



# Evidence-Based Family Engagement

Session 3 | February 14, 2024



# Welcome!



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# Group Commitments

1. Be present and participate as much as you are able.
2. Respect the diverse experiences and opinions of others.



# Session Objectives

1. Identify evidence-based tools and resources to support family engagement.
2. Identify a new strategy/practice to implement in your work with Afghan refugee families.



# Agenda

1. Icebreaker
2. Quick Review from Session 1 and 2
3. Tools and Resources for Family Engagement
4. Call to Action – Breakout Rooms
5. Closing



## In the chat, please share...

- Name
- Pronouns
- Role
- Location
- Biggest takeaway from the series / one thing you hope to take away from this session



# Quick Review of Session 1 & 2





# PDE Learning Community Standards

1. Connect families to community resources that support their goals, interests, and needs.
2. Build partnerships with families that are strengths-based, authentic, reciprocal, and respectful.
3. Partner with families to identify information, resources, and strategies to support them in their roles as teachers, models, encouragers, monitors, leaders, and advocates as they support their child's learning.
4. Provide intentional opportunities for families to connect and engage with each other.
5. Support families as they develop their leadership and advocacy skills.
6. Build partnerships with families during times of transition.





# A Quick Review from Session 1

**Standard 1:** Connect families to community resources that support their goals, interests, and needs.

**Standard 2:** Build partnerships with families that are strengths-based, authentic, reciprocal, and respectful.

Get information from the source! (e.g., parent focus groups, home visits)

Ensure parents are aware of available supports and resources in the school and community (e.g., Family Liaison)

Create opportunities to get to know families and showcase their interests (family night, cultural navigation programs, “Hello Neighbor” night)



# A Quick Review from Session 1

**Standard 3:** Partner with families to identify information, resources, and strategies to support them in their roles as teachers, models, encouragers, monitors, and leaders.

**Standard 4:** Provide intentional opportunities for families to connect and engage with each other.

Provide resources for newcomers (English classes, Newcomer Academy, interpretation services, special orientation handbook)

Create intentional opportunities and spaces for families to connect with each other (e.g., Parent Café, face to face, social media, family buddy program)

Create parent and family welcome kits with important school information



# A Quick Review from Session 1

**Standard 5:** Support families as they develop their leadership and advocacy skills.

**Standard 6:** Build partnerships with families during times of transition.

Establish a parent-led advisory group

Refer families to nonprofit and community services to support and fill in gaps

Ensure invitations for PTCs and other school-based events are available in families' preferred language



## A Quick Review from Session 2

Parents have varied hopes and aspirations for their children's educations

Education system in Afghanistan differs from the US

Parents and students are interesting in ESL classes, but it is important to offer modalities and times that work for them

Open door approaches are appreciated

Communication is key – ClassDojo is great!



