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The New York State Association for Bilingual Education

# NYSABE News

Summer Issue

July/August 2010

## A Message from the President, Margarita Reyes



Dear Members and Friends,  
I begin this message with a wish that all of you and your families enjoyed a well-deserved, joyful, healthy, and peaceful summer. As we reflect on last school year and begin the next, I wish to recognize the outstanding efforts of NYSABE's Executive Board, Delegate Assembly, Executive Director, and general membership in accomplishing the association's goals and objectives in the areas of advocacy, leadership, professional development, networking and information/dissemination. The following summary outlines the main accomplishments during the Spring 2010 term and acknowledges some of the many stakeholders to whom we wish to express our gratitude:

- NYSABE, with the sponsorship of Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan and the coordination of Assemblywoman Carmen Arroyo, ensured our successful participation in the Bilingual Education Legislative Day in Albany. During this event, entitled Bilingual Education: Challenges and Promises, the NYSABE team addressed the current challenges faced in the education of bilingual learners and made recommendations for a renewed vision for

bilingual education in the 21st century. We thank Dr. John B. King, Senior Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Education, NYSED staff, and elected officials for attending the meeting and engaging in very important discussions. Special thanks to Carmen Pérez-Hogan for assisting us in the coordination of the event. I also want to express my gratitude to the NYSABE team who joined me in this endeavor: María de los Angeles Barreto, Eudes Budhai, Rose Colón-Cisneros, Diana Hernández, Dr. Tatyana Kleyn, Dr. Cindy Mc Phail, and Nancy Villarreal de Adler.

- NYSABE, in collaboration with NYSTESOL, wrote a position letter to Dr. John B. King, P-12 Deputy Commissioner, to convey our members' concerns and recommendations related to the possible elimination of the translated versions of the Regents exams. Please visit our website [www.nysabe.org](http://www.nysabe.org) to view the letter and the response from NYSED.

- NYSABE has continued to participate in the NYSED Committee of Practitioners and NYSCEA meetings where key issues related to the instruction and assessment of ELLs/bilingual learners have been discussed with educational leaders, including the NYS Commissioner of Education, NYSED staff, members of the Board of Regents, and educators representing a wide array of professional organizations.

- NYSABE has continued to strengthen its linkages with national and statewide profes-

sional organizations such as NABE, TESOL, NYSTESOL, NYSUT, and NYSCEA. Through joint meetings and position statements, collaborative professional activities, and ongoing communication, NYSABE's support network has shared common goals and resources.

- NYSABE has also expanded its collaborative relationship with colleges and universities focusing on the education of ELLs/bilingual learners. As a result of joint activities, the Institutions of Higher Education Consortium (IHE Consortium) has been revived and is already planning the Bilingual Education Research Forum at the 2011 NYSABE Conference.

- NYSABE has fulfilled its commitment to disseminate information on current educational research and best pedagogical practices by presenting the first issue of the Journal of Multilingual Educational Research (JMER). This presentation was conducted by Dr. Aida Nevárez-La Torre, JMER Editor, during the 2010 Annual Conference in Melville, NY. Similarly, NYSABE's newsletter

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## A Message from the President, Margarita Reyes (cont.)

fall and winter issues were disseminated among our members. Very special thanks to Dr. Tamara Alsace, Newsletter Editor, and Nancy Villarreal de Adler, Project Director. In addition, I express my gratitude to Heriberto Galarza, Past President, and Michael Arent for their diligent work in disseminating articles and announcements via NYSABE's listserv and website.

- The 2010 NYSABE annual conference was convened on March 11-14, 2010. On behalf of the NYSABE leadership and the conference chairpersons, Heriberto Galarza and Wilda Ramos, I express my most sincere gratitude to all committee chairpersons, parents, educators, and community members who participated in the conference. Their active involvement was crucial in creating a collegial forum where educators, parents, representatives of community-based organizations, elected officials, publishers, and other supporters were able to share their experiences, vision, and expertise related to the education of English language/bilingual learners.

- In addition to the 2010 NYSABE annual conference, several opportunities for professional development, focusing on current research, policies, and optimum pedagogical practices, were organized and implemented by NYSABE Delegates at each NYS region.

- NYSABE's ongoing leadership training for executive board and delegate assembly continued. Heriberto Galarza, Past President, conducted a session on advocacy. Nancy Villarreal de Adler, Executive Director and Past President, provided training on NYSABE's mission, goals and objectives, and the development of NY-

SABE's strategic action plan.

- NYSABE thanks the NYSED's Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies as well as the Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Centers (BETACs) and the Office of Special Education (OSE) for their unfailing support. Through mutual assistance, participation in committees, and professional development activities, the common vision and the spirit of collaboration have been solidified.

As we celebrate our accomplishments, we must recognize that a lot of work still lies ahead. I am confident that our membership will continue to strive to ensure equitable and quality education for all our students in the state of New York. As bilingual educators, we must continue our advocacy for all ELLs/bilingual learners. It is our responsibility—the academic achievement of our students depends on us!

In this final message as President, please allow me to express my deep appreciation to all individuals across the state whose advice and unfailing support have assisted me and NYSABE in achieving our goals. I would like to extend special thanks to NYSABE's past presidents, particularly: Eudes Budhai and Dr. Ximena Zate for their support and dedication. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Carmen Pérez-Hogan and the Honorable Assemblywomen Carmen Arroyo and Catherine Nolan for their continued assistance. In addition, I thank Dr. Aida Nevárez-La Torre, Editor of NYSABE's JMER, and Dr. Tamara Alsace, NYSABE Newsletter Editor.

As I continue expressing my appreciation, there are three

individuals I must recognize: my dear NYSABE Past Presidents, Nancy Villarreal de Adler, Executive Director, Heriberto Galarza, and Wilda Ramos, Conference Co-chairpersons. I would not have been able to accomplish this year's Strategic Plan without their unwavering support, hard work, expertise, and mentorship. I feel blessed for having had the opportunity to be guided by such an outstanding team of professionals.

In closing, I congratulate NYSABE's Executive Board, Delegate Assembly, and Executive Director for their tireless efforts and commitment to Bilingual Education and our Association's mission. To all NYSABE members, thank you for your leadership, dedication, support and courageous actions on behalf of our English language/bilingual learners. I hope that as NYSABE's president, I have served you well by sustaining this year's theme, Bilingual Education: A Pathway to Multicultural and Multilingual Learning Communities.

