school years by having the same teacher(s) two or more years in a row.
- School community engages families by teaching them about schooling in the United States and showing them how to be involved in their student's educational life.
- School community creates opportunities for family input and involvement in school planning and implementation of programs.
- School community's plans support groups and activities to address family reunification issues.
- School community makes connections in the community for social-emotional support, health and mental health services, and immigrant and refugee services.
- School community pursues community support for initiatives designed to accelerate achievement for Newcomer SIFE.
- The school provides targeted social-emotional and academic services to support MLLs/ELLs. SIFE students are placed into the ENL program strand for Newcomers, SIFE, and beginner MLLs/ELLs, which is geared towards establishing basic communication skills, and gives special attention to SIFE. These students are grouped together so that they could support each other in their primary language. They are also given additional supports, such as small group skill classes (e.g., numeracy or computer and typing classes, book clubs (that use engaging texts to support literacy), lunch groups with counselors and teachers, access to the SIFE library (which includes low-level/high-interest books for small group or individual use), and participation in different clubs such as the Explorers Club (which gives students an opportunity to go on weekend field trips to various cultural institutions), as well as Saturday school.
- Although there is no "typical" day for a SIFE student, the school generally provides them with multiple supports. Much like Newcomer and beginner MLLs/ELLs, they are placed in a double period English class to promote literacy and to foster deeper relationships of trust with teachers. Because the school individualizes programming, interventions and programs may vary by student. Those who need the most support may have a different set of weekly activities than students who are more advanced. The school leadership's belief in working with the "whole child" sets the tone for how other staff members approach their work with individual students. In these ways, the school prioritizes social-emotional support in service of academic success.

### Essential Feature 8:

Professional learning sessions on curriculum development and instructional strategies is provided for all teachers of Newcomers including ENL and content area teachers.

#### Components include:

- a. Professional learning affords teachers resources and time to examine and plan lessons that are instructionally aligned to the *Key Principles of Effective ELL Instruction* and New York State’s Next Generation Learning Standards, Next Generation Science Standards and the Bilingual Common Core Progressions;
- b. Sustained, on-site professional learning is anchored in research-informed practices that develop MLLs/ELLs’ capacities to fully participate in rigorous learning opportunities across content areas in all schools;
- c. Professional learning enables teachers to develop both the dispositions and capacities to serve diverse MLLs/ELLs effectively, especially Newcomers;
- d. Professional learning sessions are intentionally designed to build teachers’ capacities to highlight and leverage the interrelationships among content area understandings, analytical practices, and the language needed to meet disciplinary conceptual and practice demands;
- e. Professional learning sessions promote a deep understanding of subject matter content knowledge and subject matter pedagogy that incorporate an understanding of the language practices needed to engage in the discipline(s);
- f. Professional learning sessions advance a profound understanding of new language development and strategies for teaching MLLs/ELLs that can be applied to the specific subject matter area(s) they are called upon to teach;
- g. Professional learning sessions have teachers learn about approaches to language learning that can build bridges between a student’s home language knowledge and their evolving acquisition of a new language within an academic context;
- h. Professional learning sessions help teachers design lessons that include the kinds of learning tasks students will be expected to undertake as they progress through the standards and demonstrate their knowledge and capacities. Teachers learn how to calibrate the content and language demands of these tasks, as they learn to build curriculum, lessons, and assignments, and also how to create temporary scaffolds that enable students to actively engage in and productively carry out the learning tasks; and
- i. Professional learning sessions call on teachers to implement structured assignments that allow for the application of theory to practice. The structured assignments engage teachers in assessing students, designing lessons, trying out strategies, evaluating outcomes, and continuously reflecting with expert guidance on what they are learning.

#### Examples from Successful Schools

- School community provides Newcomer Program teachers with supportive onboarding structures and mentors.
- School community has collaborative structures and scheduled time to facilitate co-teaching by ENL and content area teachers in order to support the balance of language, literacy and content knowledge acquisition.
- School community engages teachers in intentional and thoughtful unit and lesson planning between ENL, literacy and content area teachers.
- School community promotes cross-disciplinary and cross-grade literacy expectations and teacher collaboration.
- School community provides professional development for general education teachers who receive Newcomers after they exit temporary Newcomer Programs.
- School community ensures that all teachers of Newcomers and MLLs/ELLs have access to high-quality professional development that provides high leverage pedagogical practices, promotes the effective use of student assessment data, and develops skills for supporting new language acquisition across the curriculum.
- School community creates early-release days or shared prep periods, for teachers to meet in grade-level teams to create interventions for struggling students, or in department teams to plan for instruction, examine student work, and carry out data inquiry work.