

# Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

New York State Education Department  
89 Washington Avenue – EB505, Albany, NY 12234  
55 Hanson Place, Rm 594, Brooklyn, NY 11217  
(518) 474-8775, (718) 722-2445, [OBEWL website](#)



## March 2021 Newsletter

### In this issue:

- Letter from the Associate Commissioner .....1
- Science Initiative .....2
- Long Island RBERN .....3
- 2021 World Language Professional Learning Series .....4
- NYSSB Annual Report 2019-20 .....5
- Pursuing the Seal at Massapequa ....6
- News from other NYSED Offices .....7

### Greetings from Associate Commissioner Elisa Alvarez

Dear Colleagues,

March is the month in New York State where anything is possible weather-wise, hence the phrase “in like a lion, out like a lamb.” March 2021 marks a full year that our state, our nation, and our world has lived under the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is the official beginning of spring, March is also the month when we “spring forward” and lose an hour of sleep due to Daylight Savings. But if we consider it carefully, there are a lot of reasons to celebrate this month.



March is National Women’s History Month and 2021 has seen some momentous achievements, including the swearing in of Kamala Harris as Vice President of the United States. Vice President Harris is the first woman, the first Black American, and the first South Asian American to hold this office in the history of our country. This year, in our very own state, Dr. Betty Rosa was appointed as the Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York. She is the first Latina

woman to serve in this position. We will continue to celebrate these strong leaders throughout the year, but especially on International Women’s Day (IWD), to be celebrated on March 8th. According to the [IWD website](#), this is a “global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women”, but also serves as a “call to action for accelerating women’s equality.”

March also happens to be National Foreign Language Month. It might just be fate that staff from the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages will give a presentation during National Foreign Language Month to the NYS Board of Regents to request final approval of the proposed revisions to the NYS Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English. Dr. Joanne O’Toole, the Principal Investigator leading the World Languages Standards and Professional Learning Initiative with OBEWL, describes the proposed standards as such: “They are integrated in ways that promote literacy development and interculturality; they prioritize authentic resources, materials and texts now readily available from around the world in real time. They align to the national *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*; the New York State Next Generation ELA Standards; AP, IB, and edTPA expectations; all while promoting students’ use of 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Skills in interdisciplinary contexts.” On behalf of this office and all of the stakeholders that have helped us to bring these standard revisions to this point, I want to express my gratitude and excitement that world languages will once again be put at the forefront for all learners.

So let’s celebrate where we are right now in the month of March! Celebrate ourselves, our students, and what we have been able to accomplish given the extraordinary challenges of this past year. Michelle Obama, Former First Lady of the United States said, “You should never view your challenges as a disadvantage. Instead, it’s important for you to understand that your experience facing and overcoming adversity is actually one of your biggest advantages.” Let us all realize that through grit, perseverance, and team effort we are making it through one of the most difficult times in our history and we have much to celebrate.