Margarita G. Reyes

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In our final issue of this year's NYSABE Newsletter, our delegates and members present summaries and descriptions of the goings on at this year's annual conference. You will read about the many exciting and informative presentations, sessions and events that worked to make this year's conference one of the best. We hope that for those of you who were not able to attend, these summaries will give you a taste of what you missed and a hunger to attend next year's

event. For those of you who were fortunate enough to be there, we hope that this issue will bring back fond memories of a premier professional experience that also provided wonderful social and networking opportunities. In addition to the news from the conference, we have included information about other NYSABE advocacy, professional development, and networking activities from around the state. It has been a busy, but fruitful year for our members under

the leadership of outgoing president Margarita Reyes. We are grateful to her for her leadership and industry this year. We hope that all our readers enjoyed a restful and summer and look forward to sharing more NYSABE news during next school year. Be on the watch for our first issue this fall, which will include a message from our incoming president, Maria de los Angeles Barreto.

***The first issue of the Journal of Multilingual Education Research (JMER) was introduced during the 2010 NYSABE Annual Conference held in Melville, New York. During the conference we had the pleasure of meeting with Dr. Aida Nevárez-La Torre, Editor of JMER, and Coordinator of Multilingual Education Programs at Fordham University's Graduate School of Education. The following excerpts from our conversation give us a glimpse of Dr. Aida Nevárez-La Torre, the accomplished teacher, advocate, researcher, teacher educator, scholar, visionary, and human being.***

**It has been said that most excellent teachers have had remarkable role models during their formative years.**

This resonates with my own experience. I have had many inspiring role models and mentors over the years. Some were formally educated while others taught from rich life experiences. First, I come from a Puerto Rican family of several educators. My grandfather, Emilio, was a self educated

man, who taught in the mountains of Lares, Puerto Rico in the early 1900s. My mother, Aida, followed in his footsteps as a teacher, and later she traced my own path into becoming an educator. Growing up, I also remember my grandmother, Aurelia, who could barely read and write, yet was skillful in teaching young wives in our street how to be strong women for their families. In that way she illustrated the rich oral tradition of the Puerto Rican culture.

Second, I was fortunate to have attended educational institutions with masterful teachers. Some are known and admired just by the hundreds of students they worked with in K-12<sup>th</sup> classrooms, like Mrs. Berrios, Mrs. Turull, and Mrs. Murillo. Others have national and international reputations. While completing my doctoral studies, scholars like Maria Brisk, Vito Perone, Catherine Snow, and Paulo Freire uncovered for me a world of knowledge through research and praxis (the interconnection of theory and practice).

However, regardless of their different backgrounds, I feel

that all of them share some basic characteristics of what an effective educator is: they all inspired me to work hard and make learning a life-long process; they guided my creative and intellectual energies to inquire and challenge what is unjust in education; and they all model the power of language and meaningful communication.

**Your career as an educator, initiated in Puerto Rico and continued in the USA, embodies NYSABE's notions of bilingual educators as advocates for their students' educational rights.**

My path as a bilingual person reflects that of many children and youth in NYC schools. I, like them, was once a monolingual Spanish speaker who was thrown into an all English world. The process of becoming an emergent bilingual started for me in the island when I attended an all English private academy. For the first time in my young life, I was in third grade, my reading skills were not considered good enough, I was a silent participant in classes, and the teachers did not understand who I was or my culture. As any

**From the Desk  
of the Editor,  
Tamara Alsace,  
PhD  
Director of  
Multilingual  
Education,  
Buffalo Public  
Schools**

**A  
Conversation  
with Dr. Aida  
Nevárez-La  
Torre,  
Editor of  
NYSABE's  
Journal of  
Multilingual  
Education  
Research**

**by  
Dr. Tamara Alsace  
and Nancy Villarreal  
de Adler**

***"...effective teaching, among other things, involves creating a meaningful forum where students can learn, and challenging oppressive conditions that may defy their opportunities to be educated."***

second language speaker and writer I worked doubly hard since I had to translate every thought from L1 to L2 before expressing it. Although my efforts did not go unnoticed by some teachers, my performance throughout elementary and middle schools was not reflective of my true competence. Yet, in high school and college I flourished as a learner and as a bilingual individual.

buses to the school grounds every morning where breakfast, lunch, and snacks were provided. That summer several field trips to museums, and water parks were scheduled. I wondered about the parents of these children since none ever came to the school or accompanied them during field trips.

One day a friend took me to see the migrant campsites,

colorful handkerchiefs and hats on their heads, bent down, moving slowly down rows of crops. These images of migrant workers in the fields were fossilized in my mind; I often contrast their experiences as immigrants in this country with my own.

My trajectory learning an L2 growing up and as a bilingual and ESL teacher working in city schools alerted me that as a practitioner my role needed to be more than just teaching the ABCs. I had to challenge the oppressive elements of an educational system that might not be sensitive to the socio-economic and political realities impacting the lives of emergent bilinguals who lack fluency in English, but have a wealth of knowledge to share in their first language. These students might also be immigrant and poor, transient, or students with interrupted education. The educational and linguistic rights of multilingual students are not a given. I, as an educator, need to help guarantee their validation today and for posterity. In this sense, for me the roles of advocacy and of teaching are intermingled, they are one and the same function and responsibility. Thus, effective teaching, among other things, involves creating a meaningful forum where students can learn, and challenging oppressive conditions that may defy their opportunities to be educated.

**Your journey as a successful bilingual teacher, a Harvard graduate, a teacher educator, and a scholar in the field of bilingualism has been characterized by inquiry.**

That is very true. When I was a child, my father used to



Nancy Villarreal de Adler, Executive Director,  
Dr. Aida Nevárez La Torre, JMER Editor,  
and Dr. Tamara Alsace, Newsletter Editor.

