

Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

New York State Education Department

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March 2023 Newsletter



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Greetings from Associate Commissioner Elisa Alvarez



Dear Colleagues,

I recently had the pleasure of hearing our Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona, address about 4,000 educators at this year’s National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) conference in Portland, Oregon. Dr. Cardona restated his commitment to our children by discussing the key components to his new campaign, “Raise the Bar.” The plan’s components include providing students with academics that promote rigor and critical thinking, promoting mental health, addressing teacher shortages—especially for English Language Learners, and providing opportunities for multilingualism to become the norm. I encourage all of you to learn more about Secretary Cardona’s vision for our educational architecture.

This year’s NABE presenters included a wide array of amazing trailblazers in education. Evelyn DeJesus was appointed president of the organization, and her life-long advocacy was evident throughout this entire conference. DeJesus and her amazing board ensured that educators were able to engage in workshops and seminars that validated their work, inspired their creativity, and informed practices to increase their opportunity to provide for their students, such as how to successfully apply for federal funding. Attendees arrived from New Mexico, Spain, Boston, New York, and Chicago. Presenters included Superintendents, Principals, and our very own RBERN Specialists.

Claribel Gonzalez, a resource specialist from our RBERN West at Erie 1 BOCES, delivered a session on ‘Developing Computational Thinking and Embracing Multiliteracies in a Dual Language Classroom.’ Her presentation addressed ability of coding practices and the use of technology to expand students’ use of both their home language and their second language of English to promote creative writing. Executive Director of RBERN West, Michael Duffy, and I had the privilege of sitting in Ms. Gonzalez’s presentation. It was enlightening to observe the connection of the participants coupled with the passion that Ms. Gonzalez radiated. It reaffirmed that providing these professional learning opportunities are essential to continue our work across all states.

Thank you Evelyn DeJesus, Nilda Aguirre, and the NABE Board for continuing to unite us all.

In unity,

Elisa Alvarez

April is National Bilingual/Multilingual Learner Advocacy Month

In 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives recognized April as National Bilingual/Multilingual Learner Advocacy Month. English Language Learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing student population in American schools. Currently, they make up roughly 10% of all school students; that number is expected to hit 25% by as early as 2025.

It's the time to affirm, celebrate, and advocate to promote educational and social equity for our ELLs.

They are our assets. ELLs:

- Bring talents and immense potential to school
- Live through complex life experiences
- Understand multiple perspectives
- Are potentially good problem solvers

They need our support:

- Treat them as the immensely capable human beings they are
- Create inclusive and respectful environments for them and their communities
- Offer enticing and generative learning opportunities and resources
- Continue to develop their multilingualism

It's the time to affirm, celebrate, and advocate to promote quality education for our multilingual learners (MLs).

Multilingualism offers many advantages:

- Cognitive flexibility
- Creativity and problem-solving
- Metalinguistic dexterity
- Appreciation of diversity
- Compassionate understanding

We want these talents cultivated and developed, not just for ELLs, but for all students, contributing to a multilingual and intercultural future for American society.



Cited from [National Research & Development Center to Improve Education for ELLs](#)

The following resources and activities will help you and your district to better understand and support ELLs and MLs.

- Resources: [NYS ELL and ML Educator Tools and Best Practices](#)
- Resources: [NYS ML and ELL Program Quality Review and Reflective Protocol Toolkit](#)
- Resources: [National Bilingual Multilingual Learner Advocacy Month Social Media Toolkit](#)
- Activity: [My Name, My Identity](#)
- Activity: [Shadow a Student Challenge](#)

National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) 2023 Conference

Associate Commissioner Elisa Alvarez and staff from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks represented our state at the NABE 52nd Annual International Bilingual and Bicultural Education Conference. The conference theme was *United in Our Diversity: The Power of Languages and Cultures*.



Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona, greeted the conference stating, “¡Mi nombre es Miguel Cardona y soy TÚ Secretario de Educación!” Dr. Cardona discussed his *Raise the Bar: Lead the World* initiative and its plan to provide every student a pathway to multiculturalism. Actions to support this goal include funding for dual language programs, international schools, and other models with a proven track record of success; reorganizing Title III into the Office of English Language Acquisition; and supporting Seals of Biliteracy. He charged attendees to “foster a new multilingual generation of Americans — strengthened in their identities, supported in their education, prepared to lead in our country and around the world.”



Associate Commissioner Elisa Alvarez meets with Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers, and Evelyn DeJesus, Executive Vice President of the American Federation of Teachers. As an early childhood teacher and reading specialist, DeJesus taught for two decades in New York City Public Schools and made literacy and support for multilingual learners her signature curricular issues. Ms. DeJesus serves as President of NABE.



Executive Director, of RBERN West at Erie 1 BOCES, Michael Duffy, and his family greet Associate Commissioner Alvarez at the 2023 NABE Conference. Two staff members from RBERN West—Elizabeth Kuttesch and Claribel Gonzalez—presented at this year’s conference.

Celebrating World Languages at Preston High School

Spanish Club's Noche Latina

Twenty members of the Spanish Club cooked pasteles, arroz con guandules, tres leches, arroz con pollo, perrito, y maduros. They shared this food at the Noche Latina party after school with students of different cultures. The members of the Spanish Club played Latin music and taught students and teachers dances such as merengue and bachata. The students, teachers, and members of the Spanish Club had a wonderful time!



Italian Club's "Women's Day Party" for the Senior Run Program of the Compassion Center

As part of Preston High School's celebration of International Women's Day, thirty members of the Italian Club hosted a "Women's Day Party" for members of the Senior Run Program of the Compassion Center. The Italian Club has been hosting parties for the members of the Senior Run program for the past twelve years. The members of the Italian Club baked Italian desserts, served food, wrote "Women's Day" cards in Italian, made spa gift packages of lipstick and chocolates, listened to Italian music, and played Tombola (Italian Bingo) for cash prizes with their friends from the Senior Run Program.

2023 J. David Edwards Power of Advocacy Award

The Joint National Committee for Languages-National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS) is an organization that analyzes federal and state legislation, provides policy recommendations to decision-makers on Capitol Hill, and tracks the budget and appropriations in Congress. Each February, JNCL-NCLIS organizes the Language Advocacy Day, an annual policy summit and lobby-day in Washington, D.C., to connect stakeholders from across the country with members of Congress with the aim of advancing the language agenda. For more information on this organization, please visit their [website](#).



At the annual summit, JNCL-NCLIS hosts an awards ceremony to recognize leadership, excellence, and dedication to language education through advocacy. Marie J. Campanaro is the recipient of the *2023 J. David Edwards Power of Advocacy Award*, in recognition of her extraordinary advocacy initiatives carried out at the local, state, and federal levels that contribute to the JNCL-NCLIS mission and serve to expand access to languages other than English. A National Board Certified Teacher, Marie was a Spanish teacher at Spencerport High School in western New York. She is a staunch advocate for world languages and has served as the [New York State Association for Language Teachers \(NYSAFLT\)](#) Public Advocacy Chair for many years. NYSAFLT maintains an [Advocacy Center](#)

with a variety of tools for educators, parents, and students to advocate for world language programs. Marie is also a member of the conference planning committee for the NYSAFLT Rochester Regional organization, who held their annual conference on March 11, 2023 at Nazareth College in Rochester.

World Language Unit Design Workshops Offered in Nine Regions in the Summer of 2023

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages will host unit design workshops in nine regions of the state to help educators prepare for the implementation of the NYS Learning Standards for World Languages this coming September. *Although the examples given will be for Checkpoint B, these workshops are open to teachers of any level (Checkpoints A through C).* The events will run from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., with a one-hour lunch on your own, on two consecutive days (please note the alternate times for the NYC session below). To participate, educators must register in advance using this [online registration form](#). Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until the venue capacity has been reached. These sessions are offered free of charge, are in-person only, and will not be recorded for future viewing. Below are the list of dates and locations by region.

