

Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

New York State Education Department

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April 2023 Newsletter



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Greetings from Associate Commissioner Elisa Alvarez



Dear Colleagues,

The month of April, recognized as the National Poetry Month, allows us to celebrate the beauty and creativity of artists throughout the world. The expressions and views of others captured from the words on a page in any language inspires understanding and inclusivity.

Understanding of another’s plight or joy cultivates inclusivity, as we are provided a glimpse into another person’s point of view. All are accepted and welcomed.

Our classrooms are filled with emerging poets. Not only our students, but our teachers as well. Various themes have emerged throughout my travels across the state to our district and school communities, and one that dominated the most was caring for the heart of our children. Teachers are doing all they can to build positive relationships and create a safe space for the emotional well-being of our scholars. Time provided in getting to know one another, reflection, and mindfulness activities embedded in the school culture have been key in creating a place of belonging. In our schools I have seen a wide variety of authentic literature—from authors such as Elizabeth Acevedo, Maya Angelou and Ria Thundercloud—which allow our students to either recognize themselves or learn about others.

Our schools are taking courageous steps to respond to the needs of our children. Some of these may be baby steps, but those schools are still taking steps nonetheless. As we redesign the architecture of our school communities to celebrate and welcome diversity, equity, and inclusion for our students and all in our communities, it is important to note that there is no one formula that all schools must follow. Yet, schools can succeed through a constant commitment to recognizing the truth of everyone’s struggles as well as their moments of triumph. Our best approach is to provide students with multiple opportunities to access meaningful learning experiences—whether it be through poetry, art, research, language learning, CTE, computer science, or any field we can support—for our students, as our stories, are all unique.

I celebrate and thank all educators who have made a path for each child and family to belong. I leave you with a poem:

If you talk to the animals
they will talk to you
and you will know each other.
If you do not talk to them
you will not know them
and what you do not know
you will fear.
What one fears, one destroys.

Chief Dan George

In unity,

Elisa Alvarez

Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute (PR/HYLI) 2023

In March, more than 250 students representing 136 different high schools from all over New York State came to Albany to partake in The 33rd Annual [Angelo Del Toro Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute \(PR/HYLI\)](#), which was the culmination of a yearlong leadership and civic development program. The PR/HYLI three-day event included team building exercises to build inter-regional relationships and a variety of leadership workshops that involved various forms of art and expression, including drama, dance, singing, murals, and hip-hop poetry. The culminating event was the mock assembly held in the Assembly Chamber at the New York State Capitol. This year's overarching theme was *Defending Our Democracy*.



Leading up to this event, students practiced and prepared for months to debate four separate Assembly Bills on the Chamber floor. These Assembly Bills, which are currently in legislative process, have the potential to directly impact the communities of our youths. These student leaders had the opportunity to tour a university campus, meet with and hear from influential leaders, famous authors, and elected officials. Pictures of PR/HYLI students engaged in these activities are shown on this page.



On the Monday of the event, PR/HYLI student leaders visit the State Capitol again to speak directly with their legislators and lobby about the importance of supporting their education and communities. Seven of these leaders met with the NYS Board of Directors to speak about their experience in the program. These students were Diana Castellano (Chatham HS), Ferneidy Dotel (Amsterdam HS), Javier Feliz (Tech Valley HS), Diana Meza (Ichabod Crane HS), Xavier Moore (Amsterdam HS), John Pezzulo (Guilderland HS), and Isabella Wiseman (Chatham HS).

PR/HYLI is an innovative collaboration with the NYS Assembly/Senate Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force in conjunction with the SOMOS Annual Conference, the New York State Education Department, NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL), the New York City Department of Education, and other agencies.



This year, a total of \$50,000 of scholarship funding was awarded by SOMOS, Inc. to deserving individuals, which will go toward postsecondary education expenses. In addition, OBEWL increased funding to expand the number of Hispanic students participating in the institute by 35%. To date, PR/HYLI has been attended by almost 7,000 students throughout New York State.