In unity,

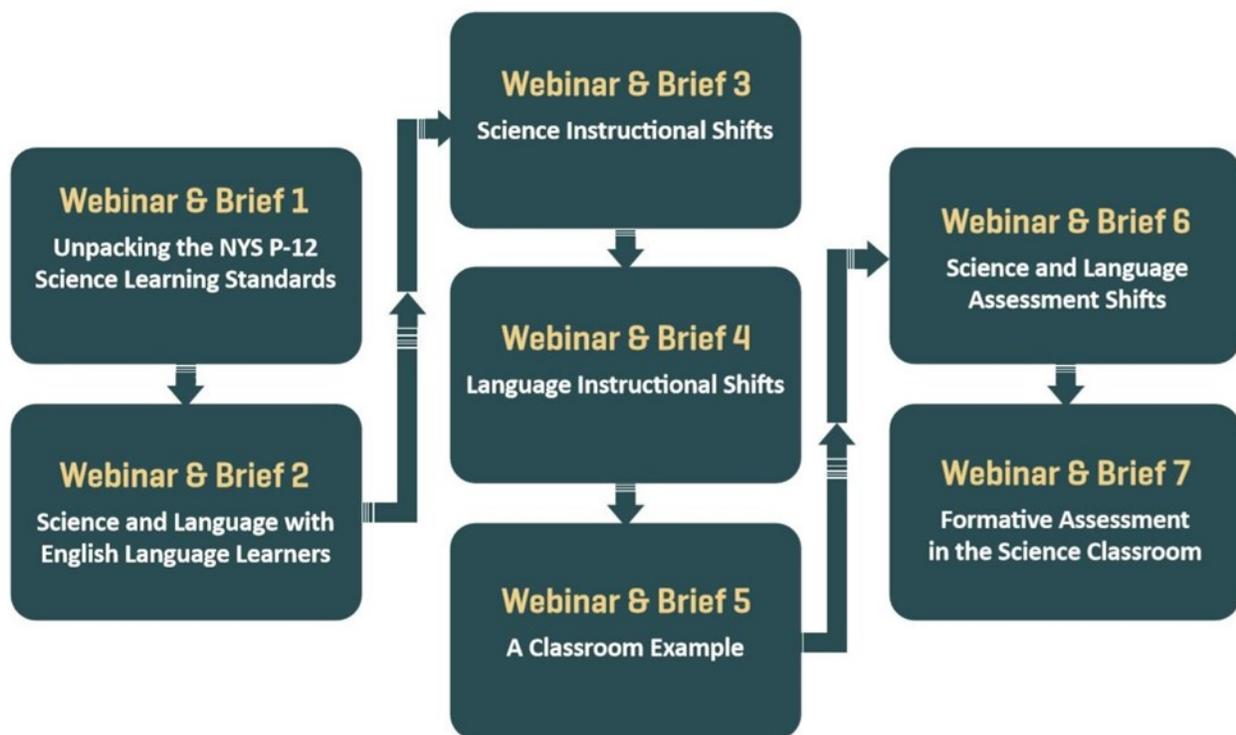
*Elisa Alvarez*

## Science Initiative

In collaboration with Drs. Okhee Lee, Lorena Llosa, Alison Haas, and Scott Grapin of New York University, NYSED will soon be releasing a series of webinars and briefs entitled “Integrating Science and Language for All Students with a Focus on English Language Learners.” This series unpacks the New York State P-12 Science Learning Standards and addresses instructional shifts aligned to the standards with a focus on English Language Learners (ELLs). The series features examples from the Science and Integrated Language (SAIL) project by the research team at New York University.

These webinars and briefs illustrate how to integrate science and language instruction for all students, with a focus on ELLs from the perspective of academic disciplines. Specifically, the series highlights ways that science as a discipline provides opportunities for ELLs to participate meaningfully in their classroom communities. As new science standards are currently being implemented in New York, these resources will be timely for science, English as a New Language, and bilingual educators across the state.

