

# The NYSABE Bilingual Times

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Fall/WINTER 2024 Issue



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

155 6th Avenue, 4th Floor  
New York, N.Y. 10013

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**Dr. Eliezer Hernández**

## DEAR NYSABE FAMILY,

Welcome to The Bilingual Times Newsletter, Fall 2024 edition. As the president of NYSABE, I am honored to serve alongside the Board of Directors, Delegate Assembly, and Executive Director. Our role in this community, as educators, families, and community leaders involved in bilingual education, is not just invaluable, but it is the very essence of our success. We are deeply grateful for your contributions.

Our unwavering commitment to advocating for the right to bilingual education in New York State is a testament to our dedication and impact on our bilingual students,

educators, families, and the community. Your active participation in our organization's objectives—Advocacy, Professional Development, Communication and Dissemination of Information, Leadership, and Networking—is not just crucial, but it is the driving force behind our success.

**Advocacy:** Our aggressive advocacy agenda, led by Dr. Tamara Alsace, Dr. Kate Menken, Dr. Gliset C. Morales, and Lyda Ragonese, is making a significant difference. In July 2024, [NYSABE released a Position Statement on New York's](#)

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[Bilingual Educator Shortage](#), which has already led to increasing awareness across New York State. Your active participation is crucial in achieving more impactful changes like these.

**Professional Development:** NYSABE provides professional development to our Delegate Assembly. On a regional level, our delegates have developed professional development action plans to serve the needs of their specific communities. In addition, our annual conference provides opportunities for NYS to come together and learn from each other with 90+ workshops and six keynote speakers.

**Communication and Dissemination of Information:** Through the Journal of Multilingual Education Research (JMER), The Bilingual Times newsletter, and E-News, NYSABE disseminates current information and research related to Bilingual Education. NYSABE is leveraging social media platforms to reach bilingual educators and families statewide, inform them of our advocacy agenda, and provide support. NYSABE is on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly known as Twitter).

**Leadership:** NYSABE offers hands-on leadership training to the Board of Directors and Delegate Assembly members. In addition, NYSABE promotes leadership among members by providing them opportunities to hone their leadership skills through their participation in ad-hoc or standing committees. NYSABE has created several ad hoc committees that offer further opportunities for our delegates to interact with past presidents and engage in strengthening the organization. Our strategic

planning ad hoc committee will review data and trends to inform our strategic goals to inform our strategic goals in a more effective and efficient manner.

Two years ago, NYSABE began the rigorous process of reviewing and updating its bylaws and policies. We have made significant progress thanks to the committed past presidents, delegates, board of directors, and NYSABE members. This work is a testament to our collective dedication and will only strengthen our organization and work for our multilingual families and community.

**Networking:** NYSABE offers a forum to establish relationships and strengthen linkages among educators, parents, advocates, elected officials, members of educational agencies, private and public educational entities, institutions of higher education, and community-based organizations. Our annual conference provides a platform for our multilingual community to network.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Delegate Assembly, and Executive Director, I am delighted to extend our invitation to you for the 47th Annual NYSABE Conference. The conference, to be held from February 27 to March 1, 2025, in Saratoga Springs, NY, will provide a unique opportunity to engage in discussions and hands-on learning opportunities. These sessions will be a platform for sharing innovative strategies, inspiring us all to ensure that all multilingual and bilingual learners have the tools they need to thrive.

Our theme, “Reaffirming Policy to Transform Practice and Action in

Bilingual Education,” emphasizes NYSABE’s unwavering commitment to harnessing the power of effective policy. This commitment is to create meaningful and transformative educational experiences for our students. We believe this theme resonates with our shared mission and vision for bilingual education.

This year, our conference will focus on engaging discussions and hands-on sessions to foster advocacy work through our students’ lens. We will provide a platform for sharing innovative strategies and practices that ensure all multilingual and bilingual learners and educators can succeed in the Twenty-First Century.

NYSABE supports educators, parents, community members, and educational leaders by offering a diverse array of learning opportunities and resources centered on critical themes such as diversity, equity, belonging, multicultural/multilingual pedagogy, bilingual education program models, bilingual special education, supporting immigrant students and families, among many others!

We cannot wait to see you in Saratoga Springs, NY, where we will embark on this exciting professional development and collaboration journey. Let’s engage in enriching conversations and work together to advance our commitment to bilingual education!





## A Note from the Editor



Cecilia M. Espinosa, Ph.D.  
Professor, Lehman College/CUNY



Dear NYSABE Community,

**T**his year has gone by very rapidly. The need for quality bilingual education continues to be of great importance. The work of NYSABE is central to ensuring bilingual education moves forward. This edition of the NYSABE Times Newsletter focuses on several themes:

As you can read in the bios, our newly elected NYSABE Delegates bring a wealth of experiences that enrich the potential for advocacy for bilingual education at the regional and state levels. Thank you for your dedication and commitment!

We welcome Dr. Martha Rosas, who is joining Nancy Villareal de Alder and me as editor of the NYSABE Newsletter. Martha comes to us with a strong grounding in bilingual education as a classroom teacher and teacher educator. She will be working behind the scenes with us and will write a column about an issue of bilingualism in each volume of the NYSABE Newsletter. Welcome, Martha!

We celebrate the NYSABE Position Statement developed by the Advocacy Committee Leadership team members on the topic of Bilingual Educator Shortage. We know how important a position statement is within the context of any educational organization, but particularly in the context of bilingual education, a position statement clarifies and fortifies its advocacy role for NYSABE and the larger context of education in New York State.

To strengthen our understanding and the schools' participation in The Seal of Biliteracy, we offer you an essay that will help us continue to recognize its potential and revisit the work we need to do to sustain and expand in this regard. We also offer you profiles of a few schools that illustrate where this path ends and where it begins. We hope to continue to highlight schools that help strengthen the promise of bilingualism and multilingualism as an asset. Please contact us with names of schools you would want to see highlighted in the NYSABE Times Newsletter.

In this volume, we also share with you an essay written by the NYSABE Region VI delegates who hosted a "SIFE and Newcomer Parent Workshop" in partnership with Buffalo Public School 30, Frank A Sedita, and another essay written by the NYSABE Region 6 delegates, who hosted a memorable "Latin Rhythms NYSABE Edition" at the Fred Astaire Dance Studio in Williamsville, NY. This gathering brought together nine participants for an afternoon celebrating culture, history, and community.

We thank all the authors of this NYSABE Times Newsletter Edition for their contributions.

Looking forward to the NYSABE Conference February 27 - March 1st, 2025.

I wish you a peaceful and generative 2025!

Cecilia M. Espinosa  
Co-editor

## From the Desk of the Executive Director



Nancy Villarreal de Adler  
Executive Director, NYSABE



*"Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality." Warren Davis*

*"Leadership is an action, not a position." Donald Mc Gannon*

**A**s we welcome NYSABE's newly elected delegates and prepare for the 2025 conference and membership events, let's reflect upon these inspiring quotes and connect them with our role as bilingual education leaders. Let's strengthen our **active support and commitment** to fulfill NYSABE's goals:

- Promote the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of high-quality bilingual education programs for students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds as a means to ensure equitable and enriched educational opportunities for all students,

- Promote Bilingual Education as a valid and research-based educational process and approach by which academic success and socio-emotional development of students is ensured as they develop bilingualism and biliteracy; and
- Advocate for broad public recognition of the importance of bilingualism and biliteracy as a path toward equitable participation in a global, multi-lingual and multicultural world.

This year's conference theme, *"Reaffirming Policy to Transform Practice and Action in Bilingual Education"*, and the focus on biliteracy

in this issue of our newsletter are linked as a unified, intentional call for action. It is a call to review and reinforce existing policies, including CR Part 154 and the NYS Seal of Biliteracy, with the intent of making a tangible, positive impact on their implementation and outcomes, thus strengthening bilingual education. Both the theme of the conference and the articles in this issue seek to acknowledge the vision and efforts of schools to provide bilingual programs and create a path toward the students' achievement of the NYS Seal of Literacy.

In closing, let's be reminded that we, all members of NYSABE, are **active members** of the advocacy committee and leaders in bilingual education.

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader."*

*John Quincy Adams*

*"Great leaders find ways to connect with their people and help them fulfill their potential."*

*Steven J. Stowell*



**REGISTER TODAY!**

# **The New York State Association for Bilingual Education 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

*Reaffirming Policy*

**February 27 – March 1, 2025**  
**The Saratoga Hilton Hotel**  
**Saratoga Springs, NY**

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



# Meet the Newly Elected Delegates

## REGIONAL DELEGATES

## 2024-2025

### Region I - Long Island



Sonia Argueta  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**S**ONIA ARGUETA is an educator with 22 years of experience in bilingual education. She's worked at the second largest New York State School District, Brentwood Union Free School District, where she served as a 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade bilingual teacher. She has also worked with adult English Language Learners (ELLs) in an ESL Evening High School program for Adult Education.

As a speaker of Spanish as a home language, Mrs. Argueta enjoys sharing the love of her language and culture with her students. She was raised in Venezuela where she earned her first college degree in Business Administration. Mrs. Argueta immigrated to the United States, where she fulfilled her dream of learning English and earned an Early Childhood Education degree at Five Towns College. She later continued her professional career at Saint John's University where she earned a Master of Science in Education degree in TESOL.