When I moved to work in the United States I was already a professional bilingual educator. Different from the students I taught, my dual language and professional skills allowed me to live successfully in different existential spheres at the same time. Although, like them I had experienced the linguistic challenges of learning a second language, I did not share some of the socio-economic and political realities influencing their education in US schools. I remember vividly when I began to work as a bilingual teacher in Massachusetts. It was a summer bilingual program for children of migrant families, mostly from Mexico and Central America. The children were brought in

and for me, it was a rude awakening. Until that day, I did not realize that the time the migrant children spent at the school was, perhaps, the only time during the day that they could be just that -- children. The campsites looked very desolate. There was nothing there but trailers and some shacks with a door and a small window at each side. Inside, there was only a medium-sized room where the kitchen was located as well as the space where they ate and slept. The furniture was minimal, and there were no books that I could see. They shared a bathroom with the family who lived next door. As we travelled around the fields all I could see were bodies with

complain about the many questions I asked him whenever he was doing something around the house. My father was very skillful with his hands and I was always asking him how he fixed something, constructed an object, or drew a picture.

Questions have always been my friends. As a learner they became a tool to acquire understanding and create new ones. As I mentioned earlier, I had great models of teachers who taught by questioning reality and the status quo. As a result, as a teacher I incorporated reflection and inquiry into my praxis. When I was an elementary school teacher I recognized the contested nature of the educational settings where I worked. Inquiry became a way of teaching and advocating for my students as well as stimulating my professional growth.

In the book I recently published, *The Power of Learning through Inquiry: Teacher Research as a Professional Development Tool in Multilingual Schools* (2010, Information Age Publishing), I describe my formal introduction to teacher inquiry and its potential to improve teaching. I explain that the first time I heard about teacher inquiry was in a writing institute offered by an area university while teaching second grade in a bilingual school in western Massachusetts. The institute offered me the opportunity to learn about writing as a process, and taught me how to document student growth through observations, reflection, and analysis. The discussions unlocked for me an appreciation for the cyclical progression of writing and how this process could be modeled to emergent bilin-

guals. That year I conducted my first classroom inquiry on teaching the writing process to multilingual students. After much scaffolding and modeling combined with some direct instruction, my students began to write as they had never done before. In the spring, one of the second graders I had worked with as part of my teacher inquiry project entered a city wide writing contest. Her poem, written bilingually, won the first place of all the second grades that year. It was very gratifying for me to know that one of my emergent bilinguals saw herself as a writer and to witness how some of my colleagues finally acknowledged the learning potential of emergent bilinguals (pp. 5-7).

In my view, the power of teacher inquiry is revealed when educators examine their practices and the factors that influence them with the purpose of making necessary changes to improve the learning opportunities of their students, and working conditions in schools. As such, I argue that reflection and inquiry done by teachers in multilingual classrooms and schools may assist to construct effective learning communities. Teacher research may assert the voices of bilingual, ESL, and mainstream teachers who work with emergent bilinguals, to articulate their expert knowledge about significant educational problems, while creating positive alternatives to eradicate them (p.7).

**You bring to your position as NYSABE's editor a wealth of knowledge, experience, and most importantly, a vision for Bilingual Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

Multilingualism has been part of the world through centuries of its nations' development. Even in the U.S. there is a rich history of bilingualism. Current and future educators must ask themselves, "What can be learned from such a vast trajectory of education and communication through different languages?" The idea that the history of bilingualism should frame its future in education was the inspiration for the theme of the first issue of the *Journal of Multilingual Education Research*, NYSABE's latest publication. In this first issue, we identified some of the main initiatives that need to be explored as we construct a new outlook for Bilingual Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

First, the reader is invited to conceptualize differently the multifaceted nature of bilingualism. Linear and hierarchical models are no longer effective in integrating the new research-based understandings of bilingualism as a complex multidimensional process. In addition, these models are deficient in working with the multiple languages, increasing numbers of emergent bilinguals in our schools, and the proximity of speakers of other languages through the advances of technology. A *dynamic view of bilingualism* needs to be adopted in educational research and in schools to improve the learning opportunities of multilingual students (García, 2010).

Second, the dangerous dichotomy that exists in schools among foreign, heritage, and bilingual language teachers as well as among special, mainstream, and bilingual educators should be replaced with more collaborative models of educating all children. Dec-

***"The idea that the history of bilingualism should frame its future in education was the inspiration for the theme of the first issue of the Journal of Multilingual Education Research"***



***"This challenge should intrigue and motivate everyone towards creating the conditions to achieve excellence in multilingual education."***

ades of teacher isolationist's structures have done little to transform the education of emergent bilinguals with and without disabilities in regular and inclusive classrooms. Alternative models that revitalize foreign and heritage language education by valuing the learning of new languages and the maintenance of existing language resources within the student body are desirable. For this task, the collective wisdom of teachers in foreign, heritage, bilingual, and English language programs can advance language learning more than can working as separate specialized professionals in schools (Wagner & Osborn, 2010). Similarly, inclusion and the advent of Response to Intervention (RtI) instructional models demand that teacher preparation as well as professional development programs provide authentic and comprehensive explorations of effective ways that practitioners can learn from one another to benefit the education of all students in multilingual schools (Zhang & Cho, 2010).

Third, educational assessment continues to be a challenge for the education of multilingual students. Current assessment schemes for the inclusion of emergent bilinguals in the accountability movement, as dictated by NCLB and interpreted by school districts, have not eradicated the age old limitations of such a venture. Problematic issues with the technical quality of large scale and classroom-based assessments, their use and misuse, and the skewed interpretation of the results continue to abound. In addition, when standardized tests are used as the de-facto language policy of school districts, concerns of educational biases resurface in the scholarship landscape. An urgent call is made for better informed educators, researchers and policymakers to recognize the need to move away from the one-test-fits-all model and implement a varied spectrum of assessments that uncover the hidden and tacit strengths and weaknesses of all students, including emergent bilinguals.

These ideas represent a beginning agenda for practitioners, administrators, researchers, and policymakers to critically study these issues and expand them for the benefit of educating emergent bilinguals in New York State and across the nation. This challenge should intrigue and motivate everyone towards creating the conditions to achieve excellence in multilingual education.