### Map of webinar and brief series on integrating science and language with ELLs

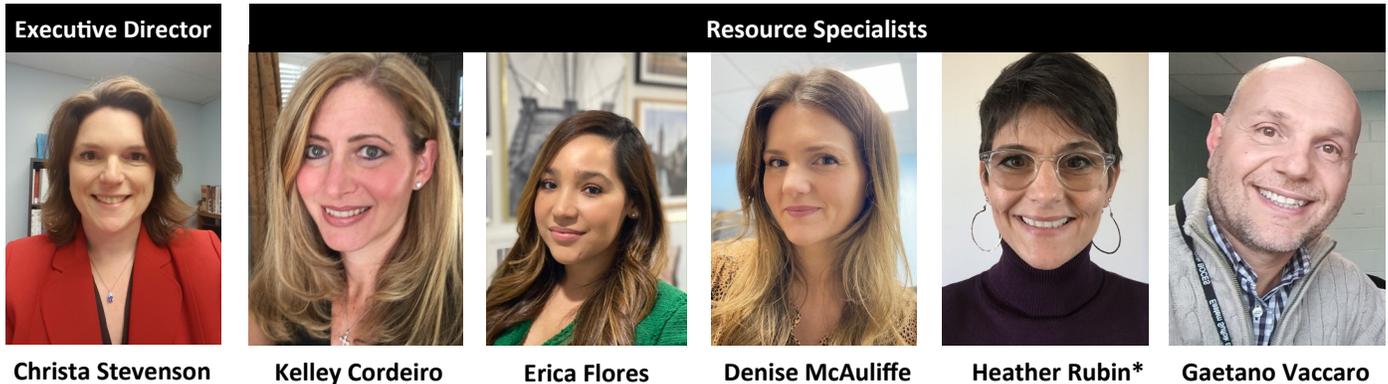


The series consists of seven webinars with accompanying topic briefs. The first two webinars and briefs serve as an overview and unpack the New York State P-12 Science Learning Standards. The next three webinars and briefs focus on science and language instruction, including science instructional shifts, language instructional shifts for ELLs, and illustrations of these shifts using classroom examples. The last two webinars and briefs focus on assessment for ELLs, including science and language assessment shifts and formative assessment with ELLs in the science classroom. Together, these webinars and briefs illustrate contemporary approaches to science and language instruction and classroom assessment for ELLs.

If you have any questions on the Science initiative, please contact the New York State Education Department Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages at [obewl@nysed.gov](mailto:obewl@nysed.gov)

## Long Island Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN)

The Long Island RBERN, housed at Eastern Suffolk BOCES, serves the 125 school districts and five charter schools of Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Home to both the largest and smallest suburban school districts, Long Island is a demographically and linguistically diverse region reporting over 44,000 English Language Learners (ELLs) who speak nearly 100 different languages. As an important component of OBEWL's long-term strategy to raise standards for ELLs, the Long Island RBERN staff provides technical assistance and professional development, as well as individualized on-site program consultation services to all Long Island schools and districts.



### **Program Highlight: *The Long Island RBERN Parent Academy***

Beginning in May 2020, the Long Island RBERN reimagined its approach to serving parents of ELLs. Previous in-person parent outreach conferences were successful but had not yielded the impact and outcomes intended. Therefore, in 2020, the Long Island RBERN took their parent workshops online, offering a variety of interactive webinar topics, such as helping children during remote instruction and attending to social-emotional health in the top 5 languages spoken by ELLs on Long Island—Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Urdu, and Turkish. This effort was an unequivocal success. In May and June 2020 alone, the Long Island RBERN Parent Academy webinars reached 377 parents. The Long Island RBERN continues building on this strategy for success in 2020-2021, bringing a variety of topics to parents such as nutrition, physical fitness, information about college financial aid for parents of high school-aged ELLs, and mental health of children and teens. To learn more about the Long Island ELL Parent Academy and its offerings, visit our [website](#) dedicated to this.

The Long Island RBERN has a strong online presence in order to support OBEWL initiatives and improve ELLs' access to equitable education. To learn more about the Long Island RBERN and its many resources, visit the links below. Be sure to check out their YouTube channel to see recordings of prior webinars that highlight innovative practices designed to enhance the education of ELLs.

- [Long Island RBERN Website](#)
- [Long Island RBERN Parent Academy](#)
- [Long Island RBERN Twitter Feed](#)
- [Long Island RBERN YouTube Channel](#)

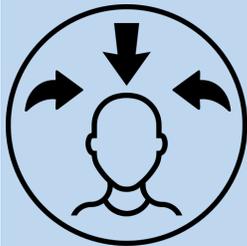


\*Lead Resource Specialist

## 2021 World Languages Professional Learning Series

OBEWL presents a three-part workshop series to support world language educators' transition to the proposed revisions to the LOTE standards entitled, "From Skills to Modes."

