

**SUPPORT FOR NEWCOMER AND REFUGEE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

<p>WHEREAS,</p>	<p>The state of Utah values the contributions of multilingual and multicultural families to Utah's schools, and the diversity of Utah's students is continually increasing with 34,394 English Language Learners (ELL) in 2014 to 55,546 ELL enrolled in 2022, which is approximately 5% to 8% of the total student population, with some Salt Lake City schools having large refugee populations reporting over 30 languages spoken, and the depth of Utah's diversity extending to over 120 languages spoken in the state with these multilingual contributions invaluable enabling our military, churches, and businesses to communicate with the world;<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> and</p>
<p>WHEREAS,</p>	<p>Refugees, defined as people coming into Utah due to “persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion”, must rebuild their lives, and will require basic needs, such as, but not limited to, shelter, food, water, and medical attention;<sup>5,6,7</sup> and</p>
<p>WHEREAS,</p>	<p>The value of family involvement with schools benefits both parents and students; and better school–community relationships lead to greater gains in academic achievement, enhanced emotional development and behavior; and research indicates that the most common barriers for refugee families include: lack of confidence interacting in a culture different than their own, lack of English language skills, and insufficient information on home-school collaboration and/or partnerships; and if resources and information are not disseminated in a language that is understood then underserved and underrepresented communities receive little to no communication;<sup>8,9,10</sup> and</p>
<p>WHEREAS,</p>	<p>Adapting to new schools in a new country and culture poses unique academic challenges for refugee students as evidenced by ELL having the lowest graduation rates of any groups in Utah; despite these challenges national research demonstrates that refugee students are capable of academic and professional achievements equivalent to their peers, despite the barriers they face in doing so, especially noting that refugees that enter the U.S. before age 14 graduate high school and enter college at the same rate as natives;<sup>11,12</sup> and</p>
<p>WHEREAS,</p>	<p>After displacement refugees may integrate into an urban area, or live in camps for years or even decades before a durable solution is found for them; and may require alternate means of substantiating age, identity, guardianship, and prior educational experience during the school enrollment</p>

	<p>process, as traditional documentation may vary by country of origin or have been lost in crisis;<sup>13, 14, 15</sup> now, therefore, be it</p>
<u>Resolved.</u>	<p>That Utah PTA and its constituent associations call on state, district and local leaders to uphold the value of diversity and multiculturalism as an asset to our state, our communities and our classrooms by seeking out ways to welcome and support refugee students and families to integrate as part of our school community; and be it further</p>
<u>Resolved</u>	<p>That Utah PTA and its constituent associations support PTA sponsored multicultural events with the intention to increase understanding and acceptance of new cultures in order to promote safe and welcoming environments for newcomers and refugees; and be it further</p>
<u>Resolved.</u>	<p>That Utah PTA and its constituent associations encourage additional state funding for increased wraparound services that provide fundamental needs to refugees; and be it further</p>
<u>Resolved.</u>	<p>That Utah PTA and its constituent associations support efforts to provide interpretation and translation services to refugees and encourage individual teachers and staff be made aware of the availability and instructed on the use of services to increase family understanding and engagement in order to meet the unique needs of every family and child, leading to better gains in academics and student behavior; and be it further</p>
<u>Resolved.</u>	<p>That Utah PTA and its constituent associations support specific, targeted services at the Local Education Agency (LEA) and /or school levels designed to provide refugee students the opportunity to learn English sufficiently well to comprehend classroom instruction, catch up with their peers in all subject matters, and have access to academic support outside school hours as needed; and be it further</p>
<u>Resolved.</u>	<p>That Utah PTA and its constituent associations support additional flexibility for refugee students throughout the enrollment and placement process, including, but not limited to, flexibility regarding age, guardianship, and identity documentation, to ensure schools have accurate information; additional time for obtaining final vaccinations if compliance is likely, as refugees learn to navigate Utah's healthcare system; and additional flexibility in the acceptance and translation of prior educational experience into Utah credits, ensuring each student is placed in the appropriate grades and classes.</p>

## Documentation:

1. H.C.R. 22 Concurrent Resolution Celebrating the Contributions of Multilingual and Multicultural Families to Utah Schools, 2021 General Session, State of Utah, Chief Sponsor: Dan N. Johnson, Senate Sponsor: Daniel W. Thatcher, lines 63, 122-23  
<https://le.utah.gov/~2021/bills/static/HCR022.html>
2. Utah State Board of Education, Superintendent Annual Report, Average Daily Membership by District and State Totals School  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/superintendentannualreport?mid=1045&aid=1>
3. Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. (2021, March). Refugees in Utah. Fact Sheet. Salt Lake City, Utah, United States of America: University of Utah. 2 <https://gardner.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/Refugees-FS-Mar2021.pdf?x71849>
4. Peña, N., Hor, J., Benally-Sagg, R., Loayza, C., & Kum, E. (2020). Local Needs Among Utah's Multicultural Communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs. 16 <https://multicultural.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/MCA-COVID-19-Multicultural-Needs-Report.pdf>
5. Title 8-Aliens And Nationality Chapter 12-Immigration And Nationality Subchapter I-General Provisions, 42 <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title8-section1101&num=0&edition=prelim>
6. Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. (2021, March). Refugees in Utah. Fact Sheet. Salt Lake City, Utah, United States of America: University of Utah. 1 <https://gardner.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/Refugees-FS-Mar2021.pdf?x71849>
7. Mercy Corps. (2015, Jun 15). What do refugees need after leaving everything behind. Retrieved from Mercy Corps: <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/what-refugees-need-after-leaving>
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<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1124003.pdf>
9. Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium. (2016). Engaging Families of English Learners. Bethesda, MD , United States of America. 1 <https://maec.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Engaging-Families-of-English-Learners.pdf>
10. Peña, N., Hor, J., Benally-Sagg, R., Loayza, C., & Kum, E. (2020). Local Needs Among Utah's Multicultural Communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs. 16 <https://multicultural.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/MCA-COVID-19-Multicultural-Needs-Report.pdf>
11. Utah State Board of Education. (2019). Fingertip Facts. 7  
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/file/89d76231-2165-46e5-b842-4e925c04c700>
12. Evans, William N. and Daniel Fitzgerald. (2017, June). The Economic and Social Outcomes of Refugees in the United States: Evidence from the ACS. 1. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w23498>
13. Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. (2021, March). Refugees in Utah. Fact Sheet. Salt Lake City, Utah, United States of America: University of Utah. 1
14. Watts, D.-J., Friedman, J. F., Vivier, P. M., Tompkins, C. E., & Alario, A. J. (2011, Oct). Immunization Status of Refugee Children after Resettlement. *Medicine & Health/Rhode Island*, 290. <http://www.rimed.org/medhealthri/2011-10/2011-10->

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