



COALITION

LATINO EDUCATION ADVOCACY DIRECTORS

Legislative Priorities 2021

New York State

About the LEAD Coalition

[Latino Education Advocacy Directors \(LEAD\) coalition](#) consists of leading educational advocacy organizations committed to improving Latinx academic outcomes and opportunities in New York State. Created by the [Hispanic Federation](#), the coalition works to highlight and address the educational needs of Latinx students in the following ways: identifying and supporting effective practice; public policy advocacy and research; and the advancement of a shared educational agenda.

LEAD COALITION 2021 GOALS

In response to COVID-19 and on-going challenges with systemic racism, the Coalition demands action to ensure that equity is at the forefront of all educational rebuilding policies. This year we are focusing on budget and legislative asks meant to:

- Increase equitable relief funding for New York State schools that support recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Ensure access to fixed and high-quality broadband across New York;
- Improve interventions to support students' academic/non-academic development;
- Increase high school graduation and retention;
- Increase Latinx college and career readiness; and
- Increase college access, graduation and retention.

LEAD COALITION MEMBERS

Advocates for Children of New York
Alliance for Quality Education
Adelante of Suffolk County
Amber Charter School
Avenues for Justice
ASPIRA of NY
Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education
Catholic Charities Community Services
Coalition for Hispanic Family Services
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
Community Assoc. of Progressive Dominicans
El Centro del Inmigrante
El Puente
ExpandedED Schools
Hispanic Federation
Ibero-American Action League
Internationals Network for Public Schools
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Latino U College Access
LSA Family Health Service
Masa-Mex Ed
National "I Have a Dream" Foundation
NYC Coalition for Educational Justice
NYS Association for Bilingual Education
Parent-Child Home Program Project Hospitality
Operation Exodus
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
The Opportunity Network
Zone 126

P-12 Education Priorities

BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Fully Fund the Original Foundation Aid Formula—\$3.8 billion

NYS's highest Court found that the State has unconstitutionally underfunded schools through the annual budget by failing to “align funding with need” to determine the “actual cost” of providing a “sound and basic education” to all students as promised in the State constitution.

COVID-19 Funding Requests

- Repayment of Pandemic Adjustment cut of 2020—\$1.1 billion
- Distribute current/future Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund equitably across NYS schools—\$164.2 million
- Reimburse Expense Base Aids (including pandemic related transportation costs) —\$400 million
- General COVID-19 Expenses —\$225 million

Ensure access to fixed and high-quality broadband across New York

- Equitable access to high quality devices/internet requires funding for schools, direct families, homeless shelters, community organizations for resources to address the digital gap —\$341 million
- Cultural-relevant and linguistically appropriate professional development trainings on remote instruction and digital literacy to parents and school staff. Supporting the Digital Literacy Pilot program will ensure families receive supports in their home language —\$8 million

Increase NYSED Funding to Support Multilingual Learners (MLLs) formerly English Language Learners

MLLs significantly lag behind their non-MLL peers when it comes to academic achievement and graduation rates. We firmly support the Board of Regents and NYSED budget asks to support programs for these students.

- 1) Increase districts’ capacity to serve MLLs, enhance curriculum, and increase instructional support—\$15 million
- 2) Increase support services by expanding staff at NYSED’s RBERN and statewide support centers—\$1.6 million
- 3) Create a new English Language Proficiency assessment for MLLs with severe cognitive disabilities—\$1 million
- 4) Enhance communication with multilingual parents by providing document translation services—\$1.5 million

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure High-Quality Internet Access in New York State—S3184/A5180 (Mayer/Benedetto)

NYS must establish a funding stream that focuses on increasing access to broadband internet across the state. To ensure high-quality internet access for every student and school in New York State during the COVID-19 pandemic, this bill will provide a funding avenue by establishing the E-LEARN fund through an assessment on intrastate operating revenues of telecommunication companies.

Employ Mental Health Professionals in All K-12 Schools —S1969/A05019 (Jackson/Gonzalez-Rojas)

This bill requires that all elementary, intermediate, middle, junior and senior high schools throughout New York State have a full-time licensed social worker and a full-time licensed psychologist on staff to meet the needs of their students.

Establish Preventive Mental Health Methods and Trainings for Educators— A2134(Fernandez)

This bill requires training for teachers, administrators, and instructors in the area of mental health first aid.