***The 2010  
NYSABE  
Annual  
Conference***  
By Heriberto Galarza  
and Wilda Ramos,  
Co-Chairpersons

On March 11-14, 2010, NYSABE held its Annual Conference at the Huntington Hilton Hotel, in Melville, New York. We would like to thank all conference sub-committee chairpersons and members for their superb work throughout the planning and execution of the conference. Their dedication, collaboration, team work, and mutual support were essential in ensuring a quality professional learning experience for the participants. The conference planning committee included the following sub-committees:

**Teacher Institute:** The Teacher Institute sub-committee was co-chaired by Ellie Paiewonsky and Terri Brady-Méndez. This institute

offered its 575 participants a major session conducted by Dr. Aida Walqui. It focused on "Talk in the Development of Academic Uses of English: What is the Role of Teachers?" The Institute also offered a variety of workshops on effective strategies for the development of academic English.

**Parent Leadership Institute:** Chaired by Carmen Alverio-Hope, NYSABE Parent-at-Large, this sub-committee hosted a multilingual Institute for 167 parents. The major session, conducted by Maria Neira, NYSUT Vice-President, was entitled "How Parents Can Help their Children Succeed in School." In addition, the language-specific workshops following the major session were conducted by staff developers, teachers, and BETAC staff.

**Bilingual Special Education Strand:** Dr. Awilda Ramos-Zagarrigo chaired this sub-committee, which offered a special keynote address presented by Dr. Theresa Janczak. Her presentation, entitled "Considering Response to Intervention for English Language Learners", was followed by a panel discussion on "Critical Features and Guiding Principles for Working with ELLs through an RTI Lens."

**Dual Language Institute:** Dr. Bernice Moro chaired this sub-committee which offered a keynote presentation by Dr. Yvonne Freeman and Dr. David Freeman focusing on "Dual Language Essentials." In addition, the Dual Language Strand offered a special session on "Bridges to Comprehension: Choosing

and Using Culturally Relevant Bilingual Books." This session was conducted by Dr. Yvonne Freeman, Dr. David Freeman, and Ann E. Ebe.

#### **Leadership and Policy Forum and Past Presidents' Meeting:**

In this joint meeting, Laura Rodríguez, Deputy Chancellor for Special Education and English Language Learners, NYC Department of Education, conducted a presentation called, "ELLs-The Journey to Academic Success."

**Administrator's Forum:** Dr. David Mauricio chaired this sub-committee, which offered a national and state perspective on Bilingual Education. Participants, including district superintendents, school and central office administrators, and school board members, engaged in discussions led by Dr. Pedro J. Ruiz, NYSED Coordinator of Bilingual Education and Foreign Languages, and Dr. Santiago Woods, NABE Executive Director.

#### **Legislative Luncheon:**

Organized by Carmen Pérez Hogan, Chairperson, and convened by Denise Góñez-Santos, the Legislative Luncheon featured Assemblywoman Carmen Arroyo and representatives of elected officials who expressed their support and vision for the education of ELL/bilingual learners in NYS.

#### **Student Essay & Art Contest and Student Award Luncheon:**

Anne Henry was the chairperson of this sub-committee which included the participation of students in general and special education. During the Awards Luncheon, the awardees' families and conference participants celebrated their accomplishments.

**Awards:** María de los Angeles

Barreto chaired this sub-committee which selected this year's NYSABE awardees.

**Banquet:** María Meyer, chairperson for this sub-committee, gave special attention to all details to make the gala banquet a special setting where the Gladys Correa Memorial Award was presented to Estee López.

**Logistics:** Chaired by Yolanda Rodríguez, this sub-committee ensured the smooth running of all activities by concentrating on the requirements for each presentation and event, addressing the presenters' needs, and collaborating with all sub-committees.

**Keynote Speakers:** Heriberto Galarza was the chairperson, and his past experience helped him in identifying and securing renowned speakers for the main sessions. Among them was Dr. Miriam Eisestein Ebsworth who presented "Living and Learning in a Bilingual World: Myths and Realities."

**Program:** Cynthia Jonsson and Korrin Mundo co-chaired this sub-committee which was charged with the responsibility of evaluating and selecting workshop proposals, communicating with proposal applicants, identifying rooms for all presentations, designing and editing the conference program.

**Registration:** Evelyn Arent was the chairperson for this sub-committee and was responsible for creating the data base and working closely with NYSABE's Treasurer to ensure compliance with NYSABE's registration procedures.

**Exhibitors and Vendors:** Ray Sánchez chaired this sub-committee and was responsible for ongoing communication with



*NYCDOE Office of ELLs Executive Director Angelica Infante, Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez, and NYSED Coordinator Pedro Ruiz at the Policy Forum*



*Denise Góñez-Santos, convener of the Legislative Luncheon, speaks at the NYSABE conference*



*Ofelia Anamaría, Chairperson of the NYSABE Booth at the conference*



*Heriberto Galarza ( left), Bernice Moro (center) and Wilda Ramos ( right )*



*Dr. Theresa M. Janczak delivers the keynote address for the Special Education strand.*



*Carmen Dinos and Assemblywoman Carmen Arroyo, surrounded by Nancy Villarreal de Adler, NYSABE Past President and Executive Director and Maria de los Angeles Barreto, First Vice President.*

vendors and the coordination of the exhibitors' area. Ray was assisted by María Meyer.

**Hospitality:** Lorraine Estrada was the chairperson for this sub-committee which guided and supported VIPs, presenters, past-presidents and special guests to make their conference registration and participation a most pleasant experience.

**NYSABE Booth:** Ofelia Ana-maria, chairperson for this sub-committee, was responsible for the success of the booth which offered a wide variety of items for purchase. Her additional tasks included doing an inventory and preparing a financial report on the items sold.

**Volunteers:** Amanda Villalba was the chairperson for this sub-committee which coordinated the participation of volunteers, provided guidance and support to the attendees, and worked in close collaboration with the Logistics sub committee to sustain a collegial environment.

#### **Entertainment:**

Eudes Budhai chaired this sub-committee which gave a festive touch to the conference. This year, the sub committee added an enjoyable Karaoke night.

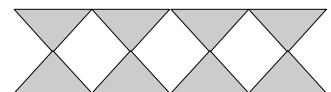
**Student Performances:** This sub-committee, chaired by David Cabrera-Villafañá, secured outstanding students' performances which gave the conference a festive multicultural flavor.

**Evaluations:** Linda Scalice, chairperson, provided conference participants with a survey to assess their satisfaction with the overall confer-

ence, workshops presented, keynote speakers, and activities. It also gave attendees opportunities to make suggestions for future conferences.

