

ESL Newcomer Academy

ESL Newcomer Academy is home to JCPS' fastest-growing demographic. Hundreds of beginning English learner students, grades six to ten, enroll throughout the year at the Newcomer Academy to acquire basic English and continue their grade-level coursework. Students typically stay for one year, but some stay an additional year to help catch-up on missed formal education. Students transition to middle and high schools throughout JCPS and continue to receive ESL services.

ESL NCA enrolls students year-round. As immigrants and refugees become part of our community, their school-aged children are enrolled in school. The student population at ESL NCA typically doubles over the course of the year. Approximately 90% participate in the Free/Reduced price lunch program and over 50% are homeless (McKinney Vento). 704 students were enrolled at ESL NCA at the end of 2015-16. 908 students enrolled by the end of the 2016-17 school year. Students speak over thirty primary languages at ESL NCA. The largest language group is over half the school's population (Spanish). 50% of our teaching staff is from an international background, including Cuba, Bhutan, Puerto Rico, Bosnia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Barbados, Ukraine, and Venezuela. We learn from each other via the rich diversity of our students and staff, striving to build a stronger global community for both our school and our city with this new-found knowledge.

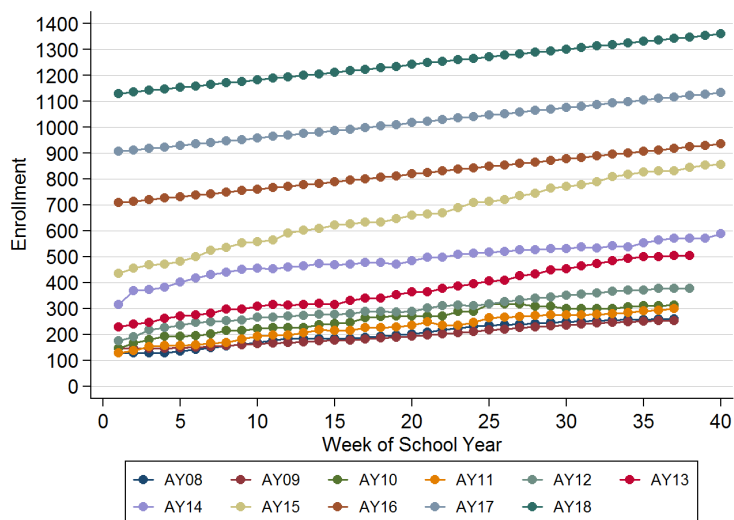


Certified teachers at ESL Newcomer Academy are highly qualified in ESL and their subject areas. Teachers use research-based instructional methods of sheltered instruction for English Language Learners. All instruction is in English, with support provided in native languages when suitable. Students are scheduled into learning communities based on their academic and linguistic needs. These strands include grade-level sheltered content classes, literacy and numeracy development emphasis for students missing more than two years of formal education and who will return the second year to NCA, and intervention strands with more math or literacy built into daily instruction. Teachers share common

groups of students, and meet in Professional Learning Communities to analyze students' academic language development via interdisciplinary common language assessments.

The ESL Newcomer Academy was established during the 2006-2007 school year. It was a small program, ending the year with under 200 students. Staffing consisted of a resource teacher, a couple of BAIs, and 8 teachers. Over the years, student enrollment gradually grew (see chart).

Students enroll all year and exit our program at the end of the school year. End of year movement to a new school allows



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our students to begin the following school year with their new classmates, thus providing for a more seamless transition. Students' ACCESS scores (usually released in April) drive the transition decision. Then, students are placed via student assignment to their new schools.