## A Quick Review from Session 2

Patience and understanding is critical

Leverage parent expertise

Communication in Dari or Pasto is always the goal

Inform parents of the benefits of parent engagement and out-of-school activities

Advocate for education at the primary, secondary, and advanced levels

Don't hesitate to reach out for more support

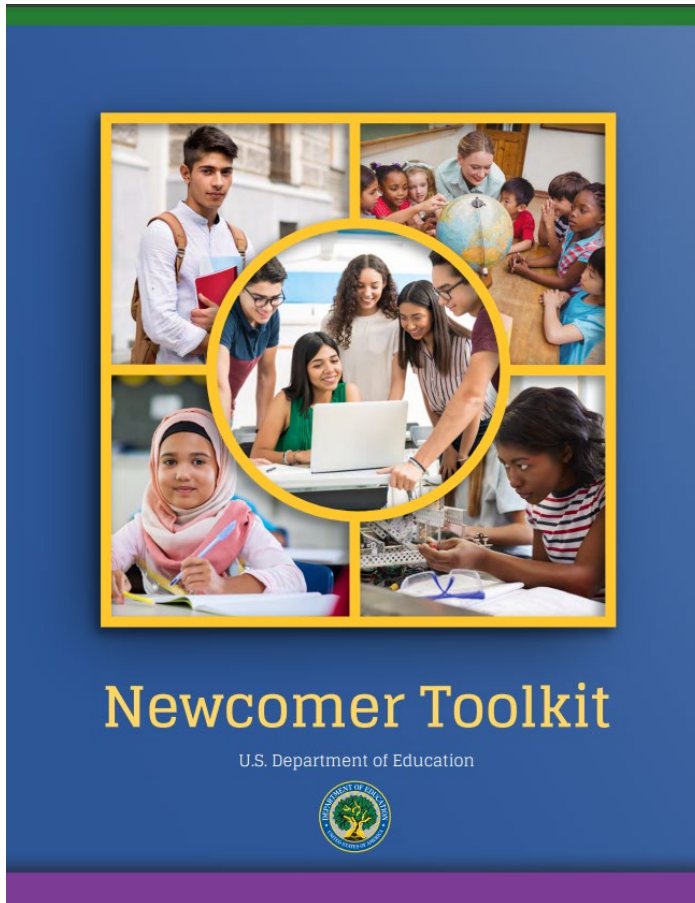


# Tools and Resources for Family Engagement





# Newcomer Toolkit



- Discussion of topics relevant to understanding, supporting, and engaging newcomer students and their families or guardians.
- Tools, research-based strategies, and examples of classroom and schoolwide practices in action.
- Chapter-specific professional learning activities for use in staff meetings or professional learning communities.
- Selected resources for further information and assistance.



# Newcomer Toolkit

## Chapter 5: Establishing Partnerships With Families



Ideas in  
ACTION

Protacio et al. (2021) present examples of adjustments made at three middle schools by teachers and staff that resulted in improved school-family partnerships and increased ML family engagement.

- **Example 1:** One school changed a poorly attended Open House event into a Diversity Night and provided families with the space and agency to share about their cultures. Students shared funds of knowledge posters about their cultures. The event had a higher attendance rate than the Open House, and families who completed a survey about the event were highly satisfied with it.
- **Example 2:** A middle school ESL teacher improved outreach to ML families by providing invitations for parent-teacher conferences (PTC) in families' native languages. The teacher also hired interpreters who accompanied families to meetings with general education teachers. This resulted in 100 percent PTC attendance by ML families, as well as the recognition by other teachers, who had previously held deficit beliefs, of the value ML families place on their children's education.
- **Example 3:** A health teacher encouraged MLs to indicate on a map where their families came from. Students also made videos about their countries. During PTCs, the teacher displayed the map in her room and played student-made videos on the computer. As families arrived at PTCs, they were asked to tell a story about their countries and cultures. This generated interest and engagement from families, teachers, and students, and helped families feel safe and welcome at the school.

These three examples demonstrate that even small changes can result in positive steps towards engagement and partnerships among secondary schools, MLs, and their families.

Source: Protacio, M. S., Piazza, S. V., & David, V. (2021). Family engagement in the middle: Reaching out to families of English learners. *Middle School Journal* 52(1), 30–39.

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### Engaging Newcomer Families: Examples From the Field

These examples demonstrate a wide range of approaches schools, districts, and communities can take to engage newcomer families. Use them to help your school staff gain insight and inspiration.

**Example 1: Engaging Families in Decision-Making (California).** A quarter of the students in the Alhambra Unified Schools District in California, arrived in the United States fewer than three years ago from various parts of the world. The district engaged families in decision-making as part of a Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Initiative. This initiative focuses on helping students, teachers, families, and others work together on education and health issues. To this end, the SS/HS Initiative created an ethnically diverse parent advisory board to provide a forum for family concerns. SS/HS staff worked with the schools to identify a variety of families, not just community leaders. Forty families joined the advisory board; many came as couples, demonstrating their commitment to their children's success. To reach out to immigrants, every flyer, poster, and communication material is translated into Cantonese, Spanish, and Vietnamese, and at every meeting, translations of speakers' comments are provided via headphones.

