

# FINAL REPORT

IMPROVING EXPERIENCES FOR  
HIGH SCHOOL NEWCOMER  
STUDENTS IN ASD-W



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2024-2025

The ASD-W Council of Student Leaders acknowledges the land on which all Anglophone School District West schools, with the exception of one, is located on the traditional unceded and unsurrendered territory of Wolastoqiyik.

This territory is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship which the Wolastoqiyik, Mi'kmaq, and Peskotomuhkati peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725.

We note that the treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Wolastoqey, Mi'kmaq, and Peskotomuhkati title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

# INTRODUCTION



*The Council of Student Leaders met with Child and Youth Advocate Kelly Lamrock in April, 2025.*

The Council of Student Leaders is a group of twenty-seven students representing all nineteen high schools out of the seventy schools across the Anglophone West School District. This is the third consecutive year where the council has met, and there are eight returning members from previous years. The purpose of the council is to provide student voice concerning things happening in the district, from the student perspective to address student problems. The student leaders act as advocates for their schools and the district.

The council meets in its entirety four times throughout the school year, though there are several subcommittees on the council that have additional meetings. The students vote on a research topic and then acquire the necessary data to formulate recommendations to amend the issue. During the first meeting, the council determines the topic they intend to do a 'Deep Dive' on, which is voted upon. In the second meeting, the council prepares and refines research questions, a methodology, and forms a research committee. During the third meeting, the research committee presents their findings to the council, which then prepares its recommendations. Finally, at the fourth meeting, the council reviews the document prepared by the writing committee line-by-line, which must be approved by the council itself. Each time the council assembles, they conduct a formal board meeting.

In addition to the research conducted, the council hosts various guest speakers at each meeting. The council also had the opportunity to ask questions to the district Superintendent, David McTimoney related to any issues that have arisen in schools since the last meeting.

In the 2024-2025 academic year, the Council of Student Leaders assembled for the first time in October with the goal of determining the ‘Deep Dive’ topic for the year. Splitting the council into smaller groups, they were able to share common experiences, issues, and successes among their schools. Each group brought their ideas into a group forum, where through discussion they had a list of concerns to address. Through a unique and innovative voting system the Council calls ‘Dotmocracy’, the ‘Deep Dive’ topic was narrowed down to:

**“High School Newcomer and EAL Support in ASD-W.”**

**Key Terminology**

***Newcomer:***

*Any student who came to New Brunswick from outside Canada and has been here three years or less.*

***SLIFE:***

*Student with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education*

***ELD:***

*English Literacy Development. A student who needs to learn English and does not read in any language.*

***MLL:***

*Multilingual Language Learners are learning English while also learning in their first language.*

***EAL:***

*The subject area of English as an Additional Language.*

# DEVELOPING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In November, a subcommittee met with Susan Young (ASD-W Director of Data and Improvement), Gabbie Guimaraes (ASD-W Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Program Facilitator), Heath Currie (ASD-W Acting Subject Area Coordinator for EAL and Cultural Pedagogy), and Tegan Taylor (ASD-W Subject Area Coordinator EAL Education). All available data on the topic of Newcomer students and the support they receive was examined. The group was able to identify the following information to support the research:

**Data Point 1**

Newcomers are 8% of the ASD-W student population.

**Data Point 2**

Newcomers represent a broad group of students with differing needs based upon their experiences prior to arriving in ASD-W schools.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based upon the collected data, the council refined three research questions:

**1** *How do the experiences of Newcomer students change over their first years in ASD-W schools?*

**2** *How can schools build on the personal strengths of Newcomer students?*

**3** *What can schools do to help Newcomer students be successful in school?*

Council members working to refine their 'Deep Dive' topic.



# METHODOLOGY

In March, 2025, the council engaged two key research methods to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to answer the research questions in ASD-W schools.

Research Method	Description	Sample Size and Description
<p><b>1) Focus Groups</b></p>	<p>The focus groups were used to collect qualitative data from the Newcomer students to describe their experiences in ASD-W schools. Council members sat with small groups of Newcomer students for 45 minutes each for the guided discussion; but there were no limitations placed on what the Newcomers could say. There were four initial questions that stemmed into further open discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell us about the types of classes you like to go to?</li> <li>• What are ways the school can make Newcomer students more comfortable?</li> <li>• Do you feel you have the knowledge and skills to be successful at your school?</li> <li>• Do you feel like things get easier for Newcomer students after being in Canada for a year or two?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 focus groups</li> <li>• 16 students total</li> <li>• Fredericton High School</li> <li>• St. Mary's Academy</li> <li>• The focus group at Chipman Forest Avenue had to be cancelled because of weather.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2) Anonymous Online Student Survey</b></p>	<p>An anonymous survey with a mixture of closed and open-ended questions collected quantitative and qualitative data. The questions focused on Newcomer experiences in ASD-W schools since they moved to Canada, up to and including their present-day experience. You can view the survey questions and summary of results in Appendix I.</p>	<p><b>86 responses</b> Grades 9-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fredericton High School</li> <li>• St. Mary's Academy</li> <li>• Chipman Forest Avenue</li> </ul>

Senator Krista Ross guiding the council on how to be a strong advocate in April, 2025.



