

NJCIC is Awarded the Dr. Elizabeth “BJ” Franks Advocacy Award by NJTESOL/NJBE

The New Jersey Teachers of Other Languages / New Jersey Bilingual Educators (NJTESOL/NJBE) awarded the 2022 Dr. Elizabeth “BJ” Franks Advocacy Award to the New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children and Education Law Center. The reception was held during NJTESOL/ NJBE’s Annual Conference, on Thursday, June 2nd, at 6:00PM at the Hyatt Regency, New Brunswick, NJ.

06/03/2022, New Jersey– The New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children (NJCIC) and Education Law Center (ELC) were jointly awarded the **Dr. Elizabeth “BJ” Franks Advocacy Award**. This award is given to recognize an organization in New Jersey that has served as a catalyst for the advancement of the needs and concerns of English language learners in the state. Advocating for educational equity for all immigrant children is a cornerstone of NJCIC’s policy advocacy priorities. We are humbled to be recognized for our work in driving educational equity for English language learners and congratulate our fellow awardee and partner, Education Law Center, for this recognition.

Between April and July 2021, NJCIC, NJTESOL/NJBE, and ELC conducted listening sessions with parents, caregivers, and youth, and organized in-depth interviews with ESL/bilingual educators, administrators, and counselors. We were able to summarize our findings and recommendations in a [report](#) released November 2021.

The report, [English Learners in New Jersey: Exposing Inequities and Expanding Opportunities in the Wake of the Pandemic](#), found that many school districts are failing to meet the standards of the New Jersey Bilingual Education Code or are non-compliant with federal law. It has been used by advocates in education equity to amplify English learner student concerns, such as the lack

of diversity in the education field in New Jersey. NJCIC is proud to continue to partner with these organizations to advocate and drive change for English language learners. Emily Chertoff, former Executive Director of NJCIC offered the following statement. “Many English learner students face discrimination at school, and in a lot of cases, their only advocates in the system are individual teachers and counselors like the members of NJTESOL”. Offering recourse for systemic changes she “hope(s) this report is a step towards systemic accountability for New Jersey schools, and that in the future teachers, students, and caregivers don’t have to fight for English Learners’ basic rights.” In reflecting on her participation and leadership of this project she states she is “grateful to my NJTESOL friends for recognizing the work that NJCIC’s amazing student volunteers, youth Mental Health Advocates, and Policy Director did to draw attention to this issue.”



“The first step in addressing systemic educational inequities for English language learners in NJ is to illuminate just how severe the problems are, and this report does just that.” said Priscilla Monico Marin, NJCIC’s new Executive Director who received the award on behalf of the organization. “In the months to come, NJCIC plans to continue to advocate for changes to the Bilingual Education Code with the New Jersey Department of Education and to promote legislation that creates pathways for diversity in New Jersey’s education system”. NJTESOL/NJBE provides opportunities for the voices of teachers and ESL and bilingual students to be lifted in advocating for changes that would affect their professions and education. They do this by actively tracking legislation, submitting recommendations to state agencies and working with state administration in providing opportunities for inclusion, diversity and equity for educators and students.

About the NJ Consortium for Immigrant Children

NJCIC works with New Jersey’s young immigrants and their allies to advance their full, fearless participation in our society. We seek lawful status for immigrant children and youth and advocate for systemic change in how they access legal and social services.

For more information or to join our efforts visit our website at [NJCIC](#)

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