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Supported Transitions:
Effective Educational Approaches for Older Refugee Youth with Interrupted Schooling

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List of Acronyms

CEDA	Community Education Development Association
CDEM	Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba
CLB	Canadian Language Benchmarks
CYRRC	Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition
DSFM	Division scolaire franco-manitobaine
EAL	English as an Additional Language
INS	Intensive Newcomer Support
IPW	Immigration Partnership Winnipeg
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
IRCOM	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba
LAL	Language, Academic, and Literacy
LEAD	Literacy, English, and Academic Development
LRSD	Louis Riel School Division
NEC	Newcomer Education Coalition
N.E.E.D.S.	Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services
NYESS	Newcomer Youth Educational Support Services
REDI	Refugee Employment Development Initiative
RETSD	River East Transcona School Division
SERC	Sexuality Education Resource Centre
SIFE	Students with Interrupted Formal Education
WSD	Winnipeg School Division

Executive Summary

Older refugee youth with interrupted schooling face unique challenges due to multiple, interconnected barriers beyond learning a new language. Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) have had limited access to quality education and tend to enter the Canadian education system with language, academic, and literacy (LAL) learning needs. In Manitoba, this group of youth represents a small but often high-needs portion of refugee students.

The Newcomer Education Coalition (NEC) is an alliance of stakeholders from settlement and education backgrounds that works collaboratively with other partners to facilitate more inclusive schools for immigrant and refugee youth. Grounded in the community knowledge of the NEC, this research explores some approaches to supporting older refugee youth with interrupted schooling and examines the use of these approaches in a Winnipeg context. The research focuses on high-school-age youth, 15-21, in Winnipeg-area school divisions with high concentrations of students with interrupted schooling. Through sharing community voices and using local, national, and international examples, this research provides constructive, community-informed programming and policy ideas that can address the needs of this group of youth.

Methodology

Interviews with administrators were conducted to give an overall understanding of available programming, while focus groups with youth, parents and community leaders, service providers, and teachers provided diverse perspectives on the features of effective programming. A reading of literature and program precedents gave broader insight into potential responses to meet the needs of youth.

Findings

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR YOUTH IN WINNIPEG

Many participants, notably youth themselves, underlined the resilience, experiences, and strengths of SIFE. Participants also described significant challenges—particularly poverty and language barriers—which can put pressure on youth to earn an income and interpret for their families. Communication with schools was a challenge, with many youths and families experiencing miscommunication about age eligibility for high school or credit requirements for post-secondary education. Multiple youths and parents expressed a sense of disillusionment with the education system and described how a lack of communication and support had serious repercussions for youth.

TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMMING IN WINNIPEG

As recognized by participants, older refugee youth have individual strengths, needs, responsibilities, and preferences. Many of the involved administrators, educators, and service providers underlined the importance of supported transitions with programming that allows students to be challenged and progress through a continuum of options. Transitional programming supports youth seeking further education and employment opportunities.

In Winnipeg, most school divisions congregate students in magnet high schools to provide initial sheltered LAL classes and gradually transition students into EAL and mainstream classes. Separate sites or separate school programs for initial LAL programming are not in use in the public system. Local and international examples illustrate how off-site programs can provide intensive initial supports. For

in-school programs, some youths described a sense of stagnation in EAL classes, while others expressed that the transition into regular classes was difficult and they often felt lost. The literature, and many educators, stressed that targeted pre-exposure to language is vital for youth to progress through academic and skill development. For example, there has been some use of tutorial classes and language-supported vocational programs. EAL-designated E-credits for adapted courses were described by many educators as a transitional tool. However, there was a lack of clarity among families, teachers, and administrators about the appropriate use of these credits, especially for graduation. E-credits are not recognized by post-secondary institutions, so youth cannot use them to meet entry requirements.

Some youths may not be comfortable in high school or general adult programming. Multiple administrators noted that in Winnipeg there is a lack of adult programs that combine language and content development, and few of such programs specifically for young adults. The BridgES Program was highlighted as a local example that uses a co-teaching approach for targeted language and content development to transition young adults to post-secondary education and employment options.

TARGETED EXTENDED LEARNING AND EXTENSIVE SUPPORTS FOR TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMMING

Teachers, service providers, and families emphasized the need for support for youth, and their families, in navigating education and employment pathways. Few participants mentioned the key role of guidance counsellors in this support, but this is stressed in the literature. Targeted extended learning and extra help from both educators and community members were also emphasized by youth, service providers, and educators as ways to help youth progress through language and content acquisition. Psychosocial and interpretation support for youth, and their families, are key examples of the extensive supports that many participants saw as fundamental to effective resettlement and education.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMMING

Participants involved in supporting youth emphasized the need for collaboration among a range of actors, particularly including mainstream teachers, refugee parents, and community organizations. Most youths highlighted relationships with supportive teachers as a positive part of their school experiences. Administrators and teachers explained that communication and training with mainstream teachers is vital to supporting transitions within schools. Service providers and educators also emphasized the value of community supports and the need to open schools up to community organizations. Administrators and teachers reiterated that collaboration across different levels and departments of government is necessary not only to fund transitional programming but also to address underlying issues related to poverty.

Recommendations

Based on this study, the following recommendations were developed to assist school divisions and other partners in adapting and developing programming and supports:

A. DEVELOP TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

1. Provide and promote a flexible range of transitional programming options for youth.

2. Offer vocational programs with targeted language support.

3. Ensure that young adult SIFE (18-25) in each division have access to free young adult-specific programming options to equip them with the requirements for post-secondary education.

B. FACILITATE TARGETED EXTENDED LEARNING AND EXTENSIVE SUPPORTS

1. Ensure consistent communication and strong support for transition and pathway planning, particularly in terms of post-secondary credit requirements.

2. Collaborate to offer extended learning opportunities with targeted language support.

3. Invest in extra help, wraparound supports, and cultural-linguistic supports, but also develop community-based supports such as volunteers and mentors for SIFE.

C. ENHANCE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

1. Ensure all schools, particularly LAL magnet schools, have a whole-school approach in place for all staff to support SIFE.

2. Adopt strategies and policies for a whole-community approach to supporting SIFE, prioritizing communication and collaboration with families and communities.

3. Seek diversified funding sources for extended learning and supports, direct financial supports, and needs-based pilot projects.

The research concludes that educational programming and supports which help youth transition through a continuum of options are necessary. In Winnipeg, educational approaches to SIFE tend to focus within mainstream high schools for initial and ongoing programming. In this context, there are many positive practices being implemented by dedicated educators.

At the same time, collaboration and communication can be enhanced to strengthen and expand available programming and supports both within and beyond high schools. Partnerships at multiple levels are important not only to provide vital funding from various government departments but also to identify and coordinate complementary forms of school and community support. Communication and support is also necessary for youth and their families to be aware of their options and how to navigate pathways to further education and employment. Collaboration is essential to leverage government funding, community capacity, and the strength of youth themselves so that youth can thrive.

Introduction

Older refugee youths with interrupted schooling face unique challenges due to multiple, interconnected barriers beyond learning a new language. Interrupted schooling refers to "students who had limited access to education as well as students who may have had more continuous, but inadequate quality of schooling, and as a result, may lack native language literacy" (Drake, 2017, p. 338). Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) tend to enter the system with language, academic, and literacy (LAL) needs beyond learning English as an additional language (EAL). Multiple years of interrupted schooling mean youth may not be literate in their first language and have often not developed academic content knowledge or critical thinking skills required by the education system (Kanu, 2008). At the same time, many youths are dealing with trauma from past experiences as well as ongoing challenges associated with resettlement—notably cultural adjustment and poverty (Kanu, 2008; Stewart, 2012; Ennab, 2017).

Interrupted schooling will have different implications for different students that must be individually assessed. Some studies indicate "students from War-Zones areas... are participating successfully in the Canadian educational system" (Stermac et al., 2010, p. 105). Older refugee youth with interrupted schooling arrive with diverse experiences, strengths, skills, and needs, and it is important to recognize their capacity and resilience (Stewart, 2011).

Nonetheless, older youth with significantly interrupted schooling face interconnected systemic barriers that put them at risk of being marginalized (Stewart, 2012). "These experiences suggest that this group of students may experience greater difficulties adjusting to and integrating into a new society and may be slower in learning academic concepts, skills, and a new language" (Kanu, 2008, p. 917). Without appropriate support, this group is at higher risk of leaving school or being guided towards lower levels of education or work (Schroeter and James, 2015; Dykshoorn, 2009).

Effectively dealing with the challenges presented by interrupted schooling for older youth therefore necessitates accounting for such systemic factors, designing systems-level approaches to combat these challenges, and centring the agency and resilience of refugee youth and their families. In Canada, there is limited comprehensive research on the range of educational approaches and programming options for this specific group. Furthermore, in a broader North American context, there is a lack of literature on this topic that includes the voices of the community, particularly students and their teachers (Auslander, 2019). "The inclusion of these perspectives is critical to the comprehensive school and classroom design necessary to integrate this population of students in meaningful ways" (Auslander, 2019, p. 16).

In Manitoba, newcomer youth, which includes refugees and other categories of immigrants, represent an increasing proportion of students (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2017). Older refugee youth with interrupted schooling represent a small but often high-needs portion of refugee students. Manitoba Education tracks interrupted schooling in terms of years below grade level, with youth who are assessed as being three years (or more) below grade level, or with no previous school experience, being considered as having significantly interrupted schooling (D. Turner, personal communication, September 21, 2019). The assessment and reporting system for interrupted schooling is not consistent across the province, so data is more an indication of trends. In terms of new enrolment in Manitoba,

from 2016 to 2018 an average of 105 high-school-age students each year who enrolled in September were reported as having significantly interrupted schooling (D. Turner, personal communication, 2019). Of this group, an average of 33 students per year entered with no previous formal education.

In the spring of 2018, the Newcomer Education Coalition (NEC) and its community partners convened a forum in Winnipeg on newcomer youths with interrupted schooling.[1] A key recommendation emerging from the forum was to develop research on successful approaches for supporting this group of youths. This research aims to improve understanding of the features of effective educational approaches and explore a range of programming options in Winnipeg.

The report begins with a summary of the research methodology. Then, to ground an exploration of effective educational approaches in the experiences of Winnipeg youth, the report highlights key factors in their experiences, as described by participants.

Next, the report outlines a range of transitional programming available for SIFE in Winnipeg. Supplementary information on transitional programming formats, using national and international examples, is provided.

Building on this, the report presents features of effective approaches highlighted by participants and relates these to the literature on each topic. Targeted extended learning and extensive supports are vital to support youth with transitions. Collaborative partnerships within the school and the broader community are also recommended.

