



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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New Data Shows English Language Learners Under-Represented in NYC Career and Technical Education Programs

July 24, 2017 (NEW YORK CITY) — Today, Advocates for Children of New York (AFC) released a data brief analyzing city and state data showing that English Language Learners (ELLs) are under-represented in career and technical education (CTE) programs at New York City high schools. Entitled *Missed Potential: English Language Learners Under-Represented in NYC Career and Technical Education Programs*, the brief examines ELL enrollment at schools that offer CTE, as well as their participation and completion rates in the CTE programs at those schools.

The paper finds that although ELLs made up around 10.8% of the city's high school students in 2015-16, they comprised only about 5.3% of students who participated in CTE programs. This disparity appears to be driven both by low numbers of ELLs attending CTE schools and low CTE participation rates at the school level.

“The low number of ELLs in the city's CTE schools and programs is a problem that needs attention,” says Kim Sweet, AFC's Executive Director. “High quality CTE programs provide an invaluable bridge to future learning and employment paths. Failing to address access issues for ELLs keeps them from pursuing these opportunities, potentially with long-term repercussions in terms of future employability and earning potential.”

CTE has been shown to keep students engaged and on track to graduation, a benefit especially important for ELLs, who last year graduated from high school at a rate of about 27%. Encouragingly, the graduation rate for ELLs who completed most or all of a CTE program was about 57%—more than double the city-wide rate for ELLs.

But even compared to the already low numbers of ELLs who attend CTE schools and participate in CTE, disproportionately few ELLs actually made it to the point of completion. Of the 23,000 students in the 2016 graduating class who completed at least two-thirds of a CTE course sequence, only 477, or 2.1%, were ELLs—even though about 8.3% of the total graduating class were ELLs. “ELLs won't reap the benefits of CTE if they aren't getting into the programs or receiving support once they get there,” explains Sam Streed, Policy Analyst at AFC and one of the brief's main authors. School officials should prioritize this issue and identify ways to ensure that ELLs are, at minimum, equally represented among students who take advantage of the city's CTE offerings.”

The paper offers a list of recommended steps the New York City Department of Education can take to begin to address barriers for ELLs, including resolving recruitment and enrollment issues, offering extra training for CTE instructors in serving ELLs, and providing classroom supports in CTE schools—such as bilingual CTE classes and translation and interpretation services. AFC also recommends increasing data transparency regarding CTE outcomes for ELLs and other vulnerable students and forming an advisory group, made up of educators, parents, students, and professionals with expertise in ELLs and/or CTE, to further assess the problem and issue further guidance.

[Read full report.](#)

About Advocates for Children of New York (AFC)

For more than 45 years, Advocates for Children of New York has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds who are at greatest risk for failure or discrimination in school because of their poverty, disability, race, ethnicity, immigrant or English Language Learner status, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, or involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice systems. AFC achieves this through four integrated strategies: free advice and legal representation for families of students; free trainings and workshops for parents, communities, and educators and other professionals, to equip them to advocate on behalf of students; policy advocacy to effect change in the education system and improve education outcomes; and impact litigation to protect the right to quality education and compel needed reform.

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