The New York State Association for Bilingual Education Newsletter

The NYSABE Bilingual Times

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A Message from the President

WELCOME

Eliezer Hernández, Ed.D.

Dear NYSABE Community,

As I reflect on the extraordinary success of NYSABE's 50th Anniversary Conference, I am filled with profound gratitude, pride, and hope for the future of bilingual and multilingual education. This conference was more than a milestone event. It was a powerful celebration of five decades of advocacy, leadership, scholarship, and unwavering commitment to multilingual learners and their families.

To everyone who attended, whether as a longtime member, first-time participant, presenter, sponsor, exhibitor, or volunteer, thank you for making this historic gathering so meaningful. Your presence, enthusiasm, and dedication transformed our conference into a vibrant community of learning, collaboration, and action.

Throughout the conference, we experienced countless memorable moments that reminded us of both how far we have come and the critical work that still lies ahead. Our Advocacy Luncheon showcased the collective power of our community as the Educational and Advocacy Committee engaged attendees in meaningful conversations and actionable advocacy efforts that will

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continue to influence educational policy and practice across New York State and beyond.

We were honored to host an exceptional Leadership Forum featuring Dr. Miguel Cardona, Dr. Betty A. Rosa, and members of the New York State Board of Regents. Their insights challenged us to think boldly about equity, access, and opportunity for multi-lingual learners, while reaffirming the importance of educational leadership grounded in justice and inclusion.

One of the conference's most inspiring moments was the induction of our distinguished keynote speaker, Dr. Ofelia García, into the Multilingual Hall of Fame. Her groundbreaking scholarship and lifelong advocacy have transformed the field and inspired generations of educators, researchers, and language advocates. We were equally privileged to hear from our keynote speakers Dr. Kate Seltzer and Monserrat Garibay, whose powerful messages energized attendees and reinforced the importance of sustaining multilingualism as a cornerstone of educational excellence and social justice.

The 50-Year Retrospective provided a moving tribute to NYSABE's remarkable history. Hearing from our past presidents as they reflected on a defining action, accomplishment, or lesson from their time in leadership reminded us that our organization's strength has always been rooted in visionary leadership and a shared commitment to the students and communities we serve. Their stories illustrated how collective action over five decades has shaped educational opportunities for countless multilingual learners.

As we celebrate our legacy, we also celebrate our future. To our new members, welcome to the NYSABE family. We are honored that you have joined our community of educators, advocates, administrators, researchers, and community leaders. Your voices, ideas, and leadership will help write the next chapter of our organization's history.

Most importantly, thank you to every member of the NYSABE community. Your commitment to bilingual and multilingual education continues to inspire hope and drive progress. Together, we have built an organization that has stood strong for fifty years, and together, we will continue advocating, educating, and leading for generations to come.

As we look toward the future, let us carry forward the spirit of collaboration, courage, and advocacy that defined this year's conference. It is with this in mind that NYSABE urgently calls upon the Administration for Children and Families to withdraw the proposed English-Only requirement for Head Start. Please see the Position Statement developed by the Advocacy Committee on p. 25.

Let us continue to stand up and push back against barriers that limit opportunities for multilingual learners. And let us remain steadfast in our mission to ensure that bilingual education thrives for generations to come.

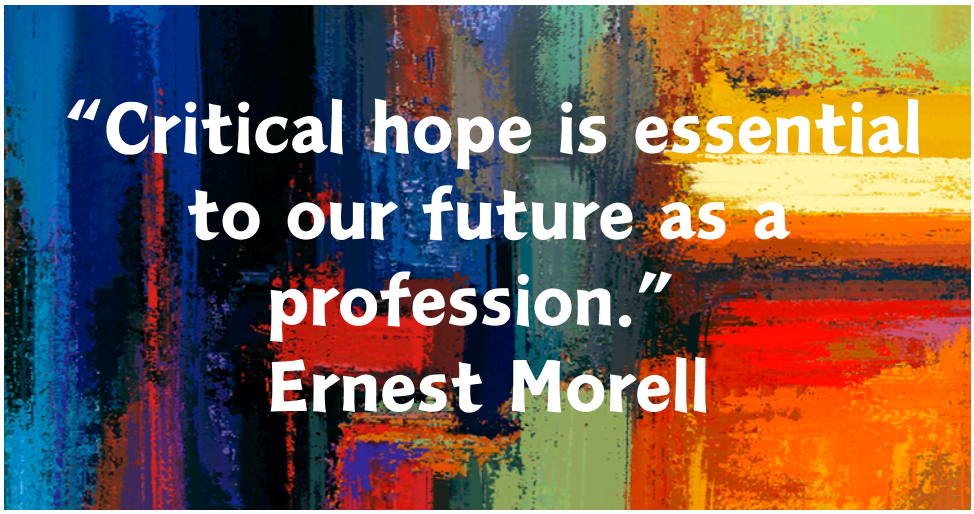
Thank you for being part of this historic celebration and for helping make NYSABE's 50th Anniversary Conference an unforgettable success.



A Note from the Editor



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



Dear NYSABE Members,

In this volume, you will find essays and photos that connect us back to the theme of this year's NYSABE Annual Conference: Breaking Barriers Through Bilingual Education, 50 years of NYSABE, which was held between March 19 and March 21st, 2026, in White Plains, NY.

These texts remind us of the essential purpose of bilingual education. At its core is the need to center and partner with the communities we serve, while we affirm, nurture, and celebrate our students' racialized multilingual identities. Vital to bilingual education is the insistence that bilingual teachers must teach from a space of agency. Similarly to the past, in these times, bilingual educators need to continue to act as relentless advocates with firm convictions. There is ample evidence that bilingual education has the greatest potential to offer transformative experiences to our multilingual students.

These authors challenge us to build from the past as we reimagine what its future might look like. In deepening our commitments through collaborative endeavors and advocacy, we will overcome any barriers we encounter, as the Advocacy Committee urges us to do in the Position Statements in this volume. I thank the authors of these texts as well as our Newsletter graphic designer and NYSABE President, Dr. Eliezer Hernández, and Nancy Villarreal de Adler, Executive Director and co-editor.

¡Adelante!

Cecilia M. Espinosa
NYSABE Bilingual Times Newsletter co-editor

1976 50th 2026
NYSABE ANNIVERSARY
NYSABE
The New York State Association for Bilingual Education

From the Desk of the Executive Director



Nancy Villarreal de Adler
Executive Director, NYSABE

"A divided kingdom cannot defend itself from its adversaries. A divided person cannot face life in a dignified way."

Paulo Coelho,
By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept.

As I reminisce about NYSABE's 50th Anniversary conference events, I am filled with joy, pride, optimism, and energy. The shared message at every conference activity declared our sense of unity, mutual support, strength, advocacy, and clear vision for the future. Together, let us then continue to celebrate the accomplishments of our past and present bilingual education heroes. Let us continue to acknowledge the challenges that educators, families, and community members initially confronted more than 50 years ago, and that they continue to encounter today. Even now, we continue to face challenges in establishing educational policies and programs that ensure equitable educational opportunities for all multilingual students.

Let us also continue to honor the countless educators who, over the years, have sought and implemented the best classroom and schoolwide pedagogical practices, grounded in sound educational research, to promote the academic and socio-emotional success of our students in bilingual education programs.

Dear NYSABE pioneers and present leaders, thank you for paving the road to success for past, present, and future educators, families, and students from diverse multilingual and multicultural communities throughout NYS. Congratulations on your most valuable legacy!

"My goal is not to get the Nobel Peace Prize. My goal is to get peace and to see education for every child. I truly believe that the only way we can create global peace is through not only educating our minds, but our hearts and our souls. Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world."

Malala Yousafzai, 2014 Nobel Peace Prize



March 18-20, 2027 | SONESTA HOTEL WHITE PLAINS, NY | www.nysabe.org/2027conference | conference@nysabe.org

JOIN EDUCATORS, LEADERS, PARENTS, ADVOCATES, POLICY MAKERS & RESEARCHERS FROM ACROSS NEW YORK STATE

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

- INSPIRING KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
- ADVOCACY AND POLICY
- RESEARCH & BEST PRACTICES
- NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES
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CONFERENCE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION OPENING OCTOBER 1, 2026

Be part of the movement.

SAVE THE DATE!

MARCH 18-20, 2027
SONESTA WHITE PLAINS HOTEL
WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK

50 Años No Es Nada: Bilingual Education in Nuevayol



Maite T. Sánchez, Ph.D.
Hunter College, City University of New York



During Friday, March 20th's keynote presentation, Ofelia García started by singing the tango "Volver" by Carlos Gardel and "Debí tirar más fotos" by Bad Bunny. This was a joyous metaphor to highlight the connection between the past and future of bilingual education and bilingual communities in New York. In what followed, Ofelia took the audience on a masterful trip of the people, organizations, and events that have shaped bilingual education in New York since the 1950s. Ofelia had a strong message: bilingual education is the result of bilingual communities' fight for justice for bilingual communities in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Throughout the years, that original liberatory focus has narrowed to primarily the teaching of languages. She urged the audience that the work in support of bilingual education needs to be re-centered on bilingual communities' resources and in the fight for equality for these communities.