Recommendations are presented based on findings from local research as well as the literature and precedents. Finally, the report concludes with an argument that educational programming and supports that help youth transition through a continuum of options are necessary. A community-based approach is built into the research methodology and is discussed in the next section.

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1 NEC members include representatives from Immigration Partnership Winnipeg and the Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations; youth-serving organizations such as N.E.E.D.S. Inc. and IRCOM; the Manitoba Teachers' Society; current and former teachers, principals, and administrators; and a range of other community members. The 2018 forum brought together a range of stakeholders, including representatives from schools, school divisions, government departments, and community-based organizations across Manitoba. The intent was to discuss issues faced by older refugee youth with interrupted schooling and to explore program and policy ideas to support this group of youths within and beyond the K-12 system (Newcomer Education Coalition, Forthcoming).

Methodology

Research Approach

Research on effective approaches to supporting high-school-age SIFE is strengthened by including the perspectives of those with lived experience (Auslander, 2019). This research was conducted in collaboration with the Newcomer Education Coalition and follows community-based research approaches. Following the NEC forum recommendations for research on this topic, Ray Silvius at the University of Winnipeg and Noëlle DePape at Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW) obtained a grant from the Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC) and hired a researcher with a background in direct and indirect newcomer support services, particularly for youth. The researcher was based at IPW. Working with the staff team, and IPW's Youth Advisory Council for Newcomer Services, was key to grounding this work in the experiences of the newcomer community.

A research advisory group with members from education and settlement backgrounds was involved from the early stages of research design and was critical in the process of engaging community members and educators. A list of members of the research advisory team can be found in the opening acknowledgements.

Research Procedures

Initial background research and community consultation provided an understanding of the barriers associated with interrupted schooling. The research was subsequently guided by the following questions:

1. What are the features of effective approaches to education for high-school-age refugee youth with interrupted schooling?

2. What effective approaches are in use in Winnipeg schools to support high-school-age refugee youth with interrupted schooling?

3. How can effective approaches be facilitated in Winnipeg?

Data Collection

Data was collected in spring 2019. Research methods included focus groups with youth, parents and community leaders, youth service-providing organizations, and EAL teachers, as well as semi-structured interviews with school division administrators.

To understand the range of approaches and experiences in Winnipeg, data collection was both "top-down," from upper-level administrators who have considerable decision-making power and systems-level perspectives, and "bottom-up," from the lived experiences of those affected by interrupted schooling and from those who implement strategies on the front lines. Interviews with administrators were conducted to provide an overall understanding of available programming, while focus groups provided diverse perspectives on the features of effective programming. Recruitment for focus groups was done through community partners and was targeted to include representation from across the city and school divisions.

FOCUS GROUP WITH YOUTH

Youth were recruited through youth-serving agencies and leaders of the Newcomer Youth Advisory Council. A focus group with nine youths was held—five women and four men ranging in age from 18 to 21. Recruitment aimed to include communities from different areas of the city and various

countries of origin, although there was significantly higher representation from Syria, with six students from Syria, one from Iraq, one from Kenya, and one of Burundian origin but born in a refugee camp. Only Arabic-speaking students requested interpretation and this was provided.

Participants were selected based on the number of years they had spent out of school. Three students indicated they had an unknown period of interrupted schooling (but they were referred by agencies for having significantly interrupted schooling), two had significantly more than three years of interrupted schooling, three had two years of interrupted schooling, and one had only one year of interrupted schooling. The input of youths with shorter periods of interrupted schooling was accounted for in the analysis of data. Efforts were also made to include youth who had had varying experiences with the education system. The group included youths who were still currently in school, had stopped school and were currently employed, had stopped and returned to a different school, and had graduated and gone on to university.

Youths were asked questions about positives and negatives of their school experience, experiences stopping school, pressures such as work, different gender-based experiences, and their plans for the future.

FOCUS GROUP WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

The community focus group included four parents and six community leaders. Parents had children who had arrived as refugees within the last five years, were between 15 and 25 years old, and had significantly interrupted schooling. Of the community leaders, two expressed that they had experienced interrupted schooling themselves, one was also the parent of older youth with interrupted schooling, and all had worked closely with families and youths in their communities who had experienced interrupted schooling. Community leaders supported parents with interpretation. Recruitment aimed to include communities from different areas of the city and various countries of origin including the Congo, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, and South Sudan.

Parents were asked about positive and negative school experiences, school collaboration with parents and ethno-cultural communities, their children's plans for the future, and ideas on how youth can be best supported.

FOCUS GROUP WITH YOUTH SERVICE-PROVIDING ORGANIZATIONS

Eight representatives from youth-serving organizations across the city participated in a focus group. Questions focused on successful approaches and features for supporting older youth with interrupted schooling, and where this was happening in Winnipeg. They were also asked how schools and service providers can better collaborate and how service providers can be better supported in their roles.

FOCUS GROUP WITH EAL TEACHERS

Six EAL teachers who were flagged by advisory group members as having a high level of involvement in professional development participated in a focus group. One EAL coordinator with close involvement in a specific EAL program also participated. Questions focused on successful approaches and features as well as smooth transitions and collaboration with parents. Teachers were also asked how they can be better supported in their roles.

INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with high-level administrators from all seven of the Winnipeg-area school divisions: Winnipeg School Division (WSD), Seven Oaks, Pembina Trails, St. James-Assiniboia, Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), River East Transcona School Division (RETSD), and la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM). Interviewees were identified in conversation with the advisory group and the school divisions themselves as having the portfolio most related to overall newcomer programming. One administrator was also joined by a divisional EAL consultant. Questions focused on the divisions' approaches to supports for older refugee youth with interrupted schooling; features of successful practices, models, and approaches in the division; and collaboration with families and community organizations.

Limitations

Data collection was limited to a short period of time between grant approval and the end of the school year. This, and the scale of the project, meant that a relatively small number of community voices were included. Notably, areas with lower concentrations of youths with interrupted schooling (particularly rural areas) and junior-high-age youths were outside of the project scope. These exceptions present areas for further research.

Data Analysis

Focus groups and interviews were audio-recorded by the researcher and sent for transcription. Transcripts were analyzed by the researcher and a coding software was used to organize codes and quotes. Preliminary coding was developed based on interview guides and then served as a framework for grounded coding. The findings of the study emerge from the frequency and interconnections of codes as well as the researcher's overall observations. The results were shared with the research advisory group in fall 2019.

Ethics

The project received approval from the University of Winnipeg Research Ethics Board and research done in collaboration with school divisions was in accordance with their specific research policies.

Experiences of Older Refugee Youth with Interrupted Schooling in Winnipeg

Participants in focus groups and interviews spoke of a range of strengths and challenges experienced by older refugee youth with interrupted schooling. It follows that effective approaches, features, and programming must recognize and respond to these factors. Overall, there was a major emphasis on the strengths and resilience of this group of youth. At the same time, youth face challenges associated with resettlement while having limited time to complete their education and fulfill family responsibilities. In terms of implications, there was a strong sense of disappointment about limited opportunities available to youth.

Strengths

Refugee youth tend to be resilient and develop protective factors for coping with challenges (Stewart, 2011). Many youth participants underlined their will and persistence to learn despite their challenging circumstances. Similarly, adult participants reiterated the need to recognize the diverse skills, experiences, stories, and cultures of these young people.

Challenges

Refugee youth and their families tend to begin the resettlement process with intermediary challenges of communication and cultural adaptation (Stewart, 2011). Youth and parents expressed that language barriers are a key challenge. Parents and teachers also mentioned challenges with cultural differences, while youth described experiences of prejudice within the education system. Teachers and administrators described trauma as a key challenge for youth and parents. All focus groups and interviews touched on issues associated with poverty and unmet basic needs—particularly housing instability and unaffordable transit—that limited student opportunities.

Participants in focus groups and interviews acknowledged limited time as a major pressure on older youths. This was associated both with policy limitations as well as youths' and families' expectations for their education. Most youths described discouraging experiences linked to age and eligibility, with many being turned away from multiple schools because they were over 18, despite the fact that they have the right to attend school until age 21.

Older refugee youths can experience the pressures of family responsibilities from their parents and siblings as well as their own spouse or children. The pressure on youth to work and contribute to the family income was particularly highlighted. Work pressure was emphasized by most young male participants, while some young women discussed childcare as a challenge. A few community leaders spoke about the pressure on youth to interpret for their family. One said its "very unfair for the children, for the parents... it creates lots of issues and you're putting a huge responsibility upon children's shoulder, and they're not capable to do so. And if they misinterpret it's going to be on the children" (Parent/Community Leader Focus Group). These issues can present challenges for the education system.

Implications

Multiple older youths and parents expressed a strong sense of disappointment and unmet expectations in their experience with the school system. One youth explained this disconnect between expectations and reality: "Things that we lost back home that we got here… we have these opportunities and have these educational systems that can help out, why are we not using it?" (Youth Focus Group).

They described experiences with lack of support, learning plateaus, and limited opportunities, particularly due to miscommunication about credit requirements and exclusion based on age. They associated this with leaving school, not pursuing further development, associated mental health issues, and involvement in crime and gangs. One parent described the experience of her son after learning that he had graduated without post-secondary recognized credits: "when he graduate, he get depression actually… now he has mental issues" (Parent/Community Leader Focus Group). Another community leader explained:

> last week I had two boys in my community arrested at night because they were involved in a gang, both of them graduated from high school, they went to university and they found they cannot be anywhere and now they've become you know on the wrong side of society.
>
> Parent/Community Leader Focus Group

Effective educational approaches to support older refugee youth with interrupted schooling can recognize and respond to these realities through the design and features of a range of programming.

Transitional Programming in Winnipeg

There is a range of programming in use in Winnipeg schools to support older SIFE. Community participants emphasized the value of programming that allows for youth to transition smoothly through programming options, both within and beyond high school, with supports to navigate these pathways.

In terms of initial programming, separate LAL classes within a school are the most common format in Winnipeg. For subsequent transitions within high school, the importance of targeted language development related to academic content knowledge and employment skill development was highlighted by administrators and teachers. Youth and other participants underlined the need for extra support for mainstream and summer classes which allow youth to progress through curriculum content.

For transitions to further education or employment, targeted bridging programs and vocational programs were highlighted. The importance of adult education options for young adults was also noted by many administrators. Many youth and parents focused on post-secondary education as a goal, but there was also community interest in preparing youth for employment.

A brief explanation of programming formats and local policies provides context and is followed by a description of various approaches to programming available in Winnipeg.