- **Capital District:** July 13th - July 14th - Questar III BOCES
- **Hudson Valley:** July 18th - July 19th - Ulster BOCES
- **Long Island:** July 11th - July 12th - Western Suffolk BOCES
- **Mid-State:** July 27th - July 28th - OCM BOCES
- **Mid-West:** June 26th - June 27th - Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES
- **New York City:** July 20th (9am-2pm) - July 21st (10am-3pm) - Fordham University, Bronx Campus
- **Northern NY:** August 8th - August 9th - Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES
- **Southern Tier:** July 25th - July 26th - BT BOCES, Johnson City Learning Center
- **Western NY:** July 6th - July 7th - Erie 1 BOCES

2023 Professional Learning Series for World Language Educators

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages offers a monthly series of webinars for world language educators on a variety of topics relative to the NYS Learning Standards for World Languages and high-leverage teaching practices. These webinars are held at 4:00-5:00 p.m. via Zoom on the dates listed below, and are recorded for educators to access on-demand following the original events. Educators can earn CTLE credit by attending the live webinar or by viewing the recording and scoring at least a 7 out of 10 on a multiple-choice post-assessment.

- [World Languages in the Elementary School and the Revised Standards](#)—4/18/23
- [Getting to Know Your Heritage Language Learners: Basic Sociolinguistic Concepts](#)—4/24/23
- [Getting Ready for Implementation of the World Language Standards: Administrators' Perspectives](#)—5/9/23
- [Getting Ready for Implementation of the World Language Standards for Teachers](#)—5/30/23
- [Discover Authentic Resource Gems in the World Language Wakelet](#) - 6/8/23

A reminder that there are 24 webinars on the NYS Learning Standards for World Languages available for educators to view on-demand. For more information on professional learning for world language educators, please visit our [website](#).

4+1 Pathway Assessments in Additional Languages Approved

NYSED continues to receive and review applications for 4+1 Pathway Assessments in World Languages. In February, assessments were added in French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese (Brazilian & European), and Russian. For more information on these 4+1 Pathway Assessments, please visit the [Multiple Pathways website](#). A full list of all Department-Approved Pathway Assessments in World Languages can be found [here](#).

Webinars on the World Language Standards for Administrators

This spring, OBEWL will offer a two-part webinar series on the NYS Learning Standards for World Languages to school and district administrators. These webinars will be offered free of charge and will provide CTLE credit for attendees. To earn credit, administrators must attend a part 1 session and a part 2 session. For more information, please visit our [World Language Professional Learning website](#).



Orientation Workshop for Administrators - Session I

Tuesday, April 18 11:00am-12:00pm OR Wednesday, April 19 1:00-2:00pm

This first session will provide an introduction to the revised NYS Learning Standards for World Languages (2021), beginning with a brief summary of the key shifts required to successfully implement the revised standards. We will then outline the implications of these shifts on planning, instruction, and assessment, with particular emphasis on creating standards-aligned learning objectives consistent with proficiency targets at each checkpoint. The session will conclude with actionable recommendations for how administrators can support teachers preparing to implement the revised learning standards and an orientation to the World Languages Administrator Reference Guide.

Orientation Workshop for Administrators - Session II

Tuesday, April 25 10:00-11:00am OR Wednesday, May 3 1:00-2:00pm

This second session will build on the foundational principles outlined in Session I to highlight ten observable lesson planning elements and fifteen observable lesson instruction elements that are specific to World Language instruction. Correlations of these elements to the widely used Danielson and Marzano rubrics are provided in the Administrator Reference Guide. This session will end with a brief tour of the many tools and resources already available on the OBEWL website to facilitate professional development for your teachers, along with lesson, unit, and curriculum planning aligned with the revised standards.

To download the flyer for these webinars, please click [here](#). For more information on these webinars, please visit our [website](#). To register for these webinars, please click [here](#).