# ANALYSIS

The following four themes emerged from both the focus groups and the anonymous survey.

## Theme 1

*One-to-one supports and EAL specific classrooms help students thrive in a school environment.*

- “I can now have a conversation with people” (in reference to EAL class)
- “Its easier because I took two EAL classes”
- “EAL classes are important.”
- “One of the teachers made a student buddy up with me to make me more comfortable. He helped me go wherever I asked and was my first friend. That made me comfortable.”
- “We have a welcoming committee now so that helps. We go around school showing new kids classes and pairing them up with someone that has the same schedule.”

## Theme 2

*Inaccessible extra-curriculars can slow down the social adjustments of Newcomer students.*

- 24% of the Newcomer students were involved in their culture club.
- 31% Newcomer students said that in their first six months at school, they did not know about clubs, teams, or activities offered at their school.
- “I would like to join a club but I don’t know how.”
- “I wanted to join volleyball, but I missed try-outs.”
- “Getting involved in clubs and activities can help you make friends faster.”

# ANALYSIS

## Theme 3

*Significant positive change occurs in school engagement, enjoyment, and success over time for Newcomer students.*

- “If it’s not going well, don’t worry, it will eventually become better. Better days are on the way. If you feel lonely, try participating in teams, clubs, and activities. Be happy and just do you!”
- When referring to their first six months at school in Canada, 28% of Newcomer students said they “were/are uncomfortable.” However, when referring to their most recent six months at school, only 6% Newcomer students said they “were/are uncomfortable”
- “I don’t know where to go for help” went down by 11% over time.
- People participating in school activities went up by 23% over time.
- “I can now have a conversation with people. I can understand the language – what they are saying.”

## Theme 4

*Newcomer students like having a variety of learning strategies available and to choose from.*

- 58% of surveyed Newcomer students said that being provided examples/models that show how to do the work helps them learn best.
- 52% of surveyed Newcomer students said that videos with captions/subtitles help them learn best.
- 45% of surveyed Newcomer students said that class discussions help them learn best.

Meeting with Minister of Education Claire Johnson while recommendations are being drafted. April, 2025.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

*In the survey, Newcomer students were asked about how they felt in their first six months in a Canadian school as opposed to their current experience. There were improvements such as while 29% of students said they were uncomfortable in the first six months, only 6% said they feel that way now. When the council analyzed the data it became clear that it was important for students to feel comfortable as fast as possible. The council has written four recommendations based on the data that should speed up the process of becoming comfortable and successful at school.*

## **Create student-led long-term support for Newcomer students**

The council recommends creating an online Microcourse for students who want to help their Newcomer peers adjust to their newfound school and environment. A Microcourse is an eight-week course for partial credit hours. Providing the course online would ensure accessibility across all ASD-W schools both urban and rural. Students will learn different learning strategies, resources (including people, groups, devices, and books), cultural awareness, and how to provide both social and educational support. In order to complete the course students would need to complete a practical component working with Newcomer students.

The council's research demonstrated that Newcomers benefit from having student peer support. One student explained, "Our friends help us with class. Having friends makes school work easier." Another student described how "One of the teachers made a student buddy-up with me to make me more comfortable. He helped me go wherever I asked and was my first friend. That made me comfortable." This course will give schools the opportunity to have a peer-buddy system.

## **Provide support tools and devices for communication and understanding**

Providing access to tools and devices to ensure important extra-curricular announcements and classwork is seen and understood by all Newcomer students. Tools and devices could include videos, printouts, and AI-translators to help Newcomers get information on what is happening throughout the week, how to sign up for sports and clubs, and to help make classwork understood.