Transitional Programming Formats

The designs of programs to support older refugee youth with interrupted schooling vary in terms of location and delivery, language of instruction, transition planning, and other factors like funding sources (Short and Boyson, 2012; Government of Ontario, 2008).

Programs can be located within a school, at a separate site, or at a dedicated newcomer-specific high school. Appropriate programming may be possible in a student's local school, or they may attend a magnet school where students with LAL needs are congregated from across a wider area. Sheltered instruction is an approach to academic language, literacy, and content development where students often begin in separate classes and gradually integrate into mainstream programming. Sheltered classes in magnet schools are a common initial programming model in Canada. Separate-site or whole-school programs are less common, but they can provide youth with intensive initial supports.

In terms of language of instruction, most programs in Canada use immersion approaches where instruction is initiated in the target language. There are various forms of bilingual programming where instruction is initiated in a student's first language to start developing literacy, academic, and, eventually, additional language skills. This model is less common since SIFE often have limited time to progress through language and content acquisition.

Planning for transitions into mainstream programming, further education, or employment can be built into various program designs. Bridging programs and vocational programs are targeted to transition youth toward these goals. Support in navigating education and employment options is referred to as pathway or transition planning.

Appendix A provides a more detailed explanation of transitional programming formats as well as case studies which may provide insight in a Winnipeg context.

Manitoba Policy Context

There are a number of key policies informing educational approaches and experiences for older students with interrupted schooling in Winnipeg. Within these policies, educational approaches and practices vary between different school divisions and across different schools. Such policies may be constraining for educators, youth, and families who are seeking solutions to the unique needs of refugee youth.

Some key policies are regarding inclusion, age eligibility, and the use of EAL E-credits. E-designated courses are adapted courses where curriculum outcomes are reworked to include goals from the EAL curriculum depending on a student's EAL stage (Manitoba Education and Training, 2011). E-designated courses are not recognized by post-secondary institutions and cannot fulfill entry requirements, notably for 40-level Math and English. Curriculum and funding are also important policy-related factors. A summary of relevant policies is available in Appendix B.

Flexibility for Programming Options

Effective newcomer programs are not one-size-fits-all, and they must flexibly respond to the literacy skills and educational backgrounds of their students, potentially changing program design features over time (Short and Boyson, 2012). Many administrators explained that the demographics and concentrations of refugees in their divisions continually change over time and are seldom predictable. Administrators often referenced this along with the need for data and needs-based decision-making and a collaborative team approach within their administration in order to adapt their methods as needed. Administrators also generally emphasized the individuality of schools and students, one noting "no one model will fit every division or every school… models aren't necessarily transportable" (Administrator Interview).

Building on this individuality, some administrators spoke of the need for a plurality of programming options for youth. For example, one administrator described the value of pilot programs in responding flexibly and creatively to student needs: "There's a need, we look at what we can bring in, we do a pilot" (Administrator Interview). A range of programming options is discussed below.

INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT

Intake and assessment, including cognitive assessment, is an important starting point for initial programming and planning. In Winnipeg, most intake and assessment for SIFE is school-based, with few centralized divisional systems. There is minimal use of first language assessment.

Many administrators highlighted initial registration as an opportunity for communication and collaboration. One administrator described the involvement of their settlement services team in the registration process, saying they work to "get the right people around the table for the registration" (Administrator Interview). Multiple administrators noted that registration is also an opportunity to establish a relationship with parents. DSFM has a "Trois tasses de thé" approach where parents are invited to come meet with school staff for three cups of tea, beginning with the registration.

Initial Programming

ORIENTATION PROGRAMS

The Introduction to Canadian Education Program at Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services (N.E.E.D.S.) provides an educational orientation program for refugee and newcomer youth, ages 6 to 21, which serves as initial programming for many youth. N.E.E.D.S. conducts intakes with students to assess their strengths and needs, and provides programming and supports before youth enter public school. N.E.E.D.S. supports transitions to public schools by providing information to schools and maintaining an ongoing relationship with youth via school liaisons.

SHELTERED LAL CLASSROOMS IN MAGNET SCHOOLS

Congregating LAL students in magnet high schools to provide sheltered classes is the main initial programming being used in areas with higher concentrations of refugee youth in Winnipeg. Sheltered LAL programming provides a home base for SIFE learners to gradually integrate into the wider school courses and community. LAL classes can be scheduled in a student's timetable along with other classes. One teacher expressed the value of this flexible scheduling, saying, "I think that's the beauty of the LAL programming… we can individualize and tailor it to their needs" (Teacher Focus Group). Many teachers underlined the value of the Manitoba LAL curriculum and LAL credits to guide and recognize student learning.

ITINERANT TEAMS IN LOCAL SCHOOLS

Seven Oaks does not offer sheltered LAL programming and instead has LAL students enrol in classes according to individualized plans, including EAL and mainstream classes. Students can then be provided with in-class resource supports and teachers can be supported by itinerant teams of specialists. In some divisions where LAL-specific programming is available in a magnet school, some students still opt to stay in their local school. One administrator explained some families prefer older youth go to school closer to the

BILINGUAL PROGRAMMING

Bilingual programming with older refugee students' first language as a language of instruction is not a common approach for older youth in Winnipeg, with immersion in English being the most common method. However, Francophone and French Immersion schools provide unique options for students with Francophone backgrounds as they may have access to supports and programming in an official language they are more familiar with.

Francophone SIFE may still have language, academic, and literacy needs and may speak a different dialect of French. As the main Francophone community high school in Winnipeg, Collège Louis Riel offers sheltered LAL programming in French. Other divisions with French Immersion schools do not focus on LAL in French.

Learning English is still a necessity whether Francophone students are enrolled in French - or English-speaking schools. Collège Louis Riel gradually introduces SIFE students to English classes. Meanwhile, Miles Macdonell Collegiate is a dual-track French Immersion school, so students can do English LAL programming and also take classes in French.

Some divisions offer bilingual programs or heritage language classes in additional languages, but these tend not to be in languages that are the first language of the current demographic of SIFE. Seven Oaks offers an after-school Arabic language class for one hour, three days a week, for kindergarten-to-grade-eight students, and has a similar program structure for after-school EAL classes.

family home, and closer to the school of their younger siblings, in order to provide support and childcare. Housing and transportation were highlighted by administrators as factors influencing educational options.

SEPARATE SITE PROGRAMS

Outside of the public system, one of the participants in the youth focus group was currently enrolled in a small independent school and described a positive experience. Freedom School is an independent Christian school located in downtown Winnipeg that focuses specifically on supporting SIFE learners. This program is not focused on re-entry into the public school system. Other youth participants were interested in the school's year-round programming model and the potential for free summer learning.

Divisional administrators did not see separate programs or schools as a desirable option for SIFE, primarily due to concerns with inclusion and their sense of belonging in the community as well as access to appropriate programming.

Transitions within High School

LANGUAGE-FOCUSED EAL CLASSES

The difference in common underlying proficiency between SIFE and EAL students means that placement in language-focused EAL classes is not necessarily appropriate for SIFE. Youth participants described concern about lack of exposure to English-speaking students and lack of exposure to required content from being placed almost fully in language-focused EAL classes. Some described feelings of stagnation and hopelessness. Positioning language-focused EAL classes as part of transitional programming, rather than a place to stay, is an important distinction.

LANGUAGE- AND CONTENT-FOCUSED EAL CLASSES

Many administrators emphasized the need for targeted language supports to help youth progress through content acquisition and skill development.

This is particularly relevant due to the time pressures faced by youth and the need for them to obtain required credits. Many youths placed similar emphasis on the need for content-specific language support, explaining that they often felt capable of mainstream course content but lacked specific vocabulary.

A number of programming options provide pre-exposure and extra help with academic communicative competence. Some schools have E-designated sheltered courses which group EAL students for curricular content courses with language support and adapted curriculum objectives. Multiple teachers emphasized the value of these classes being taught by specialized content-area teachers. In a different variation, Fort Richmond Collegiate offers tutorial courses where students take age-determined curriculum content courses in parallel with a class focused on extra support and language development linked to that content. Participants had varying perspectives on multi-age classes, but they were generally seen as a strength rather than a barrier when associated with differentiated instruction and age-appropriate content.

REGULAR (NON-EAL DESIGNATED) CLASSES

Youth and service providers emphasized the need for various forms of help with regular classes, allowing youth to push themselves while still being supported. Electives such as arts and sports were seen by teachers and administrators as an important way for youth to ease into regular programming. At the same time, the need to use electives judiciously given this group of youths' limited time to develop academic knowledge and employment skills was particularly underlined by parents. Challenges and opportunities for effectively supporting SIFE with regular classes are discussed in more detail in following sections on extra support and professional development.

REGULAR CLASSES WITH ADAPTATIONS

Students are also able to do adapted courses within a regular classroom setting. This may result in a regular credit or an E-credit. Students who are seen to

be meeting (or close to meeting) regular curriculum outcomes are granted a regular credit. Conversely, if youths taking a course for regular credit are seen as struggling to meet required outcomes, this can be switched to an E-credit.

Parents and some service providers described how a lack of consistency and communication around the use of E-credits can lead to misunderstandings and disappointment. For example, E-credits not being sufficient pre-requisites for acceptance into university programs can be surprising and disheartening for families, as one parent illustrated:

> My two boys and girl this year they graduate from high school. I was very happy, but because I don't understand the system here. So my daughter she tried to get some credit but they refused, I think for the language. [My] son too, and he cannot go to university- that's what [we] discover now.
>
> Parent/Community Focus Group

Some administrators emphasized that E-credits are a transitional tool to be planned early and intentionally. At the same time, there was a lack of clarity among families, teachers, and administrators about the appropriate use of E-credits, especially for graduation.

SUMMER CLASSES

Administrators did not describe offering summer classes specifically for LAL needs. However, LRSD offers summer EAL programming with some integrated LAL support. Seven Oaks also has summer EAL programming. Some other administrators indicated an interest in developing summer EAL programming for senior-year students within their divisions.