As an educator, Mrs. Argueta understands the importance of professional development and serving others. She enjoys teaching ELL/multilingual learners, providing them with meaningful lessons, strategies, and skills to help them reach their full potential. She also enjoys assisting parents by providing them with information and developing workshops that help them understand the educational system in the United States and learn about the many services that are available in the school and overall community. Mrs. Argueta has a passion for teaching bilingual students. She brings her students' culture into the classroom by bridging students' personal backgrounds and experiences with their experiences in a U.S. school. In her daily teaching, she engages students by looking at similarities and differences through products, practices, and perspectives of cultures.

Mrs. Argueta believes that a good education shapes, not only minds, but also the hearts of students. She believes that learning the language and traditions of other cultures can make students gain cross-cultural understanding and an appreciation of others. Her biggest joy is seeing students thrive, develop their self-esteem, and grow in confidence while they are learning English.



Dr. Jordan González  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**J**ORDAN GONZÁLEZ, PH.D. started his career teaching English as a Foreign Language in Madrid, Spain. He followed his passion for bilingual education and became an ENL and Spanish for Heritage Speakers Teacher for five years in the New York City Department of Education.

Dr. González then served as the Director of Language Acquisition for Yonkers Public Schools, where he led K-12 programs in Bilingual Education (Dual Language and Transitional Bilingual Education), English as a New Language, and World Languages across forty schools. During those four years, he provided leadership and professional learning to principals, teachers, and families on ELL-English Language Learner state regulations (CR-Part 154), ELL programs, and instruction for language development. In 2017, Dr. González started and cultivated the NYS Seal of Biliteracy program in Yonkers, where seniors graduate with formal recognition of their proficiency and academic achievement in English and a World Language.

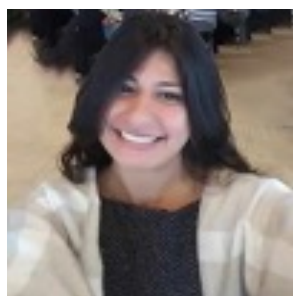
Currently, Dr. Jordan González serves as the administrative coordinator and lead resource specialist for the Long Island Regional Bilingual Resource Network (L.I.RBERN), where he provides technical assistance, professional development, and support to school districts in Nassau and Suffolk counties as it relates to ELLs. He participates in NYSED taskforce committees for the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL), including the NYS Seal of Biliteracy Taskforce, and is currently the chairperson for the ELL Graduation Rate Taskforce.

## Region II - New York City



Dr. Kate Menken  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**KATE MENKEN, PH.D.** is Distinguished Professor of Linguistics at Queens College of the City University of New York (CUNY), and a Research Fellow at the Research Institute for the Study of Language in an Urban Society of the CUNY Graduate Center. She is Co-Editor in Chief of the journal *Language Policy* with Miguel Pérez-Milans, and Delegate of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education. Her research interests include language education policies, bilingual education, and the experiences of multilingual learners and their families in U.S. public schools (especially New York City). Her books include *English Learners Left Behind: Standardized Testing as Language Policy* (Multilingual Matters, 2008); *Negotiating Language Policies in Schools: Educators as Policymakers* (with Ofelia García, Routledge, 2010); *Common Core, Bilingual and English Language Learners: A Resource for Educators* (with Guadalupe Valdés and Mariana Castro, Caslon, 2015), a book edited by the entire CUNY-NYSIEB team entitled *Translanguaging and Transformative Teaching for Emergent Bilingual Students: Lessons from the CUNY-NYSIEB Project* (CUNY-NYSIEB, Routledge, 2020), and a new book published in 2024 titled: *Overcoming the Gentrification of Dual Language, Bilingual, and Immersion Education: Solution-Oriented Research and Stakeholder Resources for Real Integration* (with Garrett Delavan and Juan Freire, Multilingual Matters). Her work also appears in journals such as *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *Language Policy*, *Theory into Practice*, *TESOL Quarterly*, *Educational Policy*, *Bilingual Research Journal*, *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, and *International Multilingual Research Journal*. Further information can be found on her website: <http://katemenken.org> and [Google scholar page](#).



Lisa Pineda  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**LISA PINEDA** is a passionate advocate for multilingual families and students, dedicating her career to creating innovative, student and family-centered opportunities. She has co-designed transformative programs such as ELLtrepreneurs, ALL-STAR ELLs, and Community Changemakers at the Division of Multilingual Learners, providing platforms for students to thrive academically, socially, and personally.

For the past five years, Lisa has led the Angelo Del Toro Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute (PRHYLI), New York City Delegation, providing students with unparalleled opportunities for growth and achievement. Through her leadership, students have earned college credits, achieved the prestigious Seal of Biliteracy, and honed public speaking skills through presentations on different platforms across the state. The program empowers students to advocate for legislative bills impacting Latinos, offering a platform to develop critical thinking and leadership skills. Lisa co-developed an innovative course within the program, *Exploring Social Justice through the Arts*, where students learn to advocate for bills through various art forms, combining creativity with civic engagement. With over a decade of experience in bilingual and multilingual education, Lisa specializes in fostering family and community partnerships that enhance educational opportunities for English Language Learners (ELLs) and their families.

In her current role as Associate Director for the Office of Multilingual Learners, Lisa provides strategic support to schools opening or strengthening bilingual education programs, offering professional learning opportunities for educators, parent leaders, and family engagement teams. She is an advocate for equitable access to multilingual education and has developed innovative resources, such as guides and booklets for parents of multilingual learners, to support families in navigating and thriving within the education system.

Lisa has played a pivotal role in leading and co-organizing several high-impact citywide and statewide conferences, demonstrating her commitment to advancing multilingual education and family engagement. Her efforts include the successful coordination of the NYSABE Parent Institute in both in-person and virtual formats, the Citywide Multilingual Family Conference hosted at the Intrepid Museum, and the Citywide Equip.Learn.Launch Virtual Institute for the Division of Multilingual Learners, New York City Public Schools. Lisa's creativity shines through in her ability to present new perspectives on the benefits of multilingualism. She is a valued thought partner, bringing innovative ideas to showcase bilingual education effectively. Her collaborative efforts have ensured that the Annual Multilingual Family Conference features the NYC Bilingual Education Community Fair as its centerpiece event, celebrating and highlighting bilingual programs and resources across New York City Public Schools. Lisa's expertise extends to curriculum development, strategic planning, and event coordination. Her commitment to advancing bilingual education is reflected in her work with the New York State Seal of Biliteracy, where she supports students in achieving academic excellence and cultural pride. A skilled communicator and visionary leader, Lisa is passionate about empowering students and families and communities to advocate for multilingual education, preserving cultural heritage, and ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed in a linguistically diverse world.



## Region III - Mid-Hudson



**Yolanda L. Rodríguez Delgado**  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**YOLANDA L. RODRÍGUEZ DELGADO** was born in Caguas, Puerto Rico, but grew up in the small rural town of Maunabo. At the age of 15 her family moved to Humacao where they still reside. In 1997 she moved to New York after completing her Bachelor's Degree in Biology from the University of Puerto Rico, Humacao Campus. She has a master's degree in Education with a Bilingual Extension from Hunter College, CUNY. She is an experienced educator and is very passionate about teaching and Bilingual Education. In 2014 she Co-Founded BxArts Factory and began serving as their Executive Director. The mission of this non-profit organization is to make art accessible to everyone in the Bronx. The Factory's Programs support local artists and arts projects to increase social change in the local community.

In her 27 years as an educator Yolanda had the opportunity to teach at the Elementary, Secondary and Graduate College Level. She was an Adjunct Professor for Hunter College, School of Education and taught several classes at Mercy College and Manhattanville College. Her courses always focused on Bilingual Education and Emergent Bilingual Education. Yolanda has presented in several local and state conferences.

She first worked at the White Plains City School District in 2008 as a Kindergarten and 2nd grade Bilingual teacher. In 2018 she left the classroom to support other teachers as a Dual Language Instructional Coach. In August 2022, Mrs. Rodriguez completed her School and District Leadership Certificate at Manhattanville College. In October 2022, Mrs. Rodriguez was appointed as the Director of World Languages and Multilingual Learner Programs K-12 in White Plains; the same district that she has proudly supported for 16 years.

47th Annual Conference  
**NYSABE**  
New York State Association for Bilingual Education

Reaffirming Policy to Transform  
**PRACTICE AND ACTION**  
in Bilingual Education

**Keynote Speakers:**



**Okhee Lee**  
Professor,  
New York University



**Hugh Burnam**  
Hode'nhyaȟ:dye' Mohawk,  
Wolf Clan, Onondaga Nation



**Cecilia Espinosa**  
Associate Professor, Lehman College  
City University of New York



**Trish Morita-Mullaney**  
Associate Professor,  
Purdue University




**Ariana Mangual Figueroa**  
Associate Professor,  
City University of New York



**Melissa Birnbaum**  
Visual Arts Educator,  
Pan American  
International High School

**www.nysabe.net/2025conference**



**The  
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for  
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**www.nysabe.net**



## Region IV - Central



Gloria Kimmich  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**G**LORIA KIMMICH is a kindergarten teacher at Seymour Dual Language Academy in the Syracuse City School District. She says: I am originally from the South Bronx, New York. I grew up in a Hispanic neighborhood where many of my neighbors and friends spoke more than one language and came from diverse backgrounds. My upbringing shaped my outlook on different cultures and helped me to understand and welcome unique individuals and their experiences. It has also heavily influenced me in my career path in education. I am certified in Early Childhood, Childhood Education grades 1-6, and ENL. I have been a member of my district's Emergent Bilingual Language Team for the last seven years and have assisted in the creation of the mission and vision of the school that pertains to our dual language program.

I have a wonderful husband and two children, ages 4 and 17. They support me in the work that I am committed to in the dual language program. My family understands my dedication and the time I spend to involve myself in dual language initiatives and programs that support teachers, students, and families alike.

