

# Immigrants, an asset to the Lennox School District



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(LSSA)

# Lennox, California

- 1.3 square mile radius
- Unincorporated, politically underrepresented part of Los Angeles County
- “Port of Entry” area - Lennox - 1st stop in U.S.
- More than 45,000 residents
- 95% Hispanic/Latino

- Nearly 65% of Lennox residents (most from Mexico and Central America) have resided in U.S. less than 5 years.
- More than 85% of Lennox families are Spanish language dominant.
- 95% of student population qualify for free/reduced cost lunches.
- As many as 35% of Lennox families live in sub-standard conditions.

# Lennox School District

- Five elementary schools - total 3,764 K-5th grade students
- Lennox Middle School (LMS6 and LMS 7/8) - 1,972 students
- 3 school readiness centers (4th will open this Fall) - population - birth to 4 years old - 150 families
- Preschool program - approx. 550 families
- 92% Latino
- Immigrant community
- School district provides services to entire community

# How does Lennox School District address immigration issues?

- Bilingual staff - almost every teacher and all administrators and office staff speak Spanish - requirement for employment
- Welcoming environment for students and families
- School staff culturally understand families
- Every school has a school counselor who is bilingual
- Intake process of new students - academic screening in English and Spanish

- During student intake - seek place of birth and number of years in the country to determine the best way to serve student and family i.e. needs for housing, medical, dental, mental health, etc.
- Services sometimes provided free of charge through Healthy Start and collaborations with community agencies.
- District does not ask for any immigration documentation. Only ask for student's birth certificate but it does not matter from where.

- Every school has a parent center and parent coordinator who are bilingual. They provide assistance to parents i.e. English classes, community resources, place to talk, etc.
- District offers healthy start clinic that provides medical and dental services for families.
- District offers tutoring and academic programs during the day and after school programs until 6 pm for students.

- All communication that goes home is in English and Spanish.
- ConnectEd - calls in English and Spanish, also addresses literacy issue of parents.
- District and community provides annual cultural events i.e. Cinco de Mayo parade, Lennox Family Festival and individual school/classroom cultural events.
- Involve families - view parents as a resource.



- The district does not provide Medical services or partners with any agencies that do.
- These services do not work in Lennox because of the concern with immigration and documentation.

## District views itself as the “service delivery vehicle” in the community

- As such it has successfully brought grants to the district to address risk factors of students and their families.
- District has established long term collaborative partnerships to bring prevention, intervention and other services to school sites.
- Having services on site at schools reduces barriers to service delivery.
- For example, SS/HS - Lennox Safe Schools Alliance (LSSA)

# Risk Factors of Immigrant Students and Families

- Communication gap between children and their parents as children learn English and assimilate and parents do not
- Gang Involvement/Community Violence
- Alcohol/Drug use
- Low academic level of students and parents
- Low literacy level of parents

# Risk Factors continued

- Parents often work multiple jobs to survive, children are often unsupervised or given adult responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings.
- Students sometimes miss school to care for siblings or act as translator for parents.

# Strengths of Immigrant Students and Families

- Strong extended family
- Support system
- Language - use Spanish to learn English
- Children are resilient

# How SS/HS - Lennox Safe Schools Alliance addresses immigration issues?

- Majority of project staff speak Spanish and are Latino/a
- Clinical translator for mental health therapists who do not speak Spanish
- All materials provided in English and Spanish
- Large parent component - educate parents about violence, alcohol and drug prevention