Access to a licensed/certified social worker, guidance counselor and career supports in all K-12th schools —S1062 and S831 (Gounardes)

These bills require licensed or certified school social workers, guidance counselor and career supports in each elementary, intermediate, middle, junior high and senior high school.

Expand Access to Advanced Coursework to Improve Educational Equity—S1111/A04407 (Liu/People-Stokes)

This bill requires schools to provide notice to parents on the availability of advanced courses, and other early college and career experiences; and requires educational agencies to adopt a policy for automatic enrollment in advanced courses where a student has demonstrated readiness, pursuant to measures determined by the Commissioner of Education. This bill will also allow a parent of a student to opt-out of automatic enrollment.

School Climate, Codes of Conduct & Disciplinary Action of Code Violations—A05197 (Nolan)

This bill requires that school codes of conduct must: (1) set clear and specific expectations that hold students accountable, (2) define violations in the code of conduct, (3) use graduated and proportionate discipline practices, (4) define the roles and responsibilities of school personnel and law enforcement, (5) ensure annual staff training, and (6) include restorative approaches to proactively build a school community based upon cooperation, mutual understanding, trust and respect. In addition, the **code of conduct must establish procedures by which violations are reported** to the appropriate school personnel, the facts are investigated and determined, and interventions and discipline measures are decided upon and implemented.

Increase Parent Information in Home Languages—S01429/A00407 (Serrano/Rozic)—\$5 million

This bill establishes the Educational Equity Act which provides language assistance to parent/guardians who have children enrolled in public school and who do not speak English. This bill would require school districts to:

- **Create an annual language assistance plan** to assess language needs within the district and determine the primary languages of parents based on population. (Top 2 languages of 2% of population or top 8 languages if in NYC).
- **Provide translations of certain documents sent to parents** regarding a child's education. Including but not limited to: report cards and permission slips; documents pertaining to a student's health, safety, placement, or discipline.
- **Provide a mechanism for school teachers and staff to fax documents and receive translated versions** of them within a reasonable time. Provide a notice to parents and guardians of their rights to translation services. Sign in visible area to parents informing them of covered languages in schools.

Information Increase Aid for English Language Learner Student Enrollment —S0203/A906 (Kaplan/Magnarelli)

This bill will support districts and students with substantial Multilingual learners enrollment growth until the Foundation Aid is fully funded.

Increase culturally and linguistically diverse educators—S00342/A04556 (Persaud/Hyndman)

This bill supports the establishment of teacher programs that increase representation and retention of underrepresented teachers. This bill supports the teachers of tomorrow program by providing grants and procedures to increase recruitment and retention resources for a diverse teacher population.

Higher Education Priorities

BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Continued Funding for the Senator José Peralta NYS Dream Act and Implementation

NYS must secure NYS DREAM Act funding to ensure undocumented immigrants continue to have opportunities and access to higher education. This is the same increase to state financial aid programs as last year. —\$27 million

During the NYS DREAM Act implementation, HESC seemed to be stretched to its full capacity and needs additional financial support to properly put the law into action. HESC needs funding to create a statewide marketing and education campaign, increase community outreach, and develop training materials/sessions for counselors. —\$1 million

As with the Excelsior Scholarship, SUNY and CUNY must also participate in marketing and recruitment efforts to assist new students in understanding the NYS DREAM Act Application Process and Eligibility Criteria. They should distribute information about the NYS DREAM Act at all student fairs and at their Financial aid workshops. SUNY and CUNY should receive \$250,000 each to help with these efforts. —\$500,00

Increase Opportunity Program Funding

Opportunity Program Funding has been proven to increase retention and graduation rates, especially for first generation college bound students. Many of these students are low-income students of color that need additional academic and financial support and services to graduate college.

FOUR YEAR UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

- Higher Educational Opportunity Program (HEOP)—\$35.5 million
- Liberty Partnership Program—\$18.4 million
- Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP)—\$15.8 million
- Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP)—\$12 million

COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAMS

- Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK)—\$32.8 million
- CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)—\$2.5 million
- College Discovery Opportunity Program—\$1.6 million

PROGRAMS SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Support and Services for Individuals with Disabilities —\$15 million
- Bridge to College and Careers Pilot Program —\$3 million

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Access to Mental Health Staff Members at SUNY and CUNY campuses —S844/A302 (Gounardes/Gottfried)

This bill relates to requiring at least a ratio of one clinical, non-student mental health staff member per one thousand students on all SUNY and CUNY campuses.

