

M E M O R A N D U M

July 20, 2021

TO: Health and Human Services Committee
Education and Culture Committee

FROM: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst
Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst
Nicole Hernandez-Rodriguez, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Newly arriving migrant and asylum-seeking children, youth, and families in
Montgomery County

PURPOSE: Update and Discussion

Expected for this session:

County Government:

Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
JoAnn Barnes, Consultant to DHHS
Gillian Huebner, Consultant to DHHS
Diane Vu, Director, Office of Community Partnerships
Luis Cardona, Administrator, Positive Youth Development (DHHS)
Monica Martin, Administrator, Child/Adolescent School and Community-Based
Services, (DHHS)
Deborah Lambert, Senior Policy and Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget

Montgomery County Public Schools:

Everett Davis, Acting Associate Superintendent, Office of Teaching, Learning, and Schools –
Student & Family Support & Engagement
Ruschelle S. Rueben, Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Schools
Margarita I. Bohorquez, Acting Director, Student, Family, and School Services – International
Admissions & Enrollment

Community Partner Representatives:

Diego Urriburu, Executive Director, Identity, Inc.
Celia Rivas, Immigration Services Coordinator, Catholic Charities

At this session the Joint Committee will receive an update on the national and regional/local landscape regarding the arrival of migrant children who have come to live with approved sponsors through the Office of Refugee Resettlement and newly arriving migrant and asylum-seeking children and families who are now residents of Montgomery County.

The Joint Committee last had an update on unaccompanied children/children fleeing violence in April¹. (Link to the packet in footnote.) At that session, the Joint Committee also heard from Ms. Cabrera-Lopez and Ms. Say of the International Mayan League who informed the Joint Committee about the circumstances that have led to a large percentage of new migrants coming from Guatemala, the trauma they have faced at home and on their journey, healthcare needs, and the importance of the county understanding the indigenous languages that are spoken in addition to capacity for those who are Spanish speakers. The Joint Committee was told that DHHS was convening a steering committee with MCPS and others to plan and coordinate a response so that the county is well prepared to address the needs of newly arriving migrant and asylum-seeking children and families.

The presentation slides for today's update are attached at ©1-30. Following the presentation by representatives from DHHS and MCPS, the Joint Committee will also receive comments from Mr. Uriburu and Ms. Rivas, representing two of the County's community partner organizations.

Some notes from the presentation slides:

- More than 65,000 unaccompanied children have crossed the United States – Mexico border between January and May 2021. The highest percent are from Guatemala (48%), followed by Honduras (25%) and El Salvador (14%). Seventy-two percent (72%) are over 14 years old. Sixty-eight percent (68%) are boys. Families also approach the border. Some with children under the age of 6 are allowed to stay in the United States. (©3).
- According to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), 473 unaccompanied children have been released to sponsors in Montgomery County between January and May; 182 of those children arrived between April and May. The District of Columbia Metropolitan Region has been the destination for 1,814 children with 661 living with sponsors in Prince George's County, 560 in Fairfax County, and 120 in the District of Columbia. (©8). Children and families may also arrive through other avenues without going through the ORR process.
- Children enrolling in MCPS may, but do not have to show documentation from ORR when they enroll. Currently, MCPS data shows that few children have enrolled but these numbers may not be fully representative. (©10).

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https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2021/20210428/20210428_HHSEC1.pdf

- The Steering Committee has been reviewing national best practices and programs in other jurisdictions. A summary of best practices is at ©12.
- The Steering Committee has developed a proposed response model that will: (1) Strengthen interagency coordination and create a navigation network; (2) Enhance family and community-based supports; and (3) Strengthen education and school-based services.
- Included in the proposal are coordination positions, one each in DHHS and MCPS; development of a strong navigation network; the creation of a Mobile Resource Team that supports schools that do not have existing supports such as Wellness Centers, Linkages to Learning, and certain other DHHS-partnered efforts; a public-private partnership to expand access to legal services; expansion of mental health supports; family reunification support; recreation and positive youth development; and efforts to address safety issues including bias, exploitation, gang recruitment, and trafficking. The Steering Committee has discussed and considered the best practices that have been developed by Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar and its communications and network model. MCPS will have professional development programs; implement a newcomer orientation program, expand in and after-school programs such as therapeutic recreation including art, music, athletics, gardening, and community-building programs; and provide opportunities for older newcomers to access the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA).

This proposal provides a framework for better serving those newcomers who have already arrived and for preparing the County to support those that are expected. The Steering Committee and its partner committees and work groups will continue to work on mapping the system flow and navigation model with a focus on a person-centered system that responds, no matter what door the child comes through. This will provide an understanding of what each child or family needs and when they need it so they can be linked to immediate crisis services, and longer-term education, health and mental health, legal, safety, and other supports.



Newly arriving migrant and asylum-seeking children, youth and families in Montgomery County

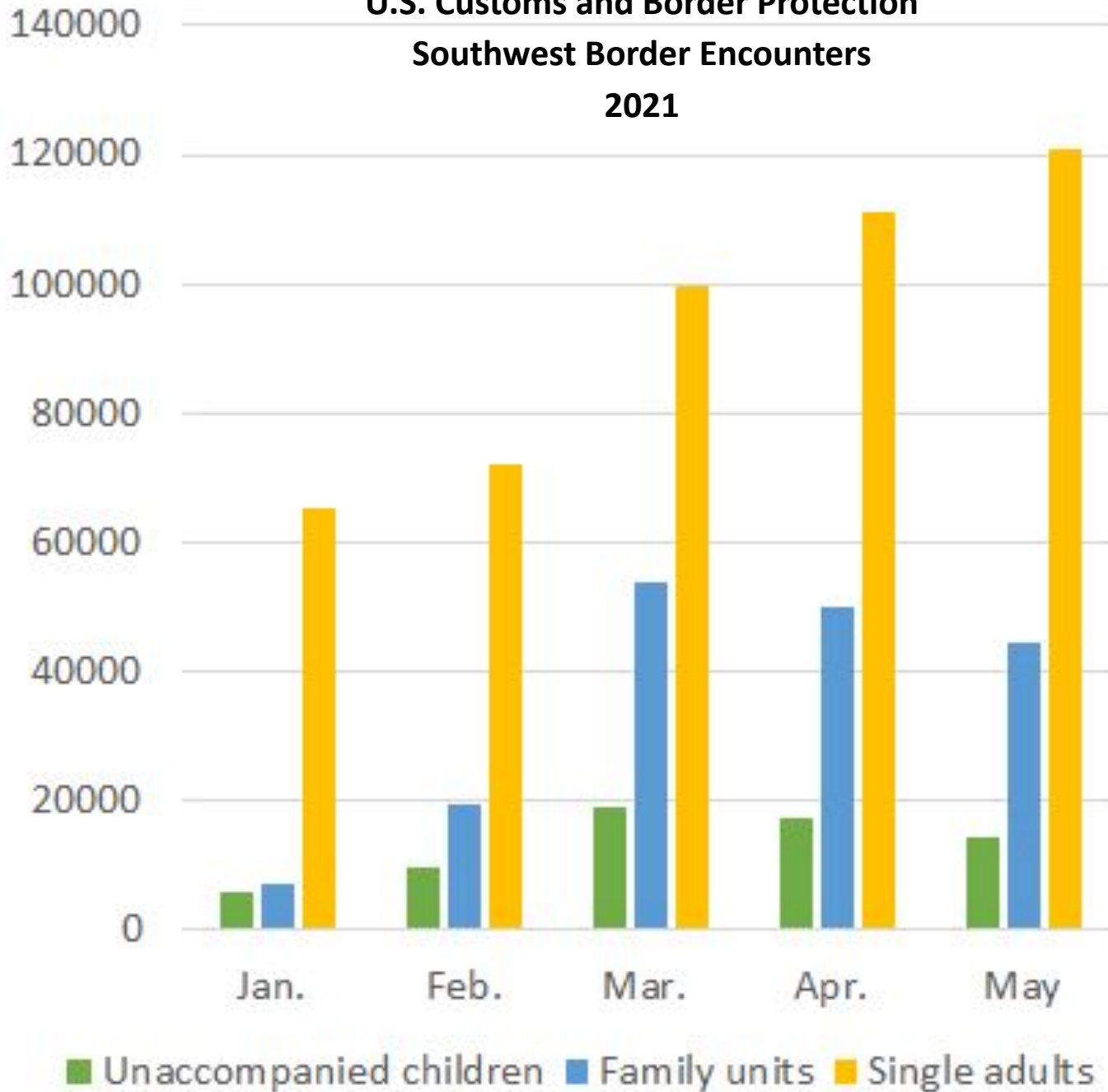
Planning a coordinated and effective response