We also wish to recognize the efforts of Betty Colón, NYSABE Treasurer, in working very closely with the Registration Committee and the Conference Chairpersons.

In closing, we thank our friend Margarita Reyes, NYSABE President, for this memorable experience. Communication and trust have distinguished our work with Margarita. We sincerely hope that we have paved the way for future NYSABE leaders to be at the forefront in their service, support and advocacy for linguistically and culturally diverse students, in New York State and the nation.



## **Conference Voices**

### ***Special Education Strand***

*By Awilda E. Ramos-Zagarrigo, PhD.*

The New York State Association for Bilingual Education 33rd Annual Conference on March 11-14, 2010 welcomed Dr. Theresa M. Janczak, an Assistant Professor in the Exceptional Education Department at Buffalo State College and Director of the New York State Response to Intervention –Technical Assistance Center (NYS Rtl-



TAC). Dr. Janczak served as the keynote speaker for the special education strand and presented to hundreds of NYSABE members on Response to Intervention (RtI). She presented an overview of the salient features of RtI and provided insight into this multi-tiered prevention model as it pertained to English language learners (ELLs). Dr. Janczak's presentation was impressive. It laid the groundwork for assisting attendees in ensuring that ELLs receive appropriate interventions, in the hopes that referrals to special education will be diminished for this population. Dr. Janczak's presentation was followed by a panel presentation entitled, "Critical Features and Guiding Principles for Working with ELLs through an RtI Lens" presented by Dr. Alexia Rodriguez Thompson, Annalisa Allegro, and Dr. Sarita C. Samora. The presenters shared information on statewide initiatives and best practices related to implementing RtI with ELLs. They highlighted collaboration among professionals in schools and among technical assistance networks, misconceptions about RtI, considerations for literacy development in the native and second language, and language development for ELLs with and without disabilities. The special education strand was a success and NYSABE will use the energy generated at the conference to spark and sustain partnerships among stakeholders in the education of ELLs.

### **2010 Essay and Art Contest Winners**

*By Anne Henry*

One of the highlights for me each year at the NYSABE conference is the awards luncheon where we recognize and honor the winners of the student Essay and Art Contest and the Nivia Zavala Bilingual Student with Disabilities Art and Essay Contest. I was privileged to be, once again, the chairperson of the contests and convener for the 2010 conference luncheon. Every year, I look forward to receiving and reading the entries from students across the state; this year was no different.

It was wonderful to have winners from all three grade levels: 3 – 5, 6 – 8, and 9 – 12 this year. The first place winners were Cassandra Charles (PS 189, Brooklyn), Nicole Hernández (PS 189, Brooklyn), and Maria Peña Rodríguez (Brentwood HS). First place winners received a certificate of achievement, a gold medallion, and a check for \$100. The second place winners were Jennifer García (PS 189, Brooklyn), Clifford LaLanne (PS 189), and Zoila Espinal (Brentwood HS). Second place winners received a certificate of achievement, a silver medallion, and a check for \$75. The third place winners were Hermán Velásquez (PS 32, Brooklyn), Diana Luca (West Middle Bay Shore), and Sindy Solorzano (Brentwood HS). Third place winners received a certificate of achievement, a bronze medallion, and a check for \$50. And, the first place winner for the Nivia Zavala art contest was Michael Maldonado

(Halsey MS, Brooklyn).

NYSABE invited each winner and two guests along with teachers and other school personnel to attend the luncheon. I was thrilled that all the winners, their parents/guardians, and teachers were able to attend! It was clear that the parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators were very proud of their students for their achievement, and the students were in their glory as they accepted their awards. Once the

awards were presented, first place winners were asked to read their respective essays. All three students did an amazing job reading their essays to the audience.

NYSABE would like to recognize the ESL and bilingual teachers for their effort and dedication on behalf of English language learners. Their labor and commitment to bilingual education were exemplified in these students: when teachers provide quality instruction, have high



*Michael Maldonado, Halsey Middle School, Brooklyn, NY. He was the winner of the Nivia Zavala Art and Essay Contest.*



*Student winners proudly display certificates.*

expectations, and give appropriate support, the children do excel.

Congratulations to all the winners, their parents/guardians, and teachers for a job well done!



*Alejandra Torres, Multicultural High School, (Brooklyn), winner of the 2010*

### ***NYSABE Parent Leadership Institute at the Annual Conference*** By Carmen Alvero-Hope, Parent-at-Large

On Thursday, March 11, 2010, the Parent Leadership Institute was held during the NYSABE Annual Conference, in Melville, NY. Led by Carmen Alvero-Hope, NYSABE's Parent-at-Large, the Institute welcomed one hundred and sixty seven parents from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The major session was conducted by Maria Neira, NYSUT Vice President. During her presentation, "How Can Parents Help their Children Succeed in School," Ms. Neira focused on the power of parents to advocate for their children's educational rights and the need of teachers and parents to work jointly to ensure the best academic opportunities for the youngsters. "To be strong advocates", she said to the parents, "you need to

know that you have the right to:

- see your child's education records, and information on educational programs and opportunities;
- translation and interpretation services so you can communicate with school personnel.
- know about all policies, and rules, that require parent consultation at the school and/or district level;
- information about services provided by the school system — including eligibility requirements, and how to apply (i.e., transportation, food services, health services, English as a second language (ESL) and/or bilingual instruction, remediation, special education services, etc.);
- written information about the expectations for your child's educational program, attendance and behavior;
- written information about the grading criteria used to evaluate your child's academic performance;
- information about your child's instructional program;
- have a meeting, within, a reasonable time after requesting it, to have your child's education record explained;
- have your child's education records sent to another school in a timely manner."

Ms. Neira also stated "you also have the right to participate in your child's education and to:

- feel welcome, respected,

*Parents at the 2010 NYSABE Parent Institute with NYSUT and NYSABE leadership.*



and supported in your child's school;

- participate in regular written or verbal communication with teachers and other school staff and share concerns regarding your child's academic, social, and behavioral progress;
- meet with their child's teachers and principal, and participate in parent-teacher conferences to discuss your child's progress in school and meet with other school staff to discuss concerns.
- be informed on a regular basis, both informally and through formal progress reports, of your child's academic and behavioral progress in school;
- participate in governance and educational decision-making through the school leadership team at your child's school. You also have the right to get help in participating."