New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) Conference

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages extends congratulations to the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) on the success of its 45th Annual Conference at East Wind Long Island in Wading River, NY. The theme of this year's conference was "Celebrating Transformative Educators, Families, and Community Leaders in Bilingual Education." This event marked the first time in three years that the organization was able to hold an in-person conference, making it an exciting opportunity for attendees to finally meet and reconnect with peers from across the state.



The Bilingual Teacher of the Year award was presented to Soh Young Lee-Segredo of the Jackson Main International Baccaalaureate Primary Years Programme World School in Hempstead Union Free School District.



Dr. Jordan Gonzalez (Conference Chair and LI RBERN), Alicia Barinas (OBEWL), Cynthia Felix-Jeffers (NYC DOE), Lisa Pineda (NYC DOE), Priscilla Zárate (NYSABE President and Port Washington UFSD), Associate Commissioner Elisa Alvarez (OBEWL), Ron Woo (NYS Language RBERN), and Candace Black (OBEWL)



Janet Suarez-Lovett, Supervisor of World Languages, ENL, and Bilingual Education Programs for the Hicksville Union Free School District, accepts the Bilingual Education Administrator of the Year award.



Awards of Appreciation were presented to all NYSABE Committee Chairs, including RBERN Executive Directors Michael Duffy, Ron Woo, and Christa Stevenson and former RBERN West Executive Director, Denise Gonez-Santos.

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

NYSABE's annual conference included numerous presentations from regional student groups. Show below (from top to bottom): the Jackson Main Annex IB PYP School Choir, Central Islip High School Show Choir, recipients of the 2023 NYSABE Student Awards, and the Brentwood School District Choir.



April Is National Deaf History Month!

National Deaf History Month—which used to start on March 13th, the date that I. King Jordan became the first Deaf President of Gallaudet University—occurs now on April 1-30 through a recent decision by the National Association for the Deaf Board of Directors. This decision was made, according to the www.nad.org website, “to simplify and incorporate the celebration in one month and also to focus on overall celebration of American Deaf history from all parts of the Deaf Community...[and to ensure] that our historical lens include the experiences of BIPOC Deaf People.” Below are a few updates from our schools highlighting their American Sign Language programs.

Mrs. Maria Kaminsky, American Sign Language (ASL) teacher at **East Meadow High School**, started an event called “ASL Idol” over 10 years ago. It began as an opportunity for students to have fun while earning the community service hours required for induction into the National American Sign Language honor society, but it has since become a highly anticipated annual event throughout the region.



Participants in ASL Idol from East Meadow High School

ASL students from all over Long Island have the opportunity to compete by performing songs that they have translated into ASL for a chance to be crowned the winner. The event is well supported by teachers and the larger Deaf community. In the past, more than 400 people have participated and more than \$4,000 has been raised for an organization that benefits the Deaf community.

2022-23 is the first year that American Sign Language courses were offered at **Wallkill Senior High School** in the mid-Hudson Valley. Two ninth-grade classes, with a total of 47 students, have learned a tremendous amount this year and approach each class with enthusiasm, according to their ASL teacher, Mrs. Melissa Mourges. One of the innovative activities her classes engaged in this year were inter-building performances of various winter holiday songs in ASL. Mrs. Mourges’ ninth-graders learned “Let It Snow” in ASL, while her elementary colleague, Kindergarten teacher Ms. Ellison, taught her students “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.” The two groups of students performed the songs for each other via Zoom.



ASL students from Wallkill Senior High School

RBERN Resource Specialist Presents to National Association of Bilingual Education Conference

Claribel González, Resource Specialist at RBERN West, presented at the 52nd Annual National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) conference that took place in Portland, Oregon on February 22-25, 2023. This year's conference's theme was "United in our diversity: The power of Languages and Cultures".

González's presentation titled "Developing Computational Thinking and Embracing Multiliteracies in the Dual Language Classroom" emphasized the importance of creating spaces for students to explore and expand on these critical skills. She highlighted the fact that students who are bilingual have an advantage in developing computational thinking as they leverage their entire linguistic repertoires to make meaning. Connections were made to the NYS Computer Science Learning Standards.

