

Business and Community Advisory Council
January 13, 2009
Impacts of Immigration on Schools



School View of Immigrant Students and Families:

- All will achieve—labels removed; inclusion model
- Honor what skills immigrants bring and build upon them
- Open-door policy—work around families’ schedules—“on call”
- Families grateful for our dedication
- Learning opportunity for all involved—cultural diversity
- Relationships very important

Academic Backgrounds/Skills:

- Literacy skills in first language are limited for many (reading, writing and oral language)-students and parents
- Technology skills and limited internet access
- Background knowledge required for curriculum limited
- Unfamiliar with curriculum, grading, attendance, security, and other policies and special services
- Encourage bilingualism--Continue building first language/math skills

Instructional Requirements:

- Differentiated Learning—meeting different needs and learning styles; cultural sensitivity
- More time to learn
- More planning time--collaboration
- Highly trained teachers and administrators—all areas, especially language arts and math
- Maximize staff and instructional time
- Homework challenging—teachers adapt homework /relevance
- Testing/Required Assessments—WIDA, VGLA, SOLs, Nglieri/CogAt, etc.
- Support (Title One, ESOL Office, Special Education, Advanced Academic Services, Instructional Services, etc.)
- Parent Involvement—liaison, coffees, curriculum evenings, SOL info, staff to teach/coordinate

Communication Is Key:

- Translations/Interpreters a must—county provided; hire diverse staff
- Parent Liaisons—lifeline for families and staff; conferencing, FCPS school requirements; referring parents to social services; explaining cultural differences
- Written material—carefully crafted
- Computers—not yet a means by which all parents communicate or have access

Social Issues & Services Needed:

- High poverty levels—many on free or reduced lunch program
- Health care-nutrition/dietary needs, preventive health care, dental, vision
- Cultural sensitivity/dietary restrictions
- Meeting basic needs for shelter, food, clothing, transportation, school supplies and books
- Mental Health needs: i.e. trauma, grief, divorce, reunification, isolation; domestic violence, gang and drug awareness education, etc.
- Navigation and awareness of available county programs
- Work with county to connect families with services

Money

- Specialists, testing, training, parent centers, parent liaisons, differentiated materials, school supplies, translations, interpreters, etc.