

Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

New York State Education Department
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Regent-at-Large Luis O. Reyes—A Champion for Students

Perhaps no one is a bigger champion of Multilingual Learners and multilingualism in New York State than Regent Luis O. Reyes, PhD. The son of Puerto Rican immigrants, his passion for equity and innovation has spanned a career which began as a Spanish teacher in New Jersey and continues as a vital and valued at-large member of New York State's Board of Regents.

As watchdog of the 1974 Aspira Consent Decree, which established the right to bilingual instruction in New York City, Dr. Reyes was a key player in representing Aspira in various public education coalitions. In addition, Dr. Reyes administered a federal peer-counseling project for Aspira of America, Inc., which trained and engaged Latino and Haitian high school students. He served as Chair of the Education Priorities Panel (1989-1990), a city-wide coalition of government groups that monitored the NYC BOE and advocated with all levels of government on behalf of New York's public school children.

Following the seventh annual National Bilingual/Multilingual Learner Advocacy Month of April 2022, we applaud the man who was appointed as a Member of the New York City Board of Education for two terms (1990-1998) and who has held various leadership positions including: various leadership positions including Chair of the Board's Latino Commission on Educational Reform, Member and Chair-Elect of the Council of Great City Schools, and Member of the Steering Committee of the National School Boards Association/Council of Urban Boards of Education. Dr. Reyes coordinated the Coalition for Educational Excellence for English Language Learners (ELLs) and is a founding member of the Latino Coalition for Early Care and Education.

Dr. Reyes was first elected to the Board of Regents in 2016 and was re-elected to a second term from April 2021 to March 2026. Dr. Reyes describes his Regent duties as a capstone project to a lifetime in education. Most recently, he was part of a blue-ribbon committee that helped issue recommendations to the Board of Regents on initiatives to assist Black and Hispanic boys. In the coming years, the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages will work with Regent Reyes and Board of Regents Members on a project to help support native language learning among the Indigenous Peoples of New York state.

Thanks to people with vision, such as Dr. Reyes, New York has become a forerunner in Bilingual Education and ELL services with strong regulations and guidance to assist the field in providing support for English Language Learners and Multilingual Learners. These strong rules have allowed the Department and New York State educators to create identification protocols, language proficiency assessments, graduation pathways, units of study, and accountability structures that benefit ELLs and allow our state to provide quality English as a New Language services and bilingual programs.

It is our hope that the young leaders of today will use Dr. Reyes as an example of how educational advocacy can change the landscape for children and families. The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages is truly fortunate to benefit from the knowledge and passion of this one-of-a-kind advocate for change.



Regent-at-Large Luis O. Reyes

Vestal High School's Story of Multilingual Success

On a brisk September morning at 7:30 AM, a few dozen students crowded into the Vestal High School Library to learn about the Seal of Biliteracy. After eight months, exams in 10 separate languages, numerous meetings with mentors, a lot of practice, some nerves, and 30 world language presentations, 26 students earned the Seal in English and a total of 12 world languages (Spanish, French, German, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Romanian, Ukrainian, Russian, Turkish, Gujarati, and Mandarin) — an astounding accomplishment! One student, Lejla Mujakovic, earned her Seal in four separate languages in addition to English!

Now you might ask, how did one student earn her Seal in English and four world languages? Firstly, Vestal has strong world language programs in Spanish, French, and German, offering level 5 IB courses in all three languages. The district embeds the culminating Seal presentation into these courses so that all students are prepared for the Seal, if they choose to pursue it. Additionally, school staff personally invite and recruit students who come from diverse households, adding more home languages to the program. As a district, they equally validate and value the contributions that diverse home languages and cultures bring into the school. The Seal provides an opportunity for Vestal to formally recognize the home environment. In Lejla's case, she attributes her success to a combination of her family heritage, which included exposure to Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian, but she also challenged herself to learn German in school. While New York State has about 200 students earn the Seal of Biliteracy in two world languages in addition to English, and a handful who have earned it in three world languages, Lejla is the very first student in our state to earn the Seal in four world languages in addition to English. She truly exemplifies the values of cultural and linguistic diversity that the district holds dear.

