

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
INDEPENDENT BUDGET OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 22, 2023

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IBO Examines the NYC Public School System’s Capacity to Support Language Acquisition as More Than 13,000 New Arrivals Enrolled This Year

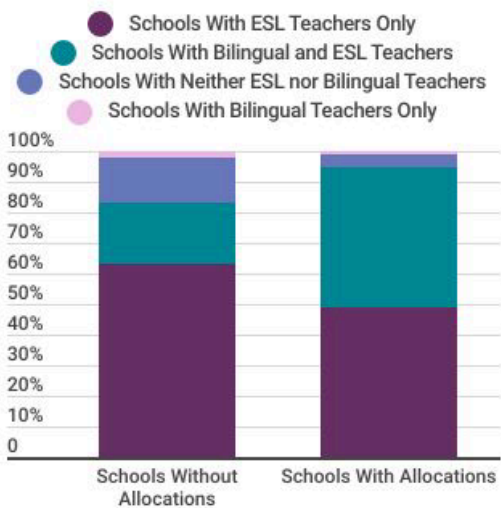
Report link: <https://bit.ly/45omyk4>

With thousands of asylum seekers arriving in New York City, The New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO) issued a brief today tracking the distribution of \$26.7 million in Project Open Arms funds—city allocations to support new enrollees in the school system who live in temporary housing—to public schools. These funds are intended to provide additional support for English Language Learners (ELLs), as many of the newly arriving students also require support for English language acquisition. Therefore, IBO also took a broader look at the prevalence of bilingual and English as a Second Language teachers, as well as the landscape of language acquisition programs in the public school system.

“This report on the capacity of city schools to serve English Language Learners is especially timely given the influx of students whose primary language is not English,” said **IBO Director Louisa Chafee**. “It looks more deeply at the types of language instruction that are primarily offered, and where, which should be of interest to educators, policy makers and families of public school students.”

The analysis found that the additional education funds from the Project Open Arms initiative, announced by the city in October 2022, had reached 600 schools as of April 2023. The Department of Education (DOE) said that principals could use those funds for resources such as tutoring, instructional curriculum and staff development to support ELLs. IBO researched the number of bilingual teachers (the vast majority of which are for Spanish) across schools that received funding versus those that did not. Schools that received the funding were more likely to have in place bilingual or English as a Second Language teachers than schools that did not receive the funding.

A Higher Share of Schools with Project Open Arms Allocations Have At Least One Bilingual Teacher Than Schools Without Allocations



SOURCE: IBO analysis of DOE Pinpoint and state certification data, as of October 31, 2022. IBO used DOE School Leadership Team budget data to identify schools receiving Project Open Arms allocations as of April 3, 2023.

NOTE: Analysis includes general and special education teachers within traditional New York City public schools serving Kindergarten through 12th grade in Districts 1-32. District 75 (citywide special education schools), District 79 alternative high schools and programs, and charter schools are excluded.

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The DOE offers different types of language programs. These include:

- English as a New Language programs, in which instruction takes place in English
- Dual Language programs, in which students learn in English and another language, often their home language, with the goal of content mastery in each and
- Transitional Bilingual programs, which provide instruction in a student’s home language and English, with the goal of transitioning students to English-only instruction.

(The IBO report contains an [interactive map](#) of bilingual and dual language school programs—and the respective languages offered across the five boroughs.)

Research supports the use of bilingual instruction because the inclusion of a student’s home language provides cognitive, social and academic benefits to ELLs. Last school year, most ELLs were enrolled in

English as a New Language programs only. The DOE has shared its intention to expand bilingual programs in the fall of 2023.

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The New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO) is authorized under the New York City Charter to provide nonpartisan budgetary, economic, and policy analysis for the residents of New York City and their elected officials. IBO helps to increase New Yorkers’ understanding of and participation in the budget process.