

U.S. JUSTICE SONIA SOTOMAYOR SPEAKS AT CONFERENCE FOR PARENTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

More than 4,000 Parents Attend Tenth Annual Conference

Schools Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott today welcomed guests at the Department of Education's tenth annual conference for parents of English Language Learners. Over 4,000 parents speaking more than 10 languages registered to attend the conference and listen to remarks from this year's keynote speaker, United States Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. The conference was held at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center and co-hosted by the Office of English Language Learners, the Division of Family and Community Engagement, the Translation and Interpretation Unit, and non-profit organizations Every Person Influences Children and Learning Leaders.

The event was organized to help parents connect with the academic services, supports, and programs available to their children in New York City public schools. This year's theme was *Creating Pathways to College: Dream, Believe, Succeed!*, and the keynote address from Justice Sotomayor, who grew up in the Bronx, offered an inspiring example of success. The event provided parents with guidance on how best to prepare their children for college and careers, as well as how to take advantage of the many cultural and academic resources available in New York City this summer.

"Parents are an integral part of a student's path to success," said Chancellor Walcott. "It is a wonderful sight to see the thousands of public school parents who took time to join us in this year's parent conference. Our goal is to equip parents, regardless of their native language, with the knowledge, support, and resources they need to become active participants in their children's academic and career success."

"This is our tenth year holding the parent conference, and each year, we have seen an increase in the number of parents from the preceding year," said CEO for the Office of English Language Learners, Angelica Infante. "More parents have been empowered through Justice Sotomayor's compelling message as well as through the numerous resources necessary that help them prepare their children to go on to college and lead successful lives—a goal of all immigrants!"

"Every year, we welcome thousands of English Language Learners and their families into our schools, each with their own dreams and aspirations," said Executive Director of Family and Community Engagement, Jesse Mojica. The Department's annual English Language Learners conference provides resources, support, and information to families so that they are involved partners in the realization of those dreams.

(More)



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

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Currently, 159,162 students (14.4 percent) in New York City public schools are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs), and more than 131,916 (12.6 percent) students are former ELLs. Overall, 41 percent (438,131) of City students report speaking a language other than English at home.

“Data clearly show that parent engagement is a major predictor of whether or not a young person goes to college. But to be effectively engaged in a process as complex, and often intimidating, as guiding a child to be college-ready—then getting him or her into and through college—requires parents to have extensive information, strategies, and support,” said Jane Heaphy, Executive Director of Learning Leaders. “Working with 10,000 public school parents each year to increase their knowledge and skills on supporting their children’s education, Learning Leaders sees that the need for college readiness and access to information is especially true for families who are recent immigrants or English Language Learners, as they often face unfamiliar educational systems. We are excited to be a partner of the NYC Department of Education at this important conference to empower parents.”

“Research clearly shows that when parents are effectively engaged in their children’s education, they have improved school attendance, are better behaved, and ultimately have improved academic achievement,” said Vito Borrello, President of Every Person Influences Children (EPIC). “This parent conference not only engages families, but provides resources to build their capacity to become academic partners supporting student success. I cannot think of a more important initiative for New York City students and their families. We are honored to work with the NYC Department of Education in support of this goal.”

EPIC is a national not-for-profit organization whose mission is helping families, schools, and communities raise children to become responsible and capable adults. To achieve its mission, EPIC provides an award-winning parenting program, a character education curriculum for families and schools, and leadership training in several areas.

Learning Leaders is a non-profit organization that helps New York City public school students succeed in school by training volunteers to provide tutoring and other school-based support and by equipping parents to foster their children’s educational development. Every year, Learning Leaders trains 10,000 volunteers to work with over 230,000 students — more than one-fifth of the New York City public school population — in over 800 schools throughout the five boroughs.

For more information on programs and services for English Language Learners, please visit: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/ELL/default.htm>.

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