González shared examples of activities and projects that were implemented in a dual language classroom to promote multiliteracies and computational thinking. For example, she shared examples of student projects and games via the *Scratchjr* platform that showcased their cultural backgrounds, experiences and interests. These projects not only promote multiliteracies and computational thinking, but also help students appreciate and celebrate their diverse backgrounds. González explained that these skills help students develop problem-solving skills, advance their communication abilities, and prepare them for future careers in a globalized world. This approach also functioned as motivation to encourage students to engage in writing tasks.

Overall, González's presentation at the NABE conference was well received by the attendees. Her emphasis on combining multiliteracies and computational thinking in the dual language classroom provides a unique approach to teaching students in a diverse and technologically advanced world. By implementing these skills in the classroom, educators can help students develop essential skills that will benefit them in their future academic and professional endeavors.



Presenter Claribel González with her husband and child, along with RBERN West Executive Director Michael Duffy (back) and Associate Commissioner of OBEWL Elisa Alvarez (right)

Improving Graduation Rates for English Language Learners in New York State: Initiatives, Tools, and Strategies

By Dr. Jordan González, Long Island Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN)

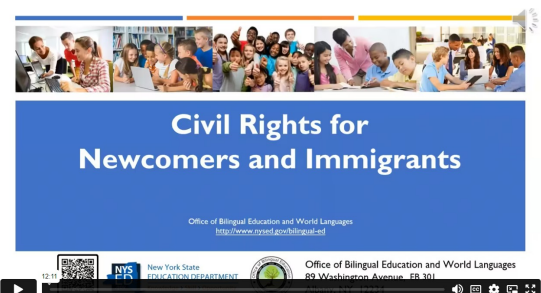
All students, including our English Language Learners (ELLs), have the right to earn a high school diploma and benefit from the opportunities and privileges it provides for future success. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that students, especially ELLs, receive the necessary support and resources to achieve this goal. While improving in recent years, the [2021-2022 four-year graduation rate](#) for ELLs in New York State was 65%, which is lower than the overall graduation rate of 87% for all students. The ELL dropout rate was also significantly higher (16%) than the rate for all students in New York State (5%). As the graduation rate for ELLs continues to lag behind that of their peers and ELL dropout rates outpace their peers, it is imperative that we take action to build systems of equity to ensure that ELLs have access to the resources and supports ELLs need to succeed academically.

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) has made it a priority to address this disparity. As part of this work, OBEWL and the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBERNs) throughout the state have formed the **ELL Graduation Rate Improvement Strategic Planning Group**. The strategic planning group includes OBEWL staff, RBERN Resource Specialists, and School District Leaders who collaborate to identify the challenges, successes, and promising practices that contribute to improving ELL graduation rates. The strategic planning group has taken a 3-prong approach which includes a quantitative subcommittee that reviews and analyzes statewide ELL achievement data, a research subcommittee that compiles and synthesizes current research from the field on ELL academic achievement, and a qualitative case-study subcommittee working to develop case studies on New York school districts with demonstrated success in ELL graduation rates. These subcommittees meet regularly and work collaboratively to review findings, implications, and triangulate the data across the three approaches. After compiling the findings of the three subcommittees, the strategic planning group will produce a series of guidance documents based on this work to support the field in improving ELL graduation rates.

These guidance documents will serve to supplement the [Multilingual Learner and English Language Learner \(ML and ELL\) Graduation Rate Improvement and Dropout Prevention Planning Tool](#) developed and published by OBEWL in 2017. The tool provides a step-by-step process that guides schools and districts through analyzing their ML and ELL student data, identify areas of concern, and develop an action plan to improve student outcomes. The data analysis component leads schools and districts through activities designed to look at ELL data from different, often overlooked, perspectives. In addition to disaggregating data by ELL specific subgroups (e.g., SIFE, Long-Term ELLs, Newcomers, ELLs with Disabilities), the activities provide for a targeted and critical examination of attendance, course-taking patterns, behavior, and other factors that may impact student success. Based on this analysis, the tool provides a series of evidence-based strategies, exercises, and interventions that schools and districts can use to improve ELL student outcomes. The [RBERNs](#) are available to provide schools and school districts guidance, technical support, and professional learning on implementing the *ML and ELL Graduation Rate Improvement and Dropout Prevention Planning Tool*. By using this tool, schools and school districts can demonstrate their commitment to equity as they develop targeted interventions and support systems that address the unique challenges of ML and ELL students, clearing the pathway to advanced achievement and graduation.

