

Re-Imagining MIGRATION

Creating A Shared Vision of Welcome and Belonging

Purpose of This Document

This document serves as a roadmap for school communities to collaboratively define and enhance their practices of welcome and belonging for newcomers. It outlines a structured approach to understanding the current state, envisioning goals, and implementing actionable strategies that foster an inclusive environment. Educators, staff, and community members can utilize this document to engage in meaningful discussions, assess their current practices, and track progress over time, ensuring that every new student and family feels valued and integrated into the school community.

Understanding Where We Are (Pre-Work)

Community Check

- What does welcome currently look like in our school?
- Where do we see successful integration of newcomers?
- What strengths can we build upon?
- What barriers might newcomers face?

Ready to Welcome

- How prepared are we to receive new students and families?
- What resources and supports do we have in place?
- Where might we need to grow?

Pre-Audit with the Belonging Barometer

- Conduct a pre-audit using the Belonging Barometer to assess our current state of belonging within the school community. This tool will help us identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth.
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Our Journey

Listen and Learn (Month 1) Together, we'll explore:

- What welcome means to different members of our community
- Key moments in the newcomer experience
- Current practices that support or hinder belonging
- Resources and strengths we can build upon

Create Our Vision Together (Month 2) Collaborate to define:

- What we see when everyone feels welcome
- What we hear in our hallways and classrooms
- How it feels when new families become part of our community
- What newcomers need to feel to have a secure sense of belonging

Put Our Vision into Action (Months 3-4) Together, we'll explore and define specific actions in these key areas:

- **Daily Welcome Practices**
 - What are our everyday opportunities to show welcome?
 - Example: Morning greeting routines
 - Example: Classroom community circles
- **Integration Support**
 - How do we guide and support newcomers through their first days and weeks?
 - What does Week 1 look like?
 - What about Month 1?
- **Community Connections**
 - What brings new and current families together naturally?
 - Example: Family buddy system
 - Example: Community celebrations

- **Discussion Question:** How can we bring new and current families together in meaningful ways?
- **Welcoming Spaces**
 - How do our physical spaces show welcome?
 - Key welcome points: Main entrance, school office, bus stop, parking lot, driveway,
 - Gathering spaces: cafeteria, library, gym, auditorium, playground.
 - Discussion Questions:
 - What visual elements can we use to communicate a welcoming environment?
 - How can we ensure physical comfort in our spaces?
 - What cultural considerations should we keep in mind to make everyone feel included?
 - What can help guide people through our space?
 - How can we make navigation intuitive for everyone?
 - What information resources would be most helpful for new students and their families?
 - How can staff best assist newcomers at entry points?
- **Staff Roles**
 - How does each staff member contribute to welcome?
 - Who does what?
 - How do we work together?
- **Measuring Impact**
 - How will we know our practices are working?
 - What should we look for?
 - How do we gather feedback?

For each of the key areas we explore—Daily Welcome Practices, Integration Support, Community Connections, Welcoming Spaces, Staff Roles, and Measuring Impact—we'll consider:

1. What's already working well?
2. What needs strengthening?
3. What new ideas should we try?
4. What resources do we need?
5. Who needs to be involved?

Keep the Vision Growing (Ongoing)

- Regular check-ins with newcomers and their families
- Adjust practices based on what we learn
- Share success stories
- Strengthen our welcoming practices

Success Looks Like

How do our plans match our initial vision:

- What we see when everyone feels welcome
- What we hear in our hallways and classrooms
- How it feels when new families become part of our community
- What newcomers need to feel to have a secure sense of belonging

Measuring Success

- At the end of our journey, we will reflect on our progress and success using the Belonging Barometer to evaluate changes in the sense of belonging among newcomers and the entire community. This will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of our practices and guide future improvements.

The power of this work lies in creating a foundation of welcome that makes successful integration possible. When we share a vision of what welcome and belonging mean, we're better equipped to support newcomers as they join and enrich our school community.