

The First Step: Paving the Path for Immigrant Students

The First Step: Paving the Path for Immigrant Students aims to remove the barriers older newly arrived immigrant youth face accessing schools that will fuel their success. Making a good school placement when youth arrive to NYC is the first step in unleashing the incredible potential of youth learning to speak, read and write in English, referred to as Multilingual Learners (MLLs) /English Language Learners (ELLs).

The Need for Action

MLL/ELL Students in New York City: A Dropout Crisis

New York City's immigrant youth are dropping out in staggering numbers. MLLs/ELLs have the highest dropout rate (26%) of any subgroup in New York City, two-to-three times that of other subgroups.

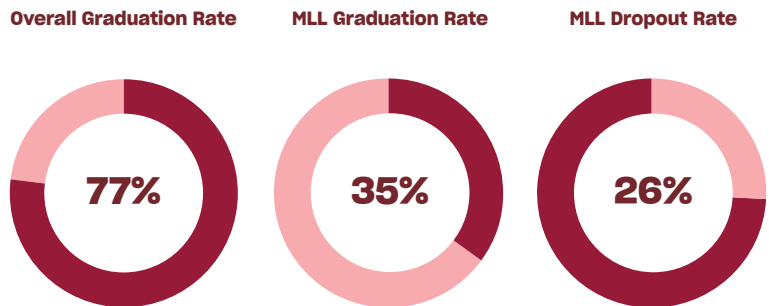
MLLs/ELLs have a dropout rate of 26%

This is particularly devastating given the fact that MLLs/ELLs outperform native-English-speaking peers when given the right supports.

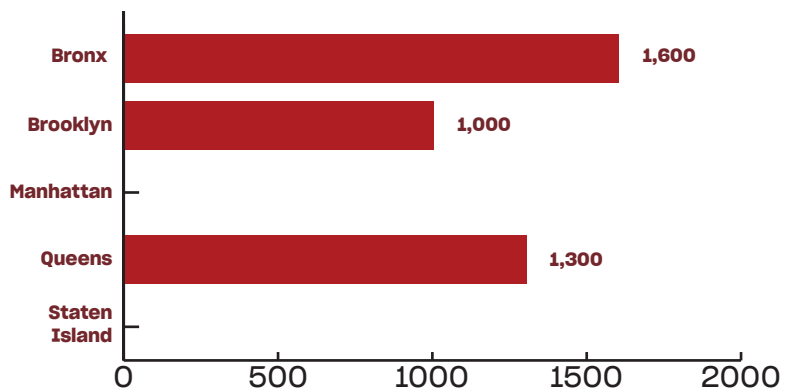
Thousands of Older Newcomers Are Not Enrolled

Beyond MLLs/ELLs who are dropping out, according to a Migration Policy Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, New York City is home to thousands of older newcomer immigrant youth—approximately 4,200 high school aged youth 14 to 21—who are not enrolled in school here and do not already have a high school diploma. Of those, **over 90% are aged 16 to 21.**

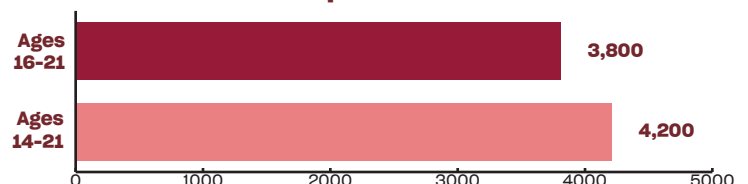
4,200 youth (ages 14-21) are not enrolled in school



Foreign-born Youth Without a High School Diploma Ages 14-21 in NYC—Live in U.S. 0-3 years



Foreign-born Youth Without a High School Diploma in NYC



Need for Supportive Programs to Address Dropout Crisis and Increase Enrollment

Recently-arrived immigrant youth who are 16-21 years old have no time to lose. They must learn English and meet their graduation requirements before they turn 21, a difficult task that is only possible with the right supports. Thus, it is vital that older newly arrived immigrants have access to schools that are prepared to fuel their success.

Transfer schools are particularly important in supporting youth at risk of dropping out because they specialize in helping overage, under-credited students succeed and have wrap-around supports. However, **all of the transfer schools that adequately serve older, recently arrived MLLs/ELLs are in Manhattan, except for one located in the Bronx.** In order to stop MLLs/ELLs from dropping out and to increase enrollment, the Department of Education (DOE) needs to provide quality options that are near where the students live and work.

Paving the Path Forward

While the New York City Department of Education (DOE) has made strides in prioritizing MLL students and our partnership together has been productive, more must be done to ensure older newly arrived immigrant students and all MLLs/ELLs succeed.

Central Recommendation:

Create a \$6M transfer school pilot program that improves recently arrived immigrant students age 16-21 access to supportive transfer schools outside of Manhattan.

- Launch in SY 2020-2021 a 3-year grant-based pilot program to increase older newly arrived immigrant youth's access to transfer schools based in communities near where youth live.
- Beyond funding English as A New Language (ENL, formerly called ESL) teachers, the pilot needs to encompass culturally responsive wrap-around supports and robust professional development to prepare all educators in transfer schools to adeptly support recently arrived MLLs/ELLs.
- Creating this pilot program will lay out a roadmap that other schools beyond those in the pilot can also follow to improve their capacity to serve older newly arrived immigrant youth as well.

Targeted Recommendation:

- **Optimize Enrollment and Institutionalize Supports for DOE Enrollment Counselors and Families:**
 - Provide **ongoing workshops and individualized support** to Family Welcome Center teams so that they continue to grow in their capacity to make the best possible placement for these youth.
 - Pilot and analyze the impact of **guide sheets to help immigrant youth and families understand how to navigate the enrollment process.**
- **Improve Access to Quality Programs:**
 - Facilitate **sharing of expertise** among schools that effectively serve older newly arrived immigrant youth in particular and those that need to build their capacity.
- **Open New Schools Prepared to Serve Older Newcomers**
 - In order to successfully target the needs of historically underserved immigrant youth, **Imagine Schools NYC must fund proposals in multiple boroughs** that include culturally responsive wrap-around supports, night programs, and educators prepared to expertly support older newcomers.

Education Collaborative

Coordinated by the New York Immigration Coalition

About the New York Immigration Coalition's Education Collaborative

With over 30 years of experience reforming the state's educational system, the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC), along with its Education Collaborative, have a distinguished track record of improving MLLs' and immigrant students' access to resources, advancing immigrant family engagement in schools, and working with the NYC DOE to address barriers immigrants face.