

# Building Cultural Sensitivity in Schools and Communities

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## Warm Up – Ice Breaker

Please consider these questions. . .

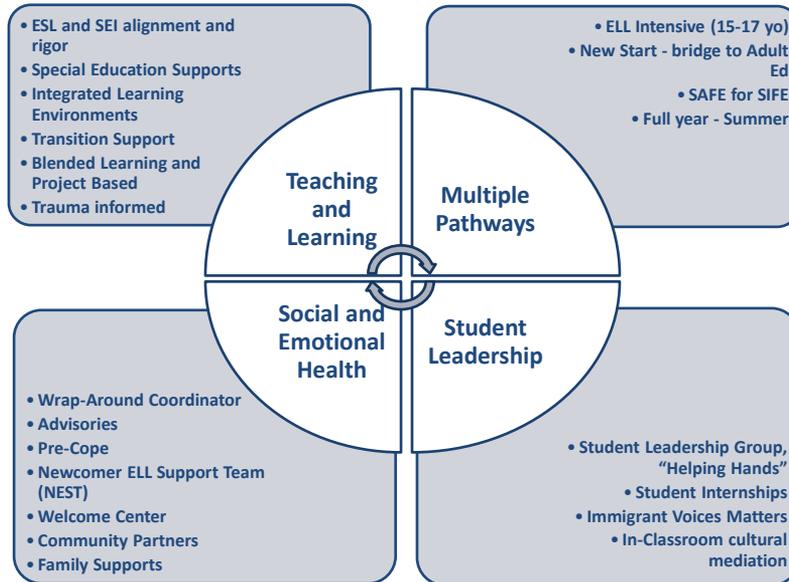
Does your school have curriculum that reflects the community that you serve?

Does your school have flexible pathways for students with diverse experiences?

Does your school have trauma informed supports?

Does your school have opportunities for diverse students to take leadership roles?

## Somerville Public Schools Immigrant Student Supports



## Our Community

Somerville has been a gateway city for immigrants throughout its history. Today:

- 18% English Learner (940 students)
- 50% First Language not English
- 52 Languages spoken in the school community

While the city is experiencing rapid demographic changes, we also recognize continuity in immigrant student and family experiences.

## Who are Unaccompanied Minors?

- Over 100 Unaccompanied Minors have arrived in Somerville since 2014. These are students whose last school attended was an immigrant detention center at the U.S. Border with Mexico.
- The students are primarily Central American and the majority are from El Salvador. They range in age and grade level from pre K to young adult
- Many Unaccompanied Minors are “homeless” under the McKinney-Vento Act definition
- They are fleeing violence in their homelands and many have faced traumas during their travel to the U.S.

**Why Somerville?** Students are re-united with family members who are Somerville residents.

**Students with Interrupted Formal Education:** Many of these students are considered “SIFE”. They have interruptions in their formal education of two or more years.

- **Link to Video**  
<http://www.scatvsomerville.org/bottom-slider/somerville-schools-welcome-new-students-who-fled-danger>
- (first 4 minutes)

## Our Approach to Diversity, Inclusion, and Safety

- Comprehensive
- Creative
- Blended
- Responsive
- Students are strong, hard workers, committed
- We work towards identifying barriers and eliminating them

## Legal Protections for Immigrant Students

- Sanctuary City
  - Plyler v. Doe
  - FERPA
  - LAU Remedies
  - McKinney Vento
  - Partnership with local police
- Legal clinics for students and families

## Teaching and Learning

- Dedicated ESL and SEI Teachers
- ELL Guidance Counselor
- Newcomers Education Success Team (NEST)
- Blended Learning and out of school time tutoring and academic support
- Trauma-sensitive/informed teaching and learning approach