Further, Ms. Neira added that under state law parents of English language learners also have "specific rights to:

- be notified, in your native language, of your children's placement in a bilingual or ESL program — and about your options;
- transfer your child to a school with a bilingual program;
- withdraw your child from a bilingual instructional program to ESL only if you prefer;
- receive an orientation session on state standards, assessments, school expectations and general requirements for bilingual and ESL programs in your language."

Ms. Neira also explained parental rights under special education laws in New York State: "If your child has a disability," she said "your child must receive special education programs and services under their individualized education program (IEP). If recommended on the IEP, this may include a bilingual or ESL instructional program, in accordance with Commissioner's Regulations Part 154."

Ms. Neira gave some examples of ways for parents to get involved in their school community:

- Attend parent-teacher conferences. Request that your school provide a translator.
- Visit your child's classroom and share information about your country and culture.
- Make attending college an expectation. Request a meeting with your child's guidance counselor when they are in middle and/or high school and ask whether your child is taking the necessary courses to ensure they will be eligible to attend college after high school.
- If you would like to improve your English, check with your child's school to see if they can refer you to an ESOL program in your neighborhood.

Further, Ms. Neira stated "You have an important role to play in your child's education. So get involved and stay involved — vote, attend school board meetings and make your voice heard. It's the best possible path to educational success for your children. And keep the lines of

communication open — both with your children's teachers and, as we face tough political battles, with your elected leaders. Visit your legislators. Share the issues and concerns of your community, first hand. A face-to-face visit is very effective. If we hope to protect the educational programs that are important to our children — we must remind our lawmakers that education matters."

Ms. Neira closed her presentation by recalling the Native American proverb that says, "There are two values which you can give your child as a present for life — first of all, roots, and then, wings."

We salute Ms. Maria Neira for her inspiring keynote presentation. We also thank the NYSABE Language Delegates, BETAC staff, and teachers who led the multilingual workshops and provided translations. Further, we thank Dr. Pedro Ruiz, NYSED Coordinator of the Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Languages, for welcoming the parents. Special thanks to Maria De Los Angeles Barreto, NYSABE First Vice President, for convening this session.

*Rose Colón, Secretary; Margarita Reyes, President; Carmen Alverio-Hope, Chairperson of the Parent Leadership Institute, and Maria de los Angeles Barreto, Chairperson of the Awards Committee.*



***"If we hope to protect the educational programs that are important to our children — we must remind our lawmakers that education matters."***



*Angelique Nuñez, recipient of the 2010 Bilingual Teacher of the Year Award.*



*Roberto Flores, recipient of the Administrator of the Year Award.*



*Dr. Ann Ebe, Dr. Yvonne Freeman, Dr. David Freeman with Dr. Bernice Moro (extreme left) and Margarita Reyes, NYSABE president (right)*



*Maria de los Angeles Barreto, First Vice President, Heriberto Galarza, and Maria Neira*



*Dr. Pedro Ruiz, Coordinator of Bilingual Education and Foreign Languages and Dr. Aida Walqui Director, Professional Development, WestEd*



*Dr. Santiago V. Wood, NABE Executive Director, and Margarita Reyes, NYSABE President*



*Dr. Lucia Buttaro (center), Maria de los Angeles Barreto, NYSABE First Vice President (left), and Ana Soto, artist.*



*Student groups at the NYSABE conference.*



*Los Jilgueritos Musical Group*



*Dr. Miriam Eisenstein Ebsworth*



*Parents at the Conference*



*NYSABE Officials and Attendees: Betty Colón, Treasurer; Wilda Ramos, Past President and 2010 Conference Co-Chairperson; Evelyn Arent, Second Vice President and Chairperson of the Registration Sub Committee; Rosemarie Colón, Secretary; Dr. Sarita Samora and Dr. David Mauricio, Past President and Chairperson of the Administrators Forum Sub Committee.*



Margarita Reyes, *NYSABE President*, Diana Hernández, *Spanish Language Delegate*, Nancy Villarreal de Adler, *Executive Director*, María de los Angeles Barreto, *First Vice President*, Rosemarie Colón, *Secretary*, Assemblywoman Carmen E. Arroyo, Dr. Tatyana Kleyn, *City College Assistant Professor*, Dr. Cynthia McPhail, *Nazareth College Director of TESOL/Bilingual Programs*, Eudes Budhai, *NYSABE Past President and NABE Vice President*, and Carmen Pérez-Hogan, *Executive Assistant at the NYS Assembly*.

## **NYSABE Legislative Day Bilingual Education: Challenges and Promises**

**By Diana V.  
Hernandez**

Thanks to the sponsorship of Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, NYSABE members and officials traveled to Albany on May 25, 2010 to meet with our State legislators and education leaders to actively advocate and make recommendations for the successful education of ELLs/bilingual learners. They were greeted by the honorable Assemblywoman Carmen E. Arroyo, Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Bilingual Education, and Carmen Perez-Hogan, past director of the NYS Office of Bilingual Education and current Executive Assistant at the NYS Assembly. During the meeting at Assemblywoman Nolan's office, the NYSABE group was greeted by Dr. David Steiner, Education Commissioner, and joined by Dr. John King, Jr., P-12 Senior Deputy Commissioner, and his staff.

Nancy Villarreal de Adler and Dr. Tatyana Kleyn initiated the dialogue with assembly legislators and NYSED staff by offering a broader vision for multilingual education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They emphasized that a strategic plan for this new vision should encompass assurances for equitable and quality education for all ELLs/bilingual learners as well as enriching opportunities for all students in NYS to become proficient, literate, and academically successful in more than one language.