As a NYSABE regional delegate, I hope to continue to advocate for dual language programs that support students in developing their bilingualism and high academic achievement. I also want to be the model for teachers of color who foster a sense of self and belonging in unique programs such as dual language programs.



Ilianatacha Rosa  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**I**LIANATACHA ROSA was born in Puerto Rico and raised in Williamsburg, Brooklyn in the State of New York. She attended SUNY Cortland and obtained a bachelor's degree in education. She went on to receive a master's degree in TESOL Education at SUNY Brockport and a Bilingual Extension at SUNY Oneonta. Ms. Rosa has been teaching Bilingual/Dual Language education at the Syracuse City School District for the past eight years and is currently taking courses towards an Educational Leadership degree.

Ms. Rosa grew up in a family that instilled the importance of culture, heritage, and language. She is a product of Bilingual and ENL education, having received support from both programs throughout her elementary years. Ms. Rosa hopes to use her leadership to advocate for bilingual education and its initiatives. She wishes to educate and share with others the benefits of Bilingual Education.



**New York State Association for Bilingual Education**

## Region V - Rochester

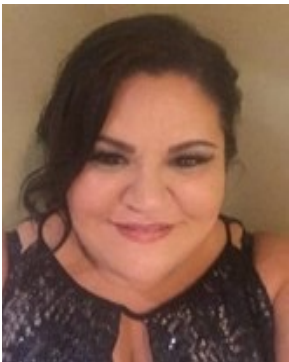


Analy  
Cruz-Phommamy  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**ANALY CRUZ-PHOMMANY** currently serves as the Director of Bilingual Education for the Rochester City School District. As a former English Language Learner, she considers it an honor to have started her career as a bilingual pre-kindergarten teacher. She served students as a bilingual fifth-grade teacher for eight years and three years as an instructional coach at Enrico Fermi School No. 17. She holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood and childhood education from SUNY Cortland, as part of Cortland's Urban Recruitment of Educators (CURE) Program. She went on to obtain a master's degree in TESOL at Nazareth and a master's Degree in School District Leadership at the University of Rochester.

With a focus on Bilingual Education and Latino Achievement, she currently serves her local community as a member of the Rochester Latinx Leadership Roundtable, the NYSED ELL Leadership Council, and as a newly inducted regional delegate of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE).

Her aspiration is to establish a district culture where there is an individualized learning plan for bilingual students, where the success of each student matters, and where teachers are empowered to meet the language needs of all students. She envisions working together to cultivate a bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural community.



Enid De Jesús-López  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**ENID DE JESÚS-LÓPEZ** is the Director of Transition Systems for the Rochester City School District (RCSD). She works at the Office of Student Equity and Placement, supervising the Language Assessment Proficiency Center (LAPC), as well as supporting students in the Juvenile Justice and foster care systems. She started her career at RCSD in 2003, as a School Counselor, and her passion for supporting students and families led her to earn a degree in School Administration.

In 2017, when Mrs. De Jesús-López began working with LAPC, she worked to streamline protocols and procedures as well as advocate for bilingual programs and services for English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners. In 2018, she championed additional services for SIFE students, which resulted in the implementation of the BRIDGES program through collaboration with RBERN and district level administration. Mrs. De Jesús-López is committed to the work of strengthening the collaboration of Bilingual Educators.



## Region VI - Western New York



Janet Correa-Longo  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**JANET CORREA-LONGO** is the Director of Multilingual Bilingual Education for the Division of Multilingual Education in the Buffalo Public Schools District. Prior to her current role, she served as an Assistant Principal at Buffalo Public School's Dr. Martin Luther King Multicultural Institute, School #48@#39. Janet has worked as a teacher for twenty years, teaching Spanish for a year in a private school and the remaining years as a special education teacher in the Buffalo Public Schools. She is a proud graduate of Buffalo Public School's McKinley High School. She continued her education at Buffalo State University, Medaille College, and the State University of New York at Buffalo, earning degrees in exceptional education, curriculum and instruction, and educational administration. She also graduated from SUNY at Buffalo's prestigious Learning Initiatives for Tomorrow Schools (LIFTS) Program, giving her the foundation to lead any school. Janet is a role model for young women, especially women of color, and is proud of her educational accomplishments.

Janet is passionate about bilingual education and a champion for social justice. She is committed to educational equity and recognizes the barriers and challenges that multilingual learners and their families face.



Dr. Maeva  
López-Kassem  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

**MAEVA LÓPEZ-KASSEM, PH.D.** is a Bilingual Education Coach for the Division of Multilingual Education in the Buffalo Public Schools District. During her 35+ years of experience, she has taught ELLs in general, special, and bilingual education settings in Puerto Rico and New York State. She also serves as an adjunct professor at SUNY College at Buffalo. As a fierce advocate for bilingual education, Maeva believes it is essential to educate members of the school community about the merits of exemplary bilingual education programs so that they may become advocates themselves.

Maeva's interests in bilingual education include Dual Language Program implementation and sustainability, integrated language and content curriculum development, constructivist learning, culturally and linguistically relevant teaching, translanguaging, metalingual awareness, and productive data-driven instruction.





## LANGUAGE DELEGATES



Dr. Miriam Eisenstein  
Ebsworth  
NYSABE  
Hebrew Delegate

**MIRIAM EISENSTEIN EBSWORTH, PH.D.** is a teacher educator, researcher, and advocate supporting multilingual learners and communities. She has a multicultural identity and English is her second language (with Yiddish, Hebrew, French and Spanish). She began her educational career as an Elementary School Teacher of English learners and was licensed by NY State in Childhood, Early Childhood, ESL, and Bilingual Early Childhood (Spanish/English). A former member of the NABE executive board, Dr. Ebsworth twice chaired the NABE Research and Evaluation SIG. She has served on the NABE Dissertation Awards Committee and represents NABE on the Hispanic Education Council. As the current NYSABE Hebrew Language Delegate, she serves on the NYSABE Advocacy Committee. She is also a longtime member of Puerto Rico TESOL. Dr. Ebsworth directs the Doctoral Programs in Multilingual Multicultural Studies at NYU where she is the academic director of the English program for families of international students and co-chairs the ELL Think Tank. Her research interests include using technology in L2 pedagogy, language variation, heritage languages, academic writing, and intercultural pragmatics. Dr. Ebsworth was NYSABE Bilingual Teacher of the Year awardee (2018-2019) and received the NYU Teaching Excellence Award and the NYSTESOL Outstanding Teacher Award. In addition, she was the recipient of the 2024 Gladys Correa Memorial Award.



Sandra McKenney  
NYSABE  
Spanish Delegate

**SANDRA MCKENNEY** was born and raised in Mexico City, Mexico until the age of 27. In 1998, she had the opportunity to migrate to Schenectady, NY after being recruited by GE Power Systems to work as a computer engineer, on a Y2K project. After working as a computer engineer for 8 years, Sandra decided to become a teacher. She completed her MS in Education at the College of Saint Rose. Then, she and her family moved to Zurich, Switzerland where she worked as a teacher for four-years in multilingual schools and had the opportunity to travel to over a hundred cities around Europe, Africa and Asia. When she returned to the US, Sandra continued her teaching career in a bilingual program at Past Road Elementary School in White Plains, NY. Since then, she moved and experienced different school environments, in cities, suburbs and rural settings, teaching from kindergarten to 6th grade. Sandra currently works as an Instructional Coach at the Seymour Dual Language Academy in the Syracuse School District.



Dominika McPartland  
NYSABE  
Polish Delegate

**DOMINIKA MCPARTLAND** serves as the Multilingual Learners (MLL) Services Administrator for the Citywide Transfer School District in New York City. In this role, she provides instructional and compliance support across the district while strongly advocating for and significantly expanding the Seal of Biliteracy program. She is also actively involved in TESOL teacher preparation programs at Hunter College and New York University (NYU), where she works as an adjunct lecturer and field mentor. Dominika is also a researcher with a focus on integrating computational thinking and digital literacy into teacher education programs. In addition to her professional duties, Dominika volunteers as a citywide Polish language advisor, helping students achieve the Seal of Biliteracy in Polish. She is a strong advocate for increased access to this award for Polish heritage language students in New York City and aims for its recognition in higher education institutions throughout the state. She holds a master's degree in English Philology from Poland, a master's degree in French from Hunter College, and a master's degree in Administration in Education from Hunter College. As a lifelong multilingual learner, Dominika is dedicated to promoting educational equity for students and educators. Her commitment to policies of equity and justice drives her advocacy not only for multilingual students but also for culturally diverse teacher candidates.

## LANGUAGE DELEGATES



Marina Vinitskaya  
NYSABE  
Russian Delegate

**M**ARINA VINITSKAYA has been working as a Resource Specialist for NYS Language RBERN at New York University since 2020. She is training ENL, Bilingual, World Language, and subject area teachers. She is leading Russian World Language PLS and providing professional development to Russian Dual Language Programs. She is supporting teachers and parents of multilingual learners on high school requirements for graduation and the college application process. Marina worked for the New York City Department of Education, for more than 25 years, as an ENL teacher, Regional Instructional Support Specialist (RIS), and a High School Principal. As a RIS, Marina was in charge of compliance and instructional programs for ELL, Bilingual, and Dual Language programs. She provided support to Superintendents and their network of schools on compliance, designing staff development, and instructional programs. As a result of practices and achievements of ELLs, the school was featured in the Stanford University Research for its “school-wide language development framework that integrated content, analytical practices, view of assessment practices, and social-emotional support for students and their families.” Marina coached new assistant principals and principals through the Leadership Program and the Wallace Foundation. Also, Marina is a TESOL Clinical Supervisor at Pace University and was an ENL consultant for a K – 8 charter school. Marina was honored as a noteworthy educator, by New York State Senator, Kevin S. Parker.