In focus groups Newcomers said that when they did not understand the work or what the teacher said they struggled. One student explained, "Language was the biggest challenge. It was hard to study." Another student explained that "Teachers talked to me with a translator device, it helped." With support devices like an AI-translator, it will allow Newcomer students to understand what the teacher is saying in the language they speak. We also found that a lot of Newcomers were not aware of different school groups, clubs, and teams because they did not hear or understand what was being said on the announcements. One student explained "I wanted to join volleyball. But I missed try-outs [because of the announcements]." Another student explained "I would like to join a club but I don't know how." Devices to assist with translation or posters in multiple languages can help Newcomers know what is out there to do in the way of sports and clubs so they can get involved. The goal is to make support devices available in all schools and classrooms.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Allow for resubmission of assignments to support academic success

Letting students fix their mistakes and resubmit assignments was identified as one of the most helpful learning strategies by 54% of the survey respondents. Also, many students identified that they found math and science courses particularly hard. One student said “Math was hard for me. GMF was really hard.” Another said, “I find science hard. When I started [school in Canada], it was one of the first [courses I took].” Supporting staff in how to provide feedback that can be understood by Newcomer students and letting Newcomer students fix their mistakes for resubmission in any and all subjects would really help with their academic success.

## Increase accessibility of clubs and extracurriculars

It is important to make extracurricular activities accessible to Newcomer students. Opportunities to engage in social events at school were a highlight for many of the students in the focus group. The most popular club for Newcomer students was Culture Club (24%). Some students identified difficulty in joining sports, “I went to try-outs for soccer but didn’t get in” or “I wanted to join volleyball. But I missed try-outs.” Other students explained that they did not know about school clubs. It seems like Culture Club is able to attract Newcomer students so the council recommends creating other extracurricular opportunities to get Newcomer students involved. For instance, intramural teams that buddy-up Newcomer and Canadian students. These intramural teams could act as a stepping stone to get Newcomers into more formal teams. The focus groups also identified it can be hard for Newcomer students to make friends and this could help.

It will also be important to make sure that costs for these activities are manageable, or a fund exists to help cover costs. Cost of extracurriculars should not prevent students from participating because this is an important way for them to learn language and become part of the school more quickly.

The ASD-W Council of Student Leaders voting during the line-by-line read of the final text of this report. May, 2025.





This year, the Council of Student Leaders decided to work on identifying the common struggles that were faced by high school Newcomer students across the district; alongside what solutions can be made to further support those students. As the council began to collect data directly from Newcomer students - who were able to share their honest experiences- common patterns began to emerge. From this data the council was able to recognize several prominent issues Newcomer students face and propose solutions that they believe could have the greatest impact.

The Council of Student Leaders provides a unique, on-the-ground perspective. Many students on the council see the perspectives and issues of Newcomers directly, both in their schools or as Newcomers themselves. It is with this in mind that the Council of Student Leaders advises entities both across the Anglophone West School District, and at the Department of Education to act on these recommendations. The ongoing support of Newcomer students is not something that should be taken lightly. The Council of Student Leaders is dedicated to advocating for those without a voice, or those who feel powerless to act. Regardless of the ideas and recommendations the council has made, there is always more to be done. One small idea can flourish into a whole new infrastructure. The hope is for the recommendations to give space to something new, something positive, that can only get better as time goes on.

As the council concludes this year's report, there is hope that beyond the work accomplished this year, the council can continue to provide a student-led voice for those who feel without. It should not matter where the student is from, or what language they speak; at the end of the day, they are still an ASD-W student. And so, it is the responsibility of those with the power to do so, to continue to pursue these recommendations, and enhance them past that of what the council has provided. The students of the council are eager to see how their ideas could develop into something phenomenal.

With that, the Council of Students Leaders hope that the group can continue for years to come, as it is a great resource to truly discover what issues are on the minds of students. The council also finds the continued interest and support from the district Superintendent very important to the work they do. The seventy schools within the district are for the students, which makes having a strong student voice at the table paramount in understanding the school environment.

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# COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

## 2024 - 2025



**President – Rowan Seahra, Fredericton High School**

**Vice-President – Addison Pollard, Chipman Forest Avenue**

**Secretary – Autumn Thompson, Hartland Community School**

**Student DEC Representative – Luke Carson, Fredericton High School**

Skyler Aubin, Cambridge Narrows Community School

Lily Foster, Canterbury High School

Alanna Cullins, Carleton North High School

Kiersten Orchard, Carleton North High School

Ethan Barrow, Central New Brunswick Academy

Winter Daniels, Fredericton High School

Nick France, Fredericton High School

Andrew Phillips, Fredericton High School

Violet MacDonald, Harvey High School

Cecilia Pauley, Harvey High School

Tyler Clark, John Caldwell School

Lily O’Neil, Leo Hayes High School

Saifullah Salak, Leo Hayes High School

Taliah Bigger, McAdam High School

Raina McKellar, Minto High School

Ashtyn Brewer, Nackawic High School

Piper Donner, Oromocto High School

Josiah Hebert, Saint Mary’s Academy

Ainsley McFadden, Southern Victoria High School

Raven Perley, Southern Victoria High School

Emily Hood, Stanley Consolidated School

Chelsea Todd, Tobique Valley High School

Farida Soror, Woodstock High School

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**Thank you to our guest speakers for taking the time to share of your experience and expertise:**

