



Partnering for Success with Newcomer Students and Families

APS Welcome Center

Objectives

The Aurora Public Schools Welcome Center seeks to

- assist refugee and immigrant students in their transition to Aurora Public Schools;
- provide academic support for refugee and immigrant students through targeted programming.



Data for 2016-2017 School Year

- 865 Interviews/Orientations
- 158 requests for support from schools
- 149 requests for support from parents
- 144 other requests for support
- 88 students in summer programs
- 831 parents and students attending family engagement events and workshops
- 14 students in SIFE support group

Targeted Academic Support

Practices

- TOSA runs a small group twice a week for students with interrupted or limited formal schooling. The group focuses on literacy, English development, self-advocacy and being accountable for attendance, credits and grades.
- We provide summer learning opportunities for K-12 immigrant and refugee students.

Outcomes

- Increased school engagement and support for students who have multiple risk factors for truancy.
- Promotes the development of cross-cultural friendships.
- Students have opportunities to develop English proficiency beyond the regular school day.

Transitioning into Aurora Schools

Practices

- Centralized Admissions refers immigrant and refugee families directly to the Welcome Center as part of their school registration.
- We meet with the family for an informal discussion to learn more about the student's background. If we don't share a language, we use phone interpretation to ensure clear and accurate communication.
- Then we provide the family with an orientation on what school will be like in APS with a visual aid binder.
- We write a summary of information about the student that teachers use to know areas of strength, interest and need.

Outcomes

- Establishes a relationship with the student and family for ongoing support.
- Students and families know what to expect at school.
- We are able to identify and be proactive about issues that arise in the interview.
- We provide teachers with valuable information about students with whom they will be working.

Relationships with Families

Practices

- Follow up with families we assisted during their school registration process.
- Assist parents with visiting schools and meeting school staff.
- Connect families with resources and programs in the community.
- Organize and offer engagement events addressing topics requested by families.
- Offer events for students and parents to learn more, ask questions and get connected to resources after they have had time to attend school.

Outcomes

- Provide a comfortable point of contact in the school system for newcomer families and students.
- More refugee and immigrant families reach out for support when they hear how others in their community were assisted.
- Increased parent involvement in schools.