



## GETTING IT RIGHT

# Ensuring a Quality Education for English Language Learners in New York



Prepared by:

New York Immigration Coalition

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**The New York Immigration Coalition**

**November 2008**

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**NYIC POLICY BRIEF**

**GETTING IT RIGHT**  
**Ensuring a Quality Education for English  
Language Learners in New York**

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# INTRODUCTION

English Language Learners<sup>1</sup> nationwide face huge obstacles to academic success. About two-thirds of children who have not yet learned English are living in poverty, compared to only one-third of English proficient children. Their parents are likely to have had only limited schooling and more than half are enrolled in “linguistically-segregated” schools.<sup>2</sup> ELLs who were not born here face additional obstacles: not only must they learn a new language, but they must also adjust to a new country and school system - all the while trying to catch up to a moving train and meet promotion and graduation standards.

We know that our public education system is not succeeding with these students. Despite overall gains in graduation rates over the last four years in New York, graduation rates for ELL students have actually decreased during this time and the gap between ELL students and English proficient students has widened. Clearly, just as ELL students have to work harder, so do we.

This policy brief is based on an extensive ELL costing out research study, *Ensuring An Adequate Education for English Language Learners Students in New York*, conducted by Multicultural Education, Training & Advocacy, Inc- an organization with over twenty-five years experience focused on school resource, ELL and immigrant student education policy and practice issues.<sup>3</sup> *Ensuring An Adequate Education for ELLs*, hereafter referred to as the *ELL Costing Out Study*, is the first comprehensive study to detail the specific needs of ELL students. META’s research draws on an exhaustive review of 60 costing out studies, previous work on the needs of ELL students, panels with experienced New York ELL educators, guidance from national experts, and analysis of successful schools in New York and nationally. It specifies elements of a quality ELL education developed based on concentration of ELL students in the context of grade level, English proficiency, and targeted ELL subpopulation needs, such as Students with Interrupted Formal Education, and arrives at a bottom line in terms of the costs.

Educators across the country are seeking ways to adapt to a new diversity of languages, cultures and student needs, and to find ways to avoid offering curricula that can only succeed with learners already fluent in English. This policy brief, *Getting it Right*, draws on data and findings from the *ELL Costing Out Study* and our more than twelve years of experience working with immigrant communities and ELL practitioners to develop policy recommendations for improving ELL student outcomes. It is our hope that this policy brief will provide policy makers, researchers, educators and parents some guidance and tools to help them advocate for and implement the best possible programs for ELL students and deliver on the promise of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity settlement, which specifies how new state funds should be used to help students with the greatest educational needs, including ELLs, succeed.

# FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## Seven Major Aspects in Developing a Comprehensive Plan for ELL Success

**1. Taking Stock of ELL Needs and Factors Impacting Academic Success:** English Language Learners are not a monolithic population. They come from a variety of backgrounds with a diversity of skills and needs that will impact the type of programs and services they need. Thus, in planning ELL programs, it is important that schools compile and analyze:

- Specific needs of elementary, middle school, and high school ELLs
- Concentration of ELL students in the context of grade level and English proficiency
- Targeted needs within ELL subpopulations, such as Students with Interrupted Formal Education, Immigrant Youth, Long-Term ELLs, and Special Education ELLs.

**2. Basic Elements of a Quality Education Must Be Provided at the State Level:** The *ELL Costing Out Study* identified elements necessary for providing ELLs an adequate education at all levels. Although programs and elements will vary from school to school, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) must guide and help districts and schools develop programs that draw from the following elements:

- Expand academic instruction time through extended school day, Saturday academies & tutoring;
- Expand student supports through guidance, mentoring & social support;
- Enhance learning resources and materials including technology and software;
- Reduce class sizes for ELLs including an ideal 15:1 qualified teacher ratio depending on grade and ELL concentration;
- Expand Pre-K and full day Kindergarten opportunities with targeted ELL interventions;
- Provide ongoing professional development for all teachers on ELL methodologies;
- Strengthen planning, preparation, and support for ELL teachers;
- Enhance parent engagement, family outreach, and community partnerships;

**3. Elementary, Middle School, and High School Specific ELL Needs that Must be Addressed:** In addition to the elements that we identified at all levels, there are different considerations that must be addressed at different grade levels. For example,

- Middle school ELLs are challenged by the increased language demands of content instruction and by the expectation that they will learn more independently. As such, reading interventions and more individualized tutoring have both proven to be successful strategies.
- High School ELLs also tend to be new immigrant students and often need targeted supports to help them adjust and meet graduation standards in a shorter time. High Schools that are successful with ELLs often incorporate trained guidance counselors and dropout prevention programs in their ELL plans.

#### **4. Effective Administrative Functions Must Be Supported**

- These include program administration, assessment, monitoring, technical assistance and teacher costs related to administering the state’s annual language proficiency examination, and processing of state and federal ELL program applications.

#### **5. Diverse ELL Instructional Models Must Be Encouraged and Constantly Improved**

- The state is responsible for ensuring that parents have a meaningful choice among ESL (English as a Second Language), transitional bilingual, dual language programs, or other model programs. Through program monitoring and evaluation and state level technical support to districts and schools, the state must develop processes that can glean, share and provide incentives for best instructional practices, integrate them into ongoing quality professional development for ELL educators and support scaling up of proven, successful programs.

#### **6. A Critical Precondition: Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified ELL Teachers**

- A serious commitment to improving outcomes and implementing quality programs for ELL students will require a significant increase in the number of certified and qualified ELL teachers. In New York State, we know for a fact that there is a shortage of certified ESL and bilingual teachers.<sup>4</sup> Taking current ELL certified teacher available and attrition rate into account, the *ELL Costing Out Study* estimates that an additional 7,780 ELL teachers are needed in New York State.
- To eliminate this shortage once and for all, the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department in partnership with Institutions of Higher Education, must create a long-term strategy for training and recruiting the certified and highly skilled teaching force we need to help ELL student succeed. Undoubtedly, these efforts will require us to reexamine how teaching preparation programs are providing new ELL teachers with the training and skills they need to help ELL students succeed.

