

# The NYSABE Bilingual Times

Page 1

SPRING 2019 Issue



New York University  
Metropolitan Center for Research  
on Equity and the Transformation of  
Schools

726 Broadway, 5th Floor  
New York, N.Y. 10003

WWW.NYSABE.NET

Executive Director  
Nancy Villarreal de Adler

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

Rebecca Elías

### President-elect

Alicia Báez-Barinas

### Secretary

Jacqueline LeRoy

### Treasurer

Dr. Maite Sánchez

### Vice-Treasurer

Lyda Ragonese

### Past President

Iraida Bodré

## DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

### Regional Delegates

#### Region I/Long Island

Brenda Bazalar

Luisa Rojas

#### Region II/ New York City

Eva García

Luis Quan

#### Region III/Mid-Hudson

Adrienne Viscardi

Dr. Heather H. Woodley

#### Region IV/Central

Jacqueline LeRoy

Lyda Ragonese

#### Region V/Rochester

Lourdes Roa

#### Region VI/Western New York

Michael J. Duffy

Petra Mencía

### Delegates-at-Large

Alicia Báez-Barinas

Cynthia J. Felix

Wilfredo García

Dr. Maite Sánchez

Dr. Claire Sylvan

### Parents-at-Large

Dr. Ivana Espinet

Dr. Kate Menken

### Language Delegates

Abdulilah Al-Dubai, **Arabic**

Nancy King Wang, **Chinese**

Marie-Alix Emmanuel, **Haitian**

Dr. Miriam Eisenstein Ebsworth, **Hebrew**

Dr. Hyunjoo Kwon, **Korean**

Eliezer Hernández, **Spanish**



Rebecca Elías

## A Message from the President

# WELCOME

HAPPY SPRING, NYSABE MEMBERS –

Time has flown by fast! Spring is here, and the weather is finally wonderful. Trees are budding, flowers are blooming, and birds are flying about. Our students are also blooming as they near the end of this academic year. I have traveled to many schools throughout New York State and have had the privilege of working with their multilingual learners (MLLs) and teachers. At each school, teachers and administrators have told me how much students have grown; how all the work that they have put into their learning is helping them to blossom.

We cannot forget the important role that teachers play in the growth of their

students. For that reason, I am very proud to share the success of our 42nd annual conference, *Transforming Language Learners, Their Multiliteracies, and the World through Bilingual Education*. During the conference, parents, teachers, and administrators were given the opportunity to confer with other parents and professionals in the field of bilingual education. The conference was a conduit to continued professional development. Some of the best thinkers in the field of bilingual education were part of this year's event. As we near the end of this academic year, I am proud to celebrate the continued focus on our priorities:

**(Continued on next page)**

## Inside this issue

- Ensuring adequate and equitable instruction for all English Language Learners (ELLs) and Multilingual Learners (MLLs) in the State of New York, including students with disabilities
  - Promoting high-quality Bilingual Education programs through the refinement of the Professional Standards for Bilingual Education
  - Building our organizational capacity to carry out our annual plan and sustain our growth as we move ahead
  - Strengthening our connections and collaborations with our members, families, and partners.
- It was through working with our school districts, partner organizations, and the

State Department of Education that we could have such a successful conference and develop such a promising advocacy agenda. I look forward to finishing this academic year strong.

Sincerely,

**Rebecca Elías**  
*NYSABE President, 2018–2019*

## A Note from the Editor

HOŞGELDİNİZ  
BIENVENIDOS



Heather Homonoff Woodley, PhD

We are proud to bring you this issue of *The Bilingual Times*, the NYSABE newsletter, for spring 2019. It has been a busy season for NYSABE with our annual conference (look out for conference coverage in our summer issue!) and advocacy projects throughout the state. We marched to end family separation, we made calls to increase state funding for bilingual education, and we connected with schools, families and communities in the fight for equitable education. We also made ourselves and our messages known in the political arena with a legislative breakfast in Buffalo and a community-organized town hall dialogue featuring U.S. Representative

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, NY State Senators Jessica Ramos and John Liu, and other local legislators. This spring issue of our newsletter highlights some of these recent events and how we can bring advocacy into the multilingual classroom as well in our everyday work as educators. We are proud of the impact that NYSABE can have as a place to build advocates and leaders for bilingual education, multilingual learners, their families and communities, and we recognize that whether our advocates wield a megaphone or a piece of chalk, there is power and promise in all.



## Hasta Luego, Angélica Infante-Green!



María V. Díaz, EdD

*"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night" could keep enthusiastic attendees from celebrating the newly appointed Rhode Island Education Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green on Thursday, May 31, 2019.*

Surrounded by Lady Liberty and animated by Lisette Colón-Colins and Dr. Anthony Green, numerous guests toasted Angélica's most recent achievement. These included former Secretary of Education Dr. John King, New York State Education Commissioner Mary Ellen Elia, Board of Regents Chancellor Dr. Betty A. Rosa, Board of Regents Member Dr. Luis O. Reyes, and representing NYSABE, Executive Director Nancy Villarreal de Adler, among others. Rounding out the speakers was New York City Department of Education's Chancellor Richard A. Carranza who, in addition to sharing his congratulations and praise for Angélica, serenaded her and her wonderful husband, Dr. Anthony Green, by strumming his guitar and singing "So-

mos Novios/It's Impossible." Sending his love and admiration to his mommy from the podium was Angélica's son Asher.

Angélica was clearly moved by the special magnitude of this tribute. She took the time to reflect on the recent loss of her beloved cousin Juan Heriberto Medrano and the importance of being faithful to our work. "What will our legacy be?" she reflected. "It is about our students and the doors that we help them open."

