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2013-2014

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Fall, 2013 Issue

A Message from the President, Yazmín Torres



Dear NYSABE Colleagues and Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I extend my greetings to you on behalf of NYSABE's Executive Board, Delegate Assembly, and Executive Director. As I proudly assume the role of NYSABE's 38th president, let me share with you my professional vision for our organization during the 2013-2014 term.

We must continue to promote quality bilingual education to ensure the academic achievement of New York State's ELLs/bilingual learners. The accomplishment of this goal will be the foundation for our students to successfully become productive biliterate citizens in the global community. Toward this end, we must sustain our commitment to collaborate and strengthen our linkages with advocacy groups that work diligently to address the socio-political issues and educational policies affecting the education of ELLs/bilingual learners. In addition, we must continue fostering

high quality professional development for bilingual educators so they can meet current educational challenges.

Multiple shifts in expectations and rigor connected to teaching practices and evaluations continue to pose challenges among educators. Statewide initiatives such as the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the new APPR teacher evaluation tool, increased testing for students, and economic constraints are some of the hurdles that we face at the present time. In this regard, let me assure you that NYSABE remains vigilant while strengthening its collaborative relationships with professional organizations, the NYSED, school districts, and institutions of higher education.

Recently, NYSABE celebrated two historical events, the initiation of the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy Law in New York State, and the elevation of the NYSED bilingual education office to a much higher level, under the leadership of the new Associate Commissioner for Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies, Ms. Angélica Infante. These events represent NYSED's recognition of the value of bilingualism and biliteracy as paths towards academic achievement and successful

college and career readiness. It is in this spirit of collective commitment and collaboration that we must continue to move forward toward the implementation of the bilingual common core progressions, C.R. Part 154, and other key statewide initiatives.

In closing, please allow me to express NYSABE's gratitude to each of you for your clear vision, dedication, commitment, and hard work aimed at ensuring equitable opportunities for our ELLs/bilingual learners, their families, and educators. Although many challenges lie ahead, I promise you that through our collaborations, perseverance, and strategic planning we will create paths leading towards this year's goal, "Educating Our Next Generation of Biliterate Citizens."

Sincerely,
Yazmín Torres
President, 2013-2014

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From the Desk of the Executive Director,



Nancy Villarreal de Adler

Nelson Mandela is not dead. He is very much alive in the minds and hearts of educators who treasure quality education as the most valuable tool to battle the oppressive conditions of disadvantaged communities. For Mandela, education is the path towards freedom and authentic participation in a pluralistic democratic society. To achieve this, he reminds us, we must ensure people's access to significant educational opportunities. Mandela's vision is not dead. His legacy is celebrated, day after day, in every classroom and school where equity and enriched education for all students is the rule. His vision is alive in every community and school celebrating the multilingual and multicultural wealth of students and parents. His clear sense of togetherness, hope, and social justice is present in every gathering of committed educators and citizens that advocate for the educational rights of students. The message that must resonate in every school is clear: Let's ensure ACCESS to equitable education for all students.

These are critical transitional times in the education of ELLs/bilingual learners and in the

implementation of Bilingual Education. The fast pace of continued changes and emerging initiatives related to instruction, assessment, policies, teacher education and evaluation pose critical demands on educators and all individuals committed to the education of ELLs/bilingual learners. However, the nature of that commitment reminds us that in addition to our students' academic achievement we are responsible for their socio-emotional development. We are also reminded that both academic achievement and socio-emotional development are not only the responsibility of bilingual educators, but are part of the collective responsibility of the entire educational community. In this regard, we bilingual educators have the enormously challenging task of building the awareness, respect, and knowledge base to educate students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the whole New York community. As we move forward in our quest for quality bilingual education, let us all be reminded of Nelson Mandela's spirit of generosity, togetherness, harmony, mutual support, social justice, and hope. Let us all reflect upon his thoughts because his powerful voice is not deceased; it is very much alive in our daily work on behalf of all ELLs/bilingual learners.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

-Nelson Mandela

Editor's Note:



**Editor,
Tamara
Alsace**

2013 was a year of many challenges, but also of many accomplishments in our field. As we ring in 2014 we present you with another informative issue of the NYSABE Bilingual Times. In this issue we present a new feature: *Voices from the Field* where we highlight promising practices and initiatives throughout New York State. We hope to see YOU featured in that column in the near future.

This volume of the Bilingual Times also introduces you to our new Associate Commissioner for Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies, Angélica Infante. Her interview with the newsletter staff gives you a glimpse into her life, both personal and professional. NYSABE will be working closely with Ms. Infante to ensure the best educational opportunities for our ELL/bilingual learners.

Look inside to meet this year's executive board and be treated to highlights of the NYSABE Gala, find out which past president is a film star, and learn about other exciting projects in which our members are involved. Finally, We welcome Turkish delegate Bahar Otcu-Grillman to the newsletter staff!

Happy New Year!

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

-Nelson Mandela



Yazmín Torres
NYSABE President

Ms. Yazmín Torres attended the University of Puerto Rico and completed a bachelor's degree in secondary education with a major in social studies. In the year 2000, while at the University of Puerto Rico, she was offered a contract with the Rochester City School District (RSCD). In Rochester, she earned a Master of Science in international studies and a bilingual extension. Currently, she is pursuing her second Master of Science degree in educational leadership at Saint John Fisher College. Yazmín has more than twelve years teaching experience and three New York State teaching certifications. She was a RSCD bilingual teacher and an ELL curriculum writing specialist. At the present time, Ms. Torres works at the New York City Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (R-BERN) as a bilingual resource specialist.

In the Rochester community, Yazmín is known as a committed and dedicated educator and a strong advocate for bilingual education. Her involvement with the local Hispanic community includes actively participating in the RSCD Bilingual Council, co-chairing the IBERO Work Task Force, and acting as chairperson of the Latino Dropout Research Committee. As a NYSABE volunteer she has been the chairperson of the membership committee, co-chairperson of the Nivia Zavala student essay and art contest committee, a regional delegate, the executive board secretary and treasurer.

Ms Torres is now the 38th president of NYSABE. Her educational vision is summarized as follows, "NYSABE will continue to be at the forefront in promoting high quality education for our next generation of biliterate citizens. The students' academic achievement, coupled with their acquisition of biliteracy skills, will lay a strong foundation for them to become successful citizens in a global community."

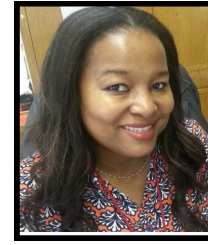


Dr. Tatyana Kleyn
NYSABE First Vice-President

Tatyana Kleyn is an associate professor in the bilingual education and TESOL programs at the City College of New York. In 2007 Tatyana received an Ed.D. in international educational development at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her dissertation focused on the intersections of bilingual and multicultural education in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese and Russian bilingual classrooms. In 2008 she received the second place Outstanding Dissertation Award from the National Association of Bilingual Education.

Tatyana is author of "Immigration: The Ultimate Teen Guide" (Scarecrow Press, 2011) and co-author of "Teaching in Two Languages: A Guide for K-12 Bilingual Educators" with Adelman Reyes (Corwin Press, 2010). She has been involved in a study of long-term ELLs (with Kate Menken) in NYC. The findings from that multi-year investigation have been published in the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *International Multilingual Research Journal*, *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, and *Educational Leadership*. Tatyana is currently serving as co-PI of the CUNY New York State Initiative for Emergent Bilinguals (CUNY-NYSIEB) that supports administrators in developing bilingualism as a resource of all students and school-wide multilingual ecologies.

Tatyana has advocated for undocumented immigrant youth and the DREAM Act for many years. She has written editorials, co-organized conferences, participated in a range of panels and spoken to politicians to bring attention and awareness to this issue. She is the director and co-producer (with Ben Donnellon) of a short documentary called, "Living Undocumented: High School, College and Beyond." The film, along with the accompanying lesson plan and resource packet, is available via www.livingundocumented.com. It was made to educate secondary students – as well as their families and educators - about the realities, policies and possibilities for undocumented Americans. She also worked with her City College "Education that is Multicultural" class to develop the bilingual curriculum called "Social Justice and Latinos in NYC: 1913-2013" through a partnership with El Diario/La Prensa to celebrate their centennial anniversary. The curriculum can be accessed at: <http://centenario.eldiario.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GuiaEducadores2013.pdf>.



Monalisa Jean-Ferrari
NYSABE Second Vice-President

Monalisa began her career in the educational field in 1985 as a literacy teacher providing instruction primarily to adult immigrants at the Flatbush Haitian Center (FHC). She pursued an associate's degree in human services at New York City Technical College while serving as an intern at a preschool program. Upon completion of her degree in 1989, she committed to community work where she began to realize that her career would benefit from reaching higher academic goals. In 1994, she pursued her bachelor's degree in liberal studies at Thomas Edison State College. Simultaneously, she founded the Greenwood Learning Center, providing a wealth of services to members of the New Jersey community. In the spring of 2004, while serving as a special education teacher for the New York City Department of Education, Monalisa earned what she calls "her lifelong wish", a master's degree in general education from Cambridge College. In the spring of 2008, she earned a second dual-master's degree in early childhood education and special education from Touro College. Her other credentials include certified social worker (CSW) and the following licenses from the New York State Department of Education: French teacher grade 7-12, school building leader (SBL) and school district leader (SDL). Monalisa firmly believes that teaching and learning are parts of a lifelong process; therefore, she is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in educational leadership and administration at Concordia University.

