

2026



LATINIDAD

in Schools

THE LATINIDAD CURRICULUM BLUEPRINT FOR NYC SCHOOLS

DESIGN PRINCIPLES,
CURRICULUM MATERIALS,
AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



Edmund W. Gordon Institute
for Advanced Study
Teachers College, Columbia University

BACKGROUND



The Latinidad Curriculum Initiative, Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study

The Latinidad Curriculum Initiative for New York City Public Schools is based at the Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study at Teachers College, Columbia University. It has been made possible by a generous grant from the New York City Council and in partnership with the United Way of New York City and the Hispanic Federation. Together, our overarching goal is to provide the opportunity for teachers, students, and communities served by New York City Public Schools to explore, celebrate, and expand their study of Latinidad across academic content areas and throughout grades K-12.

Our project aims to address unequal access to quality education by offering resources to help teachers recognize who their students are and the strengths of the communities they belong to. We aim to enhance school experiences for children and youth of all backgrounds by providing a dynamic, interdisciplinary curricular framework that empowers learners of all ages to study, understand, and appreciate the histories, cultures, and intellectual contributions of Latinas and Latinos, thus gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the city we live in.



Photo: Lizbeth de la Cruz Santana



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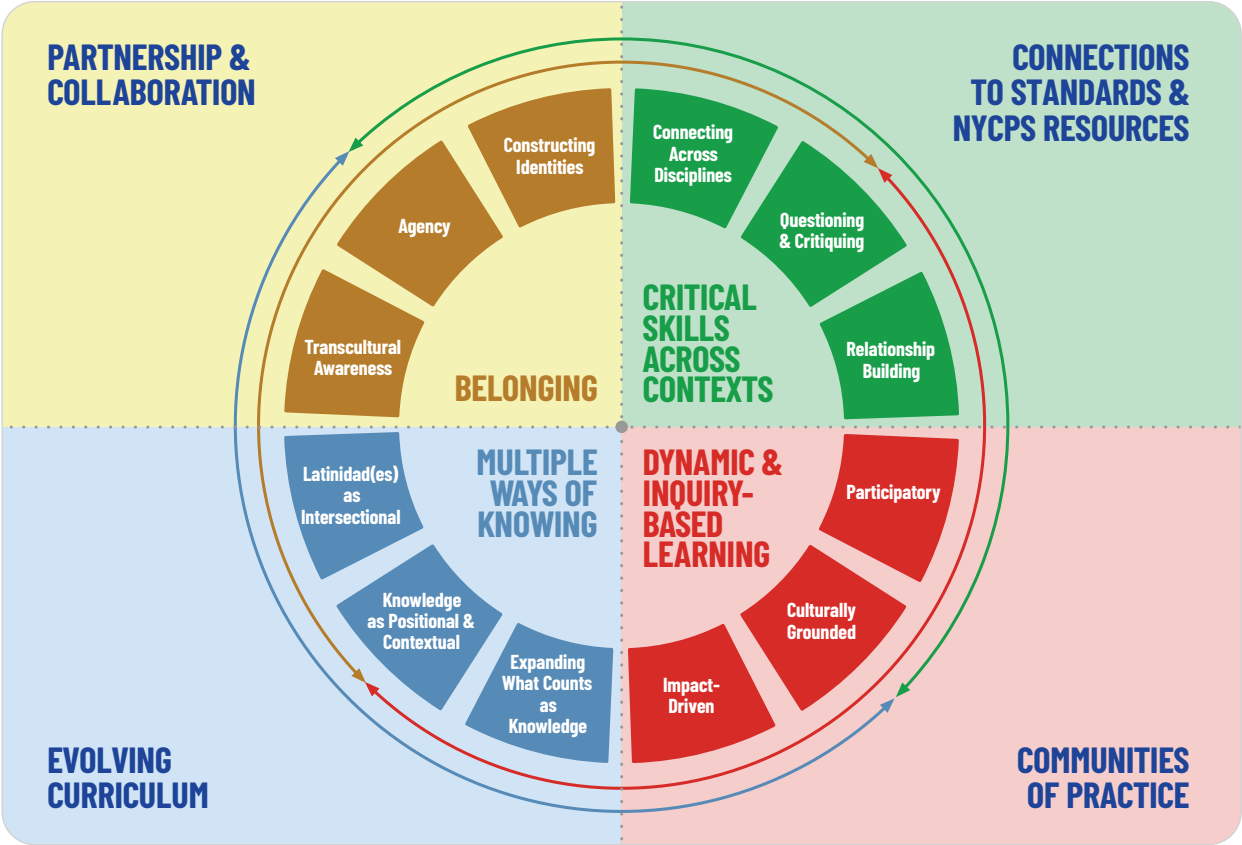
The Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI) has been made possible by a generous grant from the New York City Council, in partnership with New York City Public Schools, United Way of New York City and the Hispanic Federation.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LATINIDAD CURRICULUM INITIATIVE AND ITS RELEVANCE, TAKE A LOOK AT OUR STRATEGIC REPORT “THE NEED TO ADVANCE THE STUDY OF LATINIDAD IN NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS” AND OUR CURRICULAR BLUEPRINT ON OUR WEBSITE: <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/latinidadnycschools/>

In academic years 2024–2026, the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative Project Team at the Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study at Teachers College, Columbia University conducted research, consulted with experts, and had frequent and regular planning meetings to develop the blueprint for the *Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI)*.