Administrators also did not describe offering summer curricular content courses with adaptations or supports for EAL learners. There was strong youth interest in language-supported summer classes for them to be able to obtain required credits within a limited time period. As one youth explained:

> We need to take in the summer because we have two months, what we going to do? We need to learn. Like I have three courses in Grade 11... I want to finish it in a summer for next year I just have five, I can be relaxed like I have a spare and I study in a spare, but my school say you're going to pay, maybe $600, I can't, because me and my sister, it be hard to my dad.
>
> Youth Focus Group

Summer classes are a valuable opportunity for youth to take new courses, retake failed courses, or upgrade E-credits to regular credits, but cost is a major barrier to accessing these. Courses can cost between $200 and $1,000 per class. The Immigration and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM) is one of few organizations that offers Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)-funded summer school bursaries for newcomer youth to upgrade their E-credits.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

Alternative program designs such as off-campus programming were rarely mentioned by teachers or administrators as potential approaches for supporting SIFE learners. However, service providers discussed a number of off-campus programs that were not SIFE-specific but had similar features and had been positive experiences for youths that they worked with. Pembina Trails Alternative High School is located in Winnipeg's professional football stadium. It offers small class sizes, one-on-one supports, and flexible scheduling for students looking to complete Grade 12 courses. Alternative programs can also be located within schools. R.B. Russell Vocational School in WSD offers an independent learning program with similarly low student-to-teacher ratios, extra support, and flexible scheduling. The school also has childcare options. This type of flexibility was valued by youth with adult responsibilities.

Transitions from High School

BRIDGING PROGRAMS

Bridging can refer to supporting transitions more generally, or to specific programs with targeted

language toward education or employment goals. Bridging can be used in various stages of learning, notably for transitions within or beyond the high school setting. Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute bridges students to a continuum of programming throughout the school's large EAL department. Meanwhile, Seven Oaks' BridgES program is focused on transitions from high school into further education or employment, particularly by obtaining regular 40-level English and Math credits required for post-secondary (see Case Study for more details). This bridging program, and bridging in general, was highlighted by multiple teachers and administrators as a programming option they would be interested to see in their area.

Post-secondary education, specifically university, is a major goal for many youths and a hope echoed by parents. As one father expressed:

> The main important thing is to be able to attend university, study what you like, have your own goals. Unfortunately, that's not what's happening with our children which really cause lots of emotional problems... make things complicated for them, which is really disappointing.
>
> Parent/Community Leader Focus Group

Youth expressed a need for more preparation for, and support in, university. As one youth said, "there's a big step between high school and university and when I get into university it was like I am lost" (Youth Focus Group).

One youth, who hoped to become a teacher, suggested she would like to see a university program for refugees. WSD's Build From Within program is an interesting precedent as it supports Indigenous youth to become qualified teachers. Students complete their high school diploma and an Education Assistant Diploma Program by spending alternating semesters at their local high school and the Winnipeg Adult Education Centre. Youth then transition to the teacher training program at the University of Winnipeg. They work within the school division as Education Assistants,

CASE STUDY: BRIDGES AND COOPERATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Seven Oaks School Division houses the IRCC-funded BridgES program at its Adult Learning Centre. The program is for older youth ages 18-25 and focuses on transitioning them from high school to further education or employment. Another aim is to attain regular 40-level Math and English credits required for post-secondary.

The BridgES program runs four half-days a week, so youth can still go to their community high schools, the Adult Learning Centre, and work or other responsibilities. The program uses a co-teaching model with one teacher more focused on content, specifically Math and English, and the other on targeted language acquisition. There are low ratios of students to teachers (around 15:2) and volunteers provide substantial additional support. This allows for more differentiated instruction. The program being located in the Adult Learning Centre gives students access to settlement and counselling services, childcare, after-school programming, and adult EAL or content classes. Portfolio-Based Language Assessment is used.

The Cooperative Vocational Education (CVE) program is also an initiative of Seven Oaks. Students can choose from a range of free vocational programs that have an in-class and at-work component. Four students from the BridgES program recently participated in the Sustainable Energy program.

BridgES support in CVE involves communication and collaboration between the BridgES EAL teacher, the school employment coach, and the employer. The EAL teacher provides additional support at the school and the workplace.

The BridgES EAL teacher provides targeted language support to help students understand vocabulary specifically related to the job, particularly in the initial stages of the program where students learn about safety practices. Having same-language peer pairings helps students support each other. Seven Oaks is looking at developing a four-to-six-week pre-class with language development targeted towards the specific CVE course before students enter the regular course.

practicum students, and eventually certified teachers. Supports such as financial incentives and mentorship are provided. Vocational programs are another way to link to employment.

VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Many teachers and administrators emphasized the need for vocational programming with targeted language supports. At the same time, there was an awareness of some of the challenges for LAL learners to access vocational programming, and few divisions had SIFE students who were in vocational programs. Language barriers are a significant challenge particularly due to the complex language of learning materials and concerns about workplace safety. Furthermore, course adaptations can be challenging since accredited trades programs have set standards.

There are a number of programs being offered which address some of these barriers. In terms of language, the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology offers an electrician course in French and is exploring the potential for other French vocational language courses. This is a more accessible vocational option for Francophone learners which "opens up doors for them" since "they're taking it in a language they know" (Administrator Interview).

Apprenticeships were considered as potential alternatives to certified programs. LRSD has an apprenticeship coordinator and RETSD grants apprenticeship credits which some SIFE youth were accessing. Teachers had varying perspectives on whether students should be able to do apprenticeships in their first language. This is discussed in more detail in the section on language supports.

ADULT EDUCATION AND ADULT EAL

Many administrators highlighted the need for improved communication with adult education programs to make this a more accessible pathway for youth. A youth participant who spoke about going on to adult EAL did so with hesitation and uncertainty about what this involved.

There is a general lack of adult options that combine language support and content acquisition. Multiple administrators expressed that the language-content gap has become harder to fill due to cuts in federal funding of higher-level language classes. The Winnipeg Adult Education Centre has taken steps to link language and content by admitting students with lower-intermediate CLB levels and providing them with more intensive language training.

One administrator underlined the need for young adult learning spaces for youths who may not feel comfortable in either high school or older adult settings:

> We can't hold on any longer than 21 in the school system, they don't fit, a 22-year-old doesn't really fit with the 15- or 14-year-olds... they don't want to be there anymore... they need to be in something that's for young adults.
>
> Administrator Interview

Features of effective transitional programming to support youth in this liminal space are highlighted in more detail in the following sections.

Targeted Extended Learning and Extensive Supports for Transitional Programming

Participants spoke to a range of features that contribute to positive educational experiences for older refugee youth with interrupted schooling. Feelings of connection, understanding, and belonging provide an underlying sense of support and were positioned as preconditions for learning. Community participants had a strong interest in strengths-based, targeted, and extended learning, especially accessible summer programming for content credits. In terms of specific supports, there was a major emphasis on support for transition planning to help youth navigate the next steps in their education or employment. An extensive range of supports, including extra adult and peer support, wraparound psychosocial and settlement supports, and cultural-linguistic supports were discussed by participants. Youth highlighted extra help as making a positive difference in their education experiences.

Foundations for Learning: Sense of Connection, Empathy, and Belonging

Social and emotional factors have a significant impact on learning and academic progress (Farrington et al., 2012). Developing a sense of connection and belonging through relationships and understanding was emphasized by teachers, service providers, and many administrators as fundamental to the learning process.

Fostering a sense of connection was seen as a way of engaging and keeping youth in school, allowing educators and students the time that they need for better educational outcomes. As one administrator explained: "Having a true sense of belonging in one's community is going to be the biggest predictor of success for these kids… feeling of belonging comes before literacy, comes before language learning, comes before anything else" (Administrator Interview).

The value of connection was echoed by youths and the main positive educational feature they highlighted was relationships with supportive teachers. One youth described a caring teacher: "She understands them… ask them about their problems and what happened in their days, how was your night yesterday… that helps the student study and care more" (Youth Focus Group).

Youths valued staff understanding and being accommodating of their circumstances. One youth spoke about his experience of being refused re-entry into school after an absence for a family emergency: "If you understand what they're going through and what they've been through and reasons for things, it gives you more flexible of letting them back" (Youth Focus Group). Flexible scheduling and attendance policies were suggested by male youths, and some service providers, as ways to accommodate older youths' many responsibilities.

SIFE can experience a sense of isolation from mainstream students (Davila, 2012). Youth strongly emphasized wanting exposure to English and to Canadian students. "You can't learn faster because we don't have a conversation [with] Canadian[s]" (Youth Focus Group). Administrators were strong

proponents of inclusion, but they also tended to recognize a need for "inclusion and not submersion" (Administrator Interview).

Most administrators mentioned similarities between the profiles of some refugee students and Indigenous students. There was minimal reference to using specific Indigenous programming practices with refugee youth, but building relationships and a sense of belonging could be considered key elements of Indigenous approaches. Fostering a sense of belonging can be built into classroom practices as well as broader school and community connections.

Strengths-Based and Targeted Learning

Effective classroom practices are informed by relationships and understanding. Throughout all the focus groups there was an emphasis on strengths-based, differentiated, and experiential instruction to engage youth in curriculum content with targeted language support.

Existing academic literature supports the idea that responsive instruction requires an understanding of the background and strengths of youth (DeCapua, 2016; Moll and Cammarota, 2010; Lucas and Villegas, 2010a, 2010b). Service providers, teachers, and administrators reiterated the need to find ways to identify and acknowledge the experiences and skills that SIFE bring, notably in terms of vocational skills. One administrator spoke specifically to the potential for more portfolio-based assessment including youths' strengths and needs. Some service providers and teachers discussed how credits can be used to recognize the strengths of students and the time they spend developing literacy and numeracy. LAL credits, electives, heritage language credits, and work or volunteer credits were some ideas for credits that recognize student skills and learning. However, others emphasized that there is a need to balance this with content courses, particularly those that will meet post-secondary requirements.

Instruction must be targeted to build on strengths for content acquisition. Existing research demonstrates that teaching targeted academic language is essential for SIFE to progress through curriculum content (Cummins, 2014; Lescaux, Galloway, and Marietta, 2016). As one administrator explained, programming must be targeted since "high school students don't have time to just focus on language" (Administrator Interview). The BridgES co-teaching model has one teacher with a distinct focus on content acquisition and another on targeted language supports.

Furthermore, effective instruction must be engaging in order to keep youth involved. Davila notes that unchallenging work can be frustrating for SIFE learners (2012). A critical-thinking-based literacy curriculum with themes of power, identity, and citizenship can engage youth more actively in their ongoing learning (Auslander and Beiting, 2018). Parents valued programming that is fun but also covers required content, especially English and Math as post-secondary requirements. As one parent said: "Study, study, study no, they combine art and fun and education altogether" (Parent/Community Focus Group). On the other hand, youths emphasized their own perseverance in practicing reading and writing. Similar to parents, many teachers in the focus group emphasized the value of hands-on experiential learning, particularly through subjects that develop critical thinking. A teacher spoke about a lesson on the US presidential election and a service provider described another lesson on Canadian pipelines, both of which engaged youth in complex subjects through instructional scaffolding. These classroom principles also apply to extended learning opportunities.

