

Scaling What Works in Multilingual Literacy

By **Joanna Yip**, *Policy Lead II*

Despite growing recognition that multilingualism is an asset to literacy achievement and development, New York State has yet to build the systems, educator capacity, or policy infrastructure necessary to ensure multilingual learners become strong readers and writers. [Literacy outcomes](#) for New York's English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners (ELLs/MLLs) are deeply concerning. Only 3% of 4th grade ELLs/MLLs were proficient in Reading on the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress and only 5% of 8th grade ELLs/MLLs were proficient on the 2025 New York State English Language Arts Assessment¹. Improving outcomes and building systemwide change for multilingual learner literacy will require coordinated efforts and [significant shifts in practice](#) at all levels of the system. When education leaders have funding, access to evidence-based practices, and system-level enabling conditions, significant progress for multilingual learners across New York is possible.

This publication (the [third in a series](#) on multilingual learner literacy by EdTrust-New York) provides examples of local and state solutions that are working at scale to move the needle in literacy for multilingual learners. They are not isolated stories of heroic schools or individual teachers but examples of how strategic state and local investments and support can transform educator practice and align systems to disrupt poor literacy outcomes. These bright spots show how centering multilingual learner literacy drives systemic change for all students and represent replicable approaches grounded in the science of reading that can inform state and local policy and practices.

Key takeaways for literacy policy include the need to:

- ▶ Align and design literacy initiatives based on research-aligned and evidence-based practices that support multilingual learners;
- ▶ Build coherent literacy systems that align leadership, curriculum, assessment, professional learning, and instructional support so that educators share responsibility for multilingual learner success across grade levels and content areas.
- ▶ Center multilingual learners in every literacy initiative. Policies designed with multilingual learners in mind produce stronger literacy systems for all students.

Educators across the state are grappling with how to increase literacy outcomes for multilingual learners and are developing practices that work. Scaling these solutions across the state will require policy change, funding, and leadership to ensure that all of New York's multilingual learners receive the evidence-based support they deserve.

1. Prepare Leaders to Advance Multilingual Literacy



Background:

The Hunter College School of Education at the City University of New York trains educators for school (SBL) and district (SDL) leadership certification through an unconventional leadership development model—the Collaborative Leadership Advancing School Success (CLASS) program. To prepare for school and district leadership roles, candidates lead organizational change with a focus on improving language and literacy outcomes for underserved students.



The Challenge:

Although school and district leaders play an outsized role and impact on students' education, few school administrators are trained with the knowledge and competencies needed to best serve multilingual learners. Most states do not require leadership preparation programs to include training on supporting multilingual learners, leaving many leaders underprepared to meet the needs of these students. CLASS is one of the few leadership certification programs in New York that centers multilingual learners and continuous improvement, equipping leaders to drive equitable literacy outcomes and meet the needs of multilingual learners in any school system they lead.



The Solution:

CLASS is not a traditional leadership preparation program. Through a hands-on approach to leading change alongside students, teachers, and families, the program's explicit focus on language and literacy instruction helps leaders leverage multilingualism as a lens for improving teaching, learning, and system-wide decision making. The program builds the capacity of leaders who are not necessarily bilingual or English as a New Language (ENL) experts, by centering the needs of multilingual learners in everything a system leader needs to consider.

CLASS leaders are trained to see all organizational decisions and system-level design through the lens of their impact on students that are on the margins. They approach leadership through prioritizing language and literacy instruction, viewing multilingualism as an asset, and recognizing that the conditions needed for multilingual learners to thrive strengthens outcomes for all students. By centering students who are outside the sphere of success at the core of school improvement, CLASS helps leaders reduce barriers



for immigrant families and build school-wide programs grounded in culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.



The Impact:

CLASS is based on research [showing the school level impact on underserved students](#) that happens when leaders facilitate adult learning on [instructional teams](#) that focus on language development across content area instruction. Schools that incorporate the CLASS model are [better at getting students on track for graduation and meeting college readiness benchmarks, while shrinking the proportion of severely off-track students](#). These schools also showed increases in teachers' use of evidence-based practices, collaboration among teachers, and teachers' self-belief that they can make a difference — all factors that contribute to raising student achievement.