Bilingual Education Toolkit

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) is pleased to announce the publication of the first three documents in the [NYSED Bilingual Education Toolkit](#):

- Topic Brief 1: Policy and Regulation
- Topic Brief 2: Principles and Philosophy
- Appendix A : Glossary of Terms

These documents have been developed in partnership with the Bilingual Education Advisory Panel, which is comprised of Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN) personnel and key district leaders from the English Language Learner (ELL) Leadership Council. These experts have shared their vision and knowledge to support district leaders and teachers who are considering, starting, running, and/or maintaining quality Bilingual Education programs.

New topic briefs will be added to our website in the coming months.

Partnership Matters: Affirming Student Heritage Languages & Identities

International Community High School, a small school in the South Bronx that specializes in educating recently arrived immigrant youth, proudly partners with The French Heritage Language Program (FHLP). The French Embassy has sponsored the FHLP in several New York City schools, providing various opportunities to support the social and academic development of the French language. The partnership between International Community High School and FHLP began when the school first opened in 2006 and has endured due to the dedicated staff who have consistently been responsive to the individual needs of students in a growing and evolving school.

Today, the joint effort spans participation across all grades in an after school program. A few highlights are:

- Global awareness as students learn more about each other's different home countries, multiple home languages, and unique experiences with developing French language skills
- Engagement in research, debates, competitions, trips, art performances, and summer programs
- Artistic activities, such as theater, music, and digital arts, which enrich everyone, especially students who learned limited French before arriving in the United States
- Peer support provided by 11th- and 12th-grade students
- Participation in the French Advanced Placement exam and the pursuit of the New York Seal of Biliteracy through extended projects
- Students who meet the requirements of the New York Seal of Biliteracy are able to highlight this achievement on their resumes and provide evidence of higher level academic performance for college and career opportunities.

An example of an extended French heritage project includes the iLearn America Storytelling Project. The project is open to all FHLP participants who, upon completion, can publish digitally rich memoirs affirming each student's identity. The stories can also be made accessible to potential colleges and universities as part of the application process.

Vibrant small schools are committed to constantly finding organizations to expand programming options for our students. Other highly recommended organizations conduct similar initiatives of sharing students' stories and actively promoting the use of the home language or multiple languages to a wider audience; these organizations include The Glass Files and StoryCorps. The Glass Files also works with MetaBronx who is sponsoring work-based learning opportunities for several schools with large immigrant populations.

International Community High School has other long-term partnerships with Bronx Arts Ensemble, The Center for Urban Pedagogy, Behind the Book, DREAM!, and L.O.V.E. Mentoring. These organizations provide educational consultants who quickly learn about addressing the needs of multilingual learners from our trained and dedicated educators.

Ultimately, responsive and affirming partnerships with public schools elevate engagement, performance, and future outcomes by integrating students' cultural and linguistic assets. This is an essential step towards creatively reimagining the student school experience.

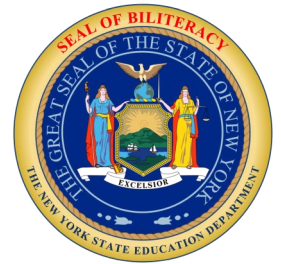


NYS Seal of Biliteracy recipients from International Community High School



Students from International Community High School won the French Heritage Theater Performance Competition on February 4th, 2023