Extended Learning

Youth sought after-school and summer learning opportunities, particularly to help them obtain required content credits within a limited time. School divisions have a range of after-school options for newcomers, including in-division, in-school, and in-community programs. Wayfinders is a division-wide after-school program run by Seven Oaks out of their Adult

Learning Centre. Peaceful Village has a central community site but also offers after-school programming in schools throughout the city. N.E.E.D.S. has a drop-in after-school program downtown. Transportation can be a major barrier to participation. Some programs provide bus tickets and Collège Louis Riel provides bus passes, depending on student need, to encourage extracurricular participation.

Summer learning allows youth to retain knowledge and obtain required credits. Aside from the formal summer classes mentioned in the previous section, a number of administrators indicated interest in partnering with community organizations to offer informal summer programming. Newcomer Youth Educational Support Services (NYESS) provides programming that covers curriculum content from grades one to twelve to prepare youth for the coming school year. Qualified teachers, or teachers in training, work with youth in the morning for pre-exposure to curriculum content, while the afternoon involves experiential learning in the community. Though only at the elementary level, WSD offers free morning EAL classes for kindergarten-to-grade-six students and N.E.E.D.S. complements this with free afternoon programming to make a full day of learning. Complementary options for formal and informal programming can be determined according to student needs.

Pathway Planning

Parents, teachers, and youths spoke to the need to develop clear explanations of the education system and clear expectations about youth options and pathways therein. Initially developing youths' and parents' understandings of the unique timelines and trajectories for SIFE can help prevent a sense of hopelessness. One parent told of how speaking with a teacher motivated him to encourage his son to stay in school:

> She told us that there are a lot of kids who come, like [my] son, and they are also struggling the same way, but eventually they make it through, so let him stay the course and support him to do that and that actually encouraged me.
>
> Parent/Community Leader Focus Group

Communication with families about the education system is particularly significant in terms of graduation and post-secondary requirements. A number of parents and community leaders described the contrast of joy and disappointment when their children graduated and then discovered they did not have the requirements for university. This is strongly linked to E-credit designations but also to broader understandings of system requirements.

Parents and teachers acknowledged there can be cultural differences in approaches to guidance in navigating the school system. Students tend to come from cultures with more top-down approaches to education where youth have less flexibility in choosing courses and schedules. Youth, and their parents, may not realize the implications of these choices, particularly in terms of credit requirements for access to post-secondary education.

Guidance counsellors can play a critical role in providing counselling, academic support, and pathway planning (Auslander, 2019; Stewart and Martin, 2018). However, few participants emphasized guidance counsellors as a key source of support, with youth mentioning teachers rather than guidance counsellors as providing help in navigating education and career pathways.

Career development programs are also key to connecting youth with the next steps in their work and education (Stewart and Martin, 2018). Miles Macdonell Collegiate is developing an E-sheltered

career development and life skills course. LRSD offers career development programming for its general student population, including the My Blueprint program which supports youth in life-work planning, and also has an EAL teacher who provides employment support at Glenlawn Collegiate.

Community organizations with newcomer-serving employment programs such as N.E.E.D.S. and le Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM) can also play a role in employment supports by expanding the networks available to newcomer youth. A Francophone administrator explained that CDEM, whose mandate is to strengthen economic development in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities, looks to involve youth in economic development. The organization has strong relationships with the education system as well as with employers. The administrator explained the value of this connection for youth, saying, "our relationships are built before we start" (Administrator Interview). Youth can benefit from connections to the broader community for extra support.

Extra Adult and Peer Support

Extra support for SIFE can come from an array of people. Youth participants strongly emphasized the value of support and extra help, particularly from teachers. When asked about what she liked in her current school one youth said, "How they help 'cause they try to go step by step until you get where you want" (Youth Focus Group). This is contrasted by her previous school experience:

Sometimes the teachers they just keep going and then when school's finished we need to go home, so when you have homework you have nobody to help. And then I feel like, I'm not doing anything at school, my English is not improving, so I just decided to quit school (Youth Focus Group).

The emphasis on support was echoed by teachers. One teacher explained the value of having additional people in the class to help youth: "So there's

people to come alongside you, whether it's somebody in the classroom, whether it's another student, whether it's a volunteer, but that other human connection, it's very very important for success" (Teacher Focus Group).

Low student-to-support ratios are possible through small class sizes as well as extra in-class and extended-hours supports. The BridgES program has a student-to-teacher ratio of roughly 15:2. Educational assistants and volunteers can also provide additional in-class supports. As the same teacher emphasized regarding volunteers, "In the LAL classroom I might have four different things happening in there and I literally need a different set of people in each area to jumpstart and keep things going and keep the momentum" (Teacher Focus Group).

Parents, service providers, and teachers underlined the value of mentorship, particularly through community and those with shared cultural understandings and experiences. N.E.E.D.S. has a mentorship program that connects youth with community volunteers. NYESS's summer programs and Elmwood Community Resource Centre's Circle of Leadership program has older youth take on support roles for younger youth, thus also providing leadership opportunities. Mentorship is not only important from older adults or older youth, but also from peers. One community leader explained the value of peer mentorship:

> One of the positive things that I heard from people, mostly the young people that are struggling in school, is that if there was a student that understood them, that supported them in the class, apart from teacher, then they wanted to stay in the class because of that student, because that student understands them and they don't feel ashamed asking the student for help.
>
> Parent/Community Leader Focus Group

Formal and informal extra help can be underpinned by quality psychosocial and settlement supports.

Wraparound Supports

Psychosocial and settlement supports provide holistic approaches to well-being. As one administrator stated, "We have to find a way to strengthen their language and understanding of well-being and well-becoming" (Administrator Interview).

Addressing trauma and mental health needs through psychosocial supports such as psychologists, social workers, and counsellors was a major emphasis from teachers and administrators. One teacher explained that, while language development is important, "what always seems to jump over top of that is everything else" (Teacher Focus Group). However, educators cited challenges with access to assessment and support, particularly for older youth who tend not to be prioritized by age. Educators also emphasized the value of psychosocial supports for parents and families.

Administrators also discussed settlement supports. Some spoke to the value of having access to settlement support workers with networks in the broader community beyond the school. Currently, Seven Oaks, LRSD, and RETSD have community-based settlement workers who are employed by the division and funded by IRCC. These settlement workers can be complemented by additional cultural and linguistic supports.

Cultural and Linguistic Supports

Participants generally recognized the value of cultural and linguistic supports. However, they had varying perspectives on how language support should be used. The literature on home language literacy supports the claim that effective programs realize the function and value of home language ability and build on this for further development (Auslander, 2019; Garcia and Kleifgen, 2010; Garcia and Menken, 2014; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017).

Auslander (2019) further underlines that assessment should cover how students use their home language, but, recognizing this is not always an accessible option, interpretation and family communication are other methods to help understand home language literacy. Youths and parents emphasized the importance of accessible interpretation services, especially during the initial stages of resettlement.

Teachers and administrators had varying perspectives on the role of first-language support as a tool or impediment. Some administrators placed more emphasis on cultural liaisons with a dual role of interpreting and facilitating intercultural communication, as opposed to formal interpreters. WSD has intercultural support workers who serve in this role. Educational Assistants (EAs) can also act as language support and cultural brokers. Many administrators expressed a need for more EAs with additional language abilities, particularly in Arabic. However, there was also some hesitation to provide in-class home language supports rather than immerse youth in the classroom language. Same-language peer pairing is another way to leverage first-language knowledge among students and foster a sense of belonging.

In a study on teacher advocacy, Haneda and Alexander (2015) determined that a significant proportion of teachers who were active advocates for their students were bilingual and had significant intercultural experience. Administrators recognized that having ethnoculturally diverse leadership and staff was critical to ensuring that all students felt that their school was inclusive and representative. One administrator with a newcomer background explained, "I saw myself in them," and they also emphasized the need for students to "see themselves in that school" (Administrator Interview). Again, a sense of belonging is fundamental to learning.

A sense of belonging, targeted and extended learning opportunities, and a range of supports can be facilitated through collaborative partnerships within schools and throughout communities.

Collaborative Partnerships for Transitional Programming

Collaborative partnerships and a range of funding sources are necessary to support effective transitional programming. There was a major community emphasis on the need for communication and collaboration between various stakeholders to facilitate effective educational approaches. As one service provider explained when asked about effective program models:

> I think it's more just the attitude than the model itself, of being able to create partnerships, have open communication... when you have administrators that are willing to help out with some of those administrative and red tape burdens that usually come up when you're dealing with schools, then that really helps.
>
> Service Provider Focus Group

Communication and collaboration is vital in making connections to the rest of the school and community more broadly, and ultimately in fostering a sense of belonging. There was an emphasis on the need for a "whole-school approach," in which all school personnel and resources—not simply those with a specific mandate to serve newcomer youth—are oriented toward the needs of these students and

That collaboration [between LAL and mainstream teachers] is essential and it goes both ways in helping inform my programming, but also in supporting that kid to transition into the regular programming.

TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

their successful integration into the school system. Professional development for both EAL-specialized and mainstream teachers is important for supported transitions.

This connection to the mainstream can be expanded to a "whole-community approach" that prioritizes family and community involvement to ensure successful experiences with the education system. Such partnerships are a vital complement to diverse funding sources.

Whole-School Approach

A whole-school approach entails that all staff, and not only those specifically responsible for delivering SIFE-related programming, are oriented toward the specific needs of SIFE and are supportive in students' full integration into the school. Youths, service providers, and teachers emphasized the pivotal role of teachers in supporting SIFE, especially by making supportive connections to mainstream programming and the school more broadly. As one service provider said, "There's always that one teacher that is willing to help these kids" (Service Provider Focus Group). At the same time, connecting to the mainstream requires a broader school approach with communication and training for staff.

SUPPORTIVE TEACHERS

Research shows that teachers who effectively support SIFE provide both practical and emotional support (Hersi and Watkinson, 2012). Youths cited supportive teachers, including mainstream teachers, as one of the main positive features of their education

experiences. They noted both the caring and time teachers gave them.

Research further demonstrates that supportive teachers also act as advocates for SIFE students (Hos, 2016). LAL/EAL teachers emphasized their role as a "bridge" connecting youth to supports throughout the school. They underlined the value of a reciprocal relationship between LAL/EAL and mainstream teachers, in which mainstream-content teachers helped to inform LAL course content, while LAL teachers helped mainstream teachers recognize and address LAL needs in their classes. As one teacher explained, "That collaboration is essential and it goes both ways in helping inform my programming, but also in supporting that kid to transition into the regular programming" (Teacher Focus Group).