Designed to be developed and implemented over a three-year time period, the LCI encompasses a series of curricular materials and resources including lesson plans, teacher planning guides, professional learning and development models and resources, and an upper-division elective. All elements of the blueprint are grounded in a conceptual framework that promotes a collaborative, participatory, and community-driven vision of Latinidad as intersectional, with complex historical and geographic boundaries. The design process continues to be informed by this conceptual and pedagogical vision while also building on available resources that can be incorporated into the curriculum—a collaborative and participatory process to maintain the dynamic nature of the LCI.

Figure 1
The Latinidad Curriculum Initiative Conceptual Framework was collaboratively designed to be enacted via four pillars and twelve design principles that offer alignment, connection, and resonance across disciplines and grade levels throughout the LCI Blueprint.



The blueprint for the initiative centers the rich complexity of Latino cultures, histories, and contributions of diverse New York City communities while promoting cultural responsiveness and educational equity for all students. It encompasses a range of interrelated curricular materials and resources, all aligned under a conceptual framework that defines Latinidad as critical, intersectional, interdisciplinary, culturally grounded, and asset-based in PreK-12 teaching and learning.

Each of the four pillars of our conceptual framework is linked to design principles that demonstrate how the scope and vision of the conceptual framework could be mapped onto the K-12 NYCPS curriculum and community resources, and operationalized as the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative. Throughout this booklet, we reference **planning guides, curriculum writer checklists, curriculum resources, and annotated sample lessons** from our report, *The Need to Advance the Study of Latinidad in New York City Public Schools*, to ensure alignment with the conceptual framework, pedagogical vision, and design principles.

What follows is an overview of how the LCI curriculum, guided by a comprehensive blueprint and grounded in our conceptual framework, is collaboratively designed, dynamically implemented and refined, and supported through professional learning resources and communities of practice. This booklet is organized into the following sections:

Section 1:
Approach to Curriculum Design 6

1.1 Overview of the Conceptual Framework..... 6

1.2 From Conceptual Framework to Design Principles..... 7

1.3 Centering Youth and Community Perspectives..... 12

Section 2:
Curriculum Overview 18

2. Latinidad Curriculum Overview 18

2.1 Curriculum Planning Guide 20

Section 3:
Professional Learning to Support the Curriculum 24

3.1 Knowledge Building Workshops and Curriculum Writing Sessions 24

3.2 Intergenerational Collaboration and Piloting 28

Section 4:
Implementing the LCI Blueprint 30

Current and Future Phases..... 30

References 32



OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The project team began by brainstorming a set of broad goals and used a backward design approach (McTighe & Wiggins, 2005) to identify the four main pillars that shape the conceptual framework and serve as a foundation for all phases of the project. The following resources were consulted prior to the first brainstorming exercise:

- Universal Design for Learning
- Understanding by Design Principles and Frameworks, and some overarching questions
- Community Cultural Wealth and Funds of Knowledge
- Considering design justice principles
- Collaborative Inquiry and Youth Participatory Action Research

In the initial visioning sessions for the conceptual framework, community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (González et al., 2004) were central to establishing an asset-based, inquiry-driven pedagogical approach. This approach centers the experiences of diverse Latino communities whose presence and contributions to New York City and the nation’s history have historically been underrepresented. We drew from Universal Design for Learning principles in order to maximize inclusion across differences and needs in ability, language, and background, “to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities” in order to participate in knowledge production collectively (CAST, 2024, n.p.).

Informed by critical and culturally grounded participatory approaches and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR; Caraballo et al., 2017; Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Mirra, Morrell & Garcia, 2015), the process necessarily includes collaborators of all ages and backgrounds from the diverse communities that will engage with the curriculum initiative.

LATINIDAD BOTH ENCOMPASSES THE GREAT DIVERSITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY OF THE LATINO COMMUNITIES IN THE DIASPORA, AND IN NEW YORK CITY SPECIFICALLY.

Recognizing that identities are constructed and negotiated in the context of practice, in cultural worlds (Caraballo, 2011; Holland et al., 1998), our approach to this curriculum is meant to address Latinidad as an overarching construct, with particular epistemological, ontological, and pedagogical commitments, as outlined in the conceptual

framework and operationalized in the infographic via the scope diagram and the sample curriculum map. As such, *Latinidad* both encompasses the great diversity and intersectionality of the Latino communities in the diaspora, and in New York City specifically, and incites critical dialogue about the limitations of any overarching construct or identity marker (e.g., Monreal & Lathan, 2024; Fahami, 2024). The *Latinidad in Schools* curriculum, therefore, invites ongoing recognition as well as critical analysis of the history, cultures, contributions, and agency of those who identify as Latinas, Latinos, and Latine/x in the city we live in, and beyond.



FROM CONCEPTUAL FRAMING TO DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI) conceptual framework was designed to serve as the grounding mechanism for a culturally sustaining, intergenerational collaboration and inclusive curricular initiative. The following section outlines the intentional and collaborative process through which the LCI’s conceptual framework was developed, centered around the voices of NYC Latinx youth, families, and educators.

