Guidance for Schools in Welcoming Students with Disabilities Arriving in New York City

You, or your designee, must ensure all staff are prepared to welcome students with disabilities—including students in temporary housing (STH) and those whose families are seeking asylum—as they arrive to your school.

As a reminder, when a student with a disability relocates to New York City, and the family provides a non-DOE IEP (or equivalent document from their home country), a Comparable Service Plan (CSP) must be developed to provide the student with services comparable to those described in the non-DOE IEP. This plan must be implemented until a new IEP has been developed by the DOE. Note that if a non-DOE IEP and/or supporting materials are not immediately available—which is the case with most asylees—self-reported information from the family should be used to create the CSP, as appropriate.

Additionally, note that it is possible for families seeking asylum to first go to a Family Welcome Center (FWC), the Committee on Special Education (CSE), or your school to enroll their child. If the family goes to the FWC first, the FWC will assign school placement and the CSP should be created at the assigned school. If the family goes to a CSE first, the CSE will assign school placement and create the CSP for the student. If families arrive at your school first to enroll their child, you should create and implement the CSP, then initiate the referral process to evaluate them for special education services going forward.

For additional information on CSPs, review the Creating the Comparable Service Plan section (page 104) in the Special Education Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM) and Completing a CSP in SESIS. For guidance related to special education referral and evaluation for students, review Considerations for Students in Temporary Housing in the SOPM. For guidance in supporting students who have experienced trauma, review Considering Trauma in Special Education Evaluations and IEP Development.

For questions regarding CSPs, contact your administrator for special education (ASE). For questions regarding initial referrals and evaluations, contact your supervisor of school psychologists. For guidance on enrollment procedures, contact your FWC.