Edwin's Story: Whole-School, Whole-Child, Whole-Community (WSCC) Problem-Solving

Edwin, a new student at Ellen Ochoa, arrived in the United States from Guatemala last year and attended two other schools before joining Ms. Owen's fourth-grade class. He is extremely polite and adept at navigating daily social and cultural interactions, smiling and saying "hello" to teachers and classmates each morning, using "please" and "thank you" without prompting and "bathroom, please" and "thank you" when given permission. Ms. Owen and Ms. Tigue, his ESOL teacher, set up a meeting in early October with Edwin's aunt, Mayra, with whom he is living until his parents are able to immigrate. By scheduling an interpreter to attend the meeting with the help of their community/school liaison, Ms. Herrera, they are able to learn from Mayra that before immigrating last year, Edwin lived in rural Guatemala and did not attend school, making this his first school experience. His teachers emphasize how well Edwin is doing socially, that he has a positive and motivated attitude toward learning and adapting to school routines and culture. Also, his teachers share their observation with his aunt that he is an excellent artist and enthusiastic soccer player, pointing out the banner of flags Edwin helped to make with classmates illustrating the flags of teams in the European professional soccer (football) league that he follows. Mayra smiles and points out one of the flags to share that they are very big fans of the FC Barcelona Club.

Next, they share initial academic pre-assessment data, including evidence that Edwin is able to add and subtract some single-digit numbers, but struggles to add and subtract larger numbers or answer addition and subtraction word problems that are translated into Spanish. They arrange for Edwin to join a schoolwide math intervention group that meets every morning in the computer lab during arrival to log on to Fast Math, an evidence-based software program that builds number sense and math fluency. Because Edwin eats the free breakfast provided for all students in the school, they assure Mayra that he can take the breakfast with him to eat in the computer lab while using the computer program. Ms. Tigue had already asked cafeteria staff if they could provide 100% juice pouches in their daily breakfast options as the computer teacher had also agreed to allow these in the lab, as they are not as easily spilled as cartons of milk or juice.

During their meeting, Mayra shares that Edwin loves to go to the library to watch professional soccer games replayed online, as he doesn't have access to the internet at home. Ms. Owen models to Mayra (and later to Edwin in class), how to log on to Fast Math at the local library. They also show Mayra other websites that he can access for free at the library to reinforce math and reading fluency, including Tumble Books and Kids A–Z, where he can read along and listen to audio books read in Spanish and English. As an aside, they also point out the free access to Rosetta Stone, as Mayra shared that since immigrating to the United States three years ago, she has been attending ESOL classes at a local church. Edwin usually goes to these classes with her and enjoys using the computers available there, so Ms. Tigue shows Mayra how to log into the library website using a library card.

The school team members collaborated with one another and engaged Edwin's family to nurture his academic growth, as well as his overall health and well-being. They demonstrated the WSCC model by utilizing interpreting services provided by their school system, assessing and responding to assessment results by placing Edwin in an evidence-based Tier 2 intervention, gaining new knowledge about his academic background through a face-to-face meeting, emphasizing his strengths as a learner during their meeting, ensuring his physical needs are met by prioritizing access to free breakfast options every day, and assisting Edwin and Mayra with navigating and effectively utilizing technology available to them in their local community.