New York State Seal of Biliteracy Annual Report



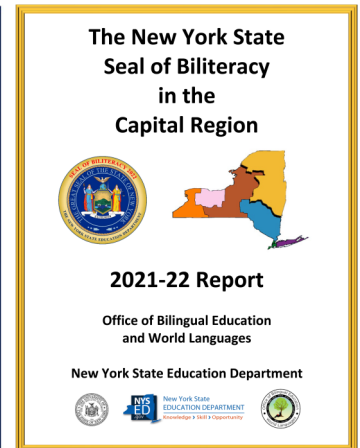
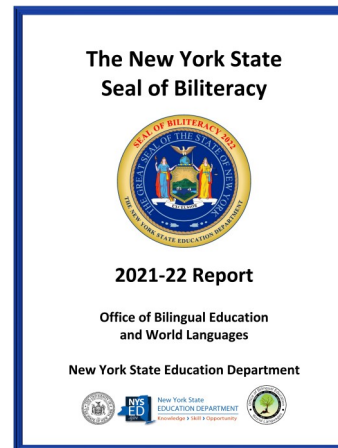
Each year since 2018-19, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has released the [Annual Report on the New York State Seal of Biliteracy](#) (NYSSB or “the Seal”). The reports summarize facts and figures, such as the number of students who have earned the Seal and the number of schools that have offered it. The data is disaggregated in several meaningful ways, including by year, by region, by gender, and by race and ethnicity, which can provide valuable information for districts and schools to recruit and support students in their pursuit of the Seal. The reports also provide information regarding future goals for growth areas, strategies to achieve these goals, and how the NYSSB compares to other such programs throughout the country. NYSED will continue to collaborate with various stakeholders, including the NYSSB Task Force, the NYSSB Forum, the Division of Multilingual Learners of the New York City Department of Education, the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBERNs), and individual districts and schools offering the NYSSB program to accomplish these goals.

The recently released Annual Report shows that the NYSSB grew significantly in the 2021-22 school year:

- 374 schools offered the Seal of Biliteracy, a 15% increase from the prior year;
- 7,114 students earned the NYSSB, a 29% increase over last year and nearly 4% of seniors attending high schools in New York; and
- More than 24,900 students have earned this distinction since it was first offered.

On the [NYSSB Annual Reports website](#), schools can also find individualized reports for each of the following regions:

- Capital region
- Hudson Valley region
- Long Island region
- Mid-State region
- Mid-West region
- New York City region
- Western region



For more information on the New York State Seal of Biliteracy, visit the [New York State Seal of Biliteracy website](#).

For questions on the NYSSB, including how to start a program at your school, please contact us at nyssb@nysed.gov.

NYSSB Webinars for Administrators

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages is collaborating with the NYS Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (NYSASCD) to offer two webinars on the NYS Seal of Biliteracy for administrators. Both workshops will be offered via Zoom from 4:30-5:30 p.m. on the dates listed below and are provided free of charge. The workshop on May 10th is designed for administrators with no experience with the NYS Seal of Biliteracy, while the workshop on May 24th is geared toward administrators with some experience with the Seal who are interested in expanding their program. To register for either of these webinars, please click on the registration links provided below:



[Starting a Seal of Biliteracy Program at Your School](#)—May 10th, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

[Expanding your Seal of Biliteracy Program](#)—May 24, 4:50-5:30 p.m.

For more information on the NYS Seal of Biliteracy, please visit our [website](#) or contact nyssb@nysed.gov.



World Language Content Advisory Panel

The World Language Content Advisory Panel (WL CAP) is a group of experts in world languages, educational leadership, and language acquisition who collaborate with the Department on a monthly basis to provide professional learning, create instructional and pedagogical resources, and support the development and implementation of the revised New York State Learning Standards for World Languages (2021). All students in New York State should have the opportunity to develop proficiency in English and at least one other world language and to develop cultural competency to interact with the peoples who speak the languages studied. The WL CAP helps Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages staff develop professional learning, resources, and guidance to aid the field in implementing the New York State Learning Standards for World Languages (2021) in accordance with the implementation timeline.

The New York State Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB) Task Force

The NYSSB Task Force is a group of experts in the Seal of Biliteracy who partner and collaborate with the Department on a monthly basis to provide support to schools offering the New York State Seal of Biliteracy, including the development of resources and professional learning for schools implementing this program.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Strategic Planning Group

The CTE Strategic Planning group represents a collaborative effort between the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) and the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBERNs) to support the needs of current and future multilingual learners in CTE programs across the state. Facilitated by Dr. Virginia Guglielmo-Brady (Capital District RBERN Director) and Hongying Shen (OBEWL Liaison), the group is comprised of specialists from each RBERN and meets monthly via Zoom.