Among tears and smiles, those present felt pride in reflecting on Angélica's journey as an educator in New York City and how wise Rhode Island has been in selecting her to steer their school system in the right direction. Angélica pondered

what the people of Rhode Island will say about her in the next six months. She shouldn't worry since she lives by the words of Donald McGannon, former president of the National Urban League who stated, "Leadership is not a position or a title, it is action and example." We know that as the students, families and communities of Rhode Island get to know her and see as she works by action and example, they will agree that she is one of a kind.

Completing our salute that magical evening was an energetic DJ (female, of course) that got everyone on their feet.

Yes, oh what a night it was!





# Cross-Language Connections in Bilingual Education



Hulda Yau  
Bilingual Teacher,  
Rochester City School District

*The roots of the term education imply drawing out children's potential, making them more than they were; however, when children come to school fluent in their primary language, and they leave school essentially monolingual in English, then our schools have negated the meaning of the term education, because they have made children less than they were. (Mary Ashworth, cited in Cummins, 1989)*

Today, many schools continue to promote a subtractive view of bilingualism and see students' home language as a barrier to their achievement. As educators, we need to support bilingual students' self-worth and identity as they maintain their home language and develop strong English language literacy competencies that give them a chance at economic advancement.

Bilingual students do not have a language deficit they need to overcome. They have a highly complex language system that can serve as a resource to transform their learning as they attain English proficiency and develop high levels of academic achievement. I agree with Dr. Ofelia Garcia when she states, "...there is a growing dissonance between research on the education of minoritized emergent bilinguals, policy enacted to educate them and the practice we observe in schools" (Garcia, 2018). We need to bridge this gap by calling for educational policies that take into account bilingual students' linguistic and cultural resources for learning

According to psycholinguistics and neuroscience researchers, bilinguals experience significant cognitive advantages because they constantly interact with the world through two languages.

Using cross-language connections in the classroom can benefit and increase bilingual students' academic performance. Cross-language connection is the ability to use one language to analyze and understand a second language. When students are able to make connections between two languages, they develop metacognitive abilities and gain understanding on how their languages are the same and how they are different. Creating hybrid language spaces for cross-language connections allow students the opportunity to apply features learned in one language to another. When taking a holistic approach to educating bilinguals we must consider the development of metalanguage.

There are many definitions for metalanguage but I found the definition stated in *Biliteracy from the Start* to be comprehensive and important to share in its totality.

**Metalanguage is thinking and talking about language, and, in the case of biliteracy, understanding the relationships between and within languages. It is the language used to talk about language, and its mastery allows students to analyze how language can be leveraged to express**

**meaning. The development of metalanguage includes the ability to identify, analyze, and manipulate language forms, and to analyze sounds, symbols, grammar, vocabulary, and language structures between and within languages. It has been identified as one of three fundamental skills, along with psycholinguistic abilities to decode and comprehend, required for a person to become literate (Bialystok, 2007; Koda & Zehler, 2008).**

Metalinguistic awareness can begin as early as kindergarten. I recently asked a group of kindergartners to tell me what they noticed in the word *piano* written in English and piano written in Spanish. I held up two cards with an image of a piano. One card had the word written in blue representing English and the other card had the word written in red representing Spanish. These kindergartners were quick to point out that the spelling was the same in both languages and that the words had similar pronunciation. It was a quick lesson on cognates and a wonderful way to expand their metalinguistic awareness.

Cognates are words in different languages that share an etymological

root resulting in similar spelling, meaning, and pronunciation. Creating cognate charts in the classroom are useful tools to illustrate cross-language connections. Educators can use cognate charts with a focus on content-area vocabulary words, cross-content vocabulary words or for the purpose of teaching students how word parts like roots and affixes across languages can help them understand new vocabulary. The Common Core State Standards encourage students to analyze vocabulary, word origin, roots, and affixes. Research concludes that carefully designed cognate instruction may provide Spanish-speaking children with a “cognate advantage” in comprehending English academic texts (Lubliner & Hiebert, 2011).

The website *Colorín Colorado* has a cognate chart that illustrates the connections between English and Spanish roots. Cognate charts can also lead to discussions on false cognates. False cognates are words that look and sound similar in multiple languages but do not have the same meaning. For example, the word *éxito* in Spanish does not mean *exit* in English, it means success.

Cross-language connections can also scaffold students’ understanding of English syntax. A major part of both speaking and writing is learning how to arrange words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language. Because syntax varies across languages, it is important to create instructional opportunities where we make students aware of how syntax in English can be similar or different from syntax in another language. Instead of teaching syntax as a set of rules, we can draw on students’ linguistic resources to make connections, transfer understandings, and spot important difference. This can be done through whole group

mini-lessons or writing conferences.

Research reveals that when learners of two languages discover similarities and differences in the two language systems, they tend to have improved phonological awareness in comparison to monolingual children (Campbell & Sais, 1995; Koda & Zehler, 2008). It is evident that research supports the development of metalanguage and metalinguistic awareness as cross-language connections. Two resources that are helpful in implementing cross-language strategies in the classroom are *Biliteracy from the Start: Literacy Squared in Action* and *Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators*.

A growing number of scholars advocate exploring practices that strengthen students understanding of the reciprocal nature of languages (Cummins, 2008; Garcia, 2009; Hopewell, 2011). Many currently argue that strictly separating languages is not always appropriate (Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Gajo, 2007; Garcia, 2011; Wei & Wu, 2009). It is our responsibility as educators to create hybrid language environments where students and teachers can examine their languages in meaningful and intentional ways as we encourage our bilingual students to become sophisticated readers and writers. Instead of having these language environments disconnected, we can have them build on one another.