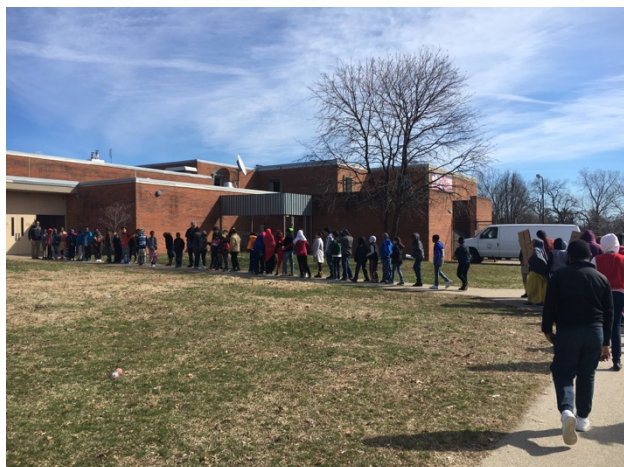
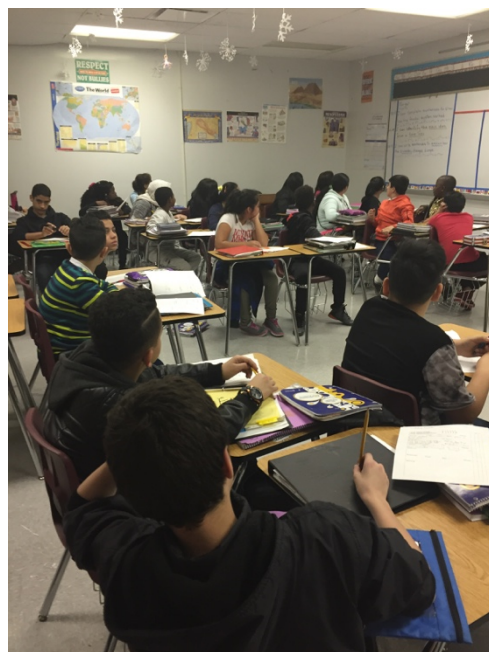
In the early stages of our program, funding for teachers was based on end of year capacities. Students enroll all year, but transition only at the end of the school year. With end of year enrollment in mind for staffing, classes can start with 10 to 15 students, and grow into their cap-sizes (29 or 31 – the same as all JCPS schools, based on the JCBE-JCTA contractual agreement.) The smaller class sizes at the beginning of the year allow teachers to build strong foundations in the classroom to foster positive interactions among students and establish routines. Less instruction was lost this way, compared to our present system of starting-up new sections with new teachers throughout the year.

As the school continued to grow, funding, staffing, and accommodating enrollment growth changed.

In 2013-14, Shawnee's chemistry lab and three classrooms inside of the Northwest Neighborhood Place were added mid-year to accommodate growth. Four new teachers were also added. In the middle of the 2014-15 school year, four classes in the old Myers building (currently Phoenix) along with four additional teachers. A team of 6th and 7th grade students were moved to this building, along with our strongest teachers, to help offset overcrowding. Moving the strongest teachers was crucial, as we were only staffed with one Principal and one counselor to support teacher needs in two buildings.

In 2015-16, three more classrooms were added at Shawnee, with four more teachers, during the late fall. Restroom access at Shawnee has become a challenge, as students stay within the Newcomer part of the building – nine comodes/urinals serve 550+ students. Students are escorted by classes to the restrooms throughout the day to prevent overcrowding during transition times. In the early spring, an additional three classrooms were added to Phoenix, along with four more teachers. More students were moved mid-year with their team to accommodate this growth. At the end of the year, we were funded for an Assistant Principal to support the Phoenix campus, and second counselor.

During the 2016-2017 school-year, we were awarded funding for twelve more teachers and three BAIs in October. While it was a challenge to increase teaching staff mid-year by 33%, we were successful in hiring qualified new candidates. Three more rooms were added to Phoenix in January, along with four more teachers. Teachers at Phoenix moved their classrooms for the third time in one year to accommodate our growth into their building mid-year. As 12 teachers shared 10 classrooms, finding room for teachers to plan, staff to meet with parents, and support for student interventions was a challenge at Phoenix. There was a small office (about 8' by 15' where the assistant principal and BAIs work, alongside of teachers planning, and a student and parent meeting space. All other rooms are occupied every



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minute of the day. A month later, instructional staff at Gheens relocated their second-floor offices to provide us with eight more classrooms. Again, students and teachers were moved. The facilities at Gheens were exceptional, but we were challenged by transitions to Male High School's cafeteria, which involved crossing around the parking lot and loss of instructional time.

As our school continues to increase enrollment, special considerations need immediate attention. While we are still under one cost center, and one set of administrative supports, we have currently spread out over three locations to accommodate our growth. A retired administrator with considerable administrative experience but limited ESL methodology background, was added to support the third location during the Spring of 2017. This funding has not been re-allocated. Adding new teachers throughout the school year has proven to be a considerable challenge. Our program requires that teachers have expertise in both English language development and in specified content areas. As we have increased our teaching staff 33%, we have not been able to increase our resources for these new teachers starting mid-year, especially pertaining to ESL methodological support. Instructional and clerical resources have been spread out to accommodate the third campus. Bilingual Associate Instructors, the mental health therapist, resource teacher, and principal visit each campus on a schedule. Records, attendance, payroll, transportation, scheduling, and ordering/receiving are conducted from a centralized location for all three campuses. With multiple campuses, it is challenging to ensure the safety of students as daily routines take place, such as adequate supervision during transitions and responding to individual student needs.