The LEAD Coalition was established to narrow the achievement gap of Latinx and other students of color. The goal of the coalition is to increase the educational profile of Latino/a children and youth and the conditions they face in public education. The coalition will also develop a multifaceted reform agenda to catalyze changes aimed at enhancing New York State’s K-16 college access and success pipeline, thus improving the academic outcomes of Latino/a and other students of color.

Support the DREAM Act
The New York State DREAM Act (A.9605, De La Rosa, S00471C, Peralta) would help ease the cost of higher education for immigrants in New York State. Passing this bill would allow undocumented students seeking to attend an institution of higher education access to state financial aid. Under the proposal, these students would be eligible for general awards, performance based awards, and the New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). The legislation would also help immigrant families prepare for the costs of higher education by allowing an individual with a taxpayer identification number to open a New York State 529 family tuition account under the New York State College Savings Program.
Allow Federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program Recipients to be Eligible for the New York State Excelsior Scholarship

This proposed legislation (A.09670, Sepulveda, S07420, Peralta) would grant college financial aid to DACA beneficiaries without inquiring about legal status nor requiring that they first qualify for TAP, EOP or HEOP. The effective date would be immediate and would apply to undergraduate admissions to a public institution of higher education for a term or semester beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year.

Restore Opportunity Program Funding

Opportunity Program Funding has been proven to increase retention and graduation rates, especially for first generation college bound students. Many of these students are low-income students of color that need additional academic and financial supports and services to graduate college. These programs include the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Liberty Partnerships, Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP), and Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP). Opportunity programs at the community college level include the Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) and College Discovery programs.

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

Increase the maximum amount allocated under the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) to fully cover the cost of SUNY and CUNY tuition. There is currently a gap between the maximum TAP provided and the full cost of tuition. In addition, the cost of tuition has risen $200 this year and will continue to do so for the next two years.

Allocate $1.4 billion in Foundation Aid Based on a Three-year Phase-in of the $4.2 Billion Owed

New York legislators should enact a commitment to fund the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, beginning with allocating $1.4 billion in Foundation Aid for 2018-2019. The coalition seeks more transparency in district reporting and the allocation of items to meet specific needs. In addition, the coalition supports increased engagement of parents in the budgeting process.

Currently, New York State ranks second in the nation regarding the largest spending gap between wealthy and poor districts, with a gap of $9,796 per student between rich and poor schools in New York State.

Allocate $92 million in Funding to Meet the Needs of English Language Learners

In addition to the items below, the coalition would like to see funds dedicated to supporting the social-emotional needs of English Language Learners. Allocate funding for the recruitment and training of bilingual support staff to better meet the needs of ELLs and engage parents.

- Foundation Aid Earmarked for ELLs: Earmark $85 million for English language learners which accelerates additional Foundation Aid to districts with ELL-driven formula aid.

- Expand Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN) Supports: $1.6 million in ESSA Plan to expand RBERNs’ ability to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to increase the English language proficiency and academic content gains of English language learners/Multilingual learners (ELLs/MLLs), as well as to reduce dropout rates and increase graduation rates.
Develop a Spanish Language Arts Test Development and Exam Translations: $4.43 million in new funding to support a Spanish Language Arts test development ($3.43 million) and translation of all required state assessments into the State’s eight most common foreign languages ($1 million).

Address the Shortage of Bilingual Education Teachers: $770,000 in ESSA Plan to expand the Clinically Rich Intensive Teacher Institute that provides graduate students the opportunity to receive certification in English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and/or to complete the requirements for the Bilingual Extension (BE). The program’s objective is to supply LEAs with highly qualified and certified teachers to serve their ELL/MLL population.

Fully fund the New York State Board of Regents ESSA budget request of $29 million
It is important that the state maintain high standards, and by funding the ESSA Plan, New York State would allow these thoughtfully identified initiatives to be implemented, potentially having a tremendous positive impact on achievement and helping close the achievement gap statewide.

Some of the initiatives of importance to the coalition include the following:
- Support Improved School Climates: $10 million to promote positive school climate and bullying prevention.
- Increase College Readiness: $3 million to expand access to quality high-level coursework.
- Support Teacher Development: $2.9 million to provide high-quality professional learning.
- Increase Parent Engagement: $2.5 million to create a parent-friendly data dashboard through presentation of important information about school and district performance in a transparent, understandable way.

Support Legislation that Supports a Culturally Responsive Education
Support programs that increase teacher diversity, provide anti-bias training for teachers, and create a culturally relevant curriculum. Training and curriculum that provides an inclusive and welcoming culture that engages the diversity of students across the state is long overdue.

- Culturally Responsive Professional Development and Anti-bias Training Opportunities
  - A04710A, Rodriguez and S05589, Hamilton - “Requires NYSED to establish professional development programs in culturally responsive instruction and provide access to those programs on its website.”

- Culturally Relevant Curriculum
  - S03111, Parker and A03292, Solanges - “Provides that all schools shall have a multicultural curriculum.”

Allocate $50 Million to Expand Community Schools and Renew $150 Million in Existing Community Schools Funding
Community schools work to address the child as a whole, providing wraparound services that ultimately impact student performance. Over the past few years, the community school movement has gained momentum, especially in schools with high needs student populations. The funds need to be sustained in order to see the long-term benefits and attain measurable, concrete outcomes. The $50 million in new funding would allow for the expansion of community schools. Of the $150 million needed to sustain funding, $75 million would be funneled through receivership funding and another $75 million would be allocated through community school grants.