



Boldly Reimagining Multilingual Education in NYC Public Schools

Multilingual NYC Advisory Council Summary Report
2025

Introduction

In the multicultural and multilingual city that is New York City, our public school students are uniquely positioned to thrive in a world where multilingualism and cultural fluency are valued and essential skills. More than 44% of our students speak a language other than English at home and our students collectively speak more than 156 languages. The world comes together in our classrooms and there is an unmatched opportunity to prepare graduates who, through their diversity of experiences and exposure, develop the creativity, communication, cultural responsiveness, and global awareness to succeed and lead in an interconnected world and shape the future with confidence and purpose.

This summary report provides an overview of the findings and the recommendations of the Multilingual NYC Advisory Council, a diverse group of students, families, educators, school and district leaders, and advocates from across the five boroughs. The robust work of this Advisory Council lays the groundwork for a five-year strategic plan intended to expand pathways to multilingualism and global leadership for all NYC public school students, while making sure that our English Language Learners are set up to succeed. This work also establishes a foundation for the advocacy and community building needed to bring the plan to life.

A full and comprehensive report, which further situates the work and recommendations of the Advisory Council in the historic context and current landscape of multilingual education in NYCPS, will be published this school year.

A Look at Key Terms

Throughout this report, we use the following terms:

- **Home Language** - The primary language a student speaks at home. In 2024-25, about 44% of NYC Public School students spoke a language other than English at home.
- **English Language Learner** - An English Language Learner, or an ELL, is a student whose primary home language is not English and has scored below commanding English language proficiency on the NYS Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). About 19% of NYCPS students were ELLs in the 2024-25 school year.
- **Multilingual Learner** - Multilingual Learners, or MLs, include current ELLs, students who were once ELLs, students who were never ELLs but are heritage speakers of a language other than English, and World Language Students. *Note:* The New York State Education Department and NYCPS refer to English Language Learners (ELLs) as Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLs/ELLs) except in instances referring to state policy.
- **Immigrant** - A person who comes to live permanently in a country where they have migrated. *Note:* NYCPS does not ask for or collect immigration status of K-12 students or families

Multilingual NYC Advisory Council

Council Overview and Purpose

On the 50 year anniversary of the Aspira Consent Decree, NYCPS announced the launch of the Multilingual NYC Advisory Council to develop a community-informed strategy to *Boldly Reimagine Multilingual Education*. More than 375 students, families, educators, and community members expressed interest in participating on the advisory council through an open application process. A 15-member team from NYCPS reviewed the applications with the goal of creating a council that reflects the diversity of our city—considering languages spoken, borough and grade-level representation, and personal or professional knowledge of the multilingual and immigrant student experience.

A final group of over 50 advisors were selected to serve on the Advisory Council (see the full list of advisors on the [Multilingual NYC](#) site) and were onboarded in November 2024. Advisors were assigned to subcommittees focused on three different topic areas: Welcoming and Inclusive Schools, Pathways to Multilingualism, and Preparing Global Leaders. Each subcommittee was jointly led by a NYCPS leader and a community co-chair from the Advisory Council.

Between December 2024 and June 2025, advisors met as a full advisory council group, with their subcommittees, and for special sessions focused on specific topics. Meetings involved presentations from various stakeholders, including members of the Office of Multilingual Learners and other offices within NYCPS, breakout room discussions, and collaborative work time to review and develop recommendations.

Findings from the Advisory Council

Over the course of their eight months of work, the advisors grappled with the complexities of multilingual education in NYCPS and shared their diverse perspectives, drawn from both lived experiences and professional expertise. They reviewed data on the current state, asked hard questions, and engaged in iterative discussion. Through this process, the advisors identified clear challenges and opportunities in the work to boldly reimagine multilingual education in NYCPS. A summary of findings is below and is further expanded upon in the full-length report.



Key Findings

- **Access to Quality Programs:** NYCPS faces uneven access to high-quality bilingual education programs (including Dual Language and Transitional Bilingual Education), English as a New Language (ENL) Only programs, and World Language and Heritage Language course options across districts with limited instructional materials and gaps in resources for ELLs.
- **Inclusive Schools:** Many schools struggle to fully meet the complex needs of multilingual and immigrant students and families, regardless of immigration status¹, though programs and initiatives like Dream Squads and Project Open Arms highlight effective, inclusive practices.
- **Teacher Shortages:** NYCPS has persistent bilingual and World Language teacher shortages, and requires a coherent strategy for teacher preparation, multilingual educator recruitment, and professional learning to equip all teachers to serve ELLs.
- **Family Engagement:** Despite expanded language access resources, persistent language barriers and inaccessible structures limit families' ability to participate as true partners in their child's education as advocates and decision-makers.
- **College and Career Readiness:** Barriers to advanced courses, work-based learning, and the Seal of Biliteracy prevent multilingual and immigrant students from fully developing the skills, credentials, and opportunities that support long-term academic success, financial stability, and career advancement.