From 2011 to 2013, Monalisa served as the president of the Haitian Educators League for Progress (HELP), a not-for-profit community-based organization serving Haitian educators in New York City and abroad. As part of her professional development, she is a member of the Haitian Leadership Fellowship which is a project of CAUSE-NY, the intergroup relations department of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY). At the present time, Monalisa reaffirms her belief in bilingual education by serving as the NYSABE's second vice president and Haitian language delegate. Monalisa's vision is to build sustainable relationships with all constituents locally that will lead toward global impacts. To uphold and achieve this goal, she believes that she must remain focused on the vision despite all challenges.



Claire E. Sylvan, Ed. D.
NYSABE Secretary

Claire is the founding Executive Director of Internationals Network for Public Schools. This dynamic collaborative network supports schools in providing recently immigrated English language learners (ELLs) with high quality public education, pathways to college, and full participation in a democratic society. Claire has worked with and on behalf of English learners, particularly adolescent immigrants and migrants, for more than 30 years in diverse roles and settings including the community, teacher preparation, public secondary education and policy/advocacy venues.

Under Claire's leadership, Internationals Network was founded in 2004. It has expanded the Network's high schools within New York City as well as in California, Virginia, Utah and Connecticut. As of September 2013, the Network supports faculty and school leaders serving more than 6000 immigrant and ELL students. In 2008, Claire led Internationals, in collaboration with Long Island University, to establish NYC's first urban teacher residency program, I-START, which leads to a master's degree as well as state certification in TESOL.

Claire participates in local, state and national policy bodies concerned with immigrants and English language learners, as well as broader education reform initiatives. Her research and writings span heritage and native language development programs as well as educational designs, pedagogies and practices that build on the assets of adolescent English learners in multilingual classrooms and schools. She coauthored papers and articles with Isaura Santiago Santiago, Migdalia Romero and Ofelia García.

Dr. Sylvan is an outspoken advocate for translation and interpretation services for NYC public school parents, the NYS Seal of Biliteracy, fair and appropriate assessments of English language learners and their teachers, the implementation of Common Core State Standards, as well as for multiple pathways to graduation.

Attending McGill University and Brooklyn College as an undergrad, Claire completed her graduate studies at Teachers College, Columbia, with master's and doctoral degrees in TESOL, education administration and curriculum and teaching, each with a bilingual minor. Claire is fluent and literate in Spanish and lives in Jackson Heights, the most diverse center of immigration in NYC.

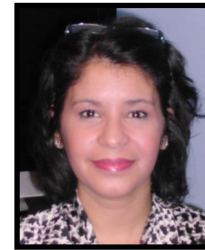


Iraida Bodré
NYSABE Treasurer

Iraida has been an educator for the past 18 years. She began her teaching career in the City of New York, often working with ELLs in monolingual classrooms. Ten years ago, she began working at the Westbury Union Free School District as a dual language teacher. She holds a master's degree in elementary education with a bilingual extension, and is currently pursuing a degree in educational leadership.

Iraida has been an active member of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education since 2004. She has served as a volunteer for various committees and as a Logistics Chairperson for the 2012 and 2013 NYSABE's annual conference. In 2010, she was elected as Delegate of Region I, which serves Nassau and Suffolk counties in New York. This year, she contributes to the vision of NYSABE by serving on the Executive Board as Treasurer.

Iraida's educational vision is clearly summarized in the following statement: "It is my belief that our primary duty as educators is to ensure that students are provided with an exceptional education that will prepare them for the future."



Dr. Awilda E. Ramos Zagarrigo,
NYSABE Past President

Awilda was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, the proud daughter of a Puerto Rican mother who raised her and her five sisters as a single parent. She is a proud wife, mother, and grandmother, with a daughter, two sons and a beautiful granddaughter. She was raised in a bilingual home where her mother was determined to instill in her daughters the pursuit of education and cultural pride. She is very proud to be bilingual and her greatest wish is that every child would have the benefit of being bilingual.

Dr. Ramos Zagarrigo is currently an assistant professor in the Exceptional Education Department at Buffalo State College. She is also the co-director of the Bilingual Special Education Program. She holds a Ph.D. in special education with a concentration in multicultural education from the University of Buffalo. Her research concentrates on culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, including authentic assessment and effective strategies for teaching reading to students who are culturally and linguistically diverse and exceptional. Prior to joining the faculty at Buffalo State College, she worked in the Buffalo Public Schools as a teacher's aide and a bilingual special education teacher. She continues to serve on many Buffalo Public School committees in an effort to collaborate with the school system and the community to ensure success for all students.

Awilda teaches both undergraduates and graduates at Buffalo State College and hopes to prepare students to become great educators and advocates for students with disabilities, as well as to be passionate about teaching all students. This year, Awilda was awarded the SUNY Buffalo State President's Award for Excellence in Academic Advisement and was recognized by the Buffalo Mayor's Office for her achievements as an outstanding Hispanic educator. Dr. Ramos Zagarrigo has served as a delegate-at-large, first vice-president, and was the 2012-2013 president for the New York State Association for Bilingual Education. She hopes to continue collaborating with individuals at the local, state, and national levels to ensure that NYSABE's mission moves forward and that our children have the best opportunity at an amazing education.

A Conversation with Angélica Infante,

Associate Commissioner for Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies,
New York State Education Department

by

Dr. Bahar Otcu-Grillman,
Turkish Language Delegate and
Nancy Villarreal de Adler,
NYSABE Executive Director



On November 27, 2013, we visited Angélica Infante, the newly appointed Associate Commissioner for the Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies, at the NYSED headquarters in Brooklyn, NY. Our goal for the visit was to have a conversation with Ms. Infante that could offer us a glimpse of her background, life and professional experiences, vision and strategic planning for the implementation of a healthy, effective, and enriched Bilingual Education program in New York State. It is indeed an honor and a pleasure to present to you excerpts of that conversation in NYSABE's "Bilingual Times":

Nancy: Practitioners and people in general from all over NYS want to know who you are. What do you want them to know?

Angélica: Okay. I am the daughter of two immigrants from the Dominican Republic. I was part of a bilingual program in NYC very early on as a child. I was in bilingual education here. And I thought that was what helped me throughout life, like it really helped me think things through. I remember just translating everything in my life, like thinking, emotions, and everything. So that was very powerful for me. I think the place where I find the most comfort is with my family. My parents were very..., you know, like most American par-

ents, they wanted education really to be at the forefront. But they really wanted me to be bilingual. Aside from school, really, in my house, we had to speak Spanish. Aside from the fact that my mother didn't speak English at all, my father did, but you know, we had Saturdays when we were reading newspapers. That's what we did in Spanish in my house. It was a ritual (and we also watched) *Siempre en Domingo*. Culture was very much transmitted in my family and it was very important. Like many different immigrant families, I am not sure if my parents wanted me to be an American. They struggled with that. They did not want me to be an American child. They didn't want me to have the same independence. You know it's a struggle. It's a struggle. So ...I think that it's what made me the person that I am today, and I value it a great deal. And I try with my children to do that. I have two kids. I have a six year-old who is autistic, who is now in a bilingual program. I have a three year old who's in a dual language program in a private school in Manhattan called *Mi Escuelita*. And so every time I think about the decisions I am making, I think about my kids, "Is this something I would want for my children? Is this something that I really think is valuable?" So that's who I am. I'm really a very family oriented person. I don't like a lot of attention - I really don't. And that's who I am. I'm an educator. I've been a teacher, from AP (Assistant Principal) to Principal, the whole gamut, and I see the challenges in all of them. But I think the one I enjoy the most is being a teacher, it's the most powerful. A part of me is also an advocate. You can't do this job or any job really working with English language learners and not be an advocate. But that's really who I am, an advocate. I struggled with taking this job because I would be removed from things and I worried about that a great deal. But I also see now that I'm here, next week it will be my third month, that there's a lot of work to be done to be able to help people who are actually doing the work; they are the ones who are really moving the agenda. That's who I am. I don't know if that an-

swers your question or you want me to talk more on that.

Nancy: There's another question, and actually the person who asked this question is my husband. Your first college degree, he says, was not in the field of education. What made you shift to the educational arena?

Angélica: When I was in high school I was a tutor. I tutored all the kids in my neighborhood. So I always had that passion for teaching, I thought it was important. Then, I went to school and I had some artistic abilities. I draw, paint, and I decided that architecture was for me. And the whole time I was doing that there was something missing. There was something that was missing that I enjoyed; and when I graduated the social justice piece came into play. I ran into Teach for America. Basically, it's just for two years and then you go do whatever you want to do. The whole premise for Teach for America was putting teachers in high poverty areas. But I only wanted to work in New York City, in real areas where I grew up. You know that I grew up in Washington Heights. I wanted to be around kids that looked like me, so I ended up working in the South Bronx, which was a very powerful experience. So, what really drove me was the desire to really give back, to really be part of my community. I could not do that in this other field where I would be ...um... very isolated. You know architecture is a very isolating field. And I enjoy the attractions and seeing kids grow. And you know education is... is a different kind of field. People say, is it a science or is it an art? And it's both. And I feel that that's what drives me. It really does.