Dr. Nancy King Wang  
NYSABE  
Chinese Delegate

**N**ANCY KING WANG, ED.D. has been working as a Resource Specialist for NYS Language RBERN at New York University since 2015. She worked for the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) for more than 30 years as an ESL teacher, a Chinese language teacher, a bilingual guidance counselor, and an assistant principal of administration for 16 years. She taught in the College Now Program at La Guardia Community College and served as president of the Association of Chinese-English Bilingual Educators-East Coast of USA. Ms. Wang holds a master's degree in Bilingual Education and ESL Teaching from City College, master's degree from New York University in Applied Psychology and School Counseling, and post master's degree in School Administration and Supervision from St. John's University. She also holds the principal and district administrator's licenses.



# The New York State Seal of Biliteracy



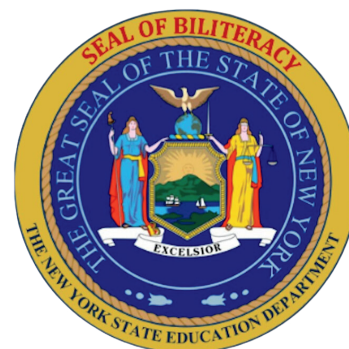
**Candace Black**  
World Languages Associate,  
Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages,  
NYS Education Department

The New York State Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB) is an award given by the Commissioner of Education to students who can demonstrate a high level of proficiency in English and one or more additional world languages. Our state was the second in the nation to establish a State Seal of Biliteracy program in 2012. We did this not only because New York has a linguistically diverse population that speaks over 200 languages, but also because we recognize that multilingualism is an essential skill for 21st century graduates to be successful in our global society.

While all 50 states and the District of Columbia now have a state Seal of Biliteracy program, New York is among a minority of states (15) that use Intermediate High proficiency as the requirement to earn the State Seal; most other states use Intermediate Low or Mid for their Seals. New York is also one of only two states that

recognizes that different languages require different instructional hours to reach a certain proficiency. For that reason, New York has differentiated proficiency targets for different classifications of language (commonly taught, less commonly taught, and classical languages). New York is unique in that students must earn points from a choice matrix in each language to obtain the NYSSB. Instead of determining proficiency through a single data point, such as a test, New York's varied criteria to earn the Seal allows each student to find the pathway to the NYSSB that is best for them. Points can be earned from course grades, test scores (both state and national), transcripts, and culminating projects, which prepare students for the rigors of college research and presentation skills. At this time, colleges and universities in our state are still learning about the NYSSB. It is our hope that they will adopt strategies to consider the NYSSB in admissions, placement, and college credit decisions.

Since the NYSSB was first offered, more than 40,000 students have earned this distinction in over 80 different languages in addition to English. (For a list of the languages in which students earned the NYSSB in 2024, please see the list at the end of this article.) Last year, New York saw over 10,600 students from almost 500 high schools earn the NYSSB. Three hundred of those students earned the NYSSB in two world languages in addition to English, 17 earned the NYSSB in three world languages in addition to English, three earned the NYSSB in four world languages in addition to



English, and the very first student in New York history earned the NYSSB in five world languages in addition to English. These students who can communicate in more than one language and act with intercultural competences have the skills to work towards a world in which cooperation, collaboration, and mutual respect can become the norm.

The growth in the number of schools offering the NYSSB and the number of students earning this award has been strong and steady, as evidence in the table below. That consistent growth is a testament to the dedication of teachers and administrators and the hard work of students. Looking at the numbers below, there's no evidence that a global pandemic occurred. Educators and students kept their eyes on the prize even during that challenging period in our history and showed significant growth every year.

These gains have not been without challenges along the way. To be successful, a NYSSB program needs a champion, a NYSSB Coordinator, that can rally faculty and staff to put the structures in place in the school to offer the NYSSB. Teachers of English Language Arts, English as New Language, and of

**(Continued on next page)**

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of NYSSB Earners	284	1,355	2,054	4,031	4,609	5,492	7,114	8,745	10,614
Number of Schools Offering	14	84	115	228	292	324	374	428	499



**(Continued from page 14)**

World Languages dedicate class time, planning periods, after school time, and their own free time to ensure their students have the support to develop the proficiency required for the NYSSB. Educators, counselors, and administrators don't just inform students about this award, they actively invite students to pursue it. For some students, especially our English Language Learners (ELLs)/ Multilingual Learners and Heritage Language Speakers, this may be the first time they have been told their home language is a valuable asset, some may even say a superpower. The number of Heritage Language Speakers earning the NYSSB has exploded since New York first started tracking them as a separate group in 2021. Last year, more than 1,900 Heritage Language students earned the NYSSB. Our current and former English Language Learners who earned the NYSSB last year numbered almost 2,900, which represents about one in every three NYSSB earners being a current or former ELL.

Despite these encouraging numbers, New York has many more ELLs and Heritage Language students who are qualified to earn the NYSSB, but who are not pursuing or earning this award. We are fully committed to working to ensure that all students who can demonstrate proficiency in English and another language by graduation have the opportunity to earn the NYSSB. Our greatest challenge is recruiting schools who are not currently offering the NYSSB. If a student's school doesn't offer the NYSSB, it doesn't matter the number languages in which they can communicate. Earning the NYSSB is only possible when the high school the student attends offers this program.

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) continues to produce a variety of supports and resources for schools offering the NYSSB, including:

1. Webinars for educators on best practices for implementing the NYSSB;
2. The NYSSB Forum, a group of hundreds of educators involved with the NYSSB that meet monthly during the school year over Zoom to discuss challenges and solutions to increase access to and supports for the NYSSB for schools and students;
3. A statewide book study on *Promoting Multilingualism in Schools: A Framework for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy* with more than 140 educators and led by authors Dr. Kristin Davin and Dr. Amy Heineke;
4. Two-page briefs on the NYSSB for various stakeholders (e.g., students, families, teachers) in 11 languages; and
5. The NYSSB Guidance Toolkit, a series of 8 modules with resources designed to assist schools in implementing the NYSSB for the first time.

OBEWL doesn't do this work alone. We work closely with the eight Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBERNs) across the state to provide local support and professional learning on the NYSSB. We also work with the NYSSB Task Force, a group of 30 experts in the NYSSB from around the state, including practicing teachers, NYSSB Coordinators, Building and District

Administrators, as well as representatives from statewide and national organizations such as NABE, NYSABE, NYS TESOL, NYSAFLT, NYSAWLA, New York City Public Schools, BIG5 School representatives, and the RBERNs. This leadership group meets monthly to advise OBEWL on how to continuously increase access and equity relative to the NYSSB.

If your school is interested in learning more about offering the NYSSB, please contact Candace Black ([nyssb@nysed.gov](mailto:nyssb@nysed.gov)). For more information on the NYSSB, please visit our website.

List of languages in which students earned the NYSSB in 2024: Akan Twi, Albanian, American Sign Language, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bisaya, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cebuano, Chin, Croatian, Dari, Dutch, English, Ewe, Farsi, French, Georgian, German, Greek, Gujarati, Guyanese Creole, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Karen, Khmer, Kinyarwanda, Korean, Kunama, Kurundi, Latin, Latvian, Lingala, Macedonian, Malay, Malayalam, Mandarin, Mandinka, Marathi, Mizo, Mohawk, Montenegrin, Nepali, Pashto, Patois, Persian Farsi, Pilipino, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Seneca, Serbian, Somali, Soninke, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tibetan, Tigrinya, Turkish, Turkmen, Tuscarora, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Wolof, Yemeni.

# Embracing Bilingualism: A Glimpse into the Bilingual Program at Seymour Dual Language Academy in Syracuse



**Lyda Ragonese**  
Supervising Director of Bilingual  
Education, Syracuse City School  
District, NYSABE Treasurer,  
Delegate-At-Large

## Seymour Dual Language Academy

### Mission Statement

*Students at Seymour Dual Language Academy will be bilingual, biliterate and multicultural. Students will demonstrate high academic achievement that prepares them to compete and be successful in a global society.*

Nestled in the City of Syracuse's West Side is Seymour Dual Language Academy, a school with a rich history of bilingual education. Under various leaders over the years, Seymour has undergone different bilingual models. Since 2015, the 50/50 dual language bilingual program has emerged as the preferred model in the Syracuse City School District. What began as a bilingual strand at Seymour has now evolved into a school-wide implementation of the 50/50 dual language bilingual program. In its second

year as a PreK-5 school-wide bilingual program, there is clear evidence of the school's inclusive environment that values bilingualism and multiculturalism. This transformation reflects the commitment to fostering a community where students not only learn academic content but also develop proficiency in both languages, enhancing their cultural awareness and appreciation.