Lessons Learned:

CLASS shows that preparing educators to lead school systems effectively requires more than technical skills. The program equips leaders to drive organizational change through a cross-functional approach that breaks down silos between specialists and content teachers on collaborative instructional teams, fostering collective responsibility and shared accountability for all students. Candidates learn to identify and address organizational constraints and limiting beliefs at the heart of managing system-wide change. As one graduate reflected, the CLASS model is “most disruptive for people who want certainty and see leadership as a checklist.” Leading change for multilingual learner success requires leaders who can challenge the status quo, navigate ambiguity, and engage teams in problem solving without predetermined answers. By centering multilingual learners in leadership preparation, CLASS builds a bench of education leaders who are capable of setting a vision for equity and navigating the complex waters of change.

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2. Integrate Language Development into Literacy Instruction



Background:

In 2023, New York City launched NYC Reads to support greater numbers of students to reach grade-level proficiency in reading. The initiative seeks to ensure all students have access to consistent, effective instruction in phonics and decoding, as well as comprehensive, evidence-based curricula for reading comprehension grounded in grade-level, quality texts and instructional materials.

District 19 had already begun their journey of moving away from inconsistent, locally developed materials to a shared, research-based and standards-aligned curriculum a few years before NYC Reads began its city-wide implementation. The district spans the communities of East New York, Cypress Hills, and Starrett City, with 19% of students who are multilingual learners, many of whom also face housing insecurity. 83% of the district's multilingual learners are newcomers learning to read in English as a new language. In the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the district adopted common instructional materials for all subject areas including English Language Arts (ELA).



The Challenge:

When District 19 began implementing new literacy instructional materials, educators faced the same obstacles many other schools have: they found that the initial roll out overlooked the needs of multilingual learners. District leaders heard educators say, “ELLs can’t do this,” so they had to shift the narrative to “What is it that ELLs CAN do?” ELA teachers needed to see the role they could play in supporting language development, instead of leaving the responsibility solely to their colleagues who teach English as a New Language. All educators, regardless of their role, needed to learn to integrate language development within ELA instruction to support multilingual learners.

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The Solution:

Under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Tamra Collins, District 19's ELL/MLL Services Administrator, Atara Boker, partnered with the [Language Unity Collaborative: Educational Solutions \(LUCES\)](#). This research and professional learning partnership enabled 10 schools in the district to deepen their support to multilingual learners in the context of implementing their shared ELA materials. A curriculum-based approach to professional learning accelerated shifts in teacher practice across schools, ensuring that professional learning remained directly connected to what teachers had to teach the next day.

The LUCES approach focused on developing students' language comprehension through the text, lessons, and assessments embedded in the ELA materials. At the lesson and unit levels, teachers were trained to identify and teach the [Core Academic Language Skills](#) — a set of high-utility language skills needed to successfully engage with complex, grade-level texts and content. The language skills were aligned to unit essential questions, instructional goals, and culminating tasks and assessments. For key learning tasks, teachers identified the sections of the grade-level texts that most closely aligned with assignments and assessment questions, allowing them to focus on the language students needed for comprehension and demonstrating success. In addition, teachers learned how to help students take a functional approach to reading complex texts—understanding not only what the text says, but how language is used to convey meaning for its particular audience and purpose. Students were taught to draw on the language structures and patterns in the text, and apply them in their own writing, strengthening the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing.



The Impact:

From 2022 to 2025, the district increased their overall ELA proficiency by 11.5 percentage points, with their ELLs/MLLs growing 6.5 percentage points. Schools saw the most growth in students' ability to decode challenging words, as well as their ability to understand words and phrases that connect and organize ideas in a text. They also saw increases in participation among multilingual learners. There was a reduction in teachers' overuse of translations and greater strategic use of home language resources to support knowledge building and reading comprehension.

From there, the district went beyond supporting core ELA and phonics instruction. Leaders worked to better align Standalone ENL—which focuses on English language development—and bilingual programs, so that multilingual learners experienced a coherent approach to literacy development across languages and classroom settings. This included training ENL teachers to use instructional routines that reinforced the learning taking place in ELA classes. Instead of using separate content, teachers used Standalone ENL time to focus on building background knowledge for upcoming ELA lessons and supporting language development required for grade-level assessments and content.

