



**Summary of  
Settlement Agreement Between  
the United States and  
Providence Public Schools**



## Overview

The United States and Providence Public Schools entered into a Settlement Agreement on November 13, 2024, requiring the District to improve its services and programs for new immigrant students who have had limited or interrupted education. These students are known as “Newcomers” in the District.

The United States Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Rhode Island investigated the District’s academic programs for Newcomers under a law called the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA). The District cooperated fully and committed to improving its services for Newcomers. This document summarizes the Agreement. You can read the entire Agreement on the Department of Justice’s [website](#).

***This summary is intended to increase awareness of the Agreement and the steps the District is required to take to better serve its Newcomers and their families. The summary is designed for readers who do not have a legal background.***



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## Identification & Placement

The District will accurately identify students as Newcomers and provide them with appropriate school program options. The District will:

- ① Check whether a student has had interrupted schooling by interviewing parents and students, reviewing records from previous schools, and testing literacy and math skills in the student's native language if a test is available in that language.
- ① Provide a student's program options within the first 20 days of the school year, or, if they register after the start of the school year, within 10 days of receiving their registration application.



## Identification & Placement (ctd.)

The District will make sure students make informed and voluntary decisions about their placement options. The District will offer to meet and share this information for each of the student's program options:

**Amount of ESL  
provided.**

**Core content  
courses offered,  
and amount  
provided.**

**Electives offered  
(including career  
and technical  
education).**

**Integration with  
students outside  
Newcomer  
Programs.**



## Integration

- The District will make sure Newcomers can take elective classes, and attend lunchtime, recess, extracurriculars, and other non-academic activities, with their peers who are not Newcomers.
- Newcomers will also have the same access to special programs like special education, Advanced Placement courses, and career and technical education as their peers who are not Newcomers.
- The District will determine when each Newcomer is ready to exit a Newcomer Program by considering appropriate information about the student.

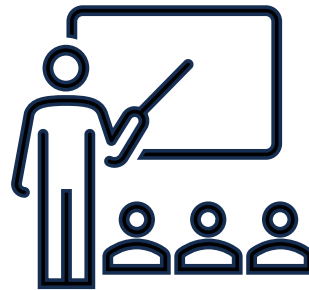




## English Language Instruction for Multilingual Learners

The District will provide all Newcomers with **at least 2 daily periods of English as a Second Language (“ESL”)** taught by a teacher who is certified by the state of Rhode Island to teach ESL.

- At least 1 period will be devoted entirely to ESL
- For the second period, the District can provide ESL in a student's regular English class/period.





## **Compensatory Services (Make-up ESL for Newcomers who were not offered required ESL)**

The District will offer make-up ESL to students who *enrolled* in the District's Newcomer Academy during the 2023-24 school year, and who were not offered a period of standalone ESL prior to May 1, 2024.

Each student is **entitled** to make-up ESL in the amount of the number of hours of ESL the student would have received if they had received a daily period of ESL in the Newcomer Academy;

The District will give students the **choice** of receiving this make-up ESL in the form of academic tutoring or in a classroom. setting;

The District will provide **notice** that this make-up ESL is available, explain why it is being offered, and offer to discuss the student's options.





## Staffing & Professional Development



- The District will make sure the Newcomer Programs have enough ESL-Certified Teachers to teach ESL.



- The District will make sure that core content teachers (such as teachers of math, science, English/Language Arts, and social studies) get training on how to help Multilingual Learners learn the material in their classes.



- The District will also make sure that teachers get trained on teaching strategies that are specific for Newcomers, including understanding Newcomers' diverse experiences, cultures, values, beliefs, and worldviews.



## Communications

The District will provide interpretation and translation to parents/guardians who are not fluent in English so that they know about their student's educational opportunities. This includes:



Collecting information about the language parents/guardians *prefer to use to receive* communication of important information;



Provide parents/guardians with **qualified interpreters and translators** and *easily accessible instructions* on how they may request one;



**Distributing translated documents** containing *essential information*, such as report cards, and documents related to special education and discipline, in the major languages used by Newcomers.



## **Newcomers with Disabilities**

- The requirements under this Agreement will apply equally to Newcomers with a disability.
- To ensure that Newcomers have equal access to special services, the District will provide:

**All Newcomer students with a disability access to Special Education and ESL.**

**Adequate training to special education teachers on working with Newcomers with Disabilities.**

**Access to resources and services that support Newcomer's social, emotional, and mental health needs.**



## Program Monitoring & Evaluation

The District will make sure that schools are properly serving Newcomers by monitoring their progress in learning English. This means the District will:

- ✓ **Review** data for *each* Newcomer *every quarter* to verify they are receiving the appropriate services;
- ✓ **Audit** *all* Newcomer Programs within 60 days of the start of each semester for the duration of this Agreement;
- ✓ **Evaluate** end of year progress of *each* Newcomer Program and *take action to fix any problems.*

**This Agreement will remain in effect through the end of the 2026-2027 school year.**



## Contact Information

If you have concerns about discrimination at Providence Public School District and believe the District did not address your concerns, please contact the **U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Rhode Island**, or the **Educational Opportunities Section in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice**.

✉ Email: [usari.civilrightscomplaint@usdoj.gov](mailto:usari.civilrightscomplaint@usdoj.gov)

☎ Phone: (202) 514-4092 or 1-877-292-3804

You may also submit a complaint through the **Civil Rights Division Reporting Portal**.