Situation Update

Situation update - national

- **Arrivals**: The U.S. is expecting a 20-year high in the number of unaccompanied migrant and asylum-seeking children approaching the border. These young people are fleeing high levels of violence, crime, natural disasters, the effects of climate change, food insecurity and poverty. The majority (90%) are seeking to unify with family members in the United States.
- **Numbers**: More than 65,000 unaccompanied children crossed the U.S.-Mexico border between January and May. In March, the number of unaccompanied child arrivals was the highest on record (18,960); April was the second highest (17,171).
- **Demographics**: The majority of unaccompanied children are from Guatemala (48%), Honduras (25%) and El Salvador (14%). 72% are over 14 years old and 68% are boys. Many newly arriving children from Guatemala are Native American, not Hispanic/Latino. They speak indigenous languages (for example, Mam, K'iche', and Q'anjob'al).
- **Not only unaccompanied children**: In addition to unaccompanied children, family units and single adults continue to approach the border in high numbers. Most continue to be pushed back under Title 42, although some families with children under age 6 have been allowed to enter the United States. Some children and adults cross the border undetected by immigration authorities and are not included in numbers reported by DHS/CBP or the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Southwest Border Encounters 2021



Most individuals who approach the border are returned or apprehended.

Unaccompanied children under age 18 are currently allowed entry.

Some families with children under age 6 are allowed entry (per CBP discretion).

The process to get here...



1. If apprehended at the border, the child is placed in a **DHS/CBP** detention facility for processing.

2. If identified as “unaccompanied”, DHS/ICE is meant to transfer the child to an **HHS/ORR** facility within 72 hours. Protection screenings and family reunification processes commence. The average length of stay in ORR facilities is currently 37 days.



3. Once family members or other sponsors have been identified/vetted, the child is released. 49% are released to a parent or legal guardian, 41% to an immediate relative, 10% to a distant relative. Upon release, all children are placed in removal/deportation proceedings.

FUNDING THE RESPONSE

- In FY 2021, the federal appropriation for unaccompanied children was \$1.3 billion.
- 84% of program costs are spent on border facilities (typically the first 30 to 60 days after children's arrival in the U.S.).
- Less than 16% of federal funding is spent on supporting unaccompanied children with access to post-release services, legal services, and child advocates.
- The U.S. government spends as much as \$775 per child per day on emergency facilities at the border, resulting in program costs of \$62 million per week.
- UNICEF reports that it is 80 percent more expensive to detain children than to provide appropriate care and services within the community.
- Montgomery County has not received additional funding from the federal government or the state to facilitate our response to newly arriving migrant and asylum-seeking children and their families.

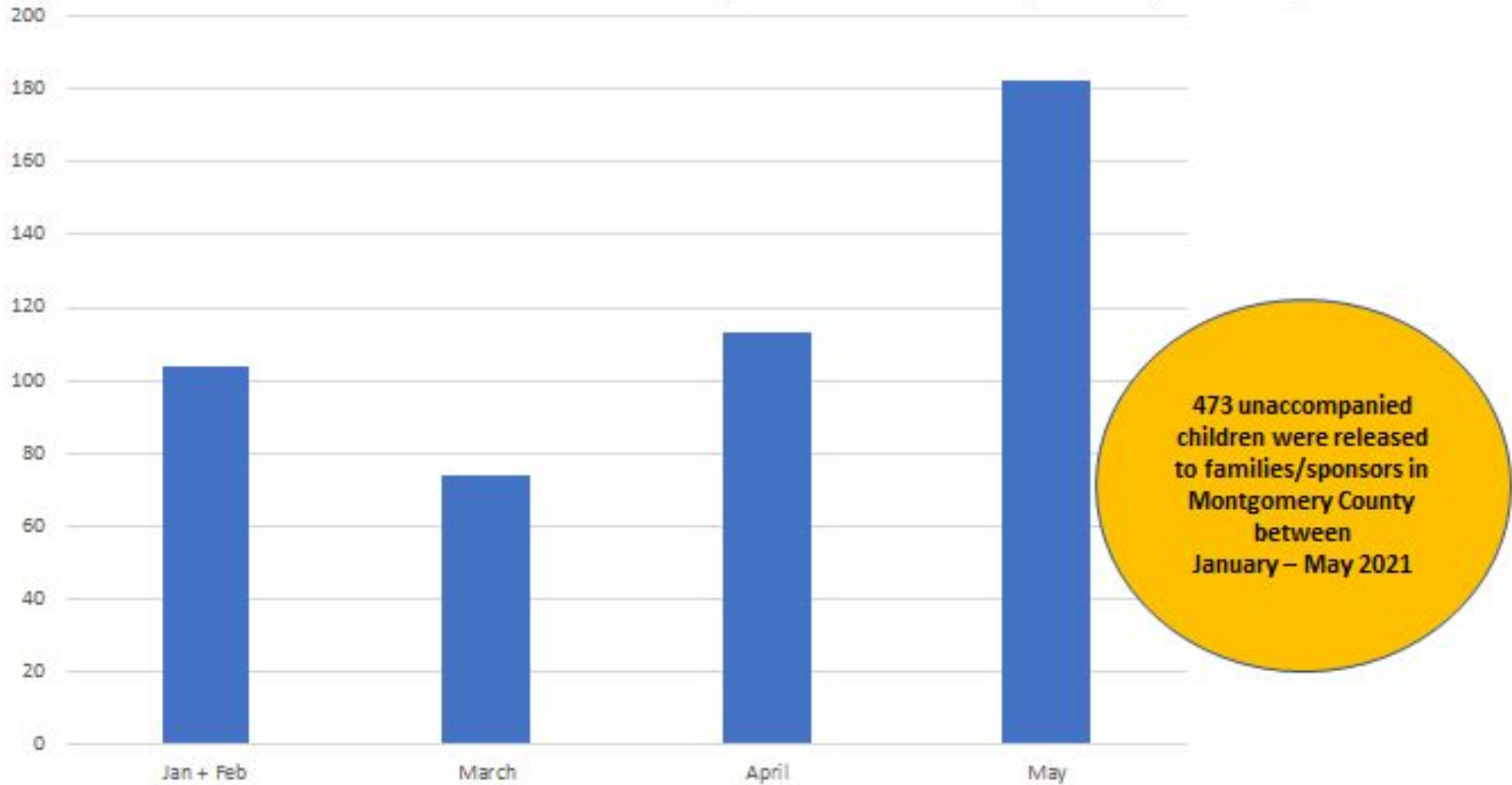
Situation update – Montgomery County

- Montgomery County is a primary destination for unaccompanied children seeking to unify with families/sponsors.
- Between 2014-2021, Montgomery County was the 11th highest receiving county in the nation; the second highest (after Princes Georges) in Maryland.
- Release numbers from border facilities have been low because case management has not been in place. ORR is working to expedite the release process and numbers of children released are expected to increase in the coming weeks and months.
- According to ORR, 473 unaccompanied children have been released to sponsors in Montgomery County between January and May, with an increase of 182 children between April and May.
- In addition to unaccompanied children released to sponsors in Montgomery County, an unknown number of children are arriving with parents or other caregivers. There is no mechanism to track the total number of migrants and asylum-seekers arriving in each state or county.