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Lessons Learned:

The success of the LUCES partnership hinged on alignment across leadership roles, with school and district leaders learning alongside teachers to ensure a shared understanding of the practices needed to achieve the district's goals. Principals, assistant principals, and district curriculum leaders engaged together in professional learning and instructional calibration to support implementation across schools. Through instructional walk-throughs and collaborative learning grounded in a shared research-based framework, leaders built a common understanding of effective literacy instruction for multilingual learners. These leaders in turn supported teachers in the day to day implementation, creating a district-wide understanding of how to use the Core Academic Language Skills framework to implement shared literacy instructional materials at scale across schools.



3. Prepare Content Teachers to Advance Adolescent Multilingual Literacy



Background:

Educator Preparation Programs are a critical component to improve literacy outcomes for all students, but many programs do not sufficiently prepare teachers to work with multilingual learners. To address this gap, the City College of New York and New Visions for Public Schools formed a partnership—funded by the federal National Professional Development Program—to develop a teacher certification model that combines job-embedded training with instruction aligned to the science of reading and culturally responsive teaching.

Building Secondary Educator and Administrator Leadership ([B-SEAL](#)) is an 18-month certification program for middle and high school content-area teachers to earn either a New York State certification in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) or a Bilingual Extension, while paying minimal out-of-pocket costs. In addition to graduate coursework, teachers participate in year-long job-embedded instructional coaching, a Professional Learning Community, and team-based learning with colleagues at their schools.



The Challenge:

One of the greatest barriers to literacy proficiency for multilingual learners in middle and high schools is that students spend most of their day with content-area teachers who often have little training in supporting bilingualism, language development, and literacy. While English as a New Language and bilingual teachers play an essential role, relying on them alone will not close existing literacy gaps for multilingual learners. Content-area teachers need opportunities to train in instructional practices that integrate language and literacy instruction with academic content, to support multilingual learners in all classrooms throughout the school day.

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The Solution:

B-SEAL is a particularly effective model for teacher preparation because it places literacy, metacognition (students' ability to monitor and regulate their own thinking while reading), and student outcomes within content-area instruction at the heart of the program's approach. Teachers are trained to organize literacy instruction so that students engage in reading with a greater sense of agency. Content teachers learn how to help students develop the tools needed for strategic reading, sense making, and comprehension. Grounded in the scientific research on the benefits of metacognitive awareness on reading comprehension² B-SEAL trains content teachers in instructional routines that support students to develop self-awareness and problem solving approaches while reading complex texts. Students learn to pay close

attention to subject-specific language and recognize linguistic features in text that often present barriers to comprehension.



The Impact:

Based on survey data, students self-report positive changes in their ability to read strategically, willingness to voice comprehension confusion, and in their confidence, empowerment, and persistence as readers. As students develop greater self-awareness, they grow in comprehension and their willingness to take risks and read harder texts. This approach reminds students of the assets they already have so they can tackle harder problems in reading. The program provides compelling evidence of the direct link between teacher practice and accelerated shifts in student empowerment for literacy.

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Other research-based elements of the program include gathering data on students' comprehension and metacognitive awareness, to set up instructional goals and identify teaching moves. Ongoing formative assessment data helps teachers get an accurate understanding of what students can do. Research shows that when teachers analyze evidence of the impact of their actions, they develop greater self-efficacy and realize that how they teach matters³. As teachers develop confidence and skill, they also learn to make evidence-based decisions that better align their teaching in response to students' literacy needs. As a result, over 90% of teachers and 100% of leaders report that B-SEAL is effective in preparing them to support multilingual learners.



Lessons Learned:

In B-SEAL, coaching has multiplier effects on literacy, content learning, and teacher development. Its approach combines high-impact, evidence-based practices for literacy with student data within content-area instruction, raising teachers' self-awareness and student outcomes. The program achieves significant change in teacher practice for time spent in coaching, not just in literacy instruction but also culturally responsive teaching, because it trains teachers to collaborate with students to support their own growth.

The teachers' preparation experience is also situated within a Professional Learning Community. As individual teachers develop their teaching practice, their school leaders are required to learn alongside them and implement school-wide bilingual approaches. These include advancing the Seal of Biliteracy, designing bilingual programs, or developing a multilingual initiative in their roles as school administrators. In this way, the program advances a literacy strategy that has a direct impact on multilingual students and is built on their linguistic assets as resources for literacy and academic success.