Continue and Prioritize the Smart Scholars and P-TECH —A7501 (Benedetto) *not introduced yet*—\$625,000

Smart Scholars Early College High School Program and P-TECH programs further prepare students for college and postsecondary success. The Commissioner of NYSED provides grants to continue funding these educational opportunities. This bill would require the Commissioner to prioritize partnerships that demonstrate the willingness and capacity to serve students who have been identified as economically disadvantaged and/or academically at-risk for not successfully completing high school or not enrolling in or succeeding in college.

Streamline Access to Financial Aid Through the Excelsior Scholarship for DACA Students —A2257(Simon)

This bill relates to eligibility for the New York state excelsior scholarship for those enrolled in the federal deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA) program. Specifically, it removes questions on the application form related to immigration status.



Rebuilding After COVID-19: Supports for Latinx Students Across New York State

Dear Elected Official,

During the past year, educators, students, and parents navigated a set of unprecedented challenges. Since our students' academic learning became interrupted, alarming statistics clearly indicate that Black and brown students are falling behind. Therefore, as our communities focus on rebuilding, we must intentionally work to meet the needs of communities of color. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and on-going challenges with systemic racism, the Coalition demands action to ensure that equity is at the forefront of all educational rebuilding policies.

The pandemic has changed the landscape of the NYS educational system and highlighted the vast inequities faced by schools and students. Schools have been forced to shift scarce resources to meet distance learning needs for their students with short notice. Providing equitable financial resources is critical so that schools most affected by the pandemic may address academic and socio-emotional challenges. The budget asks presented in this document, address specific fiscal recommendations that must be met to ensure schools across NYS respond to students, families, and educators' needs.

Additionally, students, parents, and districts require support in accessing a reliable internet connection and high-quality devices to ensure remote learning is successful. Before COVID, nationwide only 57% of Hispanic families had a computer or laptop at home, compared to 82% of whites. As the pandemic continued, nearly 40% of Latinos did not have internet access at home and 32% did not have a computer ([SOMOS Survey 2020](#)). In New York State alone, 726,000 students or 27% of public school students do not have the necessary internet devices or connections for remote learning. The budget and legislative asks outlined above are imperative to support families and students in attaining equitable access to high-quality devices and internet. Furthermore, the crisis brought many families, especially our immigrant families, compounded distress with illness and loss, unemployment, food and housing insecurity, lack of access to basic needs, and the threat of deportation. During remote learning, Multilingual Learners' educational gaps were exacerbated due to the lack of in-person resources available. The state must provide intentional funding and programs supports to ensure the needs of Multilingual Learners and their families are met.

Equally important, the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is still unknown, nonetheless, significant investments to create academic and socio-emotional recovery supports for Latinx students and their families are essential. State leaders must respond to the increased educational gaps of our underserved student populations with both budget allocations and legislative changes. Our coalition presents several legislative asks related to academic supports and mental health to provide holistic approaches to address the needs of students, families, and educators.

Finally, our report, [New York's Latinx Completion and Career Success Crisis](#), published in collaboration with Here to Here, shows that since 2007, more Latinx students are enrolling in college at far higher rates of growth than any other racial/ethnic group. At the same time, however, these same students are increasingly leaving college without completing a degree, leaving them without the certifications that can help them find work, and in many cases, burdened by debt. Now, with the pandemic, we are clear that this crisis has only heightened the need for postsecondary readiness support that equip students to enter postsecondary and/or career opportunities successfully.

As part of our higher education priorities, we ask elected officials to prioritize programs, funding streams, and supports that address the needs of underserved students. For example, increasing access to rigorous coursework for underserved communities, expanding access to financial aid funding has proven to improve retention and graduation rates, especially for first-generation college bound students. Many of these students are low-income students of color that need additional academic and financial support and services to graduate college. Moreover, addressing the needs of undocumented students and policies that limit access to financial aid for them must be examined and changed.

Overall, Hispanic Federation and the LEAD Coalition believe a continuous trajectory toward justice and fairness in education is rooted in meeting the immediate and long-term needs of our students and families. We look forward to strengthening our partnership with your office and committing to efforts that will move forward the budget and legislative items outlined. Your commitment to respond to our families' needs now will benefit many students, communities and, in turn, the entire state.

In partnership,

LEAD Coalition Members