The design process began by rooting the initiative in core values: an ethics of belonging, commitments to intersectionality and justice, cultural sustainability, and youth-centered meaning-making. Drawing from LatCrit (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Villalpando, 2010), Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR; Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Caraballo et al., 2017; Morrell, 2008), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL; CAST, 2004), the curriculum was envisioned through malleability, accessibility, and community-rootedness. Initial discussions centered on the guiding question: *What knowledge, skills, and understandings should NYC K–12 students develop about Latinidad?*”

Backward Design and Collaborative Engagement

Using a backward planning design process, broad learning goals were brainstormed to define the core components of the framework:

- Reviewing already existing curricula within NYC schools (i.e., *Passport to Social Studies*, *Hidden Voices*, *Civil Rights for All*; see *The Need to Advance the Study of Latinidad in New York City Public Schools*, Appendix C, pp. 60-66).
- Identifying gaps in representations of Latinidad throughout these curricula (see *The Need to Advance the Study of Latinidad in New York City Public Schools*, section 1, page 23).
- Brainstorming the pillars that would contribute to answering our guiding question, such as questioning data and what counts as data, critical thinking, and joyful expressions of Latinidad. Figure 2 on page 8, *Conceptual Framework for Exploring Latinidad*, shows the first iteration of what eventually becomes our latest version of the conceptual framework flowchart, co-constructed by the LCI team at Teachers College with input from youth collaborators and feedback from multiple stakeholders.



Latinidad Curriculum Initiative Blueprint Animation, Kindea Labs, 2025.

SECTION 1: APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DESIGN



Iterative Process and Visual Representation

Multiple design sessions centered around key questions from researchers, educators, and youth:

- What are our non-negotiable commitments?
- How can we scaffold content across K-12 while honoring local contexts?
- How can the blueprint be malleable for diverse teachers, schools, and audiences?

Ideas that were iteratively discussed and revisited throughout sessions were formatted into a visual framework, generatively created in service of legibility and usability for teachers and communities. As we synthesized curriculum commitments into a visual, we refined the four pillars to match each one with three design principles.

Figure 2

The brainstormed ideas were bucketed into four foundational areas that eventually evolved into what we currently see in the framework: (1) *Belonging* (listed below as *Perspectives & Values*); (2) *Multiple Ways of Knowing* (listed below as *Knowledge & Concepts*); (3) *Dynamic & Inquiry-Based Learning* (listed below as *Approaches to Learning*); and (4) *Critical Skills Across Contexts* (listed below as *Competencies*).

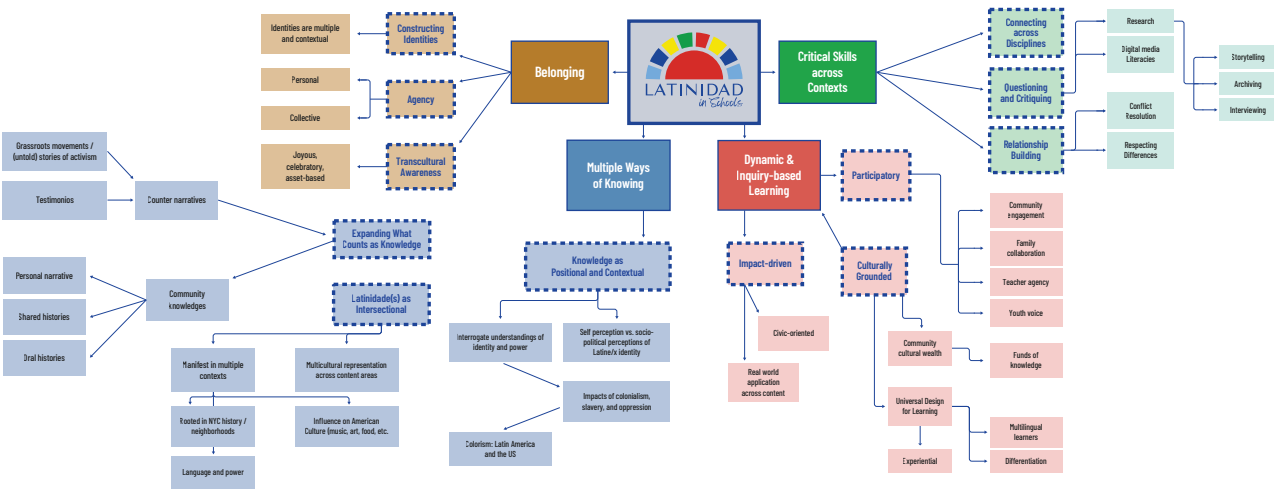


Latinidad Conceptual Framework Flowchart and Design Principles

The images in the following section offer a sense of how the perspectives, values, approaches, and skills in the initial brainstorming and visioning were distilled into the current version of the framework, which consists of four pillars, each to be enacted via three design principles. The flowchart (Figure 3, below), continues to anchor our work, uses arrows to mark the path between these interrelated areas of focus and the design principles that guide our curriculum mapping.

Figure 3

The *Latinidad Conceptual Framework Flowchart* shows the relationship between the four pillars and the design principles.



For the version of the design principles as described below, presented in the Blueprint Infographic (Figure 4), the goal was to foreground this intersectional approach to knowledge and teaching throughout the curriculum. Units and lessons are anchored in essential competencies and skills that students should learn, practice, and apply in and beyond school. The four pillars of the conceptual framework are operationalized via the three main design principles that guide the design and planning of curricular and pedagogical resources.

