



Citywide Council on English Language Learners (CCELL)

Department of Education of the City of New York

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Citywide Council for English Language Learners (CCELL) Resolution # 08

Support for passage of the NY State DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act
June 2012

Whereas, the CCELL, established by NYS Education Law 2590-B, 5. (a) (i) – (iii) (the Law) with the power to advise and consent on any educational or instructional policy involving bilingual or English as a Second Language Programs, and to issue an annual report on the effectiveness of the city district in providing services to English Language Learners (ELLs) and making recommendations, as appropriate, on how to improve the efficiency and delivery of such services; and

Whereas, according to NYCDOE Spring 2011 Report (the Report), on 2010-2011 Demographics of NYC English Language Learners (ELLs) more than 41% of NYC students report speaking a language other than English at home; and

Whereas, the Report states that the current number ELLs in the NYC system is 154,466 students, which is 14.3% of the student population (excluding charter schools), among which 168 home languages are represented; and

Whereas, the Report states that about 45.5% of current ELLs are foreign born and that new immigrant students in NYC schools this year number 72,630 or around 6.7% of the student population; and

Whereas, there is no hard data on the number of undocumented students in NYC schools, it is logical to expect that many ELLs who are foreign born or new immigrants will be undocumented and that they were brought to this country by their parents at an age where they were unaware of their status; and

Whereas, in 2010, the U.S. Congress did not pass the federal DREAM Act legislation that would have granted some undocumented students, who came to the United States at a young age, a path to education and citizenship if they met certain criteria; and

Whereas, California, Texas and New Mexico have already passed their versions of the DREAM Act, without the citizenship provision, which can only be accomplished by a federal law; and

Whereas, in January 2012 the State University of New York (SUNY) Trustees unanimously approved a resolution supporting a plan to offer state sponsored tuition assistance, grants and scholarships to college-bound illegal immigrants who want to enroll in state schools, with H. Carl McCall, Chairman of the Board of Trustees stating: “the current demographic realities of NYS indicate that many of the brightest and hardest working students eligible to enroll at SUNY are of undocumented status, and it is imperative that SUNY remain accessible to these students”; and

Whereas, there is a growing number of NY State DREAM Act supporters; which includes the NY State Department of Education, the City University of New York, New York University, NY State Board of Regents, the NYC Council and NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg, for bills circulating in the NY State Assembly and Senate that would extend financial benefits to undocumented students; and

Whereas, on June 14, 2012, President Obama issued an Executive Order allowing illegal residents under the age of 30, who came to the United States before the age of 16 and have no criminal or security threat, and who have been successful students or have served in the military, to get a two-year deferral of deportation; and

Whereas, failure to pass DREAM Act legislation will stop the pursuit of education and career fulfillment of many bright and talented students whose barriers to achieving their dreams are lack of resources and undocumented status; and

Whereas, the CCELL advocates for equal access to higher education for all students, whether or not they are undocumented; and now therefore, be it

Resolved, that the CCELL fully supports pending New York State DREAM Act legislation that will ensure equal access to higher education for all students, regardless of immigration status; and be it further

Resolved, that the CCELL fully supports New York State DREAM Act legislation that will provide financial resources from both the public and the private sectors, as well as make available tax-free education accounts for undocumented students to help their families plan for college; and be it further

Resolved, that that the CCELL fully supports that NY State DREAM Act legislation be passed so that the great untapped potential of undocumented youth will have the opportunity to make valuable economic and social contributions to NY State.

Adopted by the Citywide Council on English Language Learners on June 27, 2012.

References:

1. NYCDOE Spring 2011 Report on 2010-2011 Demographics of NYC English Language Learners (ELLs)