With her unique style, Ofelia García reminded us of the role of so many people, organizations, and schools that built bilingual education for "integration, for su gente, for power and for rights" (and here are a few of the ones that she cited): the Puerto Rican Study, Chicanos, Native Americans, the Young Lords, Aspira founded by Antonia Pantoja, Hernán LaFontaine, PS 25 La Escuela Bilingüe, Community School 211, among others.

Ofelia García also gave us a word of caution: As bilingual education continues to be attacked, and dual language programs continue to focus primarily on the teaching of language, the ones that are left out are racialized bilingual children and their communities. She urged us to use the term "dual language BILINGUAL education" to remind people that this is a form of bilingual education, that is good for the communities, for the families -not for the market. Bilingual Education is not only for educating immigrants or educating "ELLs". It is also about including students in all stages of the bilingual continuum, including all different ways of being bilingual. This includes making sure that students and communities language practices are emergent presences (as a corriente) rather than static presences (as separate languages or separate home countries). Ofelia García reminded us of the reason why she, Susana Ibarra Johnson, and Kate Seltzer talk about a translanguaging pedagogy of juntos, to design spaces where students' trans-languaging flows with the corriente for deeper compre-hension, and to transform subjectivities of inferi-ority.

Ofelia García ended her presentation with the Boricuas lessons/

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lecciones from the 50s, 60s, and 70s, guiding advocates for bilingual education in the new wave of attacks.

Lesson 1/Lección 1: bilingual education as anti-colonial and anti-racist

Colonialism didn't end when the powers left; colonialism continues today through other means. Bilingual education has to be part of a broader effort to dismantle white supremacist relations of power. Ofelia left the audience with this question: *How can we work today to dismantle these supremacist hierarchies?*

Lesson 2 / Lección 2: Decolonizing education for liberation from coloniality.

Bilingual education must liberate colonized and racialized bilingual people, and it has to be done with communities' histories and practices with an eye to developmental/ maintenance.

Ofelia posted these reflections to the audience: It doesn't matter what model of bilingual education you have; what matters is how you keep on developing it – and not only maintaining the sense of being bilingual. And not only to develop English/Spanish/Chinese, but for developing bilingual people, bilingual citizens who develop pride in who they are and the sense of power to being bilingual. How can bilingual education work in relationship – juntos- with the students and the communities' presence?

Lesson 3 / Lección 3: The educators have to be either from el pueblo or who know the gente intimately, who really know the stories and the experiences.

The curriculum in bilingual education programs needs to be locally developed for and with the gente. Ofelia García reminded us that educators are also activists, organizers, and curriculum developers, and can no longer afford to just be educators in the structures of language but need to bilingual communities. She stressed that policies and materials cannot supplant the human spirit and imagining teaching of educadores. She left the audience with this reflection statement: *How can bilingual educators take curriculum into their own hands for the benefit of their own communities?*

Ofelia García ended her powerful presentation the way she began, with some of the lyrics of Bob Dylan's The Times They Are A-Changin song: "gather 'round… keep your eyes wide, lend your hand… don't stand in the doorway." She urged the audience, one last time, to keep the lesson from the Boricuas from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

And she left the audience with this powerful statement: "This work has been the focus of NYSABE por 50 años y lo será por 50 años más." Ofelia García spoke about the past with a message for the future.



Hope as Inheritance & Legacy in the Education of Bilingual Youth: Imagining Critical Futures through Advocacy



Laura Ascenzi-Moreno, Ph.D.
Brooklyn College, City University of New York



The NYSABE 50th Anniversary Conference culminated with Dr. Kate Seltzer's talk, *"Hope as Inheritance & Legacy in the Education of Bilingual Youth."* Dr. Seltzer addressed how bilingual educators and advocates can imagine the future of bilingual education for the multilingual children of New York State.

Dr. Seltzer reminded the NYSABE audience that moving the field of bilingual education forward requires educators to examine their own language practices and how these practices have shaped their ability to imagine the future. This introspection is critical as the connections between language, family, and community often go unnoticed and unrepresented in bilingual programs. Over the past two decades, the emergence of translanguaging has offered teachers a new perspective on understanding their language practices and those in their families and communities. Translanguaging invites educators to develop a deeper awareness of who they are and how that understanding can be applied to programs, policies, and instruction. The goal is not only to think about language, but to explore its intersection with identity and power, and thus provide the kind of bilingual education that matches the aspirations of Latinx families and communities. At the heart of this work is for educators to insist on bilingual students' "humanity, brilliance, and dignity." There is no room for deficit-based perspectives or approaches to bilingual students and their families within this conceptualization of bilingual education for the future.

The struggle to advocate for bilingual education is not just about teaching language but is a testament to racialized multilingual students' and families' brilliance, which is now under assault. Dr. Seltzer reminded the NYSABE audience that educators must face this struggle courageously as they become informed about how to holistically support multilingual students and expand their advocacy skills to do so.

Dr. Seltzer spoke about a model for critical advocacy that she developed with her colleague, Dr. Rebecca Linares. The Framework, Critical Advocacy for Bi/multilingual Students, supports educators to understand how they can engage in school-based advocacy work in ways that sustain themselves, their colleagues, and the communities for which they are advocating. This Framework uses the metaphor of a tree and is divided into four parts: 1) the roots, grounding educators' histories; 2) the trunk, which represents core advocacy beliefs; 3) the branches, which stand for the core critical advocacy actions; 4) the offshoots and branches, which represent the local enactments of critical advocacy. The future of

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bilingual education is ultimately intertwined with advocacy, Dr. Seltzer stressed.

Dr. Seltzer reminded the audience that the advocacy of educators and administrators can take different forms; there is not one way to act to advocate for the future of bilingual students. Rather, there is a multitude of responses and actions that can be and should be taken to chip away at the inequities that exist for multilingual students. This critical framework for advocacy helps educators to be intentional and reflective about their stances and approaches to advocacy. Each of the components of the framework is designed to be both internal and approaches to advocacy. Each of the components of the framework is designed to be both internal and outward-facing. For example, as educators explore their roots and strengthen their trunk, they should consider how their intersectional identities inform their perspectives and approaches to multilingual students and their instruction. As educators grow their branches, they should think about how their approach to action is aligned with their strengths. Lastly, in determining how to sprout off-shoots and leaves, Drs. Seltzer and Linares encourage educators to think about what conscious actions they are willing to take and how they surround themselves with support.

The NYSABE audience was left with a message of critical hope. This critical hope is bolstered by being cognizant of all of the powerful bilingual education advocates who have come before us and how we need to receive the baton for advocacy for the future. Strength and purpose are cultivated through reflection, solidarity, and purpose.

1976 - 2026 50th NYSABE

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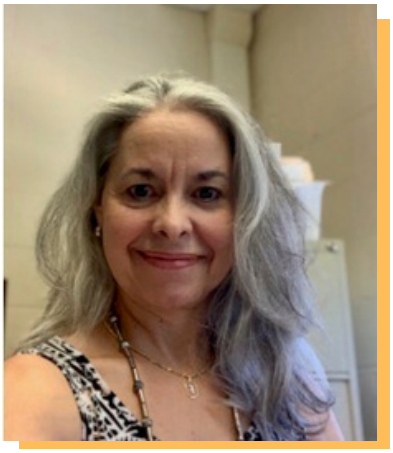
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A Summary of Beyond Benchmarks: Using Biliteracy Trajectories to Affirm Identity and Drive Instruction



Maeva Lopez-Kassem, Ed.D.
NYSABE Region VI Delegate

"Write down your full name on a piece of paper.
Now, write it again — this time using your other hand."

With this simple yet thought-provoking prompt,
the audience was hooked from the very start.

Ms. Jaimie Dini, the Brewster Central School District's ELL and Bilingual Education Coordinator, and her colleague Ms. Kelsey Stockton-Ortiz, a second-grade Spanish Zone Dual Language teacher, are passionate, inquisitive, and experienced educators. They presented at NYSABE's 50th Anniversary Conference, sharing their deep expertise in bilingual instruction and assessment through the lens of Biliteracy Trajectories. Their presentation was especially timely, as one of NYSABE's current aims is to more deeply examine ways to expand bilingual and dual language programs while ensuring that both established and emerging programs remain strong, sustainable, and thriving.

The presenters used the name-writing activity to spark discussion among participants. The metaphor resonated immediately. Writing one's name with the dominant hand, participants noted, symbolized an emergent bilingual's prior knowledge and use of their home language. This led to an important thought: students do not enter schools as blank slates, and educators must intentionally recognize and value the linguistic and academic assets they bring. Writing with the non-dominant hand represented the process of learning a new language or skill, one that builds upon, rather than replaces, prior knowledge. When asked to reflect on the role of assessment, participants emphasized that meaningful interpretation of student data requires attention to both of a student's languages.

Building on this engaging opening, Ms. Dini and Ms. Ortiz guided the audience through their learning about biliteracy trajectories, illust-rated through real classroom and district experiences, as well as their plans for continued district-wide growth and refinement. What follows is a succinct overview of their presen-tation and its call to action.