#### **7. Brass Tacks: Funding and Accountability for ELL Aid Needed to Ensure Implementation of Elements for ELL Success**

- The *ELL Costing Out Study* found that ELL student education requires an extra funding weight of approximately twice that of regular education students (2.0); currently funding for ELLs is approximately half that (1.5).
- Additionally, in the real world, where school budgets reflect a combination of state, local and federal funding sources and a myriad of competing needs and choices, it is not at all clear that even the currently generated supplemental resources are in fact being spent on the specific educational needs of ELL students. Thus, in addition to providing adequate funding for services, the state must strengthen guidance and accountability on the use of ELL funds to ensure that they reach the population funds are intended to help and that money is used in high quality, proven programs such as those outlined above.

## THE SCOPE OF THE CHALLENGE

### English Language Learners are the nation's fastest growing student population

Nationally, nearly 5 million students, approximately 10.5% of the US school population, were categorized as English Language Learners in 2005-2006.<sup>5</sup> That is an increase of nearly 61% over the preceding decade. This challenge is not going away - and the evidence shows that we are not educating them for the world they must face.

Distribution of ELL Students by Home Language		
Home Language	Number	Percent
Spanish	113,062	58.8
English	11,994	6.2
Chinese	4,178	2.2
Bengali	3,787	2
Arabic	3,585	1.9
Russian	3,377	1.8
Haitian Creole	3,286	1.7
Korean	2,021	1.1
French	1,591	0.8
Albanian	1,423	0.7
Polish	1,308	0.7
Punjabi	1,101	0.6

**\*\* By 1,000 or More ELL/LEP Students (N=192,425).<sup>7</sup>**

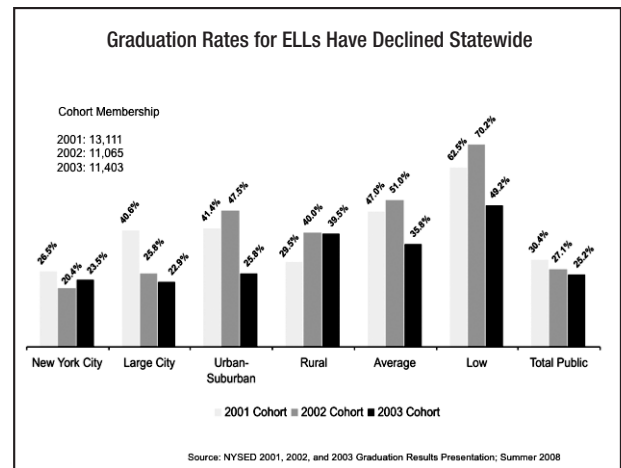
In New York, ELL students are defined as students coming from homes where English is not the primary language and who test below a minimum English proficiency level on a state-mandated exam called the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R).

Some 200,000 students in New York are ELLs. They represent approximately 13% of the total NYS student population. They attend 3,384 schools in 527 school districts throughout the state and more than three-quarters are enrolled in New York City and the Big 4 Cities of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers.<sup>6</sup>

# Our School System Lags Behind in English Language Learner Achievement in Nearly Every Measure of Educational Attainment

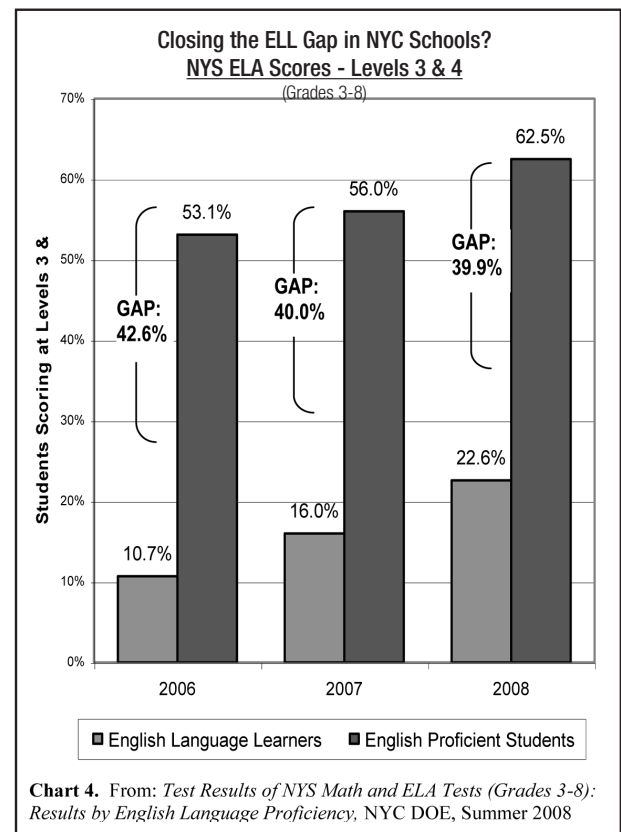
## New York State

- In 2004-2005, only 51.3% of ELL students who had completed four years of high school passed the Regents English Assessment with a score of 55 or higher. Meanwhile, 85.6% of non-ELL students passed that same exam. The percentage of ELLs who have passed the Regents ELA and Math examinations has either remained flat or declined over time.<sup>8</sup>
- ELL graduation rates in New York State continue to decline. Only 25% of ELLs in the 2003 cohort graduated within four years; a decrease of 5% from the 2001 cohort. The overall graduation rate for students in the 2003 cohort was 68.6%.



## New York City

- In 2007, only 21% of ELL students in NYC met 4th grade English Language Arts (ELA) standards compared with 63% of non-ELL students. This gap was more pronounced on the 8th grade ELA, where only 5% of ELL students achieved the learning standards as compared with 46% of non-ELL students. This gap has persisted over the past eight years.<sup>9</sup>
- ELL enrollment rates swell in 9th and 10th grade due to increases in immigrant student enrollment in those grades; however, by the 11th grade, nearly half of ELLs disappear from school rosters. These students likely dropped out or were pushed out of school into GED programs.
- Barely a quarter of ELL students in the New York City's class of 2006 graduated high school— less than half the rate of English Proficient students. This represented a decrease of 9% from the 2005 four-year ELL graduation rate of 35.3%. Nearly half of ELL students drops out of school after seven years.<sup>10</sup>



