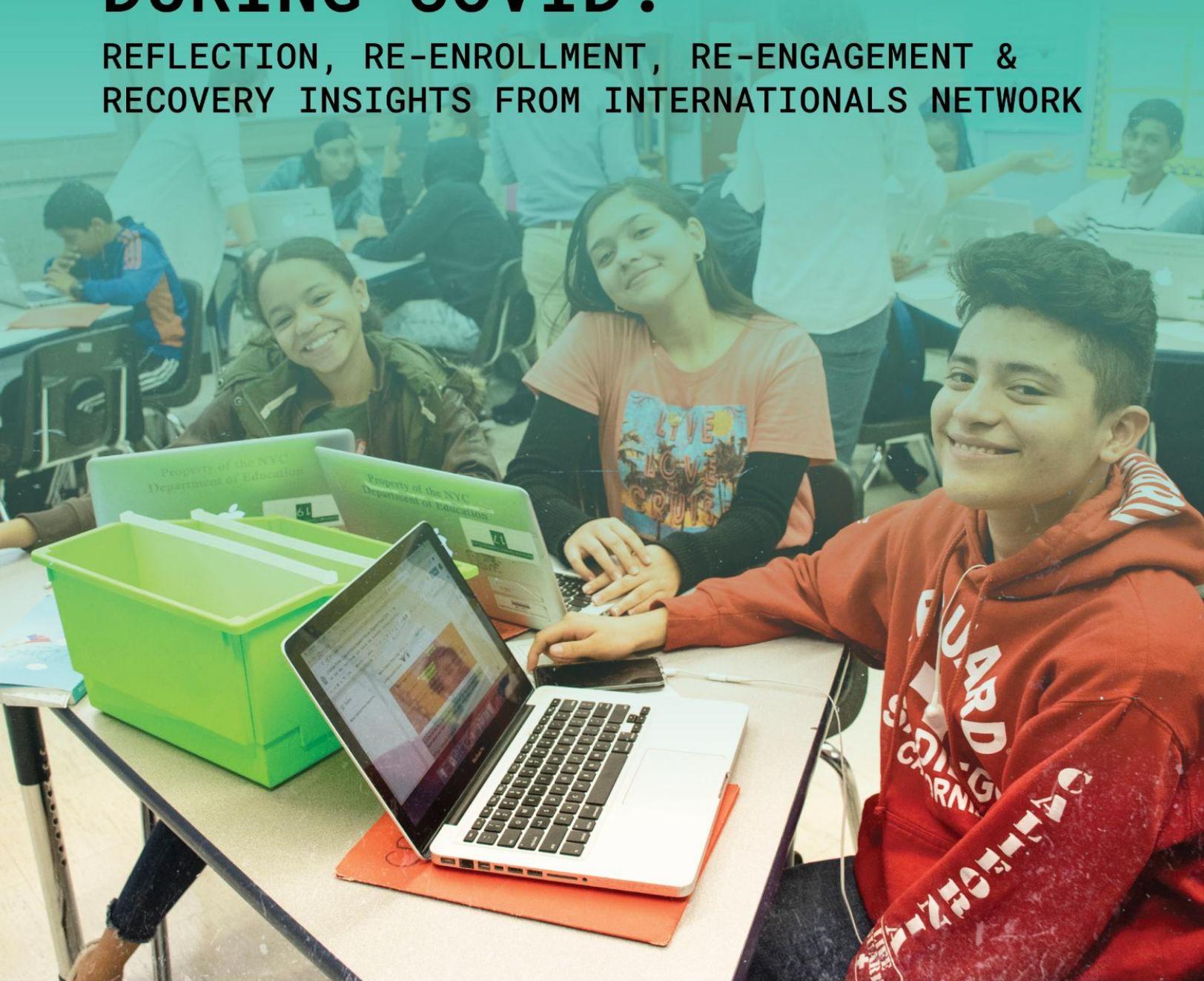


# SERVING NEW YORK CITY'S MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS DURING COVID:

REFLECTION, RE-ENROLLMENT, RE-ENGAGEMENT &  
RECOVERY INSIGHTS FROM INTERNATIONALS NETWORK





***“One of the largest impacts of the pandemic on our students has been the loss of social connections. We have a responsibility to create spaces within our school community to help our students process their experiences; however, we recognize that this cannot fall only on our counselors and social workers, but space must be made across classrooms and embedded into the curriculum. Before students can feel safe to take intellectual risks in the classroom, they must feel safe to process their emotions and feelings related to the pandemic and other traumas they may have experienced.”***

***– Elizabeth Demchack, Principal  
Claremont International High School  
Bronx, New York***

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# INTRODUCTION



*"The hardest for me was not writing on paper. I miss it. I miss doing project work in groups in person and not in break out rooms. If school opens regularly in person for whole days of the week then we need to do projects with writing. It helps me so much."*

- Student, International High School  
for Health Sciences

*"One of the greatest challenges for the coming year will be getting students to trust school - trust that school is vital to their learning; trust that it is worth their time to be with us and not working; trust that the community we will build together will benefit them academically and emotionally. I think opting out of school is going to feel like a viable option for some students."*

- Kathleen Rucker, Principal,  
Brooklyn International High School

## Introduction

On September 13, 2021, New York City Public Schools opened their doors for in-person school for all students for the first time since March of 2020. The school year ahead represents the first in-person school year after the rollercoaster of opening and closing that characterized the latter half of the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years. While all students were significantly impacted by Covid-19 and subsequent disruptions to in-person schooling, numerous reports have illuminated how the pandemic widened disparities in opportunities and outcomes between students who are multilingual learners (MLLs) and other students. Internationals Network schools within the New York City Department of Education's district portfolio enroll nearly 6,000 of the city's multilingual learners.<sup>1</sup> Because Internationals Network New York City students are concentrated in some of the hardest hit areas of the City by the Covid-19 pandemic, we

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term *multilingual learners* to refer to the cohort of students who are both classified as *English Language Learners (ELLs)* or *Limited English Proficient (LEP)* students. This subgroup is referred to by many names. The term *multilingual learner* acknowledges their rich linguistic resources, rather than emphasizing solely the goal of learning English. We retain the acronym ELL in many of our data charts because it is the term used in policy documents.

draw from our learnings and insights to inform ways to support multilingual learners and immigrant students in all of New York City for the unprecedented school year ahead. This report focuses on the subset of sixteen Internationals Network schools in New York City, exploring the rich dataset of our 16 New York City network schools to draw insights and recommendations. With a history in New York City dating back to 1985 when the first International high school opened, we have evidence, research, artifacts and reports to examine growth and changes in our student population, their achievement, and examples of classroom and school-level promising practices. The size and longevity of the network, as well as our robust partnerships with key community-based and university partners in New York City, enable us to draw deep and rich conclusions to inform policy and practice for years ahead.

In the pages that follow, we seek to dig deeply into the needs of New York City’s immigrant multilingual learners (MLLs) to meet four goals. First, we **reflect** on the learnings of the past year, including the challenges, losses, and innovations, with a deep dive into some of our enrollment and achievement data. Second, we present examples and insights from ways in which our 16 network schools across New York City have been working to **re-enroll** multilingual learners at the secondary level, including those who have been disengaged from school, those who have fallen behind in credits, and those who are setting foot in a US classroom for the first time in the 2021-22 school year. Third, we highlight recommendations to **re-engage** multilingual learners in New York City’s public schools, not only within Internationals Network, but in the middle and high schools across the city that have MLLs enrolled. Our recommendations address how to re-enroll and support the many young people who have disengaged from school, not due to disinterest, but because being part of the labor market became a necessity due to financial losses and the loss of lives and livelihoods. Finally, we explore some initiatives that are being supported in our New York City schools in partnership with the New York City Department of Education to **recover** losses as part of the Covid-19 plan and highlight recommendations that will ensure that the needs of multilingual learners and immigrant families are embedded in these plans. Together, we hope that our plan to **reflect, re-enroll, re-engage and recover** will address some of the educational facets of the disproportionate losses born by the immigrant families in our city.

## Background and Context

No district, school or teacher was prepared for what unfolded across our nation’s schools starting in March 2020 when closures due to Covid-19 sent millions home and teaching and learning shifted online. In addition to the heavy lift of implementing online learning, we know that school closures due to the pandemic also required students (mostly low-income students of color) to care for ill family members and manage hunger, housing instability, and lack of basic necessities (Hough, 2021). A group that already faces multiple stressors including linguistic and technological barriers, immigrant students and their families have been cited in numerous studies as being disproportionately impacted by remote learning and the impact of the pandemic (see [References](#)).

Many traditionally underserved groups, including immigrants, homeless students, and students with disabilities, “went missing” after the shift to remote school took place -- researchers estimate that “as many as 3 million” students disengaged completely from school during the pandemic (Korman, O’Keefe, & Repka, 2020). Throughout the extended period of the COVID-19 pandemic and the re-emergence of the virus in new and highly contagious variants, immigrant youth in New York City and their families have suffered at disproportionate rates. Reports from [Make the Road NY](#), the [Center for an Urban Future](#), the [Immigration](#)

[Initiative at Harvard](#), and others have pointed to the impact of the pandemic on communities of color and immigrants, especially as they are overrepresented among essential workers, low-income residents, and low-income families. In the United States, immigrants and MLLs have left school at higher rates than any other student group during the pandemic (an estimated 1.2 million nationwide), and the number of MLLs registering for school dropped from 16,000 in 2019 to 14,000 in 2021. This loss is due to multiple factors, including the economic recession that has led some immigrant youth to take on additional work to support their families (Jacobson, 2021; Russell & Vázquez-Toness, 2021). Many immigrant youth have been forced to balance work and school or leave school altogether due to work schedules that conflict with school. Some youth have taken on additional responsibilities in the home to support younger siblings and care for elderly relatives.

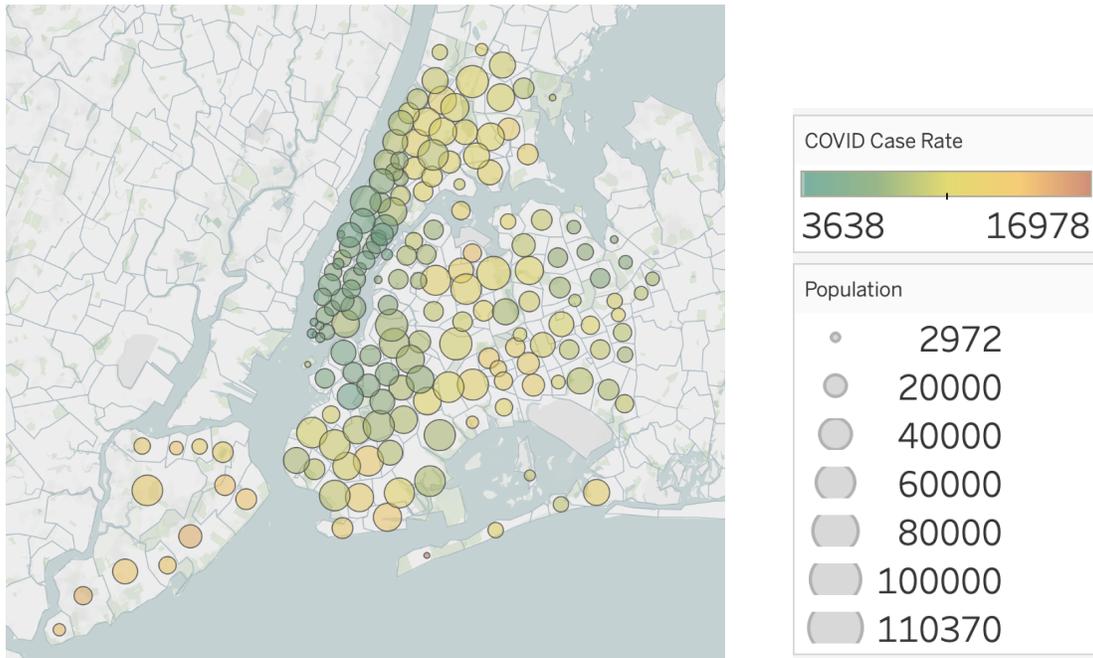
Internationals Network for Public Schools is a national network, spanning 11 districts in 7 states. Exchange of ideas, cross network learning and support are central to our model and to the growth and success of our innovative schools and school-within-a-school academy programs. As the only national school network focused on the specific needs of immigrant adolescent multilingual students, Internationals Network for Public Schools began its response and shift online in March 2020. Over the course of these 15 months, we have learned a great deal that informs our current network wide efforts to re-engage students in the year ahead and help them re-engage, re-enroll and recover.

