

CONTACT: Diana E. Cruz (212) 233-8955 (ext. 149)  
[Dcruz@hispanicfederation.org](mailto:Dcruz@hispanicfederation.org)  
Maria Morrissey (518) 802-7178  
[Mmorrissey@hispanicfederation.org](mailto:Mmorrissey@hispanicfederation.org)



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## **CHAMPIONS SENATOR JACKSON AND ASSEMBLYWOMAN ARROYO WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN THE LATINO EDUCATION ADVOCACY DIRECTORS COALITION'S NYS MULTILINGUAL LEARNER COMMISSION BILL BECOMING LAW**

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**New York, NY – The Latino Education Advocacy Directors (LEAD) Coalition** launched a statewide campaign in February of this year to push for an increased investment from New York State in its Multilingual Learners (MLL), to ensure that their academic needs are met. MLLs refers to students who speak and understand other languages and are learning English.

Currently, multilingual students fall staggeringly behind their English-speaking peers, in academic achievement, and even more so when it comes to graduation rates. In 2017, the four-year MLL dropout rate was higher than the four-year graduation rate.

The campaign led by the LEAD Coalition, called “Invest in Our Future,” outlined the challenges and a series of recommendations aimed at closing the achievement gap among this high need student population. Included in these recommendations was a bill that would create a Commission for the Educational Advancement of Multilingual Learners (S4031/A8211).

Sponsors, Senator Robert Jackson (SD 31) and Assemblywoman Carmen Arroyo (AD 84) were instrumental in the passing of this bill and believe it is needed for the advancement and success of many New York students.

On December 12<sup>th</sup>, Governor Cuomo signed this bill into law, which will create a Commission meant to inform the New York State Department of Education, the legislature, and the Governor on how to close the achievement gap between MLLs and their native English-speaking peers.

We are proud to have worked with these amazing legislators who prioritize the interests of the communities they serve.

"Hispanic Federation is deeply grateful for the Multilingual Learner Commission being signed into reality. The information and recommendations that will be written by this commission of experts will help New York State better support students who have been habitually undeserved. Senator Jackson, Assemblywoman Arroyo, and Governor Cuomo were integral parts in this bill's success" said **Frankie Miranda, President of the Hispanic Federation**. "Understanding the true need of multilingual learners and how New York can ensure these students' needs are met, will be invaluable and is a great step forward in closing the achievement gap."

"The Latino Education Advocacy Leaders (LEAD) Coalition was created to improve Latinx educational outcomes. This Multilingual Learner Commission will help the most vulnerable group of Latinx students, as well as all diverse multilingual learners across the state" said **Diana E. Cruz, Director of Education Policy of Hispanic Federation**. "Senator Jackson and Assemblywoman Arroyo are true champions of immigrants and multilingual learners and for that we are thankful. We hope to continue our work together along with the Commission, legislators and the Governor to implement recommendations that ensure our multilingual students will thrive and reach their potential."

"Zone 126 is pleased that the educational needs of multilingual learners are going to be addressed through the work of this commission and thank everyone who helped make it happen," said **Anthony Lopez, Executive Director of Zone 126**.

"Congratulations to state leadership for passing this landmark legislation to advance the achievement of the New York State's multilingual learners. The establishment of a commission to evaluate policies, practices, and investments in the state's multilingual learners (MLLs) is a first step in ensuring that more MLLs graduate from high school and are prepared for postsecondary success," said **Marissa Muñoz, Northeast Director for Young Invincibles and former Education Policy Director at Hispanic Federation**.

"We commend the Governor for signing legislation to establish the Multilingual Learner (MLL) Commission—an essential step towards closing education gaps and providing New York's multilingual students with the supports they need to thrive," said **Kim Sykes, Director of Education Policy at the New York Immigrant Coalition**. "Across the state, our students speak over 200 languages and the MLLs population has grown over twenty percent in the past decade. We know that when immigrant New Yorkers get the resources they need, our communities are stronger and more equitable. We look forward to working with the Commission to boost the graduation rates and support the educational attainment of multilingual learners across New York and know the Commission's inclusion of New York's diverse immigrant communities is critical to its success."

**Senator Jackson**, said, "As a longtime parent advocate with roots in the immigrant-majority neighborhood of Washington Heights, I was proud to introduce this bill and I'm even more proud that the governor has signed it into law. Multilingual learners in our public schools deserve to be fully supported among their English-dominant peers. This commission will help us create learning environments that unlock the potential of students in New York who come from all over the world. I thank Assembly member Arroyo for her leadership on this issue in the Assembly and look forward to reading and implementing the commission's recommendations soon!"

"The graduation rate for English Language Learners has seen some gains over the years but remains disturbingly low and in need of focused attention. The Governor clearly understands these dynamics and his signing of this legislation into law is a monumental step forward in improving the education of all our children," stated **Assemblywoman Carmen E. Arroyo**, member of the Assembly Education Committee. She added, "I am proud to have collaborated on this new law with State Senator Robert Jackson, a life-long advocate and leader on improving the education of our children. His leadership in the State Senate on this major education issue will lead to a better life for countless students."