As bilingual educators, we need to reject reductionist philosophy that values English above other languages. Let us encourage strategic use of students’ home language, which is profoundly different from randomly switching back and forth between languages. It is placing quality of instruction above the language of instruction. These

pedagogical methods maximize bidirectional transfer of students’ knowledge and skills.

As educators, we need to promote equity in bilingual education by providing students with a cultural and linguistic relevant curriculum. Let us carve out spaces where we build on their complex and fluid ways of communicating. Let us give a voice to those who language differently.

---

#### WORKS CITED

---

Bialystok, E (2007). Cognitive effects of bilingualism: How linguistic experience leads to cognitive change. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10(3), 210-223.

Campbell, R., & Sais, E. (1995). Accelerated metalinguistic (phono-logical) awareness in bilingual children. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 13, 61-68.

Canagarajah, S. (2011). Codemeshing in academic writing: Identifying teachable strategies of translanguaging. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(3), 401-417.

Creese, A. & Blackledge, A (2011). Separate and flexible bilingualism in complementary schools: Multiple language practices in interrelationship. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(5), 1157-1160.

Cummins, J. (2008). Forward. *AILA Review*, 21, 1-3.

Gajo, L. (2007). Linguistic knowledge and subject knowledge: How does bilingualism contribute to subject development? *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10(5), 563-581.

Garcia, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Garcia, O. (2011). Educating New York's bilingual children: constructing a future from the past. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 14(2), 133-153.

Garcia, O., & Kleifgen, J. (2018). *Educating emergent bilinguals: Policies, programs, and practices for English learners*. Teachers College Press.

Hopewell, S. (2011). Leveraging bilingualism to accelerate English reading comprehension. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 14(5), 603-620.

Koda, K., & Zehler, A. (2008). *Learning to read across languages: Cross-Linguistic relationships in first- and second- language literacy development*. London: Routledge.

Lubliner, S., & Hiebert, E. (2011). An analysis of English-Spanish cognates as a source of general academic language. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 34, 76-93.

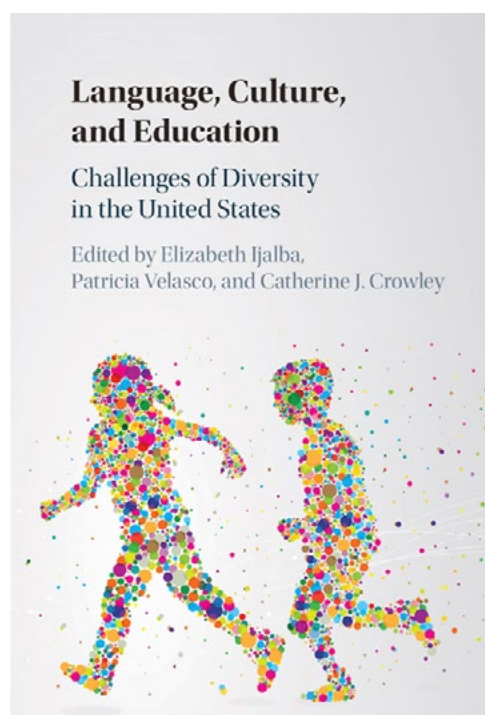
## Language, Culture and Education. Challenges of Diversity in the United States. (2019)

Edited by Elizabeth Ijalba, Patricia Velasco and Catherine J. Crowley —Cambridge University Press.

**B**ilingual education has undergone dramatic changes that have impacted how practitioners and researchers view the role of language(s) in teaching and learning. *Language, Culture and Education: Challenges of Diversity in the United States* (2019) is an edited book by Elizabeth Ijalba, Patricia Velasco and Catherine J. Crowley. The book is a collection of research in areas that have remained relatively unexplored, mainly the challenges faced by immigrant groups in preserving their home languages, making sound educational decisions for their children, and the social challenges they face. The main immigrant groups considered are Hispanic, Chinese, Korean, and Arab-Americans. The book includes perspectives from the parents, special educators, speech language pathologists, and researchers. Framed within historical and ecological perspectives,

this book calls out the unfair persecution of immigrants under the Trump administration and the adverse effects of anti-immigrant policies on the children of immigrants in our schools.

In addition, this book explores the role of language variation in school and community contexts, the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate disability evaluations, and the dire need for building multicultural competence among professionals working with immigrant families. Children growing up with exposure to more than one language are often over-referred for special education, particularly speech-language therapy. Such practices especially affect the children of immigrant families. It is crucial to differentiate language differences from language disorders and to include families in that process. This book includes a historical analysis of bilingual education, two chapters on how to conduct evidence-based disability and language evaluations, a chapter on advising parents how to plan bilingualism for their children, perspectives on parent education, an analysis on the challenges faced by immigrant mothers of children with autism spectrum



disorders, research on the particular language and education needs of children from Chinese, Korean, and Arabic immigrant families, research on early intervention, depiction of a college course on building multicultural competence for preservice teachers, a chapter exploring biliteracy between a Mixteco-Mexican father and daughter, and a chapter looking at health alternatives among Mexican immigrant families.

In summary, this volume highlights bilingual education, disability evaluations, cultural and linguistic differences among immigrant groups, home language practices and healthcare perspectives in immigrant families. Across disciplines there is a need to develop models of cultural competency and professional development for educators and speech-language pathologists, who work with culturally and linguistically

diverse groups. Research is also needed to determine effective models and methods of multilingual education based on content-based instruction and translanguaging. Finally, there is a dire need for research on language assessment based on ethnographic approaches and narrative analysis. We hope that the research in this volume contributes to resolving gaps in these areas.