More than 50% of working adults in New York City are immigrants. Many have [avoided using benefits for which they are eligible](#), including the myriad of safety net programs (i.e., food, housing and cash assistance) during the pandemic due to immigration concerns. The Urban Institute (Haley, 2021) reported the following “chilling effects” due to immigration concerns: 28% of adults in low-income immigrant families and 43.9 percent in families with non-permanent residents reported avoiding noncash benefits or other help with basic needs due to concerns about immigration enforcement. This means avoiding nutrition programs, health programs, and housing assistance, as well as SNAP, unemployment insurance, free or low-cost medical care for uninsured people, and emergency rental assistance. The fallout from this chilling effect is of concern to Internationals Network schools due to a ripple effect on our students, with potentially disastrous impacts on their well-being. We have observed an increase in homelessness or transitional housing among our students as well as rising health concerns.

The majority of students in our 16 New York City Internationals Network schools come from families that make up New York City’s essential workforce and are living in the zipcodes impacted most heavily by COVID-19. They live in neighborhoods located at the epicenter of the pandemic’s impact, in zip codes that were hardest hit by infection, hospitalization, and death, see graphic below. (To view a dynamic version of this visualization, please click [HERE](#).) Many of our students also reside in zip codes in Brooklyn and the Bronx with some of the lowest vaccination rates (New York City Department of Health, 2021).

## COVID Case Rate by Zip Code

About 61% of our students live in the zipcodes that have COVID cases per 100K residents in the top third citywide. About 28% of students live in zipcodes with cases in the middle third citywide.

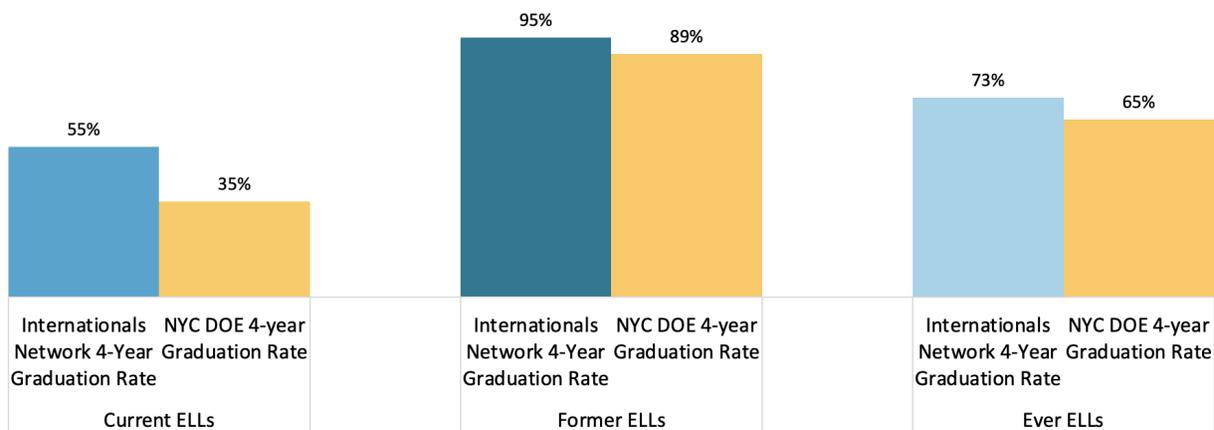


(For more information and detail on Covid rates in the five boroughs of NYC, see this [LINK](#))

## Immigrants and Multilingual Learners in New York City

Multilingual learners make up 15% of NYC public school students overall-- at the secondary level, they are scattered across 424 of the 520 high schools that are part of the New York City Department of Education. Our direct experience and research across Internationals Network demonstrate that MLLs can be successful with appropriate support and resources. Yet public data reveal a dismal outlook for most MLLs and illuminate our collective failure as a nation to provide what immigrant students and multilingual learners need to be successful. Below is an illustration of the achievement of students in Internationals Network's New York City schools, as compared to MLLs attending non-Internationals Network high schools in New York City.

**Current ELLs, Former ELLs, and Ever ELLs at Internationals Network's high schools in NYC graduated at higher rates than comparable students in NYC.**

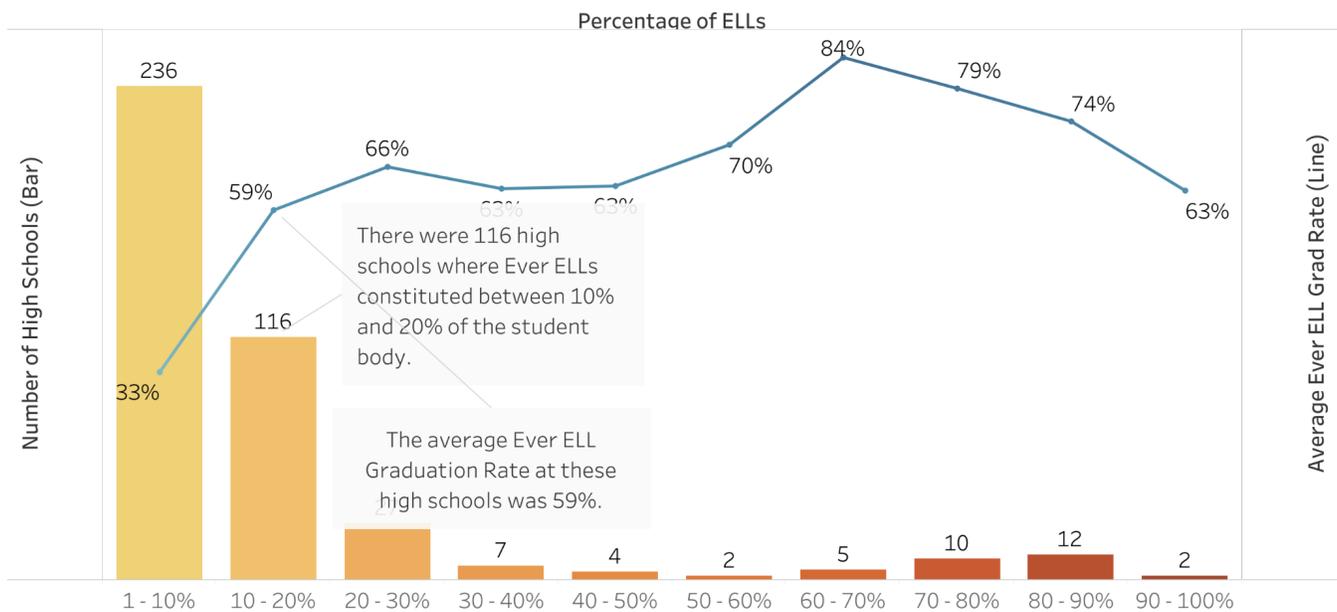


In 2019 in New York City, the graduation rate for students who were Ever ELLs in high school was 65%, as compared to 77% for the general education population. Students who had not yet tested out of ELL status by senior year (*current ELLs*) were even less likely to graduate; only 35% of these students in NYC schools graduated in 2019.

In 2020, New York State waived Regents exam requirements that pose a barrier to graduation for many students. As a result, we observed an uptick in graduation rates for New York City’s English Learners, current ELLs and former ELLs, as can be seen below.

These graduation figures represent averages across hundreds of schools, and thus obscure a significant amount of variation across schools depending on how many MLLs they have enrolled. Of the more than 500 New York City public high schools, 83% enroll ELLs. In general, New York City high schools with a large proportion of ELLs had higher graduation rates for these students than schools that had just a few ELLs (as shown below). However, at most high schools enrolling ELLs in NYC (236 or 45% of all NYC public high schools), fewer than 10% of the student population are ELLs, and these high schools had a dismal average graduation rate for ELLs of 33%. This suggests that at many high schools, ELLs are liable to fall through the cracks when they do not constitute a significant portion of the student population. (To view a dynamic version of this visualization, please click [HERE](#)).

In the majority of NYC High Schools in SY 2019-20, ELLs constituted 10% or less of the student body. The average graduation rate for Ever ELLs at such schools was 33%.



In about 40% of NYC High schools, however, 50 or more ELLs are currently enrolled, and about 20% of high schools in NYC have upwards of 100 MLLs. The recommendations in this report are thus relevant far beyond Internationals Network for Public Schools. Without question, re-engaging immigrant students and multilingual learners is an issue of central concern not only to the 16 Internationals Network Schools in New York City, but to the many high schools and middle schools that serve them.

## About Internationals Network for Public Schools

Internationals Network for Public Schools is one of several partner organizations who work with the New York City Department of Education to support a network of 15 public high schools and 1 middle school in New York City. These schools serve 6,000 immigrant multilingual learners each year; about 70% of these students are Spanish speakers, and about 30% were born in the Dominican Republic. After Spanish, Arabic is the most common language among Internationals Network students in NYC; 5% of students speak a form of Arabic at home. Aside from the Dominican Republic, the most common countries of origin include the United States (12% of students), Ecuador (9% of students), Honduras (5%), and Guatemala (5%). (To view a dynamic visualization, please click [HERE](#)).

As the only school development and support organization dedicated to the needs of new immigrants and refugees, Internationals Network has become a leading national voice in the fight for educational equity. Our work emerges at the intersection of educational practice, research and policy. Internationals Network transforms education for immigrant and refugee multilingual learners through classroom and school-level innovation. We help schools and districts better serve multilingual learners through multi-faceted school-wide interventions that address students' social emotional, academic and linguistic needs. Internationals Network designs new public secondary schools and programs hosted within larger schools, coaches school leaders, teachers, and school staff, and provides access to a collaborative, robust network of support and learning for our partners.

Internationals Network schools and academies are designed to reinforce effective instructional practices for multilingual learners and foster an equity-focused, linguistically and culturally responsive school climate. The result is students who are more successful than their counterparts at many schools outside of our network, graduating at higher rates and thriving beyond high school. We have developed a comprehensive approach to the education of immigrant and refugee MLLs and broadened our impact by sharing proven best practices and influencing policy for MLLs. In the world of education reform, Internationals Network has become a leading voice in the education of immigrant and refugee multilingual students. (For additional research on Internationals Network see this [LINK](#).)

Across Internationals Network, we are aware of the intersecting challenges that our students face. We know that innovation at the classroom, school, and district level can support immigrant adolescents to meet and exceed the challenges facing them. In this report, we explore considerations for the school year ahead that we consider relevant not only for schools within our network, but for all educators, schools and programs that serve multilingual learners. Regardless of how many or few are enrolled in a school or district, we consider their success to be a benchmark for our collective effectiveness.

The launch of the 2021-22 school year presents much uncertainty about the year ahead with re-opening of New York schools in person, rising cases of the Delta variant of Covid-19, new leadership in Albany, and the upcoming NYC mayoral election. School staff have worked through the summer to ensure that plans for the coming school year are crafted thoughtfully and include consideration of multilingual learners and immigrant youth. The immediate challenge is to assess the impact of the pandemic and school closings on MLL students and their school communities and identify key lessons learned. In our June 2021 report, we laid out ten key recommendations for re-engaging multilingual learners for the 2021-22 school year and

beyond. In this report, we dig into five of these recommendations and how we can address them with immigrant MLLs in NYC and their families.

## Key Recommendations for Re-Engaging Multilingual Learners

1. Foreground equity to ensure that multilingual learners' specific realities are addressed in district and school policies, considering in particular barriers to school access, enrollment and attendance.
2. Encourage school-level innovation & cross-school collaborations by creating intentional opportunities for adult learning.
3. Encourage and allow for scheduling flexibilities to ensure that all students are served.
4. Promote and support competency-based learning and performance assessment that de-emphasizes seat time but ensures access to rigorous and higher order thinking for all students.
5. Continue to incorporate targeted opportunities for asynchronous learning in ways that are meaningful, accessible and promote equity for diverse learners.