Unaccompanied children released to families/sponsors in our region

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021 through May
Montgomery	1,168	214	473
Prince Georges	1,557	263	661
Fairfax	1,318	226	560
D.C.	322	48	120
	4,365	751	1,814

Unaccompanied children released to families/sponsors in Montgomery County in 2021



MCPS International Enrollment Data

Month	Number of Student Intakes 2017–2018	Number of Student Intakes 2018–2019	Number of Student Intakes 2019–2020	Number of Student Intakes/Cleared 2020–2021	Number of Student Intakes/Cleared 2021–2022	Number of ORRs 2020–2021	Number of ORRs 2021–2022
July	366	271	515	1	11	0	
August	869	748	1174	228		2	
September	362	748	1104	186		4	
October	213	430	571	78		5	
November	127	250	227	62		1	
December	155	210	211	56		0	
January	242	359	361	43		3	
February	186	342	228	82		6	
March	195	328	82	98		12	
April	198	349	5	97		5	
May	146	343	42	81		10	
June	156	240	10	74		10	
TOTAL	3215	4618	4530	1086		58	

Of the 473 unaccompanied children who've entered Montgomery County since January 2021, only a small percentage has enrolled in school.

*MCPS does not collect data on students' country of origin. Students who arrived in the country unaccompanied and came through the ORR system are not obligated to show ORR documentation to MCPS. Therefore, the ORR numbers reported by MCPS may not be fully representative.

Elementary METS Sites	Middle School METS Sites	High School METS Sites
Broad Acres LTL school-based health center	Eastern (30) LTL (no health component)	Bethesda-Chevy Chase (10)
R. Sargent Shriver LTL (no health component)	Gaithersburg (31) LTL (no health component)	Montgomery Blair (73) SCYS (YMCA 1 day/week)
South Lake LTL (no health component)	A.Mario Loiderman (28) LTL (no health component)	Albert Einstein (27) SCYS (EveryMind 2 day/week)
	Montgomery Village (12) Access to Cluster Project	Gaithersburg (87) Wellness Center
<p>8 METS sites do not have DHHS-partnered supports. 12 METS sites do not have DHHS-partnered supports that include family case management/care coordination (4 METS sites w/SCYS only have part-time mental health support).</p> <p>(#): # METS students enrolled (2020-2021)</p> <p>LTL: Linkages to Learning</p> <p>No DHHS-partnered supports</p> <p>SCYS: Part-time mental health support. Counselors may or may not serve METS students and may or may not speak Spanish.</p>	Neelsville (12) Access to Cluster Project	Richard Montgomery (26) SCYS (Rockville 1 day/week)
	Takoma Park (5)	Northwood (85) Wellness Center
	Julius West (11)	Quince Orchard (21)
	White Oak (22)	Rockville (19) SCYS (Rockville 1 day/week)
	Sligo (28)	Seneca Valley (25) (+ CREA) Wellness Center (January 2022)
	Wood (12)	Springbrook (41) Access to Cluster Project
		Thomas Edison (+ CREA)
		Watkins Mill (46) Wellness Center
		Wheaton (53) Wellness Center

(11)

NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

- Dedicate County, agency, and school-based **point persons** to support newcomers, coordinate services, and ensure implementation of best practices.
- Prioritize and facilitate **enrollment** (education and social services).
- **Co-locate services** (case management, legal services, mental and behavioral health support) where children/youth are (i.e. schools).
- Establish clear **referral pathways**.
- Support ongoing and comprehensive **newcomer programs** at impacted schools and in the community.
- Let Latino/Hispanic and indigenous **culturally-competent** professionals and community partners lead.
- Offer trauma-informed and resilience-oriented **professional development** to district- and school-based staff interacting with newcomers.
- **Assess** the situation and **evaluate** the response.

Montgomery County's Response (a proposal)

Montgomery County's Response

BIENVENIDOS
WELCOME

1. Strengthen interagency coordination & create a navigation network
2. Enhance family and community-based supports
3. Strengthen education and school-based services



USE EXISTING STRUCTURES

Steering Committee (New)

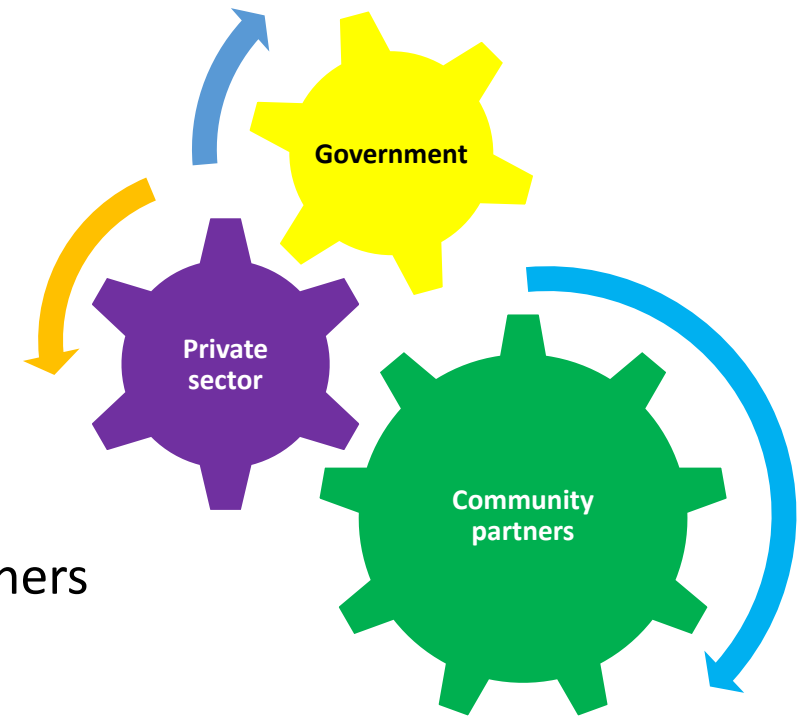
- Montgomery County government agencies
- Chaired by 2 part-time consultants (DHHS)
- Launched in April 2021

Children Fleeing Violence Working Group

- Montgomery County government agencies + community partners
- Chaired by MCPS and DHHS
- Launched in 2014

Trafficking Prevention Committee

- Three subcommittees: education/outreach, victim services, legislative outreach
- Launched in 2014



ESTABLISH NEW POSITIONS

- **Newcomer Coordinator (DHHS)**: Coordinates family- and community-based supports and works with the Navigation Network for Newcomers to support newly arriving children, youth and families to access services, including child care, medical and mental/behavioral health care, food and housing assistance, and legal services, and leads data collection/analysis.
- **Transition Counselor for Newcomers (MCPS)**: Coordinates school-based services, aligns learning programs and works with Navigation Network for Newcomers to link students and their families/sponsors to wrap-around supports and integrated services in and out of school, and leads data collection/analysis.