<p><b>Partido de fútbol de los Alumnos y Estudiantes</b></p>  <p>Venga a comer, queda a estudiar</p> <p><b>Comida</b>      <b>Futbol</b></p> <p><b>Ayuda con la tarea</b></p> <p>Jueves, Abril 30 6:00: Futbol 6:30: Pupusas y Ayuda con la tarea</p> <p>East Somerville Community School 50 Cross St., Somerville</p> 	<p><b>Student-Staff Soccer Game</b></p>  <p>Come for the free food, stay for homework help!</p> <p><b>Food</b>      <b>Soccer</b></p> <p><b>Homework Help</b></p> <p>Thursday, April 30th 6:00: Soccer 6:30: Pupusas and Homework help</p> <p>East Somerville Community School 50 Cross St., Somerville</p> 
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## Multiple Pathways

- SAFE/SIFE Programs
- Bridges to Adult Ed (in development)
- ELL Intensive (in development)
- Full year - including summer with health and nutrition thematic learning
- Traditional ELL Path

## Social Emotional Health and Well-being

### Wrap-Around Services

- Wrap-Around Coordinator
- School-based Mental Health providers  
(Riverside, Home for Little Wanderers, pre-Cope)
- School-based Health (Teen Connection, Cope)
- BEST Team
- Yoga and Cultural Identity

## Partnerships in Community

- Community Leadership Resource Team (CLRT)
- Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) – resource and referral for basic needs
  - food, clothing, housing, insurance, health referral, playgroups, and recreation
  - Multilingual services (translation and interpretation)

## Family and Caregiver Support

- Welcome Center
- Family Liaisons (support for siblings and whole family)
- Bilingual Support Groups and parenting skills
- Workshops and events
- Parent English Classes and Computer Literacy

*"I was looking at how my generation tried to fit into both cultures, how we were in situations where we had to help our parents with different tasks, from translating for them at the hospital to taking them to work and other things. In a way, there was always pressure on my cousins and me to do well, as if our successes would justify our parents' sacrifices.*

*There was one photo of my aunt, a single mother of three kids, that showed her walking to the bus stop at 5 in the morning.*

*She would drop off her kids at day care, then go to Dunkin' Donuts for a 10-hour shift and then go home to take care of the kids. Another aunt had lost her home and worked 12 hours a day at a factory. . .*



*. . .and then it hit me.*

*I had done all of this because of the pressure my parents put on me to graduate. Just trying to find my own path in life made me realize what I had been trying to say. I needed to honor them and their work, their sacrifices.*

*It's not just my mom, but my family. Their sacrifices were worthwhile, for my cousins and for me."*

<http://mobile.nytimes.com/blog/lens/2016/05/11/honoring-a-debt-to-immigrant-parents/>

Laritza Menjivar, former SPS Student

## Student Leadership

- Immigrant Student Leadership Group – “Helping Hands”
- City Links Internships
- Career Exploration Program for ELLs
- Immigration Voices Matter
- In-class cultural mediation

We asked ELL Students what they want teachers to know about them:

- I feel bad when we sit in different spaces in the cafeteria. It would be nice to be integrated.
- I don't want to just be seen as part of a group, I want to be seen as a person.
- Sometimes I don't have help with my homework because my parents don't speak English.
- I don't want to be treated as a child who doesn't know anything just because I can't speak English.
- Life is hard. The process is not the same when you are undocumented. We need different supports.

## Discussion

How can you create or strengthen these supports in your school?

- opportunities for diverse students to take leadership roles
- curriculum that reflects the community that you serve
- trauma informed supports
- flexible pathways for students with diverse experiences

### English Learner Pathways Resources and Partners

#### Resources

- Alternate Pathway Teacher (local funds requested)
- Boston University Consortium Grant
- FLNE DESE - America's Promise Grant
- Title III

#### Partners

- Boston Mobilization
- Bunker Hill Community College
- Cambridge Health Alliance
- City Links
- Home for Little Wanderers
- Parenting Journey
- Parkour Generations Americas
- Riverside Community Care
- SCALE
- Somerpromise
- Tufts University
- Welcome Project
- Youth Harbors