Three staff members that are intimately involved in Vestal's Seal program, Gianni Cordisco, Ingrid Constable-Clarke, and Patrick Clarke, shared with our office how the International Baccalaureate Program and the skills it instills in students has been a major factor in the success of their Seal program. The International Baccalaureate Learner Profile aims to develop internationally minded students who strive to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective. We believe this profile serves as a foundation that our students, teachers, and families stand behind. Without having students who are comfortable taking risks and venturing into a variety of cultures and languages, this program would not exist. Without our teachers serving as mentors and continually guiding our students through this process, our program would have failed. Without our families, who support our philosophy and our students in their endeavors, these success stories would not be possible. Truly, Vestal prides itself on not only what they can offer to their students as educators, but what their students and families can offer the district.

For more information on how to start a New York State Seal of Biliteracy program at your school, please visit our [website](#) or contact us at nysseb@nysed.gov.

Lejla Mujakovic, New York State's first Seal of Biliteracy graduate in English and four world languages, is a member of the graduating class of 2022 from Vestal High School.



European Day of Languages — Save the Date!

The European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) is a global network of European organizations. To date, there are 125 clusters represented in 90 countries. In NYC, the EUNIC cluster consists of 22 regular members and 18 associated members. Its aim is to promote European values, share knowledge, build capacity among members and partners, and engage local partners in dialogue and common cultural projects. EUNIC is proud to announce the 2022 European Day of Languages to be held on September 30th from 10am to 2pm at the Goethe-Institut in New York City. This year's theme is Partnering for Language: EUNIC Meets the Seal of Biliteracy. This event — part conference, part information fair, part information

A Call to Act on: Our Voices, Our Stories

Now more than ever, it is imperative for educators to remember that all students, especially immigrant students, have a story and a voice of their own.

Educators that acknowledge, incorporate, and celebrate the whole child, can provide access to a world that many view as impossible. They can give light when it may seem like it is dimming.

Beverly Guity, Resource Specialist for the Hudson Valley Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network, is currently collecting immigration stories to support our families by building awareness and appreciation of the knowledge and contributions they all bring to our school communities. The intent of this project is to share the voices of those that may feel they do not have a voice so that we as educators can gain a better understanding of the needs of our students and families. Through building our own awareness and sharing these stories, we can shift from a deficit mindset and ensure that all students have access to all aspects of education and that all families feel empowered to advocate for a culturally and linguistically inclusive education.

Families who are willing to share stories of their immigration journeys and the impact that journey has had on them economically, socially, and mentally, are welcomed to reach out to Beverly via email at bguity@swboces.org.

Facts About Immigration

According to the [American Immigration Council](#), nearly a quarter of New York State residents are immigrants, while almost one-fifth of residents are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.

In 2018, 4.4 million immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 23 percent of the population.

New York State was home to 2.3 million women, 2 million men, and 206,980 children who were immigrants.

The top countries of origin for immigrants in New York State were the Dominican Republic (11%), China (9%), Mexico (5%), Jamaica (5%), and India (4%).

3.6 million people in New York State (18 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least one immigrant parent.