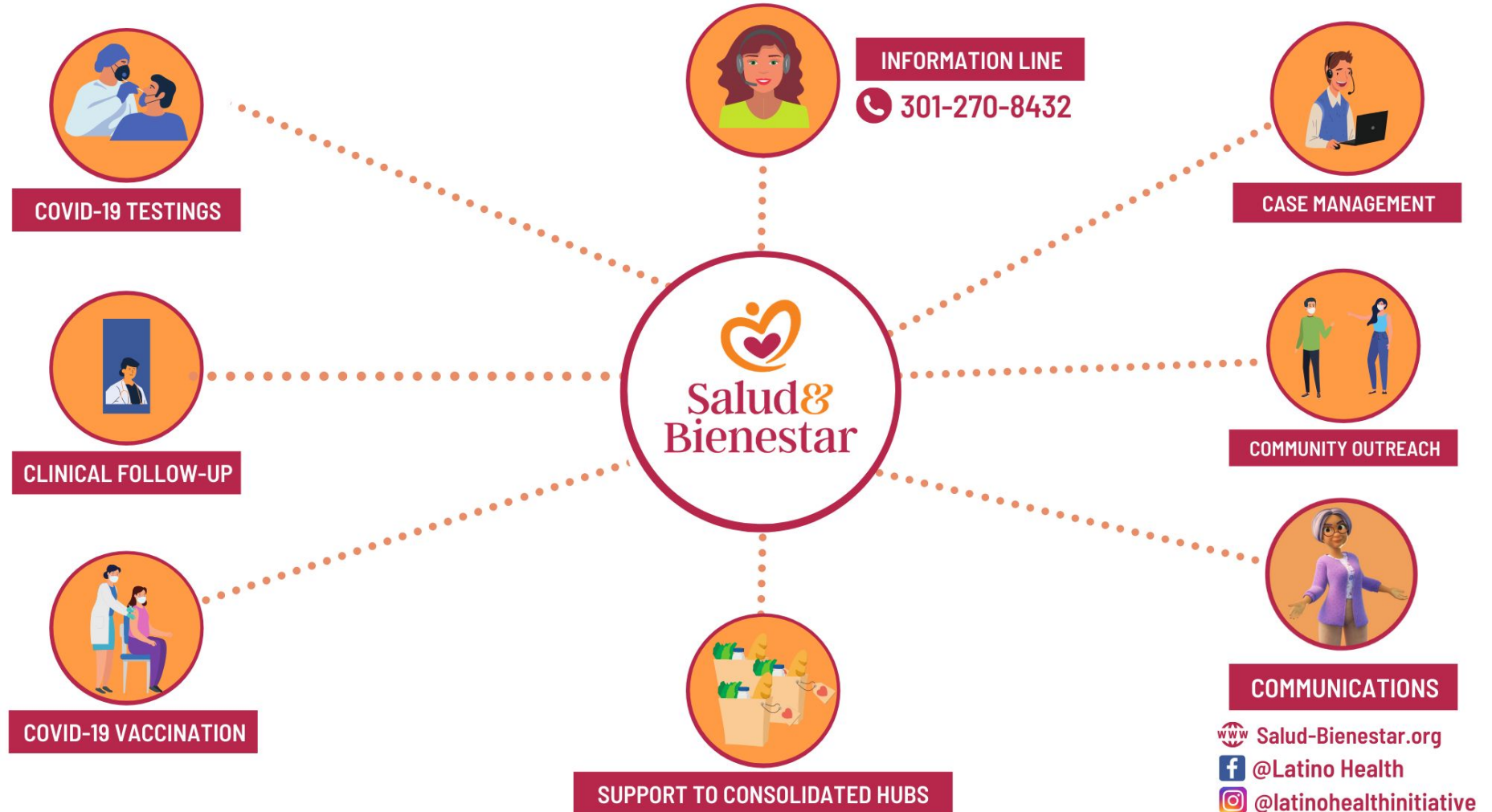
*positions may be contractual



USE A NETWORK MODEL

Learn from what exists and works:

The Latino Health Initiative launched *Salud y Bienestar* in response to the COVID-19 crisis. It is a partnership between the Montgomery County government and local organizations with strong connections to the Hispanic/Latino community. The same model can be used to support newly arriving migrant and asylum-seeking children and their families.

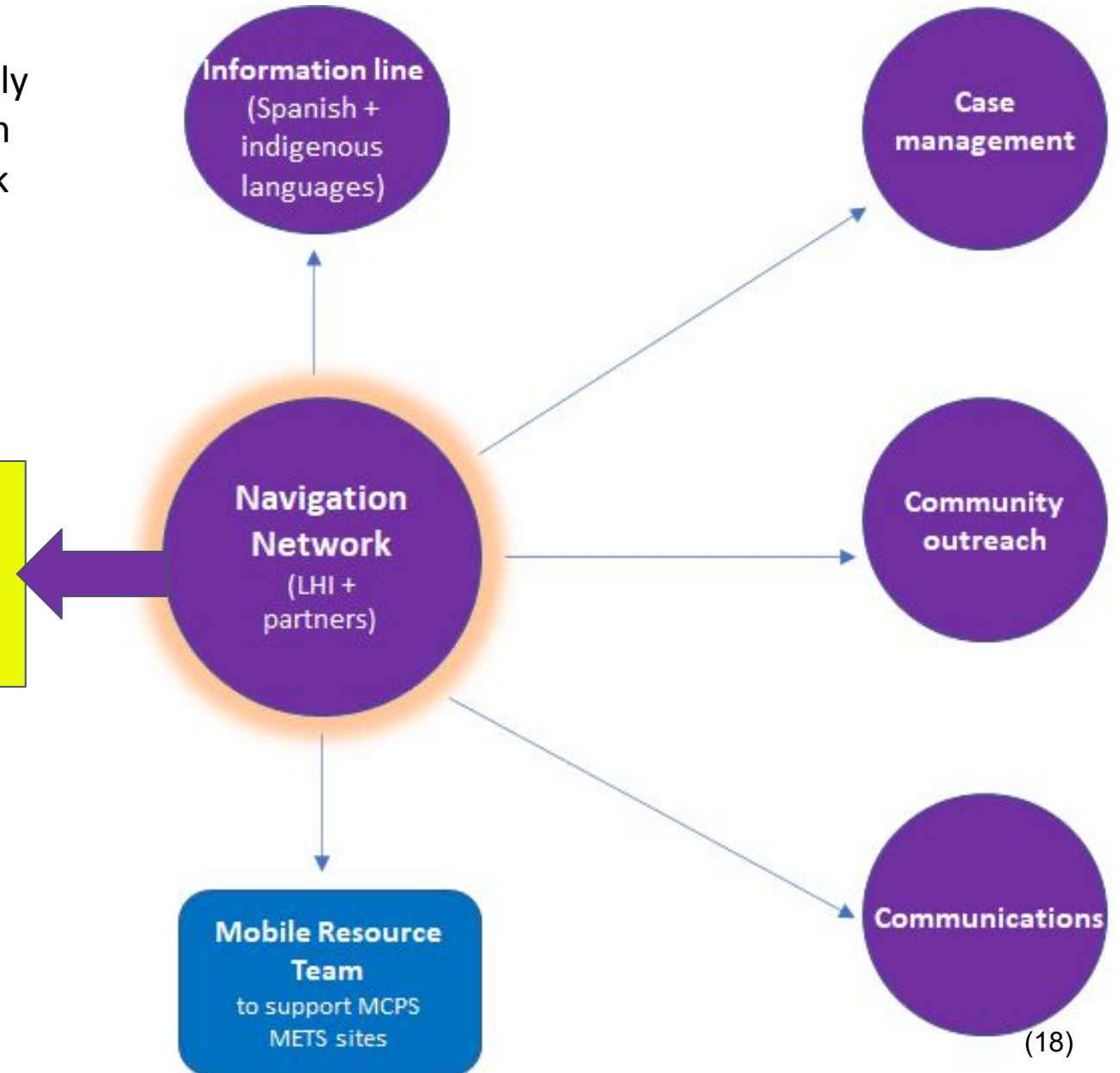


CREATE A NAVIGATION NETWORK FOR NEWCOMERS

The **Navigation Network for Newcomers** will proactively link newly arriving migrant and asylum-seeking children and families/sponsors to existing services. The Network will facilitate case management, referral to services, community outreach and communications through culturally competent community- and school-based partners.