Ms. Dini and Ms. Ortiz defined biliteracy trajectories as the developmental paths students follow as they become proficient readers and writers in two languages. Their work is grounded in the research of Dr. Kathy Escamilla and her colleagues, the Literacy Squared framework. This research illuminates how emergent bilinguals develop their two languages and offer a coherent approach to analyzing dual language assessment data from a bilingual, rather than a monolingual perspective, ultimately guiding instruction that supports high levels of achievement in both languages.

Dini and Ortiz explained that reading growth for emerging bilingual students is often determined by analyzing data from a monolingual perspective. That is, we look at a student's scores in Spanish assess-ments and English assessments sepa-rately as if languages in a student's brain were stored in two distinct linguistic spaces. Here is the dilemma: our understanding of bilingualism has shifted. We know that bilinguals have one linguistic repertoire with features of their two languages and that through explicit instruction and a multitude of experiences, bilingual students make connections between their two languages to learn and make sense of the world. It is therefore necessary to assess language learning from that integrated perspective.

Adopting biliteracy trajectories is

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sensible yet challenging because it relies on long-term data collection and an extensive understanding of data analysis. Additionally, it requires those involved to create biliteracy targets from the data to inform instructional paths for students in the bilingual program. To that end, Ms. Dini and Ms. Ortiz have engaged in professional development focused on the adoption and implementation of biliteracy trajectories. They use multiple data points, including STAR Lectura, STAR Reading, DIBELS, teacher assessments (word study, vocabulary, writing), and report cards/progress reports to measure student growth and inform instruction. Also, they use this data to build and refine the biliteracy trajectory for the bilingual programs in the district.

Dini and Ortiz acknowledged that in the recent past, teachers in the dual language program experienced significant stress over their bilingual students' reading scores because they were compared to those of monolingual students. Given that developing two literacies is significantly more complex than developing one, such comparisons were unfair and of limited value for instructional decision-making. Since adopting a biliteracy trajectory mindset, the team said, teachers interpret student progress from an asset-based perspective, thus enabling them to draw realistic, intentional instructional and assessment plans that support students' biliterate growth.

Understanding student biliteracy trajectories has impacted classroom instruction in myriad ways. For instance, teachers in a two-way dual language program partner students for small group/partner work based on their reading levels across languages. For example, student A (Spanish) and student B (English) both read at an independent level 1Az in their respective languages. These students learn vocabulary, explore grammatical rules, and practice fluent reading while working together with the teacher or in learning centers. Such learning experiences, Ms. Ortiz emphasized, can shape students' identities and confidence. Students can view themselves as home language experts and as capable learners of a new language. They can focus on their assets as learners and teachers rather than on an ill-conceived vision of themselves as deficient learners.

This amazing duo concluded their presentation on a high note with their vision for the future. They plan to continue collecting data to adapt the district's biliteracy trajectory, explore biliteracy trajectory-focused curricula and assessments, and continue to expand their knowledge of best practices for enrichment and intervention in dual language settings. Their work is commendable and replicable and offers a powerful model for educators across New York State and beyond. ¡Bravísimas!



All Conference portals opens on October 1, 2026

Professional AWARDS Nominations

- THE GLADYS CORREA MEMORIAL AWARD
- THE DR. XIMENA ZATE BILINGUAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD
- THE BILINGUAL INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT OF THE YEAR AWARD
- THE BILINGUAL PARENT OF THE YEAR AWARD
- THE BILINGUAL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD
- THE DR. ANTONIA PANTOJA BILINGUAL ADVOCACY AWARD
- THE BILINGUAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Advocacy Really Works!



Kate Menken, Ph.D.
Professor of Linguistics, Queens College
2025 Gladys Correa Memorial Award Recipient
NYSABE Advocacy Committee Co-Chairperson



Tamara O. Alsace, Ph.D.
NYSABE Past-President
2018 Gladys Correa Memorial Award Recipient
NYSABE Advocacy Committee Co-Chairperson

"When the world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful." – Malala Yousafzai

Educational Policy and Advocacy Session at the NYSABE 2026 Conference

This year's Educational Policy and Advocacy Session was expanded to a major session, held during the luncheon on Thursday, March 19th. During the session, our conference participants raised their voices as one, and their voices were heard!

The session began with participants being treated to an "advocacy retrospective" titled 50 Years of Bilingual Education Advocacy in New York State, which included historical video clips, pictures, newspaper clips, and more, highlighting NYSABE's role in supporting and protecting bilingual education since the organization's establishment in 1976. The retrospective was followed by a brief presentation by Nedda DeCastro on Plyler v Doe (the federal law that guarantees a free public education to all students, regardless of their or their parents' immigration status) and the work of the NYS Language and Education Rights Network (NYS-LERN), a statewide coalition of like-minded organizations working to safeguard the educational rights of multilingual learners in which NYSABE is a founding member.

The Advocacy Committee then presented NYSABE's current advocacy priorities:

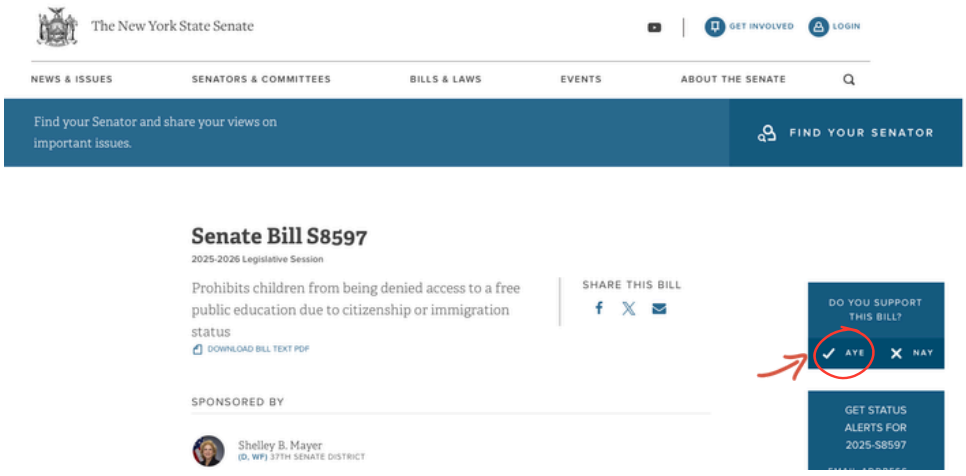
- Addressing the Bilingual Educator Shortage
- Protecting Immigrant Students and Families - NY Fights Back!

In the next segment, our conference attendees were put to work! The Advocacy Committee led participants through a series of activities that enabled them to register their support, on the New York State Senate and Assembly websites for three key bills supported by NYSABE. These efforts helped advance stronger state protections for immigrant students and their families.

BILL#1 (S8597/A10021) Sponsored by AM Catalina Cruz and Senator Shelley Mayer

Prohibits children from being denied

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access to a free public education on account of perceived or actual citizenship or immigration status or the perceived or actual citizenship or immigration status of their parents or a person in a parental relation-ship.

BILL #2 (A3506/S02235-A) NEW YORK FOR ALL ACT sponsored by AM Reyes and Senator Gounardes, prohibits and regulates the discovery and disclosure of immigration status; prohibits police officers, peace officers, school resource officers, probation agencies, state entities, state employees, and municipal corporations from questioning individuals regarding their citizenship or immigration status; regulates the disclosure of information relating to immigration status.

BILL #3 (A05373A/S04735-B) PROTECT OUR SCHOOLS ACT sponsored by AM Cruz and Senator Sepúlveda, prohibits immigration enforcement in school settings; prohibits all public and charter schools from allowing law enforcement officials inside school property to access a student, except to address an imminent safety situation or if they have an appropriate judicial warrant or judicial order.

Two key lawmakers in these advocacy efforts, Senator Shelley Mayer and Assembly Member Catalina Cruz, were greeters at the conference on Friday to speak further about their bills and partnership with NYSABE.

Exciting News About Our Advocacy Wins!

We are thrilled to say that our advocacy efforts paid off in big ways this year! While it is the combined efforts of our NYSABE members and many of our partner organizations that helped us achieve the following "wins", there is no doubt that NYSABE played a key role.

- Addressing the shortage of bilingual educators
  - NYSED, in response to meetings called by NYSABE and CUNY-IIE, added the LOTE and ESOL certificates to the list of base certificates that qualify for the bilingual extension.
  - The NYSABE Bilingual Educator Pipeline Initiative was funded for Buffalo State University at $250,000, which will support a large cohort of future bilingual educators (the request was for a total of $1.2 million for Buffalo State and Queens College combined). NYSABE is deeply grateful to our legislators, especially AM Jon Rivera, AM Catalina Cruz, Senators April Baskin and John Liu, and former Senator Sean Ryan (now Mayor of Buffalo), who have championed this initiative over several years.
- Protecting Immigrant Students and Families
  - Governor Hochul and NYS Legislators approved the FY2027 Budget, which includes a comprehensive "immigration package" with the following key provisions that NYSABE has been fighting for:
    - Education Access: Codifies protections ensuring all children, regardless of immigration status, have a right to free public education.
    - Limits on ICE Cooperation: Prohibits state and local law enforcement from entering into agreements with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and forbids collaboration in civil immigration enforcement activities.
    - Sensitive Location Protections: Bars civil immigration arrests at designated safe spaces like schools, hospitals, polling sites, and places of worship without a judicial warrant.
    - Prohibiting Detention Facilities: Prevents local municipalities from entering into contracts to house individuals for federal civil immigration violations or assisting in the creation of private immigrant detention facilities.
    - Information Safeguards: Restricts state and local agencies from collecting or sharing personal immigration status data unless required by a judicial warrant.
    - Right to Sue: Empowers New Yorkers to pursue legal action in state courts against federal agents who violate their constitutional rights.