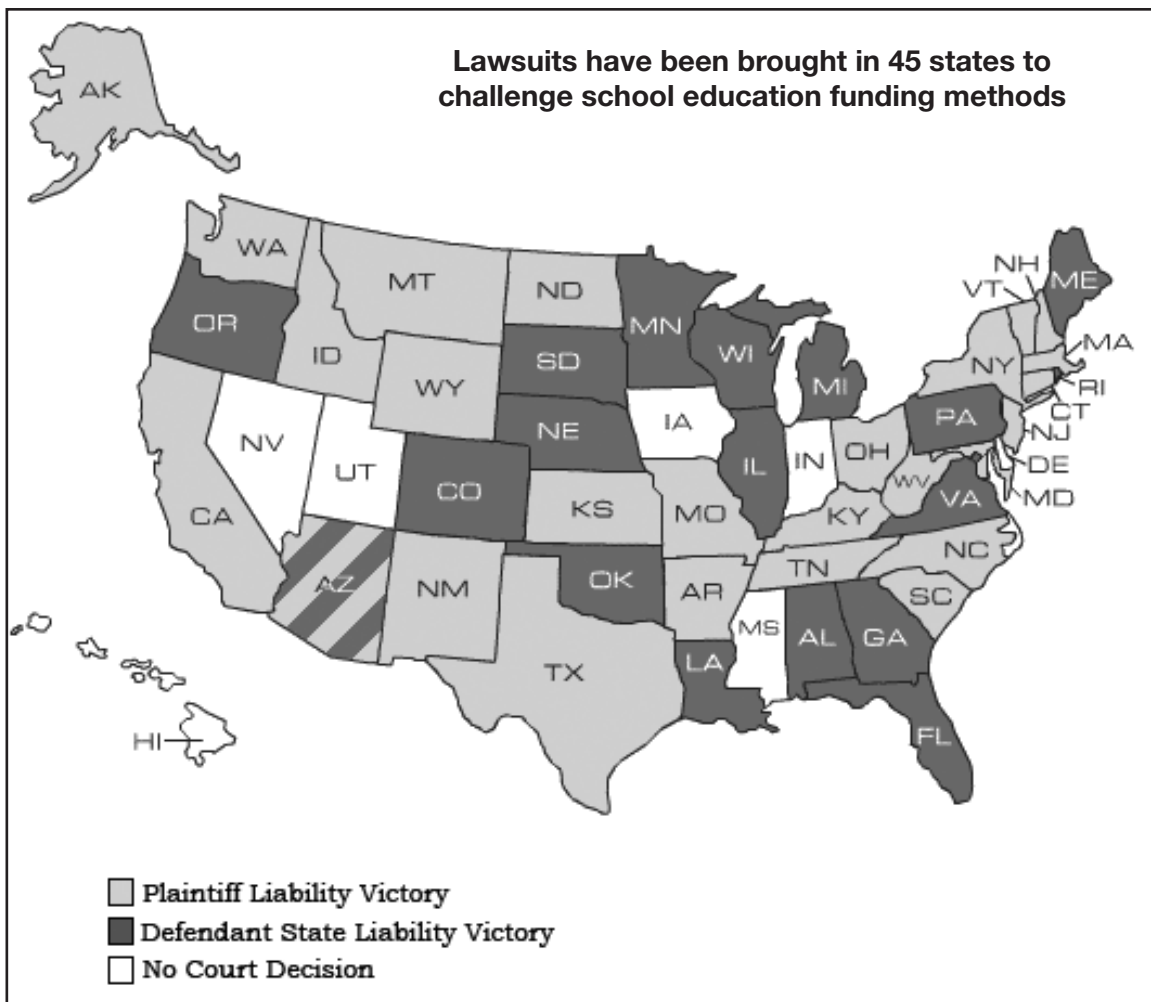
**This is a crisis. It demands change.** The schools must significantly increase the number of ELL students who demonstrate proficiency on the New York math and English tests for grades 4 and 8 and pass the five Regents high school examinations. Those current ELL students who may be exempt from taking an English language Regents examination should demonstrate academic achievement and annual yearly progress in learning English and in content classes. Finally, the high school dropout rate for ELL students must be addressed immediately through comprehensive strategies and goal setting to close the achievement gap.

## WHY AN *ELL COSTING OUT STUDY*? WHY NOW?

In 2003, New York State's highest court upheld a lower court ruling that the way the state paid for education was unconstitutional. School districts were not being given what they needed to educate New York's children. If all students were going to have a chance to meet the Regents Learning Standards, we were going to need to do things differently, and we were going to have to do more.

Correcting the problem required a determination of the actual costs of providing a sound basic education.<sup>11</sup> The groundbreaking studies done to support the lawsuit particularly noted needs for pre-kindergarten, smaller class size, and additional resources for special education students and children living in poverty. But a critical set of students was overlooked in all this- ELLs. All children and young people face multiple challenges in school - learning new information, gaining increasingly complex understanding of the world and of themselves, acquiring new skills, growing up, fitting in. But English Language Learners must struggle simply to understand the language in which those challenges present themselves. The resources specified for ELL students by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE), the plaintiff in the case, consisted of add-on ESL teachers. We now know more is needed.

CFE engaged two consulting firms to undertake the cost research. The resulting costing-out study, called *The New York Adequacy Study*, found that New York would have needed to spend an additional \$6.21 to \$8.20 billion in the 2001-02 school year to ensure a full opportunity to meet the Regents Learning Standards for all students. The professional judgment panels understood poverty to have a particularly significant influence on cost, and ELL students were viewed only as a subset of the poverty population. Unlike the treatment of special education, for which the study convened separate panels, no separate panel was asked to address the particularized educational needs of English language learners. There was no accounting for ELL subpopulations, such as Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFEs) or the different levels of English language skills among ELL students. Not discussed were the resources associated with the recruitment, production, and training of sufficient and adequately trained professional staff to address ELL student needs. In the words of one national expert, the study's findings, "deal with the ELL factor by tweaking on the number of ESL [English as a Second Language] teachers in the school." The reviewer noted further that the panels did not seem to recognize that English language development instruction could require between one-fourth and one-third of instructional time for ELL students. A second expert reviewer noted that "the panels appear to assume that resources geared to ELLs can be substituted for other resources and so additional resources are not envisioned."



Source: [http://www.schoolfunding.info/states/state\\_by\\_state.php3](http://www.schoolfunding.info/states/state_by_state.php3)

In the end, the study recommended only a minimal increase in the funding weight for ELLs in New York, substantially below the ELL weighting recommended in other studies, which ranged as high as 100%. A panel of three judicial referees noted that in a seven-state review, “the average weight used for English language learners was between 1.5 and 1.9.” However, it went on, “Implementation of even the lowest figure in this range, 1.5, would have the consequences of driving the funding gap well above the levels requested by the plaintiffs or proposed by the City of New York. Accordingly, we have taken the more conservative approach of preserving the State’s 1.2 ELL weighting.” The judicial referees went on to recommend that updated costing-out studies should be done on a cycle of every four years.