The initial task undertaken by the group was to collaboratively develop a “SMARTIE goal” that demonstrates **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ction-Oriented, **R**elevant, **T**ime-Bound, **I**nclusive, and **E**quitable objectives in facilitating systems of support for multilingual students in CTE programs.

The group’s SMARTIE goal focuses on developing and leading equity-centered professional development opportunities for CTE facilitators *and* administrators to ensure that equity is pursued on a systemic level. The intended outcomes focus not only on ensuring the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) *currently* enrolled in CTE programs are met, but on increasing ELL representation in CTE programs via concrete, systemic, equitable pathways and support systems.

It is critical for the group to anchor these efforts in the specific needs and insights of CTE programs across the state. As such, the group collaboratively developed two data collection surveys: an administrator-focused survey and a CTE practitioner-focused survey to be sent out later this year.

The CTE Strategic Planning group recognizes that many structural and social barriers to equitable CTE access are interrelated and are further influenced by local context. To that end, regional subgroups will be formed to identify local “lab sites” for the purposes of developing and leading professional development opportunities. These subgroups will allow the planning group to reflect on the process and progress based on each region’s identified needs as efforts continue to move forward. The professional development opportunities to be developed and led by each subgroup, will address multiple barriers that ELLs face in receiving equitable to CTE programs. These opportunities will be implemented in a customized manner to serve ELLs’ needs in each region, district, or school context.

Designing Your Digital Age Learning Ecosystem with ELLs in Mind

by Heather Rubin, Long Island RBERN

Our educational landscape has shifted. You might even say there has been a seismic shift in our post-pandemic classrooms. We have moved beyond our work to transform the traditional, non-digital classroom structure. Now we need to design our classroom environments so that all of our digital learning resources work together as a functioning system - a digital learning ecology. How can we keep ELLs in mind while creating this new classroom environment?

Learning Ecologies

Designing complex learning ecologies to advance language development and content knowledge requires that we consider the way we want students to interact with one another, learn by doing, and express their ideas using digital learning resources (Rubin et al., 2022; WIDA, 2014). Start this design process by considering the Digital Age Teaching for English Learners Framework (or DATELS; see figure 1). It highlights several essential elements to include when crafting your classroom's learning ecosystem. Using a DATELS approach involves planning instruction and selecting tools that will work together to accomplish the following:

- Increase social interaction and engagement
- Provide authentic communication and contextually rich language practice
- Reduce the affective filter so that more learning can occur
- Support scaffolded instruction through digital tools and media
- Incorporate all six literacy skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and visually representing)
- Emphasize the 5 Cs for 21st century ELs (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and culture).

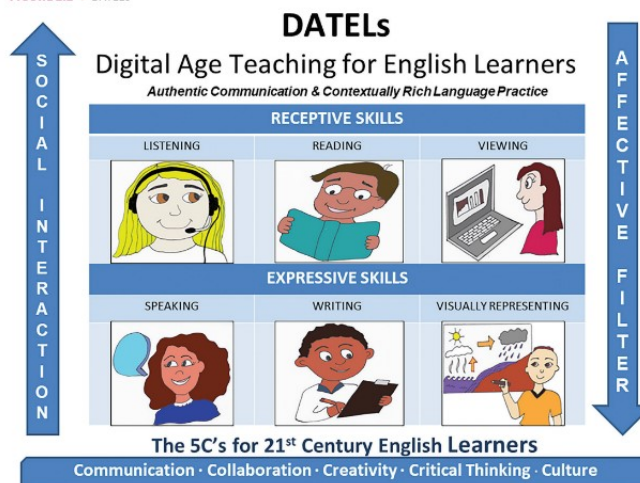
Multiple Opportunities for Learning

Carefully designed digital-age learning ecosystems provide students with opportunities to work independently and within groups in both asynchronous and synchronous settings. They provide options for how and when students complete tasks, as well as how they demonstrate mastery. This flexibility, along with curated resources, develops student agency and can increase motivation and peer-interaction. Before you begin to select the appropriate digital learning resources for your classroom, reflect on how these tools will promote student agency and virtual access to assignments. Select tools that empower students to create and publish multimedia, such as videos, podcasts, e-books, and blogs. Students will learn to organize and communicate their ideas more clearly and effectively, and publishing student work allows them to reach authentic audiences. For ELLs, the use of images, text, audio, and video assets not only facilitates the acquisition of content area knowledge but also accelerates the language learning process by providing a multisensory, multimedia experience.