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For further details on how these policies are being implemented, review the official Governor Hochul Press Release or the New York Immigration Coalition Statement detailing the legislation.

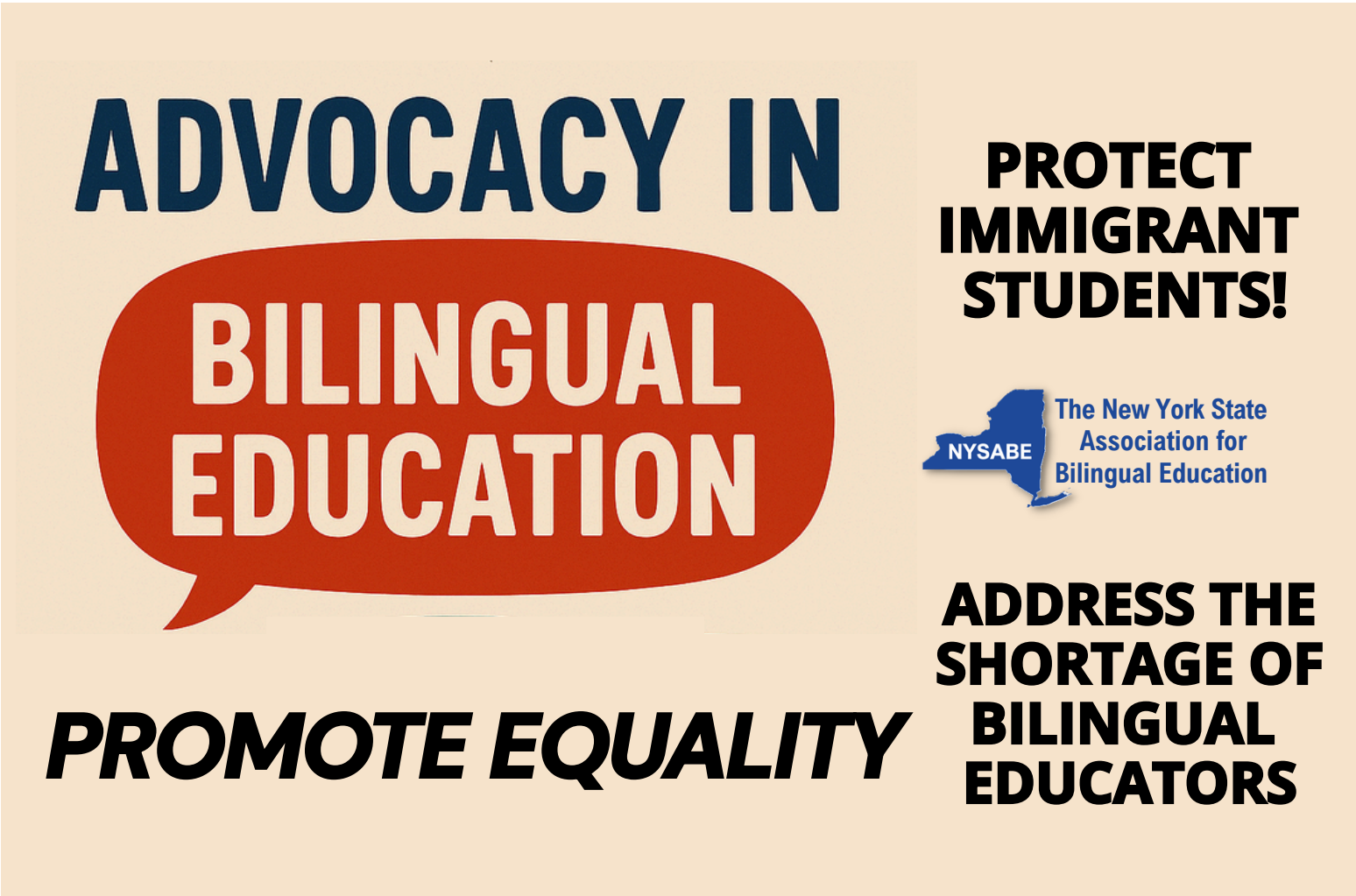
NYSABE celebrates the support we have received for our Bilingual Educator Pipeline Initiative and these new state protections for immigrant students and families. Before, during, and after the NYSABE 2026 Conference, our members wrote letters, made calls, and advocated tirelessly because we believe that this legislative package and funding moves us closer to a system that not only opens doors but sustains students' multilingualism and cultural identities as assets. NYSABE's advocacy actions helped make this possible!

Advocacy really does work, and NYSABE members will continue to advocate in support of NYSABE's mission, for the benefit of all New Yorkers.

In other Advocacy Committee news

While we celebrate our legislative "wins", it is essential that we keep up our momentum on other important issues because there is still much advocacy work to do. Towards that end, please see our recent Position Statement and White Paper on the Science of Reading SoR), authored by Dr. Cecilia M. Espinosa (Bilingual Times Editor) and Dr. Laura Ascenzi-Moreno (JMER Co-Editor). These publications are quite an accomplishment and will help NYSABE members advocate for literacy instruction that is grounded in multilingual research and best practices, and that incorporates our students' linguistic and cultural assets.

What are some of the issues that most concern you? What would you like to see on our advocacy agenda? We are now developing the NYSABE advocacy agenda for the coming year and held a Town Hall meeting on June 15th to engage members in setting our priorities. If you were unable to attend the Town Hall or have further thoughts on the matter, please share your thoughts with us at advocacy@nysabe.org.



The New York State Association for Bilingual Education

NYSABE Position Statement: Literacy Development for Young Multilingual Learners in the Age of the Science of Reading

Drs. Laura Ascenzi-Moreno and Cecilia M. Espinosa
in Collaboration with the NYSABE Advocacy Committee

May 2, 2026

The New York State Association for Bilingual Education is committed to promoting bilingual education and equitable educational opportunities. Integral to this mission is NYSABE's work to ensure all educational reform efforts are grounded in bilingual education research, including the recent literacy reforms advanced by Science of Reading (SoR) legislation and mandates, in particular New York State's Back to Basics Reading Plan.

As waves of Science of Reading (SoR) reforms have swept the country and arrived in New York State, multilingual learners (MLs) are at the center of literacy reforms that were not designed to meet their varied needs. When translated into practice, these reforms tend to promote "one size fits all" approaches, rooted in monolingual perspectives to literacy. As a result, emergent multilingual students are viewed from a deficit lens - as lacking the experiences and ways of using language or knowledge deemed necessary to become literate. It is from this context that this position statement draws on research from the field of bilingualism to illuminate how young emergent multilingual children develop literacy. The recommendations that follow emerged from conversations with biliteracy experts and a review of the relevant reading research for emergent multilingual students. For an in-depth review of bilingual research that is critical for designing foundational reading instruction for young emergent multilingual students in early childhood, please see this white paper.

Recommendations:

Blanket approaches to literacy assume that such approaches will benefit multilingual students, without any evidence from research to support the claim; instead, NYSABE's position is that these approaches may in fact be harmful. Given that MLs should receive instruction that is asset-based and responsive to their linguistic and cultural resources, NYSABE offers the following recommendations for educators, policymakers, and state and local leaders:

Multilingual learners…

- Are provided with reading instruction that values, affirms, and builds on their funds of knowledge, linguistic repertoires, and community resources.
- Are given a rich, diverse repertoire of literacy experiences, including exposure to a variety of genres, songs, and foundational reading instruction that is developmentally appropriate, linguistically and culturally relevant and is representative of a range of intersectional identities.
- Are provided with current, culturally relevant children's literature, that serve both as mirrors and windows, and that expose students to a variety of identities and language practices.
- Receive ample opportunities to participate in critical literature-based discussions which help develop understanding of diverse perspectives, identities, and language practices.
- Are given opportunities to develop and deepen interests through text selection within literacy and content area instruction.
- Are provided with concise, developmentally appropriate, culturally-relevant and linguistically responsive foundational reading instruction, with sufficient time dedicated to all aspects of literacy development, including their language development.

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State, district and school leaders…

- Support teachers in their work to integrate all aspects of language (writing, reading, listening, speaking) and multimodal learning opportunities that leverage the children's full linguistic repertoire (translanguaging) and that are culturally and linguistically sustaining.

- Regularly provide coaching, professional learning communities, professional development and other learning opportunities for classroom teachers, reading specialists, and all educators who work with multilingual learners to gain nuanced understandings of biliteracy as a process interwoven with language, culture, race and identity.

- Engage bilingual educators in analyzing literacy policies and curricula to ensure that they incorporate bilingual students' vast resources and those in their families and communities.