As a leader in the fight for educational equity for multilingual learners, Internationals will continue to support our students and their families through services to our schools, exchange across our network, and partnerships with CBO allies and advocacy partners. This report offers lessons learned and recommendations informed by work in schools and lived experiences of leaders, teachers and students.



Students and teacher from International High School for Health Sciences, Queens, NY

# PART II: REFLECTION

## Initial Impacts

In March 2020, images from New York City plastered the pages of national and international newspapers. New York City was dubbed: Coronavirus hotspot of the world. The governor of New York declared a general statewide quarantine: all residents of New York City and State would “shelter in place” and only essential businesses would remain open to the public; all non-essential workers would work from home. Daycare centers and nonessential businesses would remain closed for the foreseeable future, while schools and universities shifted to remote learning. The city that never sleeps became a ghost town overnight, its silence punctuated only by ambulance sirens piercing the stillness while in the background, the hum of the emergency cooling trucks brought in to deal with the rising death toll lent an eerie sound track.

When school began on September 13, 2021 in New York City, the pandemic and its impact had extended into its third school year, with students, families, teachers and school leaders facing constant uncertainties. Data, observations, conversations with students, families and educators revealed a year of tremendous challenge and hardship. In taking stock of the impact, we have been confronted with the realities of loss. Throughout these past months, we have reflected a great deal to make sense of what the young people and adults in our schools have learned and how they have innovated during the pandemic. We are also taking stock of lingering impacts. In the pages that follow, we share data trends across our New York City Network schools.

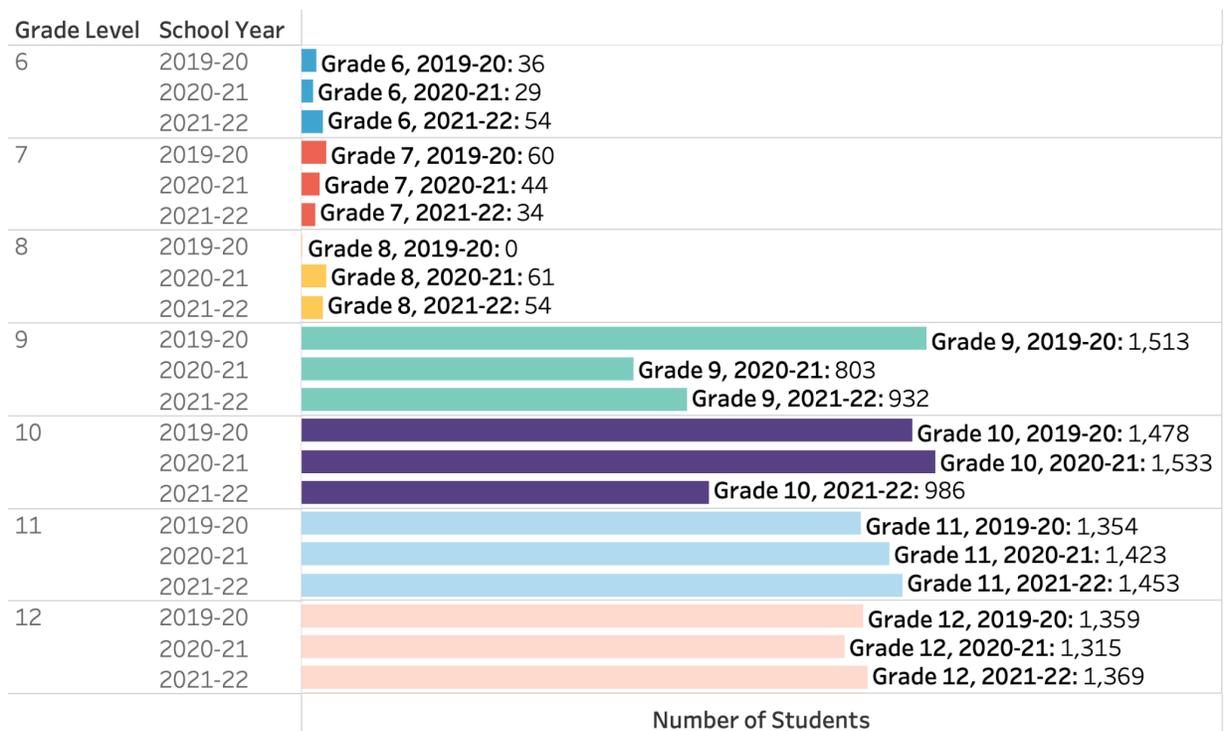
*“One challenge ahead is re-engaging the students who have slipped away this year and helping them back on the path to graduation and college; rebuilding our sense of community now that so many have spent so much time apart.”*

*– Maison RippetEAU, Assistant Principal,  
International High School at Prospect Heights*

## Enrollment

Nationally, enrollment of students in public schools has dropped each year between Fall of 2019 and Fall of 2021. Enrollment in New York State [decreased 3.4% on average across all student groups](#). Among immigrant students, enrollment issues were exacerbated by changing and more restrictive immigration policies under the prior federal administration from 2016-20. Across the network as a whole, we estimate that more than 800 students have had to relocate due to the pandemic -- this includes students doubling up in housing, relocating to other districts, moving out of state in pursuit of employment, or returning to their home countries. Among the most dramatic shifts over the course of the past three school years is the drop in enrollment, as seen in the figure below. (To view a dynamic version of this visualization, please click [HERE](#)).

Between School Year 19-20 and School Year 20-21, the number of ninth grade students enrolled in Internationals Network high schools decreased by nearly 50%. In 21-22, the number of 9th graders rose slightly, but it was still about 40% less than in 19-20.



The drop in enrollment reflects a national trend: [National Center for Education Statistics](#) reports that enrollment in public schools nationally dropped by 1.1 million students in Fall 2020 as compared to Fall 2019 (2.2% of all students enrolled). Enrollment in Internationals Network schools in NYC decreased by about 10% between 2019-20 and 2020-21. Most of the decrease in enrollment came from a significant decrease in the number of 9th graders enrolled between these two school years. Preliminary numbers for 2020-21 show that 9th grade enrollment has increased somewhat, but neither the cohort starting in 2020 nor the cohort starting in 2021 have reached the sizes of pre-pandemic cohorts. An important question is how much these figures will change as the school year continues; we expect to see an increase in enrollment as 2021 continues, but it is still unclear whether and when enrollment will return to pre-pandemic figures for multilingual learners.

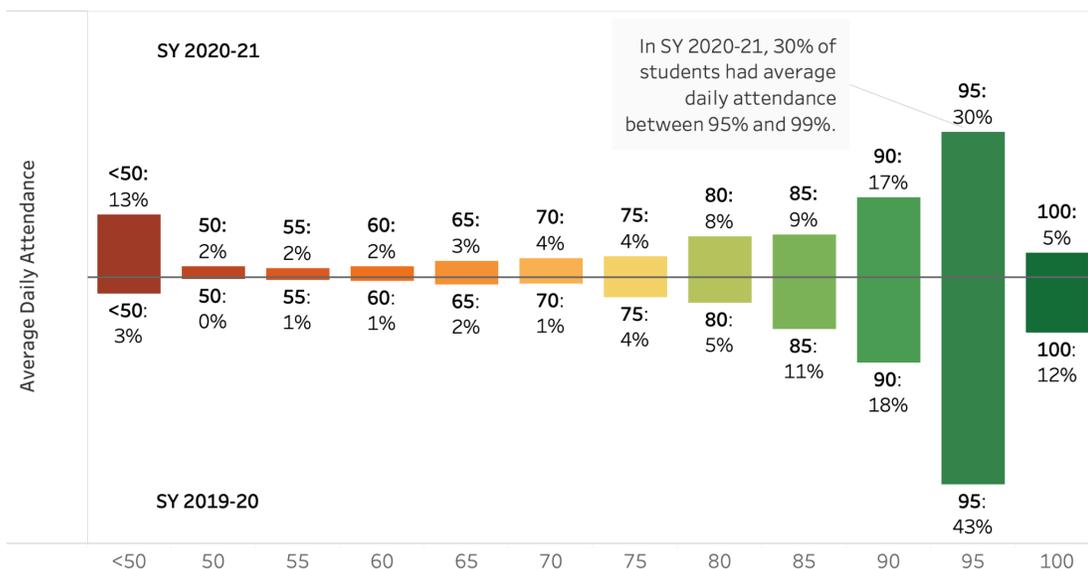
In NYC, there were 34,600 MLLs enrolled in the 2020-21 school year in high school, compared to 35,200 MLLS in the year prior. This decrease of nearly 2% is significantly less than the overall 10% reduction in enrollment that Internationals Network schools experienced. Data gathered about global migration reveal that migration fell 46% around the globe in the first half of 2020 and 72% in the 2nd half of 2020, resulting in many fewer newcomer students arriving in US schools (Papademetriou, 2020; Greenberg, Grow, Heredia, Monin and Workie, 2021).

Other existential challenges not only pose significant barriers to students' current engagement with school, but can compound the threat that students do not return to school in the Fall of 2021. Every Internationals Network New York City school reported having students who have and continue to face significant personal and financial losses alongside major upheavals in their lives. These include loss of parents or family members to Covid-19, relocation, and an urgent need to work significant hours to help counter economic hardships due to job loss of parents or family members. Because students' families are overwhelmingly active in the service industry (including restaurants, food service, cleaning), as well as construction, every Internationals school community has students whose families have been faced with lost or reduced employment. As a result, the hours available to engage in school are reduced because many students must now work significant hours to help financially.

## Attendance

Making sense of attendance and student engagement became much more complex as a result of remote and hybrid learning formats. Prior to the pandemic, more than two-thirds of Internationals students attended school at least 90% of the time but that number dropped in 2020-21 by more than half to nearly 40% of students attending 90% or more. During remote learning, what "attendance" means varied across districts, and systems for tracking attendance were not designed to provide the nuance necessary to fully understand

In School Year 19-20, 73% of Internationals Network NYC students had average daily attendance above 90%. In 20-21, 55% of Internationals' NYC students had average daily attendance above 90%.



student engagement. In contrast to the straightforward policy of marking students present when they arrive in the classroom, remote and hybrid learning required designing new processes to capture students' participation using new district and in-house systems, as well as adapting procedures for following up.

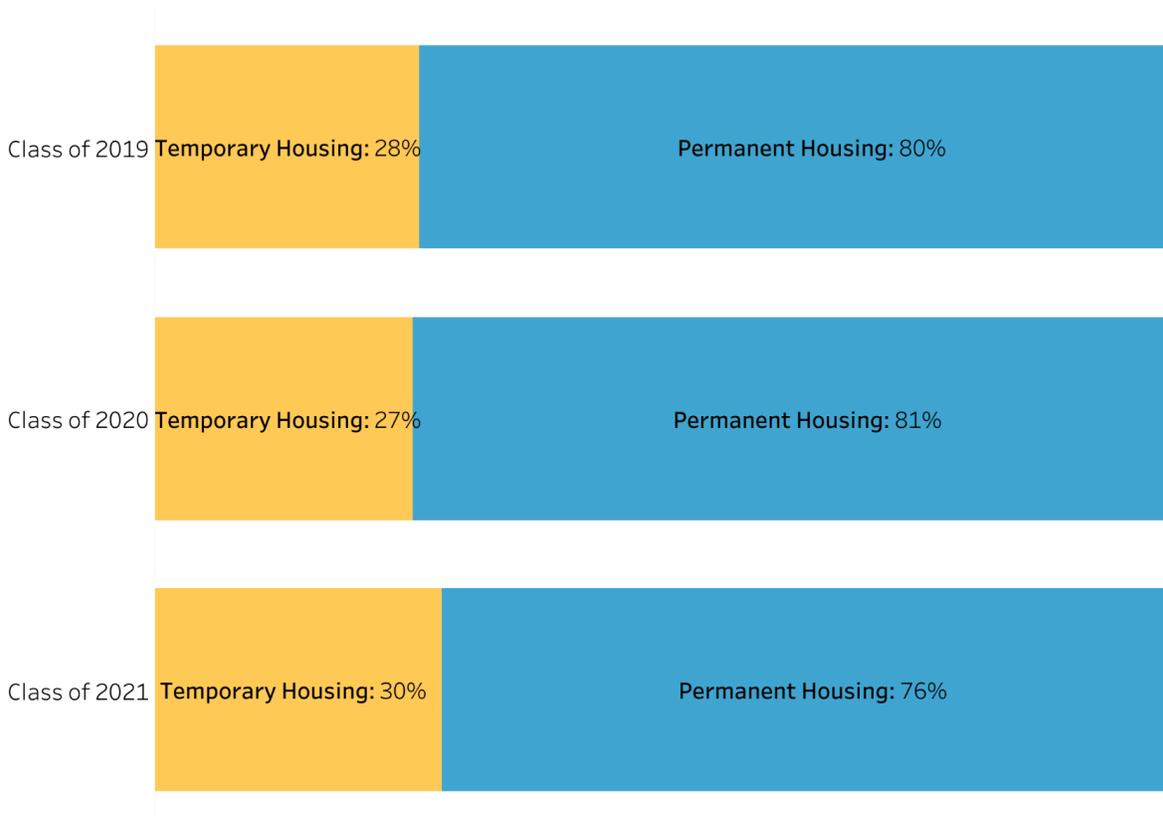
Although Internationals Network schools in NYC have seen fewer students drop out of school, attendance among those who remain enrolled has been lower than in previous school years. The New York City Department of Education deems students who are absent more than 10% of the time as chronically absent. After the start of the pandemic in Spring 2020, the number of students who were chronically absent rose to nearly 45%. School leaders have stressed the intersecting challenges that have negatively impacted students' attendance during the pandemic: work, mental health, family obligations, lack of access to broadband and technology and distractions that arose from attempting to do remote school at home with inadequate space.