Civil Rights for Newcomers and Immigrants Video

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages has released a new video to provide district and school administrators with essential information on supporting immigrant students who are newly arrived to the United States. Topics addressed in the video include Resources, Laws and Funding, Students without Records, and Best Practices. In addition to viewing the video, administrators will also be able to download the slides to turnkey them within the district and receive access to numerous useful resources.



Dictée Interscholaire NYC Edition - 2023!

By Pascale Baptiste-Midy

On Saturday, April 1, 2023, the Société Honoraire de Français de Brooklyn Technical High School (BTHS) hosted the City-wide dictée, 2023 édition. A dictée, for those who don't know, is the French version of a spelling bee. The competition involves writing full sentences (as opposed to isolated words). It is an exercise with which anyone who grew up in the francophone system is accustomed. The event was a great success. In total, about 85 students from 8 schools of the city of New York participated in the first organized, city-wide dictée in the United States.

Where did this idea to organize the competition come from? Last year, the French Honor Society students led by Oralie Joseph-Gabriel and Kadijatou Barry organized a Spelling Bee competition in the American style. The competition was held at BTHS and only recruited participants from the school. This event was so successful that before the two girls left for college, they expressed their desire for this competition to become one of the major annual activities of the Society, and to make it a city-wide competition. Students were selected through a spelling bee to participate in the second phase, the Dictée. Two elements made it special: the strong commitment from Fabrice Jaumont, the Education Attaché of the French Embassy, and the sponsorship from the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).

On Saturday, April 1st, the BTHS library, where the event took place, was full of French students of all four levels (as well as students who are native speakers of French), from Beacon, Townsend Harris, Midwood, Eleanor Roosevelt, Bronx Science, Stuyvesant, and BTHS. There was a friendly and joyful ambiance at the event, as well as a palpable strangeness that came with participating in an authentic French contest for some participants.

Fabrice Jaumont authored and delivered the dictée, so that no school had any advance knowledge of what would be in the competition. Right after, while the students were having their French snacks, delivered from a local French pastry shop, the teachers from the different schools gathered to correct the dictée, guided by Valerie Mitchell, French 3 teacher at BTHS, in an impressively efficient manner. Thanks to Madame Mitchell, two champions—a gold and a silver medalist—were selected for each level. All students received a certificate of excellence from the French Embassy for their participation in this event. Among one of the winners for the AP-Native group was a non-native speaker of French. The achievement of these students reinforced our collective desire as teachers to continue sharing the knowledge of the French language and Francophone culture with this new generation of high school students.

Lucy Chen and Paul Semon, the two officers of the Société who coordinated the event this year, are leaving for college, but the Dictée Interscholaire is here to stay. The Société Honoraire de Français is already getting ready for next year, and is hoping for the participation of all schools in the district to the City-wide dictée, 2024 édition. The group aims to add other types of activities, such as poetry and songs to the event. French teachers of New York City are asked to make it part of their goals for next year. For more information, please contact Pascale Baptiste-Midy at mbaptistemidy@schools.nyc.gov.

We would like to extend our thanks to Fabrice Jaumont from the French Embassy; Patricia Hert and Rothane Khaled from the OIF; and Valerie Mitchell, Joshua Herd, and Alessandra De Meo, French teachers from BTHS - and all the teachers from the participating schools.