Responding to the lack of longitudinal studies on ELL/bilingual learners, President Margarita Reyes presented NYSABE's recommendation to conduct longitudinal cohort studies to determine the trajectories of ELL/bilingual students over time. This would be accomplished by revising the current policies

and collecting core subject, dropout, graduation, and post graduation data disaggregated according to the instructional model used for each ELL/bilingual learner and former ELL/bilingual learner served in New York State's bilingual or ESL programs. This data would have to be reported regularly at the school, district, and state levels to ensure consistency, accuracy, and updated public information. "The testimony to the academic achievement of ELLs can only be achieved by studying them through the continuum from LEP/ELLs to former LEP/ELLs", stated Margarita Reyes.. Other recommendations included:

### ***Creating a Deputy Commissioner for Bilingual Education***

Serving a crucial leadership role in building the New York State's capacity to meet the educational needs of ELLs/bilingual learners, this cabinet level position would serve as a catalyst to influence policy and practice; establish meaningful accountability systems - both financial and programmatic; establish an integrative database system that can accurately and consistently identify and track ELL students' performance P-20; establish criteria for identification and classification of ELLs that are uniform and standardized within the state, and minimize the role of subjective judgments. A key role for this cabinet position would be to develop the state's strategic plan for enrichment programs where all NYS students can have the opportunity to grow academically while learning in more than one language.



### **Common Core Standards**

While the national Common Core Standards make reference to ELLs, there are no specific details on how ELLs, at different levels of English proficiency, will meet the Standards; consequently, NYSABE, represented by Rosemarie Colón, recommended the merging of the revised NYS ELA/ESL standards with the Common Standards. In this manner, the new NYS Standards will reflect the needs, strengths, and learning characteristics on NYS ELLs/bilingual learners. In addition, NYSABE recommended the adoption of the Native Language Arts Standards which, in alignment to the new NYS Standards, will allow bilingual learners to develop literacy skills in their native language. As NYSED plans the development of a state curriculum, based on the Standards, NYSABE strongly advocates for the genuine access of all bilingual learners to that curriculum by using research-based effective instructional strategies.

### **Universal Pre-K, Early Childhood, and Enrichment Programs**

"Serious consideration must be given to expanding academic instructional time through extended school time, improving outcomes by implementing quality programs for ELLs such as developmentally appropriate and high quality early childhood, pre-school and kindergarten care and education, and improving the quality of students' out of school time. Our focus must be on a child's life from birth to five years old, which is develop-

mentally the most critical stage in a child's life. Expansion of Pre-K and full day Kindergarten opportunities with targeted ELL interventions must be made available to every four year old in New York. Let us begin to raise a new generation of children who have the knowledge and skills they need to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century," stated Eudes Budhai.

### **Longitudinal and Comprehensive Research**

There is a need for additional research that is longitudinal and comprehensive and addresses such topics as English language literacy, biliteracy, English language development and academic achievement through content instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy, and identification and reclassification of students. There is a need to fund longitudinal research that is directly tied to developing effective practices for educators of bilingual/ELL students general and special education. This research must document effective characteristics, systemic components, and dispositions of highly effective teachers, administrators and staff.

### **Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified ELL Teachers and Administrators**

In New York State, there is a shortage of certified ESL and bilingual teachers. Taking current ELL certified teachers and the attrition rate into account, it is estimated that an additional 7,780 teachers of LEP/ELL students are needed in New York State (ELL Costing Out Study, 2010). "To eliminate this

shortage, the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department in partnership with institutions of higher education, must create a long term strategy for training and recruiting the certified and highly skilled teaching force we need to help ELL students succeed", stated Dr. Cynthia Mc Phail.

As referenced in NABE's Position Paper (May, 2010), Eudes Budhai added that there is a need to:

- Reinstate **Bilingual Education Fellowships** in higher education to increase highly qualified bilingual education leaders at the masters and doctoral level
- Prioritize funding for teacher preparation programs designed to recruit and train highly qualified bilingual and ESL teachers
- Prioritize funding for higher education "Public School Administrator Preparation Programs" (principals, superintendents) designed to prepare **highly qualified bilingual/ESL administrative leaders** (critical need in public schools)
- Prioritize funding for "rehiring" of highly qualified bilingual/ESL certified teachers that have recently left the teaching profession due to frustration with poorly implemented or supported bilingual/ESL programs

### **Charter Schools: ELLs and Students with Disabilities**

While NYSABE acknowledges that charter schools

## **NYSABE Legislative Recommendations**

Creation of the position  
of Deputy  
Commissioner for  
Bilingual Education

Common Standards

Universal Pre-K, Early  
Childhood, and  
Enrichment  
Programs

Longitudinal and  
Comprehensive  
Research

Recruitment and  
Retention of Highly  
Qualified ELL  
Teachers and  
Administrators

Charter Schools: ELLs  
and Students with  
Disabilities

Programmatic and  
Financial Accountability

***"High stakes assessment systems used to identify and reclassify bilingual/ELL learners need to be fair, valid and reliable."***

are another means for access to educational opportunities for children in poor neighborhoods, it recognizes that charter schools have proportionately fewer Hispanic students, fewer ELLs (regardless of their ethnicity), and fewer students with disabilities, than nearby public schools in NYC, including schools that share the same building. If the population of charter schools matched the demographics of their neighboring district schools, there would be roughly 5,000 additional Hispanic students enrolled in them, according to the analysis, which used demographic data from the Education Department (NY Times, 2010). Using three sets of data from the New York State School Report Cards and analyzing the charter population at the school level, Buckley and Sattin-Baja (April, 2010) found that English language learners, are consistently under-represented in charter school populations across three academic school years. For these reasons, María de los Angeles Barreto, First Vice President, urged legislators and NYSED leaders to ensure access of ELLs and students with disabilities to charter schools.

***Programmatic and Financial Accountability***

High stakes assessment systems used to identify and reclassify bilingual/ELL learners need to be fair, valid and reliable. Further, in order to assess the development of bilingualism/biliteracy, and content knowledge, assessments need to be developed in languages other than English. Precise recommendations included:

- Developing and providing precise language for **identifying** students as ELLs through the use of valid and reliable instruments/procedures;
- Developing, implementing and monitoring accountability guidelines that exempt first year beginning level students with little or no proficiency in English from academic tests in their second language;
- Developing, implementing and monitoring accountability guidelines that exempt recent immigrants (two years or less in the US), from taking academic tests in their second language for two years;
- Developing, implementing and monitoring accountability guidelines for reporting data to include disaggregation by bilingual/ELL subgroup data;
- Developing, implementing and monitoring accountability guidelines that include bilingual/ELL subgroups in the disaggregation of high school completion rates in AYP determinations;
- Developing, implementing and monitoring a standard definition/process for determining high school graduation rates for Bilingual/ELL subgroups across the state;
- Utilizing external evaluators, in addition to U. S. Department of Education staff auditors, to monitor the progress of our state toward ELL accountability objectives, and to assist our state in establishing and maintaining an accountability system for ELL student achievement in coordination with school districts.
- Developing a new, transparent school funding formula that dramatically increases investment in ELLs
- Requiring that in exchange for new funding, school districts must invest in programs that have been proven to work for ELLs.
- Ensuring funding for Pre-k and kindergarten programs.
- Creating a database system that accounts for the accurate identification, assessment, and tracking of our ELL population from pre-kindergarten to post-secondary.
- Ensuring that Contract for Excellence funding be completed as a transparent process. Funds must be earmarked for programs that are research-based and comprehensive in nature and support the development of L1 literacy proficiency to ensure successful L2 literacy development across the curriculum via best practices and pedagogy.