The figure above juxtaposes attendance metrics during the 2020-21 school year (on top) with those from school year 2019-20 (below the horizontal line.) Notable are the large increases in students who attend less than 50% of the time and the decrease in students with above 90% attendance. (To view a dynamic version of this visualization, please click [HERE](#)).

### Increase in Homeless and Housing Insecure Student Population

Nearly ten percent of New York City's public school students are homeless (Advocates for Children, 2020), representing a total of 98,000 students in the 2019-20 school year. Internationals Network New York City students are overrepresented among this population of homeless and housing insecure, as shown in the chart below. (To view a dynamic version of this visualization, please click [HERE](#)).

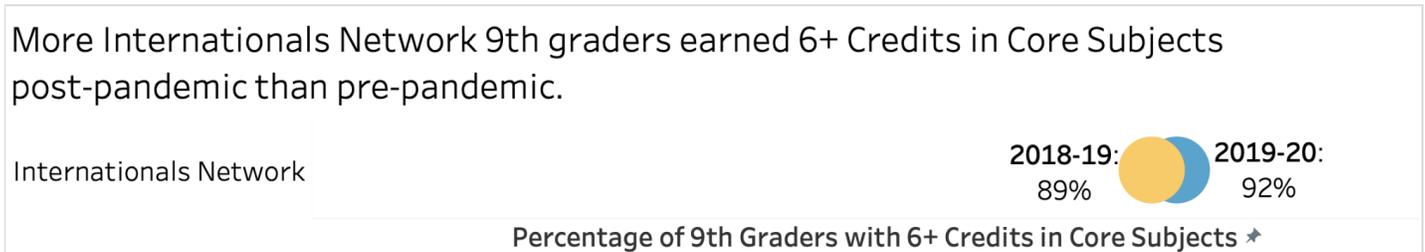
Between 25% and 30% of Internationals Network students in NYC live in temporary housing. This compares to about 9% of students in the NYC DOE in the 2019-20 school year.



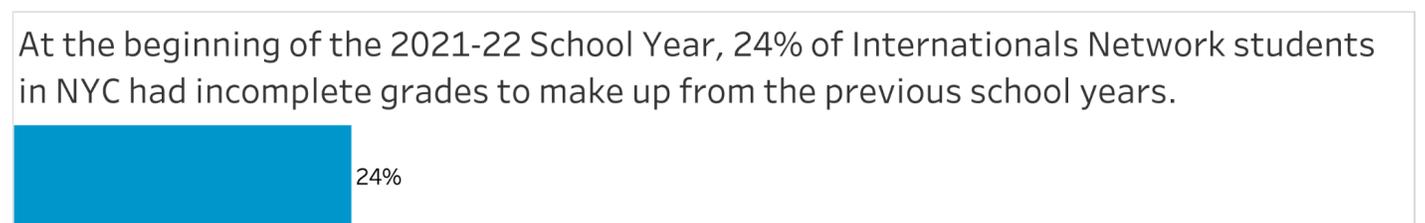
As is clear from this data visualization, there has been an increase in the loss of permanent housing among Internationals NYC students. The above illustration shows averages, and the range of homeless and housing insecure students in New York City Internationals schools is 14% on the low end and 45% on the high end. Unknown still are the short and long term effects of recent displacements due to Hurricane Ida (August 2021) and the displacement of many families from flooded apartments, coupled with the economic losses due to Covid, as well as the expiration of both the eviction moratorium and unemployment benefits.

## Changes in Course Completion and Overall Achievement

One of the most significant predictors of whether students are on-track to success and graduation in high school is course completion in their first year of high school. Although the pandemic was very disruptive during the 2019-20 school year, Internationals Network students in 9th grade in New York City were deemed “on track” in terms of the credits they earned *more* frequently that year than in the prior school year. The difference was small overall -- on average, 89% of 9th graders were on track at the end of the 18-19 school year, versus 92% in 19-20. The percentage of 9th graders who earned enough credits to be on track for graduation was higher in **school year 2019-20** than in **school year 2018-19** (pre-pandemic) as seen in the figure below.



Despite the slight uptick in students earning 6 or more credits, the start of the 2021-22 school year still finds students with incomplete grades to make up from prior years. This will undoubtedly have an impact on the year ahead as schools work to ensure students progress toward graduation.

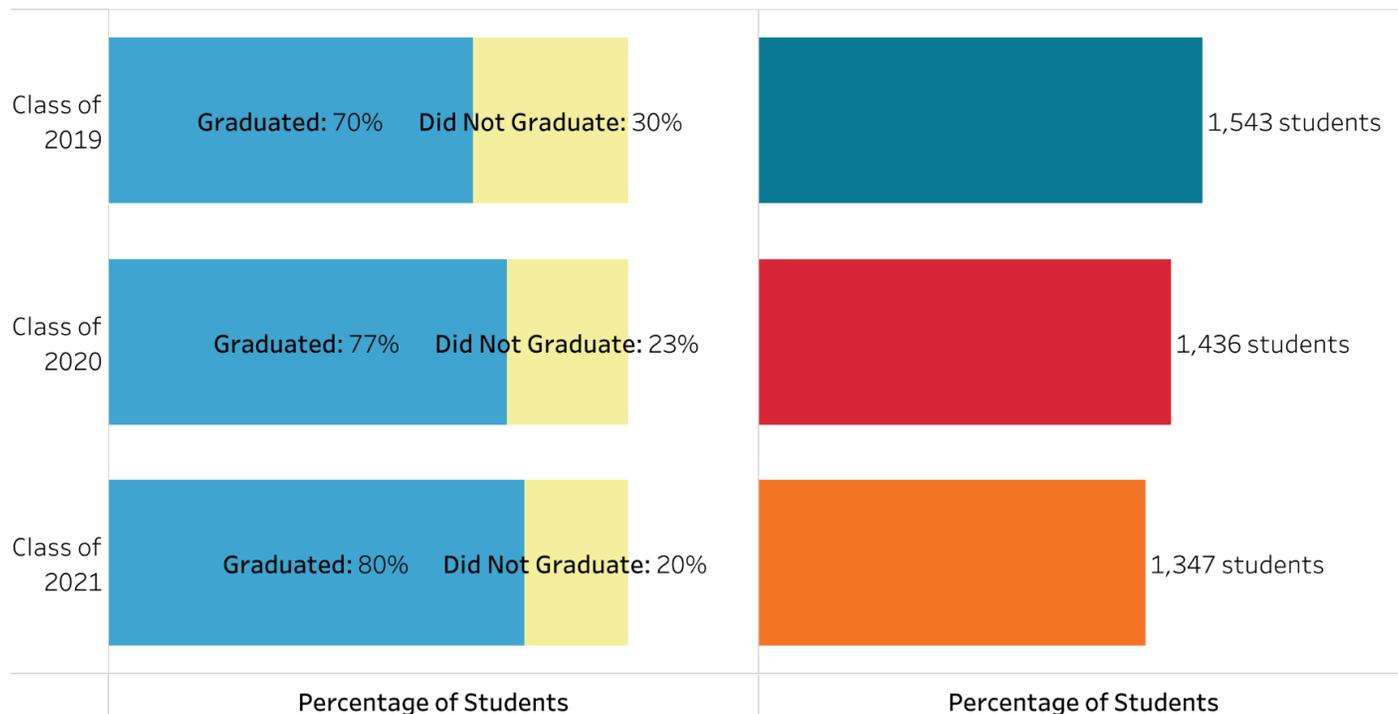


These incomplete credits will carry over into the coming school year. This poses a dual challenge for schools, who will need to address gaps from prior school years.

## Graduation, Dropout, Discharge

For states with high hurdles that students must achieve in addition to course completion to attain a diploma, such as New York State’s Regents tests, the shift to remote learning has been accompanied by cancellation of many exit exams. Despite drops in enrollment and attendance, the overall adjusted 4 year cohort graduation rate across Internationals Network was somewhat higher in **2020** than **2019**.

At Internationals High Schools in NYC, 4-Year Graduation Rates were lower before the pandemic began than after.

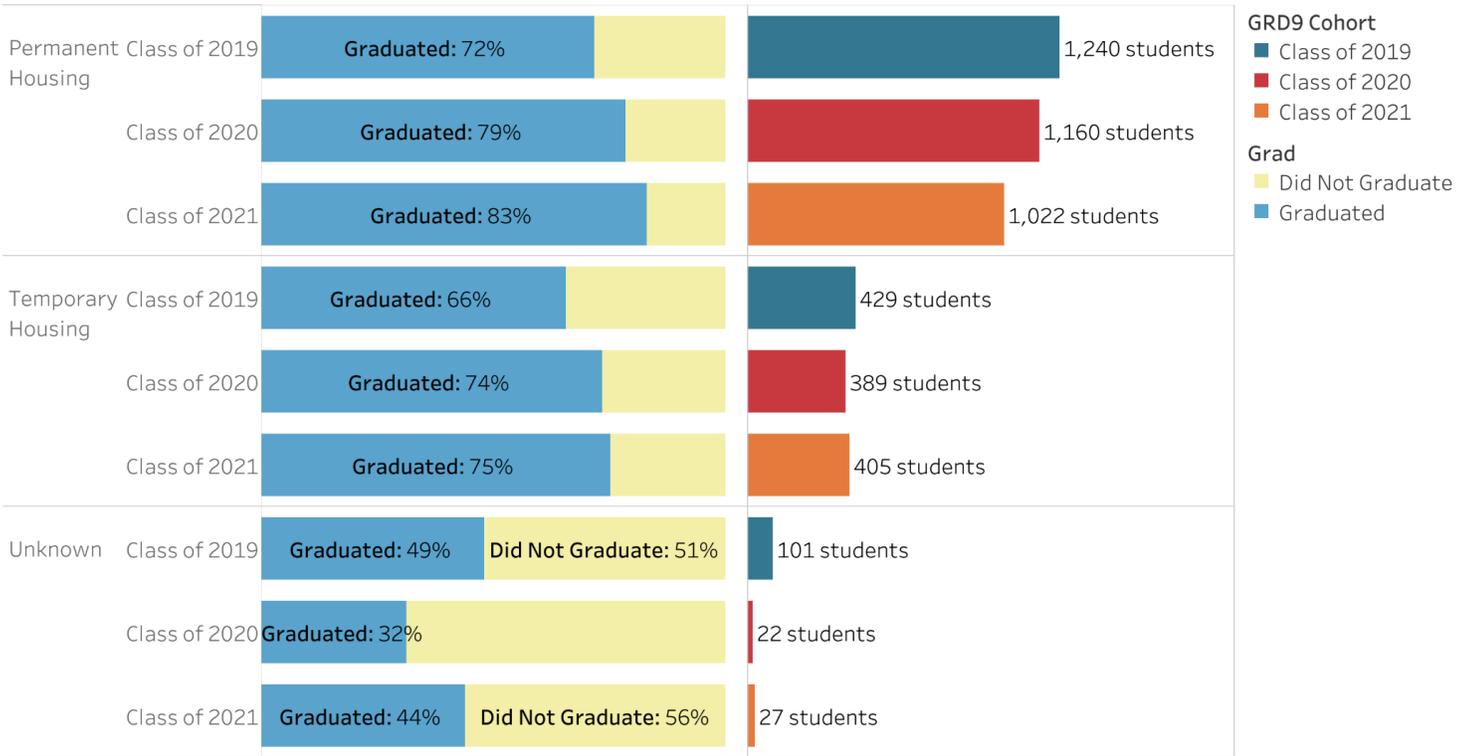


As illustrated above, across Internationals Network’s New York City schools, the four-year graduation rate for the **Class of 2020** was 77%, higher than the **Class of 2019**’s graduation rate, which was 70%. The most recent graduating class, the **Class of 2021**, graduated at a rate of 80%. This year-over-year increase from 2019-2021 may in part be attributable to the waiver of graduation requirements around Regents exams. In a typical school year, most of Internationals Network students must earn a score of above 65 on the ELA and Algebra Regents exams; in 2020, any student who had previously taken the exam was given a waiver that enabled them to graduate even if they did not have a score of 65 or higher.

