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NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

P.O. Box 70
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POSITION STATEMENT

Presented to the New York State Board of Regents
November 17, 2008

On behalf of all educators, parents, advocates, community-based and educational entities whom NYSABE represents, we thank you for this opportunity to make recommendations in the following areas:

PART 154 Regulations

1. Revise and strengthen the language of the regulations to convey the mandated nature of bilingual and ESL services for all LEP/ELLs in New York State
2. Make Bilingual Education programs and schools accountable for the teaching of Native Language Arts by:
 - a. Revising and aligning the NLA Standards to the ELA and ESL Standards
 - b. Increasing the required daily NLA instruction to a full period (more than 36 minutes)
 - c. Developing NLA assessments that will demonstrate progress in the development of academic language and literacy in the student's native language
3. Give school districts the option to develop specialized programs for SIFE students. New arrivals would enter a non-graded accelerated program that will aim at developing basic language/literacy and content area skills. After one school year, it is expected that the student will enter an age appropriate school classroom.
4. Develop an alternative assessment for students with severe disabilities. This assessment, replacing the NYSESLAT, would serve to indicate entitlement to Bilingual/ESL services and demonstrate progress in the linguistic and cognitive areas.
5. Support the implementation of Bilingual Education full-day Pre-K programs that will ensure the academic readiness of students by focusing on intensive native language instruction.
6. Encourage active participation of parents of LEP/ELLs by using their native language in all forms of communication
7. Replace the LAB-R with an appropriate assessment instrument that will ensure accurate identification of LEP/ELLs and will yield the information necessary to drive instruction.

TEACHER SHORTAGES

1. Increase ITI funding to increase the number of Bilingual and ESL teachers
2. Encourage IHEs to develop degree-oriented programs for support personnel, eg. bilingual school psychologists, bilingual counselors, etc.

LONG TERM ELLs

1. Fund programs specifically designed for ELLs that will provide enrichment activities beyond ESL instruction
2. Develop procedures to safeguard the educational rights of Long Term ELLs in Special Education

NYSABE reiterates its commitment to advocate for every child's birthright to equitable educational opportunities.

32nd Annual Conference
"Bilingual Education: Honoring Our Heritage for a Better Tomorrow"
March 12 – March 15, 2009
Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown, NY

2008-2009

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