---

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Elizabeth Ijalba, PhD

---

Elizabeth Ijalba, PhD: Is an Associate Professor in Linguistics and Communication Disorders at Queens College, City University of New York. She founded the Bilingual Biliteracy Lab and developed research on parent education with immigrant families of children with language disorders. Her current research focuses on narrative analysis as a method of assessment in bilingual children with language and reading difficulties.

---



Patricia Velasco, EdD

---

Patricia Velasco, EdD: Is an Associate Professor and coordinates the Bilingual Education Program at Queens College, City University of New York. She started her career as a speech therapist in Mexico City. She currently works with bilingual teachers developing materials and scaffolds for multilingual learners facing the demands of the Next Generation Learning Standards.

---



Catherine J. Crowley,  
JD, PhD, CCC-SLP

---

Catherine J. Crowley, JD, PhD, CCC-SLP: Is Professor of Practice in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Teachers College, Columbia University (TC). A Fellow of the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA), her work focuses on designing culturally and linguistically appropriate evaluations. Dr. Crowley is the founding director of the Bilingual Extension Institute. Her website [Leadersproject.org](http://Leadersproject.org) offers free videos, evaluation materials and courses for those who wish to increase their expertise.

---



# Buffalo Coalition Holds Legislative Breakfast in Support of Bilingual Education



Tamara Alsace, PhD



**B**uffalo, NY: The Buffalo Immigrant Leadership Team (BILT) and the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) are two advocacy organizations working in coalition to address the educational needs of English language learners/multilingual learners (ELL/MLs) in Western New York and in the Buffalo Public Schools (BPS). While the ELL/MLs graduation rate did increase from 27% in 2017 to 38% in 2018, a key factor to sustaining and growing this trend lies with support for bilingual teacher preparation programs in local colleges and universities as well as increased academic support for ELL/ML students. The number of ELL/MLs in BPS has more than doubled since 2009 and

surrounding districts have seen increases from 10% all the way to over 200%.

The “Raise the Rate” coalition also includes local universities and organizations such as SUNY Buffalo State, the University at Buffalo, Niagara University, and Canisius College, as well as refugee resettlement agencies like Jewish Family Services, Catholic Charities of Buffalo, the International Institute, and Jericho Road. In mutual support, and in collaboration with Buffalo Schools, they held a Legislative Breakfast on Friday, March 15, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. at Pearl Street Grill to raise awareness about the educational needs of ELL/ML students in Buffalo and Western New York.



The Coalition invited the entire Western Delegation of New York State legislators, including Assemblyman Sean Ryan, Senator Tim Kennedy and NYS Senate Majority Leader, Crystal Peoples-Stokes, along with Superintendent Kriner Cash, Buffalo Board of Education members, Regent Catherine Collins, Mayor Brown,



County Executive Poloncarz, and other local officials, to attend the breakfast. Many of the invitees attended in person or sent representatives.

According to Dr. Haoua Hamza, BILT Co-Chair, “We are seeking support from legislators to address the critical shortage of bilingual educators in New York State, particularly in Western New York where the most prominent languages are different from those in the New York City area. There is a great need for the NYS Education Department to offer Bilingual Extensions in the following languages: Burmese, Karen, Somali and Swahili, and alternative pathways and resources for certification in other languages such as Arabic, Bengali, and Spanish.”





Resources are required to design and implement high-impact strategies to identify, recruit, prepare, hire, and retain bilingual teachers and bilingual support personnel for bilingual general education and special education programs. Dr. Tamara Alsace, local NYSABE representative, agrees that the statistics are moving in the right direction, but says, "The ELL/MLs graduation rate still needs improvement, and based on years of educational research, bilingual education can be one of the most important solutions to address this issue. Without qualified teachers, it is impossible to implement effective programs."

As a community that is excited to welcome new Americans, the Raise the Rate coalition believes the NYS

Education Department must assign a greater sense of urgency to addressing the qualified personnel shortage, and that they receive the necessary funding and support to do so. When ELL/MLs receive the support they need to succeed, they actually outperform their



monolingual English-speaking peers. The members of the Coalition believe that the time to act is now!

The coalition held this Legislative Breakfast in order to inform legislators about the pressing needs of ELL/ML students, and also to explore all the ways in which our Western New York community can support our newest residents. According to Dr. Gliset Colón, Professor and Bilingual Certificate Program Coordinator at Buffalo State, "The Raise the Rate coalition is diverse and passionate about the outcomes we want to see."

For questions, please contact Dr. Tamara Alsace at 716-316-9536 or [talsace@gmail.com](mailto:talsace@gmail.com).

## Public Education Town Hall: A Bold New Vision for Public School Equity & Justice

With responses from U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and State Senators Jessica Ramos & John Liu  
Organized by Jackson Heights People for Public Schools  
Jackson Heights, Queens – March 16, 2019

**O**n March 16, 2019 NYSABE actively (and loudly!) participated in a public education town hall held in Jackson Heights, Queens that was entitled "A Bold New Vision for Public School Equity & Justice." The event was organized by Jackson Heights People for Public Schools (JHPPS), an organization of parents and community members, which supports and advocates for local public schooling. It was an inspiring event, with a packed room of 300 people. Many NYSABE leaders

attended, cheering and shouting in support of bilingual education. The participants from the area, which is mostly Latinx but where over 167 languages are spoken, were also enthusiastic and vocal in their support for bilingual education, together sending the strong message that there is a great need in New York State and across the country for policies and funding to support and expand bilingual education! The entire event was recorded by @TurnOnTheSound (available online at <https://vimeo.com/325194457/823d4ea9de> - click "Related Videos" to see all of the presentations and the elected officials' responses).