Korean Festival at the South Bronx Academy for Applied **Media**

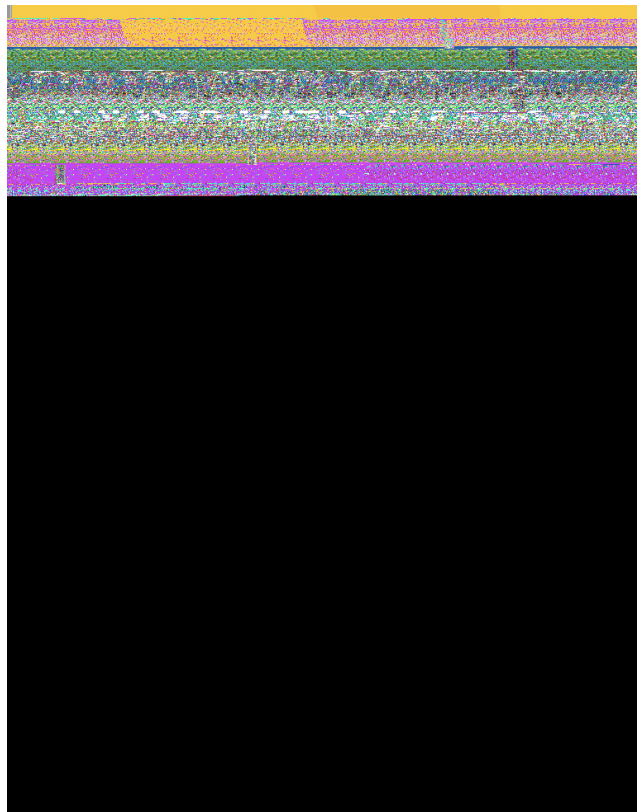
A Pilot Program for Immigrant Liaisons in Secondary Schools

The CUNY Initiative on Immigration and Education ([CUNY-IIE](#)) is a NYSED funded project that brings together educators, researchers, families, and local leaders. Together, they work to learn about, from, and with immigrant communities, to act in ways that center our shared humanity regardless of legal status, and to advocate for equitable policies and opportunities. The project includes an Immigrant Liaison working group, also known as "ImmLiaison." It was created through CUNY-IIE's collaboration with the New York State Youth Leadership Council ([NYSYLC](#)) and their educator team, Teach Dream, to start the first immigrant liaison pilot program in New York. To that end, the group has created a soon-to-be-released document to share their work and to lay the framework for schools to develop immigrant liaison positions to support the needs of immigrant students, families, and caregivers across the state, especially those who are undocumented.

An immigrant liaison is a part-time (or possibly full-time, if needed) position in a school created to offer support for immigrant, and especially undocumented, students and their families and caregivers. What that support can look like will be detailed throughout this guide. We argue that immigrant liaisons are needed in districts with immigrant populations, such as New York City, as well as in other districts with significant immigrant populations, because schools are still not sufficiently welcoming spaces for immigrant students, families, and caregivers. There are many reasons for this, including that teachers in public schools do not reflect the student body; school environments and curricula need to improve their cultural responsiveness; and high schools in particular are not prepared to support undocumented students in post-secondary planning. The NYSYLC is asking the New York City Department of Education to create an immigrant liaison position in every New York City public school.

The ImmLiaison team spent the 2020-2021 school year developing the immigrant liaison position and, in the spring of 2021, implemented a pilot program with immigrant liaisons in three NYC public high schools. In the spring of 2022, the team expanded the program to two NYC public middle schools. This guide includes a description of the pilot program, examples of the work done, and how that work was supported by the NYSYLC through monthly meetings and a youth fellowship. This guide also includes recommendations for schools that want to create their own immigrant liaison position, particularly regarding hiring and funding, with a priority placed on hiring immigrants and especially non-citizens.

A variety of support materials are included in the appendix, including a glossary that we encourage the reader to check out if unknown terms related to the intersections of immigration and education come up while reading this guide. The guide was compiled by Jennifer (Jenna) Queenan, with support from Anna Meixler, Madison Koenig, Jessica Rofé, Maria Fernanda Vera, Cynthia Carvajal, Farrar Cooper, Jae Berlin, Guadalupe Ambrosio, Angy Rivera, Ariana Mangual Figueroa, Tatyana Kleyn, and Nancy Stern, as well as the Spring 2021 immigrant liaison team: Laura Pamplona, Juan Carlos Perez, Katharina Kempf, Emilia Fiallo, Dennise Palacios, and Ariada Silva. The guide will be available via the [CUNY-IIE website](#) by mid-June 2022.