Angélica (She asked to go back to the first question): You know, I said earlier that being a mother is one of the most important things that I feel I do. But I have a lot of guilt about that. I feel guilty every single day so my house looks like Toys R-Us exploded because

I am not around as much as I should be. But I am very grateful to my husband. If my husband were not there, I wouldn't be able to do things that I can do and enjoy. But it doesn't take away the guilt, I still feel guilty, I still feel terrible. But it's a balance. I struggle with that. I am sure all educators do. You know you are worried about other children, and then your kids kind of get shortchanged a little. So that's where I am in life. I just wanted to make this (conversation) a little more personal.

Bahar: What is your vision for the education of ELLs/bilingual learners in New York State?

Angélica: The vision for ELLs, it's a good question because I think that the vision that we are crafting right now (we are in the process of crafting) is really about having access... really having the ELLs' abilities be at the forefront. Instead of looking at them as a deficit or what they don't bring to the table, we need to change the way people look at them and see that these kids bring more to the table than other kids do. And how do we do that? I feel my job is to really figure out a way to have people understand that these kids (ELLs) are working twice as hard and they are producing twice as much. Even if they are just scoring a Level 2, a Level 2 is very meaningful for someone who doesn't speak the language. Really, looking at the strengths of this population, I think, is [part of] the vision. The second [part of] the vision is really, truly, having bilingual education for everyone, not just for English language learners. I think that if it's only for a certain population, it's always going to be something different. But if we really push that everyone participate in some sort of bilingual program and some sort of language enrichment, I think that people will understand the importance and the value of what these kids [ELLs] bring to the table. It just can't be for us, it can't be. We just can't keep bilingual education within our community. It's a different time now and we have to really move [the agenda], especially the way our country is, and New York City, and the State (multilingual and multicultural). I have the opportunity now

to go to different places in the state. Unbelievable richness in language and culture! It's just very different, very different. And we have to capitalize on that. I mean we have amazing resources that other states do not have. Really. So that's the vision, to make sure that people understand the strengths and how to really put these kids in the forefront, as well as bilingual education.

Bahar: And what are some of your systemic strategies to improve the present level of achievement of ELLs?

Angélica: So some of the things we are looking at, I guess, we're really looking at the Common Core Standards. And, who's part of the Common Core standards? Who works with our children? I think part of some of the challenges we've had is that it's always been just relegated to the ESL and bilingual teacher. But our kids are with all teachers. All teachers need to understand how to work with our students, not just say, "Okay, we're going to apply the common core standards," but how do you do that for this population? Their success and failure is also your success and failure. So, really part of the strategy is to work with everybody and have it be everybody's responsibility. I worry that it's 2013 and we are still having the same conversations. It's very hard, very difficult. But I think we have an opportunity now to do things a little differently and we have to do them. So that's part of the strategy. Also, really having very clear principles of what the expectations are for the State of New York. What do we expect and what don't we expect to see in all our districts? I think that is going to be one of our major strategies, and to hope that everybody is on board with it, not just something for the ELL [educators]. Curriculum people understand it and have to execute it. Districts, superintendents, everybody has to be on board. And, this is what I am sharing with you guys – one of the visions – that there will be some principles that will be guiding the road for New York State.

Nancy: As the leader of the Office of English Language Learners in New York City you had many successes and challenges. What are some successes that you would like to replicate and are there any lessons that you don't wish to repeat or you would like to change?

Angélica: This was a tough question. (All laugh. Nancy: "It's not from my husband by the way") I have to tell you when I read it last night I said 'oh my god, this is a hard question!' But the truth of the matter is that I think that part of the success is really having people understand and embrace bilingual education. Those are some of the things we did. People must take ownership of these kids and you know New York City is a big place, so it didn't happen everywhere, but there is now a deeper understanding of what needs to happen. Some of the challenges that I do not wish to replicate... um... sometimes in an effort to do things, um, how do I put this? So we were opening up bilingual programs, and I think that I would have liked to give people more time. You know there have to be steps for people to be successful. And I think that that's something - that I don't want to be in that place again. But sometimes (you do it) in an effort to say 'Okay we've done this here,' but there have to be different ways to act when people are very nervous about being out of compliance or not having enough of this. How do you do that? How do you support the people along the way in a way they don't feel threatened by what the end call is? And I think that's one of the biggest challenges. And also really getting some of the people on board that I think in a different context there was a lot of – how do I put this without saying too much? I was always the person at the table that was saying 'Well what about the ELLs? What about this?' and fighting. I think that one of the biggest challenges is how to get people on board where you're not fighting them. You



"...we are working at different places [but] we are working together, united—and I think that's very important..."

know there doesn't have to be a constant battle; how do we get to that place? And I think those are some of the challenges and one of the things that I would like to do differently here. I really would like to work in a way where people are embracing this [bilingual education] and instead of seeing it as one other thing they have to do. And I think we are in a good place to do that. I think we are in a good place. I think we are ready, I think it's a different time. I don't know... it's hard. It's about allowing the time for people to make mistakes. I think it's the one thing, if you're going to quote me, I think it's about allowing people to make mistakes, because people are afraid to make mistakes, and then they'd rather not do it. And I want people to try it and make the mistakes, learn from them and create something strong and powerful. That's really what I would like. [Bahar: "Just like an educator would treat their learners".] Right, sometimes when we're setting policy and doing big work, we forget those things, that there are going to be challenges. I think that's one of the things that I would like to do differently.

Bahar: Okay, in what ways will you reach out to other areas of the State?

Angélica: There are many things that we are trying to do. We are trying to – just like I said – we are three months here – we are working, we are trying to work with all the organizations. We really want to kind of set a vision and have everybody work around that same vision. What I was telling Nancy was really that we are working at different places [but] we are working together, united. And I think that's very important for me, very important because this is too difficult a job to do it by yourself. You just can't do it alone. Involving other people is very important and very crucial. Everybody should be part of the ELL conversation and they are trying. I have to tell you I am so surprised. Everybody, everybody wants us to be a part of their conversation. It is just so nice. So nice. [Nancy: they are opening the doors.] Oh yes, I think the Commissioner has made it very clear that he wants us working together. But I don't feel like they [other people at NYSED] have to be pushed. They really want to do it. They are

reaching out, they want to do it. So I think it's an opportunity for us to work with people we've never worked with. People see the work that we do as part of their work. So, yes, part of it is really reaching out to different organizations, not just ELL organizations. People that do work around curriculum have to have that conversation to begin with. I don't know if that answers your question but I think we want to partner with as many people as possible. You asked me earlier what the goal is. Well, the goal is for New York State to lead the ELL conversation nationwide as they once did. This was a state that used to do this kind of work and I want us to be in that place again. The nation is looking to us.

Nancy: As you travel throughout the State, you realize that there is more than just New York City.

Angélica: Absolutely, absolutely, oh my gosh.

Nancy: I lived in Upstate New York, in Syracuse and I worked there for more than ten years. I am very much familiar with the small cities and towns... and they, in a way, are a different reality from what we see in New York City.

Angélica: Of course.

Nancy: And what is your experience in visiting there [cities and towns outside of New York City]?

Angélica: That's such a great question Nancy, because it goes back to my guilt. Since taking this job, I have been out of my house at least two or three days where I have been in different parts of New York State. I really wanted to get to know the state and that's been important for me. And what I've seen is, you're right, there are different realities. Different cultures, different richness in the places that you would not expect. You find a whole Somali culture [for instance] ! And for me it's different, different experiences and different places. The way they function is different, and their needs are different. But what I have come to understand is the richness that we have, and we have to

share it. I feel like, you're right, when I was in New York City, I knew New York City's reality, and maybe a little bit of Yonkers and Long Island. But now, that I've had a chance to travel, I really think that we need to put on the map every single ELL population that we have. I mean it's amazing the type of work that is happening in different places... pretty amazing. I think we just haven't tapped into it and we haven't shared it. So in order to share it, one of the first things I did is that I started an ELL leadership committee. I reached out to the ten top – well actually twelve – districts that have ELLs. We've been meeting once a month and the Commissioner has been part of those meetings. And we've been talking about, what is it that we need? What are our challenges, what are some of the solutions? [We want to hear it from them] they're doing this work. And then, ... I'd like to form a leadership committee with the different organizations that are doing this work ... bring everybody together, because it's very difficult like – As I hear what is happening in Utica, as I hear what is happening in Buffalo [Nancy: Or New York], all different places, it's very hard if you don't include everybody in the conversation to really have a clear understanding of the work that needs to be done. There's so much work and it's so diverse and it's so different. And everybody has such a desire to do it. So, I think that that's an excellent question because I had no idea, and now I do – that's what I've been doing in the last three months, travelling, getting to know, asking questions and I've seen the challenges and the opportunities. I think there are so many opportunities and I think that the work that we have to do is to really bring those opportunities to everyone throughout the state. Just because we have a small number of English Language Learners doesn't mean you're not doing wonderful things that they can't be shared. I really saw some things that are pretty amazing. Amazing, yes!