The town hall was organized to help

shape the educational agenda of local elected officials who work at the state or national levels, especially Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, U.S. Representative for New York's 14th congressional district, which includes parts of the Bronx and Queens. Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez's meteoric rise in politics officially began when she unseated senior democrat and longtime incumbent Joseph Crowley to become the youngest woman ever to serve in the U.S. Congress, quickly becoming the face of the progressive liberal movement. She is therefore well-positioned to make a strong mark on federal policy, which is why it was so significant that NYSABE had the opportunity to participate in this important event. NYSABE had this place



Kate Menken, EdD

at the table because members had been involved in local education organizing and political campaigns – which shows why it's so important for all of us to get involved outside of our workplaces alone! Anyone can advocate, you don't need much time or money to do so, and it truly can make a difference.

Speakers at the town hall included NYSABE along with Class Size Matters, NYC Opt Out, Network for Public Education, the Alliance for Quality Education, and New York State Allies for Public Education. Responses were provided by Ocasio-Cortez and newly-elected New York State Senator Jessica Ramos of District 13 (which includes several Queens neighborhoods, including Jackson Heights), who also ran on a progressive platform. State Senators John Liu, Robert Jackson, and State Assembly member Catalina Cruz also spoke.

This event showcased the power of grassroots public-school parent organizing for issues such as equitable school funding and bilingual education (of course!), and against high-stakes testing and school privatization. The event began with opening remarks by Amanda Vender, lead organizer of Jackson Heights People for Public Schools, explaining the purpose of the town hall for families and community members to share their views on key educational issues affecting our local public schools with their lawmakers (her introduction can be watched online at: <https://vimeo.com/325191468/3242902bd6>).

The first speakers were New York State Senator Robert Jackson and his chief of staff Johanna Garcia, both of whom started out as public school parent activists, who spoke about the importance of parent organizing and called for

families to opt out of state tests (<https://vimeo.com/325193259/8751a891eb>). Maria Bautista, campaign director for the Alliance for Quality Education, spoke next demanding bills that New York State legislators can pass to make schools culturally responsive for children of color and break the school-to-prison pipeline (<https://vimeo.com/325195289/ebc805dc06>). Leonie Haimson of Class Size Matters was the next speaker, and she talked about the numerous benefits of reduced class sizes for all children, with data that clearly documented how class size has increased in New York City schools, and how legal action, proposed legislation, and adequate funding could remedy this issue (<https://vimeo.com/325194937/ebbfd1bf6c>). Carol Burris from the Network for Public Education described how vouchers and charter schools drain funding away from public schools, and are a stepping stone to school privatization (<https://vimeo.com/325191672/53caf8839e>). Noted education historian and author Diane Ravitch, also from the Network for Public Education, spoke about the influence of billionaires on education policy, how charter schools are privately funding, and argued that parents should wield test refusal “as David would a slingshot” (<https://vimeo.com/325192088/9f31ee23cd>).

Representing the New York State Association for Bilingual Education were NYSABE Executive Director Nancy Villarreal de Adler and NYSABE President Rebecca Elías. The speaker was Kate Menken, NYSABE Parent Delegate and Co-Chair of the Advocacy Committee, who is also on the steering committee of Jackson Heights People for Public Schools. She first described the history of bilingual education in New York, with its roots in the Civil Rights movement and community organizing, and then

described bilingual education and its benefit. She argued how bilingual education is a right for multilingual learners and bilingual families, before asking for increased funding for bilingual education through federal and state policies that would expand bilingual education and increase support for existing programs. Specifically, NYSABE asked for policies to increase the number of certified bilingual teachers, open bilingual Pre-K programs, and eliminate high-stakes testing. Many members of NYSABE's executive board and delegate assembly were present, and throughout Kate's presentation NYSABE members in the audience as well as community members cheered and shouted their support for bilingual education. You can watch the presentation online: <https://vimeo.com/325194457/823d4ea9de>

The town hall participants' enthusiasm when bilingual education was discussed meant that our elected officials needed to respond. And, they did. In her response, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said:

**“Spanish was my first language. And I went to a school where no one looked like me, and where teachers thought I needed remedial education because I spoke two languages instead of one... I should have never been made to feel the being bilingual was a deficit... This needs to be a national movement where we realize our agency, and the good news is that it's already happening... Do not deter, because bilingual education is a right!”**

Senator Jessica Ramos said:

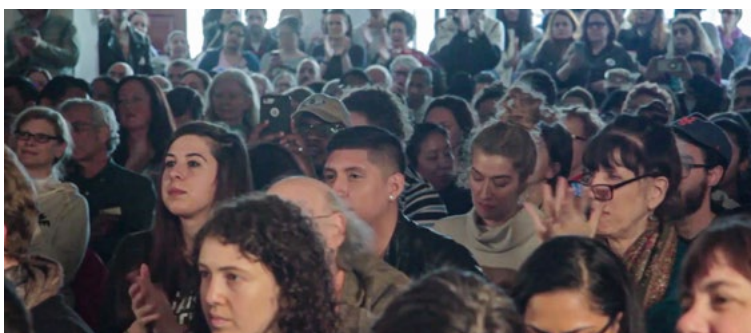
**“Bilingual education hasn't been a priority, and we all know that especially in a district like ours, bilingual education is a must.**



**There is no greater advantage for the children in this district than to be bilingual!"**

**"It doesn't matter if you're an immigrant or not, learning two languages from a young age is good for you. On every level. ... We should all be demanding that our kids be speaking two languages from the jump. And in fact we should be setting a standard where if your kid is only learning one language then their education is not good enough. This is the 21st century."**

Significantly, in her response, State Senator Jessica Ramos said: "I'd be very proud to carry the bill myself," thereby making a commitment to put forth a state bill in support of bilingual education. The NYSABE Advocacy Committee immediately followed up with her about it and is working with her team to develop a bill!