Themes across Findings

To support the execution of a strategic plan to boldly reimagine multilingual education in NYCPS, four themes emerged across the findings as critical enablers to ensuring progress and positive impact for multilingual and immigrant students and families.

- **Set clear systemwide standards for quality and access** for bilingual education and English as a New Language (ENL) program design, delivery, and continuity.
- **Improve access to data and information** to help families understand programs and policies impacting their child and to empower them as true partners in their child's education.
- **Prioritize resources and funding** to support equitable outcomes for multilingual and immigrant students in major NYCPS initiatives.

¹ NYCPS does not ask for or collect immigration status of K-12 students or families

- **Adopt an asset-based mindset** that recognizes the brilliance and potential of multilingual learners as evidenced in the achievement of Ever ELLs compared with their Never ELL peers.

Priorities

From these findings, this report establishes five key priorities. Together, these priorities define our commitment to our schools' multilingual and immigrant students and families and provide a framework for ensuring inclusion, access, and excellence are embedded in the plan to boldly reimagine multilingual education for NYCPS.

- **Priority 1:** Establish High Quality Pathways to Multilingualism with Equitable Access for English Language Learners
- **Priority 2:** Strengthen and Expand a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Workforce
- **Priority 3:** Promote a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging for Multilingual and Immigrant Students and Families
- **Priority 4:** Foster Multilingual and Immigrant Family and Community Leadership and Advocacy
- **Priority 5:** Recognize Multilingualism as a Core Competency for College, Career, and Civic Readiness

Recommendations

Priority 1: Establish High Quality Pathways to Multilingualism with Equitable Access for English Language Learners

1.1 Improvements to bilingual program availability and quality

- 1.1a All districts should increase the availability of high-quality bilingual education programs, including dual language bilingual education programs, across grade levels and take steps to increase access for English Language Learners (ELLs).
- 1.1b NYCPS should work Centrally and with districts and schools to ensure that all bilingual education programs have increased access to high-quality curriculum and materials in the language of the program.
- 1.1c NYCPS should work Centrally and with districts and schools to ensure that all bilingual education programs have increased access to screeners for students in both English and the partner language to monitor progress and growth in response to instruction and to predict reading risk in both program languages.

1.2 Improvements to ENL Programming

- 1.2a All schools should implement highly-effective integrated ENL co-teaching by following guidelines to appropriately program ENL co-teaching pairs, schedule consistent and adequate co-planning time, and prioritize co-attendance for teaching pairs to attend professional learning together.
- 1.2b NYCPS should expand the core curriculum to include dedicated, grade-level appropriate English Language Development (ELD) curriculum for delivery of the standalone English as a New Language instructional component, K-12.

1.3 Improvements to World and Heritage Language programming and availability

- 1.3a Schools and districts should provide increased access to World Language and Heritage Language course options.
- 1.3b NYCPS should select and support standards-aligned core curriculum for World Language and Heritage Language programming.

1.4 Systemwide steps to improve ELL programs and services

- 1.4a NYCPS should conduct a cost study analysis of the current funding weights for ELLs under the current NYCPS Fair Student Funding formula.
- 1.4b NYCPS should facilitate a longitudinal study of the benefits of bilingual education programs in NYCPS and identify key indicators of program quality necessary to achieve those benefits.
- 1.4c NYCPS should expand public data reporting on all English Language Learner programs and ensure availability of information in a user-friendly multilingual format that is accessible to families, community members, and policymakers.

Priority 2: Strengthen and Expand a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Workforce

- 2.1 NYCPS should deepen financial and programmatic investment in Grow Your Own and other recruitment programs to expand and diversify the pipeline of educators certified to work in bilingual education, English as a New Language, and World Languages.
- 2.2 NYCPS should develop strong, city-wide bilingual, ENL, and World Languages educator career pathways for multilingual students as part of FutureReadyNYC's education pathway.
- 2.3 NYCPS should expand data collection and analysis of current and anticipated workforce needs for bilingual, ENL, and World Language programming.

- 2.4 NYCPS and Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) should work together to ensure teacher preparation programs are aligned to the diverse and multilingual needs of NYCPS students and the school districts that serve them.
- 2.5 All teachers and school leaders should receive training and tools to support the academic, social-emotional, and linguistic needs of English Language Learners and immigrant students, regardless of immigration status, ensuring inclusive and affirming environments at every grade level.
- 2.6 All schools should identify an ELL Coordinator to provide support and oversight for the policy implementation and academic achievement of English Language Learners.
- 2.7 NYCPS, Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs), and the United Federation of Teachers should work together to formalize Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) professional learning focused on MLs/ELLs for all educators.