In the Blueprint Infographic, published after Year 1, each pillar is described as it might inform curriculum and pedagogy, followed by possible indicators or sample focal questions that exemplify how each of the principles might be enacted across multiple grade levels and academic disciplines. The flowchart in Figure 3 offers a "behind the scenes" view of the process used by the project team to map the relationship between the pillars, design principles and examples of how each of the design principles might be implemented.

SECTION 1: APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DESIGN



Belonging (gold/yellow) puts into conversation everything that affirms community and inclusion through constructing identities, agency, and transcultural awareness (design principles appear in boxes with dotted outlines in the flowchart in Figure 3). The Belonging pillar requires the curriculum to consider how students can experience joyous and asset-based learning, build collective and personal agency, and recognize their own intersections of ethnicity, race, gender, language, and place.

The next area of focus, **Multiple Ways of Knowing** (blue), situates knowledge as positional and contextual, Latinidad(es) as intersectional, and asks us to expand what counts as knowledge (see dotted outlines). The initiative aims to do this by interrogating dominant narratives of power and identity, examining the Latine/x identity within socio-political contexts, ensuring multicultural representation in all content areas, employing counter-narratives through oral histories and stories of activism, and centering community knowledge through privileging testimonios, personal narratives, and shared histories.

Dynamic & Inquiry-Based Learning (red) serves as a pedagogical blueprint for the curriculum ensuring our practices are culturally grounded, impact-driven, and participatory (dotted outlines). Choices of how the curriculum translates these three principles include community engagement, teacher agency, youth voice, and family collaboration. We hope for consistent cross-community engagement, also guided by civic-oriented, real-world action that privileges the already existing cultural wealth in Latine/x communities and by centering the various generational funds of knowledge as a form of counter-narrative.

Lastly, **Critical Skills Across Contexts** (green), pulls in the literacies that students must learn, communicate, and collaborate with competencies such as: connecting understandings across disciplines, questioning and critiquing, and relationship building (see dotted outlines). This can be operationalized in various ways, through digital literacies, conflict resolution, respecting differences, and research skills such as archiving, interviewing, and storytelling.

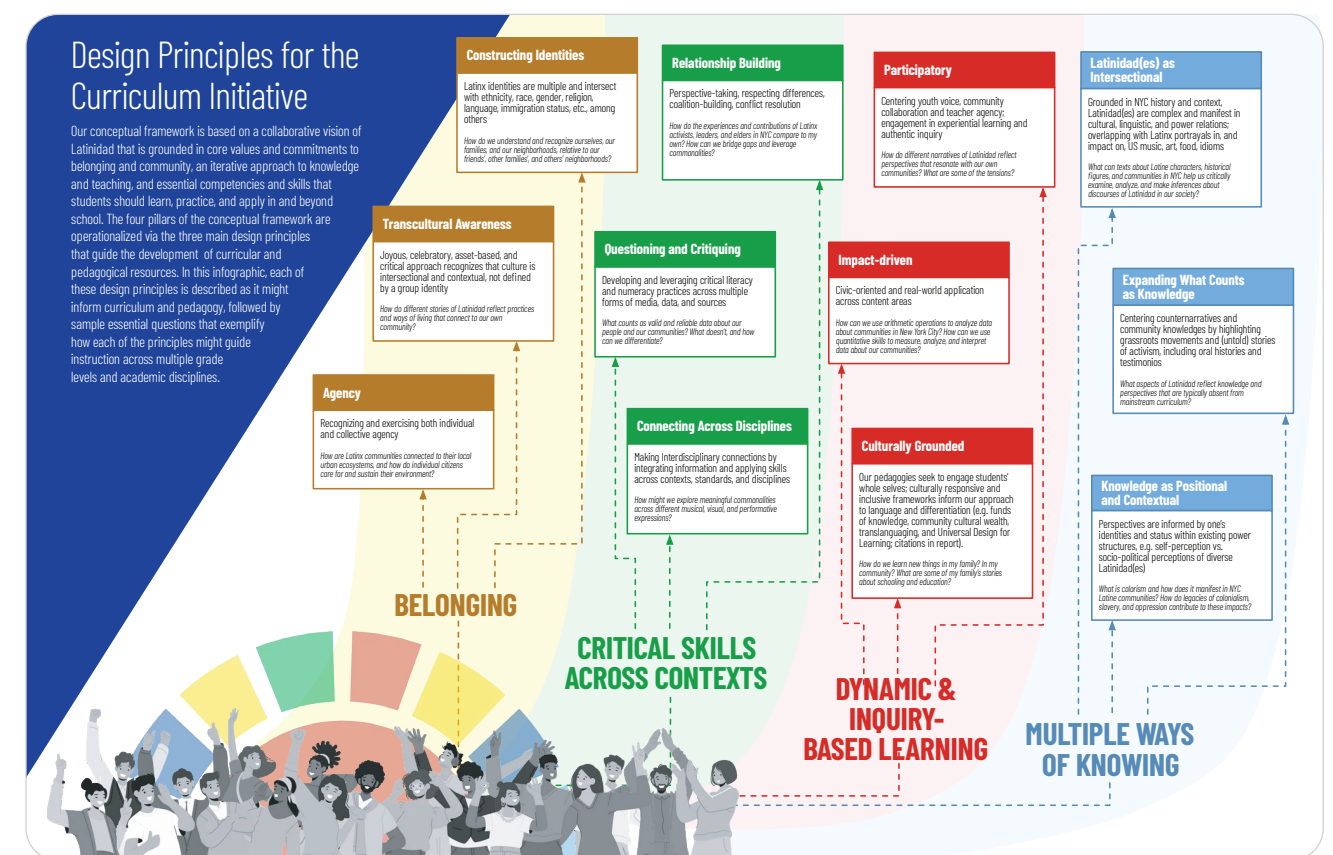
One tension inherent to such a conceptual framing is its role in aligning various elements of the initiative and unifying multiple and diverse stakeholders towards common purposes. Similarly, the blueprint is meant to be a living document that will undoubtedly evolve as this initiative unfolds and with continuous community, youth, and teacher engagement through the stages of development and implementation. The collaborative and participatory process for developing the blueprint has been presented to educators, scholars, and community members through feedback sessions in the process of developing the curriculum as well as its implementation and ongoing assessment and evaluation.



