



City School District of Albany 2020-21 Legislative Priorities Support for English as a New Language and Refugee Students

The enrollment of English as a New Language (ENL) students has more than tripled in the past six years in the City School District of Albany to nearly 1,300. This dramatic growth has been due primarily to a large influx of refugee families in the City of Albany, in spite of recent federal restrictions. Our students represent more than 55 countries and speak 49 different languages. Our ENL students comprise about 11% of our total student population, and that figure is expected to continue to grow. For example, we have added more than 200 new ENL students in 2019 through October.

Our district is deeply committed to our English-language learners (ELLs) and their families. In recent years we have established a Department of ENL and Refugee Services and opened the Albany International Center, an optional, short-term program designed to serve refugee and immigrant students in grades 6-12 who are in the early stages of learning English and also adjusting to a new culture and a new community.

The state has recognized the important needs of ELLs and has mandated increased staffing levels through the implementation of CR Part 154. We applaud this philosophy. Unfortunately, the requirements of CR Part 154 are unfunded. This places a significant burden on high-needs districts like ours to provide programs and services for our ENL students without short-changing other students. Support specifically targeted to districts like Albany with large and growing ENL student populations is a critical need.

To comply with these requirements, our school district has added 28 new teaching positions over the past four school years at a total cost of nearly \$2.2 million to meet the unfunded mandates of CR Part 154. These positions do not include our additional investments in a principal for the Albany International Center, an ENL home-school coordinator and an ENL social worker.

For 2020-21, we will be requesting an additional \$132,500 to support staff needs in the following areas:

- One (1.0) ENL elementary literacy coach
- One (1.0) teaching assistant at AIC

In our longer-term planning, we envision the international center growing to serve students in grades 3-5 as well as ENL students 18-21 that are about to age-out of public education without the time to complete high school graduation requirements. We also envision the center becoming a regional hub that would provide these same services to ELLs from surrounding school districts, consolidating resources and building on our experience and expertise in serving our city's large, rapidly growing and diverse refugee and ENL student population.

VISION STATEMENT

The City School District of Albany will be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.

MISSION STATEMENT

We will work in partnership with our diverse community to engage every learner in a robust educational program designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success.