**Example 2: Family Resources at Franklin-McKinley School District (California).** Parent Resources in the Franklin-McKinley School District in San Jose, California, offer parents a range of learning opportunities. These include parent workshops and support, immigration services and resources, anti-bullying information, information on children's health and nutrition, etc. The district also houses the Family Resource Center that, among other things, provides families with resources for basic needs, such as clothing, food distribution, school supplies, adult education, etc.

**Example 3: Family Resources at South Gate High School (California).** South Gate High School (SGHS) serves a predominantly Latina/o student population. The school website contains a section dedicated entirely to family resources. They include a request for technology help, mental health support resources, information about family workshops, and a link to the district Parent Portal and other resources. Almost all information, including forms that are available through the family resources page, is available in English and in Spanish.





# Newcomer Toolkit

## Chapter 5: Establishing Partnerships With Families

**HANDOUT A:  
Organizing Family and Community Engagement for Impact**

Component 1 Academic Success	Component 2 Advocacy and Decision-Making	Component 3 Awareness and Use of Resources
<b>Opportunities for engagement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directly linked to student grade-level learning goals</li> <li>• About two-way communication and collaboration with teachers and school leaders</li> </ul>	<b>Opportunities for engagement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Related to school academic and nonacademic programming</li> <li>• Connected to exercising advocacy and shared decision-making</li> <li>• About successful transitions</li> </ul>	<b>Opportunities for engagement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linked to social services</li> <li>• Connected to adult education</li> <li>• About information and access to school and community resources</li> </ul>
<b>Impact (why)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family knowledge and understanding of key grade-level learning concepts</li> <li>• Greater ability to apply strategies that support grade-level learning concepts</li> <li>• anywhere and anytime</li> <li>• Strong collaboration between teachers and families</li> <li>• Higher expectations for learning and achievement</li> <li>• Improved student achievement, attendance, and behavior</li> <li>• Family ability and access to monitor progress regularly</li> <li>• Increased interaction with learning between families and their children</li> </ul>	<b>Impact (why)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased family participation in the life of the school community through organized meetings, groups, and committees</li> <li>• Increased knowledge and understanding about families' rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• More families as thought partners for district and school improvement</li> <li>• Access to academic and nonacademic resources and after-school programs</li> <li>• Better understanding of curriculum, academic standards, and benchmarks</li> <li>• Knowledge of district and school vision, mission, and policies</li> <li>• More volunteers supporting the school and all students</li> </ul>	<b>Impact (why)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of partnerships with specialized community organizations</li> <li>• Greater selection of services and resources for families throughout the community</li> <li>• Increased number of academic and nonacademic opportunities for children beyond the school day</li> <li>• Efficient and effective use of fiscal and human resources across the community</li> <li>• An increased number of community organizations engaged in supporting district and school goals</li> </ul>
<b>Approach (how)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing professional learning opportunities for school leaders, teachers, and support staff</li> <li>• Systematic application of research and evidence-based practices in engagements</li> <li>• Personal outreach by teachers</li> <li>• Integration of family engagement into the fabric of teaching and learning</li> <li>• Effective and targeted use of time and human and fiscal resources</li> </ul>	<b>Approach (how)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal invitations</li> <li>• Coordinated parent and family orientation that includes transition years, academic milestones, and college and career readiness</li> <li>• Quarterly newsletter</li> <li>• Structured and targeted open house events</li> <li>• Welcome centers</li> </ul>	<b>Approach (how)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A district/school strategic plan for community partnerships that targets the needs of the school community</li> <li>• An organized family and community engagement leadership team that meets regularly and includes partners across service areas</li> <li>• Marketing</li> </ul>
<b>People Responsible (who)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District/school leadership team</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Parents and families</li> <li>• Support staff</li> <li>• Family and Community Engagement (FACE) coordinators</li> </ul>	<b>People Responsible (who)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District/school leadership team</li> <li>• Family and Community Engagement (FACE) coordinators</li> <li>• Title I staff</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> <li>• Front office staff</li> </ul>	<b>People Responsible (who)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic community partners</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> <li>• Family and Community Engagement (FACE) coordinators</li> <li>• District leadership</li> </ul>