4. Adopt High-Quality Materials to Advance Multilingual Literacy



Background:

In order to significantly increase the quality of bilingual education in New York, schools need coherent instructional materials in home languages to anchor instruction, professional learning, and implementation in alignment with [Commissioner's Regulation Part 154](#). Quality bilingual materials make it easier for schools to meet the linguistic needs of their multilingual learners and to reach biliteracy proficiency at higher rates.

After launching NYC Reads in New York City Public Schools, the district needed bilingual and English language development materials that would align with their core ELA instructional materials for literacy. Hoping to open at least 100 more bilingual programs by 2030, New York City invested in new instructional materials in 2025 to accelerate access to quality bilingual education for many more multilingual learners.



The Challenge:

Without a shared set of materials, teachers spend significant amounts of time looking for bilingual content that does not always align across languages or with research-backed practices for bilingual education. The district hoped to address instructional variability and needed a way to ensure quality in bilingual literacy instruction across schools. New York City has a long history of bilingual education, but the new district-developed materials offered the city a way to address uneven implementation, ensure parity between languages (avoiding English dominance), and increase alignment between Home Language Arts instruction and ELA knowledge-building and literacy instruction within NYC Reads. The district needed to make sure that teachers were not just teaching in two languages at a

surface level, but truly building explicit bridges between languages to strengthen students' understanding and linguistic dexterity.

To serve students who are new to learning English, teachers also faced another barrier: lack of adequate support and minimal guidance on how to approach English language development for Standalone English as a New Language classes. Instructional materials for English language development created by curriculum companies are notoriously poor in quality, with some programs focused on grammatical features devoid of analytical thinking and others lacking alignment to grade-level skills and standards students need to be successful in core content areas. The result is confusion, inconsistent instruction, and poor language development outcomes. It is no surprise that 47% of teachers surveyed by the Office of Multilingual Learners at NYCPS indicated Other/Unspecific when asked what materials, resources, or approaches they used for Standalone English as a New Language classroom instruction. Another 12% indicated that their approach was “Ad Hoc” and the rest (41%) were using a phonics program. These data show that teachers lack a research-backed approach to English language instruction, creating a major roadblock to literacy proficiency.





The Solution:

For early literacy, NYCPS adopted Amplify Caminos Lectoescritura for foundational skills instruction following a rigorous, multi-phase review process led by the Office of Multilingual Learners, NYC Reads Core Curriculum, and NYC educators to ensure alignment to the science of reading in Spanish, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and classroom feasibility. This deliberate selection process reflected the district's commitment to expanding equitable access to authentic, research-based Spanish literacy instruction for bilingual learners.



For the 2026–27 school year, this adoption is being implemented as part of a coherent system of literacy support, pairing [Amplify Caminos Lectoescritura for instruction with mCLASS Lectura](#) to enable aligned bilingual literacy screening and progress monitoring in Spanish. Through citywide professional learning for educators, job-embedded coaching, and teacher leader development, NYCPS is investing in the conditions necessary for strong implementation, ensuring that all bilingual programs have access to the high-quality materials, data, and instructional support needed to accelerate progress toward biliteracy.

In the upper grades, the district piloted bilingual complements to ELA curricula designed to be used in bilingual education settings. Starting with Spanish and Chinese, the two top languages represented among the city's bilingual programs, the district developed and is piloting middle school Home Language Arts curricula to support the development of biliteracy. Moving forward, it will develop additional language arts curriculum in other home languages to support bilingual programming in high schools.

NYCPS also engaged in an intensive review of English language development programs and a pilot of instructional materials for Standalone English as a New Language, the required language instruction for multilingual learners at the beginning levels of English proficiency. This process led to the first phase of formal adoption of one program for K-5 Standalone English as a New Language, providing an anchor for professional learning and implementation through a shared English language development program.



Lessons Learned:

By adopting quality bilingual and English as a New Language materials, NYCPS is poised to improve the quality of bilingual education at a greater scale, showing the potential of what common materials can do, while the field continues to demand better materials for bilingual education in the future. Professional learning and ongoing evidence-based decisions will be critical to ensure that materials are just the start and that teachers can truly make language and literacy support come alive in the most powerful ways for biliteracy success.