Figure 4

In the Design Principles for the Curriculum Initiative presented in the Blueprint Infographic, the design principles are followed by a short description of these foci. They are operationalized via three key principles that guide the design and planning of curricular and pedagogical resources.

Each of those principles is enacted or exemplified in a series of indicators that correspond to content or contexts of particular relevance to particular subjects and grade levels. Branching out from the “Latinidad in Schools” center image are four main areas of focus that mandate this initiative as a participatory process rather than top-down prescription.





CENTERING YOUTH AND COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Youth voices have been central to the conceptual framework and curricular design process and this section describes the phases of engagement in which youth perspectives have been incorporated in the development of the conceptual framework and the blueprint. In 2024–2025, more than 35 high school-age youth and recent high school graduates responded to an open call for perspectives and initial feedback on the LCI during the development of the conceptual framework.

YOUTH LEARNED ABOUT THE PROJECT FROM THEIR MENTORS & PEERS, SOCIAL MEDIA, WORD-OF-MOUTH, AND VIA COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS.

Youth learned about the project from their mentors, social media, and word-of-mouth, via community organizations and programs such as Students and Educators for Equity (SEE), The Circle Keepers (TCK), and Arte Justice, and the Latino Alliance at partner high schools, as well as through peer recruitment by inviting friends and interested community members. In their

initial virtual brainstorming meetings, the youth viewed early drafts of the conceptual framework and provided feedback that shaped every following action. As a group, they stressed the importance of:

- Accessible language and visual accessibility
- Nuanced attention to languages within cultures of Latinidad
- Stories of NYC-based Latinx leaders, cultural pride, and solidarity
- Engaging counter-narratives through a richer teaching of Latin American history beyond music, sports, or entertainment contributions.
- Lesson plans that remain rooted in our conceptual framework design, ideas such as the use of multi-modality through photography, oral histories, and project-based learning across grade levels.

In naming these as priorities, youth engaged with Belonging and Latinidad(es) as Intersectional by centering joy and asset-based views of our culture, while also demanding recognition of Afro-Latinx, Asian-Latinx, immigrant and multilingual, and multicultural identities.

From Working Groups to Co-Facilitated Community Dialogues

Stemming from larger and more informal whole-group youth meetings, three smaller working groups formed. The first group focused on content (What should we teach?), the second on pedagogy and approaches to teaching (How should this look/sound/feel in the classroom?), and the final group on inquiry and gathering data (methods to develop this curriculum grounded in culturally sustaining and critical epistemologies). In each session, and later through youth-led community conversations, they mapped the curriculum they wished to see and, in doing so, continued to breathe life into each quadrant of our framework.



Youth-Led Working Groups

1. Content: What should we teach?

Multiple Ways of Knowing: Youth proposed multimodal sources (photography, oral history, virtual galleries, and mapping).

Youth met weekly and brainstormed curricular ideas such as Latine/x historical events or activists of interest. Eventually, in discussing the importance of neighborhoods, murals, and aspects of culture such as the food on our streets, the idea of a virtual gallery was born. The virtual gallery began as an online space where youth could post multimodal forms of learning, similar to a museum, and explore how a digital space could expand opportunities to learn and transform. This idea arose in the content group at the same time as the pedagogy group, who thought of a virtual museum space as a pedagogical tool to bring immersion to the classroom instead of the other way around. In other words, they wanted every student to be able to visit spaces that represent Latinidad without battling access, time, or funding. While the two groups’ approaches to the virtual gallery space were different, the ideas converged and made space for cross-content conversations rooted in the design principle: *Expanding What Counts as Knowledge*. After developing the virtual gallery, youth presented it and got feedback from students, teachers, policymakers, scholars, and community members at both the 2025 Youth Summit and the Hispanic Federation Education Summit. The virtual gallery is also a living resource that is constantly adapted and adjusted based on feedback.