October, 2024:

- EECD Director of Strategic Initiatives, Natalie Holder

December 2024:

- Subject Coordinator for ESS School Counselling, Sandra Braun

April, 2025:

- Senator Krista Ross
- Minister of Education, Dr. Claire Johnson
- MLA David Coon
- Child and Youth Advocate, Kelly Lamrock
- 

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- Gabriela Guimaraes (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Facilitator)
- Heath Currie (Acting Subject Area Coordinator for EAL and Cultural Pedagogy)
- Tegan Taylor (Subject Area Coordinator for EAL Education)
- Susan Young (Director of Data and Improvement)
- Sean Newlands (Principal of Nackawic High School)
- Nicole Giberson (Principal of Woodstock High School)
- Summer Duchesneau (Acting Vice-Principal of Cambridge Narrows Community School)
- Andy Clark (Principal of Hartland Community School)
- Damon Levine (Digital Content Writer)
- Paul MacIntosh (Director of Communications)
- Sarah Francis (Nihkanatpat Ciw Skicinowi Kehkiketuwakon, Director- Leader for Indigenous Teachings)
- Molly Brown (First Nations Education Coordinator)
- Derrick Grant (Subject Area Coordinator for Numeracy)
- Peter Trusiak (Subject Area Coordinator for Science and Experiential Learning)
- Jane Burke (Subject Area Coordinator, Literacy K-12)
- Angela Thomson (Subject Area Coordinator, French Second Language)
- Julie Kilcollins (Director of Schools - Woodstock Education Centre)
- Kendra Broad (Director of Education Support Services)

**Thank you to the organizing team for planning and supervising meetings:**

- Eric Church (Social Studies Lead Educator)
- Jennifer Keating (Music Lead Educator)
- Lucinda Mills (Visual Arts Lead Educator)
- Beth Christie (Subject Coordinator for Social Studies, Fine Arts, and Enrichment)

**Thank you to the bus drivers for getting us safely to our meetings and the district transportation team for all the logistics.**

**Thank you to our meeting host sites:**

- Cuffman Street School
- Carleton North High School and their incredible Culinary Arts class
- Second Wind Music Centre and Smoyd's Catering for our farewell banquet.

# APPENDIX I

# ANONYMOUS STUDENT SURVEY

## Research - Academic Experiences for Newcomer Students

Council of Student Leaders Project 2024-2025

### 1. School \*

- FHS
- SMA
- CFAS

### 2. Grade \*

- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

### 3. When did you start school in Canada? \*

Please input date (M/d/yyyy)

### 4. What language do you speak most often at home? \*

### 5. Did you know English before you moved to Canada?

- Not at all
- A little
- A lot

### 6. How do you learn best in the classroom? Which strategies help you learn the best? You can choose as many strategies as you want. \*

- Including lots of photos and images
- Videos with captions / subtitles
- Including charts and graphs
- Guest speakers
- Reading from a book or handout
- Being provided examples or models that show how to do the work
- Class discussions
- Being able to answer orally (speaking) instead of writing the answers on paper
- Extra time
- Time to work one-on-one with the teacher or another adult helper
- Getting the chance to fix mistakes and resubmit
- Other

### 7. If you participate in teams, clubs, and activities can you tell us which ones?

Enter your answer

### 8. If you do not participate in teams, clubs, and activities, can you tell us why?

Enter your answer

9. Do teachers in your school know what you are good at? (For example math, football, singing, cooking, sewing, building etc.) \*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know. Nobody asked.

10. Think about your first 6 months in a Canadian school. You can choose as many of the statements as you want to describe your experience. \*

- I was comfortable.
- I was uncomfortable.
- I was able to make friends.
- I felt lonely.
- I understood what the teachers wanted me to do.
- I found the school work hard to understand.
- I found the school work too easy.
- I was happy to spend my days in this new school.
- I sometimes didn't want to go to school.
- I often didn't want to go to school.
- I participated in school clubs, teams, and activities.
- I didn't know about clubs, teams, and activities.
- There was at least one adult in the school I could talk to and get support from.
- I didn't know how or where to go for help.

