



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

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Resolution on Improving Multilingual Support and Communication in NYCPS

Approved at the January 16, 2024 CEC3 meeting by Council Members vote.

Sponsors: Dr. Darling James Miramey, Sharon Collins, Dr. Ting Yuan, Josh Kross

WHEREAS, Governor Kathy Hochul's announcement on Oct 3, 2022, regarding the launch of the Office of Language Access, overseeing and providing guidance on the expanded statewide language access policy, reinforces New York State's commitment to being a national leader in language access;

WHEREAS, the new language access law mandates executive State agencies to provide interpretation services in any language and translate vital agency documents into the top 12 most commonly spoken non-English languages, with flexibility for additional languages based on regional language access needs;

WHEREAS, the State Budget allocates \$2 million for the establishment of the Office of Language Access, operating out of the Office of General Services, ensuring efficient implementation of the new language access law, including funds for State agencies to translate documents into additional languages covered under the new law;

WHEREAS, the language access law requires each State agency to designate a language access coordinator and develop a language access plan, ensuring compliance and measuring performance, with a focus on improving access to government services for New Yorkers with limited English proficiency;

WHEREAS, acknowledging the diverse linguistic backgrounds of NYCPS community;

WHEREAS, recognizing that language barriers may result in disparities, negatively impacting the educational experience of our children by limiting access to crucial information related to education, school policies, and resources;

WHEREAS, identifying the need to enhance parental awareness of their rights within the educational system, emphasizing the importance of access to information in their home languages;

WHEREAS, understanding that the Department of Education bears the responsibility to foster inclusivity, ensuring that all families, regardless of linguistic background, have equal access to essential information;

WHEREAS, recognizing the critical role of the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ) in identifying students in need of English as a Second Language (ESL) services, with a need for improved communication to parents;

WHEREAS, understanding the necessity for clarification in the process of identifying English Language Learners (ELLs) through the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL), particularly for early education students who may transition without adequate ESL support;

WHEREAS, acknowledging the urgent need for afterschool enrichment programs in home languages to support young learners recovering from pandemic-related learning loss;

WHEREAS, identifying the need for improved transparency and responsiveness in communication from the Chancellor's Central Office regarding critical issues affecting students and parents;

WHEREAS, recognizing the necessity for teacher training programs in languages of all bilingual programs to better address the linguistic diversity within our student population;

WHEREAS, understanding that the absence of student workbooks in various languages hinders access to educational materials and limits learning opportunities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Community Education Council District 3 urges the Department of Education to update Chancellor Regulation A-663, not revised for over 15 years, to improve the system of language selection. Additionally, the Council calls for consistent communication based on current needs in more than nine languages, covering all bilingual program languages in NYCPS. This communication should include:

1/ Ensuring accurate and timely translation and interpretation services for documents, announcements, and meetings in these languages.

2/ Promoting awareness of parental rights and the significance of the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ) in identifying students requiring ESL services.

3/ Seeking clarification on the identification process for English Language Learners (ELLs) through the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL), with a focus on early education students.

4/ Developing afterschool enrichment programs in home languages to support young learners recovering from pandemic-related learning loss.

5/ Enhancing communication from the Chancellor's Central Office regarding critical issues affecting students and parents.

6/ Developing training programs for teachers in all bilingual program languages to better serve our linguistically diverse student population.

7/ Providing student workbooks in various languages to facilitate learning opportunities.

8/ Implementing new technology and tools.

Community Education Council District 3 is committed to ensuring that every student and their family have equal access to the resources and information they need to thrive in our diverse educational community. This resolution reflects our dedication to promoting inclusivity, eliminating language barriers, and fostering a more equitable and supportive educational environment for all. We look forward to working collaboratively with the Department of Education and the NYS Office of Language Access to implement these vital improvements.