2. Pedagogy: How should this come to life in a classroom? And Beyond?

The small group focused on pedagogical approaches began by building community across cultures and discussing what brought everyone to this work. The group frequently bonded over their multiple identities and how validating it felt to be involved in a curriculum that addressed their identities, experiences, and histories. These conversations naturally led to notions of identity in the classroom, and how youth have, or have not, felt seen by teachers, curriculum, and the systems they interact with daily. One high school student who currently attends a competitive application-based school shared the following reflection:

“Even though I am a New York City public school student, I feel like I rarely got the chance to learn about what it means to be Latina, or like, just like Latino literature, or anything that, like, made me feel seen and heard. I really felt like I didn’t see that in my classrooms, especially middle school and elementary, though I went to school in my neighborhood and in my area, and so, they were really underfunded. So I thought that the lack of seeing this diverse curriculum, including Latinos or any other POC, I thought it was due to my school’s lack of funding. And then I got to [high school], and it wasn’t like...I did not see that curriculum there either, so I was like, oh...and that’s what drove me here (to the Latinidad working group).”

SECTION 1: APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DESIGN

The pedagogy-focused small group continued to meet weekly and work towards a strong framework that serves as a foundational pillar of this curriculum initiative. They discussed and explored different pedagogical approaches in relation to Latinidad and how to intentionally engage multimodal approaches to teaching and learning this curriculum (multi-modality as a theme arose from most youth conversations). They advanced the Belonging pillar by envisioning joyful and celebratory representations of Latinidad(es) as well as bilingual accessibility. These conversations came to life, and continue to live, through the creation of the virtual gallery.

3. Inquiry: How can we center methodologies to develop this curriculum grounded in culturally sustaining and critical epistemologies?

Meeting with the same frequency as the content and pedagogy small groups, the inquiry-focused small group functioned essentially as a methods experimentation and exploration studio. Youth explored participatory-centered methods such as story circles, neighborhood mapping, and oral histories – all methods they plan to implement in future phases of the initiative. Many of the discussions focused on which protocols and methods might be best to advance the conceptual framework’s commitments to Belonging, Multiple Ways of Knowing, Dynamic Inquiry, and Critical Skills. The work in the inquiry group continued to evolve as youth explore how to gather data, re-imagine assessment, and remain rooted in community and peer-led perspectives given existing school structures.

In Year 2, a second youth inquiry group of 35 high school students from NYC schools across all boroughs convened to build upon the Year 1 working group’s findings, working alongside an educator inquiry group to co-design curriculum materials for the upper division modules and lessons. This collaborative process is described on page 28.

Community Perspectives: NYC Youth Summit & Hispanic Federation Education Summit

Figure 5
At small workshops during the NYCPS SEE Youth Summit hosted in the Gordon Institute at Teachers College, LCI youth collaborators shared working group findings and collected feedback from students and educators.

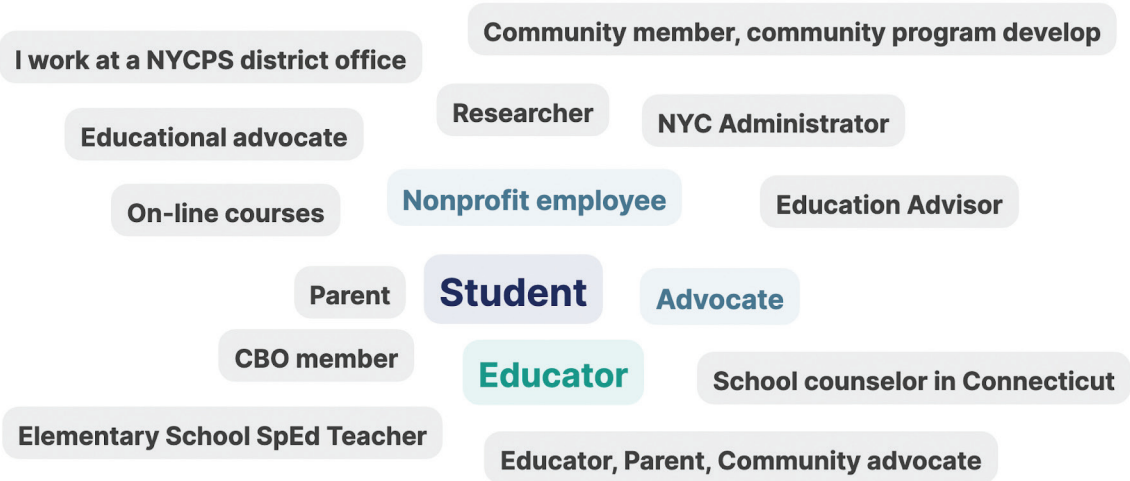


In late spring 2025, two education summits offered the opportunity for the LCI project team to garner community perspectives on the LCI. Aligned with the collaborative and participatory approach in developing and implementing the curriculum initiative, one of the uses of the weekly working groups with youth and adult allies was to prepare for presentations and garner feedback at two education summits in the summer of 2025: The NYC Youth Summit on May 28, 2025, attended by over 500 educators, counselors, administrators, and students (Figure 5), and the Hispanic Federation Education Summit on June 17, 2025, attended by nearly 400 participants with different roles and connections to education, and shown in the word cloud generated by participants



during a workshop co-facilitated by LCI and the youth (Figure 6). During both summits, youth shared their perspectives and co-facilitated small or large group conversations about cultural identities, content, and pedagogy, as they created spaces for intergenerational storytelling and curriculum visioning about a Latinidad curriculum.

Figure 6
Word cloud representing the stakeholders who participated in the Hispanic Federation Education Summit workshop, co-facilitated by the LCI team and youth collaborators.