### Standard 1: Interpretive Communication (recording available starting March 17, 2021)

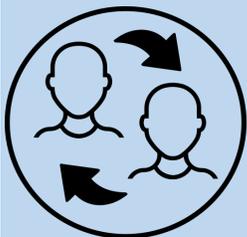


Workshop description: Get to know Standard 1, Interpretive Communication, an input-focused standard designed to scaffold learners' target language comprehension. In this session, you will take a deep dive into Standard 1 and its elements, as well as the resources developed to support you in its implementation. You will see examples of the Interpretive mode applied to various text types at Checkpoints A, B, and C, and you will come away with a set of strategies for scaffolding your learners' Interpretive Communication.

Presenter: Dr. Joanne O'Toole is a Professor of Modern Language Education in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at SUNY Oswego. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the NYSED World Languages Content Advisory Panel and the Principal Investigator of the NYS World Language Standards Initiative. Joanne has served in several world language leadership positions including President of the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSAFLT) and Director of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL), and is a regular presenter at national, regional, state, and local conferences. Joanne is a certified teacher of Spanish and taught Spanish for 16 years prior to entering post-secondary education.



### Standard 2: Interpersonal Communication—Wednesday, March 24th, 4:00 - 5:00 PM ([Registration link](#))

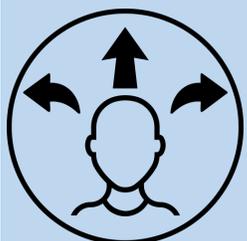


Workshop description: After a brief analysis of the contexts and functions embedded in New York State World Language Standard 2: Interpersonal Communication, participants will explore a variety of strategies for learners at Checkpoint A, B and C level proficiency. You will discover classroom-tested ways to build conversational skills, create engaging communicative situations, empower learners to ask questions, and design tasks requiring the negotiation of meaning. Common classroom challenges teachers face in facilitating interpersonal communication tasks will also be examined.

Bill Heller has taught in public elementary, secondary, community college and undergraduate classrooms for 40 years, including 24 years teaching Spanish at Perry High School. He has been a methods and Spanish instructor at SUNY Geneseo since 2001. He is a frequent presenter of workshops, webinars, and keynotes. Bill served as Conference Chair for the 2017 NECTFL Conference and is currently a member of the Executive Board and Content Advisory Panel for World Languages at the New York State Education Department (NYSED).



### Standard 3: Presentational Communication—Wednesday, April 7th, 4:00 - 5:00 PM ([Registration link](#))



Workshop description: Building on the previous two presentations on Standard 1 (Interpretive Communication) and Standard 2 (Interpersonal Communication), we will dive into the third New York State World Language Standard: Presentational Communication. Participants will explore ways in which to create real-world opportunities for students to share their proficiency in writing and speaking in the target language. We will also consider the importance of authentic audiences for student work and have the opportunity to brainstorm and share specific tasks for a variety of proficiency levels.

Presenter: Dr. Lori Langer de Ramirez began her language teaching career as a teacher of Spanish, French and ESL. She holds a Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics and a Doctorate in Curriculum and Teaching from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is currently the Director of World and Classical Languages & Global Language Initiatives at the Dalton School in New York City. Lori is the author of books, texts and articles about language teaching and learning and multicultural education. She presents workshops at local, regional and national conferences and works with teachers in schools throughout the U.S. and around the world. Her [website](#) offers free materials for teaching Chinese, English, French, and Spanish.



Recordings of these workshops will be uploaded to the OBEWL website for on-demand viewing by those unable to attend virtually. Those who attend the online workshops will be provided with a certificate of attendance for one hour per workshop; those who wish to receive CTLE credit must provide all of the requested information on the registration form. Those unable to attend the original workshop dates may earn CTLE credit by viewing the recording on the OBEWL website and answering at least seven out of ten questions correctly on a multiple-choice post-assessment. No registration is necessary to view the recording of the workshop.

Icons created by G. A. Suárez, [Cobb County Public Schools World Languages Department](#) and authorized for use under [CC 4.0](#).

## The New York State Seal of Biliteracy

The 2019-20 New York State Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB) Annual Report is being published soon and will be available on the [NYSSB website](#). This report contains:

- an executive summary (including a two-page infographic summary);
- information on the Seal from a national perspective;
- statistics and detailed analysis on the students that earned the Seal, the schools that they attended, the languages in which they earned the Seal, and the means by which they earned the points necessary to satisfy the Seal requirements;
- goals for 2020-21 and a list of strategies to achieve those goals; and
- a comprehensive list of all schools that have offered the Seal since the beginning of the program in 2015-16.

