The California Newcomer Education and Well-Being (CalNEW) project provides funding to school districts with a significant number of eligible students to improve their well-being, English-language proficiency, and academic performance.

**Purpose:**
CalNEW project funding is intended to assist school districts in planning, designing, and implementing supplementary instructional and social adjustment support services including non-clinical approaches to mitigate youth mental health needs. The CalNEW project fosters collaborative relationships between participating school districts, community based organizations, and service providers.

**Objectives:**
- Improve
  - Well-being and mental health;
  - English-language proficiency;
  - Academic performance;
  - School attendance;
  - High school diploma and California High School Equivalency Certificate attainment; and
  - Coordination between schools and local service provider networks.
- Increase
  - The number of eligible students who meet grade level requirements;
  - Likelihood of student self-sufficiency;
  - Student and family participation in school activities; and
  - Collaboration between participating school districts, the newcomer community, service providers, and community based organizations.

**Background:**
The terms “newcomer(s)” and “eligible students” includes: (1) refugees; (2) asylees; (3) Cuban and Haitian entrants; (4) certain Amerasians from Vietnam; (5) victims of severe forms of trafficking who receive certification or an eligibility letter from ORR and certain other specified family members of trafficking victims; (6) children classified as Special Immigrant Juveniles receiving services from ORR-funded Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program; (7) Iraqi and Afghan children with Special Immigrant Visa status; and (8) unaccompanied undocumented minors.

Newcomer students face unique challenges as they may have interrupted formal education and unmet mental health needs due to adverse childhood experiences such as violence, torture, and separation from immediate family and close relatives. This trauma may be further compounded by acculturation and isolation stressors which may manifest themselves in the form of high risk behavior and youth dropping out of school; escalating obstacles that impede their integration.

The parents, guardians, and sponsors confront their own barriers as they may not be fully aware of the magnitude of the cultural and academic demands posed by schools on their children and may lack an overall awareness or understanding of the educational system in the United States. Most newcomer households also live in poverty and need supports to help meet basic needs.

The CalNEW project aims to assist newcomers as they confront these challenges by providing programming that fosters well-being, improved academic performance, and self-sufficiency through supplemental education and social services. Ultimately empowering eligible students and their families to successfully integrate, grow, and thrive in California communities.

For more information, contact the Refugee Programs Bureau at rpb@dss.ca.gov or (916) 654-4356. http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Refugees