

# Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

New York State Education Department

Albany office: 89 Washington Avenue – 301EB, Albany, NY 12234, (518) 474-8775

Batavia office: 2A Richmond Avenue, Park Lewis Hall, Batavia, NY 14020, (585) 344-2002

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

[OBEWL website](#)



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Dear Esteemed Colleagues

As we enter the Fall session of another school year, celebrating Hispanic Heritage and Indigenous Peoples, we are reminded of the vital role that educators play in fostering a learning environment where every student feels seen, heard, and valued. This year marks the 50th anniversary of *Lau v. Nichols*, a landmark decision that set forth the legal obligation to provide equitable access to education for students of all language backgrounds. This ruling—as well as the many laws that have followed—champions the essential rights of multilingual students, affirming that language should be a benefit, not a barrier, in our schools.



At the NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages, we recognize that every culture and language enriches our community, and we embrace the diverse perspectives our students bring. We know that students learn best when they can see their own lives and languages reflected in the curriculum and when they feel a sense of belonging and respect. Upholding the laws that guarantee bilingual education is not just a legal obligation; it is an ethical commitment to ensure that all students thrive in an inclusive, welcoming environment.

As educators, we have the privilege and responsibility to foster acceptance and appreciation for all cultures and languages within our classrooms and hallways. Let us commit to embracing this vision, breaking down language barriers, and empowering each student to succeed on their own terms.

Together, let's make this year one of unity, understanding, and celebration of our diverse community.

With gratitude and commitment,

*Elisa Alvarez*

## OBEWL in the Field

September was a bustling month for the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL), filled with opportunities to engage with educators and share valuable insights. Our team has been active in the field, presenting on a variety of topics critical to enhancing educational practices for English Language Learners (ELLs). OBEWL's staff is passionate about our mission and always eager to share our expertise, believing that collaboration is key to fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment.

On September 9, Associate Commissioner Elisa Alvarez and world languages associate Candace Black presented to the Board of Regents. This presentation shared the latest data and information on our office's activities supporting the New York State Seal of Bilingualism and Indigenous Languages programs. In 2022-2023 more than 8,700 students earned the NYSSB, and in 2023-2024, more than 10,600 students achieved this honor with increasing numbers earning it in multiple languages. The highlight of the presentation was a [video](#) of compelling student testimonials, including Timothy Williams who spoke about the opportunity to learn the Seneca language.

On September 12, associates Carissa Zuniga and Laura Arpey spoke at the Charter School Office retreat, held at the New York State Museum. The presentation focused on the Identification Process for ELLs and other essential aspects of Commissioner's Regulations Part 154. The importance of accurate identification to ensure ELLs receive the appropriate support and resources was emphasized. Title III funds and consortia were also addressed in detail. Participants were invited to engage in meaningful dialogue about regulatory compliance mandated to improve ELL services within charter schools.

On September 24, Associate Commissioner Elisa Alvarez and associate Laura Arpey led a roundtable discussion at the New York State Council of School Superintendents. Superintendents posed questions and recommendations on topics such as graduation measures, resource regionalization, media literacy standards, and digital equity for all students.

The full staff of OBEWL gathered for two days with the RBERN staff from across the state for an opportunity to reconnect, network, and collaborate. This bi-annual event provides an opportunity



*OBEWL Associate  
Carissa Zuniga*



*OBEWL staff gathered at RBERN full-staff retreat.*

to share ideas and collaborate to support our multilingual students across the state. RBERN teams received important updates on the upcoming changes to the Comprehensive ELL Education Plan (CEEP). Attendees engaged in ongoing projects and brainstormed strategies for addressing various ELL subgroups. The Graduation/Dropout Strategic Planning Group shared their research on ELL graduation rates, and the Dynamic Instruction for ELLs workgroup presented on plans to roll out professional development for the Academic and Linguistic Demands (ALDs).