During the Youth Summit, participants warmed up with icebreakers that asked them to locate their culture in one or a few words. Once connected on the topic of culture and identity, the youth presenters led the groups in reflecting on how identity is – or is not – reflected in their current curriculum, revealing significant gaps across the different schools, students, and cultures represented. The participants were a mixed group of teachers and students who engaged in deep discussions of implementation realities of a Latinidad curriculum, especially as they considered the pressure and time restraints of testing in their current school culture. As an activity, the participants were broken up into groups with chart paper and sticky notes (see Figures 8 and 9) to express their vision for themes, stories, and pedagogies toward a Latinidad Curriculum. Key findings from this vision board and conversations were:

- Identity affirmation and representation
- Integrated and inquiry-driven content
- Community-rooted narratives
- Relational forms of assessment
- Equity and access to and beyond the LCI

SECTION 1: APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DESIGN



Figure 7

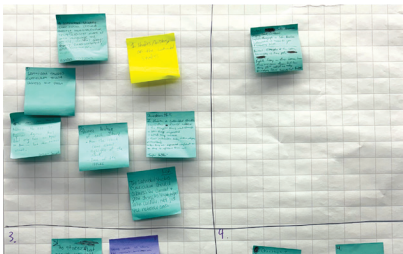
Introductory video clip about the virtual gallery prototype, with QR code to the feedback form.



Youth and adult allies coded the Youth Summit data to contribute to the piloting vision for the 2025–2026 school year. Participants were invited to join follow-up focus groups, give feedback on the virtual gallery (see Figure 7), or email the LCI team with interest in remaining engaged in the initiative and/or piloting in order to address the above concerns and visions.

Figure 8

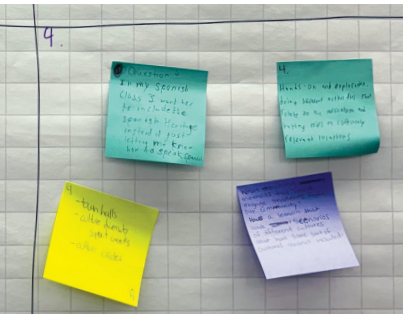
Youth Summit community vision board.



Rooted in our conceptual framework’s collaborative approach and participatory and intersectional ways of knowing, members of the LCI team worked with youth co-facilitators to design workshops. This collaborative approach offered stakeholders an overview of the LCI blueprint and conceptual framework, while creating intentional opportunities to elicit feedback and breathe community knowledge into this work.

Figure 9

Close-up of the vision board brainstorming with students and teachers.



The fourth quadrant of the vision board asked participants to brainstorm what teaching and learning methods might be engaging to members of their communities, and responses included: incorporating cultural heritage into the language curriculum, culture circles, hands-on explorations, neighborhood visits or field trips to relevant places, and opportunities to experience other cultures, such as through role plays or simulations. All of these suggestions have significant implications for the curriculum as well as the professional learning required in order to implement it.



During the Hispanic Federation Education Summit, two teams presented different aspects of the curriculum: (1) sample lesson plans, with opportunities for interaction and feedback from participants, and (2) envisioning the curriculum as a collaborative project through the lens of our conceptual framework. The youth-centered presentation consisted of a multi-generational team that shared the initiative’s conceptual framework, how we got to this point, and some of the already existing co-created vision boards (See Figure 10). This presentation culminated in feedback about what the audience of educators, principals, policymakers, and community-based organizers hoped to learn or see reflected in a Latinidad curriculum.



Figure 10

As part of the Town Hall Series spearheaded by the United Way of NYC, community-based organizations, students, educators, and community members engaged in visioning activities to share their perspectives. In this virtual whiteboard created during a series of online focus group meetings, participants brainstormed what should be taught (black-ink writing and images) and how (blue-ink writing) after engaging in conversations about Latinidad and how it could be experienced and understood by each participant.

SECTION 2: CURRICULUM OVERVIEW



LATINIDAD CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

In 2025-2026, the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative team collaborated with educators, youth, community members, and scholars in various academic disciplines to develop lessons and curriculum materials. Year 2 was intentionally focused on curriculum development and field testing of lessons, unit plans, project-based learning experiences, standards crosswalks, and a full syllabus for a high school elective course, as well as accompanying professional learning resources for curriculum implementation.

Rooted in the Latinidad conceptual framework, the Teachers College faculty team worked with expert consultants to develop sample lesson plans across grade levels and content areas to be culturally affirming and inquiry-driven, anchored in critical thought regarding history, identity, and systems, adaptable across disciplines and school systems, and embedded with skills associated with data analysis, storytelling, and social action.

Grounded in culturally responsive and universal design for learning frameworks, with input from teachers, community members, and researchers, LCI curriculum materials translate the pillars of the Latinidad conceptual framework into classroom-facing objectives and materials while maintaining malleability to adjust to diverse classroom contexts.