## Leveraging the Potential of New York State's Multilingual Learners:

### Position Statement on the Urgent Need for Funding

New York State advocates for English language learners (ELLs)/multilingual learners (MLLs), a group of statewide educational and community-based organizations focused on the educational needs of ELLs/MLLs and their families, have together identified urgent budget priorities to support ELLs'/MLLs' education. When ELLs/MLLs receive the support they need to succeed, they actually outperform their native-English speaking peers. Given how dramatically far ELLs/MLLs lag behind—even with this year's slight improvement only 34% are graduating on time—substantial investments are needed to leverage their potential.<sup>1</sup>

Key priority areas are:

- Address the shortage of qualified bilingual educators – including special education teachers, school counselors, social workers, and paraprofessionals.** The shortage of qualified educators across ELL/MLL program models (Transitional Bilingual/Dual Language/ENL) and the related shortage of bilingual special education classes are the greatest challenges facing schools and districts as they attempt to effectively meet the educational needs of ELLs/MLLs and comply with NYS regulations. There is a need for financial support to design and implement high-impact strategies to identify, recruit, prepare, hire, and retain bilingual educators and bilingual support personnel across all ELL/MLL instructional delivery models in general education and special education programs in NY State.
- Robustly fund Foundation Aid and set aside support for ELLs/MLLs.** Schools are still owed \$4.9 billion in Campaign for Fiscal Equity funding, with the majority owed to schools with high populations of minority and immigrant students. NY must urgently provide resources to bolster districts' ability to meet their legal obligations to serve ELLs/MLLs and empower their families. The funding should specifically drive support for professional development to ensure that all educators of ELLs/MLLs are prepared to fuel ELLs'/MLLs' success and offer meaningful opportunities for their parents/guardians to engage in their child's academic experiences.
- Fuel multilingual early childhood education.** Nearly half (43%) of children age 0-8 in New York live in homes where a language other than English is spoken.<sup>2</sup> Support for appropriate MLL/Emergent Multilingual Learner identification and quality programs for the under-5 student population staffed by qualified personnel are critical to ensuring that early childhood education meets its lofty goals and can implement protocols that are age-appropriate and support multilingualism. Continuous and evidence-based professional development should also be made available for educators of MLL/Emergent Multilingual Learners prior to Kindergarten.
- Create alternate assessments for ELLs/MLLs with severe disabilities.** Specific funding must be allocated to develop alternate assessments to measure the progress in the areas of language development, literacy and content areas for ELLs/MLLs with severe disabilities.
- Increase Adult Literacy Education funding.** Support high-quality, community-based adult literacy instruction and close the enormous gap created by the transition to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Such an investment recognizes the critical role that the educational opportunities afforded to the parents of ELLs/MLLs play in their children's educational success. This is crucial if NYSED wants to fulfill its mission of raising the knowledge, skill, and opportunity of all the people in New York State.

<sup>1</sup> [“NY State Graduation Rate Data 4 Year Outcome as of August.”](#) 2018. Data.Nysed.Gov. August 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Morell, Zoila. 2018. [“Bilingual Beginnings: High Impact Practices for Emergent Multilingual Learners.”](#) presented at the NYSED Summer Institute, July 17.

We urge New York's elected officials to address the issues and recommendations described above. Thank you for this opportunity to share our community-based perspectives and offer recommendations in a truly collaborative spirit. For additional information regarding the views expressed in this document, please contact Claire Sylvan at [claire.sylvan@internationalsnetwork.org](mailto:claire.sylvan@internationalsnetwork.org) or Kim Sykes at [ksykes@nyc.org](mailto:ksykes@nyc.org).

---

## **Signatures:**

**Advocates for Children of New York**  
**Arab American Association of New York**  
**Asian American Federation**  
**Bilingual Education and World Languages - Hempstead Union Free School District (HUFSD)**  
**Brentwood Union Free School District (BUFSD)**  
**Buffalo Immigrant and Leadership Team (BILT) - Raise the Rate Committee**  
**Chinese-American Planning Council**  
**Chinese Progressive Association**  
**Coalition for Asian American Children and Families**  
**Councilman Anthony Martinez, Town of Babylon**  
**Erie Regional Housing Development Corporation - The Belle Center**  
**Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project**  
**Hispanic Federation**  
**Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York, Inc.**  
**Internationals Network for Public Schools**  
**Italian American Committee on Education (IACE)**  
**Latina Moms of Long Island**  
**Legislator Tom Donnelly, 17th Legislative District County Government**  
**Long Island Black Educators Association**  
**Long Island Immigrant Student Advocates Inc.**  
**Long Island Latino Association**  
**National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE)**  
**National Association of Puerto Rican and Hispanic Social Workers**  
**New York Immigration Coalition**  
**New York Math Academy & Coaching Services**  
**New York State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (NYS TESOL)**  
**Nosotros Radio Inc. Your Latino Voice 87.7 FM**  
**Pronto Long Island, Inc.**  
**Riverhead Central School District**  
**The New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE)**  
**United Federation of Teachers (UFT)**  
**Velázquez Press**



55 Exchange Place, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10005  
T. 212 233 8955 F. 212 233 8996

March 11, 2019

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor, New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Majority Leader, New York State Senate  
Legislative Office Building  
188 State Street, Room 907  
Albany, NY 11247

Honorable Carl Heastie  
Speaker, New York State Assembly  
Legislative Office Building  
188 State Street, Room 932  
Albany, NY 11248

Dear Governor Cuomo, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie,

On behalf of the Latino Educational Advocacy Directors (LEAD) Coalition, a collective of thirty organizations committed to increasing educational equity and closing the achievement gap for Latino students across the state, we write to urge you to include \$110 million in the final budget for multilingual learners (MLLs) across the state.