CONNECTIONS TO THE MAINSTREAM

In a study including youth perspectives on SIFE programming, Auslander (2019) found that both individual staff outreach and school-wide programming options contributed to positive experiences. The initiative of individual teachers can make a major difference in supports for older refugee youth, but it must also be part of an overall school and division strategy. A whole-school approach to supporting refugee learners addresses school policies and practices; curriculum, teaching, and learning; school organization, ethos, and environment; partnerships with agencies; and partnerships with parents and caregivers (Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, 2016).

Principals can play a key role in developing a whole-school approach to supporting SIFE, particularly through communication and training. Multiple youths experienced miscommunication about age limits for entering or continuing in school, being told they could not start high school if they were over 18. This highlights the importance of clear communication on policies such as age limits and E-credits to staff, students, and parents.

Many administrators emphasized the need for professional development to better serve SIFE in schools, ideally for all staff and administrators. Some administrators mentioned the need for pre-service teacher training in supporting newcomer and refugee learners. The value of in-service professional development through job-embedded co-teaching and experiential learning was also noted by some administrators.

This understanding applies beyond LAL and EAL classes. Some administrators underlined the need for all staff to have an understanding of the unique needs of LAL learners, especially in terms of literacy. Many youths described the challenge of teachers "talking fast" in regular classes: "It's hard because teacher speaks so faster and you can't understand all what he's saying" (Youth Focus Group). In a study on effective features in SIFE programming, Auslander (2019) found that teachers, particularly content-area teachers, wanted further training in literacy and language instruction. DSFM uses "La lecture dans toutes les matières" to train both EAL and content-area teachers to recognize and support students with literacy needs. The administrator explained the value of such training:

> The high school teachers... when they're better trained at developing early literacy skills and early numeracy skills then... it's easier for them to welcome these students in their classrooms... it's really helping our high school teachers recognize that students are dependent on reading skills and as a high school teacher you can continue developing those reading skills.
>
> Administrator Interview

The whole school community must also be prepared to recognize and respond to trauma appropriately, since "the person a child chooses to talk to may be the only trusted adult in a child's life" (Stewart and Martin, 2018, p. 27). Trauma-informed practices can be incorporated into schools at multiple levels, but substantive change requires support through policy and funding (Cole et al., 2013). Teachers and administrators frequently mentioned the significance of professional development on trauma-informed and culturally-informed practices. Pembina Trails School Division has provided

cultural competency training to both administration and staff with a focus on building empathy through storytelling. Teachers themselves must be supported given their exposure to the traumatic stories and circumstances of their students: multiple LAL teachers described experiences of vicarious trauma and a sense of isolation in their work. This further emphasizes the need for support and collaboration with a broader community.

Whole-Community Approach

A whole-school approach extends beyond the school to the community more broadly. Project participants strongly emphasized the significance of fostering communication, collaboration, and relationships throughout communities. A number of participants specifically underlined the value of collaborative whole-community strategies. As one service provider explained:

> I feel like so much of the advocacy work that's done within the schools or within agencies, it's one teacher or one administrator from a different school and it's not a collective whole.
>
> Service Provider Focus Group

Such strategies can be developed through multi-level collaborative partnerships.

MULTI-LEVEL COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Teachers, service providers, and many administrators emphasized the need for collaboration at multiple levels in order to effectively support youth. One administrator explained, "These are complex problems to solve and education can't do them alone" (Administrator Interview). This was echoed by a teacher:

> We need a village to raise a kid. We need lots of hands to help us, to support us, so in the government level and the high-divisional level, at the school setting, community supporters, we need all of them.
>
> Teacher Focus Group

A systems-level approach would include collaboration with different levels and departments of government—particularly IRCC and Manitoba Education, but also other areas such as Manitoba Health—division administration, school leadership and staff, service providers, ethno-cultural communities, and other stakeholders. Parents, families, and the youths themselves can also be seen as collaborators.

A number of administrators and service providers underlined that all of these potential collaborators need to consider their common goal of supporting refugee youth and establish clear roles in order to work toward this collectively.

At the same time, policies and funding structures can create barriers to collaboration. One administrator mentioned a strong interest in bridging programming, but they also expressed concern that funding structures between provincial education and federal settlement supports were not compatible and made collaborative programs challenging. Collaboration is necessary between different levels of government as well as between schools and communities.

PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Refugee parents' involvement in their children's education can take different forms from what local educators are accustomed to, but it is nonetheless vital to their children's educational outcomes (Ennab, 2017). Parents and teachers underlined the importance of developing parental involvement through initial

and ongoing communication, particularly to develop a clear understanding of how the education system works and to facilitate dialogue around the expectations for education and employment pathways.

Parents and teachers recognized the challenge of language barriers in developing this understanding. Language barriers are a major challenge for communication between the parents of refugee youth and teachers (Ennab, 2017; Tadesse, 2014; Georgis et al., 2014). Many of these parents cannot read English print materials and do not have computer skills for online translation options. There is a need to look beyond common communication methods, particularly by offering accessible interpretation and translation supports. Facilitating teacher accessibility, planning home visits, supporting parent advocacy, offering parents computer literacy courses, and teaching about the education system in Adult EAL are other ways to improve communication suggested by participants.

A number of administrators discussed family centres as important spaces for youth programming and supports as well as adult networking. In response to the arrival of a concentrated community of high-needs refugees in the Fort Richmond area, Pembina Trails School Division and a number of community partners developed the Pembina Trails Community Hub, a family centre with accessible supports for children and parents. The Hub is located at Ryerson Elementary School, in close proximity to Acadia Junior High School and Fort Richmond Collegiate. Service providers play a key role, with the Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network coordinating the centre and the Aurora Family Therapy Centre offering mental health programming for older youths. Community organizations can help to facilitate family involvement.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION INVOLVEMENT

Community organizations can provide vital in-school and extracurricular support. Many teachers, and most administrators, emphasized the value of connecting with community organizations such as N.E.E.D.S., IRCOM, Peaceful Village, and the Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC) for in-school programming. Service providers, and some administrators, underlined the unique position of community organizations to provide extracurricular support, particularly with school transitions, extended learning, family connections, psychosocial well-being, and leadership or mentorship.

However, many of these same participants emphasized that these supports require schools to be open to letting community organizations in, both literally and figuratively. When asked about what can be done to improve collaboration with communities, one administrator said:

> I know there's a real cost to opening up a school, its custodian costs… but if you can somehow absorb that cost as a division and open it up for the community, the outcome of community engagement is worth it.
>
> Administrator Interview

Similarly, some service providers and administrators expressed their belief that policies can be a limitation to community involvement. As one service provider stressed, "There are willing people in Winnipeg to help newcomers, but we come across a lot of bureaucracy that is holding us back" (Service Provider Focus Group).

Service providers discussed the value of two-way communication in effective collaborations with school divisions and schools, particularly through interaction and sharing information. One service provider mentioned online information-sharing technology called PowerSchool which allows service providers, as well as parents, to see youths' attendance and assignments in order to better follow with them and support them. Information exchange can work both ways, for example with N.E.E.D.S. providing students' intake assessments to schools with incoming students.

Service providers also spoke to the value of interaction between schools and organizations, notably by allowing organizations into schools and having teachers go to programs. A number of service providers told stories of teachers who stopped in

CASE STUDY: PEACEFUL VILLAGE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Peaceful Village is an after-school program focused on newcomer youth but open to all youth. The program has a central community site, but it is also located at Hugh John MacDonald School, Gordon Bell High School, Fort Richmond Collegiate, Glenlawn Collegiate, and St. James Collegiate. Students do homework, share a meal, and then have space for "passion projects" like arts and sports. There is also some family programming.

Peaceful Village focuses on creating a sense of self-worth and belonging for newcomer youth. Connecting with other newcomers, as well as non-newcomers, allows youths to gradually expand their networks in the school and community. The program focuses on valuing different cultures and creates a space for youth to connect with their various communities. A service provider spoke to the program's focus on belonging:

> The students come here because they feel like they matter and they feel like it's important to be here to do better for themselves... it's important for the staff to remember that these kids are important and they need to know that.
>
> Service Provider Focus Group

The program has a learning and tutoring facilitator. Students receive extra help with their homework and also share their strengths with creative and active programming. Peaceful Village provides incentives for participation with bus tickets and bursaries for post-secondary education.

at after-school homework programs. This helped keep the youth on track with their work, developed more understanding for teachers about the types of supports youths were receiving in programs, and opened up dialogue between teachers and service providers to collaborate further. One service provider described such an interaction:

> When they went to the after-school program they realized that a volunteer sat there for three hours and worked on this one assignment with someone, which unless that youth has a mentor or someone at home that's willing to put in that much extra effort would be impossible.
>
> Service Provider Focus Group

Ethno-cultural community leaders expressed a similar desire for communication and collaboration with school divisions. Ethno-cultural communities play an important role in making youth feel connected, building resilience, and allowing them to develop further social networks, notably at school (Kilbride and Anisef, 2001; as cited in Bucklaschuk et al., 2019).

Money Matters: Systems Funding and Poverty

Effective programming and supports require appropriate funding both within and beyond the education system. Participants in interviews and focus groups readily acknowledged that effective programming requires funding for education. As one administrator said, "You can always do more with more resources" (Administrator Interview). One teacher and multiple administrators specifically stated the importance of Intensive Newcomer Support (INS) grants in providing programming and support for SIFE.

More broadly, issues associated with poverty and unmet basic needs were consistently raised throughout focus groups and interviews. Poverty is hugely detrimental to student well-being and learning (Social Planning Council of Winnipeg et al., 2016),

and while schools cannot fully ameliorate the socio-economic inequalities that affect their students, certain measures can be taken. As service providers and some administrators acknowledged, financial incentives can make the difference between students participating in school and extracurricular activities or not. Some examples of incentives include Collège Louis Riel providing transit passes, Peaceful Village and the Community Economic Development Association's Pathways program (CEDA Pathways) giving bus tickets and bursaries for post-secondary education (via Bright Futures and additional funding), and IRCOM providing summer school bursaries for youth to upgrade E-credits to regular credits (via IRCC funding).

The next section outlines recommendations for transitional programming, supportive practices, and collaborative partnerships which, along with sustained funding, can facilitate positive educational experiences for SIFE.

Recommendations

These recommendations are primarily directed toward Winnipeg-based schools and school divisions, which have been the focus of this research. However, it is hoped that other jurisdictions may gain insight from the study, including the recommendations that follow.