Link to education, health care, mental health and behavioral health supports, family reunification programs, legal services, gang/trafficking prevention/response, and other essential services.

Facilitated by the Latino Health Initiative (LHI) in collaboration with CASA, Catholic Charities, Identity, Linkages to Learning and MCPS Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement (ETCs, PCCs, PPWs).



Why do we need a Mobile Resource Team?

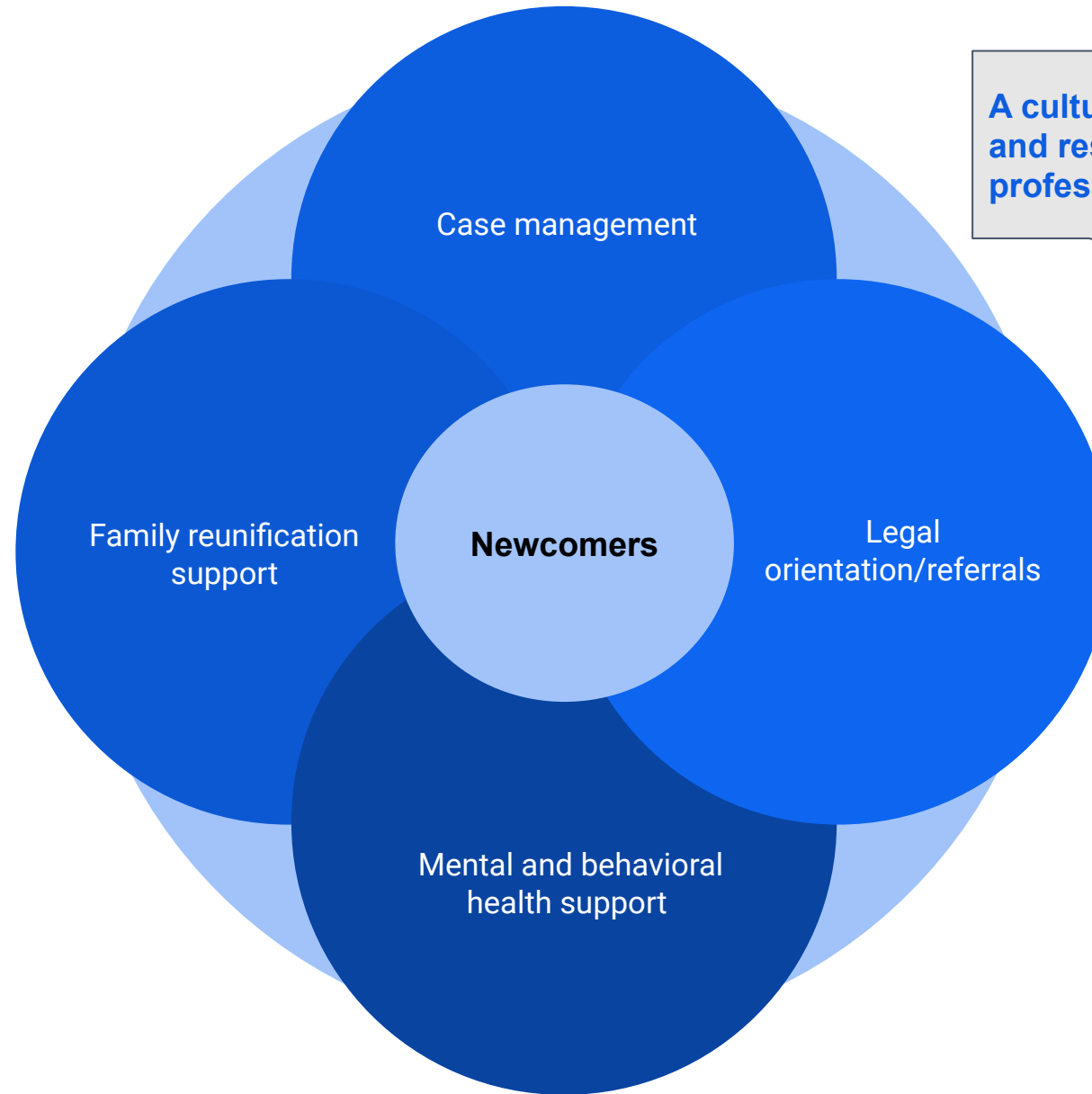
Of 12 HS METS sites, 4 have Wellness Centers.

Of 10 MS METS sites, 3 have Linkages to Learning.

2 METS HS and 1 MS METS sites can access care coordination through the Cluster Projects.

8 METS sites do not have DHHS-partnered supports. 12 METS sites do not have DHHS-partnered supports that include family case management/care coordination (4 METS sites w/SCYS only have part-time mental health support).

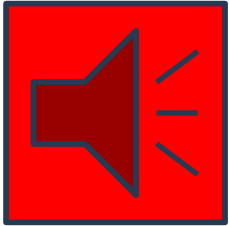
MOBILE RESOURCE TEAM



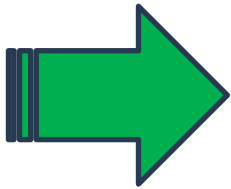
A culturally-competent, trauma-informed and resilience-oriented team of professionals.

The Mobile Resource Team can support schools without wrap-around supports, serving students in school as part of a newcomer orientation program, after school, and in collaboration with Community Resource Hubs, parishes, and other community organizations that support newcomers.

ESTABLISH A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO EXPAND ACCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES



All children have the right to access protection, seek asylum and reunite with family members. All unaccompanied migrant children/youth are placed in deportation proceedings upon release to families/sponsors. 73 percent of unaccompanied minors who were represented in court were granted permission to stay in the United States, compared to 15 percent of unrepresented children.



Build on existing County investments and increase access to legal orientation, representation and counsel for children and families seeking asylum, immigration relief, and facing deportation and removal proceedings in Montgomery County. Reinforce a safety net that is pro-family, pro-economic growth and pro-civil and human rights.

Build awareness and responders' competencies

Who is arriving? Why are they coming? What are their rights?

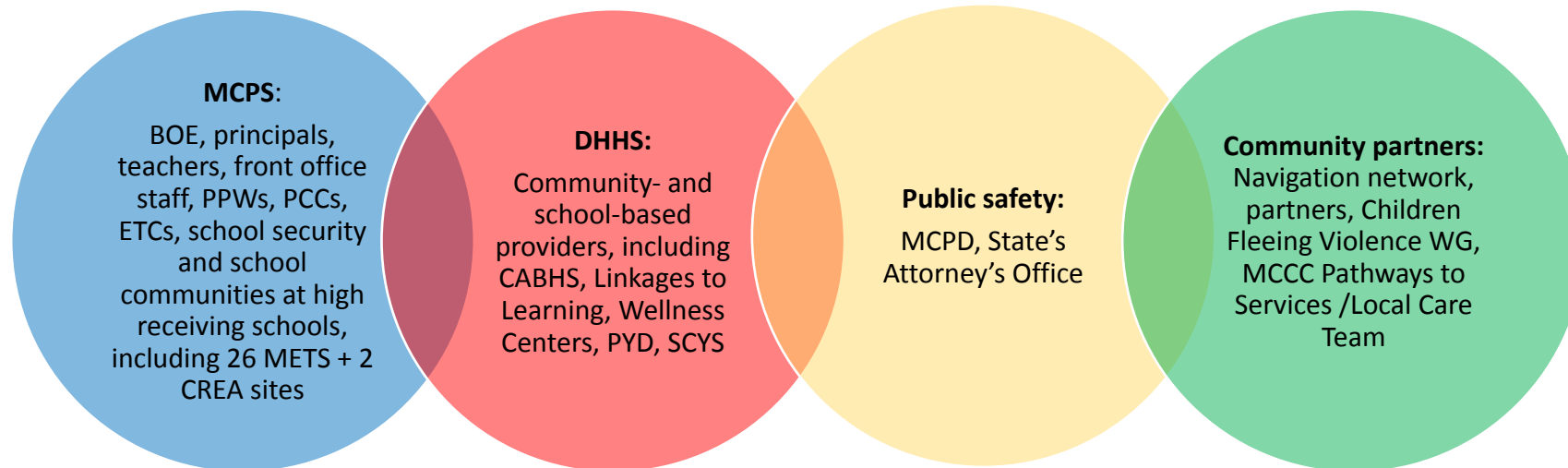
What are the risks they face and assets they bring?