Four years have now passed. Since that study did not fully consider the special case of ELL students, and since the testimony in the *CFE* case showed great conflict in estimating the resources needed by ELL students, it was an appropriate time for us to commission META to undertake an ELL- focused New York costing out study. Nationally, it was also important to us to give people the tools in advocating for a rational way for costing out ELL education and arriving at elements of a quality ELL education based on programmatic components derived from consultations with expert ELL educators and analysis of schools that have been successful in increasing outcomes for their ELL populations.

## How the *ELL Costing Out Study* was Developed

Increasingly over the past dozen years, state education policy makers, advocates, legislatures and the courts have turned to formalized studies to determine with some precision the cost of K-12 public school education.<sup>12</sup> In general terms, costing-out studies fall into two categories: resource oriented or performance oriented. The most commonly reported models are Professional Judgment studies which attempt to determine the cost of providing students with a “basket” of goods and services that are determined to be adequate to meet a certain standard, and the Successful Schools approach which seeks to identify schools or school districts that have met a given standard of performance and then uses the expenditures in such schools to estimate statewide needs. Each approach has particular strengths and weaknesses. In preparing the *ELL Costing Out Study*, the researchers analyzed 60 education costing-out studies. Their review revealed a wide range of attention paid to the education of English Language Learner students. The studies can be described as falling into three categories:

- those that failed to mention ELL students at all or, if they did, only in passing;
- those that report an extra weight or extra dollar amount needed for ELL students but without any description that related the weight or amount to what services are needed;
- those that reported more detail about resource amounts and sometimes programmatic needs of ELL students.
- Only one costing out study, performed in Arizona, was specifically concerned with ELL students.

The methodology employed in the *ELL Costing Out Study* provides a targeted analysis of the required elements and the costs for providing an adequate education for ELL students. It included a review of the literature of ELL education, comments of national experts, and the 60 earlier cost studies. META also reviewed model ELL programs and conducted visits and interviews with schools in New York and nationally that were successfully teaching their ELL students. The *ELL Costing Out Study* drew all this together to offer, for the first time, elements of a quality ELL education. Subsequently, two Professional Judgment Panels of experienced New York ELL educators established the goods and services with which to build an ELL program. Using the Professional judgment panels’ determinations META arrived at the cost of providing ELLs with an adequate education.

Panelists and experts came from throughout the State of New York, from smaller city, rural and suburban districts as well as New York City. They represented different language groups. They included classroom teachers, lead teachers, an ELL district director, coaches, mentors, principals and a former superintendent of schools. The researchers asked them first to design adequate instructional programs for ELL students, with prototypes for schools with different percentages of ELL students, as well as the resources needed to implement the programs.

## WHAT IT WILL TAKE

A major contribution of the *ELL Costing Out Study* was the identification of resources and elements necessary for providing an adequate education to ELL students at the district and school level, which were initially developed based on the researcher's research and analysis of successful schools and input from ELL experts. In this policy brief, *Getting it Right*, we draw on our twelve years of ELL policy experience to pull out those elements and expand on the areas that have been traditionally overlooked or require added attention by policymakers and administrators in New York.

### **Seven Major Aspects in Developing a Comprehensive Plan for ELL Success**

#### **1. Taking Stock of ELL Needs and Factors Impacting Academic Success**

English Language Learners are not a monolithic population. They come from a variety of backgrounds with a diversity of skills and needs that will impact the type of programs and services they need. At the most basic level, it is important for districts and schools to initially assess the needs of their ELL population to determine how they can best create programs and services to help them. This includes, compiling and analyzing important information about the ELL student population, such as ELL demographics including English proficiency levels and subpopulations like Students with Interrupted Formal Education, Immigrant Youth, Long-Term ELLs, and Special Education ELLs.

It is also important for districts and schools to look closely at how they have fared with their ELL students in measures such as NYSESLAT scores, ELA scores, graduation rates, and yearly progress with their ELL populations. Once schools determine what programs are currently in place for their ELL students, where their ELLs are not progressing or could use additional support, they can then develop outcome goals and programs that can best help students learn English and earn a Regents Diploma or complete a rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum.

In short, in planning ELL programs, it is important that schools consider and direct resources based on:

- Specific needs of elementary, middle school, and high school ELLs
- Concentration of ELL students in the context of grade level and English proficiency
- Targeted needs within ELL subpopulations, such as Students with Interrupted Formal Education, Immigrant Youth, Long-Term ELLs, and Special Education ELLs.

## Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFEs)

Within the ELL population, a particular subset warrants special attention. A significant number of newcomer students enter U.S. schools with interrupted or limited education in their native country. These students are often not able to read, write, or compute. Additionally, they are unfamiliar with academic and education routines. They enter school at all grade levels, two or more years below grade level in reading and math and typically over-age for their grade. In New York City, SIFE students make up approximately 11% (15,543) of the ELL population.<sup>13</sup>

The *ELL Costing Out Study* finds that effective programs for SIFE must be comprehensive and integrated with the rest of the school curriculum; must provide accelerated instruction that prepares the students to integrate into the standard program for ELL students; must offer counseling targeting their unique life circumstances, including extreme poverty and trauma experienced in war; and must use teachers trained specifically to work with SIFE students. Specific SIFE program elements include:

- ESL and bilingual teachers at a 10:1 classroom staffing
- More individualized attention through additional tutoring, smaller class size, daily tutoring, and extended day and year programs
- Professional development and training for SIFE program teachers
- A SIFE program facilitator at the high school level

The *ELL Costing Out Study* found the additional cost of an adequate education for a SIFE ELL student in middle school is \$2,982 per pupil. For high school it is \$8,669 per pupil.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Basic Elements of a Quality Education Must Be Provided at the State Level

Although programs and elements will vary from school to school, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) must guide and help districts and schools develop programs that include the following elements:

- **Expand academic instruction time through extended school day, Saturday academies & tutoring;** Many comprehensive school designs include a number of fully licensed teacher tutors, hired to attend to struggling students. Additional learning time such as a longer school day or year and summer school instructional programs have been found to be critical for ELL students, both for English language development and for the core curriculum. Quite a bit of research shows tutoring to be an effective strategy for helping ELLs meet state standards, particularly when tutoring is comprehensive, employs certified teachers and is done on a one on one basis.
- **Expand student supports through guidance, mentoring & social support;** School-based student support programs that are integrated into the organization of the school as a whole create a focused vision and sense of shared responsibility, which results in better student outcomes. For example, school-based mentorship programs have been shown to promote better outcomes in terms of attendance, educational attainment, and attitudes towards learning.
- **Enhance learning resources and materials including technology and software;** All students need books and other curricular materials. For ELL students, however, there is a need for an even greater variety of instructional offerings. Schools serving ELL students need libraries and materials that span more than one language and often many grades.