Personalized Learning

A well-designed digital-age learning ecosystem can meet the needs of each individual student, even as students are collaborating with others. Include linguistic, social-emotional, cultural, and academic considerations in your decision-making process. Then, select digital learning resources that you and your students can choose from to accomplish a variety of tasks and learning goals.

FIGURE 1.1 • DATELS



Retrieved from the companion website for *Digital-Age Teaching for English Learners: A Guide to Equitable Learning for All Students* by Heather Rubin, Lisa Estrada, Andrea Honigsfeld. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, www.corwin.com. Copyright © 2022 by Corwin. All rights reserved. Reproduction authorized for educational use by educators, local school sites, and/or noncommercial or nonprofit entities that have purchased the book.

Consider tools that target different needs such as:

- Tools that encourage collaboration and communication between students
- Tools that allow teachers to manage lessons, create and share content, and connect with other colleagues and parents
- Tools that give students the opportunity to be creative and demonstrate mastery
- Tools that develop language skills through all six modalities (l, s, r, w, v, vr)
- Tools that allow teachers and students to collect, reflect on, and share information with authentic audiences.

Table 1 provides an example of categories and digital learning resources to consider. There are many resources that may accomplish the same goal. Choose the resources that work best for you and for the needs of your students.

Table 1: Designing Your Digital Age Learning Ecosystem

| Interactive Presentations | Parent Communication & Translation | Social Reading | Brainstorming | Multimedia | Study Aids |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Mentimeter | Class Dojo | Kaizena | Jamboard | ThingLink | Gimkit |
| Nearpod | Remind | Parlay | Genially | Explain Everything | Kahoot |
| Peardeck | Talking Points | Perusall | Padlet | Flip | Quizlet |
| SeeSaw | Parent Square | Voice Thread | Popplet | Screencastify | Quizziz |
| Google Slides Microsoft Powerpoint | GoogleTranslate Microsoft Translator | Book Creator | Wakelet | Edpuzzle | Khan Academy |

As you continue to build your learning ecosystem, look carefully at the digital learning resources you are currently using and think about how you might refine your selections. Here are a few questions to consider:

1. Which digital learning resources do you currently use? Why?
2. In what way do the tools you have selected provide instructional support and more equitable access to learning experiences for English Language Learners?
3. How do the tech tools you have chosen foster the 5 Cs for 21st century learners?
4. What digital literacy skills will your students develop while working within your digital age learning ecosystem?
5. How might the tools you select enrich and enhance parent and community engagement?

With careful planning and consideration of the various elements described, you will be able to design a learning ecosystem that ensures equitable access to learning for all of our students.

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Heather Rubin is an administrator for the NYSED L.I. RBERN at Eastern Suffolk BOCES where she designs professional learning experiences for K-12 educators.

Equity-Centered Revisions to the NY’s SEL Benchmarks

On Monday, November 14th, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) released revisions to its Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Benchmarks for voluntary implementation. These revisions better align the benchmarks with the agency’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CR-SE) Frameworks, as well as its Civic Readiness Initiative. To develop these revisions, NYSED partnered with the national Center for the Improvement of Social Emotional Learning and School Safety (CISELSS) and the Region 2 Comprehensive Center at WestEd.



When NYSED began this work, they first established a team of external partners and NYSED program leads working on aligned content. Members of the workgroup included teachers, young people, administrators, parents, a community school coordinator, BOCES’ School/Curriculum Development Network (S/CDN) SEL Framework group, community partners, and experts in SEL, including from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). From NYSED, representatives included staff working on Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Civic Readiness, Family & Community Engagement, and Special Education. Each of these initiatives are facets of something that is whole and strong and inherently connected.