Social Emotional Learning

*"You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise."*

~ Maya Angelou

Today, more than ever, there is a need to wrap our arms around one another and around our children. Our English Language Learners (ELLs) have unique stories and journeys which have caused them to suffer from high levels of stress and anxiety. Now we are adding the events that have recently occurred to their plates.

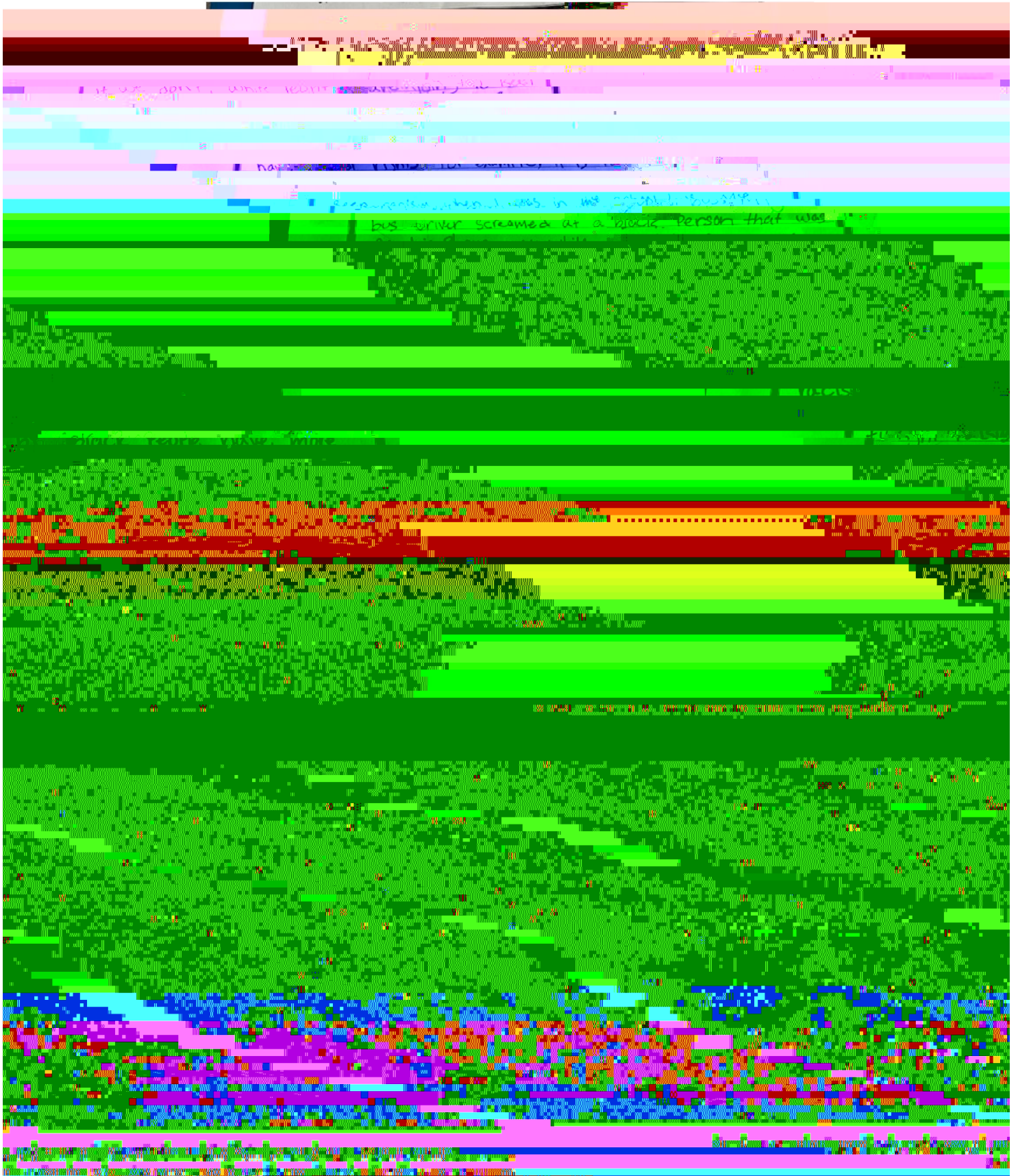
Social Emotional Learning is the process of developing one's ability to integrate thinking, feeling, and behavior in order to achieve important goals in life (Zins, 2004). It centers around the learner's cognitive ability in association with physical, social, and emotional systems.