Comprehensive school designs increasingly call for embedding technology in the instructional program and school management. Our research suggest that at least one classroom technology integration specialist per school is needed, to plan with teachers how best to integrate computer use into the curriculum and to reconcile new methods of instruction which effectively combine the use technology with traditional methods. Computers can be critical resources for ELL students because they allow students to move at their own pace and provide the opportunity to help them catch up outside of class or school.

- **Reduce class sizes for ELLs including an ideal 15:1 qualified teacher ratio depending on grade and ELL concentration;** Perhaps the most pervasive debate concerning educational reform has been whether class-size reduction is an effective method to improve academic achievement. Independent analyses reveal both concurrent and long-term positive effects on achievement associated with small, single-teacher classes from kindergarten through high school. A variety of studies have shown that lower class sizes are particularly conducive to ELL student success, with a classroom of 15 as the maximum number of students for effective ELL instruction. ELL experts also emphasize the need for well-trained qualified teachers in any classroom reduction strategy. The *ELL Costing Out Study* also pointed to ideal ELL student-teacher ratios of 15:1.
- **Expand Pre-K and full day Kindergarten opportunities with targeted ELL interventions;** High-quality preschool, particularly for students from lower-income backgrounds, has been shown to have significant long-term impacts on student academic achievement. Students whose teacher spoke their native language seemed to benefit more than other students. Research on primary education indicates that full-day kindergarten, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds, has significant, positive impacts on student learning in the early elementary grades.
- **Provide ongoing professional development for all teachers on ELL methodologies;** Research suggests that substantial investments in professional development, including particularized training of ELL students, produces changes in classroom practices and leads to improved student achievement. This is particularly important because students at all levels, regardless of proficiency, need teachers that can provide deliberate and targeted English as a second language (ESL) instruction as well as content instruction the native language or heavily mediated through ESL techniques. Several studies indicate that a significant number of hours needs to be invested in ELL professional development annually for each teacher, and that the training should:
  - Include extensive coaching in the teacher's classroom;
  - Cover all faculty in a school and occur in all subjects;
  - Focus heavily on the subject content that each teacher covers; and
  - Be aligned with state/district content standards and aligned tests.
- **Strengthen planning, preparation, and support for ELL teachers;** Teachers need time for collaborative planning in addition to ongoing curricular and professional development and review. One way to provide for this is to allow for a significant portion of planning and preparation time within the normal school day. Many program designs call for school-based instructional facilitators who assist teachers in researching both materials and strategies for the most effective means of presenting various areas of the curriculum. They also coordinate the instructional program, provide ongoing coaching and mentoring necessary for teachers to change and improve their instructional practice.
- **Enhance parent engagement, family outreach & community partnerships;** Parental involvement in the educational process is shown to have positive effects on grades, test scores, long-term academic achievement, and behavior. In particular, schools need personnel

that can communicate with students and their families in a language they can understand. Parent involvement for the parents of ELL students should address needs of immigrant families and include partnering with community organizations and adult education programs. Schools can also maximize expanded academic instruction and student supports by collaborating with community organizations.

### Expand Pre-K Options

The panelists in *ELL Costing Out Study* recommended that all ELL students ages 3 and 4 receive full-day preschool, but did not calculate cost of preschool for all English language learners students, which are routinely treated as central administration level costs. Given that teachers for preschool ELL students should be certified in bilingual education, and taking into consideration such extra costs as hiring staff who can engage with non-English speaking parents, preschool programs for ELL students will cost somewhat more than preschool programs for non-ELL students. The *ELL Costing Out Study* estimated \$14,000 per ELL preschool student for quality full-day ELL preschool programs. Other experts have suggested that a per student cost of \$10,000 would be considered reasonable for general full-time Pre-K in New York.<sup>15</sup> Applying that per pupil figure to the 52,000 estimated ELL students ages 3 and 4 yields an ELL preschool, the researchers estimated ELL Pre-K cost of approximately \$ 728m. Not all of this estimated cost would necessarily constitute additional funding. New York has several preschool programs in place including its Universal Preschool Program (UPK) and Experimental Pre-kindergarten Program (TPK). Indeed, New York has, in recent years, expanded its funding of PreK programs.

### 3. Elementary, Middle School, and High School Specific ELL Needs that Must be Addressed

In addition to the elements that we identified at all levels, there are different considerations that must be addressed at different grade levels.

In 2006-07, New York City reported that about 57% of ELLs are in elementary school, 17% in middle school and 26% in high school.

Grade	Number	Distribution Among ELL Pop. (%)
K	15,788	11.3
1	16,614	11.9
2	14,479	10.4
3	13,066	9.3
4	11,176	8.0
5	8,934	6.4
6	7,774	5.5
7	7,603	5.4
8	8,599	6.1
9	13,407	9.6
10	12,936	9.3
11	5,938	4.2
12	3,558	2.5

ELLs by Grade, 2006-07; Source: BESIS, 2006-07

While many of the recommended elements listed above apply to all levels of school, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools each have some additional particular components.

## **Elementary Schools**

Schools with effective services for ELL students at the elementary school level have a significant focus on acquiring both language and math literacy. Students in these grades are usually assigned to one teacher and tended to favor classroom instruction rather than “pull-out” instruction, both for language and content instruction. Native language instruction, trained bilingual paraprofessionals, and native language supplemental reading materials were particularly important for bilingual programs in elementary school. Successful ELL programs will include experiences that broaden horizons and extend the curriculum for ELL students including field trips, art instruction and service learning opportunities.

## **Middle Schools**

Middle school ELL students are more likely to participate in separate ESL classes, but the need for all teachers to be trained in teaching ELL students becomes more evident as students participate in several classes. Students are challenged by the increased language demands of content instruction and by the expectation that they will learn more independently. Reading difficulties that were not adequately addressed in the elementary school now interfere with learning content.