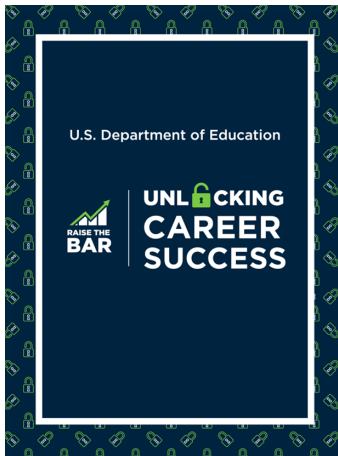
On September 30, New York City Public Schools District 14 Superintendent, David Cintron and Public School 084 - Jose de Diego Principal, Sereida Rodriguez, welcomed OBEWL associate, Austin Nojaim, Orange-Ulster BOCES District Superintendent, Tom Bongiovi, and Eastern-Suffolk BOCES District Superintendent, Dr. Jasmin Varela to their school. The primary goal of the visit was to

observe dual language instruction in action and explore how these models support historically underserved student populations. The group visited three classrooms, where they witnessed effective dual language teaching practices firsthand. Additionally, they engaged in discussions with students, teachers, and instructional leaders, with time to ask questions and gain deeper insights.

## U.S. Department of Education—Raise the Bar: Keys to Unlocking Career Success

The U.S. Department of Education, along with the Department of Labor and Commerce, has launched an innovative initiative aimed at transforming how high schools prepare students for their future careers. It is important for young people to leave high school with clear education and career goals, and the knowledge and skills needed to pursue them. Schools should ensure that students have access to staff with diverse backgrounds, cultural and other identities, and lived experiences.

This initiative seeks to provide every student with equitable pathways to post-secondary education and career training. By collaborating with high schools, colleges, and community business leaders, the plan aims to help students earn industry-recognized credentials that will equip them for in-demand jobs.



### Four Keys for Unlocking Success

**Dual Enrollment:** This program allows students to earn college credit while still in high school. It's not just about accelerating their education, it also helps students make informed decisions about their future academic paths. Research indicates that English Language Learners (ELLs) with access to college coursework in high school are more likely to enroll in college and complete their degrees.

**Work-Based Learning:** Opportunities such as internships and apprenticeships provide students with valuable exposure to professional environments. Engaging in real-world experiences allows students to gain firsthand knowledge in their chosen fields and to build relationships that can expand their professional networks.

**Workforce Credentials:** Earning industry-recognized credentials gives students a competitive advantage in the job market. How can students show what they know to perspective employers? How do they work towards licensing in their chosen field? Career and technical education can provide students with mentors that will help guide them through this process.

**Career advising and navigation:** Students need support to make informed decisions about life after high school. College is one option among many, and it is essential to expose student to the range of possibilities. You can't be what you can't see.

As leaders in education, we need to evaluate our programs and assess participation. Are all our students able to access the benefits of these programs? Are there barriers preventing participation? What can we do to eliminate those barriers and ensure equitable access for all students?

For more information, check out the USDOE's [Unlocking Career Success website](#) and watch this [video](#) about the initiative.

## **Building Foundations for All: Emergent Multilingual Learners in Preschool Programs**

With the growth of Universal Prekindergarten programs, we have new opportunities to reach our youngest multilingual learners sooner. NYSED defines Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs) as students who enter prekindergarten with a home or primary language other than English.

It is important for all staff to be aware of the needs of their EMLs. This begins by collecting information on the students' home languages through the use of the [EML Language Profile](#), which is available in 24 languages. To help identify whether a student may be an EML, schools should follow the steps outlined in the [Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten – A Protocol for Identification, Instructional Planning & Programming](#) for all students whose parents indicate that a language other than English is spoken in the home.

To help schools support their EMLs, the Office of Early Learning has created the new handbook, [Implementing the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework in the Prekindergarten Classroom](#), as well as a [Tip Sheet](#) that provides guidance for administrators and teachers on implementing best practices for EMLs. Programs that practice Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CR-SE) create student-centered learning environments that honor, reflect, and affirm the student diversity found in our classrooms today. For EMLs, this involves recognizing the linguistic and cultural assets they bring to the classroom and using these strengths to support the learning and development. This approach goes beyond mere inclusion; it actively integrates students' languages and cultures into the curriculum, creating a more engaging and relevant learning experience. As the world becomes increasingly diverse, early childhood education programs must evolve to meet the needs of all learners.