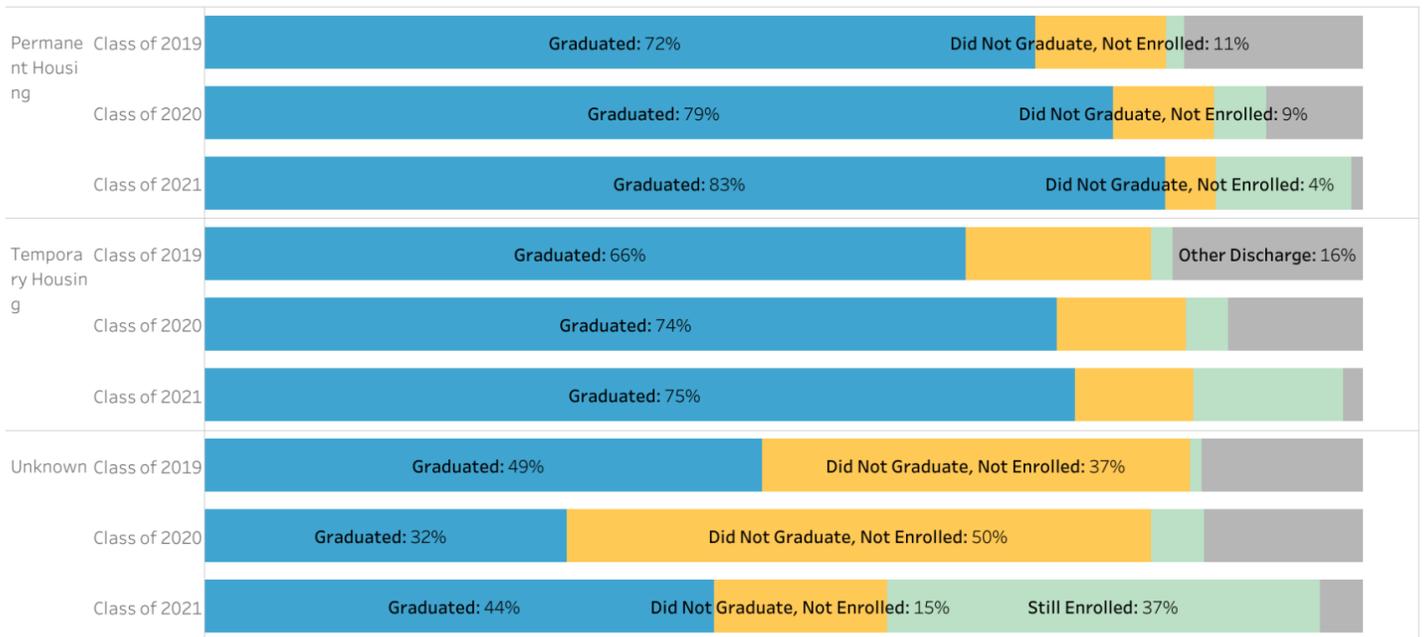
In addition, only ten percent of the students enrolled in Internationals’ New York City high schools in school year 2019-20 were discharged from school without graduating, as compared to 16% of Ever ELLs statewide and 14% of Ever ELLs in New York City public schools. About four percent of students in the Class of 2020 remained enrolled for a 5th year of high school, versus two percent of the Class of 2019. Of those students who were “negatively discharged,” 57% were discharged after 20 days of consecutive absences, 30% were thought to enroll in a different school but our staff could not verify their enrollment, 4% moved to new addresses without leaving new contact information, and a full 9% were discharged after turning 21 and essentially “aging out” of the K-12 system.

That is the good news. But our access to data enables us to dig deeper and this reveals more sobering news that impacts our plans to re-engage and potential for recovery in the year ahead. Against this backdrop of increasing graduation rates we also see that students in New York City Internationals schools who were homeless or living in transitional housing graduated at lower rates than students in permanent housing. (To view a dynamic version of this visualization, please click [HERE](#)).

At Internationals High Schools in NYC, students without permanent housing were less likely to graduate than students with permanent housing. Some students do not have a housing status on file; these students were least likely to graduate.



Internationals Network students in NYC without permanent housing were more likely to leave high school without graduating out than students with permanent housing. Overall graduation rates increased from 2019 to 2021.

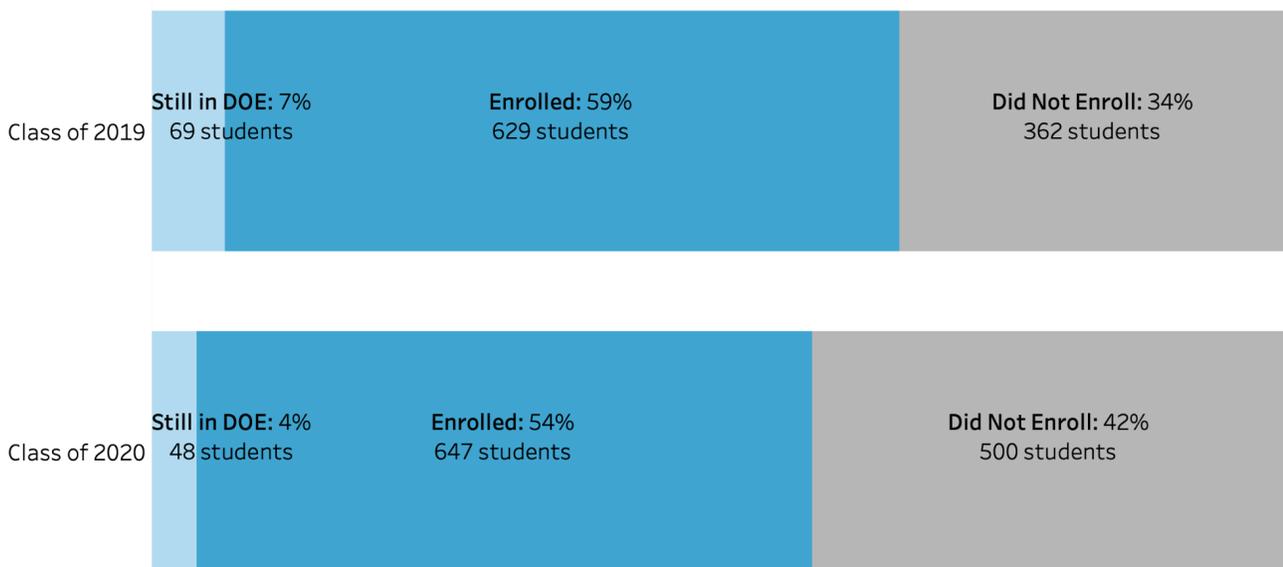


(To view a dynamic version of this visualization, please click [HERE](#).)

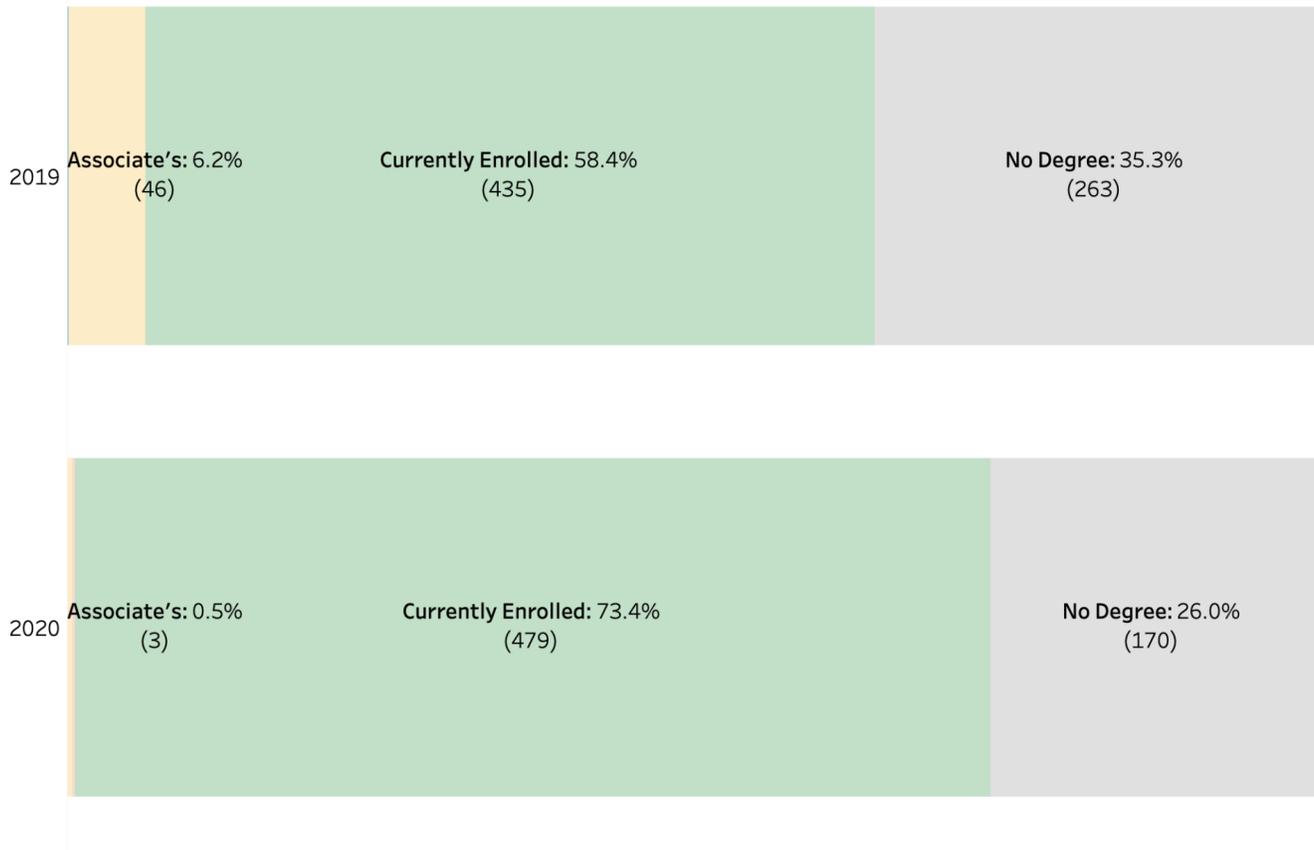
## College application and enrollment

A major shift occurred over the past two years of college enrollment: SAT tests were waived for all students, making applications to more selective colleges within reach for students who might not otherwise have considered them. Nonetheless, college application and enrollment rates dropped nationally across most population groups. Generally, we see about 70% of Internationals Network students enroll in college within two years of high school graduation. For the class of 2020, about 58% of Internationals' graduating class of 2020 enrolled in college by the Spring 2021 semester.