What is a culturally-sensitive, trauma-informed, resilience-oriented approach?

What resources are available to help?

What is my role in the response?

How can I coordinate with other partners?



Enhance family and community-based support

Legal Services:

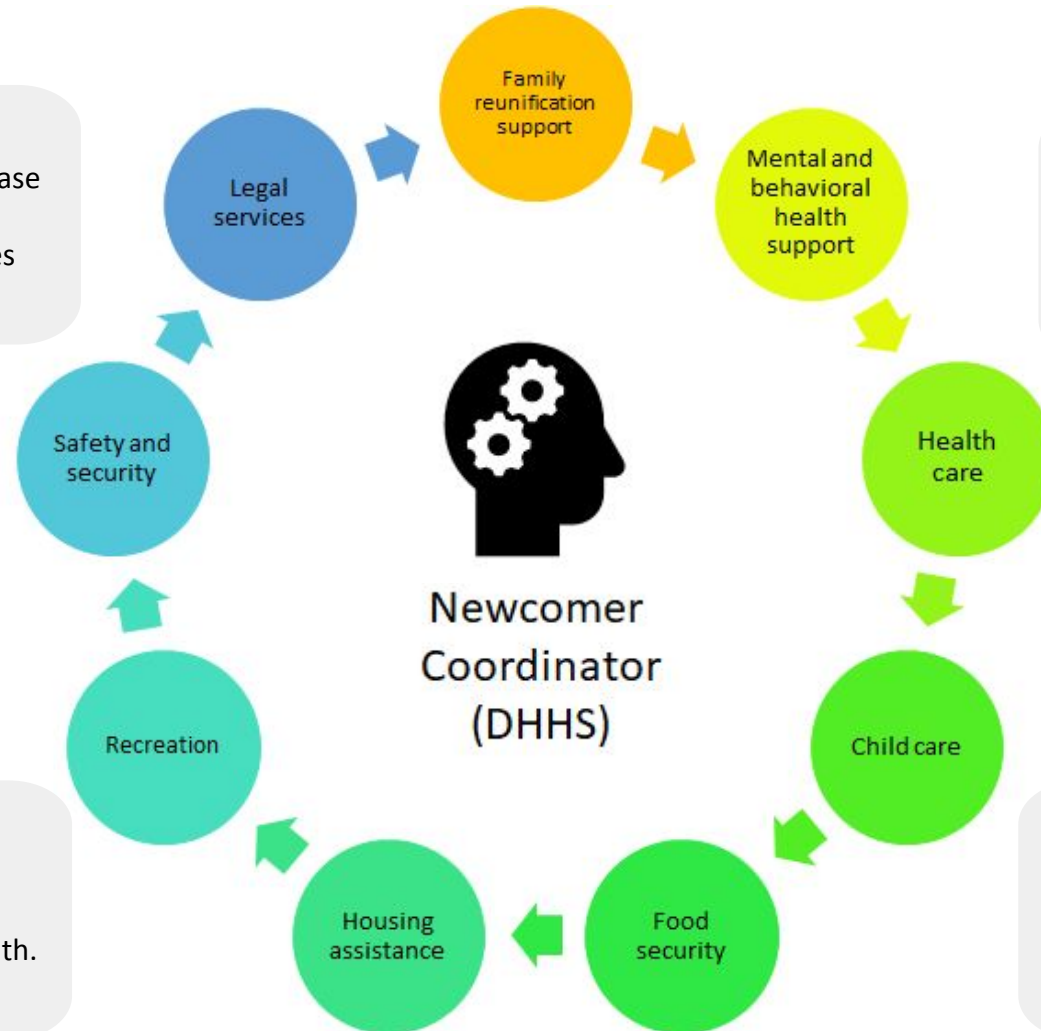
Coordinate provision of legal services and increase access to legal orientation, counsel and representation for children, youth and families facing deportation/removal proceedings.

Public safety:

Protect newly arriving children, youth and families from discrimination and bias; prevent and respond to exploitation, violence, gang recruitment and trafficking.

Recreation and positive youth development:

Expand recreational and community-building opportunities for newly-arrived children and youth.



Family reunification support:

Offer additional programs in coordination with MCPS and the Navigation Network.

Mental and behavioral health support:

Increase bilingual and culturally-competent crisis intervention, clinical support and case management capacity.

Link to existing services:

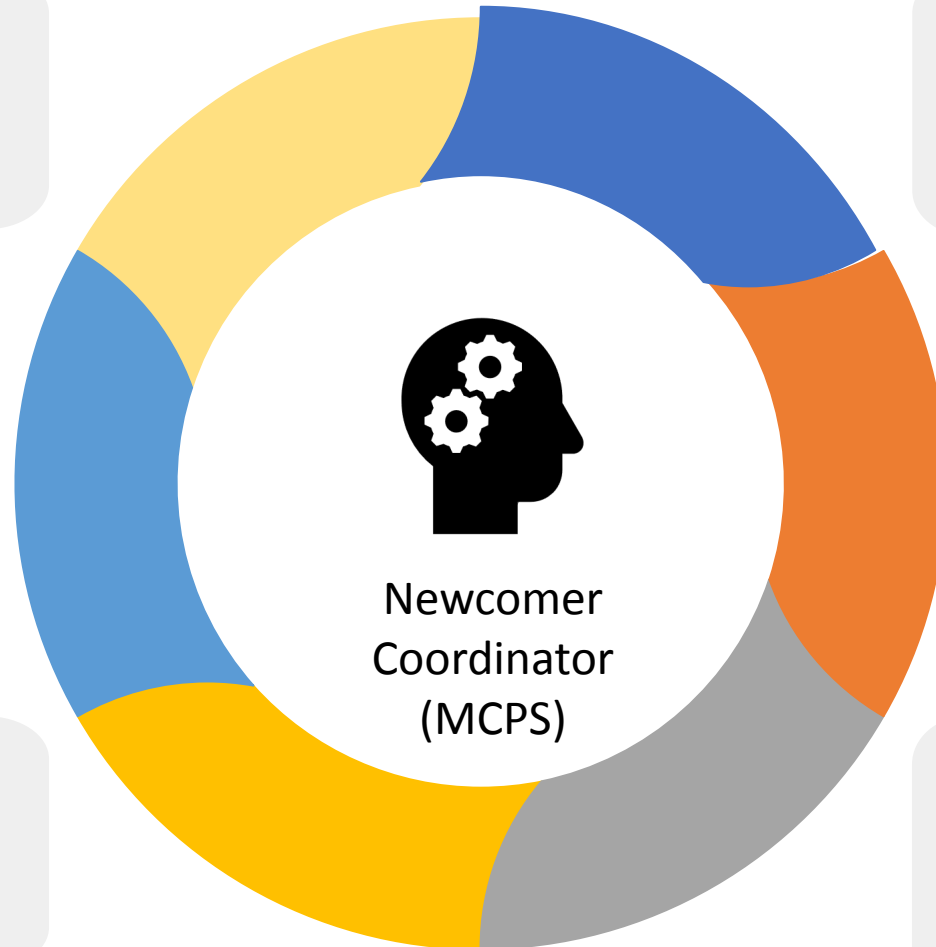
Ensure that newly arriving children, youth and families/sponsors are able to access existing services, including health/dental care, child care, food and housing assistance.

