

ENL DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



Mrs. Kamola delivered Urmila Biswa's Seal of Biliteracy

ENL in Gates Chili

Currently, English Language Learners in Gates Chili speak 23 different languages at home! For over 30% of our ELLs, Arabic is their home language. Being bilingual is an asset, and it is important to us that our ELLs use and maintain proficiency in their home language. In the two years that we have been offering the Seal of Biliteracy, seven ELLs and former ELLs have earned this accreditation on their high school diploma.

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DID YOU KNOW?

When a student is initially identified as an ELL, their English proficiency level is determined. New York State uses five levels (Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding and Commanding) to outline proficiency. These levels help us to understand what students are able to do in terms of academic English. These levels are used to determine how many (minutes per week) and what type (integrated or stand-alone) of service an ELL receives. Each school year, ELLs take the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), which is used to monitor and adjust students' proficiency levels.

TEACHING TIP

Alex Shevrin Venet is an educator, professional learning facilitator, and writer. She helps teachers connect theory to practice to create equity-centered trauma-informed schools. [Click below to read her article about rethinking holidays in schools.](#)

[Rethinking holidays in schools](#)

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

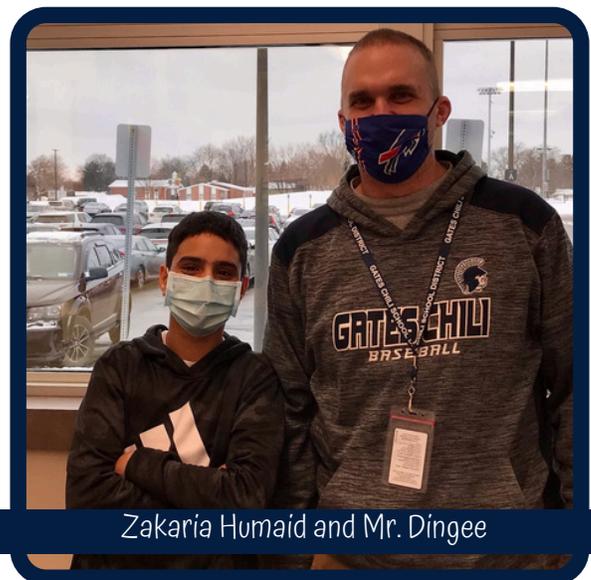


Michael Matías Bonilla (left) - Class of 2016

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Michael was born in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. His first language is Spanish. He and his family eventually moved to the GCSD where Michael began 7th grade. “You (Ms. Taylor) and the other ESOL teacher (Mrs. Ordway), you two basically worked with me from the ground up on how to learn English which has helped me tremendously in my military career. I didn’t understand how important school was back then. Now, I’m taking college serious because I finally understand that I need to study to better my future. Thanks for always being good teachers even though I wasn’t a good student.” “I started my career in the military as an HVAC technician basically fixing air conditioners on base. I deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in 2018. In 2019, I was notified by the United States Air Force that I had been selected for the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Program. On November 20 of that year, I graduated the program and earned my wings. I became an MQ-9 Reaper Sensor Operator.” Currently, Michael is studying Aeronautical Science at Embry Riddle.

Dean Dingee has been teaching math at Gates Chili for 23 years. He had experience in the past working with ELLs in AIS. So, when the opportunity came up for someone to co-teach the all-ELLs Algebra and Applied Geometry classes, he didn’t think twice. He was impressed by their work ethic and desire to learn. Math can be a difficult subject even for native English speakers. Being able to reach his students and give meaning to math is one of the challenges that Mr. Dingee faces. He finds ways to explain problems in terms that his students can understand, based on their life experiences and backgrounds. Taking the time to get to know his students makes his job easier. In return, they respond to him with respect and enthusiasm. His students describe him as “nice, funny, understanding, a motivator, always helpful and happy.” One of his students, Zakaria Humaid, says with a smile, “Mr. Dingee understands us and that sometimes we need more time.” Mr. Dingee’s advice for anyone working with ELLs or hoping to in the future? “Embrace the challenge and opportunity. They are wonderful classes to work with.”



Zakaria Humaid and Mr. Dingee