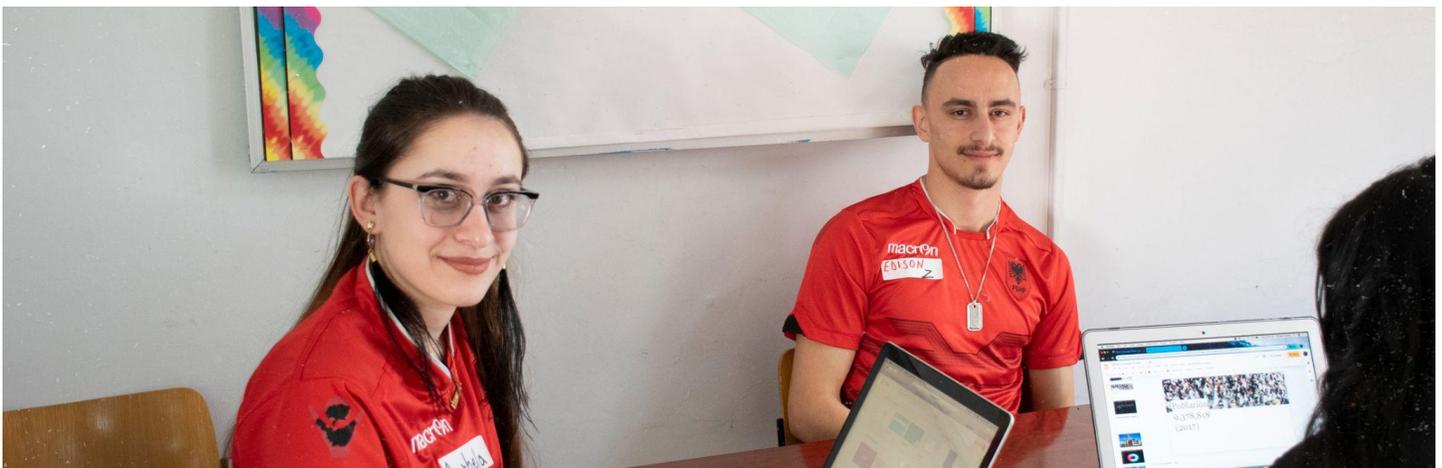
One year after their respective graduations in NYC, Internationals Network students from the Class of 2019 were about 13% more likely to enroll in college than the network's students from the Class of 2020.



Fifty-four percent of students enrolled directly in college after graduating from an Internationals Network school, and about 4% of students pursued a dual enrollment option; these students enrolled in college courses and remained active in their high schools (although they have already earned their high school diploma). This figure was slightly higher for the Class of 2019; about 65% of students from the Class of 2019 enrolled in college by the Spring 2021 semester. Among students who enrolled in college, persistence was higher in the Class of 2020; Internationals Network students from the Class of 2019 left college 30% more often than students in the Class of 2020 (35% vs. 36%). (To view a dynamic version of the visualization below, please click [HERE](#)).



In summary, in reviewing national data alongside data from New York City Department of Education and the subset of data from New York City Internationals Network schools, we have seen that Internationals schools mirrored many of the national trends: decreased enrollment, attendance and lower rates of enrollment in college, as well as lower graduation rates among students in insecure housing. Some of the trends were counter intuitive, despite lower attendance during remote learning, graduation rates increased, perhaps as a result of waived NYS Regents requirements. It is also possible that the new systems put in place to capture attendance during asynchronous learning were not able to fully track student participation. The large number of continuing students who finished the summer with incompletes/NX's reflects a need to address learning loss through credit recovery and creative partnerships with community partners and dual enrollment partners.



Students from the International High School at Union Square, Manhattan, NY

# PART III: RE-ENROLLING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS FOR 2021-22

## Addressing Learning Loss Through Credit Recovery

*"Will students be able to stop working? What will their families do without the added money from their work? Will they try to juggle both in-person school and work next year? "*

- Jaclyn Valane, Principal, International High School at  
LaGuardia Community College

*"Important for this school year is that at school they try to understand the students when we have a job. It's hard to work and study, but we have to work."*

- Internationals Network Student, NYC

For some students in New York City, the return to in-person schooling began in Spring 2021 and was a welcome relief. For others, September 13th was their first time ever in a brick and mortar New York City school. The transition and planning have been a massive undertaking for school leaders, teachers, counselors and support staff, and a daunting shift for students and their families. Some New York City students who started school on September 13th had not set foot in a physical school building for over a year, including rising 10th graders who spent their freshman year of high school learning online. Despite the effort and creativity of educators and the support of many community-based partners, many of these students have had negative experiences with remote learning due to the digital divide, financial hardship and personal crises. All of the planning and launch of the 2021-22 school year has happened amidst rising rates of infection, fears about the Delta variant, shifting policies about in-person K-16 schooling, and shifting plans and protocols. Throughout these past 16 months, we have observed and gathered examples of the countless innovations generated by teachers, counselors, student support staff and leaders, as well as the insights from students themselves. Some are outlined in our June Report [HERE](#).

Providing opportunities for students in their 4th or 5th year of high school to make up incomplete coursework has been a major priority for New York City Internationals Network schools in the 2020-21 school year. Because of students' stretched schedules, and work and family demands that have created significant barriers to attendance, some schools had to resort to a triage approach for the small number of students who struggled to attend or failed multiple classes in 2020-21. While most students now have only one or two failures or incompletes that carry over from the 2020-21 school year, a small percentage have many credits to make up in order to graduate. Because so many Internationals Network students are working nearly full-time while attending high school, schools have made every effort to provide opportunities to earn the needed credits to graduate, such as organizing virtual classes during evening hours.

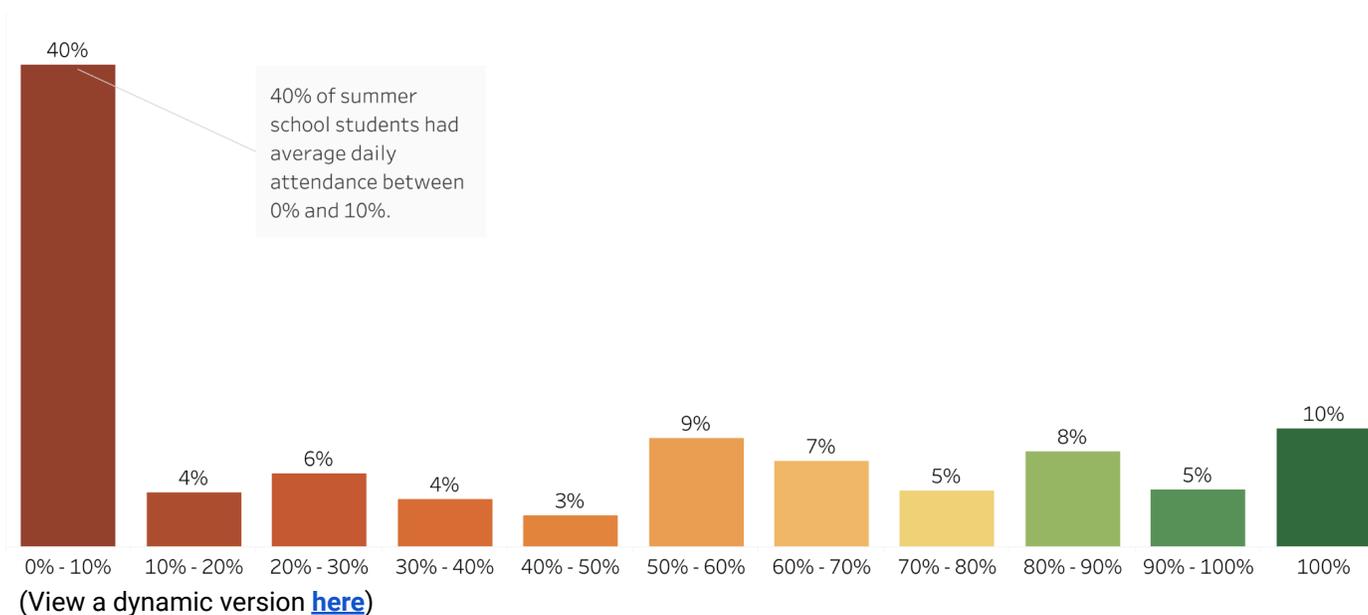
One way for students to earn or make up credit was through [Summer Rising](#) (see also [here](#)), the 2021 summer school offering, created as a New York City district-wide initiative, that provided summer school programming open to every single New York City public school student. Students enrolled in every school across New York City, in both elementary and secondary schools, were encouraged to enroll in Summer Rising. All New York City Internationals Network schools were able to offer their students a summer school in-person experience. Despite competing demands on their time, including family obligations and work, many students took advantage of the Summer Rising program.

Across the Network, about 43% of students were enrolled in Summer School during the summer of 2021.



Despite high enrollment, attendance was not high. Summer school enrollment in non-pandemic years is typically not more than 25% or less for students. This may be due to the fact that every student enrolled in a New York City public school was invited and encouraged to sign up for summer school. The universal enrollment K-12 reflects a policy that is much different than that in the past and may have artificially driven up enrollment among students who, due to the many barriers we have outlined here, were not able to attend. Income earning was among the most-cited factors that prevented students from participating in summer school, even if they had enrolled and hoped to attend. Some schools in the Internationals Network were able to offer a “work-based learning” option as a financial incentive for students for whom work and income were necessities.

Across the Network in NYC, median Summer School attendance was about 31% in the summer of 2021.



In a more innovative approach to summer school design, ten International High schools participated in the Work Based Learning Partnership Incubator (WBLPI) in collaboration with NYCDOE's Division of Multilingual Learners and the Office of Career and Technical Education. The goal of this district initiative is to re-engage and reconnect high school students and energize them for the return to in-person school. The strategy was to connect credit recovery to work-based learning. Each participating school partnered with a community based organization to create an experiential and immersive work based experience for their students. Through the WBLPI program, students were engaged in a 45+ hour experience (including on-site and off-site hours) in which they completed a major project. At the end of the program, participating students:

- Completed an evaluation of opportunities-to-learn aligned to [CDOS standards 1, 2, and 3a](#) OR had clear explanation from their supervising teacher as to why the student performed high-quality work and shown high-quality learning despite not meeting the above criteria;
- Who demonstrated successful academic performance were eligible for a \$599 payment at the completion of the program.

The work-based learning summer incubator was designed to be flexible, foster partnerships, both new and also existing, with community-based organizations, and offer opportunities for both credit and non-credit bearing experiences. A final goal of the program was to aid in the economic recovery efforts by offering financial incentives to participating students.

Students had many insights into the value of their summer program experience, including applying time management skills in real time by acquiring adult responsibilities of juggling jobs and their studies. Students viewed the experience as valuable despite the challenges it presented, challenges which normally might be viewed as reasons for non-participation in summer school. Students also had the opportunity to reflect on their past beliefs about a task/experience and develop a new perspective and find value in them. In addition, experiencing something new provides new opportunities for students to see and learn about themselves and imagine possibilities for their own future. Some of the students' reflections are included on the next page.

"Consistency, creativity, time management ability to measure correctly and problem solving are some of the skills that helped me to work on my project and successfully wrap it up. **Particularly time management played the most significant role for me as I was struggling to find time to work on my project while having a part time job. Therefore I worked on the project at home as well as in the classroom while continuing the part time job with an uncertain schedule that changes every week.** However, with a combination of consistency, creativity and positive attitude along with time management I was able to be the first person from my group to complete the project and present it as an example to my peers. Prior to working on the Future Human, **I've never realized that working with wires, circuit boards and papers could be enjoyable. This project made it open to explore and consider multiple career options.** It also helped to develop a new mindset that resilience and positive energy can make me accomplish anything regardless of having or not having experiences which can help me to be successful no matter what career path I choose in the future."