Principal James Nieves, a past president of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE), has been at the helm of Seymour Dual Language Academy for the past six years. The school serves a diverse student body, with 53% English language learners/multilingual learners and 47% Spanish language learners, all of whom are recognized as language learners. Since 2022, the school's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) English Language Proficiency (ELP) success ratio has nearly tripled, indicating significant progress in language acquisition and achievement proficiency. Seymour is on the cusp of attaining an ELP achievement level of 3, a benchmark set by the New York State Education Department. A dedicated team of six English as a New Language (ENL) teachers focus on English language acquisition, ensuring students develop proficiency in English. Their equal counterparts, Spanish as a New



Language (SNL) teachers who specialize in supporting Spanish language learners, foster Spanish language

development and student academic success. Under Principal Nieves' leadership, the school is making remarkable strides in supporting language development and ensuring that all students thrive in a dual language environment. Seymour Dual Language Academy serves as the site for the district's annual Hispanic Heritage Celebration, a vibrant event dedicated to honoring Hispanic culture and its contributions. To reinforce the school's commitment to bilingual education, all staff meetings begin with a recitation of the school's mission and the pillars of dual language education. Steering committees play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of the dual language philosophy, incorporating responsible parties from the community and parents to ensure collaborative efforts. In addition, daily morning announcements are conducted in both English and Spanish, emphasizing the importance of learning opportunities available in both languages. Last year, afterschool classes were offered for parents to enhance their language skills.

These classes provided opportunities for parents to learn English, as well as Spanish for those from English-dominant households. This initiative not only supports parental involvement in the dual language program but also fosters a stronger community by encouraging bilingualism among families.

When everyone in the school is part of the bilingual program, promoting a positive bilingual identity becomes significantly easier. This inclusive model fosters a strong sense of community and belonging among students as they

**(Continued on next page)**



engage with both languages equally. By celebrating and valuing bilingualism, the school empowers students to take pride in their linguistic abilities, enhancing their confidence and reinforcing the importance of cultural diversity within the learning environment.

Seymour Dual Language Academy employs a diverse bilingual staff to provide academic instruction,

cohesive bilingual program that meets the diverse needs of students. This collaborative approach not only fosters effective teaching practices but also builds a supportive learning environment where every student can thrive. Students are recognized with the **Elementary Emergent Bilingual Award** at the end of **PreK** and **5th grade**. This award is part of the Syracuse City School District's PreK-12 Seal of



enrichment opportunities, and social-emotional services, significantly enhancing the educational experience for all students. The instructional team, which includes an instructional coach, a bilingual coach, content liaisons, and the administrative team, creates valuable opportunities for teachers to collaborate through Professional Learning Teams (PLT) on a weekly basis.

The bilingual program at Seymour is designed to be rigorous, promoting high standards of language learning and academic achievement. It emphasizes strong collaboration between classroom teachers and support staff, ensuring a comprehensive and

Biliteracy Pathway. Opportunities to award students at the end of preschool, fifth grade, and eighth grade allows the school community to celebrate student achievements in bilingualism and encourages their continued growth in both languages. By acknowledging their hard work and dedication, the program fosters a sense of accomplishment and pride in their bilingual identity, motivating students to embrace their language learning journey.

To promote the development of a positive bilingual identity, Principal Nieves, bilingual coach, Lillian Zayas, and district administrators encourage these practices:

- **Bring in Culturally Relevant Curriculum** to integrate materials and resources that reflect the cultures and experiences of bilingual students, making connections to their heritage.
- **Celebrate Bilingualism** by hosting events, such as bilingual storytelling nights or cultural fairs, that celebrate the diversity of languages and cultures within the student body.
- **Bring in Language Role Models** by inviting guest speakers who are successful bilingual individuals to share their experiences and the benefits of being bilingual.
- **Foster Peer Collaboration** by encouraging collaborative projects where students can work together in both languages, fostering a sense of community and shared identity.
- **Provide Positive Reinforcement** by acknowledging and celebrating students' efforts and achievements in both languages, reinforcing the value of bilingualism.

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- **Create Opportunities for Family Engagement** by providing resources and workshops that emphasize the importance of bilingualism and how they can support their children at home.
- **Establish Language Proficiency Goals** by setting clear language proficiency goals for students, providing them with opportunities to demonstrate their skills in both languages.
- **Create Safe Spaces** by establishing an environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves in both languages without fear of judgment.
- **Provide Diverse Literature** by provide access to literature in both languages that showcases diverse characters and stories, allowing students to see themselves reflected in the texts.
- **Provide Professional Development** opportunities for educators on best practices for teaching

bilingual students and fostering a positive bilingual identity.

Seymour Dual Language Academy students have the option to continue their bilingual education in a neighboring middle school, ensuring a seamless transition. They will have the opportunity to start their world languages courses earlier, enhancing their academic profile. This early exposure puts them on an accelerated track to pursue the Regents with Advanced Designation Diploma. By engaging in language studies at an earlier age, students not only strengthen their linguistic skills but also broaden their academic horizons, preparing them for future academic and career opportunities.

In summary, the Syracuse City School District is continually supporting bilingualism and biliteracy by creating opportunities for student and families to be multilingual learners. During the school year, students have opportunities to be recognized as ENL Ambassadors and Pathway to the Seal recipients. Families can participate in bilingual monthly family sessions at Seymour

Dual Language Academy and local refugee and immigrant resettlement agencies. The summer offers enrichment opportunities for students in the Steps to the Seal program, Summer Institute for Language and Culture, and Seymour Dual Language Academy's Language Without Limits program.

The staff at Seymour Dual Language Academy is always striving to improve their practices, continually seeking innovative strategies and professional development opportunities. This dedication to growth ensures that they provide the highest quality education and support for their students, fostering an environment of excellence and continuous success. By engaging in language studies at an earlier age, students not only strengthen their linguistic skills but also broaden their academic horizons, preparing them for future academic and career opportunities.

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*I am extremely proud of the dual language program at Seymour Dual Language Academy. We have the unique opportunity to provide our families and community the option to enroll their students into a program that meets their language needs. We prioritize both languages (English and Spanish) and believe that students will become bilingual and biliterate. The commitment to our program from our staff to our families and students is admirable. We are a community, we are a family, we are a team, and we are a safe space for many of our newly arrived families. Our entire staff puts a great effort to make a positive impact on our students. We are all advocates for equal opportunities and for the rights of our students to have a quality education that focuses on the strength of the students. We embrace and celebrate diversity and multiculturalism. With the support of our district, we have been able to provide students with resources to support their academic success. Not only do our ELL students receive the services they need, but we have been fortunate to add support to our Spanish Language Learners to ensure equitable resources and access to language since our students are 100 percent language learners.*

James Nieves, Principal, Seymour Dual Language Academy

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# Promising Bilingual Education Practices at Gregorio Luperón High School



**Yecenia Cardoza-Delarosa**  
Principal,  
Gregorio Luperón for Science and  
Mathematics High School

Gregorio Luperón High School's mission is to empower recently arrived immigrant students to achieve academic excellence, acquire bilingual proficiency, and develop the confidence and skills needed to excel in higher education and beyond. We are committed to fostering a nurturing environment that honors students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, values bilingualism as an essential 21st-century skill, and provides equitable access to rigorous educational opportunities. We are dedicated to ensuring our students leave not only as bilingual and bi-literate individuals but as lifelong learners and community leaders equipped to make meaningful contributions to society.

Gregorio Luperón's Dual Language program stands out due to our strategic and culturally responsive approach. Instruction is balanced between English and Spanish, enabling students to strengthen both languages simultaneously while mastering content in

mathematics, science, and the humanities. We integrate culturally relevant materials into the curriculum, ensuring students see their experiences and heritage reflected in their education. In addition to language-rich instruction, we offer electives and extracurricular programs—such as aviation, robotics, computer science, and Advanced Placement classes in English and Spanish—that emphasize biliteracy and communication skills in both languages. These experiences allow students to apply their linguistic abilities in authentic, meaningful contexts, further solidifying their bilingual competence.

Promoting a positive bilingual identity is at the core of everything we do at Luperón. For many of our students, attending Gregorio Luperón High School is their first experience in an environment where their home language and cultural background are celebrated as assets.

We incorporate activities such as:

- **Cultural Showcases:** These are annual events at which students share music, dance, stories, and traditions from their countries of origin.
- **Heritage and Advocacy Projects:** Students research and present significant historical figures from their cultures, connecting their journeys to broader social movements.
- **Peer Mentorship:** Upperclassmen serve as role models, encouraging newcomers to embrace bilingualism as a strength rather than a barrier.

Additionally, our school climate prioritizes Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), which helps students develop resilience and self-esteem while navigating their dual identities as immigrants and emerging bilinguals.

We approach the Seal of Biliteracy as a culmination of our students' hard work and a testament to their academic and linguistic growth. From the moment they enter Luperón, we prepare them to succeed by:

- **Setting Early Goals:** Students learn about the Seal of Biliteracy during orientation and throughout their academic journey. We emphasize its importance in opening doors to scholarships, internships, and career opportunities.
- **Rigorous Coursework:** Our program includes advanced courses in Spanish literature, AP Spanish language and culture, AP English language and composition, bilingual mathematics, science, and social studies classes. These courses ensure that students develop the academic language proficiency needed to succeed in multiple disciplines.
- **Language Support and Assessment:** Our dedicated faculty provides targeted workshops, practice exams, and one-on-one support to help students excel in the required language proficiency assessments.

Beyond academics, our school partners with community organizations, such as Fresh Youth and Initiatives (FYI) and

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colleges, to provide resources and pathways for students to showcase their bilingual skills professionally and academically, ensuring they are prepared for life after high school.

Gregorio Luperón High School is more than a school; it is a sanctuary for immigrant-origin students navigating new lives in the United States. Our tight-knit community is built on mutual respect, shared experiences, and a commitment to equity. What makes us incredibly unique is our

focus on leadership and advocacy. Many of our graduates return as teachers, counselors, and mentors, creating a powerful cycle of support and inspiration. Furthermore, we offer workshops and family engagement initiatives to ensure that parents are active partners in their children's education and are equipped to advocate for their success.

