



River Trails

SCHOOL DISTRICT 26

To: River Trails Board of Education

From: Kristine Seifert - Assistant Superintendent Teaching & Learning; Natalie Hudson - Director of Multilingual Programs

CC: Ryan Berry - Assistant Superintendent Business Services

Re: Multilingual Staffing Update Fall 2024-25

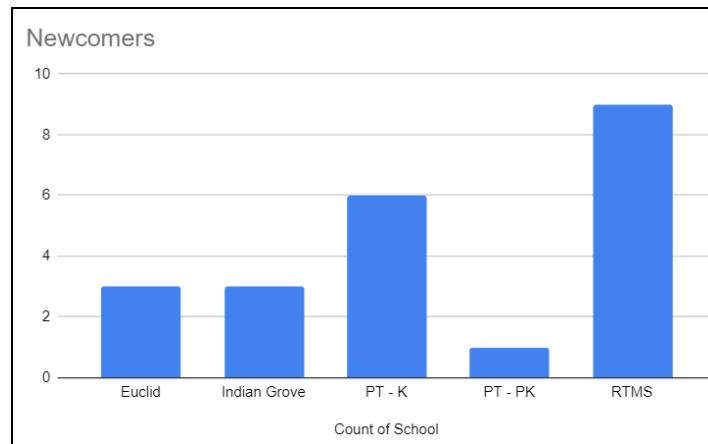
Purpose & Recommendation

This memo is being provided to update the BOE on the status of the multilingual staffing plan in RTSD26 and request additional staffing (1.0FTE) to support multilingual learners at River Trails Middle School.

Background

During the 2022-23 school year, our district registered a significant number of newcomer students, leading us to hire an additional multilingual staff member for the 2023-24 school year. However, the 2023-24 school year saw a marked decrease in newcomer students, prompting the administration to decide not to fill this position when preparing staffing allocations for the 2024-25 school year, as the student population at the time did not warrant the additional support.

This situation has changed dramatically this fall with 22 new newcomer students joining us from diverse linguistic backgrounds, including but not limited to Russian, Mongolian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Korean, Arabic, and French. These students are spread across four schools: Indian Grove, Prairie Trails, River Trails Middle School, and Euclid. This influx highlights the growing need for targeted support to ensure these students' successful integration and academic achievement within our district.



School	Dedicated ML Staff	ESL Endorsed Staff	ML Students	Staff: Student	Newcomers
Prairie Trails	1	16	44	1:44	7
Euclid	4	24	105	1:27	3
Indian Grove	3	18	93	1:31	3
River Trails MS	1	10	60	1:60	9

*Numbers as of 9/23/2024

Rationale

The recommendation to increase staffing is not taken lightly. Several factors were considered to support this recommendation including but not limited to the following:

1. Addressing Critical Needs at River Trails Middle School

River Trails Middle School, which currently supports nine newcomer students in addition to approximately 50 current, multilingual students, faces a particularly urgent need for additional multilingual support due to limited staffing and resources dedicated to language acquisition. With students speaking a variety of languages, the existing staff are stretched thin, making it challenging to provide the individualized support these students require. A multilingual support teacher at the middle school level would directly address this gap, offering specialized instruction and interventions that are critical to helping students keep pace with their peers academically and socially.

2. Increasing Linguistic Diversity and Immediate Need for Support

'Newcomer' students bring a wide range of language needs, and many require immediate support to navigate the academic and social demands of a new school environment. Without specialized support, these students may struggle to access the curriculum, participate fully in classroom activities, and build essential language skills, putting them at risk of academic underachievement. Supporting newcomer students in middle school is especially challenging because they face complex academic demands, like subject-specific classes and advanced vocabulary, while still learning English. They also struggle with social and emotional adjustments during a time when peer acceptance is critical, which can lead to feelings of isolation. Additionally, many may have gaps in prior education and require specialized instructional strategies that general education teachers may not be fully equipped to provide. These combined factors make middle school a particularly difficult environment for newcomer students to navigate.

3. Ensuring Equitable Access to Education

Adding a multilingual support teacher will help ensure that all students, regardless of their language background, have equitable access to high-quality education. This position would provide targeted language instruction, classroom support, and collaboration with general education teachers to differentiate instruction and adapt materials. By providing direct support, a multilingual support teacher can help bridge language gaps, allowing newcomer students to engage more fully with their learning and feel included in the school community. River Trails Middle School has the highest student to teacher ratio in the district (1:60) as well as the highest number of current newcomers.

Benefits

The addition of a ML teacher would allow the following:

1. Supporting Classroom Teachers and Enhancing Instructional Practices

Significantly fewer classroom teachers at River Trails Middle School have gotten their ESL endorsement and therefore have very minimal formal training in support of multilingual students. A multilingual support teacher would serve as an additional resource, providing expertise in language acquisition strategies, cultural responsiveness, and instructional differentiation. This support not only benefits the multilingual students but also strengthens the overall instructional capacity of our teaching staff, leading to improved outcomes for all learners.

2. Promoting Social-Emotional Well-Being and Community Integration

Newcomer students often face challenges beyond academics, including cultural adjustment and social integration. A multilingual support teacher focused on newcomer support can play a pivotal role in addressing these needs by providing culturally responsive support, facilitating communication between the school and families, and helping students navigate their new environment. This role would enhance students' social-emotional well-being, leading to a more positive and inclusive school experience, especially in the middle school setting where social dynamics are complex and peer integration is crucial.

3. **Aligning with District Goals for Student Growth and Success**

The addition of a multilingual support teacher at River Trails Middle School aligns with our district's overarching goals of fostering student growth and ensuring that all students have the support they need to succeed. By investing in specialized support, we demonstrate our commitment to meeting the needs of every student and creating a learning environment where all can thrive.

Summary

Given the rapid increase in newcomer students, particularly at River Trails Middle School where support is most limited, adding a multilingual support teacher is an essential step to address the linguistic and academic needs of these students. This role will not only provide direct support to students but also enhance our district's capacity to deliver high-quality, inclusive education that meets the needs of our diverse student population.