5. Align District Systems to Improve Multilingual Literacy



Background:

With 15% of students designated as English language learners/multilingual learners, Yonkers Public Schools has undertaken a deliberate approach to improving literacy outcomes through aligned systems, curriculum, and instructional practice. In the district, 54% of multilingual learners are newcomers (receiving between 0–3 years of required language services), and 42% are already performing at the Expanding level, just one performance level shy of

proficiency in the English language. In 2025, 20% of multilingual learners were within 20 points of reaching proficiency on the annual state English language proficiency assessment.



The Challenge:

District leaders recognized that multilingual learners were making significant progress, but the data showed they needed targeted, coherent support to reach literacy proficiency and long-term academic success. In Yonkers Public Schools, 64% of former English Language Learners (those who attain English language proficiency) perform at or above grade level in ELA and consistently graduate at rates between 95% and 97%, outperforming the district's overall graduation rate of approximately 90%. These outcomes demonstrate what is possible but the district needed a way to consistently get students from Expanding to proficiency at scale with more students.



The Solution:

The district identified writing as a critical area that could improve literacy achievement among multilingual learners, particularly in schools performing below the ESSA accountability benchmark. Rather than addressing writing as a separate intervention, the district established cross-functional school-based teams composed of English as a New Language teachers, grade-level classroom teachers, special education staff, and administrators. These teams collaborated to identify students on the cusp of English language proficiency, examine where and how they were receiving instruction throughout the day, and determine whether they were receiving explicit, coordinated support for writing across learning environments.

To move from data to action, the district developed the STEP Protocol (Strengths, Targets, Exit-Readiness, and Planning). The protocol helped school teams to analyze student

strengths and identify what students needed to move closer to English proficiency and academic success. The STEP process directed educators back to the district's adopted high-quality instructional materials, helping teachers identify the embedded language supports, writing opportunities, discussion routines, and foundational literacy components already built into their lessons and units. This created a clear connection between student data, instructional decision-making, and curriculum implementation, so that teachers could provide targeted support while maintaining rigorous, grade-level instruction.



The work was strengthened through the district's partnership with the [Science of Reading Center at SUNY New Paltz](#). Approximately 60 K–2 teachers engaged in sustained professional learning through micro-credential cohorts focused on foundational literacy instruction and evidence-based literacy practices. By building teacher expertise in the early grades, the district strengthened its capacity to provide high-quality, curriculum based, grade-level literacy instruction for all students, including multilingual learners.



Lessons Learned:

This work was made possible through the deliberate conditions established by district leadership. By aligning student data, team structures for targeted systems of support and intervention, curriculum implementation, and professional learning, the district created a coherent approach to improve instruction and accelerate student outcomes. Responsibility for multilingual learner success shifted from individual specialists alone to cross-functional teams that shared ownership for language and literacy development within grade-level classroom instruction. As a result, multilingual learner supports were no longer isolated initiatives but instead embedded in grade-level teaching, ensuring students had consistent access to rigorous instruction and targeted support to accelerate proficiency, literacy, and long-term academic success.

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6. Accelerate Literacy Growth for Newcomer Multilingual Learners



Background:

New York is home to thousands of multilingual learners who are recent arrivals and new to learning English. Among them are Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)—students whose formal schooling has been disrupted due to migration, war, poverty, or other circumstances. These students often enter middle and high school having to simultaneously learn English, develop foundational literacy skills in their home language and English, all while learning to master grade-level academic content.



In response, the New York State Education Department funded [Bridges to Academic Success](#) in 2011 as a project of the Graduate Center at the City University of New York, to develop programs for SIFE⁴ and newcomer multilingual learners in [Integrated English Language Arts](#), [Standalone English as a New Language](#), [Spanish Home Language Arts](#), and [mathematics](#). Programs include year-long curricula and professional learning available to all New York State school districts at no additional cost.



The Challenge:

The majority of Bridges middle and high school students (95%) read at a kindergarten level in English when they begin their participation in the program, and many are still developing literacy in their home language. These students are often written off by schools that assume it is too late to teach them how to read. Without targeted literacy support, many of the students face significant barriers in academic subjects and often drop out of school.



The Solution:

The Bridges program and curricular design is grounded in the belief that newcomer multilingual learners and SIFE bring valuable resources, such as life experiences, home language, and cultural knowledge, that enrich their schools and communities. Since 2016, Bridges has served over 15,000 newcomer multilingual learners and 1,800 educators across districts in the State. At [Brentwood High School in Long Island](#), Bridges was included as a part

of the school's strategic plan to improve language, literacy, content and social-emotional learning skills for multilingual learners. After observing several Bridges classrooms, one visiting teacher said, "I used to think that high school work with SIFE students was not going to be rigorous...Now I think that rigorous standards and grade-appropriate work is possible."