Education for Multilingual Learners (MLLs) in New York State (NYS) is in a state of crisis. For decades, NYS has failed to dedicate the appropriate level of focus and funding necessary to support the academic needs of this growing student population. And it shows. From graduation and dropout rates to scores on state assessments, multilingual learners lag significantly behind their non-MLL peers in NYS.

Here are the heartbreaking and unacceptable facts: In 2017, only 13% of MLLs were proficient in math and 5% in English in NYS assessments.<sup>1</sup> In that same year, the MLL four-year dropout rate of 30% was actually higher than MLL four-year graduation rate of 27%.<sup>2</sup> And although the six-year dropout and graduation rates, 36% and 48% respectively,<sup>3</sup> is better, they are far from the six-year 10% dropout and 85% graduation rate of the total student population. These numbers confirm the reality that NYS is one of our nation's worst performing states when it comes to the educational achievement of MLLs. The educational gap is startling and requires immediate action. New York State can and must do better by its MLL population.

---

<sup>1</sup> 2016-2017 New York State Report Card

<sup>2</sup> New York State Education Department, June Graduation Rates for 2013 Cohort

<sup>3</sup> 2016-2017 New York State Report Card Database





55 Exchange Place, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10005  
T. 212 233 8955 F. 212 233 8996

The New York State Board of Regents, under the leadership of Chancellor Betty Rosa, has focused on this crisis and the New York State Education Department has created diverse plans to support our MLLs. However, the governor and state legislature need to provide the funding for these supports. We strongly urge you to include funding for MLLs in their final budget. With these investments, New York State can turn the table and ensure that multilingual learners across the state receive a quality education that sets them on the pathway to postsecondary success.

The population of MLLs across New York State has grown 19% over the last ten years.<sup>4</sup> Yet, the supply of certified Bilingual Education (BE) and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers has not grown accordingly. In fact, since 1990 NYS is only one of two states that has had a consistent yearly shortage of certified bilingual teachers. And, in some regions across the state, the percentage of uncertified teachers teaching bilingual students is over 20%. That is unacceptable. Teaching is at the heart of learning, and students suffer when schools improvise and allow uncertified teachers to teach our MLLs. The continuing failure of our education system to prepare multilingual learners for postsecondary success is a tragedy and threatens the future prosperity of New York State as a whole.

In order to increase MLL outcomes, we strongly urge you to invest in the following:

**1. Fund a Targeted Initiative to Increase Graduation Rates for MLLs- \$3 million**

NYS must address the fact that the multilingual dropout rate is higher than the graduation rate. In order to increase the graduation rates of multilingual learners, NYS must increase its investment in the academic supports provided to high school multilingual learners as well as provide them opportunities for out-of-school time opportunities for credit recovery. In addition, NYS needs to provide alternatives to traditional assessments and ensure that assessments are provided in all of the top nine most popular languages.

**2. Increase the Number of Certified English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Bilingual Education (BE) Teachers in General and Special Education Settings and Provide More Professional Development Opportunities for current ESOL or BE Teachers- \$7 million**

NYS has a teacher shortage of certified ESOL and bilingual teachers across the state. In order to ensure that multilingual learners are receiving a quality education, NYS must increase opportunities for teachers to obtain certification, especially in regions of greatest need. To demonstrate a commitment to bilingual education, NYS should provide incentives for teachers to become certified. And to ensure effective teaching and learning, NYS necessitates the investment of the professional growth and development of ESOL or bilingual teachers via increased professional development.

**3. Increase Investment in Academic Supports and Parent Engagement for MLLs, especially in Pre-K through High School- \$9.8 million**

For many students, Pre-K is the first year of their formal education. And the reality is that a large percentage of these students do not speak English at home. In order to adequately facilitate their academic growth, NYS must provide funding to support the expansion of integrated classrooms and provide guidance and oversight in rolling out and sustaining these classrooms in Pre-K. At the same time, NYS needs to invest in the professional development of bilingual early childhood staff that put them on a pathway to careers in education. Lastly, NYS must also do a better job of increasing parent

<sup>4</sup> New York State Report Card, 2008-2017



55 Exchange Place, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10005  
T. 212 233 8955 F. 212 233 8996

information and outreach in home languages and must invest in providing additional supports to districts to develop more robust materials and transparent outreach processes to better inform parents in home language.

**4. Increase Socio-Emotional Supports Provided to MLLs- \$5 million**

For many recent newcomers, adjusting to life in a new country can be difficult, and for multilingual learners that are immigrants or come from mixed-status families, worry and fear may dominate their thoughts, potentially impeding their learning. In order to better support our multilingual learners, NYS must address their socio-emotional needs. As such NYS should pilot a school-based mental health initiative in schools with high MLL populations and increase professional development opportunities for counselors and social workers working with MLLs and their families. At the same time, NYS needs to increase the number of bilingual social workers and counselors with large MLL populations.

**5. Form a New York State Commission to Advance the Achievement of MLLs- \$200,000**

A group of experts and practitioners should be convened by NYS to thoughtfully provide guidance and feedback on how to increase the achievement of MLLs. The group would develop a best practices report, working backwards from a statement of full equity and high expectations, demonstrating a full commitment to multilingualism as an asset.