Bahar: And how would you support parent engagement as it relates to the education of ELLs/bilingual learners?

Angelica: Okay, so I'm going to give you a little preview... I'll talk to you a little bit about the principles and give you copies too. (Shows the *Blueprint for English Language*

Learners (ELLs) Success) One of the principles states: "Districts and schools value all parents and families of English language learners as partners in education and will effectively involve them in the education of their children." And then, we have some bullets (indicating that their involvement) shouldn't just be about cultural events, ("oh we'll have a cultural night, we'll bring food and that's it.") Our parents have struggled really hard to get to this country. And even if they are second or third generation, they want a better life for their kids. (Their answer is) "Yes, we want to have cultural night, but in addition to that, talk to us about how to help educate our kids, talk to us about what is happening in the schools." I think that that should be one of the premises we're moving forward. It's our job - which is going to be hard because we really don't have a lot of staff- to create real meaningful resources for parents, so we want to partner with people to do that. We are the only ones Nancy, so that's the conversation that we really need to have. We really want to have resources for parents, like a place where parents can get information that they may or may not be getting in their schools. We are asking – I shouldn't say asking, asking is not the right word - we are making it very clear to schools and districts that this is everybody's responsibility. And we are hoping to create resources around this, so if the district says 'well I don't know how to do it', well here are five things you can do. Very concrete and not difficult things on actually how you can engage parents and see what they have to bring to the table. Our parents bring richness. And aside from the culture, our parents had to look to the future to get to this country. Very smart, very savvy! And they look to the future, for their kids, for themselves, to get better lives.

Our conversation with Angélica Infante ended with the renewal of our commitment to continue working in collaboration on behalf of our ELLs/bilingual learners, parents and educators. We thank Angélica Infante and her staff for extending their hospitality to us and making this interview possible.

"...that's what I've been doing in the last three months, travelling, getting to know, asking questions, and I've seen the challenges and the opportunities..."

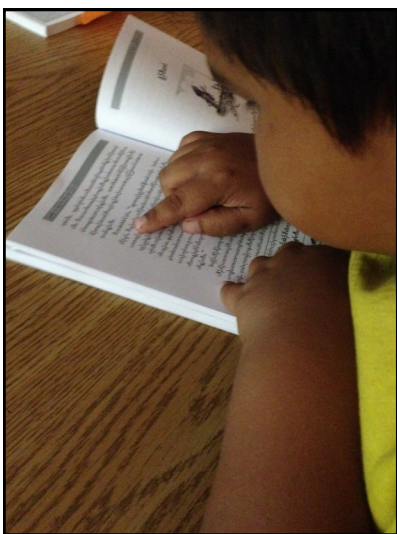




Voices from the Field:



*New York State
Teachers
and Administrators
Present
Promising
Practices*



Karen Heritage Language Project Takes Off in Buffalo

**By Michael Duffy
ESL Teacher
Buffalo Public Schools**

Buffalo's International School 45 is, in typical fashion, celebrating its linguistic and cultural diversity in a big way. The Karen Heritage Language Project is a concerted, long-term effort to raise cultural awareness in the school community and bring bilingual instruction to our school's largest language subgroup – Karen. The project was initiated through a planning grant awarded to the school by the New York State Education Department last school year.

Thus far, we have administered a pre-test that asked our faculty various questions about Karen language and culture. Weekly, teachers and students learn a new phrase in Karen via the morning announcements, presented by a Karen-speaking student and a teacher. We celebrated Karen Spirit Week the week of October 15th - 18th, during which we asked students to wear their traditional Karen clothing and we listened to traditional Karen music. Additionally, there is a bulletin board display of Karen artifacts, information, and our "Word of the Week". We also have a Karen Resource Room adjacent to the library that contains Karen literature, informational texts, and bilingual dictionaries. Third grade ESL teacher Nicole Nichter and librarian Isabella Keegan have been partnering with our Karen-speaking parent facilitator to teach and read fables to students in Karen and English. Giovanna Claudio-Cotto, of the Multilingual Department, has just completed a resource guide for teachers that contains histori-

cal, cultural, and linguistic information about the Karen people.

Says Giovanna,

"Working with students involves getting to know who they are not just in the classroom but outside. It is a great accomplishment when, as educators, we can appeal to their interests and celebrate their culture because those are the things that shape students' experiences. Having done research on the Karen culture has helped me learn more about my students, at a deeper level, and create activities that appeal to their needs and interests as well as that of others."

While we have accomplished much, we have much more planned. We will offer several professional development opportunities to teachers after school to discuss topics in-depth. We will also incorporate Karen culture into our evening PTO activities and our after school program. Finally, we will formally establish a bilingual support program in Kindergarten that will focus on Karen literacy, as well as a program in third grade that will have a dual focus of literacy and content support. Our staff has also been reaching out into the Karen community to develop a list of volunteers who will work with the school to support this exciting initiative.



Come visit us to see our progress firsthand!





PAST PRESIDENT NEWS: NYSABE Past President Stars in Film!

Teaneck actor stars in film to be shown at Teaneck International Film Festival

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2013

BY [MEGAN BURROW](#)

MANAGING EDITOR

TEANECK SUBURBANITE

[TEANECK](#) - The [Teaneck](#) International Film Festival is set for its eighth year this weekend, with many films featuring local filmmakers and actors. Carlo Mitton, a [Teaneck](#) resident for more than 30 years, stars in "Stones in the Sun," a film about a young couple, two sisters, and a father and son who are driven from Haiti to New York in the midst of increasing political violence. Set in the 1980s, it is Haitian writer/director Patricia Benoit's first feature film, and Mitton's first film role.

Mitton minored in theater in college and did "quite a bit of street theater" in New York City in the 1970s and 80s, but spent most of his time focused on his career as a teacher and administrator in the New York City public school system. He retired about a decade ago, and heard of the film through a former colleague with a friend who was working on the project. He auditioned and got the part, playing Max, a father whose son had left Haiti for the United States, and now finds he must flee his native country.

Mitton came to the United States from Haiti in 1964 at age 19, and said he drew on his personal experience for the role. "Aug. 23, 1964. I'll never forget that date," he said, remembering the day he arrived in America. "I dug into my experience because there's an emotional aspect that was very helpful in how to portray this character."

After not having visited Haiti since 1976, Mitton has gone back several times over the last few years, visiting with his older son, and attending a wedding. Last year he went to present the film, an experience he described as "cathartic." "It was a homecoming, and a chance to reconnect," he said. "When I left, going to the movies was a part of our lives. Now many of those theaters are gone. They were landmarks to me. It touched deep in the heart, but I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to go back and show this film." Mitton was one of the founding members of the [Teaneck](#) Stingrays Youth Soccer Club, and worked at [Teaneck](#) High School as security for several years after his retirement from the New York City public schools.

The film has been shown at several film festivals, including the Tribeca Film Festival and the New York African Film Festival at Lincoln Center, and Mitton said he is excited to bring the movie to his hometown.

Earlier this year, he contacted Jeremy Lentz, the director of the festival and put him in touch with Benoit. The film's subject was a good fit with the festival's theme, Activism: Making Change, Mitton said.

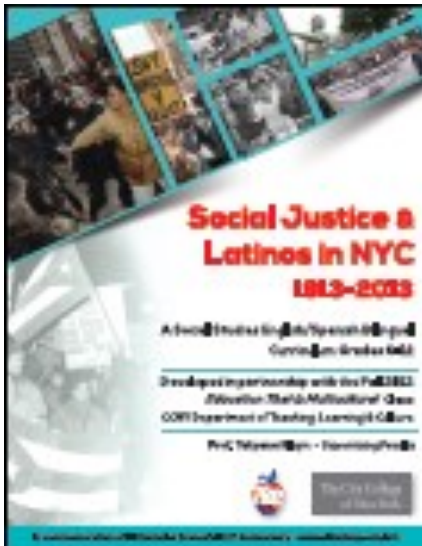
"I'm proud to have been a part of this production and happy to have had the opportunity to help bring this film to [Teaneck](#), especially within the context of social activism. I think we are in good company," he said.

Lentz said he was impressed with the film's moving story, and was happy to be able to feature a local actor at the festival. "It's a really well done film. It stood out," he said. Mitton and Benoit will be at the screening of "Stones in the Sun," Sunday at 4:05 p.m. and will participate in a talkback after the film. For more information about the film festival, visit [teaneckfilmfestival.org](#).

Email: burrow@northjersey.com

Social Justice and Latinos in NYC: A Bilingual Curriculum Commemorates the 100th Anniversary of *El Diario/La Prensa*

By Tatyana Kleyn
NYSABE First Vice President



While partnerships are a cornerstone of success is education, collaboration between an established newspaper and a university is not typical. Yet, it is precisely the partnership between *El Diario/La Prensa* and The City College of New York's Programs in Bilingual Education and TESOL that produced a secondary curriculum for students across NY State.