In closing, NYSABE reiterated its commitment to work with NYS educational leaders to advance the education of all NYS students, particularly bilingual learners. After the meeting, members of the NYSABE Legislative Task Force visited their own legislators to discuss their dis-

trict's educational challenges and data as well as recommended strategies. We thank Assemblywomen Catherine Nolan and Carmen Arroyo, as well as Carmen Pérez-Hogan for ensuring the success of NYSABE's Legislative Day. While, we celebrate our success, we recognize that we must continue our advocacy work with our elected officials and state education department leaders so we can all promote multilingualism as a national asset and a "natural resource."

## Save the Date!

**40 Years**  
and Forward  
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For English Language Learners and Educators

**November 5-8, 2010**

Crowne Plaza Hotel  
Albany, NY

40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

New York State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

•••

### **Festival of the Birds at the Syracuse Zoo**

by Ofelia Anamaría, Region IV Delegate

On May 15th, 2010, the Syracuse Zoo celebrated the Festival of the Birds, known by many as La Fiesta de Las Aves. Thanks to the sponsorship of NYSABE-Region IV, this celebration of International Migratory Bird Day and Latin American cultures included the artistic participation of the students and families from Seymour School's Dual Language Program.

Seymour's teachers were very proud to see their students showing their rich Latin culture through dances, while enjoying other Festival activities, such as bird and puppet shows, migration stations, games, walks through the Zoo, and a multicultural lunch.

The Seymour School/NYSABE booth took this opportunity to distribute pamphlets and offer information regarding NYSABE and the Seymour School Dual Language. As reported by the Rosamond Gifford's Zoo Administration, approximately 1,969 visitors attended the Festival of Birds in this beautiful sunny day.

•••

### **Region IV Members at Immigration Rally in Washington DC**

By Ofelia Anamaría, Region IV Delegate

On March 21, 2010, teachers, parents, and community

Students and families from Seymour School's Dual Language Program at the Syracuse Zoo.



members representing Region IV/Syracuse, Utica, Cortland, and Oswego, joined immigration advocates at the Reform Immigration for America Rally in Washington DC. Tens of thousands of activists, including legislators and church leaders, gathered to call for legislation that would provide legal status to millions of undocumented immigrants.



Region IV delegates and immigration advocates, like Rev. Jesse Jackson and Cornell West (pictured here), at the March Immigration Rally.



High school group winners with ALBETAC Director Pat Lo and Painting Contest Judge Robin Harvey

### **ALBETAC's 2010 Chinese and Korean Essay and Chinese Painting Contest Awards Ceremony**

On May 26th the Awards Ceremony for the 2010 Chinese and Korean Essay Contests and the Chinese Painting Contest was held at New York University's Kimmel Center. As guests enjoyed a delicious breakfast, they were entertained by Miss Fuxin Bao, an accomplished musician of the Guzheng (Chinese Zither) and a student at Newcomers High School.

Following the musical interlude, ALBETAC Director Pat Lo welcomed the contest winners, their families, teachers, and distinguished guests to the awards ceremony. Dr. Juan Vargas of the NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies, and Ms. Yu Qing Hong, representing the NYC Department of Education's Office of English Language Learners, provided opening remarks. The awards were presented by honored guests who volunteered their time to participate in this event.

Our presenters included Dr. Juan Vargas- NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies, Sang Hwa Park- Director of the Korean Education Center / Korean Consulate General of NY, Dr. LaRuth Gray- NYU Metropolitan Center for Urban Education and Robin Harvey-

Coordinator, NYU Project for Developing Chinese Language Teachers.

During the Awards Ceremony, the audience was entertained by students from the Chinese Foreign Language Program at Medgar Evers College Preparatory High School in Brooklyn and students from the Korean Foreign Language Program at PS 111 in the Bronx. The high school students performed a Chinese Fan Dance, sang traditional songs and presented

a fashion show, while the elementary students demonstrated Korean number games and sang Korean songs. It was evident that these students enjoyed sharing what they had learned as much as the audience enjoyed their performances!

Congratulations to all of our winners and many thanks to the parents, families and teachers who encouraged and supported them in this endeavor. Please visit the ALBETAC website at <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/albetac/> to see a slideshow of the award winning paintings and lists of the contest winners.

### **Attention Educators in the Central Region of New York State!**

On Friday, October 8, NYSUT will be hosting a Regional ELL Conference in Utica at the Radisson Hotel/Utica Centre. NYSABE is co-sponsoring this event and you and your colleagues, who teach ELLs, are encouraged to take advantage of this FREE professional development opportunity, which will include a native language arts session.

Once you have received approval from your district to attend the conference, please register with NYSUT at the on-line registration web site: <http://www.nysut.org/eReg/ELL10>. For more information, please contact Melanie Pores at NYSUT: [mpores@nysutmail.org](mailto:mpores@nysutmail.org) or (800) 342-9810.



Region V celebrates at the annual Puerto Rican parade in Rochester. (Photo courtesy of Ken Aponte)

## Save the Date: New York State Association for Bilingual Education 34th Annual Conference

April 29th -30th, 2011

Location TBD



### *Fostering Cognition through Bilingual Education in the 21st Century*

Join teachers, school and central office administrators, paraprofessionals, teacher educators, community-based advocacy organizations, parents, researchers, and elected officials in sharing their innovative vision and common goal, to promote an excellent and equitable education for emergent bilingual students.

For information, pre registration, award nomination, and presentation forms, please visit NYSABE web site at: <http://www.nysabe.org/>

Until next year...





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