In Winnipeg, there are many effective educational practices in place that can be learned from in order to provide a base for improvements or expansion. Building on these, there is room for Manitoba Education and Winnipeg-area school divisions to develop a broader range of transitional programming options for SIFE. Extended learning opportunities and extensive supports, particularly with pathway planning, are a vital part of this programming. Collaboration throughout schools and communities is also key. Multi-level collaboration, as well as communication across school divisions and departments, can address challenges of critical mass and funding which tend to limit programming options.

The following recommendations are intended to assist school divisions, and other partners as indicated, in furthering educational programming and supports for older SIFE. The ideas are based on community and divisional input, local and international examples, and a reading of related literature.

KEY DECISION MAKERS

ME	Manitoba Education	**IRCC**	Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada
WASD	Winnipeg Area School Divisions	**GC**	The Government of Canada
S	Schools	**GM**	The Government of Manitoba

A. Develop Transitional Programming Options

`ME` `WASD` `S`

1. Provide and promote a flexible range of transitional programming options for youth.

The research highlights the fact that this group of youth generally has a strong desire and will to learn. Youths who are willing and able to attend school, even irregularly, need to be supported to do so.

- Consider adopting more flexible scheduling and attendance policies to accommodate students' multiple responsibilities.
- Ensure that all principals and staff are aware that students have the right to attend high school until 21 and that there is flexibility to attend beyond this age.
- Foster communication and transition processes between high schools and other programming options, particularly adult education, so that students can choose the option that works best for them.
- Manitoba Education and Winnipeg-area school divisions can explore the possibility of developing centralized initial LAL programming to provide an additional programming option with more intensive supports. This can include psychosocial and settlement support, interpretation, and some home language content instruction. Such a program can also include elements of educational orientation programming with a focus on broader education options relevant to older youth.

ME   WASD   GM

2. **Offer vocational programs with targeted language support.**

    Vocational training with targeted language support can provide an opportunity for youth to build on their existing strengths and skills.

    - Explore non-accredited work training options that can be more easily adapted and can also open up pathways to accredited options. Early Childhood Education is a field to explore for vocational education.
    - Collaborate to develop plain-language text materials for vocational programming and to offer home language supports.

    ME   WASD   IRCC   GM

3. **Ensure that young adult SIFE (18-25) in each division have access to free young-adult-specific programming options to equip them with the requirements for post-secondary education.**

    - Manitoba Education and IRCC can collaborate to develop a comprehensive strategy to fill this need, particularly through Stage-2 language funding.
    - Drawing on the BridgES model, develop bridging programs with targeted literacy and numeracy supports to attain post-secondary requirements and support adult youth in transition to further education or employment.
    - Invest in making young-adult schools such as the Winnipeg Adult Education Centre more able to meet the educational and social needs of SIFE, particularly through targeted language supports, wraparound supports, and extracurricular activities.
    - Collaborate to develop a teacher training program, similar to Build From Within for Indigenous youth, to support refugee youth in the transition to university while training teachers who reflect the diversity of their students.

B. Facilitate Targeted Extended Learning and Extensive Supports

ME   WASD   S

1. **Ensure consistent communication and strong support for transition and pathway planning, particularly in terms of post-secondary credit requirements.**

    - It is important for Manitoba Education to audit and accordingly reform the guidelines for, and use of, E-credits so that they are a transitional tool rather than an end point.
    - Invest in guidance counsellors and partner with pathway-focused community organizations to offer education and career development guidance. Include these supporters in regular teacher communication with youths and families about the education system, pathway options, and post-secondary requirements.
    - Connect youth with culturally-informed employment programs, such as N.E.E.D.S. or CDEM, to provide them with guidance, work experience, and career mentorship.

    ME   WASD   S   IRCC

2. **Collaborate to offer extended learning opportunities with targeted language support.**

    Within the school day, strategic pre-exposure to academic and work-related vocabulary helps youth progress through content (for example, via tutorial classes). Extended learning days, and learning years, are vital to continue this progress.

    - Develop divisional extended-learning strategies to ensure SIFE have accessible after-school and summer options to build language and content knowledge.
    - Collaborate to offer free summer LAL programming as well as targeted language supports in free summer classes for SIFE seeking

content-area credits.

- Invite community organizations to complement summer classes with experiential programming.
- It is important for IRCC to increase its funding for summer school bursaries.

| ME | WASD | S | IRCC | GM |

3. **Invest in extra help, wraparound supports, and cultural-linguistic supports, but also develop community-based supports, such as volunteers and mentors, for SIFE.**

Psychosocial and settlement supports as well as cultural and linguistic supports, including cultural liaisons and interpreters, are fundamental investments for youth and family well-being. Extra learning support is also key. Low student-teacher ratios and educational assistants, particularly with pertinent additional language skills, are needed in LAL, EAL, and regular classes. Additional support can also come from the community itself.

- Divisions and schools can develop community support strategies for in-class and extracurricular support, including volunteer recruitment and training, adult mentorship, and peer mentorship initiatives.
- Partner with community organizations and ethno-cultural communities to provide home-language supports to leverage home-language literacy.

C. Enhance School and Community Collaboration and Partnerships

| ME | WASD | S |

1. **Ensure all schools, particularly LAL magnet schools, have a whole-school approach in place for all staff to support SIFE.**

- Ensure that all principals have a strong understanding of practices and policies related to SIFE, notably in terms of age limits and E-credits, and a plan for communicating this with all staff.
- Invest in professional development for all staff in trauma-informed and culturally informed practice.
- Train all teachers to recognize and respond to LAL-specific needs, notably via literacy training, to support students in specialized and regular classes.
- Manitoba Education and Winnipeg-area school divisions can collaborate to develop an online forum and in-person opportunities for LAL teachers to share best practices, experiences, and professional development, particularly on cultural responsiveness, advocacy, and vicarious trauma support.

| ME | WASD | S | IRCC | GM |

2. **Adopt strategies and policies for a whole-community approach to supporting SIFE, prioritizing communication and collaboration with families and communities.**

- Convene diverse stakeholders, including youth and parent representatives, as partners to develop a community-wide strategy to supporting SIFE.
- Develop division and school practices and policies to open schools up to community organizations, particularly through free use of space and information-sharing practices.
- Encourage interaction between teachers and community organization staff (for example, through a collaborative session to develop common understandings of effective homework help).
- Ensure all LAL magnet schools have an accessible newcomer-targeted after-school program option that includes transportation support.

ME   WASD   GC   GM

3. **Seek diversified funding sources for extended learning and supports, direct financial supports, and needs-based pilot projects**

- It is vital for the government to increase funding for education in general and newcomer youth in particular. INS grants must be continued and expanded to allow for SIFE-specific extended learning and supports. To address economic realities, it is recommended that stipends and public transportation passes are provided for marginalized youth to attend school.

- Divisions can look to develop partnerships with community organizations, like the Bright Futures program, which provide youths with incentives such as bursaries. It is important that government funding for these programs to offer incentives is increased.

- Divisions can also seek diversified funding sources, via multiple levels of government and other partnerships, for needs-based pilot projects.

Conclusion

The aim of this research, which was prompted by the Newcomer Education Coalition's long-term engagement on matters pertaining to refugee youth in the school system, was to improve understanding of the features of effective educational approaches for older refugee youth with interrupted schooling and explore a range of programming options in use in Winnipeg. This group of youth brings many strengths, but they also face significant challenges that put them at risk. A range of community voices as well as local, national, and international examples provided a wider view of student needs and possible responses.

Programming for students with interrupted schooling can be seen on a continuum, where entering mainstream programming or graduating is not an end point but rather part of supported transitions. In terms of initial programming, the vast majority of Winnipeg school divisions with high concentrations of older SIFE offer sheltered LAL programming congregated in magnet schools. Continuing transitions can take place within the magnet school as well as through programs and supports to link youth with post-secondary and employment options. Local and international precedents show that there is a range of program design options which could be explored in Winnipeg. Collaboration on initial programming as well as targeted language programs specifically for young adults are areas to consider.

There is also room to enhance features of effective programming within existing program designs. Fostering a sense of belonging is fundamental to supporting SIFE. Targeted extended learning and extensive supports, including pathway planning, extra help, wraparound supports, and cultural-linguistic supports, are key features of effective programs.

Funding is necessary for sustained and strategic approaches, and it is hoped that the provincial education review will result in increased funding for this group of youth as well as for all students. At the same time, there is also a need for creative, community-based approaches that emphasize communication and collaboration toward supported transitions. Engaging all stakeholders through whole-school and whole-community strategies is an important way to identify complementary options for support.

The education needs of refugee youth may be thought of as part of the many social supports required for refugees' successful settlement. To support refugees is to support the social systems that facilitate settlement, including the education system. Anticipated changes to the education system and continued policies of austerity, which perpetuate poverty, suggest that the limitations faced by the education system will not soon be resolved. This makes it all the more vital that school divisions collaborate to ensure well-supported and well-communicated transitions for this group of youth who face multiple barriers. All stakeholders can be involved in a whole-community strategy to leverage the strengths of youth, their families, and their communities. Finding ways to creatively and collaboratively support this group of youth can ensure that they and their multiple communities thrive and reach their full potential.

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Appendix A: Transitional Programming Formats and Case Studies

"Transitional programming" refers to educational approaches which support SIFE to progress through language and content development while anticipating transitions to further education and employment. The design of programs to support older SIFE varies in terms of location and delivery, language of instruction, transition planning, and other factors like funding sources (Short and Boyson, 2012; Government of Ontario, 2008). Main aspects of program design are described below. Precedents from other parts of Canada, the United States, Australia, and Germany provide examples which may be instructive for other jurisdictions striving to improve educational outcomes for SIFE.

Program Location and Delivery

Program location is a significant factor in program design, with options being located within a school, at a separate site, or at a dedicated newcomer-specific high school (Short and Boyson, 2012; Government of Ontario, 2008). For programming within a school, this can take place in local schools or in a magnet school that has specific programming which attracts SIFE from across a wider region. Itinerant teams of specialized teachers can enhance Language, Academic, and Literacy (LAL) supports in local schools. The Government of Ontario (2008) emphasizes the value of appropriate programming in a student's local school, but it also recognizes the need to congregate students in magnet schools in order to provide a full range of programming, which includes:

- A LAL/EAL program with specialized teachers
- A range of LAL and EAL course options
- A range of EAL-adapted curricular-content courses for credit
- Locally developed courses responding to the needs of SIFE, combining language development and curricular content

In terms of program delivery, sheltered instruction is an approach to academic language, literacy, and content development (Echeverria et al., 2017). "Sheltering" refers to the initial practice of teaching LAL or EAL students in separate classes, but this is combined with gradual exposure to mainstream content and classes. In a Canadian context, sheltered programming congregated within magnet schools is a common model of program delivery for areas with higher concentrations of SIFE (Manitoba Education and Training, 2011; Government of Ontario, 2008; Calgary Board of Education, 2011).