On October 17, 2013 a press conference was held at Gregorio Luperón High School (where the lessons were piloted) to launch the curriculum that puts Latino Americans at the center and celebrates their history, activism and impact on life in NYC, the United States and beyond! It comes in time

for *El Diario/La Prensa's* centennial anniversary as the nation's longest-publishing daily Spanish newspaper. Graduate students in a multicultural education course (which I taught) at the City College of New York developed the curriculum.

Each lesson builds off articles from the paper and brings in additional resources that come from different media sources, films, YouTube clips, poetry, and books - which are in English, Spanish and bilingual. The unit is intended for students of various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, as the history of Latinos is the history of New York and all Americans require a better understanding of our own diversity.

The unit is made up of nine lessons, which take 2-5 periods to complete. The unit begins with an introduction of Latinos in the U.S. and their representation across media outlets. The lessons then move into areas of social justice that include (im)migration, language, housing, workers' rights, bilingual education, and arts/culture. Lessons are grounded in essential questions such as:

- How are Latinos portrayed across media sources?
- What is the role of unions in creating fair working conditions?
- How has gentrification affected Latino neighborhoods?
- What do languages represent for the Hispanic community?
- How have court cases played a role in the establishment and denial of bilingual education?

What is the connection between parades and social justice issues?

The culminating activity is a class electronic and multilingual newspaper around current social justice issues.

Since there are a plethora of demands placed on teachers, the curriculum was created so that it could be taught in its entirety or using selected parts. The first and last lessons are essential, but the seven lessons on different topics can be chosen based on connection to the course topic and time. Those lessons can stand alone, but also provide opportunities to build on each other. The connections to the NYS Common Core State Standards are outlined in every lesson.

Bilingualism is at the heart of the curriculum. The unit plan and many accompanying documents are in English, whereas the *El Diario/La Prensa* articles are in Spanish, with a brief English summary. This set-up values Spanish, and positions students who speak the language as experts in the classroom who can support their peers and even the teacher. Educators are also encouraged to use tools such as Google translate to provide a general translation, as needed. In sum, this is as a flexible bilingual curriculum that can be used in a variety of secondary classrooms.

In the absence of culturally relevant materials and resources, especially

in Spanish and about Latinos on the East coast, this curriculum aims to fill a gap in our diverse school systems. The goal is for this curriculum to serve as a powerful tool to teach about Latinos, and the larger social and human issues that impact us all.

The full curriculum can be downloaded at: <http://centenario.eldiariony.com/latinos-in-nyc/?lang=en>. A presentation about the curriculum and its implementation will be offered at the 2014 NYSABE Conference. Check the schedule and come to the breakout session to learn more! The following articles provide additional information about the curriculum and process by which it was developed and piloted:

Gotham Schools: <http://gothamschools.org/2013/10/23/teach-latino-history-luperon-high-school-turns-to-el-diario/>

Univision: <http://noticias.univision.com/mes-de-hispanidad/lo-ultimo/article/2013-10-17/estudiantes-inmigrantes-aprenderan-sobre-historia-de-latinos-en-nueva-york?refPath=/univisionaustin/#axzz2i2tK1ff8>

Bilingual Special Education Initiatives at Fordham University

By Dr. Diane Rodríguez and Ms. Eva García

The Graduate School of Education at Fordham University, The Center for Educational Partnerships, and the NYS/NYC RBE-RN, in collaboration with practitioners, college professors, administrators, the New York State Association of Bilingual Education (NYSABE), Sinergia, Inc., the NYC Department of Education's District 75 and the Office of English Language Learners initiated conversations on May 3, 2013 in order to address the educational needs of English language learners (ELLs)/bilingual learners with disabilities. Ms. Eva García, Executive Director of the NYC RBE-RN, organized this collaborative endeavor to deepen awareness in the community of the great need for bilingual special education in the school system.

The conversation, *Enriching the School Experiences of ELLs/Bilingual Learners with Disabilities through Bilingual Education*, took place at the Fordham University- Lincoln Center Campus. The panel guests and participants constituted the "Bilingual Special Education Think Tank" whose main outcome would be the development of an action plan for the education of ELLs/bilingual learners with disabilities. The panel was composed of experts in the field who led discussions about particular issues, as noted below.

Dr. Diane Rodríguez, Fordham University, *ELLs with Disabilities: A Research Overview*,
Ms. Angélica Infante, *ELLs with Disabilities in New York City*,
Dr. Bernice Moro, Sinergia, Inc.,

Strategies to Facilitate Working with Families of ELLs with Disabilities,

Gila Rivera, Bilingual School Social Worker, Title III Coordinator, District 75, NYC DOE, *Challenges in Educating Emergent Bilinguals with Severe Cognitive, Sensory, and Other Disabilities*, and

Dr. Patricia Martínez Álvarez, Teachers College, Columbia University, *Teaching ELLs with Disabilities: Instructional Strategies in Two Languages*.

Development of the action plan would be informed by stakeholders through a series of roundtable discussions. The first round table session was held on October 25th, 2013. The keynote speaker for that event was Dr. Chun Zhang. Her presentation, *Supporting Young English Learners with Language and Communication Needs: Potentials and Challenges* sparked significant discussions on young English language learners.

Future meetings will be held:

Friday, December 6th, 2013 at 12:00 noon - at Teachers College: Round table discussion

Thursday, March 6th, 2014 - at NYSABE Annual Conference: Roundtable discussion on *Working with Families and ELLs with Disabilities*.

Friday, May 2, 2014 - at Fordham University: Round table discussion on *Challenges in Educating Emergent Bilinguals with Severe Cognitive, Sensory, and Other Disabilities*.

All interested parties are invited to join us for these important discussions on behalf of ELLs with disabilities. For further information, please contact Ms. Eva García at evgarcia@fordham.edu

Bahar Otcu-Grillman, Ed. D. Turkish Language Delegate, NYSABE



I, Bahar Otcu-Grillman, am an Assistant Professor of TESOL/Bilingual Education in the department of Literacy and Multilingual Studies at Mercy College, New York. I am currently teaching graduate courses in introduction to linguistics, methods of teaching English as a second language, bilingual education, and clinical practices. My research interests include bilingual education, applied linguistics, language policies and ideologies, discourse analysis, and pragmatics. I have recently co-edited a published volume titled "Bilingual Community Education and Multilingualism: Beyond Heritage Languages in a Global City" with Ofelia García and Zeena Zakharia. In this book and through most of my academic research, I have focused on the bilingual education practices and needs of the Turkish American community in New York.

I would like to offer a quick recap of the story of the Turkish language and culture in the U.S. Turkish immigration to the U.S. started after World War I and continues today, although at lower rates. Most Turkish Americans belong to the middle class and are well-integrated into the larger American culture. They are a highly bilingual and diverse group. They are doctors, graduate or undergraduate students, professors, artists and businessmen as well as blue-collar workers and housewives. There are some world famous Turkish Americans too, such as Dr. Oz, well-known today for his heart health tips and TV shows.

Turkish Americans in the US, as an ethnolinguistic group, are an understudied immigrant population. And yet, they have established organizations and institutions in New York and throughout the nation, reaching out to the community mainly through internet websites and electronic newsletters, which are mostly bilingual. The largest Turkish community in the US today is concentrated in and around metropolitan areas such as New York, New Jersey, Washington D.C., California, Florida, Texas and Illinois. There has been an increase in the size of the Turkish American population in recent years. According to the 2005 ACS, there were 164,945 people with Turkish ancestry in the US, although this number increased to be 189,640 in the 2008 ACS (US Census Bureau, 2005, 2008).

Since the 1970s, Turkish has been taught as a heritage language in community-based schools in the U.S. Approximately a decade later, since the 1980s, Turkish started to be taught as a foreign and second language, especially in the U.S. institutions of higher education. Unfortunately, there are no known bilingual education programs for the children

of Turkish families to date, mainly because of the highly integrated and bilingual nature of this community. This situation seems to pose the risk of complete language shift for the upcoming generations from Turkish to English. This being the case and due to an interest in the US regarding Turkish language and culture, my joining NYSABE seems timely.



Thanks to the welcoming of the NYSABE president, executive director, and Dr. Tatyana Kleyn, I have been given this honorable opportunity. I am willing to contribute to NYSABE as a Turkish language delegate, trying to fulfill my responsibilities in the best way possible. It will also give me pleasure to represent NYSABE to the Turkish American community as an advocate of bilingual education. Thanks for welcoming me so warmly and I look forward to working with all of you.



Immaculee Harushimana, Ph. D.
African Language Delegate,
NYSABE



I remember my first meeting with my dear colleague and friend, Professor Tatyana Kleyn, inside a small, homey Turkish Café located at Bedford Park, in the Bronx. We had made an appointment to discuss the possibility that I would consider serving as a NYSABE African language delegate. My first reaction was that of reticence due to my awareness of how unappreciated bilingual education is in the United States of America. After listening to Tatyana's description of the purpose of a language delegate, I actually found out that the position resonated with the research I had been conducting on the adaptation challenges faced by African-born youth in U.S. schools.