- Ensure bilingual educators have learning opportunities that prepare them to provide innovative foundational literacy instruction that focuses on multilingualism as an asset. This professional development should be independent of curriculum companies.

- Provide parents and caregivers of multilingual learners with information about literacy development and instruction in languages and modes that are accessible to them.

- Must only adopt curricula that were designed for multilingual learners; no amount of adaptation can make curricula suitable for multilingual students if they were not centered from the outset in curricular development.

- Provide SoR guidance documents that integrate findings about multilingual students and their literacies and biliteracies as an integral part of their recommendations. See, for example, New York State Department of Education Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (Herrera, Escamilla & Cabral, 2025).

- Collect information from schools and programs to understand how the curriculum is being rolled out and how it affects multilingual students across program types.

- Ensure that progress in home language literacy and language, as well as bilingual trajectories, are part of the local and state assessment practices and accountability measures.

Advancing Bilingual Special Education at NYSABE 2026



Janet Correa-Longo,
Director of Multilingual Education,
Buffalo Public Schools,
NYSABE Region 6 Delegate

As part of the NYSABE 2026 theme, *"50 Years of NYSABE: Breaking Barriers Through Bilingual Education,"* a dynamic panel explored one of the field's most critical areas: **Bilingual Special Education.**

The session, "Breaking Barriers Through Leadership & Instruction: Transforming Systems and Classrooms for Dually Identified Multilingual Learners," brought together Dr. Tamara Alsace, Interim Co-Principal Investigator at CUNY-Initiative on Immigration, and Ann Narcisse, Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Putnam Northern Westchester, and Kayla Spenlian, Dually Certified Teacher in East Ramapo Central School District, to highlight how systems, instruction, and partnerships must align to best serve multilingual learners with disabilities.

Rethinking Identification and Access

Dr. Tamara Alsace emphasized that accurate identification is foundational: "Without proper identification and placement, students aren't going to receive the services they need." She noted the overrepresentation of multilingual learners in special education—particularly in speech and language—and the frequent misunderstanding of bilingual development. When both languages are considered, students often demonstrate stronger overall language ability than their monolingual peers.

Dr. Alsace also challenged the practice of discouraging students with disabilities from enrolling in bilingual programs, highlighting research that shows these students benefit cognitively and linguistically. She called for stronger advocacy, equitable resources across languages, and improved teacher preparation pipelines.

Shifting Systems and Decision-Making

Ann Narcisse underscored the need for integrity in pre-referral processes, including thorough language reviews that examine language dominance, home language performance, and instructional supports.

She identified key system shifts:

- Evaluating multiple sources of evidence before referral
- Rethinking pull-out services that limit access to core instruction
- Strengthening progress monitoring to ensure accountability across all educators
- Her message was clear: "If students are consistently misidentified or underserved, we must examine the systems—not the students."

Designing Inclusive Classrooms

Kayla Spenlian highlighted the importance of integrating general education, special education, and ENL/bilingual education to create equitable learning environments. She emphasized asset-based approaches that recognize students' strengths and promote inclusion.

Effective practices include:

- Using scaffolds such as visuals, translanguaging, and word walls
- Including ENL educators in IEP and CSE processes
- Aligning instruction to support language development and academic goals

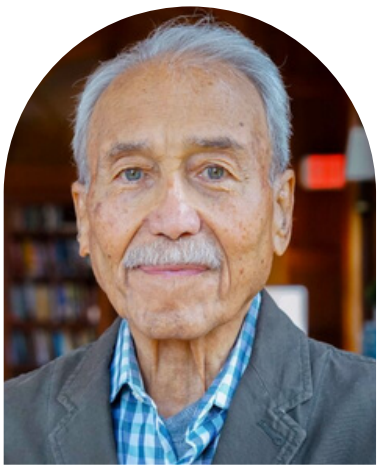
She reinforced a critical principle: "No student should be denied bilingual services due to a disability."

Family Partnership and the Path Forward

Across all panelists, family engagement and cultural responsiveness emerged as essential. Providing accessible communication, honoring family preferences, and partnering with communities are key to building trust and improving outcomes.

Looking ahead, the panel called for greater integration across systems—ensuring that bilingual education and special education work together, not in silos. The next 50 years demand collaboration, advocacy, and a shared commitment to ensuring every multilingual learner is seen, supported, and celebrated.

Hernán LaFontaine
The 2026 NYSABE Legacy Awardee



Hernán LaFontaine, a native New Yorker whose parents came from Puerto Rico in the 1920s, was born on March 9, 1934, and raised in East Harlem, Manhattan, popularly known as "El Barrio." He attended the local public schools, graduated from Stuyvesant High School, and entered the City College of New York, where he majored in science and earned his B.S. and M.A. degrees. After serving two years in the United States Army, he worked as a chemist with a pharmaceutical firm. His involvement with the community and his interest in young people prompted him to leave the laboratory and enter the teaching profession.

He taught general science at Paul Laurence Dunbar J.H.S. 120 (Bronx) and biology at the High School of Commerce (later known as Louis D. Brandeis H.S.) in Manhattan until he was appointed assistant principal at the Arthur Schomburg Intermediate School #201 (Manhattan). During his second year, he received a Ford Foundation Scholarship to continue his studies in school administration and supervision at Fordham University, where he earned a Professional Diploma in Educational Administration and Supervision.

In 1968, while pursuing his studies in the doctoral program at Fordham University, Hernán LaFontaine was appointed Principal of P.S. 25 (Bronx), the first completely bilingual school in the history of the New York City school system and in the entire northeast region of the country. The establishment of this school resulted from a concept which he developed with the South Bronx community. His leadership in establishing a solid foundation for this innovative educational program is still evident in the positive work which continues at the Bilingual School.
He was appointed in 1972 as Assistant Superintendent to head the newly established Office of Bilingual Education at the New York City Board of Education. The needs of students in the public schools who spoke a language other than English became Hernán LaFontaine's main concern in his role as Executive Administrator of this office. He served as the Chancellor's liaison for bilingual education programs throughout the school system. With more than 75,000 pupils participating in the bilingual and ESL programs in New York City, he headed the largest such program in the nation.

Hernán has been very active in many professional and civic organizations and activities. He led his colleagues in establishing several groups such as the Puerto Rican Educators' Association of New York City and the New York State Association of Bilingual Education. He was a co-founder of the National Association for Bilingual Education and was elected president of the organization in 1976.

He was recognized as a key figure in promoting bilingual education throughout the nation, receiving many awards for his contributions. For many years, he actively served on the Board of Directors of the National Puerto Rican Forum and ASPIRA of New York. Hernáa also served as consultant to the federal Office of Education, the New York State Department of Education, and to many school systems nationwide. He taught as an adjunct professor at Fordham and New York Universities and lectured widely throughout the United States.

In 1979, Hernán LaFontaine was named Superintendent of the public school system in Connecticut and became the first School Superintendent of Puerto Rican heritage in the state of Connecticut and the United States. During his tenure in Hartford, he led major accomplishments, including improvement of student achievement, revision of the total curriculum, establishment of a computer-based education program, and the initiation of mastery learning and assertive discipline approaches. A significant achievement is that he initiated and was the founder of the classical education program in the district.

In the early 1980's, Superintendent LaFontaine attended a National Institute of Education Conference of Urban School Superintendents in Washington, DC, at which Mortimer Adler, a respected educator and director of the Institute for Philosophy, presented a lecture on the Paideia Proposal. The concept of this classical liberal arts curriculum for all students, not just the elite few, appealed very much to Hernán. He realized that this teaching and learning approach was closely linked to the principles of equal educational opportunity.

(Continued on page 19)

Hernán LaFontaine
The 2026 NYSABE Legacy Awardee

(Continued from page 18)

When Hernán returned to the district, he did so invigorated, motivated, and with a strong belief that Hartford students could do well in this rigorous classical program. Superintendent LaFontaine initiated the development of a program incorporating Paideia Proposal concepts. He directed and worked with staff to plan, develop, and implement a classical program at Quirk Middle School, which was later expanded to Hartford High School and continues today as the Classical Magnet School. It is important to note that Hernán values and appreciates deeply the collective work of all the individuals who have continued throughout the years to support, implement, and further develop the program.

Hernán stated that perhaps the greatest reward bestowed upon him occurred in September 2025 when the Hartford Board of Education voted unanimously to rename the school the Hernán LaFontaine Classical Magnet School. Hernán LaFontaine has been an active and prominent civic leader in Hartford. He has served on the Board of Directors of many of the major cultural and non-profit organizations in the city and was honored many times for his contributions. Included in his awards are a Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of Hartford and a Doctor of Law from Briarwood College.

After completing more than twelve years as Superintendent of Schools, the longest tenure ever achieved by any superintendent in Hartford, Hernán retired in 1991 and joined the faculty of Southern Connecticut State University. As a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership of the Graduate School of Education, his major responsibilities included preparing teachers for certification as Connecticut school administrators and preparing experienced school administrators for certification as school superintendents. His contributions to the department and the university earned him election to the status of Professor Emeritus upon his retirement in 1999.