*Participants in the Dictée
Interscholaire*

NYSSB Webinars for Administrators

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages is collaborating with the New York State 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. 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. (Zoom)

Webinar description: Have you been thinking about starting a NYS Seal of Biliteracy program at your school? This program has experienced tremendous growth since it was first offered in 2015-16. In the current school year, more than 450 NYS high schools offer the Seal to their students. This session will review what the Seal is, who can earn this distinction, what benefits it brings to students, educators, and schools, and what it takes to start a Seal of Biliteracy program for the first time. A wealth of digital resources, as well as local BOCES contacts, will be provided to support schools interested in starting a Seal program for the upcoming year. Time will be allotted at the end of the session for questions from participants. Come and learn about how you can honor your students who have developed the 21st century skill of biliteracy.

Click [here](#) to register for this webinar.

Expanding Your Seal of Biliteracy Program—May 24th, 4:30-5:30 p.m. (Zoom)

Webinar description: Have you offered the NYS Seal of Biliteracy for one or more years and are now looking for ways to grow your program? This session will present strategies for expanding an existing program, including:

- raising awareness about the Seal among faculty, counselors, staff, and the school community;
- recruiting and motivating students;
- supporting English Language Learners to pursue the Seal;
- monitoring student progress toward the Seal;
- creating a pipeline for the Seal that spans middle and high school; and
- streamlining the Culminating Project and presentation processes.

Digital resources, a local BOCES contact, and ample time for participant questions will be provided.

Click [here](#) to register for this webinar.

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



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

OBEWL 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. 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:** 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
- **West:** 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 from 4:00-5:00 p.m. via Zoom on a variety of topics relative to the NYS Learning Standards for World Languages and high-leverage teaching practices. These webinars 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.

- [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](#).

Webinars on the World Language Standards for Administrators

OBEWL will offer a two-part webinar series on the NYS Learning for World Languages for Administrators this spring. To register, please click on the following link. These webinars are offered free of charge and provide CTLE credit for attendees. To earn credit, administrator 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 enact 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 enact 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 with 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](#).

Celebrating World Languages

Students at Glen Head Elementary School, North Shore School District, celebrated World Language Week 2023 in the month of March. Mandarin teacher, Jingwen Caig shared that students embraced languages and cultures by writing different words and phrases such as hello, thank you, welcome, goodbye, and I love you in different languages. Mandarin students also decorated their language speech bubbles, as shown in the photos below of the bulletin boards created.



News from Other NYSED Offices

2022-23 Testing Program Updates

- [Parents' Frequently Asked Questions About New York State's Annual Grades 3-8 English Language Arts & Mathematics Test](#)
- [The 2023 Grades 3-8 New York State Assessments: What Parents Need to Know](#)
- [Memo - Spring 2023 New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test](#)

Commissioner Rosa Appoints Director of Public Information as Part of Department's Shift to Service-Oriented Approach

New York State Education Department Commissioner Betty A. Rosa today announced the appointment of Keshia Clukey to serve as Director of Public Information. Keshia will lead the Department's work to be transparent, highlight effective educational practices across the state, and further its guiding principle of a service-oriented approach with news and media outlets to promote safe, nurturing, and engaging learning environments for all students.

We invite you to join us in learning about the significant contributions of women by exploring the [State Museum's extensive resource page for Women's History Month](#). These resources include research from historians and scientists, access to digital collections, virtual lessons and activities for the classroom, CTLE-certified professional development videos for educators, and information about public programming.

It's National Athletic Training Month! At athletic events, certified athletic trainers provide emergency care under physician supervision to participants who have sustained injuries. <https://bit.ly/3JdPNNf>

Show students the important role math plays in the world around us with this lesson on the connection between math and music. <http://bit.ly/34cZ0Os>, [@pbsteachers](#) [#MathMonday](#) [#MusicMonday](#) [#MIOSM](#)

[#NationalReadingMonth](#) is a great time to start a [#WeekendReading](#) tradition with your kids! The [@NYSLibrary's DayByDay NY](#) website makes two new e-books available each day. Check them out and read with your kids this weekend!

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.