Strengthen education and school-based services

Link students and families to services in coordination with the Navigation Network and Mobile Resource Team.

Expand in- and after-school therapeutic recreation, including arts, music, athletic, gardening, and community-building programs.

Provide opportunities for older newcomers to access the Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA).



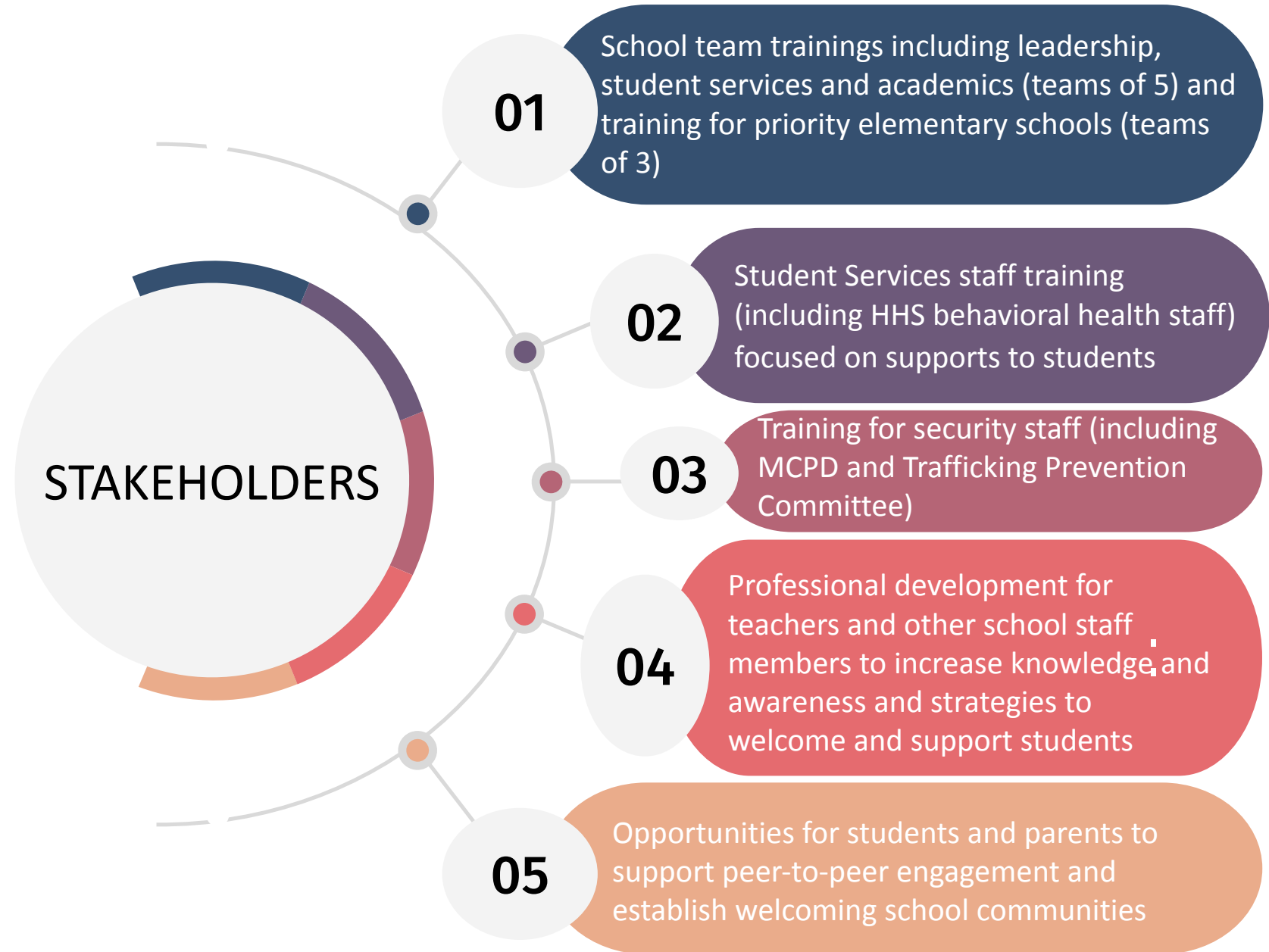
Provide professional development and cultural sensitivity programs for staff, students and families.

Review the secondary METS program and implement a newcomer/orientation program and targeted support at 22 METS sites + CREA.

Create flexible schedules to allow integrated supports during the school day.

MCPS Professional Development

Vision:
Create an environment where all students and families feel welcome. Use culturally-sensitive, trauma-informed, and resilience-oriented approaches to ensure that newcomers are ready to learn and engage in the community.

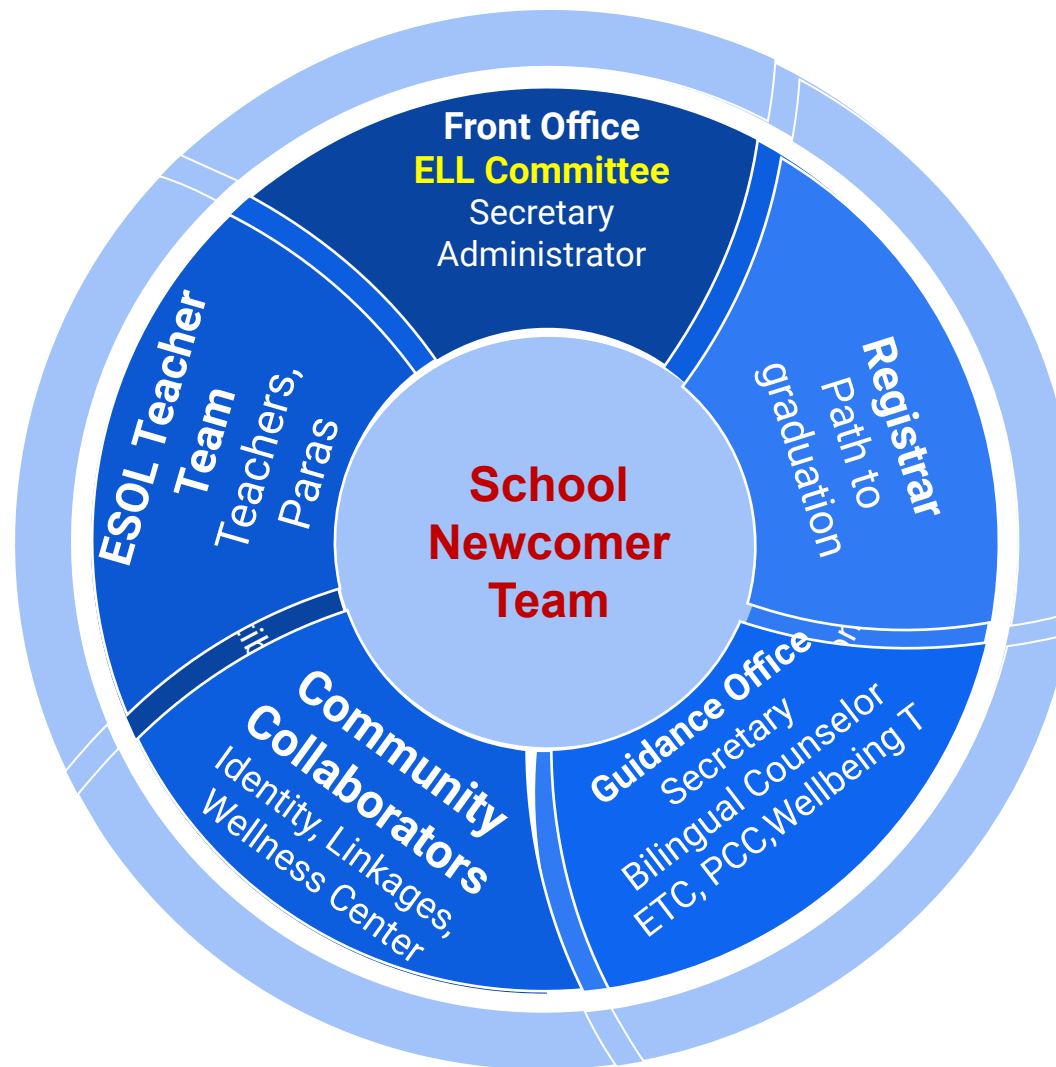


School-based Newcomer Team

ELL
Committee

Admin: Chair ELL Committee

- Collaborate with all stakeholders
- Meet weekly
- Monitor attendance
- Progress toward attaining English Language Proficiency
- Referrals - intervene with RJ early
- Collaborate with guidance on student and family supports
- Student scheduling



