

Thursday, September 8, 2022

Greater Victoria School District introduces Welcome Centre, a space to help newcomer students transition into learning community

VICTORIA, BC – The District is opening a ‘Welcome and Learning Centre’ to assist refugee and immigrant students seeking placement in a Greater Victoria school. The new space will help newcomers with registration and offer educational programming or additional support to ease their transition into a neighbourhood school.

Learning programs will be designed around the individual needs of the student. Other resources available include counselling and language assessments.

“We want all newcomer students to feel supported as they transition into the public school system,” said Board Chair Ryan Painter. “We recognize that each student will have their own lived experience that will shape their perspective or impact their learning. We want to provide wrap-around supports so each student feels comfortable, ready to engage in their learning, and has a positive experience in the classroom.”

“By creating a supportive and caring environment to help students adapt to a new culture, or in some instances a new language, we are aiming to reduce barriers in access to education,” said Superintendent Deb Whitten. “We know the importance of having youth in our schools learning and developing social connections. Our goal is to ensure that newcomer students feel welcomed and that we have the proper strategy and supports in place at the school level to set them up for success.”

The District will be working alongside community organizations such as The Intercultural Association, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre, Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees, and the Ukrainian Cultural Centre Victoria.

The Welcome and Learning Centre will officially open its doors on September 12, 2022, at the Tolmie Board Office.

Please see attachment for an image of the new facility.

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English Language Learner (ELL) Teacher Jen Barber is ready to welcome students to the new space.