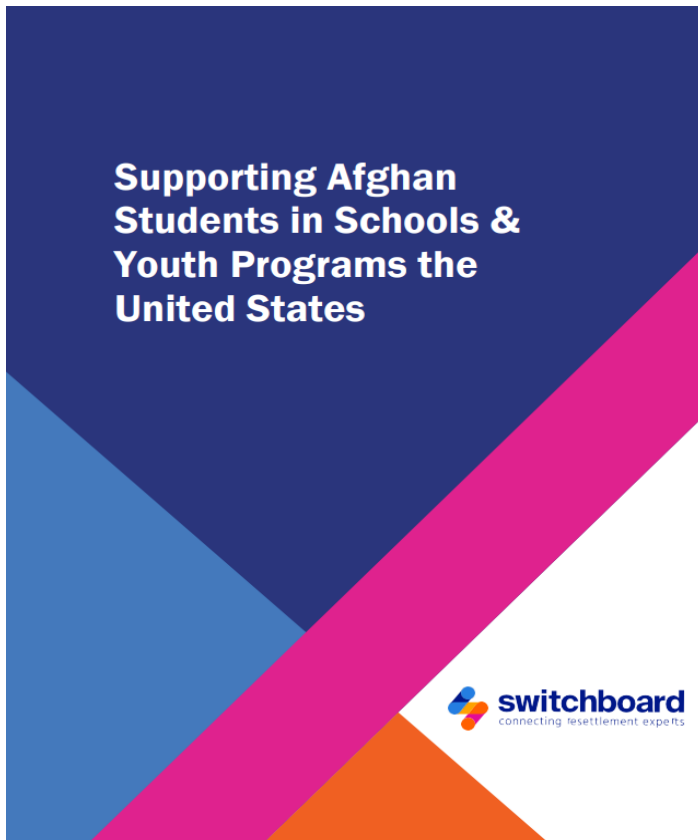
**HANDOUT B:  
Planning Template for Addressing the Three Core Components of Strong Family Engagement Programs**

	Component 1 Academic Success	Component 2 Advocacy and Decision-Making	Component 3 Awareness and Use of Resources
What do newcomer families and staff need to know?			
How will you assess their needs?			
What will be the focus of engagement activities?			
What assets do the families and staff have that can be leveraged?			
Who will be involved in planning the engagement activities?			
How will you create a safe and welcoming environment for participants?			
What capacities need to be developed or strengthened for families and staff to improve the impact of the engagements?			
How will the required capacities be developed for both families and staff?			

Build a common understanding of the core components of strong family engagement programs for newcomers and reflect on your practices related to each component.



# Supporting Afghan Students in Schools & Youth Programs in the United States



- Develop a well-rounded understanding of the circumstances of newly arrived Afghan students and their families, including the challenges they may face as they seek to adapt to the American education system.
- Better understand the Afghan educational systems and possible educational experiences of students.
- Name core considerations for working with Afghan students and their families.
- Adopt skills and strategies that may be helpful in working with Afghan students and families.



# Supporting Afghan Students in Schools & Youth Programs in the United States

## Approaches to Welcome and Support Afghan Students

### Questions Afghan Families May Have About School

- How does the school schedule work? How many teachers will students have? Will students stay in the same classroom all day or go to different classes?
- How do students get to school and home each day? What do students do if they miss the bus? Can students leave school without permission?
- How do school meals and bathroom breaks work? What is the availability of halal food (food permissible to Muslims)?
- Is there space and time for religious students to pray?
- What technology is used in classes and how does one use/access it? (e.g., email, school portals, apps, etc.)
- What type of participation is expected in different classes (academics, physical education, music, etc.)?
- What should students do if they face bullying or feel unsafe?
- What should students do if they need help with schoolwork?
- When and why should students meet with school counselors or other academic advisors?
- What is required to move on to the next grade? To graduate? What are the educational and vocational/experiential steps needed to reach various career goals?