Plan for New English Learners at Elementary Multilingual Programs

Curriculum

- Provide scaffolds to support the academic needs of students
- Build foundational literacy and math skills to accelerate students access to grade-level standards

Professional Development

- Support 135 elementary schools receiving students with limited formal education (SLIFE).
- Provide ongoing PD and training throughout the year

Instruction

- Hire six SLIFE coaches to travel and provide instructional support to elementary schools
- Hire additional teachers to support new students

Collaboration

- Support the social emotional learning needs of students
- Working with the counseling and parent outreach to support parents and students
- Working with international office team to support testing and placement of students

Plan to Support New English Learners in the Secondary ELD Programs

Curriculum

- Curriculum resources are aligned to grade level standard with scaffolds and supports
- Literacy and math interventions to accelerate student learning

Professional Development (PD)

- PD for teachers and leaders to address academic needs of students
- PD to support collaboration and co-teaching to support content and language instruction

Instruction

- Scheduling guidelines for secondary schools
- Monitoring student data to provide targeted instruction
- Additional instructional FTE staffing will be needed for new students

Collaboration

- Support the social emotional learning needs of students
- Work with the counseling and parent outreach to support parents and students
- Work with international office team to support testing and placement of students

New and Enhanced Components at MCPS

Newcomer Orientation

Provide orientation and additional supports for Newcomers at school sites in collaboration with MCPS, MC and community partners

Wraparound Services

Provide opportunities to embed integrated supports throughout the school day (e.g. community services and counseling)

Targeted Support Team

Provide ESOL Transition Counselors to support 2 METs sites per FTE

Collaborate with a Mobile Resource Team

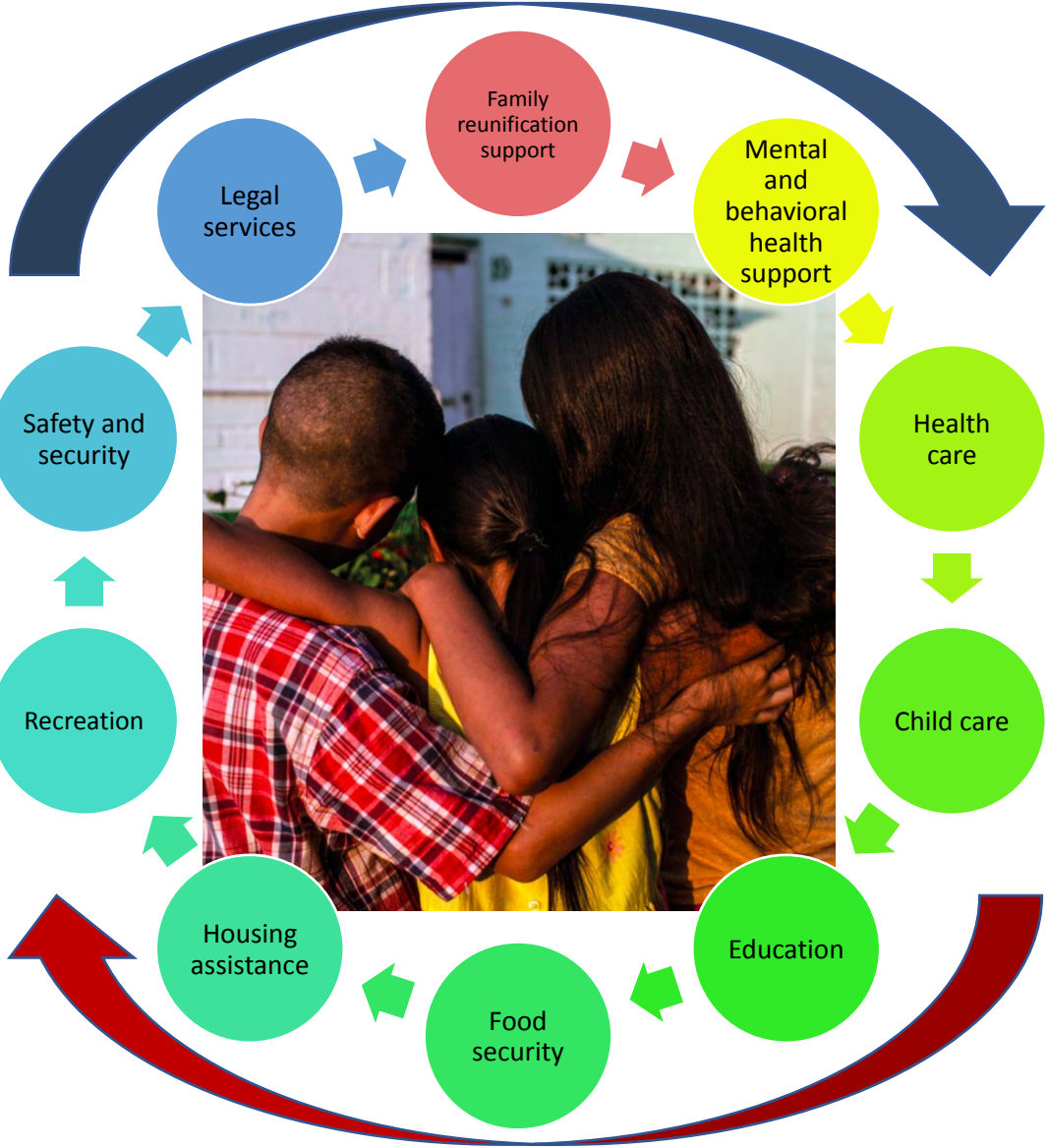
Therapeutic Recreation

Expand contracts with PYD and community partners to provide programs that embed the arts, music, athletics, peer-to-peer engagement, and recreation (schools with high need and low/no program options)

Requested Funding to Support Efforts



Transition Counselor for Newcomer (MCPS)
 22 METS sites and other impacted schools
 6 SLIFE Coaches for 136 elementary schools
 Capacity building
 Professional development
 ESOL Transition Counselors
 Pupil Personnel Workers
 Parent Community Coordinators
 Communications
 Data monitoring and evaluation



Newcomer Coordinator (DHHS)
 Capacity building
 Professional development
 Case Managers
 Navigators
 Mobile Resource Team
 Information line
 Communications
 Data monitoring and evaluation

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- HHS/Office of Refugee Resettlement: [Unaccompanied Children Released to Sponsors by County](#)
- Migration Policy Institute: [Unaccompanied Children Released to Sponsors by State and County, FY 2014-Present](#)
- Migration Policy Institute (June 2021): [Strengthening Services for Unaccompanied Children in U.S. Communities](#)
- UNICEF (February 2021): [Building Bridges for Every Child: Reception, Care and Services to Support Unaccompanied Children in the United States](#)
- KIND (July 2021): [How to support unaccompanied immigrant children and youth students in U.S. schools](#)