Preschool is a critical time for language development. EMLs are in the initial stages of acquiring a new language and benefit significantly from an environment that recognizes and supports their home languages and cultural experiences. Research indicates that when children's first languages are valued and integrated into their education, they develop stronger cognitive and academic skills, along with improved self-esteem and social-emotional wellbeing.

### **Principles of the NYS Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework**

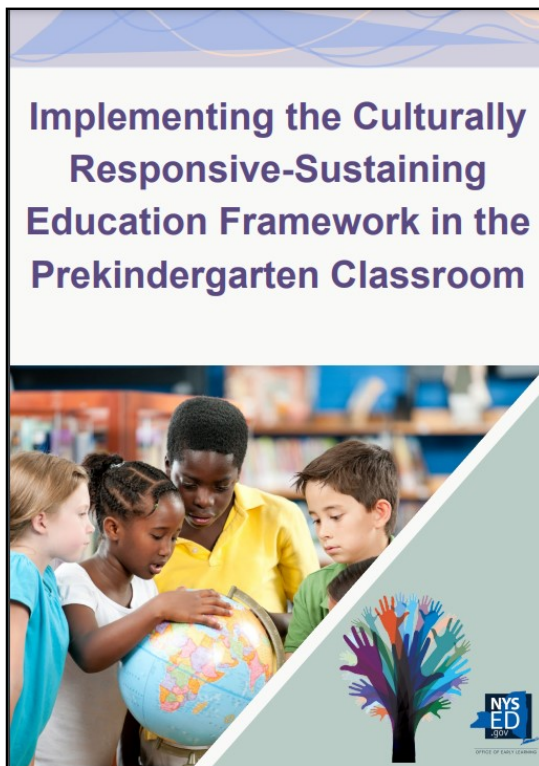
***Welcoming and Affirming Environment:*** All children should feel safe and welcome when coming to school. The classroom should be a safe place, where students can find themselves reflected in the books, toys, and overall curriculum. All people are treated with empathy, respect, and dignity. Families of all students should be considered an extension of the classroom community and should be included as much as possible. Parents should be encouraged to continue using their home language by asking about their child's day, telling stories, singing songs, reading books and by maintaining their own cultural traditions.

***High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction:*** At the preschool level, teachers set expectation of what school will be going forward. All students should be encouraged to participate in all classroom activities, scaffolding only when necessary. Teachers should promote a growth mindset as they work to promote the development of their students' basic skills.

***Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment:*** In preschool, educators should make connections to students' lives and experiences. It is also important to open their minds to the experiences of others to develop empathy and understanding. Educators need to actively engage young students in ongoing conversation and encourage them to be curious and ask questions.

***Ongoing Professional Development:*** Teachers need to be lifelong learners. Just as we have high expectations for rigorous instruction, teachers too need to seek out opportunities for their own growth and reflect on their teaching practice. Consider collaborating with the district's ENL teachers, as they will have valuable insights on how to best serve the families in your community.

Creating a culturally responsive framework for EMLs in preschool programs is not just about meeting educational standards—it's about honoring and celebrating the rich diversity that each child brings to the classroom. By adopting inclusive practices, supporting bilingual development, and purposefully engaging with families and communities, we can lay the foundation for a more equitable and enriching educational experience for all young learners.



## **An Interview with Dr. Miriam Eisenstein Ebsworth**

Dr. Miriam Eisenstein Ebsworth received her PhD in Linguistics from the CUNY Graduate Center and is now an Associate Professor of English Education in the Department of Teaching and Learning at New York University's Steinhardt School, where she has worked for 45 years. She served as the Director of Doctoral Programs in Bilingual Education and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Multilingual/Multicultural Studies unit and is the Co-founder and Academic Chair of an English program for the families of the university's international students.



Dr. Eisenstein Ebsworth's extended family speaks many languages. She grew up with grandfather, who spoke Russian, Ukrainian, Hebrew, Polish, and Yiddish, which is her first language. Because English was not her preferred language, Miriam's pediatrician told her mother that Miriam was developmentally delayed and advised her to stop speaking Yiddish in the home. Miriam's mother ignored this advice, much to the benefit of Miriam. During this time, Miriam interacted with her cousins from Argentina, which motivated her to learn Spanish to be able to speak with her relatives. This internationalism continued throughout her life with family members from Montreal and Panama, as well as her husband, who is Welsh, and part of whose family hails from Puerto Rico. Multilingualism and multiculturalism are ways of life for Miriam, whose children and grandchildren also speak more than one language.