Finally, our integration of technology and innovative teaching practices helps prepare students for a competitive global market. For instance, we

encourage bilingual students to apply their skills in STEM fields, giving them the tools to excel in diverse industries while staying connected to their linguistic and cultural heritage.

Thank you again for this opportunity to share the story of Gregorio Luperón High School. We are proud to serve as a model for what bilingual education can achieve and look forward to continued collaboration.



# Becoming Bilingual/Biliterate, Developing Critical Consciousness: Dos Puentes Elementary School



Tatyana Kleyn, Ed.D.  
The City College of New York  
& CUNY - Initiative on Immigration & Education

**D**os Puentes Elementary School (translated as 'Two Bridges') was founded in 2013 as a New York City Public School as a community school in the upper Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights. Every student who walks through its doors becomes part of its dual language bilingual program en español and English from kindergarten through 5th grade. All students—regardless of home language(s), place of birth, dis/ability and additional social and human differences—are viewed as fully capable and deserving of becoming bilingual and

biliterate, and of developing critical consciousness about their community and world as a human and educational right.

When all the founders of the school came together, we identified four areas that would anchor the vision of the school to keep everyone united and working toward the same goals.



Eventually, these areas became the pillars of the school's philosophy. First, we shared a common commitment to value the multilingualism and multiculturalism of the school community. We also committed to centering the experiences, knowledge, and strength of families while supporting the bridge between home and school. Additionally, we agreed that learning had to be active, based on inquiry and exploration. This allows children to make connections, build from their different strengths and prepares them to solve problems in their classrooms and beyond. Lastly, we were committed to building two-way partnerships to support and deepen the work of the school. These partnerships started with local universities to ensure staff continued growing and learning as we supported future bilingual educators. And it is these four commitments that became our four Dos Puentes pillars:



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- Bilingüismo, biliteracidad y multiculturalismo,
- Las familias son partners, leaders and advocates,
- Investigaciones and hands-on learning, and
- Partnerships with universities, organizations y la comunidad.


These pillars are all written to emphasize *el bilingüismo* that is woven throughout. They serve to unite us in working together to provide the

foundation of what we do to support one another: students, teachers, staff, families, partners, and the community. We regularly reflect upon and make changes to our practices, but we do so while maintaining our commitment to these overarching pillars.


To share the work of Dos Puentes over the decade since it was created, its founders—Professor Tatyana Kleyn, Principal Victoria Hunt, Assistant Principal Alcira Jaar, Maestra Rebeca Madrigal, and Parent Coordinator

Consuelo Villegas—wanted to bring together the school's comunidad to reflect on the formation and development of Dos Puentes. This was done through an edited book that is made up of case studies from 40 school-based experts and commentaries from 20 scholars with connections to the school. The book is titled "[Lessons from a Dual Language Bilingual School: Celebrando una Década de Dos Puentes Elementary](#) (Multilingual Matters, 2024)."





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# PS 244Q The Active Learning Elementary School

*The Mission of The Active Learning Elementary School (TALES), a PK-3 school, is to foster academic excellence in a safe and caring learning environment. Through a partnership of family, staff, and community, TALES strives to educate the whole child by meeting their academic, health and wellness, and social-emotional needs. We utilize a race equity lens to empower students to break up patterns of racism and become leaders in our world.*



**Robert Groff,**  
**Principal PS 244 Queens**

PS 244Q offers a Transitional Bilingual Education in Kindergarten and 1st grade. We take this approach specifically because our school only goes up to 3rd grade, and it is very rare for us to get new students in 2nd or 3rd grade, so we focus on the two grades that support our newcomers the most. We offer a bilingual program in Mandarin because, being in Flushing Queens, over 90% of our families are Asian, and the vast majority of those have roots in China.

A part of our emphasis on racial equity is the recognition that we have to support families and students in their home language. This is a key focus of our school since 55% of students qualify for English as a New Language (ENL) support. We believe strongly that it is important that we do our best to communicate with families in their home language and provide them the most access we can, so their child's school experience is relevant and offers continuity of experience

between home and school.

Our school values the importance of family connections and communication. We emphasize that for students to speak their home language is an asset that they should grow with, as they add English over time. We believe this stance will support them as they develop as learners and thinkers. Additionally, we want families to know that their home language and identities are valued and cherished.

Emphasizing the importance and value of families' home language is evident in the daily life of our school, for example, we translate school information, it is a part of our hiring processes, it influences the way we purchase books and materials, and the children's home language is also an integral part of our teachers' planning process. We know that the visibility of cultures and identities of our students helps us create a stronger learning environment for everyone, i.e., our students writing integrates translanguaging; we invite families in for classroom celebrations, we are re-envisioning our social studies curriculum to highlight people of color that represent our students and



families, we develop intentional partnerships, and our school engages in a celebration of identity with our families.

Going back to approximately 2016, we saw the need in our community to create more supportive options for our families. TALES led the work through our district in Queens, bringing together a group of schools to learn how to best approach the opening of a Transitional Bilingual class that will welcome our students and their families' bilingualism. We continue to learn and grow in supporting them, and our teachers work incredibly hard to connect with their students and families.





# Developing Creative, Caring, Divergent Bilingual Learners at Samara Dual Language Community School



Mariana Swick  
Visual Arts/Artes Visuales  
Teacher, Samara Dual Language  
Community School



Samara Community School is a bilingual public elementary school located near the Bronx River in the south-central Bronx, NY. In collaboration with families and community stakeholders, Samara's mission is to support the positive development of students that are biliterate, creative, caring, divergent thinkers, and learners. Our PK-5 students experience student-focused, in-

quiry-based learning in a Spanish English dual language classroom setting and beyond the classroom, throughout our linguistically diverse, biodiverse, and culturally rich community.

Samara stands out amongst other dual language schools in how bilingualism and biliteracy are nurtured. As a school that has grown from an early childhood program (our incipient years were PK/Kindergarten with additional grades added each year), our staff is

committed to the principles of early language development—maintaining that children actively acquire language through a rich and meaningful context. Our foundational practices in nurturing language and literacy for our youngest learners remain our best practices for supporting emergent bilinguals throughout the grades, ages, and stages. Practices such as relationship building in a trusting space; inviting family involvement in

*(Continued on next page)*





**(Continued from page 24)**

the classroom, thematic curriculum, visual expression and construction of meaning through art making, music and movement, multisensory storytelling, and dramatic play continue to drive our teaching and learning.

Developing a rich linguistic repertoire requires rich experiential learning. For over a decade, Samara Community School has prioritized and developed our place-based integrated studies. From PK's weekly discoveries of the Bronx's urban forests through viernes de bosque, to 5th Grade's study of local activists, like Dr. Evelina Antonetty who fought for bilingual education in the South Bronx, our studies honor who we are, where we are, and who came before us. The development of a positive bilingual/multilingual identity happens through storytelling of lives lived and places explored.

Our team of educators, caregivers, and community stakeholders promote understanding of our multilingual, multicultural identity through deep investigations of what

makes our place a complex multicultural community, past and present. When I consider my role as the Integrated Arts teacher, I am frequently reminded of Pedro Noguera's statement, "Understanding who your children are is at the core of equity." One of the most important ways I can nurture bilingualism and cultural pluralism is through personally meaningful artistic expression. As Karen Galas, writes in "Arts as Epistemology," "For both teacher and child, the arts offer an expanded notion of classroom discourse that is not solely grounded in linear, objective language and thinking, but rather recognizes the full range of human potential for expression and understanding." In the same way that the Seal of Biliteracy encourages students to honor multiple cultures and value language diversity, art-making supports learners' ability to think divergently and approach problems from multiple perspectives. To continue along a multilingual educational trajectory, we hope that our students will have access to middle and high schools that share the same commitment to cultural pluralism and social justice.







**New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE)  
Advocacy Committee Leadership: Tamara Alsace, Kate Menken, Gliset C.  
Morales, and Lyda Ragonese**

**NYSABE Position Statement on New York's Bilingual Educator Shortage  
July 28, 2024**

There are currently 245,570 multilingual learners/English language learners enrolled in school in New York State ([New York State Education Department \[NYSED\], 2024](#)), comprising 10% of the total school population. New arrivals comprise 182,810 (74%) of all multilingual learners, and the state has received unprecedented numbers of newcomers since August 2022.

For well over two decades, school districts in New York State have faced devastating bilingual educator shortages, resulting in stark outcomes for multilingual learners; these students have the lowest high school graduation rates of all students in New York and in the United States as a whole, as well as the highest dropout rates. The longtime bilingual educator shortage has recently been compounded by the pandemic and the arrival of many newcomers, and has prevented school districts from offering the full range of language learning and related services they are mandated to provide for multilingual learners by New York State Commissioner's Regulations Part 154.

The New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) recently conducted a survey of its membership to gather information about how schools and school districts across New York State have responded to new arrivals, and to identify any challenges that have arisen. Over 70% of respondents stated that the shortage of bilingual educators is the main challenge schools face in their efforts to welcome new arrivals in New York schools. This was followed by the shortage of other bilingual staff such as bilingual counselors, school psychologists, and paraprofessionals (57%). When asked how to address the challenges that have arisen as schools work to meet the needs of new arrivals, the top response was "hire additional bilingual teachers." Factors identified as contributing to the bilingual educator shortage include lack of funding to support tuition and other costs of attaining bilingual educator certification, rigid certification requirements, and a need for more programs to prepare bilingual educators - particularly at the undergraduate level, as most educators will remain within their first area of certification.