It was as if I could hear their helpless voices and represent their lost faces where they are sitting, unnoticed, in the ESL classroom or in the mainstream classroom. In particular, I remembered a story I had been told by a colleague from NYC Writing Project, where a recently arrived girl from Senegal was given a bilingual Spanish-English dictionary to use during the exam and did not dare to ask for the right one. I felt hurt on behalf of these students. Therefore, I thought that the African language delegate role would help me empower the unassisted young minds from Africa to affirm their first languages of literacy and see them as invaluable tools for acquiring English.

Having been born and raised in one of the few monolingual countries in the whole of Africa, I grew up strongly attached to my native language and would never imagine anyone trying to make me forget it. Whereas most of my friends' children have forgotten our native tongue, Kirundi, I pride myself in the fact that I can communicate with my two sons in it as a way to keep the secret among us. Despite my near native competency in French and English, nothing compares to the attachment I feel to Kirundi. I hope to instill the same attitudes in the kids and families I will be working with.

Due to the multilingualism prevailing in the majority of African societies, I have experienced a dilemma in choosing on which language to focus. There is talk in Africa that Kiswahili might become the lingua franca of Sub-Saharan Africa, so that is the language I would like to focus my mind on now. I look forward to the day I will be able to showcase smiling faces of African-born immigrant youth, proud of their African heritage and unashamed to show the world that African languages are written, literary and academic, just like English or any other valued language in the universe



Karibu

Welcome
 Huan ying Bienvenue
 Djirri-nyurra Hau
 Kalos Orisate Hau
 Barka da zuwa
 Irashaimasu
 Fáilte Isten Hoza
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**Hos
 geldiniz**

The 2013 NYSABE Gala "Leaders in Bilingual Education: The Pillars of a Biliterate Generation"

By Bahar Otcu-Grillman, Ed. D.
Turkish Language Delegate

Friday, October 18th, 2013. 6:30 pm. at Fordham University's Lincoln Center. Guests enter the gala room one by one. Pleasant multilingual live music caresses ears. By the window, a little ahead of the band, there is an abundance of appetizers: Mediterranean corner, Asian corner, Sushi, you name it. Delicious. Right next to them, at the bar, are different varieties of wine - wine from all over the world - a fiesta for the palate. Guests move towards their seats. Pleasantly surprised, they smile; packages of generous gifts from National Geographic on their seats. On the package there is a picture of a cheetah in a savannah - a sensation of Africa. NYSABE Delegate Assembly members, looking gorgeous in their gowns, meet each guest with a hug and a smile. Professors, teachers, administrators, and parents are the guests. Parents representing Bengali, Turkish, Hispanic, Haitian, and African communities are seated in their chairs with curiosity and happiness on their faces. A Haitian parent is singing along with the band, a song in French. This is the NYSABE spirit in the air, present everywhere.

Such a warm welcome was the first sign of an entertaining and successful night for NYSABE promoting bilingualism, biliteracy and diversity. All the details signaled the importance of the night, a glamorous gala full of colorful moments shared by invaluable leaders as the theme suggested, *Leaders in Bilingual Education: The Pillars of a Biliterate Generation*.

When the guests were seated and din-

ner was served, the gala was opened around 7:30 pm by the welcoming remarks of Eudes Budhai, NABE President and NYSABE Past President, 2005-2006. Dr. Aida Nevárez La Torre's introduction of Fordham University-Graduate School of Education's Dean James Hennessy followed. A special recognition for his outstanding support of bilingual education was presented to him by Nancy Villarreal de Adler, NYSABE Executive Director.

NYSABE Biliteracy Awards were announced afterwards. Dr. Angela Carrasquillo's work was acknowledged by Eva García who also read Dr. Carrasquillo's letter of appreciation for her lifetime award. Afterwards, Charline Julsaint was praised and described as a "biliteracy educator *that gets it*, (and promotes the) social advantages of being biliterate." Mary Lily Cerat, introducing Julsaint, praised her remarkable work in promoting biliteracy in her school. Through this, Julsaint stated, we can ensure respect in the city and all around the world, which is democracy in America at work. Next, Maria Kot was introduced and praised by Dr. Tatyana Kleyn as a parent who fights for bilingual programs. Russian, Spanish, and Chinese bilingual education programs started because of Ms. Kot's advocacy work. The guests were deeply touched by Ms. Kot's emotional response when she pointed out that our children deserve to be and to do better.

After a short break of raffle sales and collecting plates, Angélica Infante-Green greeted the audience. Being the newly appointed Associate Commissioner for Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Services, she shared two personal

stories. The first one was inspiring for many parents as it was the story of her struggles to obtain the best services for her own son who is a bilingual autistic child. The second story related how she came to understand the Common Core and the importance of helping other parents understand them as well. She finished her speech with the premise that everyone in the gala room has a leadership role; they will all help our children excel and be multilingual. Just like Ms. Infante-Green's stories made the audience ponder about the importance of leadership, her jokes lightened up the atmosphere as the audience laughed frequently.

Another break followed, and New York Assemblywoman Carmen Arroyo (District 84, Bronx, NY) took the stage to present her Proclamation to Angelica Infante-Green. She also shared a personal story of her grandchild and her teacher, pointing to the fact that teachers need continued support and a better form of evaluation and education.

The night's most anticipated guest, NYS Education Commissioner Dr. John B. King, Jr. made his speech afterwards. He emphasized the importance of quality instruction in all content areas, not only in English and math, but in all areas to ensure successful college and career preparation. His speech pointed to the need to maintain structure in the bilingual progressions and integrate the students' home language into the Common Core standards. He finalized his speech by thanking bilingual teachers for the most valuable work they have been doing on behalf of their students.

Following the audience's cheering

applause and a period to take photos with Dr. King, the last set of NYSABE's biliteracy awards were presented. In her opening speech, Dr. Claire Sylvan praised the Seal of Biliteracy and stated that New York is the second state that has approved it and is getting ready to implement it. Then, Rebeca Madrigal introduced Dr. María Torres-Guzmán, fourth awardee, by thanking her for her contributions to bilingual education and for turning dreams and ideals into reality. Dr. Torres-Guzmán responded with inspiration from a Nelson Mandela speech: To educate is to cultivate critical thinking. Languages are resources for that. Next, NYSABE President Yasmín Torres introduced Dr. Miriam Vázquez, the fifth recipient of the biliteracy award, by emphasizing Dr. Vazquez's belief that bilingual education is for all. Dr. Vázquez, responded to the introduction by thanking the faculty, staff, parents, teachers, and her own Puerto Rican family. Last, Miriam Net, a bilingual teacher and a student at CCNY, introduced Molly Wang, the sixth awardee. In her response speech, Wang talked about her Mandarin/English dual language program and how Swedish and Australian educators have expressed their wishes to learn more about her school, PS 172.

Upon closing, María de los Ángeles Barreto thanked the sponsors for the gala. Eva García made the closing remarks thanking the guests and asking, "Where are we in 2013 in terms of bilingual education?" She also answered, "We are still here!" The audience applauded enthusiastically, as the remark fit well into the night's theme: Leaders in Bilingual Education. Here, well, and ready to move forward.

The gala ended with a surprise birthday cake for Carmen Dinos. It

was the perfect end to an inspirational night as well as an entertaining one for NYSABE members and guests. To many more!

Dr. Claire Sylvan, NYSABE Secretary; Nancy Villarreal de Adler, NYSABE Executive Director;; Angélica Infante, Associate Commissioner for Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies; Dr. John B. King, Jr., NYS Education Commissioner



Marc Greene, President-Elect, New York State Council of Educational Associations (NYSCEA); William Anderson, President, NYS Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYS AFLT); Susanne Marcus, President, NYS Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (NYS TESOL); Yasmín Torres, President, NYS Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE); Angelica Infante, NYS Associate Commissioner for Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies; Henry Rubio, President, Association of Dominican American Supervisors and Administrators (ADASA)

GALLERY OF 2013 BILITERACY AWARDEES



Molly Wong



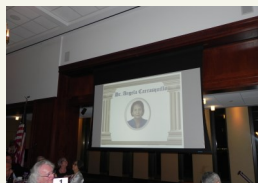
Charlene Julsaint



Maria Kot [with Yasmín Torres & Tatyana Kleyn]



Dr. Miriam Vázquez [with Yasmín Torres]



Dr. Angela Carrasquillo



Dr. María Torres-Guzmán [with Rebeca Madrigal]





**NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

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Tel: 212-998-5104 Fax: 212-995-4199

October 24, 2013

Dr. John B. King, Jr.
Commissioner
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Commissioner King,

On behalf of the Executive Board, Delegate Assembly, and Executive Director of The New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE), I express our appreciation for the thoughtful and groundbreaking work undertaken by the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) under your leadership in proposing revisions to CR Part 154. We applaud the efforts that NYSED has made to conduct a comprehensive revision process by including focus groups, surveys and conversations with the Committee of Bilingual and English-as-a-Second-Language Practitioners and NYSABE. We are pleased that many of the recommendations made by NYSABE and other stakeholders have been incorporated into the proposed revisions of CR Part 154.

