

Early Learning Institute New York State Education Department

August 7, 2025 * 9:00am-3:15pm

HUXLEY THEATER, NYS MUSEUM



Agenda

9:00-9:30 Registration

9:30-11:00 The Arts at the Center of Early Childhood Development and Learning
Dr. Aramina Vega Ferrer, Regent, New York State Board of Regents

Erik Sweet, Executive Director, Office of Early Learning

NYCPS Arts Office: Early Childhood Strings Pathways

Paul Thompson, Executive Director, New York City Public Schools Arts Office

Elizabeth Guglielmo, Citywide Director of Music, NYC Public Schools

Rachel Shapiro, Manhattan Borough Arts Director, NYC Public Schools

11:00-11:15 Break

11:15-12:15 Morning Breakout Sessions:

- Responsive Teaching: Centering Culture and Language in the Classroom - **Members' Lounge**
- Using the P-3 Toolkit to Support Project Based Learning - **Room A/B**
- P-3 Literacy Best Practices: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Fluency - **Student Center**
- Science Everywhere/P-3 Cultural Connections Toolkit - **Huxley Theater**

12:15-1:15 Lunch (on your own) - See Map

1:15-2:00 Joyful Discovery: Exploring Early Literacy through Cultural Education
Lauren Moore, Assistant Commissioner for Libraries and New York State Librarian

2:00-2:15 Break

2:15-3:15 Afternoon Breakout Sessions:

- The Power of Play: Unlocking Learning Through Joy & Exploration - **Huxley Theater**
- P-3 Literacy Best Practices: Comprehension, Oral Language, Vocabulary, and Writing - **Student Center**
- Science Everywhere/P-3 Cultural Connections Toolkit - **Room A/B**
- Supporting Early Learning Through NYS Public Broadcasting - **Members' Lounge**

Throughout the day, designated tables will be set up, staffed by representatives from each agency.

These representatives will be available to offer additional resources and support to participants attending the Early Learning Institute.



Presented by NYSED's Office of Early Learning and the Live Streaming will be paid for by NYS Council on Children and Families

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Breakout Sessions



USING THE NYSED P-3 TOOLKIT TO SUPPORT PROJECT BASED LEARNING - ROOM A/B

****OFFERED IN THE AM BREAKOUT SESSION ONLY****

Dr. Tina Rose-Turriglio, Associate in Instructional Services in the Office of Early Learning

Megan Tobiasen, Assistant in Instructional Services in the Office of Early Learning

During this session participants will learn what P-3 implementation is and strategies for implementation using NYSED resources. Participants will hear an example from a 3rd grade classroom of how a project-based learning experience supported the P-3 instructional components while meeting learning standards.

AM P-3 LITERACY BEST PRACTICES -PHONEMIC AWARENESS, PHONICS, FLUENCY - STUDENT CENTER

PM P-3 LITERACY BEST PRACTICES -COMPREHENSION, ORAL LANGUAGE, VOCABULARY AND WRITING - STUDENT CENTER

Madison Ramnes, Associate in Instructional Services in the Office of Early Learning

Christina Ryan, Associate in Instructional Services (Literacy) in the Office of Early Learning

This interactive session will highlight evidence-based literacy instructional best practices from Prekindergarten through Grade 3, aligned to the P-3 Literacy Best Practices Guide. Participants will explore real-world examples, engage in peer discussion, and leave with actionable strategies to support effective instruction. The morning will focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency, while the afternoon will dive into comprehension, oral language, vocabulary, and writing.

THE POWER OF PLAY: UNLOCKING LEARNING THROUGH JOY AND EXPLORATION - HUXLEY THEATER

****OFFERED IN THE PM BREAKOUT SESSION ONLY****

Lauren Cosamano, Assistant in Instructional Services in the Office of Early Learning

Dr. Zachary Snyder, Associate in Instructional Services in the Office of Early Learning

Dana Benzo, Director of Elementary Programs (PreK-6) Rome City School District

This interactive session will dive into the research behind the benefits of play-based learning for children, prekindergarten through third grade. The session will also explore how to incorporate play-based learning activities to meet the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards. We will be joined by Dana Benzo from Rome City School District who will share how they have successfully integrated play-based learning into their classrooms, highlighting practical strategies and outcomes.