The Impact:

The results from the Bridges program demonstrate that significant literacy growth is possible for students who start with the greatest unmet needs:

- ▶ From 2016 to 2025, 62% of students in the Bridges program experienced growth of 2 or more reading levels and 14% advanced by 4 to 6 reading levels during their participation in the program.
- ▶ 100% of students demonstrated statistically significant growth between their initial English proficiency assessment (the NYSITELL⁵) and their first state English language proficiency assessment (the NYSESLAT⁶). 86% of students improved by at least one full English proficiency level within two years.
- ▶ At least half of the students showed mastery of foundational skills in English literacy in just one school year, setting them up to access grade-level texts in English in subsequent years of middle and high school.



Lessons Learned:

Not only can students make progress, but they can meet the same academic requirements as their peers with a little more time and smartly designed learning environments. Literacy growth does not happen overnight, but Bridges students show that with the right support, that trajectory toward reading proficiency can be accelerated.



Based on the successes of the programs described above, New York state and district leaders can make significant progress in disrupting poor literacy outcomes for multilingual learners by:

- ▶ Supporting the training and ongoing professional development of school and district leaders to better serve multilingual learners.
- ▶ Creating enabling conditions to support the adoption and implementation of evidence-based, high-quality instructional materials that were designed to meet the literacy needs of multilingual learners in English and students' home languages.
- ▶ Providing guidance, criteria, and incentives to ensure that professional learning providers train all K-12 teachers in evidence-based and research-aligned practices that integrate content and language learning for multilingual learners, inclusive of bilingual language and literacy development.
- ▶ Increasing the training available to prepare pre- and in-service content-area educators to support multilingual learners in language and literacy development in all subject areas.
- ▶ Ensuring all educators understand how the science of reading applies to linguistically diverse students, such as those learning to read in more than one language.
- ▶ Expanding the instructional and professional learning resources available to meet the needs of multilingual learners who require specialized support, such as newcomers, SIFE, and long-term English language learners.
- ▶ Aligning all professional learning across a school/district with leaders and teachers working together to address the language and literacy needs of multilingual learners in a coherent manner across all subject areas and grade levels.

These examples show how multi-pronged systems and coordinated resources can uplift literacy proficiency for multilingual learners. With stronger systems, educator capacity, and policy infrastructure, New York can help multilingual learners gain the literacy skills and confidence they need to thrive in school and beyond.



Endnotes

¹ Data on state assessments from the 2024-25 school year are from the state databases found at <https://data.nysed.gov>.

² Pearson, P. D., Palincsar, A. S., Biancarosa, G., & Berman, A. I. (Eds.). (2020). *Reaping the Rewards of the Reading for Understanding Initiative*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Education. Kim, J. S., Olson, C. B., Scarcella, R., Kramer, J., Pearson, M., van Dyk, D, Collins, P., & Land, R. E. (2011). A randomized experiment of a cognitive strategies approach to text-based analytical writing for mainstreamed Latino English language learners in grades 6 to 12. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 4(3), 231-263.

³ Guo, Y., & Tian, G. (2025). How Does Teacher Certification Promote Student Achievement in Science, Reading, and Math? A Chain-Mediated Model of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy and Pedagogical Innovation. *Journal of Intelligence*, 14(1), 2. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence14010002>. Gordon, Danielle, Blundell, Chris, Mills, Reece, & Bourke, Terri (2023) Teacher self-efficacy and reform: A systematic literature review. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 50, pp. 801-821.

⁴ Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) are multilingual learners who have attended school in the U.S. for fewer than 12 months, and are two or more years below grade level in home language literacy and/or math due to inconsistent or interrupted schooling prior to their arrival.

⁵ The New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) serves as the State's formal English language proficiency assessment in the process for initially identifying English Language Learners in New York State.

⁶ The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) is designed to annually assess the English language proficiency of all English Language Learners (ELLs) enrolled in Grades K–12 in New York State schools. The test provides the State and schools with important information about the English language development of ELLs and is part of the State's compliance with federal laws that mandate the annual assessment and monitoring of the English language proficiency of all ELLs.