The team met over a year to develop revised benchmarks that reflect deep listening with young people and adults. They began by building a shared understanding of the content and objectives, then reviewed the previous benchmarks and made suggestions. They developed draft revisions based on that feedback, then came back to review the draft and provide additional feedback. When the team was satisfied, the draft was shared with additional stakeholders from other child-serving State agencies, BOCES, professional organizations, educators, and youth.

Revisions to the benchmarks center identity, agency, and belonging, and are explicit about SEL’s purpose to empower young people and adults in their teaching and learning environments by offering them necessary skills to engage with others productively. This project offered an opportunity to make an explicit commitment to nurturing and affirming a strong sense of identity, including aspects rooted in culture, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ability, linguistic diversity and more, which in turn supports NYSED’s work around DEI and CR-SE. These revisions incorporate intentional language around developing agency and making clear that the purpose of SEL is to empower students and adults. Finally, they emphasize the importance of developing a culture of belonging so that all students and adults feel welcomed, appreciated, included, and supported.

SEL and equity for students *starts* with a commitment to adult practice and modelling. NYSED is promoting this for students because it can help them to be happier, healthier, and more fulfilled, and they want that for adults, too - in schools, in families, and in communities - for their own well-being, as well as to support their capacity to serve our young people. When adults are practicing strong SEL competencies, they can more effectively teach and nurture them in young people.

These benchmarks, for adults and students, offer a framework for what to work on and when, with self-compassion and grace. They are not a measure of value, worth, or adequacy, and they are not an evaluative tool for staff capabilities or student achievement.

The [revised Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks](#) are posted on [NYSED’s SEL web page](#).

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)

NYSED's Office of State Assessment (OSA) has published the [2023 NYSESLAT School Administrator's Manual](#).

NYSED continues to seek qualified professionals to serve as committee members for ongoing test development activities for the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) and the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). New York State-certified classroom teachers, with a special consideration for those who hold a certification specific to ELLs, are encouraged to apply to participate in the test development process. Information about the specific activities and application to participate are found on the [OSA website](#).

News from Other NYSED Offices

[April is the month of the Military Child or Purple Up! for military kids](#). States and school districts across the country will hold special activities and wear purple to honor the critical role military children play while their service member parents serve our country.

[Individual Arts Assessment Pathway \(IAAP\) Application is now available](#). The application to offer the IAAP is now available for all districts, schools, and BOCES in the [SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System](#) located within the [Application Business Portal](#). Schools that wish to offer this pathway beginning in the 2023-2024 school year must complete this initial application by August 1, 2023.

[OEL News and FAQs](#) include frequently asked questions and important news regarding early learning programs in New York State. New updates: [Winter Edition - 2022-2023](#).

PLAN Pilot Updates

Recordings of the PLAN Pilot Webinars are posted in the PLAN [Video Gallery](#). *Webinar 3: Leading PBLA* was held on Wednesday, March 01, 2023, and featured a panel of NYS school leaders who shared their experiences leading performance-based learning and assessment (PBLA) in their school buildings. *Webinar 4: PBLA Student Voices* is anticipated to be offered in spring 2023.

Check out the new [Fact Sheet](#) on performance-based learning and assessment! This resource was developed to provide information on what PBLA is, and how it fits into New York's statewide assessment strategy. Check out the fact sheet for information on the following questions:

1. What are some key attributes of performance-based approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment?
2. What is performance-based assessment?
3. How does performance-based assessment fit into an assessment strategy that includes multiple measures?
4. What are different ways in which performance-based learning opportunities and assessments can be designed and used?

What are some examples of types of performance-based assessment tasks? You can find the Fact Sheet along with many other PBLA resources on the NYSED [PLAN Pilot website](#).

Join the Conversation!

If your school or community would like to share a story to include in a future edition of this newsletter, please email photos and news items to OBEWL@nysed.gov.