Priority 3: Promote a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging for Multilingual and Immigrant Students and Families

- 3.1 Every district should provide schools with information, training, and support for partnering with community-based organizations to serve the needs of their multilingual and immigrant students and families.
- 3.2 Every school should have a school-based team of educators and staff who are trained to serve as advocates for multilingual and immigrant students and their families, with a designated coordinator to serve as a liaison with the district and central offices.
- 3.3 NYCPS should continue to invest in and expand access to culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum with community input.
- 3.4 All schools should take steps to ensure that students' and families' multiple identities and languages are represented in classroom and library materials.
- 3.5 All schools should plan for and design space that is welcoming to and inclusive of multilingual and immigrant families (i.e., care closets, signage, welcome centers, family rooms, etc.).

Priority 4: Foster Multilingual and Immigrant Family and Community Leadership and Advocacy

- 4.1 NYCPS should take steps to ensure that multilingual and immigrant families are actively represented and engaged in the leadership and decision-making of citywide and community education councils and supported in engaging in school-level decision-making.

- 4.2 All citywide and community education council members should receive training on resources for multilingual and immigrant families and how to support pathways to multilingualism.
- 4.3 All Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Leadership Teams (SLTs), District Leadership Teams (DLTs), and Parent Councils supporting Early Childhood Education should receive training on resources and support for multilingual and immigrant students and families, including interpretation services, in order to create deeper school-family partnerships and leadership opportunities for multilingual and immigrant families.

Priority 5: Recognize Multilingualism as a Core Competency for College, Career, and Civic Readiness

- 5.1 All high schools should offer the New York State Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB).
- 5.2 NYCPS should expand partnerships with Institutes of Higher Education to award college credit for NYCPS high school graduates who earned the NYSSB.
- 5.3 All high schools should increase access to early college credits with an emphasis on credit-bearing dual enrollment opportunities for multilingual and immigrant students.
- 5.4 NYCPS should expand student leadership programs that highlight the power of multilingualism and global leadership.
- 5.5 All high schools should expand participation of multilingual and immigrant students in career-connected instruction, work-based learning experiences, mentorship, and networking opportunities.
- 5.6 NYCPS should ensure that the Portrait of the Graduate implementation includes definitions and processes for demonstrating proficiency that take into account the strengths of multilingual and immigrant students, including their language skills and cultural fluency.

Looking Ahead

In continued partnership with the Advisory Council and the broader community, NYCPS is committed to turning these recommendations into lasting change. By celebrating and building on the language skills and cross-cultural fluency of our multilingual and immigrant students—and fostering these strengths for all—we will set a national standard for multilingual education and welcoming, inclusive schools where students feel a sense of purpose and belonging, take pride in their identities, and graduate ready to lead, contribute, and thrive in their community and the world.

Read the full report and find more information on NYCPS's efforts to implement the Advisory Council's recommendations on the [NYCPS Multilingual NYC webpage](#).

Acknowledgements

2025 Advisory Council Chairs

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- Naveed Hasan - Elected Parent Panel for Education Policy (PEP) Member, Founding Director of No Limits Learning, Parent/Guardian at P.S. 145 The Bloomingdale School
- Paola Jordan - Parent/Guardian, Director of the Metropolitan Parent Center, Sinergia Inc.
- Rita Rodriguez-Engberg - Director of Immigrant Students' Rights Project, Advocates for Children
- Ron Woo - Executive Director, New York State Statewide Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN)
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- Somia Elrowmeim - Founder and CEO, Women's Empowerment Coalition of NYC
- Sonia Sendoya - Social Worker, Make the Road New York, Community School Director at Bushwick Campus
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- Yasmin Naji - Education Policy Manager, New York Immigration Coalition
- NYC Public Schools students and alumni

Project Leadership and Support

Thank you to Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos and Division of Inclusive and Accessible Learning Deputy Chancellor Christina Foti for their leadership and advocacy in reimagining a system that is inclusive and accessible for all learners. Thank you to the Office of Multilingual Learners staff and all members of the Central NYCPS working group for their commitment to transparency, openness to dialogue, and contributions to building shared knowledge and supporting decision-making for the Advisory Council. Finally, thank you to Anna Pons, Division of Inclusive and Accessible Learning Strategic Advisor for Multilingual Learners, and our partners at the Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL) at Columbia University for their oversight of this project and co-facilitation of our sessions. We have a strong foundation for the work ahead.