RESPONSIVE TEACHING: CENTERING CULTURE AND LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM

Members' Lounge - **OFFERED IN THE AM BREAKOUT SESSION ONLY**

Tanya Amodio-Kovacs, Supervisor in Education Programs in the Office of Early Learning

Michelle Sidoti, Associate in Instructional Services in the Office of Early Learning

Carissa Zuniga, Associate in Bilingual Education in the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

Participants will explore the importance of fostering culturally and linguistically responsive learning environments for Multilingual Learners. They will engage in peer sharing, exchanging practical examples from New York State school districts that support Multilingual Learners' success, and identify strategies that enhance both language development and academic achievement.

SCIENCE EVERYWHERE/P-3 CULTURAL CONNECTIONS TOOLKIT -HUXLEY THEATER (AM) ROOM A/B (PM)

Eric Feml-Nelsen, Education Finance Specialist 2 in the Office of Early Learning

Jason Gish, Associate in Instructional Services in the Office of Early Learning

Rachel Schlude, Assistant in Instructional Services in the Office of Early Learning

This session will integrate The Cultural Connections Framework and Resource Kit with the Science Everywhere Bird Nest Exploration. It will showcase how these resources can be effectively combined in the P-3 educational environment, providing a variety of cultural experiences for children during their school hours through inquiry-based learning.

SUPPORTING EARLY LEARNING THROUGH NYS PUBLIC BROADCASTING - MEMBERS' LOUNGE

****OFFERED IN THE PM BREAKOUT SESSION ONLY****

Cara Rager, WXXI Director of Early Learning

Jackie Stapleton, NYSED Director of Ed TV & Pub Broadcasting

Attendees will learn about the many ways New York State public broadcasting stations propel early learning! From over-the-air and online PBS KIDS content to in-the-community support and key partnerships, this session will fill your toolbox with resources and local connections!

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Featured Speakers



Dr. Aramina Vega Ferrer,
Regent for the 12th Judicial District and
Co-Chair of the Board of Regents



The Office of Early Learning is proud to host the 2025 Early Learning Institute on Thursday, August 7, at the Cultural Education Center in Albany, NY. Opening remarks will be delivered by Dr. Aramina Vega Ferrer, Regent for the 12th Judicial District and Co-Chair of the Board of Regents Cultural Education Committee. In her role, Dr. Ferrer helps shape policy for the State Library, Museum, Archives, and more. Educators and leaders in PK-3 are invited to join us for a day of collaborative learning and inspiration.

NYCPS Arts Office: Early Childhood Strings Pathways

The NYCPS Arts Office is proud to present one of our newest pilot initiatives—Early Childhood Strings Pathways—which brings high-quality, developmentally appropriate string instruction to our youngest learners. Designed for students in Pre-K through Grade 3, this program fosters creativity, builds early musical foundations, and supports whole-child development through joyful, hands-on learning.

Paul Thompson, Executive Director of the Arts, NYC Public Schools
Elizabeth Guglielmo, Citywide Director of Music, NYC Public Schools
Rachel Shapiro, Manhattan Borough Arts Director, NYC Public Schools



Lauren Moore,
Assistant Commissioner for Libraries
and New York State Librarian

Lauren Moore has served in various leadership positions at public libraries and library systems throughout her career. As the Assistant Commissioner for Libraries and New York State (NYS) Librarian at the New York State Education Department, she leads the operations of the NYS Library and its statewide services, including the Regent Joseph E. Bowman Research Library, the New York State Talking Book and Braille Library, and the Division of Library Development.