## The New York State Seal of Biliteracy



### 2019-20 Report

Office of Bilingual Education  
and World Languages

New York State Education Department

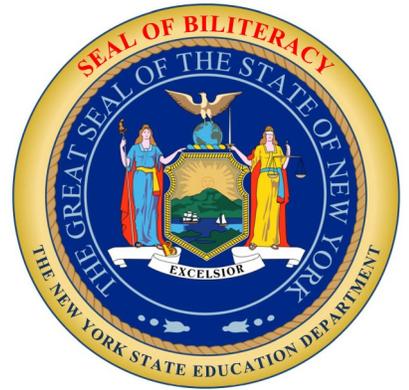


New York State  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity



## Pursuing the NYS Seal of Biliteracy at Massapequa

The Massapequa School District has a rich and diverse program of World Languages to offer all students, including an articulated elementary world language program established in 2016 that teaches Spanish in grades 3-5. At the secondary level, Massapequa offers French, German, Mandarin and Spanish (6-12th), and American Sign Language (9-12th). The Massapequa School District's administration, parents, and community have fully supported the importance of learning a second language. In 2017, the district was recognized by NYSAFLT with the James E. Allen Award for Distinguished Foreign Language Program. This statewide award is a true testament to the world language teachers who inspire their students, emphasize the importance of understanding all cultures, and focus on proficiency-based instruction.

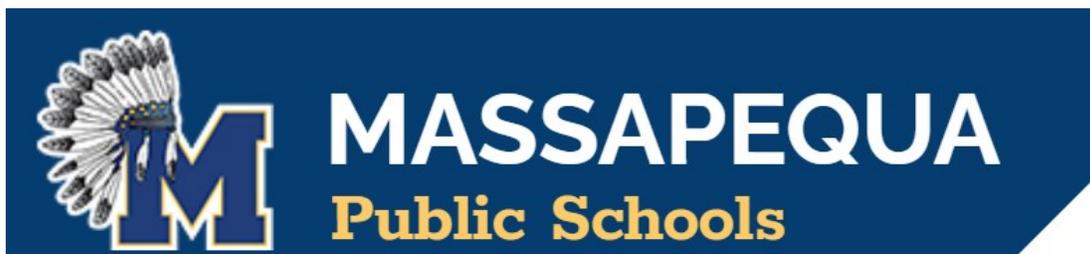


Massapequa is in their second year of offering the New York State Seal of Biliteracy. Of the 38 candidates pursuing the Seal this year at Massapequa, three will earn the Seal in their home language (Greek, Polish, and Turkish) and four students will earn it in three languages. One of the students pursuing the Seal this year is Grace Schafer, who studies American Sign Language (ASL). Grace is pursuing the Seal of Biliteracy because of her overall love for the language, but also because the Seal process is helping her to gain a better understanding of ASL and the Deaf community. She explains: "I love learning other languages because it allows me to connect with people I would not be able to if I never learned a foreign language." In her senior year, she is taking five Advanced Placement courses and two college-level classes, and her GPA ranks her in the top 3% of the graduating class. Grace is a member of the ASL Club at Massapequa, in which she has held an officer position over the last three years, including serving as co-President in 2020-21. She is a member of the National Honor Society, the National American Sign Language Honor Society, and the National Art Honor Society. Next year, Grace will continue her studies by majoring in ASL Interpreting in college and eventually pursuing a career in the language.