Middle schools that serve ELL students should have:

- ESL instruction matched to students’ English proficiency
- Native language instruction as appropriate
- Reading intervention by teachers trained in English as a second language and bilingual education instruction
- ESL classes coordinated with content area classes
- High school readiness programs
- Multilingual counselors knowledgeable about students’ culture(s) and high school program options for ELLs
- Orientation to high school curriculum and structure for newcomer students
- Student engagement through extra-curricular activities and individualized tutoring

## **High Schools**

High school presents several challenges for ELL students. High school students are more likely to be served through intensive ESL than through their native language, but successful schools include as much native language instruction as possible and incorporate English as a second language strategies into content instruction. ESL classes for intermediate and advanced level high school students should focus on reading literature and developing and refining writing skills. High school ELLs also tend to be immigrant students and often need targeted supports to help them adjust and meet graduation standards in a shorter time. High schools that are successful with ELL students incorporate:

- Trained guidance counselors and planning and preparation for postsecondary college and career options
- Opportunities to build on students’ native language

- ESL instruction matched to students' English proficiency
- Academic remediation as needed, provided by teachers trained in ESL instruction
- Intensified instruction and orientation to high school curriculum and structure for newcomer students
- Dropout prevention programs
- Academic remediation as needed and provided by teachers trained in English as a second language instruction

### WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN REAL LIFE

There are many excellent models in our own back yard to consider in designing the best possible programs for ELL students consistent with pedagogy and New York law and policy. The program models detailed in the study are offered as guidance to policy-makers, educators and parents.

The decision to implement any particular program model needs the involvement of families, community, staff, and administration. First and foremost, it is important to look at how to draw on the strengths of the staff who will be delivering the educational services. Parents and guardians must form a partnership with the school. Outreach to families - more than offering language interpreters at meetings and sending translated notices home in the appropriate languages - means reaching out to parents/guardians as equal partners. Staff who will be teaching ELLs must be committed: they will have to go well beyond compensatory education, and will need appropriate training, licensure and on-going professional development .

The models described in the *ELL Costing Out Study* reflect the dynamic reality of classroom learning. Teachers and paraprofessionals must have time to plan together frequently. Bilingual components extend students' learning through the native language. Mainstream teachers may need professional development in pedagogy, the theory of second language acquisition, formal and informal assessment, cross-cultural issues, and teaching and learning in general. In successful schools, all staff take ownership and responsibility for all the children regardless of the students' educational and linguistic needs and backgrounds.

This does not seem daunting, or unfamiliar. It may not even require that all the funds we itemize be new funding so much as ensuring funds already generated by ELLs are reaching them and targeting other available funds and staff. There are schools across the country where ELL students are succeeding – and New York City has its own success stories to be proud of.

**P.S. 124, the Yung Wing Elementary School New York City (Manhattan).** The school's Pre-K to grade 6 population is approximately 1,000 students. In 2005-2006, ELL students were 24 percent of the student body, with Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese as the major home languages. At grades 3, 4 and 5, the percentage of ELL students who met the state's standards in mathematics ranged between 89 and 96 percent. This school offers a Free Standing ESL program to its ELL student population.



Professional development is central to the school's program. Because all teachers in the school work with ELL students, collaboration between ESL and other classroom teachers is essential. Teachers participate in a Book Study Group that includes all ESL teachers. Once a month, two classroom teachers and one ESL teacher meet to develop lesson plans and units that align ESL with classroom content instruction. They also review the state language proficiency exam in order to prepare students. Teachers visit other classes within the building and in other schools. The teachers have release days to attend the Teacher's College Reading and Writing program at least six times a year. As part of ongoing professional development, there are Lead teachers for literacy and math for ELLs.

Small groups of 10 students participate in extended day programs for four days weekly. There are after school tutorial programs for small groups of students. Summer school is offered in ESL and math. In addition to academic programs, the school has a well attended range of enrichment activities, including a National Dance Institute program and a literacy through the arts club. The school has an extensive collection of materials for ELL students in its library, including books on Chinese culture, and at the classroom level there are dictionaries for ELL students' use.

This school has a very active parent program. Workshops are offered bilingually and include topics such as how parents can help their students, technology, homework help, and health.

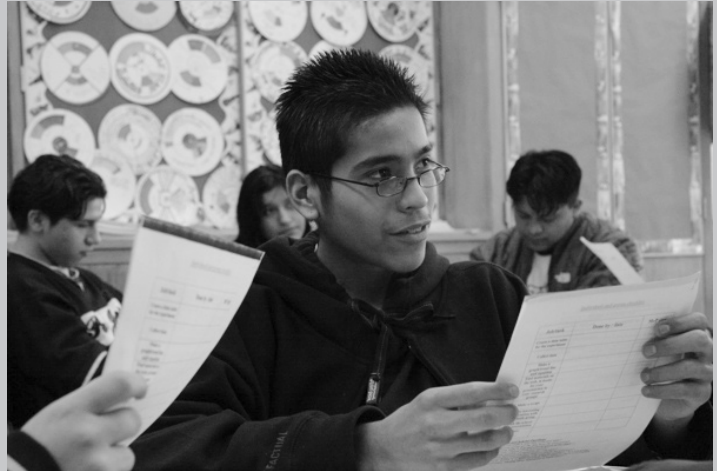
The **South Huntington Union Free School District (SHUFSD)** in Long Island has achieved success with ELL students at several schools, many of which integrate native language instruction into their ELL programs. ESL or bilingual models are used both in English language arts and social studies classes. The district also offers a number of additional services for ELLs, including programs before and after school, on Saturdays and during the summer targeted toward improving the English language literacy and test performance of these students. Teachers of ELLs in the SHUFSD are given extensive opportunities for professional development, and are expected to collaborate in curriculum development. The district has reported that all ELLs in grades 3-12 have met New York State Accountability standards, and that graduation rates for ELLs and Latinos have far exceed the performance of other high school districts across NYS. Among students who have studied in the SHUFSD for at least five years, 84 percent of Latinos and 74 percent of ELL students graduated, while only 5 percent of Latinos and 9 percent of ELL students dropped out of school.



**Birchwood Intermediate School**, in particular, has experienced positive results with its ELL students. This school has an enrollment of 647 third, fourth and fifth grade students, 13 percent of whom are ELL. Twenty percent of the student enrollment at Birchwood is Latino. Birchwood Intermediate utilizes a Side-by-Side Dual Language Model. These classes are composed of half ELLs and half English-proficient students, and are led by two teachers, one of which teaches only in English and the other only in Spanish. The language of instruction alternates every other day. ELL students at Birchwood outperform ELL students statewide in

ELA and math at grades 3-5, helping Birchwood and other SHUFSD schools earn a spot on the NYS Education Department's High Performing schools list. In 2005-2006, 80 percent of Birchwood's ELL students met the state's grade 3 English Language Arts standards and 80 percent met the grade 4 mathematics standards.