11. Think about your experience in school now. You can choose as many of the statements as you want to describe your experience. \*

- I am comfortable.
- I am uncomfortable.
- I have friends.
- I sometimes feel lonely.
- I understand what the teachers wanted me to do.
- I find the school work hard to understand.
- It is easier to understand the school work now.
- I find the school work too easy.
- I am happy to spend my days in this school.
- I sometimes don't want to go to school.
- I often don't want to go to school.
- I participate in school clubs, teams, and activities.
- I don't know about clubs, teams, and activities.
- There is at least one adult in the school I can talk to and get support from.
- I don't know how or where to go for help.

⋮

12. Do you have advice for Newcomer students who are just starting at your school? \*

Enter your answer



# ADVICE



## TO NEWCOMER STUDENTS FROM ASD-W NEWCOMER STUDENTS

ASD-W COUNCIL OF STUDENT LEADERS PROJECT  
2024-2025

**BE CONFIDENT AND BOLD.**  
IF YOU CAN MAKE  
FRIENDS THERE WILL BE  
A LOT OF CHANCES YOU  
DIDN'T EVEN EXPECT!

BE BRAVE, DON'T BE SHY  
TO ASK SOMETHING AND  
MAKE FRIENDS.  
ENJOY CANADA AND  
WELCOME IT WITH OPEN  
ARMS. IT WILL ALSO  
WELCOME YOU WITH A  
BIGGER OPEN ARMS.

BE OPEN TO MEETING NEW  
PEOPLE. EVERYONE WAS  
NEW AT SOME POINT, SO  
YOU'RE NOT ALONE. JUST  
TAKE YOUR TIME ADJUSTING,  
AND THINGS WILL GET  
EASIER.

**DON'T BE AFRAID.**  
**IF I CAN DO IT,**  
**YOU CAN TOO.**

**DON'T BE AFRAID TO SPEAK UP AND PRACTICE YOUR  
ENGLISH EVEN IF IT'S NOT PERFECT, NO ONE WILL  
JUDGE YOU AND IF THEY DO THAT SAYS MORE ABOUT  
THEM THAN ABOUT YOU.**

**Just lock in.**



**FEEL FREE TO TELL THEM WHAT YOU WANT.**

**DEAR NEWCOMERS, ONCE UPON A  
TIME I WAS YOU. I WAS NEW TO  
CANADA AND I WAS SO LONELY  
AND MOSTLY AFRAID AND  
NERVOUS. ALL I WANT FROM YOU IS  
TO TRY. NO MATTER WHAT YOU  
SURVIVED OR HAVE FACED IN THE  
PAST YOU SHOULD TRY TO START A  
NEW PAGE. YOU CAN FEEL THAT  
YOU ARE LATE, YOU CANNOT  
ACHIEVE ANYTHING, BUT YOU ARE  
WRONG. IF YOU KEEP TRYING EVEN  
THAT 1% MIGHT BE BIG  
SIGNIFICANCE IN THE FUTURE. IT'S  
TOO SMALL TO IGNORE BUT  
BELIEVE ME IT'LL PROVE TO YOU  
HOW IT MATTERS IN THE FUTURE.  
TAKE CARE.**

IF IT'S NOT GOING WELL,  
DON'T WORRY, IT WILL  
EVENTUALLY BECOME  
BETTER. BETTER DAYS ARE  
ON THE WAY. IF YOU FEEL  
LONELY, TRY PARTICIPATE IN  
TEAMS, CLUBS, AND  
ACTIVITIES. BE HAPPY AND  
JUST DO YOU.

I WANT TO TELL YOU- DON'T BE SHY.  
WORK HARD AND MAKE A LOT OF FRIENDS AND IN TIME  
YOU WILL SPEAK ENGLISH WELL. ASK ANY QUESTION  
YOU WANT FROM YOUR TEACHERS!  
SO WORK HARD AND SPEAK A LOT.

**DO NOT CHANGE WHO YOU  
ARE TO TRY TO FIT IN.  
INSTEAD LEARN ABOUT  
THE OTHERS AND TEACH  
THEM WHO YOU ARE TO FIT  
IN BETTER.**

Be friendly and  
don't be afraid  
to ask questions  
to other  
students.

Be social.

STAY ACTIVE,  
AND DON'T BE  
AFRAID TO  
SPEAK AT  
YOUR LEVEL,  
NO MATTER  
HOW  
DIFFICULT IT  
SEEMS



