

NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION



www.nvsabe.org

Executive Director
Nancy Villarreal de Adler

2009-2010

Executive Board

President

Margarita Reyes

First Vice-President

María de los A. Barreto

Second Vice-President

Evelyn Arent

Secretary

Rose Colón-Cisneros

Treasurer

Betty Colón

Past President

Anne Henry Montante

Delegate Assembly

Region I/Long Island

Linda Scalice

María A. Meyer

Region II/ New York City

Lorraine Estrada

Lucía Buttaró

Region III/Mid-Hudson

Ray Sánchez

Yolanda Rodríguez

Region IV/Capital District

Ofelia Anamaria

Region V/Rochester

Yazmin Torres

Carmen Bermúdez-Merner

Region VI/Western New York

Rose Colón-Cisneros

Evelyn Arent

Delegates-at-Large

Md. Abul Kalam Azad

María de los A. Barreto

Betty Colón

Cynthia Jonsson

Pat Lo

Parent-at-Large

Carmen Alverio Hope

Language Delegates

Amidor Almonord, Haitian

Diana V. Hernández, Spanish

Silvia Zaluski, Italian

Md. Habibur R. Chowdhury, Bengali

Sushma Malhotra, Hindi

New York University
Metropolitan Center for Urban Education
726 Broadway, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10003

April 9, 2010

Dr. Leo Gómez
Subcommittee on NABE National Action Plan

Dear Dr. Gómez,

Thank you for providing NABE's affiliates and members with the opportunity to review and offer input to the NABE National Plan for the Education of ELLs and the National ELL Plan submitted to the US Department of Education. It is really uplifting to note that at the core of both Plans is the goal of ensuring equitable educational opportunities for Bilingual Learners (BLs).

As we review both plans, we acknowledge the depth of the recommendations and the possibility of focus on two sub-populations that require our urgent attention: **Bilingual Learners with Disabilities and Students with Interrupted Formal Education**.

Bilingual Learners with Disabilities: Both plans should address the needs to:

- conduct research on the multiple characteristics, best pedagogical practices and assessment in accordance to federal laws (IDEA),
- enforce federal laws that respect and protect BL with Disabilities' rights to appropriate instruction and assessments, with respect to their linguistic, cognitive, socio emotional needs, as specified in the student's IEP,
- provide pre-service and in-service preparation and support for teachers, paraprofessionals, members of the multidisciplinary bilingual assessment team, and support personnel,
- develop alternate assessment programs for BL with severe disabilities,
- allocate funding to develop and enhance RTI programs,
- collaborate with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) to advocate for the best instructional, clinical, and therapeutic services for BLs,
- collaborate with the US Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to ensure appropriate regulations for the instruction, assessment, and support services for BLs with Disabilities,
- collaborate with the departments/office of Bilingual Special Education at universities across the nation,
- investigate and support the academic, linguistic, cultural, and socio emotional needs of deaf/hard of hearing students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Recognize their use of American Sign Language to communicate and learn.

33rd Annual Conference

"Bilingual Education: A Pathway to Multicultural and Multilingual Learning Communities"

March 11 – March 14, 2010

Huntington Hilton Hotel, Melville, New York

Students with Interrupted Education (SIFE): The plans state that *“the permanent solution to high schools in academic trouble with this population is largely rooted in their elementary schools.”* This statement seems to assume that all ELLs in High Schools have attended elementary school in the USA and ignore the influx of SIFE students. These students, many of them, traveling back and forth their homeland or entering school at the middle school or HS levels, lack the linguistic and content area knowledge and skills to succeed academically. Consequently, when discussing ELL low graduation rates, achievement gaps, drop out rates, and extended time spent in school, we must address the reality of SIFEs.

NABE’s plans needs to encourage:

- research on best school practices, including support programs, for SIFEs
- allocation of funds to develop research-based alternative programs to accelerate the achievement of SIFEs
- collaboration between LEAs with universities and professional organizations to focus on the urgent needs of SIFEs
- allocation of funding to ensure valid assessment tools in the students’ languages
- review of policies and regulations to ensure equitable programs for SIFEs

In summary, we wish to reiterate our commitment to the implementation of equitable educational programs for all Bilingual Learners.

Respectfully submitted,

Margarita Reyes
President
NYSABE

Nancy Villarreal de Adler
Executive Director
NYSABE

33rd Annual Conference
“Bilingual Education: A Pathway to Multicultural and Multilingual Learning Communities”
March 11 – March 14, 2010
Huntington Hilton Hotel, Melville, New York