Not one to move into quiet retirement, Hernán further demonstrated his commitment to Hartford and to public service by standing for election to the Hartford City Council. He was first elected to the Council in 200, where he served until 2006. Elected President of the City Council in 2004, he continued his advocacy for the improvement of education, as well as focusing on public safety, employment, economic development, and affordable housing.

Throughout his career, Hernán has been a leader, innovator, and trailblazer. He has been active in consulting, writing, and speaking to share his expertise and knowledge with others. He has provided expert testimony related to state and federal policy issues, including appearances before the Secretary of Education's Hispanic Task Force on Education (1990), National Advisory Council on Bilingual Education (1985), and the Connecticut State Legislature (1989).

As the first educator of Puerto Rican heritage to be named School Superintendent of a school district in the United States, Hernán LaFontaine represented a highly visible role model for young Hispanic and other minority students. Nevertheless, he often emphasized that his professional and moral obligation was to improve the educational system for the benefit of all youngsters, regardless of ethnic, racial, or economic background.

After 67 years of service in public education and civic/community involvement, Hernán is especially pleased to note that many of his former students went on to become his personal friends and colleagues. He comments that "there is no greater reward for a teacher than to be able to experience the success of one's students."

Hernán and his wife Evelyn raised their two daughters in Hartford, Alicia and Marissa. Both attended Noah Webster Elementary, Quirk Middle, and Hartford High School. Their sons, Richard and David, continued their education in New York City and Hartford, and are still active in their legal and military careers.

As long-time residents, Hernán and Evelyn continue to live in, contribute to, and enjoy the city of Hartford.

2026 Dr. Nivia Zavala & Ana Soto Art Contest Winners

ART CONTEST | GRADES 3-5

1st Place



Valery Cruz

Better Together
Grade: 4 | School: Twin Pines Elementary
Teacher: Crystal Cavanaugh

2nd Place



Juliana Maldonado

A Fantasy Celebration
Grade: 5 | School: PS 311X Lucero Elementary
Teacher: Maria Valdiri

3rd Place



Nathan Del Rio

Equity Cereal
Grade: 3 | School: P.S. 126X Dr. Marjorie H. Dunbar Elementary | Teacher: Ann Margaret Madera

ART CONTEST | GRADES 6-8

1st Place



Michelle Rodriguez

Diversity Is Beauty and Strength
Grade: 8 | Schoo Manhasset Secondary School
Teacher: Valerie Szuster

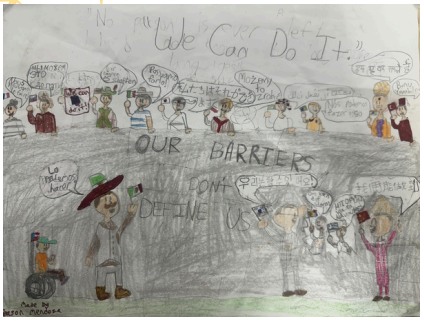
2nd Place



Ciara Casmier

Music is a Universal Langue we can all enjoy
Grade: 8 | School: East Middle School,
Teacher: Jennifer Grasso Moise

3rd Place



Jeason Mendoza

Our Barriers Don't Define Us
Grade: 7 | School: Brentwood East Middle
Teacher: Stephanie Veitsman

ART CONTEST | GRADES 9-12

1st Place



Ember Luis Castillo Mauricio

International Food Is The World Street Fest
Grade: 12 | School: Brentwood High School
Teacher: Jae Won Shim

2nd Place



Kadherleen Fernández

Bilingual Education
Grade: 9 | School: Amityville Memorial High School |
Teacher: Sheila Olsen

3rd Place



Yasmin Angeles Olguin

Embrace
Grade: 11 | School: Patchogue-Medford High School
Teacher: Grace Anello

2026 Student Essay Contest Winners

ESSAY CONTEST | GRADES 3-5

1st Place

Madison Giraldo

"My Unique Superpower"

Grade: 3 | Language: Spanish
School: PS 212Q, NYC
Teacher: Marina Velásquez

2nd Place

Aurora Castañeda

"Being Bilingual is a Superpower"

Grade: 3 | Language: Spanish
School: PS 212Q, NYC
Teacher: Marina Velásquez

3rd Place

Xochitl Huerta-Fleury

"You say barrier, I say Bienvenidos"

Grade: 3 | Language: Spanish
School: PS 212Q, NYC
Teacher: Marina Velásquez

ESSAY CONTEST | GRADES 6-8

1st Place

Alisson Loja Chillogallo

"¿Por qué es importante ser bilingüe/plurilingüe y alfabetizado?"

Grade: 7 | Language: Spanish
School: Udall Road Middle School
Teacher: Sophia Mastrangelo

2nd Place

Roxielys Correa Lao

"A Bilingual World"

Grade: 8 | Language: Spanish
School: D'Youville Porter Campus School
PS3 Teacher: Emily Priester

3rd Place

Brielle Florendo

"Being Bilingual"

Grade: 6 | Language: Spanish
School: Udall Road Middle School
Teacher: Sophia Mastrangelo

ESSAY CONTEST | GRADES 9-12

1st Place

Adanhyr Morocho

"Two Languages, One Heart"

Grade: 11 | Language: Spanish
School: Sleepy Hollow High School
Teacher: Megan Purvis

2nd Place

Yailin Cepin Leon

"Orgullosa de Serlo"

Grade: 12 | Language: Spanish
School: East High School
Teacher: Ivelisse De Jesus

3rd Place

Genesis Hernández

"El Poder del Bilinguismo"

Grade: 10 | Language: Spanish
School: Westbury High school
Teacher: Marleny Abreu

NYSABE

The New York State Association for Bilingual Education

The 2027 Dr. Nivia Zavala & Ana Soto Art Contest and the Student Essay Contest information will open on October 1, 20206. Visit www.nysabe.org/2027Conference.

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING OUR CHILDREN: A Guide for Families Affected by Immigration-Related Stress



Priscilla Zárate
Past-President 2022-2023

At the NYSABE Conference on March 19, Dorothy Santana, LMSW, facilitated a timely workshop focused on supporting children and families affected by immigration-related stress. Her presentation offered bilingual educators and school leaders practical strategies grounded in trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and healing-centered approaches. This article highlights key themes and implications from her session for educators committed to supporting immigrant-origin students and families.

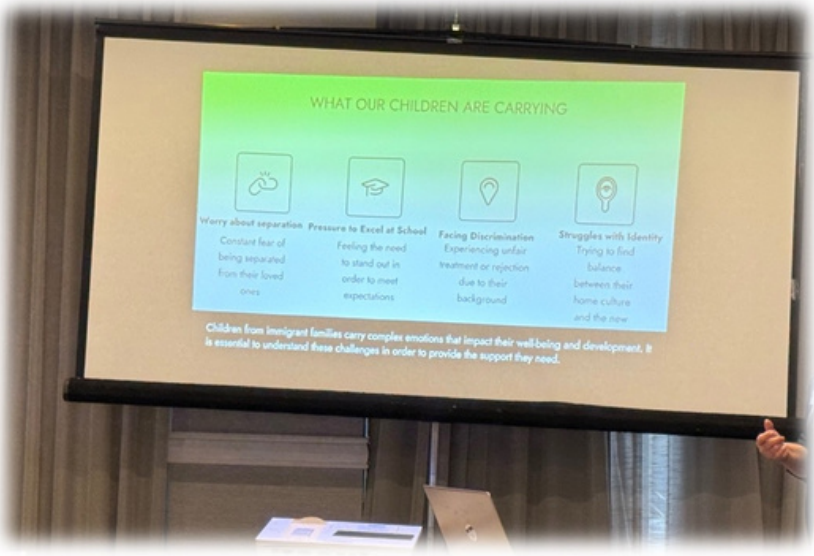
Understanding the Growing Impact of Immigration-Related Stress

At a time when evolving policy discussions, immigration-related uncer-tainty, and concerns about family stability continue to affect many immigrant students and their families, educators in schools are increasingly witnessing how these realities can surface in students' lives through anxiety, distraction, withdrawal, interrupted engagement, and growing needs for emotional reassurance and support. Against this backdrop, Dorothy Santana, LMSW, facilitated a timely workshop for educators at the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) Conference titled Understanding and Supporting Our Children: A Guide for Families Affected by Immigration-Related Stress.

The session provided a critical space for educators to deepen their understanding of the emotional and social realities immigrant students and their families may be navigating beyond the classroom, particularly within the context of ongoing uncertainty and heightened student need. Drawing on trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches, the workshop equipped participants with practical strategies to strengthen educators' capacity to support students and families through safety, connection, and resilience.

The workshop opened with a wellness exercise that immediately established the tone for the session. Participants engaged in grounding strategies





Caption: Dorothy Santana, LMSW, presenting at the NYSABE Conference

(Continued on page 23)

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designed to model the healing-centered approaches emphasized throughout the presentation. These practices reinforced a central message: supporting children begins with emotional regulation, presence, and care.

Santana guided participants in examining the emotional burdens many children may carry in the context of immigration-related stress, including fear of family separation, discrimination, identity struggles, anxiety, and academic pressures compounded by instability. She also addressed signs educators and families may observe, including withdrawal, mood changes, school avoidance, physical symptoms of stress, and difficulties with concentration and learning. These discussions reinforced how immigration-related stress can affect both well-being and educational engagement.