### Checklist: Culturally Responsive Strategies to Build Trust and Rapport with Afghan Students and Families

*This box suggests various strategies which may be adapted for your school or program context. Not all strategies may be possible given resource and capacity limitations, but incorporating as many as is feasible may help Afghan students and families succeed.*

- ❑ Make interpretation readily available, as required by federal law. Go beyond translation apps to offer high-quality in-person, video, or phone interpretation.
- ❑ Try to ensure outreach to female family members is done by female staff (especially early on).
- ❑ Assign each student one teacher, advisor, or peer mentor that they can go with questions, concerns, or just to talk. These trusted contacts can give students space to discuss expectations, upcoming assignments, etc. and reflect on experiences at school so far.
- ❑ Share information about existing opportunities and accommodations for students to adhere to cultural and religious traditions. Explore whether additional accommodations are needed, such as appropriate spaces and time for Muslim students to pray; availability of halal food; or accommodations to uniform or dress codes so that students may wear culturally preferred attire.
- ❑ Clearly explain any situations where students will be asked to stay at school longer than usual, to mitigate any confusion or fear among families when students do not arrive home at the normal time. Plan extra time to talk about extracurricular activities, address concerns, and provide reassurance to increase the likelihood of students, especially girls, being allowed to participate.
- ❑ Partner with Afghan community organizations or volunteers to help educate students about U.S. social norms. Give students concrete examples of acceptable and unacceptable behavior (for instance, explain that labeling others, name-calling, being disrespectful of different faiths or ethnicities, etc., are not acceptable and that students may get in trouble for these behaviors).
- ❑ Provide home visits rather than asking families to come into the office (e.g., for sensitive conversations or to share information about school town halls, parent-teacher conferences, parent-teacher associations, etc.). If families are connected with resettlement agencies, consider involving their caseworkers or other relevant service providers.
- ❑ Facilitate activities for the entire family to promote engagement and relationship building between families and school staff. For instance, create an affinity group for Afghan students and families where learning and resource sharing among families could be facilitated.
- ❑ If you have a number of Afghan families coming to your school or school district, explore whether families would like to participate in gender-specific meetings or focus groups to share information about how to best engage with them and support students. Ask families if they would like to co-facilitate such meetings with school personnel. Ensure Dari and/or Pashto interpretation will be provided as needed.



# Supporting Afghan Students in Schools & Youth Programs in the United States

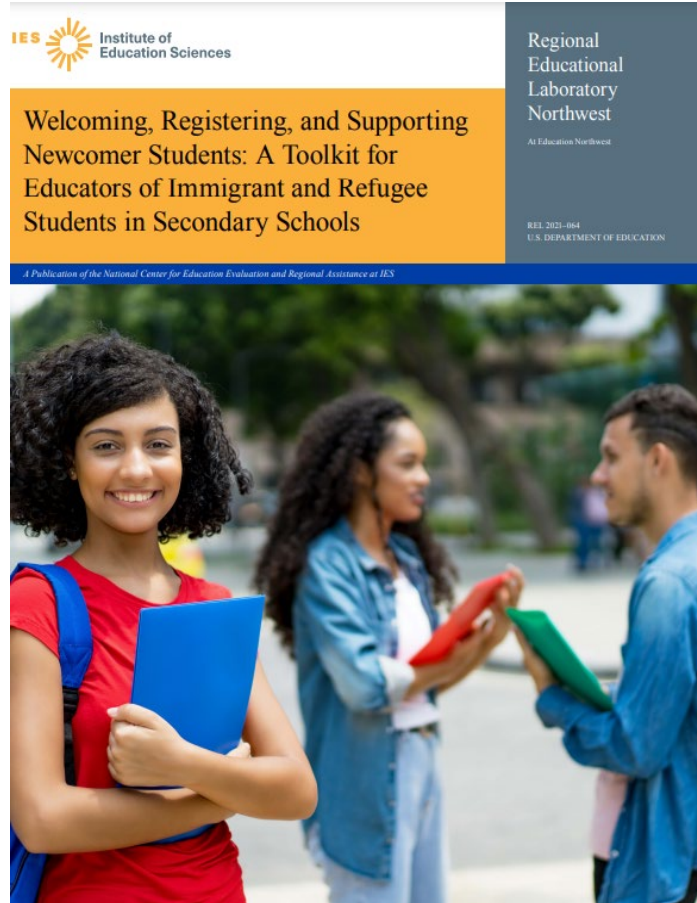
## Considerations for Working with Afghan Students and Families