**Flushing International High School and the Bronx International High School** are part of a highly successful network of schools that focus on recently arrived immigrant and ELL students. Flushing International has a 2% percent dropout rate and 92% of graduates continue on to college after high school. Bronx International High School's ELL dropout rate is under 5%, with 90% of graduating seniors attending college. At Flushing International there are 314 ELL students representing 18 languages and 29 countries. The Bronx International has 315 students, 254 of whom are ELLs representing 40 different language groups.



Language and culture are integrated into teaching and learning. There is a flexible curriculum that uses native language to support English language development, and language and content learning are unified.

At the heart of the program's philosophy is interdisciplinary team teaching and staff collaboration. All faculty participate in developing curriculum that integrates the language development and content needs of ELL students. Student learning is supported by academic coaches, social workers and guidance counselors. Student growth is measured by means of portfolio assessments. Technology is integrated in all curriculum areas and all students use computers as part of the learning process.

Extensive professional development includes before-school and weekly collaboration time. Visits by teachers to other schools and classes are required. There is extensive coaching by the schools' principals. Teachers also participate in a writing project at Lehman College for one and half days a week. There is a science coach one day a week and lead teachers in math and English who work with all ELL teachers on a daily basis. At these schools, every teacher is also a language teacher.

The schools offer tutorial assistance students before or after school. At Bronx International, the after-school program has a 12:1 student/teacher ratio and meets for 2 hours daily. Summer school offers intensive literacy development as well as paid internships. Field trips are planned around the curriculum needs of the class.

At the Flushing International High School there is a Family Associates program that meets daily. Its activities include a seminar for parents on college preparation and application, health care, immigration issues, and supporting and helping students to meet academic standards.

#### **4. Effective Administrative Functions Must Be Supported**

In their discussion of district level costs, the *ELL Costing Out Study* pointed to administrative, management and assessment functions. For example, all students are screened with a Home Language Survey to determine if a language other than English is spoken at home. Where a non-English home language is indicated, students are given a battery of Language Proficiency tests. Another example is oversight of curriculum development for ELL students. For a school district with at least 1,000 ELL students, there would be central district staffing of two full time staff — an ELL director/supervisor and curriculum/assessment coordinator, clerical support, and one Coach for every 500 ELL students. Districts with between 3,000 and 5,000 ELL students would need central office staffing of an ELL director, a curriculum director, and an assessment coordinator, Coaches at a 500:1 ratio, a SIFE program director, family and community director, and clerical support.

New York City is in a class of its own, given the size of its ELL population. Although, these sources of data do allow for an approximation of district level costs, New York City's budgeting process is opaque at best, with costs for ELL services spread throughout any number of cost centers and even then not always labeled as such.

META's computations found the bottom line for both New York City and rest-of-the-state district level costs was estimated at \$44.1 million, a figure that is likely to be on low side of the actual cost of district ELL services.

#### **State**

State Level ELL program costs include program administration, assessment, monitoring, technical assistance and teacher costs related to administering the state's annual language proficiency examination, processing of state and federal ELL program applications, program monitoring and state level technical support to school districts.

The school ELL adequacy models recommended by the *ELL Costing Out Study* panels would add additional state level costs to the overall New York ELL program estimated at \$3m to \$3.5m over current state costs.

#### **5. Diverse ELL Instructional Models Must Be Encouraged and Constantly Improved**

The state is responsible for ensuring that parents have a meaningful choice among ESL (English as a Second Language), transitional bilingual, dual language programs, or other model programs. The state and districts are responsible for ensuring that schools with 20 or more ELLs in the same grade level, 15 in K-8 schools in New York City, provide parents the option of a bilingual program. Through program monitoring and evaluation and state level technical support to districts and schools, the state must develop processes that can glean, share and provide incentives for best instructional practices, integrate them into ongoing quality professional development for ELL educators and support scaling up of proven, successful program models and methodologies.

#### **6. A Critical Precondition: Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified ELL Teachers**

A serious commitment to improving outcomes and implementing quality programs for ELL students will require a significant increase in the number of certified and qualified ELL teachers. In New York State, we know for a fact that there is a shortage of certified ESL and bilingual teachers.<sup>16</sup> Based on visits to successful schools and the professional judgment panels, the *ELL Costing Out Study*

estimates that New York needs approximately 13,572 bilingual and ESL teachers. Taking current ELL certified teacher available and attrition rate into account, the research team found that there is a need for an estimated 3,915 new bilingual teachers and 3,865 new ESL teachers.

To eliminate this shortage once and for all, the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department in partnership with Institutions of Higher Education, must create a long-term strategy for training and recruiting the certified and highly skilled teaching force the state needs. This strategy will need to include incentives for ELL teachers, such as tuition and book programs, and institutional costs entailed in gearing up for this effort. Undoubtedly, these efforts will also require the state to reexamine how teaching preparation programs are providing new ELL teachers with the training and skills they need to help ELL students succeed.

The *ELL Costing Out Study* proposed a teacher production cost of \$123 million over eight years, but recognized that the figure could seriously underestimate what it will take to train and staff bilingual and ESL programs at adequate levels.

## 7. Funding and Accountability for ELL Aid Needed to Ensure Implementation of Elements for ELL Success

### School Level Costs

META first calculated the total school level costs as designed by the professional judgment panels based on program elements, like those described earlier, and the unique needs of ELLs in elementary, middle school, and high school and concentration.