"Supporting children begins with emotional safety, connection, and care."

Go-To Strategies for Educators

A particular strength of the workshop was its focus on practical strategies educators can use immediately to support children and build resilience. Santana shared approaches that help children manage stress, including encouraging open conversations about feelings, using breathing techniques for self-regulation, promoting creative outlets such as drawing and journaling, and implementing the Worry Box strategy, which allows children to externalize and symbolically release their worries.

The session also emphasized the importance of relationships and support systems. Santana discussed how families can foster emotional safety through routines, active listening, affirmation, and the preservation of cultural traditions that strengthen identity and belonging. Equally important was the emphasis on collaboration between families and schools, including partnerships with teachers, counselors, social workers, and bilingual educators to ensure coordinated supports for children.

A particularly compelling component of the workshop focused on creating a family plan. Strategies such as building support networks, organizing emergency documents, identifying trusted caregivers, and creating memory boxes with comforting items were framed through preparedness, empowerment, and care.

The workshop also addressed the broader role of schools in supporting immigrant-origin students through trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices. Santana emphasized emotionally safe learning environments, social-emotional learning, peer support, affirmation of cultural identity, and partnerships among schools, families, and community organizations.

Key Takeaways for Educators

- Create emotionally safe learning environments
- Recognize signs of stress early
- Use practical strategies to support emotional regulation
- Strengthen family-school partnerships
- Focus on resilience and protective factors

"Preparedness can be framed not through fear, but through empowerment."



Caption: Participants explored practical strategies grounded in empowerment and care.

(Continued on page 24)

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Implications for Bilingual Educators and School Leaders

One of the workshop's greatest strengths was that it modeled the very practices it promoted. Participants did not simply learn about emotional regulation and supportive strategies; they experienced them. This experiential approach made the session especially meaningful and aligned closely with the purpose of the presentation.

Dorothy Santana's workshop made a significant contribution to the NYSABE conference by integrating research, practical strategies, family-centered supports, and healing-centered practices in ways that were both thoughtful and actionable. For bilingual educators and school leaders, the session reinforced the need to create systems of support that respond to students' emotional well-being, affirm cultural and linguistic identities, and strengthen family-school partnerships.

At its core, the session affirmed that understanding children's experiences and supporting their well-being are inseparable. Through intentional support, culturally responsive practice, and strong family-school partnerships, educators can help children navigate adversity with dignity, resilience, and hope.

About the Presenter

Dorothy Santana, LMSW, is a culturally responsive education specialist, social worker, and community leader committed to supporting the well-being of children and families, particularly those impacted by immigration-related stress. She works at the intersection of education, mental health, and family advocacy, supporting schools and communities in strengthening safety, connection, and resilience. She serves as a Parent Delegate in 2022-2023 with the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE).



The New York State Association for Bilingual Education

NYSABE Position Statement Opposing Proposed English-Only Head Start Mandate

New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE)
Advocacy Committee Leadership: Tamara Alsace, Kate Menken, Analy Cruz-Phommany, Ivana Espinet, Maeva López-Kassem, and Lyda Ragonese

August 23, 2026

The New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) strongly and unequivocally opposes the proposed changes to the regulations that would mandate English-Only instruction in Head Start early childhood programs. The proposed § 1301.04(a) would require Head Start programs to conduct all education in English and to prioritize teaching English to children who are multilingual learners (MLs)/English language learners (ELLs). The proposal further states that these changes would "minimize non-essential multilingual services" and redirect resources toward "English-language education and assimilation."

NYSABE endorses the Position Statement recently issued by the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE). As NABE states: "Multilingual services are not "non-essential"...Head Start serves children from diverse linguistic communities. Their languages represent the knowledge and culture they have acquired in their families and communities. A child's first language provides a foundation for learning English: children draw upon concepts developed in their first language to learn related and new concepts in English. This formidable
asset should not be disregarded or minimized in the name of assimilation. We reject the premise that assimilation should be an educational objective for Head Start."

Home language instruction for MLs/ELLs is essential for their learning. The benefits of bilingual education for MLs/ELLs have been well documented, especially for our youngest learners. There is a robust and conclusive research base that shows that MLs/ELLs who have the opportunity to receive bilingual education outperform their peers in English-Only programs and experience a range of academic, cognitive, and socioemotional benefits - particularly when home language support is sustained in school over time (Baker & Wright, 2021; Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015; Steele et al., 2017; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). For instance, in their empirical research about Spanish-speaking young children in Head Start and public pre-K programs, Partika et al. (2021) found that when educators support students' home languages in instruction, the students demonstrate stronger language and mathematics skills.

Multilingual learners/English language learners who receive a bilingual education will not only learn English, but will learn English more effectively, so if English learning is the aim of this mandate then bilingual education would further its aims.

Aligned with ample research on the topic, Head Start programs are currently required to provide bilingual instruction for MLs/ELLs. Despite the claim by the Administration for Children and Families that this requirement is "at odds" with the 2025 Executive Order (E.O. 14224) designating English as the official language of the United States, E.O. 14224 does not require monolingual instruction in English. In fact, it states the following: "Agency heads are not required to amend, remove, or otherwise stop production of documents, products, or other services prepared or offered in languages other than English." NYSABE's Position Statement on E.O. 14224 can be seen here.

The New York State Association for Bilingual Education

NYSABE Position Statement Opposing Proposed English-Only Head Start Mandate

New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE)
Advocacy Committee Leadership: Tamara Alsace, Kate Menken, Analy Cruz-Phommany, Ivana Espinet, Maeva López-Kassem, and Lyda Ragonese

August 23, 2026

NYSABE celebrates the multilingualism of New Yorkers and the entire nation, and applauds New York State policies and educational practices that embrace the home languages of MLs/ELLs. Any federal English-only requirements would violate New York State policies and legislation. In New York, Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 mandates the provision of bilingual education for MLs/ELLs (New York State Education Department, 2014). Additionally, the New York State Education Department states that early childhood MLs/ELLs "bring rich
cultural and linguistic experiences to the prekindergarten classroom. These valued resources should be used to scaffold learning and can contribute significantly to academic achievement in prekindergarten and beyond."

In response to the federal promotion of English-Only policies and this attack on bilingual education for our youngest students, we call upon New York State leaders to ensure that Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 is fully funded and upheld, and that this state law be extended to include PreK and 3K students.

NYSABE calls upon the Administration for Children and Families to withdraw the proposed English-Only requirement for Head Start.

We call on educators, families, researchers, policymakers, advocates, and community partners across New York and the nation to make their voices heard during the federal policymaking process. The public comment period closes October 6, 2026 and instructions on how to submit comments can be found in the NABE Head Start Position Statement.

We stand with NABE and their recent position statement, which recommends that federal policy should instead:

- "Promote strong English language development;
- Support children's continued development of their home languages;
- Invest in well-trained bilingual and multilingual educators;
- Support linguistically and culturally responsive early childhood education;
- Strengthen meaningful family engagement; and
- Recognize multilingualism as an asset — not a burden."

National Indian Education Association Convention and Trade Show 2026



Denise Góñez-Santos, Ph.D.
School Improvement Specialist
Title III Consortium
RBERN West



On October 7 – 10, 2026, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) will host the **57th Annual NIEA Convention & Trade Show** — ***Strength in Community: Building the Future Together*** — in Buffalo, NY. The organization states that, "NIEA was formed in 1969 by Native educators and advocates who were anxious to find solutions to improve the education system for Native children."

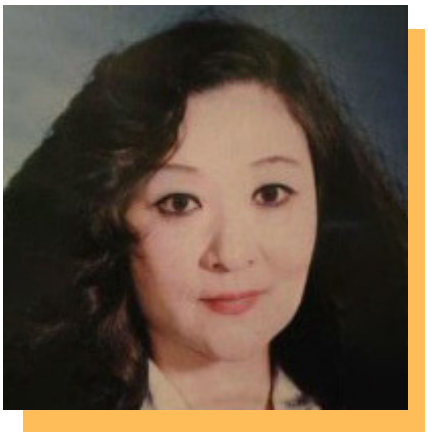
The Native American Indian Education Association of New York (NAIEA/NY) https://www.naieany.com/ is a partner organization for NIEA. The current NAIEA/NY Chair, Tammy Bluewolf-Kennedy (Oneida), together with the membership, will be ready to welcome educators and leaders from all Indigenous nations, including Alaska and Hawaii, who will participate in this national conference. This is an important and wonderful opportunity for all bilingual educators to stand in solidarity with our colleagues who are working to teach the Indigenous languages and cultures of the original people.

Please consider attending the NIEA Convention and Trade Show to learn what you can do to support Indigenous language and culture programs in your school district. https://niea.org

Respectfully submitted by
Dr. Denise Góñez-Santos - denisegonez-santos@e1b.org



Chinese English Dual Language Celebration in New York City



Nancy King Wang, Ed.D.
NYSABE Chinese
Language Delegate



To recognize the achievements of Chinese/English Dual Lang-uage schools in New York City, the Association of Chinese/English Bilingual Educators East Coast of USA presented the "Outstanding Educational Leadership Award" to three public school principals in Queens at the Flushing Library on June 13th, 2026. The honored leaders are PS 20 Principal Elisa Barresi, PS 163 Principal Francine Marsaggi, and PS 173 Principal Daniella Tweedy. They received their plaques from State Senator John Liu.