Link for full NYSABE Position Statement on New York's Bilingual Educator Shortage - <https://www.nysabe.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NYSABE-Position-Statement-on-the-Bilingual-Educator-Shortage.pdf>

# Intersecting Expertise: Spotlight on Syracuse City School District's Collaborative Language Proficiency Team



**Kristina Crehan**  
Assistant Director  
of ENL, World  
Languages &  
Bilingual Education



**Elizabeth Deng**  
Refugee Academic  
Coach (ENL Teacher on  
Special Assignment)



**Jennifer White** ENL  
Instructional Coach  
(ENL Teacher on  
Special Assignment)



**Jeanne  
Finlayson-Schueler**  
Bilingual School  
Psychologist



**Katherine  
Teasdale-Edwards**  
Assistant Director of  
Special Education

## The Right Recommendation: LPT Process and Evidence Collection

The Language Proficiency Team (LPT) in Syracuse City School District operates through a systematic process (see Figure 1) to ensure that students with diverse linguistic and educational needs receive the appropriate support. When a student and their family attend their appointment for English as a New Language (ENL) intake and interview, a Language Assessor first reviews whether the

student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). If so, a referral is made to the LPT, along with any relevant documents and information provided by the parent or student during the appointment. Once confirmed that the student has an IEP and speaks another language at home, the case is assigned to a specific LPT member, who begins to gather evidence. This evidence is compiled into a digital file and shared with the LPT team. The LPT team relies exclusively on evidence gathered and

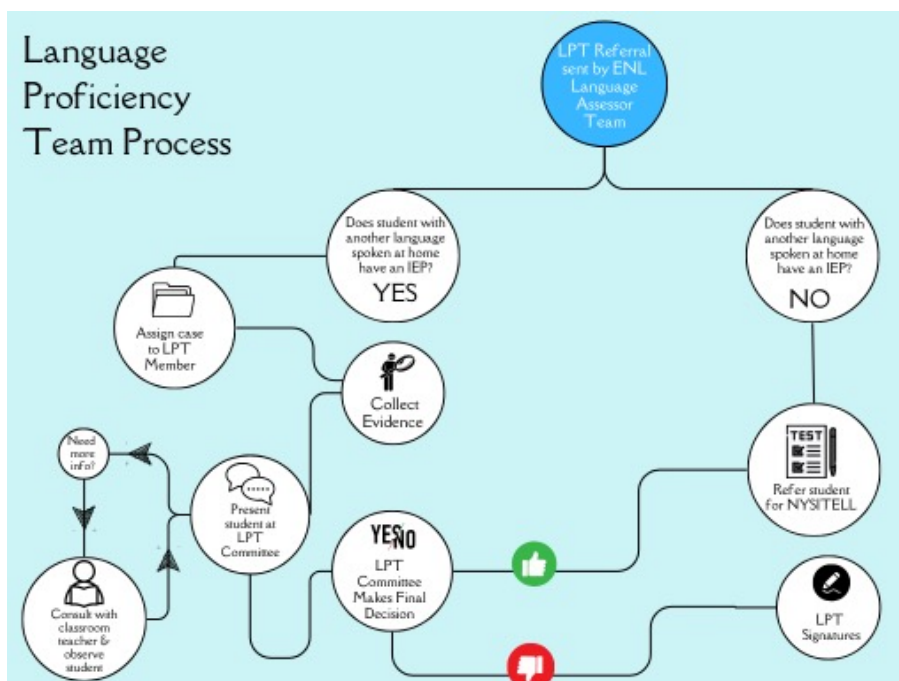
does not conduct a new evaluation. During the monthly LPT meeting, the assigned member presents the student information to the committee, where all evidence is reviewed, and a final recommendation is drafted. If there is a clear consensus among the committee members, the final recommendation moves forward and is prepared for electronic signing. However, if the committee determines that more information is needed, they identify the missing pieces and postpone the final

recommendation until that evidence is collected, ensuring a thorough and informed process.

**Figure 1, SCSD LPT Process Flow Chart**

Preparing for a Language Proficiency Team (LPT) meeting involves careful gathering of pertinent information to ensure informed decision-making is possible. In SCSD, the first step in the process for students undergoing LPT review is for the LPT member to meaningfully gather all necessary data and evidence. This information is sourced from various resources including an ENL Intake Form completed

*(Continued on next page)*





by a Language Assessor during the initial interview, notes captured on the districtwide student information system, the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), and relevant minutes from Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings. Understanding the significance of gathering comprehensive information for each student, the LPT team at Syracuse City School District has also developed unique tools to aid in the evidence-gathering process. One such tool is a student observation tool, designed to provide insight into the student's language use, interactions, and learning environment. Additionally, the

actively involving parents in this process, the LPT gains a comprehensive understanding of the student's individual circumstances.

### Figure 2, Excerpt from LPT Parent Questionnaire

#### Lessons Learned: Enhancing Collaboration in LPT Implementation

In a Language Proficiency Team (LPT), each member plays a crucial role in synthesizing and analyzing information to make informed recommendations for students. On the SCSD team, ENL educators deliver a comprehensive synopsis of student information and findings, focusing on language acquisition and proficiency. The Bilingual School Psychologist contributes valuable insights into the student's background and testing results, shedding light on their cognitive and emotional needs. The ENL and Special Education Assistant Directors weigh in on any additional information, questions, or concerns, drawing from their expertise in both language acquisition and special education. Finally, the entire team comes together to collaboratively analyze the gathered evidence and make a recommendation. Each member brings valuable expertise

team also utilizes a teacher/specialist questionnaire, allowing educators and specialists to share valuable observations and insights about the student's progress and needs. By synthesizing data and evidence from these sources, the team can gain a comprehensive understanding of the student's linguistic and educational needs, and ultimately make a well-informed recommendation.

In addition to the evidence sources described above, parent input stands as one of the most critical components of the Language Proficiency Team (LPT) process, providing invaluable insights into a student's educational history and

needs. The LPT Parent Questionnaire serves as a cornerstone in gathering this vital information, delving into the student's language use, behaviors, and overall educational experience. Through one-to-one conversations with each parent, the LPT member and parent fully complete the LPT Parent Questionnaire (see Figure 2), ensuring that every aspect of the student's language acquisition and special education needs are thoroughly understood. These conversations happen with interpreter support whenever needed to ensure effective communication with families from diverse linguistic backgrounds. By

Parent / Guardian Questionnaire	Comments:
A. At what age did your child start to speak their home/primary language? English?	
B. Does your child speak any languages other than those noted above or use another mode of communication?	
C. What is the best language to use when explaining things to your child?	
D. In which language does your child best express wants, needs, and feelings?	

to the table, contributing to a holistic understanding of the student's situation and needs. Those with special education expertise play a vital role in reviewing and interpreting Committee on Special Education (CSE) minutes, reports, and test scores, as well as presenting CSE decisions regarding special education placement and related services, such as speech/language therapy. They also contribute to discussions on expected growth in English proficiency considering the student's special education needs. On the other hand, members with English as a New Language (ENL) expertise focus on interpreting evidence related to second language acquisition and how these needs may translate to the classroom. This collaborative

approach ensures that all aspects of the student's needs are considered. Truly, the involvement of all parties is essential for the success of the team and the successful review of students.

This collaboration, however, did not come to be so strong without significant effort. Implementing the Language Proficiency Team (LPT) in 2014 brought about unexpected challenges as the SCSD ENL department navigated the changes outlined in Part 154 while aligning them with the district's unique processes. Initially, the integration of the LPT with the Language Assessor & Intake team proved impractical, as Language Assessors lacked the time to gather necessary evidence after students' ENL

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intake and interviews. As a solution, the LPT leadership transitioned to other ENL department staff, including an Assistant Director, Instructional Coach, and Refugee Academic Coach. Additionally, creating strong collaboration between the ENL and Special Education departments posed unique hurdles. At first, a designee from the department was represented on the team, however NYSED required district administrators to be involved. Over time, this led to a shift towards both departments equally sharing LPT responsibilities, ensuring equal understanding and input into the process. Furthermore, the number of students requiring LPT review has doubled in recent years, making it challenging to make recommendations efficiently. The team has had to

dedicate more time to the process and to fine tuning procedures and tools to ensure reviews can be both efficient and thorough. Through these adaptations and learnings, SCSD has established a more streamlined and effective LPT process that better serves the needs of their students.

In conclusion, the Language Proficiency Team (LPT) process embodies a commitment to excellence and collaboration, ultimately ensuring the most appropriate supports for students with diverse linguistic and educational needs. In Harrison's case, the student diagnosed with Autism we described in the beginning of this article, the LPT team embraced this collaborative approach to ensure they have a clear

and accurate picture of his linguistic proficiency. Through dedication to the process, team members go the extra mile in evidence collection, utilizing unique tools and strategies to gather comprehensive information about each student. Strong collaboration among team members, including ENL specialists and special education experts, fosters a holistic understanding of each student's needs. Moreover, the recognition of the significance of parent input enhances the decision-making process, fostering a partnership between the team and families. The LPT's unwavering dedication to making the most appropriate recommendation for each student reflects its commitment to equitable and inclusive education.