### Sample Scripts: Engaging with Family Members

- Thank you for everything you have done to support [student name] as they transition to a new school. Is there anything I can do to help right now?
- I recognize how much new information you're hearing. It can be overwhelming learning so much information so quickly.
- When it comes to [student name]'s education, what is the most important thing to you right now?
- I understand you have concerns about [topic]. Can you tell me more about what you think?
- It sounds like you are thinking that [summarize viewpoint]. Did I get that right? Did I get anything wrong?
- Thank you for sharing your perspective with me. Would it be useful for me to explain [topic] further, to help you make a decision?
- I respect your decision. I'm always happy to talk to you about this again. If you have further questions or thoughts on [topic], please contact me at [contact information].



# Welcoming, Registering, and Supporting Newcomer Students: A Toolkit for Educators of Immigrant and Refugee Students in Secondary Schools



- Identify and use research-based practices, policies, and procedures.
- Welcome and engage newcomer immigrant and refugee students.
- Register newcomer immigrant and refugee students.
- Build educators' capacity to support newcomer immigrant and refugee students.
- Support newcomer immigrant and refugee students.



# Welcoming, Registering, and Supporting Newcomer Students: A Toolkit for Educators of Immigrant and Refugee Students in Secondary Schools

## Welcome and Engage Newcomer Immigrant and Refugee Student Families

### WELCOME AND ENGAGE NEWCOMER IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

*"It is difficult for immigrant families and schools to build relationships across multiple lines of difference, including language, culture, race, country of origin, and educational norms of family participation and discipline .... Working together, teachers and immigrant families can engage in the kind of communication that links school- and home-based learning to improve academic achievement." (Dryden-Peterson, 2018, p. 487)*

Welcoming and engaging newcomer immigrant and refugee students and their families is an important step for schools. Building culturally responsive, relationship-based partnerships with families can support future engagement and involvement, which can in turn improve student outcomes (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Dryden-Peterson, 2018; Niehaus & Adelson, 2014; Wilder, 2014).

Immigrant and refugee families face unique challenges as they engage in their children's education, including language barriers and lack of familiarity with the host country's education system (Antony-Newman, 2019). Specifically, immigrant and refugee families in the United States might not know enough about the U.S. education system and its norms to support their children in U.S. schools, and they might not know what expectations the U.S. school system has for how parents engage with their child's learning (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Dryden-Peterson, 2018; Short & Boyson, 2012). In addition, educators might not recognize families' efforts to engage because those efforts occur through organizations and social networks outside the school or outside the school's knowledge (Poza et al., 2014).

Educators and schools can support immigrant and refugee families as they learn about the U.S. education system and about their expected roles in their child's learning and engagement with the school (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Parents' involvement in their child's education is linked to improved academic achievement, including higher assessment scores and grades, as well

#### The meaning of "family"

Some immigrant and refugee students arrive in the United States with their parents. Others arrive with more distant relatives or guardians who may not be



# Learn from Each Other

What tools or resources have helped you with family engagement?