Grace also has a condition called Albinism which causes her to have a lack of pigment in her hair, skin, and eyes. The condition also results in her being legally blind. Patricia McCarthy, an ASL Teacher at Massapequa, explains that "ASL is a visual language in which the brain processes linguistic information through the eyes, including the shape, placement, and movement of the hands, as well as facial expressions and body movements." Grace has never let this challenge prevent her from learning ASL and achieving her goals. She uses a CCTV device to magnify the signing done by her teachers and peers. Melanie Smith, another ASL Teacher at Massapequa, characterizes Grace as "an outstanding, all-around student since she began taking ASL level 1 in her freshman year. Her skills, which include linguistics, facial expressions as well as understanding Deaf Culture, are beyond exceptional." In her free time, Grace serves as a peer mentor in the National Organization of Albinism and Hypopigmentation (NOAH), whose mission it is to educate people with albinism and their families.

Massapequa's Seal of Biliteracy program is an example of how districts can create rigorous and inclusive programs that meet the needs of students and help them to achieve their highest potential. For more information on the NYS Seal of Biliteracy program, please visit the NYSSB website or send an email to [obewl@nysed.gov](mailto:obewl@nysed.gov).



[Link to Massapequa Public Schools' website](#)

## News from Other NYSED Offices

### NYSED's Parent Dashboard

The New York State Education Department's Parent Dashboard provides a gateway to school-level data for parents and the public. Feedback from parents and stakeholders will guide enhancements to the Parent Dashboard. View the dashboard and provide feedback [here](#).

### NYSSSA Applications Available

Applications are being accepted for the 2021 NYS Summer School of the Arts (NYSSSA). NYSSSA programming will be entirely virtual for the 2021 season. Because of this, tuition will be free. Audition information and application materials are available [here](#).



### Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE) Program

NYSED is implementing the Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE) program intended to provide professional learning support to all educators in New York State, including teachers of ELLs. More information about this work is posted [online](#).

A key component of this program is hearing directly from educators regarding the tools and skills they need to best support students in remote/hybrid learning environments through an educator [reflection](#) due by March 15<sup>th</sup>. Click [here](#) for the link to complete the reflection. Please feel free to share this link with educators you work with to hear how we can best support your work with English language learners.

A separate reflection for school administrators will be distributed in early March. We hope that you continue to keep up to date as these tools and resources are rolled out to the field by visiting the [TRLE website](#).

### News from the Office of Higher Education

Although the teacher certification exam fees were not waived, a one-year [emergency certificate](#) was created to give candidates an opportunity to work in New York State public schools for one year while taking and passing the required exam(s) for the certificate sought. With this one-year emergency certificate, candidates would not need to take certification exams immediately and could take them at a later date. Eligible candidates can also apply for a one-time, one-year renewal of the emergency certificate.

In addition, an [edTPA safety net](#) was established for certain groups of candidates where they could pass an Assessment of Teaching Skills-Written (ATS-W) in lieu of passing the edTPA. The ATS-W costs less than the edTPA.

Every fall, a certain number edTPA vouchers, Educating All Students (EAS) test vouchers, and content specialty test (CST) vouchers that cover the costs of the exams are distributed to educator preparation programs (EPPs). EPPs give the vouchers to their candidates according to financial need. The edTPA vouchers distributed in September 2020 can be used to pay for the edTPA or the ATS-W (safety net test).

## Need local support? Contact your local RBERN!

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

- [New York State Language RBERN \(statewide\)](#)
- [Capital District Region RBERN at Questar III BOCES](#)

- [Mid-State RBERN at OCM BOCES](#)
- [Mid-West RBERN at Monroe 2 - Orleans BOCES](#)
- [New York City RBERN at Fordham University](#)
- [West Region RBERN at Erie 1 BOCES](#)

### [Resource Collection for ELLs](#)

### [Resource Collection for World Language Students](#)

### [NYSED Parent Newsletter](#)

### [Calendar of Professional Learning Events for ELL Educators](#)

## Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

New York State Education Department

Albany office: 89 Washington Avenue – EB505, Albany, NY 12234, (518) 474-8775

Brooklyn office: 55 Hanson Place, Rm 594, Brooklyn, NY 11217, (718) 722-2445

[OBEWL Home Page](#)

[Bilingual Education website](#)

[World Languages website](#)

[NYS Seal of Biliteracy website](#)



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

