

## **A plan to support our city's newcomers**

The City School District of Albany's proposed 2017-18 budget includes funding for a new program to serve the city's rapidly growing population of refugee and immigrant families.

Starting in September, the Newcomer Program will serve about 175 students in grades 6-12 whose English is limited enough to merit extra help and attention in all subjects. The program will be based at North Albany Academy and serve students throughout the district.



The rapid increase in the number of Albany's refugee and immigrant students – quadrupling in the past five years to more than 1,200 – spurred creation of the program. So did stringent state regulations on how to serve English-language learners. The new program will help the district meet these new state directives.

In a district in which students speak 57 languages, a Newcomer Program is the most cost-effective way to provide English-language learners with the programs and supports they need while also complying with new state regulations.

The Newcomer Program would cost less per year than providing the state-mandated services for the same number of students across the district's 17 district schools.

It's expected that students will spend an average of two years in the program, gaining the language skills and academic foundation they would need to transition successfully to their assigned schools.

The 2017-18 budget supports seven new positions in the Newcomer Program: a principal, secretary and five teachers. Another 10 teachers will transfer to the program from elsewhere in the district.

The district hopes to expand the program to add students in grades 3-5 for the 2018-19 school year.