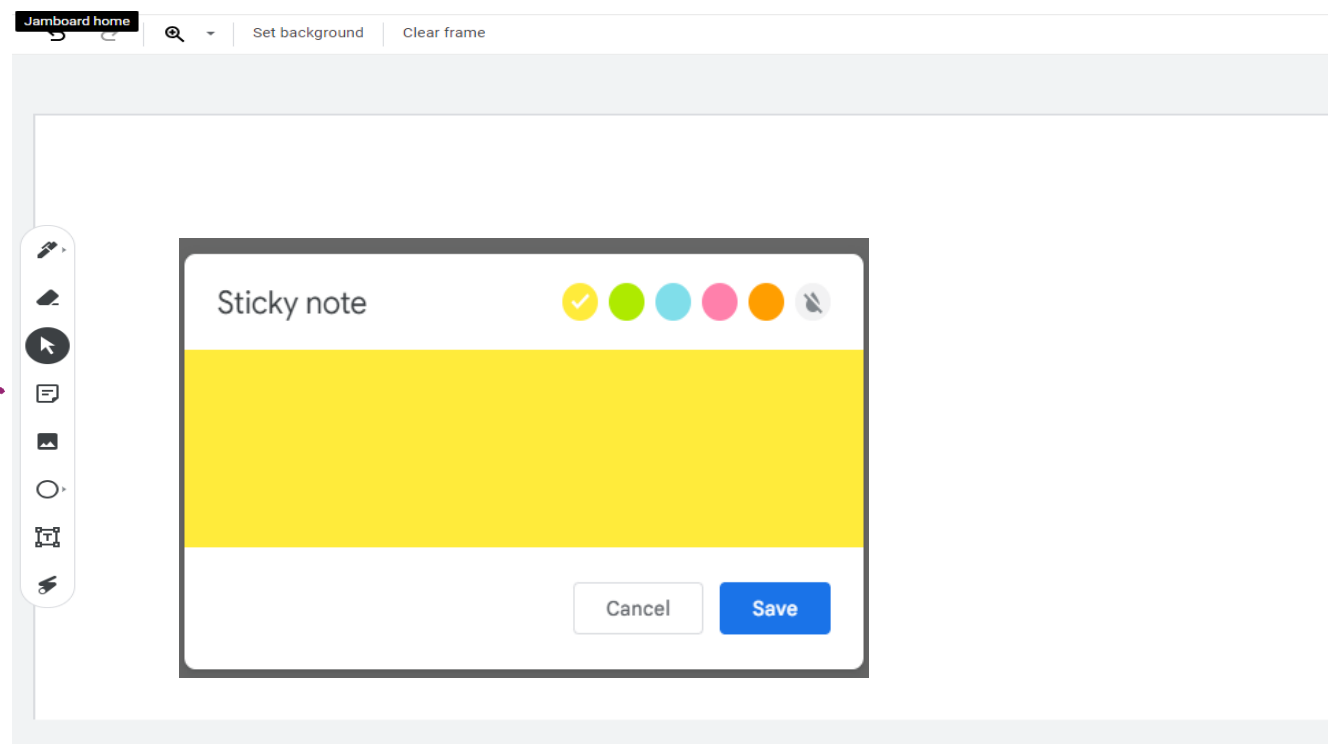




# Jamboard 101

Move between pages  
using the arrows

Use this icon to  
add a note.  
When you click  
it, an empty  
note will  
appear.



Choose your color,  
add text, and click  
"save." You can  
then drag your  
note where you  
want it to be.





# Call to Action: Breakout Rooms





# Instructions

- Divide into 4 groups.
- Individually, spend 5 minutes reflecting and responding to the prompt: **What new strategy/practice can I use when working with newcomer families?**
- As you reflect, consider the following guiding questions:
  - When could this strategy/practice be implemented?
  - What would it take to implement this strategy/practice?
- Share your ideas with the group – small and/or whole!



# Coming Back Together





# My Personal Commitment

What is one thing you plan to do differently in your work with Afghan refugee families?

The image shows a digital workspace titled "My personal commitment". On the left side, there is a vertical toolbar with icons for editing, erasing, moving, and other drawing tools. The main area is a white canvas with the title "My personal commitment" at the top. On the canvas, there are four colored squares: a yellow square, a green square, a cyan square, and an orange square, arranged in a slightly irregular horizontal line.



# Additional Resources

- [Creating a Welcoming and Healing Environment for Newly Arriving Afghan Children and Families](#)
- [Educational Experiences Of Afghans: Learning From Afghan Refugee Students & Families](#)
- [Welcoming Afghan Students And Families: A Workshop For US Educators](#)
- [How Schools Can Partner with Afghan Refugee Families](#)
- [Welcoming Afghan Families: Lessons Learned from Austin ISD](#)



## Questions/Comments?

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# Thank you!