We are supportive of your efforts to move New York State's regulatory framework from a deficit model to an asset-based model for ELL/bilingual learners who at the present time are classified under federal law as limited English proficient(LEP). Your commitment to ELL/Bilingual learners is evidenced by your efforts to align CR Part 154 with cutting edge research and best practices to ensure that all teachers actively support the academic language development of their ELL/bilingual learners. Also, by recommending the inclusion of early childhood education under the guidance of CR Part 154, you have further demonstrated your commitment to these students by assuring that their pathway to college and career readiness starts at an early age.

Attached is NYSABE's detailed feedback, which includes our recommended modifications, requests for clarification as well as areas for inclusion of issues currently not addressed in the proposed recommendations. There are multiple areas that we are in complete agreement with NYSED's proposed recommendations, but in the interest of brevity, we have only included the areas where we are proposing additions and modifications or requesting clarifications.

New York State is leading the nation in creating a clear and consistent set of requirements and guidance for high quality educational programs and services for ELL/bilingual learners, as reflected in the development of the Bilingual Common Core Initiative. If implemented properly with appropriate supports, this initiative, coupled with aligned changes in CR Part 154, have the potential to promote deep innovation in schools and districts that will provide New York's ELL/bilingual learners with the early identification, instructional programs, and supports leading to the reduction of the achievement gap for these students.

As we urge your prompt adoption of the long-awaited revision of CR Part 154, we thank you for your vigorous, forward-looking leadership, and your careful review and consideration of our recommendations

Sincerely,

Yazmin Torres
Yazmin Torres
NYSABE President

NEWYORK STATE ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION



Attachment

NYSABE Recommendations on the Revision of CR Part 154

Overall, NYSABE supports many of the forty three proposed items. However, we do not support several key items as written; therefore, proposed modifications for those particular items are included in this review.

We believe that any changes made to CR Part 154 must be founded upon research and best practices. However, several items refer to a “Freestanding ESL program” while other items refer to an “ESL program”. This terminology creates confusion and is not aligned with the work on the Bilingual Common Core which emphasizes the need for integration of academic language and content in **all the languages** students use. Therefore, to align CR Part 154 with the current state reforms and cutting-edge research on language development, we strongly recommend replacing “Freestanding English as a Second Language program” with “**Language Development Program**” which is defined as a research-based program that integrates two key components:

- Content instruction (Language Arts, math, science, social studies) taught in English **with home language supports** and appropriate scaffolds; and
- English as an additional language pedagogy.

The following are important areas that have not been addressed but must be included in this revision:

- New York State should take the lead nationally in advocating for the elimination of deficit-based terminology, such as “Limited English Proficient (LEP),” and be replaced with the use of cutting-edge terminology such as ELLs/Bilingual Learners or ELLs/Emergent Bilinguals.
- CR Part 154 must be broadened to include Early Childhood/Preschoolers.
- In defining eligibility for ELL/bilingual learner status, Caribbean students from homes where Creole or non-Creole based languages other than English are spoken must be included under CR Part 154 in the definition of ELLs/bilingual learners. Due to their historic exclusion from services and programs under CR Part 154, we strongly recommend that NYSED partner with researchers and practitioners working with these populations prior to designing appropriate programs that validate students’ home languages and English varieties.
- Non-verbal students whose home language is not English must be included under CR Part 154 in the definition of ELLs/bilingual learners.

NYSED Survey

The following are sub-sections where additional consideration/revision is required.

Identification and Placement

2. **Require the qualified professionals responsible for making the determination of whether a student is an English Language Learner to engage in appropriate consultation with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for students who have or are suspected of having a disability. Students with disabilities who take the regular New York State assessments will also take the statewide language proficiency identification assessment. The CSE must determine individually whether a student with a severe disability who is eligible to take the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) will participate in the regular statewide language proficiency identification assessment. If not, the CSE must identify appropriate alternate assessment measures to be used to determine the student's language proficiency.**

Recommended Modification: *Require the qualified professionals responsible for determining whether a student is an English Language Learner to consult/collaborate with qualified members of the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for students who have or are suspected of having a disability. CSEs must be required to include a bilingual teacher (bilingual in the language of the student), and/or ESL teacher, bilingual support personnel (bilingual in the language of the student), such as school psychologists, school counselors, school social workers or guidance, in making this determination.*

For a student suspected of having a disability or for a student with a severe disability who is eligible to take the New York State Alternative Assessment (NYSAA), the CSE will determine, on an individual basis, whether the student should take the statewide language proficiency identification assessment or not. If not, the CSE must identify and administer appropriate alternate assessment measures to determine the student's language proficiency in both, the home language and English. Students with disabilities who take the general New York State assessments will be required to take the statewide language identification assessment.

NYSED must develop guidelines for the appropriate identification, placement, instructional and support services, and assessment for ELL/bilingual learners with disabilities.

3. **Use the identification process to determine if a student has Interrupted Formal Education Skills, so that schools and districts can provide targeted interventions to such students and track their needs. Students with Interrupted Formal Education Skills shall mean English Language Learners who upon initial enrollment in school have been in the United States for one year or less and are two or more years below grade level in literacy in their home language and/or two or more years below grade level in Math.**

Recommended Modification: SIFEs should be identified more narrowly as students who have experienced serious interruptions in their education. Defining SIFEs solely on the basis of a two-year-below-grade-level bar could result in an inappropriately large percentage of the ELL/bilingual learner student population being classified as SIFEs. SIFE students are ELLs/bilingual learners who upon initial enrollment in school have been in the United States for one year or less and who are more than two years below grade level in literacy in their home language and/or more than two years below grade level in Math, as evidenced by assessments in his /her home language. In addition, the trajectory of a student's education must be considered when making the proper identification. Students identified on the basis of having serious interruptions in their education must have access to additional supports and services as appropriate and to rigorous instructional and assessment programs that allow the tracking of their progress.

7. Consider seeking authority to develop a process to identify ELLs in preschool and to develop separate regulations regarding the identification, placement, and programming requirements for ELLs in preschool. (Note: development of these regulations would begin following adoption by the Regents of revised Part 154 regulations).

Recommended Modification: Given the critical opportunities and long-term benefits presented by early identification of ELLs/bilingual learners in Early Childhood/preschool, this recommendation should be strengthened by changing "Consider seeking authority" to "Seek authority"

Exit Criteria

10. As is done in almost all other states, subject to the approval of the United States Department of Education through its accountability workbook amendment process, create additional paths to determine that a student is proficient, including:
 - a. scoring proficient on the NYSESLAT or scoring advanced (the level below proficient) in all sections of the NYSESLAT while also scoring proficient on a 3-8 ELA assessment for two consecutive years or scoring advanced in all sections of the NYSESLAT while also scoring 75 or higher on the ELA Regents.
 - b. In the case of an ELL with disabilities, create a process for the CSE to consider whether a student should continue to be designated as an ELL and make recommendations for a final determination of ELL status to be made by the superintendent or his or her designee. The district must include in the CSE meeting an individual with knowledge or special expertise regarding the student's language development needs, such as a regular or special education teacher or related service provider who is appropriately qualified to provide ESL or bilingual instruction or related services.

Clarification Requested: Please clarify whether this change (the removal of the proficient students from this subgroup) will have a negative impact on schools with large populations of

ELLs/bilingual learners in terms of schools meeting their AYP/AMO requirements for the ELL/bilingual learner subgroup and on evaluations for teachers with large ELL/bilingual student populations. Please share data showing how you have modeled the impact of this change. If in fact this change will negatively impact the ELL subgroup performance and teacher evaluations of teachers of ELLs/bilingual learners in large ELL population schools. This is an area of grave concern.

Parent Information and Choice

15. Require that *in addition* to parent-teacher conferences, quarterly progress meetings or other such scheduled meetings provided to all students, school staff meet with parents or persons in parental relation to ELLs at least once a year to discuss their child's language development progress and needs and NYSESLAT results. The district must take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the parent or person in parental relation understands the proceedings of the meeting, including using a qualified interpreter (oral) /translator (written) for the language and mode of communication the parent or person in parental relation best understands.

Recommended Modification: All parent/family-teacher conferences must be held at least twice a year and must include the student's report on the instructional/assessment program and its alignment with current regulations and initiatives. Reports on student progress must include academic achievement in all areas in connection to language development

Types of Programs and Instruction

16. Define a Freestanding English as a Second Language program as a research-based program comprised of two components: a content area instructional component in English with appropriate scaffolds and supports (including all core content, such as English language arts, math, science, social studies), and an explicit English language development component (Stand-alone and/or Integrated English as a Second Language instruction).

Recommended Modification: Replace "Freestanding English as a Second Language program" with "Language Development Program" which is defined as a research-based program that integrates two key components:

- *Content instruction (Language Arts, math, science, social studies) taught in English with home language supports and appropriate scaffolds, and*
 - *English as an Additional Language pedagogy,*
17. Define Stand-alone English as a Second Language as a unit of study or its equivalent in which pupils receive instruction in order to acquire the English language needed for success in academic content courses. Stand-alone ESL may be provided through self-contained or pull-out instruction, except as required by a student's individualized

education program (IEP); however pupils shall not be pulled out of core content area courses in order to receive a Stand-alone English as a Second Language unit of study.

