



NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

P.O. Box 70
Buffalo, New York 14207

June 16, 2008

www.nysabe.org

Mr. Richard P. Mills
President of the University of the State of New York and
Commissioner of Education
New York State Education Department

Dear Commissioner Mills,

The New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) is the professional organization that advocates for the education of New York State's English language learners. While we congratulate the New York State Education Department (NYSED) for its initiative to revise the Learning Standards, NYSABE expresses its deep concern for the exclusion of the Native Language Arts Standards (NLA Standards) from the revision process (Regent's Memorandum of March 19, 2008).

A consistent body of research confirms that English language learner's success in second language literacy depends greatly on a sound literacy foundation in the native language. For this reason, Bilingual Education programs have as a primary goal the development of native language literacy that supports and enhances the achievement of high literacy standards in English Language Arts (ELA). Consequently, the New York State's NLA Standards, currently used in the New York State's Bilingual Education classrooms, serves as a bridge that assists students in meeting rigorous literacy standards in their native language and transferring these same skills and strategies into English.

Considering the pivotal role that native language literacy plays in the achievement of English language skills, the NLA Standards' alignment with the state's English Language Arts and English as a Second Language (ESL) Standards is of the up most importance. By mirroring the rigorous curriculum challenges and expected outcomes included in the ELA and ESL Standards, the NLA Standards supports the students' successful transition into an all English academic environment.

On behalf of the students and professionals participating in Bilingual Education programs, NYSABE requests the inclusion of the NLA Standards in the revision process initiated by the NYSED. We believe that the parallel revision of the trilogy: ELA, ESL and NLA Standards will ensure equitable access to a congruent delivery of pedagogical services for all English language learners in Bilingual Education settings.

In closing, NYSABE reiterates its commitment to ensure optimum educational opportunities for all English language learners by strengthening the spirit of collaboration among all members of the educational community.

Yours truly,

Wilda Ramos
Wilda Ramos
NYSABE President

C: Robert M. Bennett
The Honorable Members of the Board of Regents
Johanna Duncan-Poitier
Jean C. Stevens
David Abrams
Pedro Ruiz
Committee of Practitioners

2007-2008

Executive Board

President

Wilda Ramos-Morales

First Vice-President

Anne Henry Montante

Second Vice-President

María de los A. Barreto

Secretary

Rose Colón-Cisneros

Treasurer

Betty Colón

Past President

Dr. Bernice Moro

Delegate Assembly

Region I/Long Island

Linda Scalice

Amanda Villalba

Region II/ New York City

Sandra Lugo

Juliet Luther

Region III/Mid-Hudson

Ivette Matías

Silvia Zaluski

Region IV/Capital District

Ofelia Anamaría

Sonia L. Otero

Region V/Rochester

Lourdes Odell

Margarita Reyes

Region VI/Western New York

Rose Colón-Cisneros

Tamara Pozantides

Delegates-at-Large

María de los A. Barreto

Betty Colón

Dr. Barbara Dray

Yolanda Rodríguez

PARENT-AT-LARGE

Rosannie López

Language Delegates

Amidor Almonord, Haitian

Evelyn Arent, Spanish

Md. Abul Kalam Azad, Bengali

Anne Henry Montante, Vietnamese