- Student, New York City Internationals Network High School

"This was my first experience working, this helped me a lot having patience with kids and people. **I used to have a lot of social anxiety and I am getting over it.** Communication is a very important skill that this experience helped me get. **Interacting with people is something difficult for me, working here I realize that I am pretty good working with kids.**"

- Student, New York City Internationals Network High School

"The program and project in itself was very complicated, however it was worth trying something new. From my experience throughout every step, I would consider I gained and achieved skills which **might be able to help me in the future for the career I am going for.**"

- Student, New York City Internationals Network High School

"My experience in New Settlement was great. I learned how to interact with the kids and new people... One of the skills that I worked on throughout this experience was my interpersonal skills. **In the past I would be very shy and kept to myself most of the time but now I've improved in how I interact with new people, how to have more patience and be friendly and be more sociable.** Working with the children, playing with them, and talking with them helped me in ways they would never know. I loved this experience, **I thought working with so many children would be impossible but it turned out to be manageable and something I actually enjoyed.**"

-Student, New York City Internationals Network High School

From the perspective of school leaders, the program was valuable but not without challenges. The design of the pilot program felt rushed which did not allow for enough time to recruit more students and fully get a grasp on the logistics. Among the logistical challenges included the capacity of the partner community-based organizations to process student monetary awards and provide them to students in a timely fashion. Leaders felt that more time for planning and recruitment would have yielded a more cohesive implementation between school and partner organization. In reflecting on this work-based learning pilot, leaders clearly saw its value and potential. Moving forward they wonder how this type of experience might be more integrated in the regular school year sustainably, rather than exclusively during the summer.

As part of the New York City Department of Education's Work Based Learning initiative, students at [Pan American International High School](#) in Queens worked with [Coalition for Hispanic Family Services](#) to craft and hone their resumes and interview skills. At the same time, students received training in supporting after-school programs that in turn look to graduates to fill entry-level staff positions. This practical glimpse into the world of work opened a door to employment opportunities in an area few students had known about. Students at [Claremont International High School](#) worked with its Bronx neighbor, [New Settlement Community Center](#). They learned how to connect their work at summer camps to business planning, career resume building and possible career pathways that might be open to them after graduation. Students at [IHS for Health Sciences](#) partnered with the [Beam Center](#) to experience "beam camp city" where students spent four days at Governors Island to design and create customized human accessories using circuits for their project called "Future Humans." Students learned about the functions of the different parts of a circuit and applied the utility of a circuit to custom design and create visually appealing and interactive human accessories.

## Gathering Student Voices

Students are the experts in their own experiences of remote learning and have clear ideas about what schools should consider for the year ahead. To tap into student experiences Internationals Network, schools launched a number of initiatives, both formal and informal, throughout the school year and summer.

The collaboratively constructed Spring 2021 inter-school event, "[Reimagining Schools by Integrating Student Voices](#)," was an initiative of Internationals Network's New York City Professional Development Committee, which includes educators representing all the New York City Internationals Network schools. A subset of this group, the Student Voice and Leadership Subcommittee, has in recent years partnered with Internationals Network students to involve

students more directly in professional development and cross-school initiatives, with dual goals of illuminating student stories and garnering their thoughts about education. The "Reimagining Schools" event was a natural evolution of the group's previous efforts brought about by a belief that the future of Internationals Network schools must involve the thoughts, experiences, and feelings of the young people we serve. Subgroup members Britt Fremstad, Teacher, ELLIS Preparatory Academy; Sarah Cunningham, Teacher, IHS for Health Sciences; Jal Raval, AP, Bronx International HS; and Myoungmee Monchinski, Teacher, Crotona IHS worked together on a monthly basis to discuss, plan, create, and ultimately facilitate the event, which hinged on an analysis of students' responses to survey questions about their experience of school throughout the pandemic. This is particularly timely, given the need to re-engage and recover as the school year unfolds.

In another effort to engage students in having a voice in planning for the 2021-22 school year, Internationals partnered with the non-profit Educational Video Center (EVC). The focus of projects was to use video to give students input into how learning will be structured once school is in person again and to share their insights about what makes learning effective for them. [Here is a video project](#) from their experience.

In an additional effort to surface student voice and leadership, a group of six students from four Internationals schools served as [guest panelists at Internationals Network's Annual Summer Institute in NYC](#). For an audience of both new and returning teachers, these young people expounded on their takeaways from remote learning, what helped them get through, and their hopes and recommendations for the coming school year.



# PART IV: RE-ENGAGEMENT AND RECOVERY

## Introduction

*"For the new school year they should think about the students and what they need in order to be excited to start a new school year. To meet their needs is important because in that way the students can feel that they matter and that the teachers think about them as an important part of the school."*

- Internationals Network Student, NYC

Our focus for re-entering and re-imagining the year ahead is not explicitly on making up for lost time or "catching up" on lost learning, even as we are aware that there is catching up to do. It is also an opportunity to lift up the new learning, share invaluable insights, and recognize the collective resilience of schools as they courageously navigated uncertainty, and created innovative systems and structures that kept the needs of students as the crux of their work.

*"The best part of my school year last year was when I got to come back into the building and be with my friends and my teachers."*

- Internationals Network Student Panelist at Internationals Network's Summer Institute in NYC

As of June 2021, Internationals Network school and academy leaders reported that among the greatest barriers to students' full participation in school included work (in the labor force and at home, including domestic responsibilities); connectivity and inequitable access to broadband; mental health and trauma; and overall distractions that emerged from having to work at home, with inadequate space, among family and without the supportive structure of physical school. (Internationals, 2021)

*"The number of students working has skyrocketed. Usually our 11th and 12th grade students are working part-time. This year, it's common for our 11th and 12th grade students to be working full-time and for our 9th and 10th grade students to be working part-time."*

- Jaclyn Valane, Principal,  
International High School at LaGuardia Community College

Expert teachers of multilingual learners know that it is especially crucial that students remain engaged, understand what they are learning and why, receive swift feedback, and can access assignments. They know it is crucial to provide choice in assignments so that students feel a sense of agency over their learning, incorporate opportunities for group and individual work, and create spaces for discussion, whether through video chat or through message boards. It is key that groups be set up so that students can give each other feedback and utilize one another for content and language support; home language groups are especially useful for navigating language barriers. Translation tools make it possible for students to use their entire linguistic repertoire to deepen their content knowledge.

*"For next school year I really want to be in school like five days a week, in person."*

- Internationals Network Student, NYC

Rather than spending precious time and emotional energy solely on standardized testing, how can we spend the limited and precious time we have with students unpacking and making sense of what we have learned this past year? How can we put students' voices and experiences in the forefront? Even under the best of circumstances, testing only reveals to us limited once-a-year information that is modestly actionable and has not proven to deeply improve practice. Instead, how can we create authentic opportunities for deep learning - projects, performance assessments, and work-based learning experiences that allow students opportunities to show us what they know and can do (rather than what they cannot)? If we are truly concerned about addressing educational inequity, old forms of assessment cannot tell us what we need in this new moment.

Exploring the impact of remote learning and planning for the year ahead has forced educators across Internationals Network for Public Schools to examine strategies, structures and practices in a much more nuanced way. Our approach to the year ahead, addressing the question of "what is working," has become extremely complex. This is part of our on-going reflecting and taking stock. Our focus on innovation has been with an eye toward understanding key factors that have enabled our schools to function and continue to support students, while staying true to our core values and principles.

*"The new school year will mean yet another major shift in routine - change is hard for everyone. Students (and staff) dealt with a lot of trauma to shift from in-person to fully-remote last spring. Some are just becoming used to it - to make that shift again is a difficult ask. Trying to break the standard of 'normalcy' or comparing everything to 'pre-COVID.'"*

- Mary Pollack, Principal, Pan American International High School at Monroe

We have asked ourselves, what do students and staff need after more than a year of remote learning? What should the start of school look like for students who have never set foot in school? Despite its challenges, one upside of remote learning was that it provided the flexibility in scheduling and in remote learning for the growing number of students with adult responsibilities who struggle to attend school. The innovation and creativity that grew out of this past year and a half of remote learning have enabled some students to overcome barriers that are persistent to their ability to attend and engage fully with school. It has also provided examples of technology-infused and asynchronous learning that can be integrated into learning experiences in the year ahead.

Everyone in the school community, from recently arrived students to those returning to in-person school, to teachers, staff and school leaders, are entering unknown territory. In addition to enthusiasm to re-engage, there is an understandable degree of trepidation and uncertainty. Orientation, community-building and welcoming activities have played a central role for Internationals Network schools in the re-engagement plans for the new school year. These activities serve to build trust, acclimate students to school, provide opportunities for members of the community to get to know each other, and to build cohesion, rituals, routines and, key for all members in particular, to address social emotional needs, leading to a safe, nurturing and inclusive school community.

Examples of the community building and orientation activities from several schools include Manhattan International High School's [First Weeks of School](#) Homecoming Calendar lays out schedules and activities for staff and students to welcome and re-engage students with school.

Schools have also addressed the need for families, who are key partners in the school community. Internationals Network families speak a broad diversity of home languages and one aspect of schools developing a welcoming culture is having meetings and orientations in the languages spoken by students and families. Families are starting the school year with many questions and concerns, and schools across Internationals Network have hosted "open houses," school tours, and many types of orientation events over the summer of 2021 to answer families' questions and help build their comfort with their children returning to in-person school.

The International High School at Prospect Heights planned its [family orientation](#) in multiple languages to address key questions that families have, including the schedule, covid protocols, safety measures, changes to the format of classes, how to recover incomplete work, and how to best communicate with the school with questions, suggestions and concerns.

In addition to all this attention to building community, schools have reflected on how to incorporate asynchronous access to learning in a way that is more robust. Educators across Internationals Network have asked themselves: What should we remember not to forget as we rush toward this “new normal?” How can we center student and educator voices in crafting our reopening plans and in supporting students in the year ahead? How will we do the important work of building community intentionally because many students and teachers have never even met in person or even seen each other? How will we help students with low attendance find ways to participate, including those who still need to work during school hours? Most importantly, how do we take our innovations into the school year ahead?

All students, regardless of their current assets and areas for growth, have the opportunity to engage in rich learning experiences and to become proficient in the required knowledge and skills. When students have shown mastery, they will advance regardless of other considerations, such as previous behavior or attitude, quantity of work submitted, linguistic repertoire and/or ability, etc. This approach provides more equitable access for all students to engage in meaningful learning experiences and to demonstrate mastery, rather than having their access to those experiences or that achievement barred by things not related to the skills they are being supported in and assessed on. For example, if the skill students are learning is not related to language, then language should not serve as a barrier to advancement.

As we have seen in the data in the previous sections, multilingual learners across Internationals Network have suffered losses due to the pandemic -- decreases in enrollment will have a ripple effect in years to come, attendance will need to be addressed along with credit recovery. The uptick in graduation is a bright spot, but it is paired with a reduction in post-secondary enrollment that mirrors a national trend. With an increase in housing insecure students and those who are working significant hours, we know that equity, innovation and support will be key in the year ahead. We seek to draw from lessons learned to foster re-engagement and recovery, not only for multilingual learners across Internationals Network schools, but those in schools across the city. Below, we present our recommendations for how to best address the needs of New York City’s multilingual learners as we return to in-person schooling in the unprecedented year ahead.

## Recommendations for Re-Engaging Multilingual Learners and Keeping them in school

- **Foreground equity to ensure that multilingual learners' specific realities are addressed in district and school policies, considering in particular barriers to school access, enrollment and attendance.**

Schools serving multilingual learners are overtaxed at a time when school budgets for schools that serve large numbers of multilingual learners are facing budget reductions due to lower enrollment. These students remain among those with the greatest needs and yet these are the students most negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Internet connectivity has been a significant barrier for many students throughout the pandemic, as has the rigidity of the traditional school schedule that prevented working adolescents from participating fully in school. Both will continue to be barriers in the school year ahead unless a more systematic attempt is made to address these and other inequities.

Schools that are effective in supporting the needs of multilingual learners also attend to frequent, linguistically responsive communication and cultivating strong, trusting relationships with students and their families. Central in this work are partnerships with community-based organizations that are embedded in their communities, know their constituents well, and have a track record of providing services to immigrants in their home languages in ways that are culturally responsive and sustaining. As the impact of Covid-19 and the shift to remote learning began to ripple through school communities, it became evident that schools cannot instantly create relationships with families in the midst of a crisis. A strong and resilient community grows out of a school culture that includes culturally, linguistically appropriate communication on an ongoing basis. Shifts in policies, needs for crisis planning will emerge in future school years, and only some schools will have the resilience to respond effectively.