Miriam's exposure to multiple languages and cultures continued when she began formal education. As a school-aged child, Miriam attended a Yeshiva for nine years, adding Hebrew to the two languages she was already speaking, Yiddish and English. At the secondary level, she attended Yeshiva University HS and then graduated from Thomas Jefferson HS. For her post-secondary studies, Miriam attended Brooklyn College. She pursued her certification in Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language and then received a masters in TESOL from Columbia University.

During her career, Miriam has received many awards, including the Steinhardt Teaching award, the NYSTESOL award, the NYSABE Teacher of the Year award, and the Gladys Correa Memorial award from NYSABE for her teaching and political activism. In 2024, two lifetime achievement awards were bestowed upon Miriam. In honor of her lifelong dedication to the field of Bilingual Education Research, Policy, and Practice, the American Education Research Association gave Miriam the Bilingual Education Research Lifetime Achievement Award. In the same year, the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) awarded Miriam with their Lifelong Bilingual Educator Award for her years of service to the organization and the field. Miriam served on the Executive Board of NABE, chaired the committee that revised the organization's bilingual teacher preparation standards, and continues to run the NABE Research Institute each year.

Miriam continues to pursue her passion for research that focuses on cross-cultural communication and supporting second language acquisition. She is currently contributing to the publication of a book on building anti-racist communities for those in education. She is also active at the state and national levels in the Seal of Biliteracy, serving on both the committee that established the National Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy and the New York State Education Department's Seal of Biliteracy Task Force. In addition to her many professional publications and awards, Miriam hopes her legacy will be the importance of supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism, encouraging all teachers to be open to discovering how to support learners where they are and to celebrate them for who they are, and mentoring the next generation of multilingual educators.

## World Language Webinars – Fall 2024

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) of the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has conducted three online webinars thus far this fall. Recordings of these one-hour webinars are posted to the Professional Learning website. There will be four additional webinars offered this fall. All webinars are free for NYS educators and attendees can earn a certificate of attendance or CTLE.



### [Using Authentic Resources for Proficiency Development from Checkpoint A to Checkpoint C](#)

Presented by Amanda Silva on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, from 4:00-5:00pm via Zoom. For world language teachers, especially those who teach multiple levels, a key question is how to develop students' proficiency across grade levels and proficiency Checkpoints. In this webinar, the presenter will invite teachers to rethink the use of authentic resources as a tool for proficiency development from Checkpoint A through Checkpoint C. She will show how authentic resources, when paired with standards-based learning tasks and assessments differentiated by proficiency target, promote proficiency development. Participants will come away with strategies for using authentic resources creatively across the Checkpoints and ideas for saving time in planning. Click [here](#) to download webinar flyer. Click [here](#) to register.



### [Classical Language Lesson Planning – From Unit Plan to Lesson Plans: Putting the Pieces Together](#)

David Pellegrino will present Tuesday, December 17, 2024, from 4:00-5:00pm via Zoom. In this session, participants will learn how to develop thematic unit-based lesson plans aligned to the revised Classical Language standards. The presenter will demonstrate how lesson plans can move naturally from input to output to help students make continuous progress in developing their language proficiency and requisite cultural knowledge. Click [here](#) to download the webinar flyer. Click [here](#) to register.



### [Checkpoint A Benchmark Proficiency Assessment Item Writing Workshops \(Modern Languages, Classical Languages\)](#)

Tuesday, November 5, 2024, from 8:30am-2:30pm via Zoom. These 6-hour live virtual workshops will engage NYS world language educators in understanding and applying the Principles and Guidelines for Adopting or Creating Locally Developed Benchmark Assessments for Checkpoint A. The presenters will explain and model assessment items for each Communication Standard aligned to the aforementioned guidance. Participants will have the opportunity to construct assessment items for Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational Communication at Checkpoint A that adhere to these guidelines. Click [here](#) to download the webinar flyer for the Modern Language workshop. Click [here](#) to download the webinar flyer for the Classical Language workshop.