Dr. Nancy King Wang, NYSABE Chinese Language Delegate and President of the Association of Chinese/English Bilingual Educators East Coast of USA, delivered welcoming remarks at the ceremony. She stated that honoring these three school principals with the "Outstanding Educational Leadership Award" aims to recognize their extraordinary leadership and dedication to their students while promoting bilingual education. The students participating in the programs in these schools have demonstrated impressive academic skills and cultural literacy, excelling in both English and Chinese. This demonstrates that bilingual education fosters dual-language proficiency while promoting academic success. She also said that bilingual education is significant for fostering enhanced cognitive abilities, higher academic achievement, and improved cultural empathy. It also provides long-term economic advantages in a globalized job market.

State Senator John Liu spoke highly of the awarded principals and expressed his support for bilingual education in New York State. He praised the work and efforts made by the Association of Bilingual Educators East Coast of USA and the Chinese American Parents Association (CAPA).

Anthony Inzerillo, Superintendent of District 26, stated that bilingual program students in the district rank at the top of all students in academic performance. He noted that principals and teachers have invested significant time, energy, and effort to support multilingual education, building bridges for communication between different cultures.

Pauline Chu of the Chinese American Parents Association emphasized the critical importance of bilingual education, particularly in Flushing's District 25, which has over 25,000 Chinese students. She shared that during her tenure as a school board member for the district, she advocated for ENL (English as a New Language) and bilingual education, which led to the implementation of English language support programs across all schools in District 25.]

NYSABE congratulates these three honored leaders and the educators, students and families they serve. Their success is a testament to the transformative power of bilingual education!

A Heartfelt Thank You for an Outstanding NYSABE Conference



Lyda Ragonese
50th Anniversary Conference Chairperson
NYSABE Treasurer



The success of every conference is built upon the vision, commitment, and hard work of dedicated leaders who work tirelessly behind the scenes. As we reflect on this year's exceptional NYSABE Conference, we extend our deepest gratitude to President Eliezer Hernández and Logistics Co-Chairs Sandra McKenney and Yolanda Rodriguez for their relentless dedication, thoughtful planning, and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Under President Hernández's leadership, the conference embodied the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and advocacy that defines NYSABE. His vision and guidance ensured that attendees experienced meaningful professional learning opportunities, engaging presentations, and valuable networking experiences that strengthened our collective mission of supporting Multilingual learners and English language educators across New York State.

Equally deserving of recognition are Logistics Co-Chairpersons Sandra McKenney and Yolanda L. Rodriguez-Delgado, whose countless hours of planning, coordinating, and problem-solving transformed a complex undertaking into a seamless and welcoming event. From managing schedules and venues to ensuring participants felt supported throughout the conference, their attention to detail and dedication were evident in every aspect of the experience.

The success of this year's conference did not happen by chance. It was the result of months of preparation, teamwork, and an extraordinary commitment to serving the NYSABE community. Thanks to the efforts of Eliezer, Sandra, Yolanda, and the chairpersons of conference committees, attendees left inspired, informed, and energized to continue advancing educational opportunities for multilingual learners.

On behalf of the entire NYSABE community, we offer our sincere appreciation for your leadership, perseverance, and service. Your hard work created an unforgettable con-ference experience and further strengthened the bonds that unite our organization. Thank you for your outstanding contributions and for making this year's NYSABE Con-ference a tremendous success.

We are grateful for all that you do and look forward to building on this success together in the years ahead.

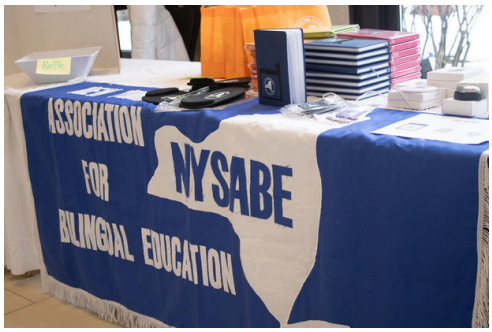
50th ANNIVERSARY NYSABE
THE NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

50 YEARS OF NYSABE:
BREAKING BARRIERS Through BILINGUAL EDUCATION

CONFERENCE CHAIRPERSON
Lyda Ragonese

BOOTH AND RAFFLE
Anne Henry

CALL FOR PROPOSALS
Kristina Crehan*
Jennifer Briggs
Meredith Green
Sandra McKenney
Lyda Ragonese
Lilian Zayas



CONFERENCE PROGRAM
Eliezer Hernández, EdD*
Lyda Ragonese*

EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND ADVOCACY
Tamara O. Alsace, PhD*
Kate Menken, PhD*
Analy Cruz-Phommany
Ivana Espinet, PhD
Maeva López Kassem, EdD
Lyda Ragonese

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Elizabeth Falzone, PhD

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GALA BANQUET AND STUDENT LUNCHEON
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James Nieves*
Dominika McPartland

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Laura Ascenzi-Moreno, PhD
María Cioè-Peña, PhD
Kate Menken, EdD
Heather Homonoff Woodley, PhD

LANGUAGE DELEGATE
Miriam Eisenstein Ebsworth, PhD*
Nancy King Wang, EdD
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THE NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION
NYSABE 50th ANNIVERSARY 1976-2026



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James Nieves*
Iraida Bodré
Eva García
Priscilla Zarate

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Eliezer Hernández, EdD*

REGISTRATION
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STRAND: SPECIAL EDUCATION
Janet Correa-Longo*

STUDENT ESSAY AND ART CONTEST
Analy Cruz-Phommany*
Enid DeJesus Lopez
Maria Petrella
Lyda Ragonese

STUDENT PERFORMANCES
NancyKing Wang, EdD*

1976 - 2026 50th ANNIVERSARY NYSABE
THE NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

50 YEARS OF NYSABE:
BREAKING BARRIERS Through BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Honoring our PROFESSIONAL AWARDS Recipients

THE DR. ANTONIA PANTOJA BILINGUAL EDUCATION ADVOCACY AWARD



Dr. Elaine Ruiz López

THE DR. XIMENA E. ZATE BILINGUAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Sofia Bosch

THE BILINGUAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

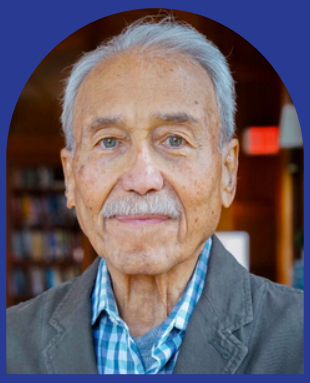


Victoria Hunt

THE BILINGUAL INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT OF THE YEAR AWARD



Sara Moran



NYSABE
The Legacy Award
HERNÁN LAFONTAINE

THE BILINGUAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL OF THE YEAR AWARD



Jessica Rivera



THE GLADYS CORREA MEMORIAL AWARD RECIPIENT

Dr. Cecilia M. Espinosa

Highlights of the 50th Anniversary NYSABE Conference





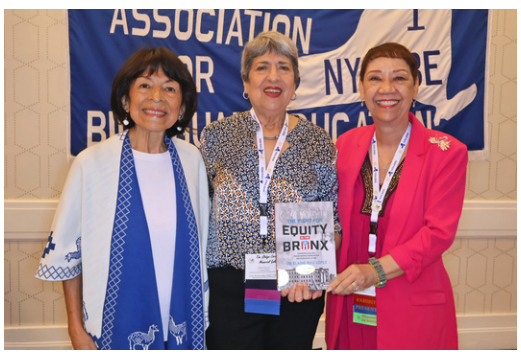
















Highlights of the 50th Anniversary NYSABE Conference
























Highlights of the 50th Anniversary NYSABE Conference








































Highlights of the 50th Anniversary NYSABE Conference






































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The New York State Association for Bilingual Education

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Kindly note that this information will be used to generate your membership card and future mailings

info@nysabe.net | www.nysabe.net | 212-998-5104

I was referred by: _____

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Name: _____

Work Phone #: ( ) _____

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NYSABE Dues: (please check one)

- ☐ $35 Associate (full time student, parent, paraprofessional)
- ☐ $45 Regular (teacher, administrator, teacher educator, researcher)
- ☐ $75 Institutional
- ☐ $100 Commercial

Select your local region: (check one)

- ☐ Region I - Long Island
- ☐ Region II - New York City
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- ☐ Region IV - Syracuse/Capital District
- ☐ Region V - Rochester
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I would like to volunteer in:

- ☐ Advocacy
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Special Events
- ☐ Membership
- ☐ Other

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 $

Please duplicate and disseminate this application among your colleagues and others.

Please make checks 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 Avenue of the Americas
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 bi-literacy 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 students.

Membership benefits include:

NYSABE Journal of Multilingual Education Research (JMER): 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 students.

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, Executive Director, NYSABE
Dr. Cecilia M. Espinosa, Editor
Dr. Eliezer Hernández, Graphic Designer



The New York State Association for Bilingual Education