We know from our immigrant-serving community-based partners that the enrollment process has always been extremely difficult for immigrant families to navigate -- the pandemic made it even more complex. Together we must continue to find ways to make this easier for our students and families, that includes language accessible information in multiple forms of print and media and provide ongoing training and support for the NYC DOE's Family Welcome Centers, in coordination with community-based partners and local community leaders. This will ensure that all students who are under the age of 21 and eligible for public high school are able to take advantage of the rich offerings of the NYC Department of Education.

- **Encourage school-level innovation and cross-school collaborations by creating intentional opportunities for adult learning.**

The school year ahead is a “new normal” that is unlike any school year that any educator has encountered or anticipated. Internationals has observed that fostering innovation requires structured time in the school schedule for meaningful adult learning and collaboration. Carving out protected planning time, collaboration time, and flexibilities that ensure space for adults to learn from each other within and across schools has supported unprecedented innovations in the past year and will be needed in the year ahead. The year ahead will see educators adapting and responding to changing conditions. This will necessitate creating flexibility that encourages innovation and new ways of collaborating across schools. Above all, it will require flexibility, risk-taking and leadership. It could mean providing incentives for schools to pool their resources and serve students in ways that are not possible for individual schools. It can take the form of professional learning communities such as the working groups that Internationals Network hosts across schools. These include a new teacher group, instructional coach critical friends group, home language development and support working group, PLCs focused on the needs of SLIFE students, the New York City Professional Development Committee, a working group for college counselors, and a year-long working group on using data for strategic decision making. In addition, Internationals convenes teachers in multi-day curriculum development intensives by content area and offers them stipends for the development of lessons and projects that can be shared across the network.

Over the past school year, schools have been afforded tremendous opportunities for flexibility that have paved the way for innovations. One such adaptation has been both a challenge and an opportunity: the need to create flexible schedules to meet the demands of remote and hybrid learning while teachers are based at home and in school buildings. School leaders across Internationals Network have problem-solved and collaborated to generate creative and student-centered solutions. Such flexibility in scheduling has enabled Internationals Network schools to provide students with supportive, differentiated, structured learning environments in this time of tremendous anxiety and loss. Flexibility in scheduling enabled schools to address tangible student needs.

- **Encourage and allow for scheduling flexibilities and different modalities of learning to ensure that all students are served.**

Educators have recognized the limitations of the traditional school schedule, especially for the hardest hit students who have had to work as a result of the pandemic's impact. Since schools are back in person for the coming year across New York City, continued flexibilities in scheduling could promote innovation in seat time policies to address persistent inequities for low-income learners. Many students under 21 across New York City are not able to attend school because they have to work. Remote learning forced a fundamental rethinking of the traditional school day. Instead of a succession of class periods in equal increments, schools were forced to recreate school schedules that were less standardized and not divided into equal periods. Working students were able to engage in school while also addressing the needs of their families. While staffing and contractual limitations set some parameters for what is possible in this realm, it will be important for the unprecedented year ahead that we explore options in this area with an eye toward innovation. To address student needs to be truly responsive, we must acknowledge the complexity of students' lives and work, family responsibilities they shoulder during ordinary times but especially during times of crisis like during the pandemic.

Being responsive is key to addressing student engagement and not forcing students to make the untenable choice between work or returning to school. Internationals Network's New York City schools have a long history of student internships which students often cite as a key part of their high school experience. Partnerships with organizations that provide career pathways explorations, like [Here to Here](#) in the Bronx, lay the foundation for relevant, applied learning in a supported work environment.

In Spring 2021, the [International High School at Prospect Heights](#) designed a [novel way](#) to enable students to participate in the internship program, a key element of the student experience. The school's [remote internship](#) is described by students, school staff and partners in this video.

In addition, schools like [Crotona International High School](#) and [Bronx International High School](#) are [Career and Technical Education programs](#) that enable students to explore an industry or field, gain experience, and interact with mentors and professionals. All of these opportunities connect school to work in meaningful, engaging ways and enable them to gain work experience that is connected to school rather than completely detached.

- **Promote and support competency-based learning and performance assessment that de-emphasizes seat time but ensures access to rigorous learning experiences and higher order thinking for all students.**

Performance assessment, project-based and mastery learning experiences, when well-designed, have multiple access points for diverse learners and foster high quality, complex learning experiences for all learners. Performance assessment is a form of authentic assessment in which students show what they have learned by completing a project or task rather than selecting an answer from a list of options on a test. Students in Internationals Network New York City schools, in addition to completing English Language Arts and Math Regents, are required to complete a set of projects across the content areas as a requirement of graduation. These projects are presented and rated by a panel in order to ensure that the student has developed the skills and knowledge to meet graduation requirements.

Internationals Network's public [Resource Bank](#) is a searchable database of materials and resources developed for and by Internationals Network schools. Among the many resources in this growing compendium are examples of [teacher-generated projects](#) that are open-ended, standards aligned, and foster student self-directed learning, critical thinking and language development. Internationals Network has developed project rubrics to guide and assess student work in the content areas: [Social Studies](#), [Science](#), [Math](#), [ELA](#), [STEM: Engineering](#), [Arts](#), [Native Language](#), [Personal Statement](#)

Many schools across New York City, including some in Internationals Network for Public Schools, have worked to incorporate [Mastery Based Learning](#) as a key element of their assessment process. This grew out of the understanding that traditional grading systems historically are inequitable to a wide swath of students, including multilingual learners, and one of the primary ambitions of mastery-based systems is to ensure transparency and equity for all students. Still, mastery-based systems are complex, both socially and technically, and require intentional, school-wide planning and support for both teachers and students in order to ensure equity is achieved. In a mastery-based learning environment, the school community collectively pursues a future where students have a greater depth of knowledge and skill that is applicable to their life and their ambitions. In order to do this, the school community creates explicit descriptions of that knowledge and those skills in the hopes that they will be able to say (document, measure) that the young people they serve have developed that knowledge and possess those skills. Focusing on transferable knowledge and skills and prioritizing depths of knowledge upholds a belief that all students are capable of (and should have access to opportunities for) engaging in higher-order thinking, as well as a belief that all students are moving toward a future where this knowledge and these skills can be applied. Professional

development, opportunities for cross-school collaboration and exchange are important parts of this process. As we look to a recovery plan for remote learning, mastery-based learning offers one opportunity for us to start thinking from an innovative perspective on how we educate students based on what they actually need.

Crotona International High School developed [mastery-based projects](#) and learning resources that enable students to complete open-ended projects at their own pace. These are examples of [grade-level appropriate, relevant, engaging and student-centered work that addresses key content standards](#) while giving students the opportunity for flexible learning. With a mastery-based approach, all students, regardless of their current assets and areas for growth, have the opportunity to engage in rich learning experiences and to become proficient in the required knowledge and skills. When students have shown mastery, they will advance regardless of other considerations, such as previous behavior or attitude, quantity of work submitted, linguistic repertoire and/or ability, etc. This approach provides more equitable access for all students to engage in meaningful learning experiences and to demonstrate mastery, rather than having their access to those experiences or that achievement barred by things not related to the skills they are being supported in and assessed on— a degree of responsiveness and flexibility that has become crucially important during remote learning and in this year of transition.

- **Continue to incorporate targeted opportunities for asynchronous learning in ways that are meaningful, accessible and promote equity for diverse learners.**

Teachers have become increasingly adept at using technology in innovative ways to meet the needs of MLLs. This opens new avenues and opportunities to use technology to amplify and enhance learning experiences, including asynchronous avenues. These enduring lessons from remote learning will continue to be useful. We have provided examples throughout this report of remote learning innovations.

For students who are entering the 2021-22 school year with a need to recover credits, programming that offers credit recovery could be re-imagined through asynchronous learning using google classroom modules that teachers have been developing over the past year. Some examples of these include strategies like this [remote card sort](#) or [this online evidence notebook](#). In addition, this [science project](#) adapts to students' realities, while this support system is accomplished by [creating remote family groups](#). Flexibilities in helping students catch up can serve to address some of the challenges that have kept working students from attending school or from enrolling altogether, helping to address attendance and enrollment

issues that were highlighted earlier in this report.

Over the course of the 2021-22 school year, we will continue to use our cross-school and cross-network exchange, conversations with students, teachers, school leaders, community partners and district staff together with our rich dataset to explore the scale of impact and recovery. School leaders will meet monthly to share approaches and strategies that appear to be having a positive impact, to explore data and to address challenges. By applying these recommendations in our work with Internationals schools, we hope to demonstrate practical and effective ways to address the challenges facing all New York City schools as they seek to re-engaging multilingual learners during this school year and beyond. Overall, our goal is to share the resources and support necessary so that all subgroups of multilingual learners students across New York City are adequately supported to develop and thrive to become the next generation of leaders. We hope that this will inspire and inform schools beyond our network to achieve equity for all multilingual learners.



Students from Brooklyn International High School

# PART V

## APPENDICES

### Additional Resources from Internationals Network for Public Schools

#### [Internationals Network Impacts](#)

Research and policy reports on Internationals Network for Public Schools.

#### [Internationals Resource Bank for Supporting Multilingual Learners](#)

This resource, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, provides a searchable platform for ideas, strategies, and tools vetted by Internationals Network Educators. The resources, ranging from promising practice videos to guidance documents to conversation protocols to complete workshops, reflect much of the learning and innovation across the Network for supporting multilingual learners during remote and hybrid learning. As school communities head back to in-person settings, these resources will continue to help educators plan, stay organized, communicate, and collaborate to support all students.

#### [Internationals Network Promising Practice Share](#)

These short teacher-created videos from the 2021 [Internationals Network Annual Professional Development Conference](#) highlight strategies that Internationals teachers have used in their own classrooms during remote and hybrid learning and found to be promising for their MLL students.

### Graphs and Charts

- Please visit the dynamic data visualizations on our website at:  
<https://www.internationalsnetwork.org/nycmlsreport/#nyc-data>

### Methodology

Mixed methods were used throughout this report and data drawn from a mix of district, school and student-level data, internal surveys, conversations with Internationals Network educators and staff, observations, and artifacts gathered from schools.

### School-Level Data

- Through the multiple student information systems, ATS and STARS, Internationals Network schools keep abreast of enrollment and achievement at the student level. The New Visions Data Portal is another tool used at the school at NYC Network level to explore trends in demographics, enrollment

and achievement. Because the pandemic spanned three school years, we have aggregated data to examine differences and trends from Fall 2019 to Fall 2021. This includes data on graduates of the classes of 2019 and 2020 to determine an overall network graduation rate. With this data, along with NYC DOE graduation cohort data, we determined students' college enrollment status and persistence using the National Student Clearinghouse. Finally, from the NYC DOE's data portal, we collected attendance data for our high schools in NYC.

### **Survey data**

- A survey was administered to school leaders across Internationals Network in April 2020, November 2020 and again in May 2021 to gather school-level information on the impact of the pandemic and report learning on students, staff and each school community. The resultant mix of quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed for trends and themes. Follow up interviews were conducted with school leaders (principals, assistant principals and academy leaders) to explore emerging themes.
- For each service that Internationals Network provides to its network schools and academies, feedback is gathered anonymously via survey. The responses from the more than 1,000 educators who took part in services from March 2020 - June 2021 were analyzed for trends and themes at three points over the past year.

### **Student Voices**

- Internationals teachers in New York City gathered input from students in writing, in group and one-on-one conversations, and through surveys. Written feedback was coded and analyzed for trends. Information about the impact of the pandemic on students and their families directly was gathered systematically via a survey administered in April 2020, November 2020, May 2021 and and through convenings and conversations with Internationals Network counselors, social workers, teachers and leaders throughout the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years and over the summer of 2021.

### **Convenings, Focus Groups and Interviews**

- From March 2020 - September 2021, Internationals Network convened school leaders to share ideas and problem-solve ways to best respond to the shifting demands of remote and hybrid learning. School-level and regional convenings served the dual purpose of gathering information and developing practical strategies. During this same time period, teacher and counselor convenings addressed emerging student needs at the classroom and team level.

### **Artifacts and Evidence Collection and Analysis**

- A plethora of artifacts and evidence have been gathered, analyzed and drawn from for this report. These include: meeting agendas and notes, written reflections from convenings, student work, instructional materials, workshop materials, school schedules and action plans.

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