Calgary Literacy, English, and Academic Development (LEAD) programming develops sheltered congregated classrooms similar to LAL programming. Programs are located throughout the city based on settlement patterns, and transportation is partially subsidized. LEAD uses a centralized intake process for the entire city, where students and their families come for multifaceted assessments that include a home-language literacy component. Classes have low student-teacher ratios of about 15:1. Programming starts with full days, but it aims to gradually transition students to mainstream classes, further education, or employment options with the support of teachers and guidance

counsellors. Students are also supported by cultural liaisons, settlement workers, and psychosocial programs. LEAD teachers throughout the city participate in professional development and collaborate via an online platform.

Separate-site or whole-school programs are less common than in-school programs. These programs are also referred to as reception programs or transitional schools when the emphasis is on initial programming to support youth toward further education or employment. The Government of Ontario positions reception programs as short-term transitional options if sufficient resource support is not available in local or magnet schools (2008). It suggests that reception programs often do not have a full range of programming and integration options, but can often offer intensive supports, particularly psychosocial and home-language support. Congregating students can address specific initial needs.

Language of Instruction

Language of instruction is another key factor in program design. Linquanti provides a framework on language of instruction through bilingual and immersion education models (1999). In bilingual models, instruction is initiated in the student's home language to start developing content knowledge and additional language skills, while in immersive models instruction is initiated in the target language. Models vary in terms of goals for language development, target population and integration, and balance between literacy and content exposure. In an American context, bilingual education models are not common for newcomer programs in general and particularly for older SIFE students who have limited time for English language development (Short and Boyson, 2012).

CASE STUDY: MILPERA STATE HIGH SCHOOL- TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL

Location: Brisbane, Australia

Milpera is a transitional school, for ages 11-18, which provides English-language and content-area education to newcomer youth—primarily refugee youth with interrupted schooling—with the intention of preparing them for mainstream schools or vocational programs. Students come from a wide range of countries and attend the school for 3 to 12 months on average. In 2018 the school had a range of 129 to 199 students. Students are placed in classrooms by junior or senior years and then by language proficiency.

Milpera has funding structures which allow it to develop specific programs to adapt to the needs of changing refugee populations. Milpera focuses on language development through experiential and content-based learning. The school takes a critical pedagogy approach which engages youth in developing understandings of themselves and society (Hones, 2007). It focuses on valuing students' identities and backgrounds, particularly through storytelling and art in the school environment. There is also an emphasis on cultural education and support as students adjust to a new country and context.

Milpera highlights its specialized EAL teachers, bilingual EAs, volunteers, and community partners as key elements of its program (Milpera State High School, 2018). The school has specialized support programs focused on literacy and numeracy. It also has a substantial student services team with a guidance counsellor, youth support worker, nurse, liaisons for the home and for the community, and art and music therapists. Students can access psychosocial supports. Furthermore, Milpera has a dedicated art-and-music-therapy mental health program and engages students in the arts more generally. The school collaborates with community organizations, including religious organizations, to support cultural adjustment and settlement. School connectedness, acculturation, and resilience, as well as stability of immigration status, are associated with enhancing student well-being at Milpera (Meryan Tozer et al., 2018).

CASE STUDY:PORT OF ENTRY PROGRAM- SHELTERED IN-SCHOOL PROGRAM WITH BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION

Location: Union City, New Jersey, USA

The Port of Entry program is a bilingual program for newly arrived high-school-age youth which focuses on meeting content requirements for the first year of high school while using and developing Spanish and English language skills (Short and Boyson, 2012). The vast majority of program participants speak Spanish but lack home-language literacy skills, have below-level content-area scores, and also lack English speaking skills. The program is located within the Union City High School so, while students have a full day of programming, this includes some classes with mainstream students. Student progress is monitored and informs the transition into regular programming (Kirp, 2013). Students typically stay in the program for a maximum of to four semesters.

The program fosters a sense of belonging by developing relationships and engaging students in content and materials that connect with their primarily Spanish-speaking cultural background (Kirp, 2013). The program has partnerships with the community via the high school, including accessible health services for families.

Port of Entry offers a Grade 9 curriculum, with adaptations and additional supports, as well as intensive English classes. Students are grouped by level, but there is differentiation between language and content knowledge. Content courses are taught in Spanish. The program has small class sizes with about 12 students. Besides teachers, there is a program leader/guidance counsellor, social workers, and a community liaison worker. The program leader/guidance counsellor continues to support youth after they transition into mainstream programming, and supports are also offered for college preparation. Extended learning is built into the program through Union City High School's after-school tutoring program as well as a summer program that covers EAL and content-area material (See Short and Boyson, 2012).

Transition Planning

Planning for transitions into mainstream programming, further education, or employment can be built into various program designs including in-school, separate site, and whole-school programs. Daily programming time and overall enrollment time are indicators of intended transitions built into program design (for example with sheltered programming gradually increasing time spent in mainstream programming).

Extra support is vital for transitions into mainstream programming and to further education or employment. Support in navigating education and employment options is referred to as "pathway" or "transition planning". Pathways to Education is a program in communities across Canada that aims to improve high school graduation rates by providing youth with holistic supports. This includes student support plans and pathway planning, tutoring with staff and volunteers, peer and adult social support, career mentorship, and financial support for food, transportation, and post-secondary education (Pathways to Education, 2018). The program has single sites in most provinces but multiple sites in Toronto and Montreal. In Winnipeg, Community Education Development Association (CEDA) Pathways supports youth in the North End of Winnipeg, including Indigenous and newcomer youth.

Extended learning also supports transitions. At the High School of World Cultures in New York, there is a strong emphasis on extended learning, including optional classes after regular school hours, on Saturdays, during vacations, and for six weeks in the summer (Short and Boyson, 2012). There are also teacher-tutoring opportunities, social and cultural clubs, and sports. Both after-school and summer options include content classes for youth that have previously failed the courses. After-school classes also include classes specifically for SIFE literacy and English language development as well as bilingual classes to clarify course content. Extended learning options are funded by a range of grants.

Bridging programs and vocational programs are significant options for older refugee youth with interrupted schooling. Bridging programs are targeted-language programs focused on preparing students for particular education or employment goals. Co-operative vocational education programs focus on employment skills training and exposure to the workplace to support transitions to employment.

CASE STUDY: SCHLAU-SCHULE BRIDGING PROGRAM AND KAUSA VOCATIONAL SUPPORTS

Location: Munich, Germany

SchlaU-Schule is a separate-site program that prepares refugees and asylum-seekers from ages 16-25 to attain core education requirements for post-secondary education and, if desired, enter the German vocational training and apprenticeship system (SchlaU-Schule, 2019). Students often have LAL needs. The school provides language training as well as curricular content courses adapted to the needs and language abilities of students. The school also adapts learning materials accordingly.

SchlaU prioritizes building a sense of belonging and community integration through relationships with peers, teachers, and other supports. The program fosters an equity-based approach to educational access and advocates for students' rights to education (Medda-Windischer et al., 2018; Cities of Migration, 2015). Two-thirds of funding for SchlaU is provided by the German government, with additional funding coming from private donors. Connections to businesses can provide funding as well as employment partnerships for students.

Pedagogy is individualized, with modular courses that allow for flexibility according to student needs. There is also extra support provided through small class sizes and one-on-one support from volunteers. After-school activities provide opportunities for connection and extended learning. SchlaU takes a holistic approach with wraparound supports including psychosocial, tutorial, and legal supports for youth. Students are connected to employment via employer mentorship and short-term internships.

Linked to vocational training, KAUSA is an initiative of the German federal government to encourage both newcomer students and employers to enhance newcomer participation in the vocational system (Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training and Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). Newcomer youth are encouraged to apply for apprenticeships. Employers are provided training and support to develop intercultural understanding and flexibility in working with speakers of German as an additional language (Jordanova-Duda, 2014). There is a focus on working with immigrant employers so that students can potentially use their home-language skills and have a supportive mentor from a similar cultural background.

Appendix B: Manitoba Policy Summary

There are a number of key policies informing educational approaches and experiences for older students with interrupted schooling. Within these policies, educational approaches and practices vary between different school divisions and across different schools.

Age Limit: The Public Schools Act states that "students have a right to attend school until (a) the last school day of June in the year in which the person becomes 21 years of age; or (b) the day the person receives a graduation diploma or certificate of completion, as defined in the regulations; whichever comes first" (Public Schools Act, 2019, s 259(1)). Students beyond this age may still attend school with the approval of school administration. This is not automatically funded, but in some cases students may be eligible for provincial funding.

Curriculum and Funding: The draft Curriculum Framework for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming (Manitoba Education and Training, 2011) outlines a foundation and goals for EAL/LAL programming in Manitoba. The domains of learning, language acquisition, and assessment are adapted for middle- and senior-years LAL students. In addition to EAL grants, schools can apply for Intensive Newcomer Support grants to support students who have had disrupted schooling.

E-Credits: EAL E-designated courses are adapted courses where curriculum outcomes are reworked to include goals from the EAL curriculum depending on a student's EAL stage (Manitoba Education and Training, 2011). E-designated courses are not recognized by post-secondary institutions and cannot fulfill entry requirements, notably for 40-level Math and English. In the 2016-2017 school year, 255 40E English and 34 40E Math credits were obtained in Manitoba (D. Turner, personal communication, 2019). That same year, 101 students graduated with only 40E English and 18 with only 40E Math. In contrast, 83 students went on to get a 40S English credit and 8 went on to get a 40S Math credit in 2017-2018.

Inclusion: Manitoba's inclusion philosophy addresses students with special learning needs and the responsibility of educators to provide inclusive supports in the community. This includes the need for educators to teach so that students with diverse educational needs can learn together. This has implications in terms of balancing separation and inclusion for students with significantly disrupted schooling.

Federal Language Funding: Adult English as an Additional Language funding in the Province of Manitoba is primarily provided by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) is a system of language assessment which divides learners into three main stages: Stage 1 is literacy to CLB 4, Stage 2 is CLB 5-8, and Stage 3 is CLB 9-12. IRCC has shifted its priority to Stage 1 funding and limited its funding for Stage 2 classes. This has implications for transitioning students from high school into adult education.

SUPPORTED TRANSITIONS: Effective Educational Approaches
for Older Refugee Youth with Interrupted Schooling