Recommended Modification: Define “Stand-alone English as a Second language” as a unit of study or its equivalent in which pupils receive instruction in order to acquire the English language needed for success in academic content courses. Stand-alone ESL may be provided through self-contained classes, or collaborative team teaching or pull out instruction where all other options are not feasible or inappropriate, except as required by a student’s individualized education program (IEP); however, pupils shall not be pulled out of core content area courses in order to receive a Stand-alone English as a Second Language unit of study.

26/27. Free Standing ESL K-8 and -12 Charts for 2014-15 and 2015-16
CHART

26. Require units of study for students in ESL programs be as follows for the 2014-15 school year:

Free Standing ESL K-8 (2014-15)¹

	Required Units of Stand Alone ESL	Required Units of Integrated ESL	Required Units that May Be Either Stand Alone or Integrated ESL
Beginner	1	1 (with ELA)	
Intermediate		1 (with ELA)	1
Advanced		1 (with ELA or another content area)	
Proficient (i.e., one year following exit from ELL status)		1 (with ELA or another content area) (or other transition services)	

Free Standing ESL 9-12 (2014-15)

	Required Units of Stand Alone ESL	Required Units of Integrated ESL	Required Units that May Be Either Stand
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¹ In the event that the Regents adopt the Bilingual Common Core Progressions (BCCP), which are based on five levels of language development, reference to Beginning shall mean Entering, Intermediate shall mean Emerging, Transitioning is a new level that shall have the same ESL unit requirements as the former Intermediate, Advanced shall mean Expanding and Proficient shall mean Commanding.

			Alone or Integrated ESL
Beginner	1	1 (with ELA or another content area)	1
Intermediate		1 (with ELA or another content area)	1
Advanced		1 (with ELA or another content area)	
Proficient (i.e. one year following exit from ELL status)		1 (with ELA or another content area) (or other transition services)	

27. Require that units of study in ESL programs for the 2015-16 school year and beyond be as follows²:

Free Standing ESL K-8 (2015-16)³

	Required Units of Stand Alone ESL	Required Units of Integrated ESL
Beginner	1	1 (with ELA)
Intermediate		2 (with ELA)
Advanced		1 (with ELA or another content area)
Proficient (i.e. one year following exit from ELL status)		1 (with ELA or another content area)(or other transition services)

² Such approach is aligned to the Theoretical Foundations of the Bilingual Common Core Initiative (available at <http://engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/nysbccci-theoretical-foundations.pdf>) and would be done in conjunction with recommendations 38, 39 and 40, which would require additional training for prospective teachers and professional development for current teachers, with a focus on best practices for co-teacher strategies an integrating language and content instruction.

³ In the event that the Regents adopt the Bilingual Common Core Progressions (BCCP), which are based on five levels of language development, reference to Beginning shall mean Entering, Intermediate shall mean Emerging, Transitioning is a new level that shall have the same ESL unit requirements as the former Intermediate, Advanced shall mean Expanding, and Proficient shall mean Commanding.

Free Standing ESL 9-12 (2015-16)

	Required Units of Stand Alone ESL	Required Units of Integrated ESL
Beginner	1	2 (with ELA and with another content area)
Intermediate		2 (with ELA and with another content area)
Advanced		1 (with ELA or another content area)
Proficient (i.e., one year following exit from ELL status)		1 (with ELA or another content area)(or other transition services)

For 26/27

Recommended Modification: In each table, column two heading "Required Units of Stand-Alone ESL" and box in this column in Beginner row with number 1 should both include an asterisk. The asterisk should note that required units of Stand-Alone ESL are only required when fewer than 50% of a class are English-language learners. Otherwise, students should receive content area integrated ESL support/instruction.

For 26 only:

Recommended Modification: In each table, column four heading "Required Units that may be Either Stand Alone or Integrated ESL" should include an asterisk after the words "Stand Alone". The asterisk should note that Stand-Alone ESL is only required when fewer than 50% of a class are ELLs/bilingual learners.

30. Allow English as a Second Language instruction to be provided in both Stand-alone and Integrated settings. In the case of Integrated ESL, require that such courses be taught by either a dually certified (ESL and content area) teacher or co-taught by an ESL and a content area teacher.

Recommended Modification: Add at the end of the paragraph, "In the case of self-contained bilingual classes, PK-6, bilingually certified teachers can offer ESL instruction."

Graduation Requirements

35. Change graduation requirements to allow multiple pathways, only for ELLs who enter the United States as new arrivals in 9th grade or above, including:

- **Scoring 65 or higher on all Regents except the ELA, and passing a rigorous exam of English proficiency such as the TOEFL, that has been approved as an alternative to the Regents examination, to receive a Regents diploma.**

Recommended Modification: NYSABE strongly supports the creation of multiple pathways to graduation, post-secondary education, and career. NYSABE is aware that unless carefully crafted, there is a danger that the creation of multiple pathways to graduation could lower standards and/or legitimize a double-standard, and track student into less rigorous courses—all of which have had a disproportionate and negative impact on immigrant, and ELLs/bilingual learners. But if properly constructed and cognizant of the full range of students' competencies, such pathways can offer a meaningful road to the American Dream.

While graduation programs should include multiple pathways, those listed in #35 are too narrow. TOEFL is too costly to be a realistic option. NYSED should review multiple pathway options in existence in other states and provide opportunities for ELLs/bilingual learners to demonstrate readiness for graduation on appropriate measures, including performance assessments, course pass, teacher recommendation, etc.

Certification and In-Service Professional Development

36. Create certification areas for bilingual teaching assistants and tenure areas for bilingual teaching assistants and bilingual teachers.

Recommended Modification: Certification pathways for languages groups with low levels/high shortages of bilingual teachers should also be created (i.e. Bengali).

37. Require all prospective teachers to complete coursework on ELL instructional needs, cultural competency, and language acquisition processes in order to receive initial certification.

Recommended Modification: Require all teacher candidates to complete coursework on ELL/bilingual learners instructional needs, cultural competency, and language acquisition processes to be eligible for initial certification. Require the same for all teachers applying for professional certification if the coursework was not included in their initial certification.

Require all leadership (school building leader and school district leader) candidates to complete coursework in the administration, development and supervision of programs for ELLs/bilingual learners, including related laws and regulations, to be eligible for initial certification. Require the same for leaders seeking professional certification if the coursework was not included in

District Planning and Reporting Requirements

41. Require districts to provide additional information in reports and plans regarding programs for subpopulations of ELLs (i.e., Long-Term ELLs, new immigrant students, ELLs with disabilities and Students with Interrupted Formal Education Skills), including program information by subpopulations and the home languages spoken in the district.

Recommended Modification: In addition to program information, provide disaggregated data on ELL/bilingual learner subgroups outcomes.

The New York State Association for Bilingual Education

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***“Educating Our Next Generation of
Biliterate Citizens”***



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- *Data driven instruction;*
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Please duplicate and disseminate this application among your colleagues and others.

Please make check payable to NYSABE and mail it with this completed form to:
NYSABE
 NYU Metropolitan Center for Urban Education
 726 Broadway, 5th Floor
 New York, NY 10003

THE ORGANIZATION

NYSABE is a multilingual, multicultural professional association that promotes the academic achievement of more than 300,000 English language learners (ELLs)/bilingual students, and supports the development of biliteracy skills among all students in New York State. Founded in 1976, NYSABE unites educators, parents, community and business leaders, elected officials, researchers, and members of professional organizations, educational institutions, and the news media sharing a common goal—to ensure excellence and equity for students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

NYSABE encourages the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of quality programs in bilingual education.

NYSABE promotes bilingual education as a process by which students achieve academic success through instruction in English and a language other than English.

NYSABE supports the belief that language pluralism and literacy in more than one language benefit the nation and all its citizens.

NYSABE collaborates with the NYS Education Department, school districts, and educational institutions by participating in their initiatives and ensuring excellence and equity in the education of ELLs/bilingual learners

NYSABE is affiliated with the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) and the New York State Council of Educational Associations (NYSCEA).

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Join the NYSABE team! Through your membership dues and involvement, you will have the opportunity to make integral contributions towards positive educational change for ELLs/bilingual learners. Membership benefits include:

NYSABE Journal of Multilingual Education Research (JMERE): The yearly issue of this journal is a must for every library and member of the association. It publishes current research on best practices in instructional methodologies, optimum program models, and key elements in the implementation of successful bilingual education programs

The NYSABE Newsletter, *The Bilingual Times*: The quarterly issues of *The Bilingual Times* offer updates on the regional and statewide activities of the association and its members. *The Bilingual Times* also provides information on current legislative and policy developments as well as articles on best educational approaches for ELLs/bilingual learners.

Professional Development: NYSABE offers local, regional, and statewide professional development activities that focus on optimum, research-based practices in bilingual education. These activities create a professional forum suitable to network with other professionals in your field of interest, to share experiences, and explore new ideas.

Advocacy and Leadership: NYSABE offers opportunities to develop leadership skills while participating in hands-on training, special committees, language group events, and advocacy activities on behalf of students, their parents, and educators.

NYSABE wishes to thank all of our contributors and supporters for lending their expertise to this publication.

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