

# Refugees find new life, solace in the hands of HDSB

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"We are grateful for the opportunity to support our Federal and Provincial governments in this humanitarian cause."

The following actions are being taken by the Halton District School Board to ensure a successful transition for Syrian refugees:

- With support from, and in consultation with, the Ministry of Education and the Federal government, the Halton District School Board will help settle Syrian refugees and integrate them into our communities, through our Welcome Centre, and into our elementary and secondary schools.

- Halton District School Board representatives are coordinating efforts with Provincial and Municipal governments, as well as with numerous other stakeholder groups (e.g., Region of Halton, Halton Multicultural Council, etc.)

- All students who are new to the Halton District School Board and who speak a language other than English as their first language visit the Welcome Centre as their point of entry to receive settlement supports and academic assessments.

- The Halton District School Board's School Programs department is developing English Literacy Development (ELD) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programming and instructional supports and resources for teachers.

- ESL instructional program leaders, in coordination with the Welcome Centre and schools, will support classroom learning and co-curricular experiences in academically appropriate and culturally responsive and relevant approaches. Examples of some resources developed include Q&A scenario-based documents, lesson plans appropriate to English Proficiency Assessment levels and entry points within the

grade and subject curriculum, Arabic specific teaching tools and lessons to include all students in literacy learning through Arabic/English translation.

- A central resource teacher will be assigned to assist with the process of coordinating support for schools for ESL and ELD students. Based on volume and levels of language proficiency, schools may need assistance in integrating refugee students.

- School administrators will attend professional learning sessions with their ESL/ELD teachers to learn about targeted and focused supports for welcoming students and families, engaging newcomer families into school

life, and developing a support network to enhance and enrich the learning experiences and inclusion of all newcomers in their communities.

- Ongoing support for all newcomers to the Halton District School Board includes orientation programs about the Ontario educational system and requirements. Newcomers are also provided information about the processes and programs specific to the Halton District School Board, the provision of interpretation services, as well as the translation of Board and school documents. Furthermore, information about parent and student engagement through Commu-

nity Connects programming is available to promote academic success and social and emotional health.

- The Halton District School Board welcomes donations through its 'Fill A Backpack' campaign and/or other donations of school supplies and clothing (e.g., winter jackets) through the Welcome Centre. Information about the 'Fill A Backpack' campaign can be found on the board website at [www.hdsb.ca](http://www.hdsb.ca) by searching 'Fill A Backpack' or 'Welcome Centre'.

- Many schools are engaged in initiatives to support Syrian refugees as they arrive and continue to grow and learn and become members of our Halton communities. For example, Oodenawi Public School in Oakville has developed 'play kits' to provide to students when they arrive at the Welcome Centre. The Halton Learning Foundation provides donations to students in need, including Syrian refugees.



Halton District School Board

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