#### New York State Total Annual Cost For Ensuring an Adequate Education for English Language Learners Students

PER PUPIL COSTS (in NYC/Long Island Regional Dollars)

SCHOOL PROTOTYPE	PANEL A	PANEL B
HS- 10 ELL	\$17,848	\$20,063
MS- 10 ELL	\$17,996	\$22,098
ELEM- 10 ELL	\$17,841	\$16,266
HS- 50 ELL	\$15,999	\$18,518
MS- 50 ELL	\$15,950	\$12,164
ELEM- 50 ELL	\$9,493	\$12,823
HS- 150 ELL	\$11,252	\$13,179
MS- 150 ELL	\$9,618	\$9,887
ELEM-150 ELL	\$11,527	\$7,580

## **BRASS TACKS: FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ELL AID NEEDED TO ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION OF ELEMENTS FOR ELL SUCCESS**

After calculating the school level costs of the elements discussed in the Professional Judgment Panels, META calculated the state and district costs, and the costs of producing the teaching production costs for year one. They compared those costs with the costs of providing an adequate education to the average student with no special needs, to yield an extra weight for ELL students that could then be used in constructing the formula used to calculate the annual state foundation aid budget. To estimate the cost of an adequate education for non-ELL or regular education students they relied upon the earlier New York studies and judicial determinations. The total per year cost of ensuring an adequate education for ELL students in New York was estimated at \$3.64 billion annually. To put this in context, this year's enacted budget brings total operating aid for schools in New York to approximately \$21 billion.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the cost of ensuring an adequate education for ELLs is less than 17% of total operating budget. Given that ELLs make up more than 13% of the total student population and have one of the highest dropout rates in New York, the *ELL Costing Out Study* provides a sensible estimate of what it will take to provide ELLs with the adequate education they need and deserve.

The *ELL Costing Out Study* found that that ELL student education requires an extra funding weight of approximately twice that of regular education students (2.0); currently funding for ELLs is approximately half that (1.5).

## CONCLUSION

Districts across New York and nationally are struggling to figure out how to provide ELLs with a quality education. In *Getting it Right*, we draw from the *ELL Costing Out Study* and what is known in the field to begin to shed some light on the question of what constitutes quality programs and services for ELLs.

It is our hope that this policy brief provides educators and advocates some tools for ensuring that new investments in education are directed more carefully towards programs that will help ELL students succeed. In the real world, where school budgets reflect a combination of state, local and federal funding sources and a myriad of competing needs and choices, it is not at all clear that even the currently generated supplemental resources are in fact being spent on the specific educational needs of ELL students. Thus, in addition to providing adequate funding for services, the state must strengthen guidance and accountability on the use of ELL funds to ensure that they reach the population that funds are intended to help and that money is used in high quality, proven programs such as those outlined in this study.

We urge the NYS Board of Regents, the NYS Department of Education, and the NYC Department of Education to use the factors and elements we discussed to create a comprehensive system-wide plan for improving ELL services and to guide districts and schools in improving services and outcomes for ELLs.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper we refer to English Language Learners or ELL students. This description is understood to be coextensive with the term Limited English Proficient or LEP that is often used in statute and case law to describe the same group of students. In New York, ELL students are defined as students coming from homes where English is not the primary language and who test below a minimum English proficiency level on a state-mandated exam called the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R). Students remain classified as ELLs until they score above the proficiency level on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), which is administered to all current ELLs each May.

<sup>2</sup> Linguistically segregated schools are those where more than one-third of the school's total enrollment is also classified as ELL.

Source: Margie McHugh, LEP and Immigrant Students in US Schools (October 19, 2006), National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy.

<sup>3</sup> Ensuring an Adequate Education for ELLs in New York was commissioned by the New York Immigration Coalition. The 200-page report can be obtained at [www.thenyic.org](http://www.thenyic.org).

<sup>4</sup> New York State Education Department, Teacher Supply and Demand in NYS in 2005-2006, Second Annual Report (207) at page 27.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/policy/states/reports/statedata/2005LEP/GrowingLEP\\_0506.pdf](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/policy/states/reports/statedata/2005LEP/GrowingLEP_0506.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> META, Inc., Ensuring an Adequate Education for ELLs in New York was commissioned by the New York Immigration Coalition (2008).

<sup>7</sup> We note that English is the home language of nearly 12,000 ELL students. New York counts among its ELL student population, students from countries where English is the official language. This would include, among others, students from Jamaica and Guyana. Under New York policy, immigrant ELL students from English-speaking Caribbean countries are served through federally funded Title III Immigrant programs. New York State Education Department, Directory of Languages (1997), found at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/biling/pub/languages.html#byCountry>. See also, New York City Department of Education, School Allocation Memorandum No. 64, FY06 (September 9, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> New York State Profile of the Educational System (October 2006) at page 70

<sup>9</sup> New York City Department of Education, New York City's English Language Learners: Demographics and Performance, Office of English Language Learners (Summer 2007), charts 20, 21 and 23, page 16-17 found at [http://schools.nycenet.edu/offices/teachlearn/ell/DemoPerformanceFINAL\\_10\\_17.pdf](http://schools.nycenet.edu/offices/teachlearn/ell/DemoPerformanceFINAL_10_17.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> New York City Department of Education, New York City's English Language Learners: Demographics and Performance, Office of English Language Learners (Summer 2007), charts 20, 21 and 23, page 16-17 found at [http://schools.nycenet.edu/offices/teachlearn/ell/DemoPerformanceFINAL\\_10\\_17.pdf](http://schools.nycenet.edu/offices/teachlearn/ell/DemoPerformanceFINAL_10_17.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> This section relies extensively on original writing and analysis of META in the ELL Costing Out Study.

<sup>12</sup> This section relies extensively on original writing and analysis of META in the ELL Costing Out Study.

<sup>13</sup> New York City Department of Education, New York City's English Language Learners: Demographics and Performance, Office of English Language Learners (Summer 2007), charts 20, 21 and 23, page 16-17 found at [http://schools.nycenet.edu/offices/teachlearn/ell/DemoPerformanceFINAL\\_10\\_17.pdf](http://schools.nycenet.edu/offices/teachlearn/ell/DemoPerformanceFINAL_10_17.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> The higher costs for high school reflect the need for a SIFE program facilitator

<sup>15</sup> META, Inc., Ensuring an Adequate Education for ELLs in New York was commissioned by the New York Immigration Coalition (2008).

<sup>16</sup> New York State Education Department, Teacher Supply and Demand in NYS in 2005-2006, Second Annual Report (207) at page 27.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.budget.state.ny.us/localities/schoolaid/schoolaid.html>



**The New York Immigration Coalition** (NYIC) is an umbrella policy and advocacy organization for more than 200 groups in New York State that work with immigrants and refugees. The NYIC's work includes policy analysis and advocacy, civic participation and voter education, community education and training and leadership development. For over ten years, the NYIC has been involved in issues related to the educational needs of the immigrant and English Language Learner students. For more information about the NYIC visit: [www.thenyic.org](http://www.thenyic.org)