**47th Annual NYSABE Conference**

# Gladys Correa Memorial Award Gala

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2025**  
**7:00 PM - 12:00 AM**

**Saratoga Hilton Ballroom**  
**Saratoga Springs, New York**

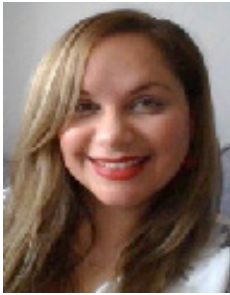
**DINNER | MUSIC | DANCING**

[www.nysabe.net/2025conference](http://www.nysabe.net/2025conference)

**SCAN QR CODE TO PURCHASE TICKETS**



# New York State Association for Bilingual Education: SIFE and Newcomer Workshop



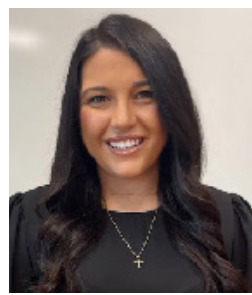
**Liz V. Alvarez  
Hernández**  
NYSABE  
Parent-At-Large



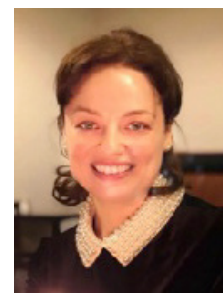
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NYSABE  
Parent-At-Large



**Janet  
Correa-Longo**  
NYSABE  
Regional Delegate

On Saturday morning, November 23, 2024, the NYSABE Region VI delegates hosted a SIFE AND NEWCOMER PARENT WORKSHOP in partnership with Buffalo Public School 30, Frank A Sedita. As its title suggests, this workshop was held to share information with parents of students who have had an inconsistent/interrupted formal education and/or with newcomer students. This workshop gathered nine families, speakers of Spanish, Swahili, Arabic and Burmese. The school provided interpreters for the different language groups.

The workshop began with a warm welcome and introduction from each member of NYSABE. Afterward, we presented an inspirational stories about individuals and students who overcame the challenges that come with being new to an unfamiliar country, like gaps in academics skills, learning English as a new language while learning new content and adjusting to new educational systems. More importantly, we highlighted the strengths, such as resilience, determination, multilingual abilities, and diverse cultural perspectives, which

each of these immigrant and newly arrived children and families brought with them that helped pave their path to success.

Parents in the audience heard about the support that, according to successful newcomers, uplift them in challenging times. First, they talked about how their ENL teachers helped them overcome academics gaps by scaffolding learning activities that made the curriculum in the general classroom accessible and providing opportunities to excel in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

These successful students spoke about how teachers should celebrate their students' culture and language to make them feel welcome and part of the school community, thus promoting acceptance and pride in their roots.

The workshop addressed higher education pathways, such as community colleges, vocational and technical schools, and apprenticeship programs available in New York State. We also discussed different types of financial aid for which students may qualify.

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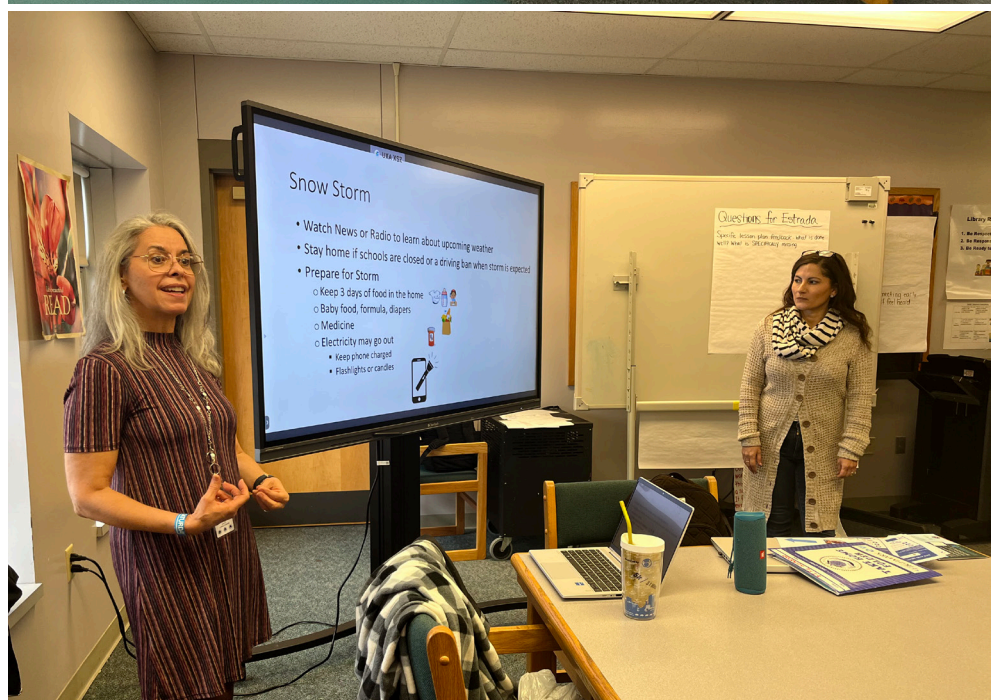
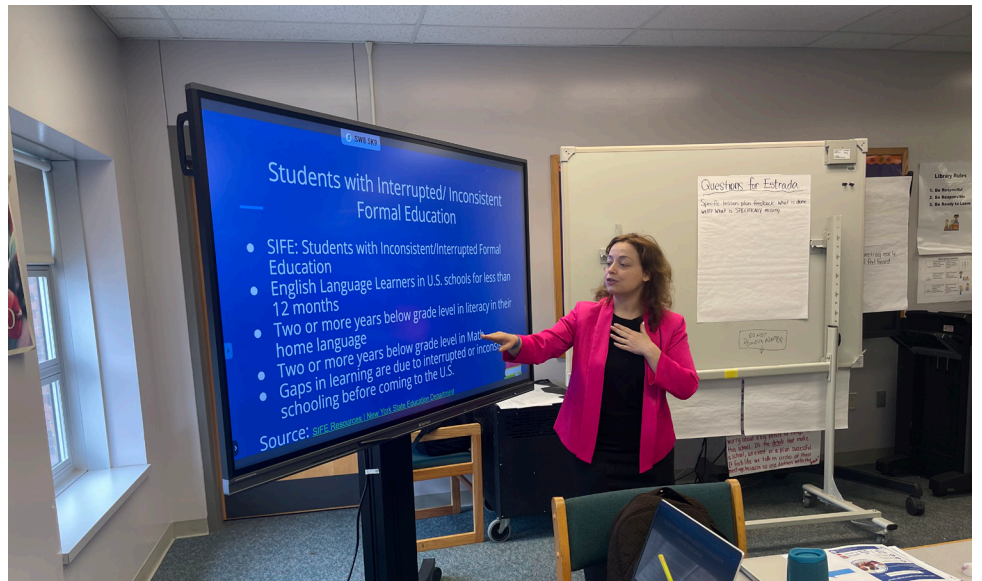




The parents were able to learn how to navigate the Buffalo Public Schools, including how to access the website and use Google translator to access important information. The NYSABE team highlighted the vital role parents play in US schools, presented various effective tools to support communication with the teachers, and emphasized school safety and discipline. Additionally, information about the school Parent Engagement Liaison was shared with parents, including how to reach out to her to obtain needed resources like food, housing, health care and legal services.

We concluded this successful event by donating coats for the children. In addition, the school gifted all participating parents a box with everything they need to make Thanksgiving dinner at home. Each family received a turkey, canned food, and all the ingredients for a happy dinner.

Once again, stay tuned for more Region VI events where we come together to support bilingual education and our multilingual communities!





## Martha's Mensaje



Martha Rosas, Ed.D.  
The Department of Early Childhood & Childhood Education  
CUNY, Lehman College

**G**reetings! My name is Martha Rosas, and I will be writing this column for the NYSABE Bilingual Times Newsletter on a recurring basis. I am an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood and Childhood Education at Lehman

College, where I teach courses on multilingualism, early literacy, and early biliteracy. Bilingual Education is very important to me. Although I was born and raised in Upper Manhattan, I exclusively spoke Spanish until I entered school. I began my career as a bilingual educator teaching in a New York City Public School Spanish-English Dual Language Program in the Lower East Side, where I soon realized that many of my students were English-dominant and had to become creative in the ways I introduced content in Spanish. I completed my M.S. in Bilingual Education at City College and my Ed.D. in International & Transcultural Studies at Teachers College. My dissertation research focused on the analysis of intercultural strategy use in multimodal texts by individuals in the Taíno community. As a result of this research, I have become interested in ways to leverage Indigenous language influences in varieties of Spanish.

As a daughter of Boricua and Cuban parents, I grew up speaking two varieties of Caribbean Spanish, an experience I discuss in my chapter, *Armonía con una palita de conflicto: A 'Latino' relationship as intercultural, which is included in *Latina Agency through Narration in education: Speaking up on erasure, identity, and schooling* edited by Dr. Carmen Martínez-Roldán. In this newsletter, I hope to highlight topics related to translanguaging with different languages and language varieties as well as issues pertinent to bilingual education and the education of language minority students.*

In addition to writing the column, my role will also be to support some aspects of the editing process and mostly the design of the NYSABE Times Newsletter.

I wish everyone a safe and wonderful New Year!



**CUNY-IIE**

### **PK-12 Immigration Literature Conference: Storytelling for Visibility, Understanding & Transformation**


Saturday, March 8, 2025

10:00 am-3:00 pm

Location: The City College of New York

Register at: <https://www.cuny-iie.org/events-1/immlitconference>

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



New York State Association for Bilingual Education

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

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

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- ☐ \$75 Institutional
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**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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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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**  
**New York University Metropolitan Center for Research**  
**on Equity and the Transformation of Schools**  
**155 6th Avenue, 4th Floor**  
**New York, NY 10013**

**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 (JMERE):** 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. Cecilia M. Espinosa, Editor

Dr. Martha Rosas, Assistant Editor

Dr. Eliezer Hernández, Graphic Designer

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High School Science Teacher, Colegio Antares-Lima, Perú.



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