Research shows that although ELLs may be exposed to the same instruction, they individually process information differently, which results in different language learning experiences. One of the main factors in learning another language is motivation. The socio-educational model of language learning states that, "integralization and attitude towards learning situations are two correlated variables that support individual motivation to learn another language, but motivation is responsible for the results in learning another language" (Henter, 2014, p. 374).

In recent weeks many educational stakeholders, especially teachers, have been working to keep motivation at the forefront of their classrooms, while tending to the hearts of our New York scholars. It has been a balance, as they prepare for a successful close to the school year, while answering difficult questions and dealing with issues of racism, violence, politics, and unanswered questions (an example of these letters is shown on the next page).

A dual language classroom in Buffalo, New York – home to the ten victims who were violently shot down due to the color of their skin, decided to put pencil to paper! They used their bilingual voices to write letters to President Biden regarding gun control and what they experienced in their very own neighborhood. Students also worked hard to create signs in both Spanish and English for the memorial outside of the site – which is found minutes from their school. The hearts of these students are aching for their community and country. Their teacher, Ms. Borek, knew that their questions, fears (for their own lives), voices, and heartache needed to be tended to as soon as possible. This was their way of discussing the real issues while continuing to shine hope and love in Buffalo.

Messages to President Biden and Community from Bufalo Public Schools Dual Language Students



Summer Professional Learning Opportunities

Throughout the summer New York State's Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBERNs) will continue to provide professional learning opportunities to support educators' instruction of English Language Learners (ELLs) and Multilingual Learners. These trainings often provide CTLE credit.

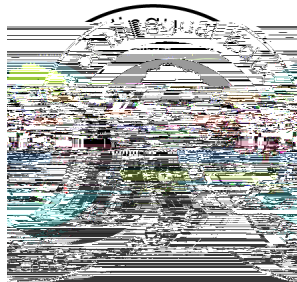
News from Other NYSED Offices

Two New York State mathematics teachers and two science teachers are state-level finalists for the 2022 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) at the elementary level. The PAEMST, one of the most prestigious honors in the nation for teachers, recognizes exemplary teaching and leadership in mathematics and science education. A [biography for each finalist](#) can be found on the Department's website.

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) awarded nearly \$95 million in subgrants to school districts, not-for-profits, institutions of higher education, and other community-focused organizations to establish or expand 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) across the state. The funds will support 136 programs and will be used by the districts and organizations to provide supplemental services and enrichments for students most in need of additional supports. [For a full list of school districts and organizations receiving awards, please visit the Department's website.](#)

Need local support? Contact your local RBERN!

The RBERNs support OBEWL's mission to ensure that all students' individual educational paths and socio-economical needs are met in multiple languages leading them to college, career, and civic readiness. They are NYSED's key providers of guidance, technical assistance, and support to New York State Districts, Charter Schools, Non



The mission of the New York State Education Department's Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages is to ensure that all New York State English Language Learners (ELLs) attain the highest level of academic success and that all Multilingual Learners (MLs) – which include ELLs, Former/Ever ELLs, World Languages students, and heritage speakers of World Languages – achieve the highest level of language proficiency in English and in one or more other languages.

