

## Welcoming Newcomers to a Safe and Thriving School Environment

Schools, local education agencies (LEAs), and state education agencies (SEAs) should, for instance, strive to increase awareness and understanding of the legal precedents that laid the foundation for newcomers to receive educational services in the United States. Here are some examples:

In [Lau v. Nichols \(1974\)](#), the Supreme Court ruled that in order for school districts to comply with their legal obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), they must take affirmative steps to ensure that ELs can meaningfully participate in their educational programs and services.

In [Plyler v. Doe \(1982\)](#), the Supreme Court ruled that states cannot constitutionally deny students a free public education based on their immigration status.

In [Castañeda v. Pickard \(1981\)](#), the Fifth Circuit Court established a three-part test to evaluate the adequacy of a district's program for ELs, and that test is used by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights in evaluating school districts' and states' compliance with the civil rights laws.