### [New York Association for Language Teachers Annual Conference](#)

NYSAFLT will hold its **107<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference** from November 8-9<sup>th</sup> at the Niagara Falls Convention Center in Niagara Falls, NY. With over 60 different workshops offered, there is something for everyone! Celia Chomón Zamora will deliver a keynote address entitled "Bridging Bytes: Building Language Connections in the AI Classroom" and a workshop the following day. Representatives from the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages will give a NYSED Update during the Saturday luncheon.

## Professional Development Spotlight: Academic and Linguistic Demands (ALDs)



The *Introduction to the Academic & Linguistic Demands (ALDs)* asynchronous course is a comprehensive Professional Learning Series designed to develop familiarity with the layout, structure, and implementation of the ALDs.

The ALDs were created as a set of tools to accompany the New York State Learning Standards for ELA and are intended for **all** teachers who serve ELLs. The goal of this resource is to give teachers the language tools needed for ELLs to unlock the standards and succeed academically. Though designed for ELLs, the ALDs offer practical tools that can be beneficial for all multilingual learners, including those with disabilities, and all students working towards grade-level learning targets. The ALDs provide the linguistic lens through which teachers can examine the standards and plan instruction to ensure that the language necessary for academic success is explicit within their lessons.

Participants in this professional learning opportunity will explore tools that help identify the words, phrases, and language structures embedded in the English Language Arts standards, to provide equitable access to standards-aligned, grade-level instruction to English Language

Learners (ELLs).

In this online, asynchronous (self-paced) course, participants will:

- Read and analyze [The Academic and Linguistic Demands: Creating Access to the Next Generation Learning Standards in English Language Arts for Linguistically Diverse Learners](#).
- Discuss why and how the ALDs provide access to standards aligned instruction for linguistically diverse learners.
- Identify and apply the appropriate resource and tool during instructional planning.
- Explore additional resources.

Participants will have six weeks to complete the course and will receive an invitation to the course on the Canvas platform 24-hours prior to the November 26th start date.

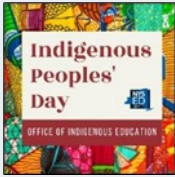
Join us as we explore this essential resource for planning successful and targeted instruction for ELLs while earning a certificate for 6 hours of CTLE upon course completion.

Click [here](#) for full access to the ALDs. Register prior to November 25th. For more information on the ALDs [contact](#) your local RBERN office.

# NEWS

## FROM other DEPARTMENTS and AGENCIES

October includes [School Board Recognition Week](#)! We would like to thank all school board members for their hard work and commitment to students, families, schools, and communities.



In honor of [Indigenous Peoples Day](#), we would like to recognize the dedicated team in NYSED's Office of Indigenous Education! The team works to support Indigenous education programs across the state. Learn more on the [Office of Indigenous Education website](#).

The Office of Cultural Education (OCE) Fall 2024 [Newsletter](#) for educators is out! The OCE is comprised of the State Library, State Museum, State Archives, Summer School of the Arts, and the Public Broadcasting Program stations.



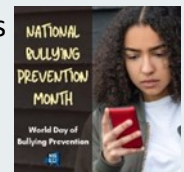
[Mental Illness Awareness Week](#) raises awareness of mental illness and educates the public about mental health issues. This year's theme is "Mental Health at Work." Find mental health resources for schools, educators, families, and caregivers [here](#).

October includes [International Day of the Girl](#), celebrating girls all around the world and helping them harness their limitless potential. This year's theme is 'Girls' vision for the future.'



It's [National Digital Inclusion Week](#)! Join us in raising awareness about digital equity and supporting solutions for affordable internet access, devices, and training.

October is [National Bullying Prevention Month](#). Show your support and help raise awareness about bullying and how to prevent it.



This month, [the NYS Talking Book and Braille Library](#) (TBBL) is celebrating the history of New York State with a list of exciting titles from their collections. Check out TBBL's New York History Month book list, which includes titles for all ages.