**6. Earmark a Minimum of \$85 million of the Foundation Aid Owed to MLLs**

NYS must restore owed Foundation Aid to school districts across the state over the next three year, and \$85 million per year, approximately 9% of the annual amount allocated, should be earmarked for multilingual learners in order to ensure that their needs are being met.

It is our hope that this letter will inform the priorities and decision of the state's political and education leadership in the months ahead. Closing the MLL achievement gap is within our reach if we have a common vision, a common path, and a long-term focused commitment. We know that the investments we make to improve MLL achievement will positively touch every aspect of our community and help build a stronger New York State.

Sincerely,

### About the LEAD Coalition

The Latino Educational Advocacy Directors (LEAD) coalition consists of leading educational advocacy organizations committed to improving Latino academic outcomes and opportunities in New York State. Created by the Hispanic Federation, the coalition works to highlight and address the educational needs of Latino students in the following ways: identifying and supporting effective practice; public policy advocacy and research; and the advancement of a shared educational agenda.

Advocates for Children of New York  
Alliance for Quality Education  
Adelante of Suffolk County  
Amber Charter School  
Avenues for Justice  
ASPIRA of NY  
Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education  
Catholic Charities Community Services  
Coalition for Hispanic Family Services  
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families  
Community Assoc. of Progressive Dominicans  
El Centro del Inmigrante  
El Puente  
ExpandedED Schools  
Hispanic Federation  
Ibero-American Action League  
Internationals Network for Public Schools  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
Latino U College Access  
LSA Family Health Service  
Masa-Mex Ed  
National "I Have a Dream" Foundation  
NYC Coalition for Educational Justice  
New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE)  
Operation Exodus  
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow  
The Opportunity Network  
Parent-Child Home Program  
Project Hospitality  
Zone 126





**New York State Association for Bilingual Education**  
**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

*Kindly note that this information will be used to generate your membership card and future mailings*

[www.nysabe.net](http://www.nysabe.net)

I was referred by: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ NEW

☐ RENEWAL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone #: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Languages Spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

**NYSABE Dues: (please check one)**

- ☐ \$35 Associate (full time student, parent, paraprofessional)  
☐ \$45 Regular (teacher, administrator, teacher educator, researcher)  
☐ \$75 Institutional  
☐ \$100 Commercial

**Select your local region: (check one)**

- ☐ Region I-Long Island  
☐ Region II-New York City  
☐ Region III-Mid-Hudson  
☐ Region IV-Syracuse/Capital District  
☐ Region V –Rochester  
☐ Region VI-Western New York

**I would like to volunteer in:**

- ☐ Advocacy  
☐ Fundraising  
☐ Special Events  
☐ Membership  
☐ Other

**CONTRIBUTION:** I would like to contribute to NYSABE's continuing efforts to strengthen Bilingual Education in New York State with my tax deductible contribution of:

☐ \$25    ☐ \$50    ☐ \$100    ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please duplicate and disseminate this application among your colleagues and others.

Please make check payable to NYSABE and mail it with this completed form to:

**NYSABE**  
**NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools**  
**726 Broadway, 5 Floor**  
**New York, NY 10003**

**THE ORGANIZATION:**

NYSABE is a multilingual, multicultural professional association that promotes the academic achievement of more than 300,000 English language learners (ELLs)/bilingual students, and supports the development of biliteracy skills among all students in New York State. Founded in 1976, NYSABE unites educators, parents, community and business leaders, elected officials, researchers, members of professional organizations, educational institutions, and the news media sharing a common goal-to ensure excellence and equity for students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

NYSABE encourages the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of quality programs in bilingual education.

NYSABE promotes bilingual education as a process by which students achieve academic success through instruction in English and a language other than English. NYSABE supports the belief that language pluralism and literacy in more than one language benefit the nation and all its citizens.

NYSABE collaborates with the NYS Education Department, school districts, and educational institutions by participating in their initiatives and ensuring excellence and equity in the education of ELLs /bilingual learners. NYSABE is affiliated with the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) and the New York State Council of Educational Associations (NYSCEA).

**MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:**

Join the NYSABE team! Through your membership dues and involvement, you will have the opportunity to make integral contributions towards positive educational change for ELLs/bilingual learners.

Membership benefits include:

**NYSABE Journal of Multilingual Education Research (JMRE):** The yearly issue of this journal is a must for every library and member of the association. It publishes current research on best practices in instructional methodologies, optimum program models, and key elements in the implementation of successful bilingual education programs.

**The NYSABE Newsletter, The Bilingual Times:** The quarterly issues of The Bilingual Times offer updates on the regional and statewide activities of the association and its members. The Bilingual Times also provides information on current legislative and policy developments as well as articles on best educational approaches for ELLs/bilingual learners.

**Professional Development:** NYSABE offers local, regional, and statewide professional development activities that focus on optimum, research-based practices in bilingual education. These activities create a professional forum suitable to network with other professionals in your field of interest, to share experiences, and explore new ideas.

**Advocacy and Leadership:** NYSABE offers opportunities to develop leadership skills while participating in hands-on training, special committees, language group events, and advocacy activities on behalf of students, their parents, and educators.

NYSABE wishes to thank all of our contributors and supporters for lending their expertise to this publication.

**NYSABE BILINGUAL TIMES STAFF INCLUDES:**

Nancy Villarreal de Adler, Project Director

Dr. Heather Woodley, Editor

César Rodríguez, Project Assistant



**The New York State  
Association for  
Bilingual Education**