Each lesson plan is prepared alongside a curriculum checklist inclusive of learning objectives aligned with our conceptual framework’s four main pillars (Belonging, Multiple Ways of Knowing, Dynamic Inquiry-Based Learning, and Critical Skills Across Contexts), and additional resources to support educators. Some examples of topics covered in the first iteration of the lesson plans are:

- **K-2:** Sounds of Latinidad: Experiencing family and cultural traditions through music
- **3-5:** Latinidad in My Community: Exploring Latinidad and identity in their own neighborhoods, through art, including murals
- **6-8:** Exploring Latinidad through Photography: Documenting lived experiences and connections in urban spaces through photography and memory
- **9-12:** Mobilizing for Equity: The Save Hostos Movement: Exploring educational equity and contributions through collective action and mobilization
- **Upper Division Latinidad Elective Course Modules and High School Lessons:** Developed by the LCI team in collaboration with an intergenerational cohort of NYC educators and high school students, these curriculum materials are designed to serve either as a cohesive high school or dual-enrollment course, or separately, as individual lessons and units

The first four sample lessons are printed on pages 30-57 of *The Need to Advance the Study of Latinidad in New York City Public Schools*, available at <https://tinyurl.com/LatinidadReport>.

All of the Upper Division Elective Course Modules and Lessons may be accessed in draft form by teachers interested in field-testing and providing feedback: <https://tinyurl.com/LCI-Modules>.



Figure 11

The infographic references the report, and the included sample lessons, to demonstrate how the Latinidad in Schools curriculum maps onto grade bands, multiple subject areas, and connects to NYC resources.

 Scan QR code to see the full Sample Lesson Plans in the report.	K-2 Sounds of Latinidad: Exploring Family & Traditions through Music	3-5 Latinidad in My Community	6-8 Exploring Latinidad through Photography	9-12 Mobilizing for Equity in Education: The Save Hostos Movement
BELONGING an overall value or ethic that guides all subsequent elements of the Latinidad project, including design processes, professional development, pedagogy, and content.	Students recognize how music can connect to and reflect their family traditions and practices.	Students explore the cultural identities of their neighborhoods in New York City.	Students explore personal connections to Latinidad through photographs and images, and recognize how their own experiences contribute to the creation of a shared visual memory of New York City.	Students recognize the importance of the Save Hostos Movement in demanding educational equality and creating a sense of belonging and identity for communities in New York City.
MULTIPLE WAYS OF KNOWING a perspective on knowledge that requires teachers and students to reflect not only on what they know but how; in other words, that recognizes that there are a variety of sources of data that can inform knowledge creation.	Students examine how music can reflect family values, traditions, and experiences and contribute to spaces that bring people together to share memories and care for each other.	Students identify features of New York City neighborhoods that express the community life and multiple ways to access the cultural heritage at the heart of Latinidad by analyzing narratives and works of art.	Students use photographs as historical evidence, documenting the diverse expressions of Latinidad across different New York City neighborhoods, including everyday practices, community engagement, and meaningful interactions with urban spaces.	Students learn how collective action and advocacy help to preserve ways of living and knowing, improve educational experiences, and develop community resources by engaging in primary source analysis.
DYNAMIC & INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING a pedagogical approach that emphasizes problem-based, student- and community- centered, and experiential learning whenever possible.	Students consider how different rhythms, instruments, and songs connect to family traditions and everyday life.	Students ask questions about how community and identity are connected.	Students ask questions about how photography can reveal both visible and hidden dimensions of Latinidad in their neighborhoods and day-to-day lives.	Students ask questions about how the fight to save Hostos Community College reflects the broader struggles for educational equity and representation in New York City.
CRITICAL SKILLS ACROSS CONTEXTS competencies that encourage perspective-taking, the ability to understand, appreciate, interact, and collaborate with people from different cultures, and questioning to draw conclusions.	Students identify key instruments and rhythms associated with Latinidad and express how music makes them feel connected to their families and communities.	Students create a drawing of their neighborhood, incorporating ways of life, practices, and cultural elements they have learned about from New York's Latino communities.	Students analyze photographs to identify specific elements of Latinidad and compare representations across different communities.	Students analyze primary source materials as a way to understand the motivations and outcomes of the Save Hostos Movement.
Curricular Connections	Literacy, Music, and Social Studies	Art, Literacy, and Social Studies	Art, English Language Arts, and Social Studies	English Language Arts, Social Studies, World Languages - Spanish



CURRICULUM PLANNING GUIDE

1. Pre-Instruction Planning

Course Title / Format Discipline or Content Area <i>(Grade alignment, where applicable)</i>	
Unit of Study & Session / Lesson Topic or Title	
Class Duration and Frequency	

Learning Objectives (Latinidad Conceptual Framework)

Belonging <i>Who and where are my communities?</i>	
Multiple Ways of Knowing <i>What do I know and how do I know it?</i>	
Dynamic Inquiry <i>What are my questions, and how would I go about answering them?</i>	
Critical Skills Across Contexts <i>How might this material be applied in other areas or contexts?</i>	



Standards (Discipline & Grade Specific)	
Essential Question(s) <i>(Broad, thought-provoking question(s) that encourage deep exploration and critical thinking around a central theme or concept; cannot be answered by 'yes' or 'no')</i>	
Focus Questions <i>Specific, targeted questions that narrow the scope of inquiry and guide the investigation or discussion toward a particular aspect)</i>	
Connected Academic Vocabulary <i>(3-9 Terms and Brief Definitions)</i>	
Formative and Summative Assessments	
Materials & Resources <i>(texts, as well as community resources such as museums, archives, cultural centers, etc.)</i>	
Connections to Students' Prior Knowledge <i>(including funds of knowledge, spaces of memory, etc.)</i>	
What Instructors Should Know <i>Challenging Misconceptions and Featuring Counternarratives</i>	

SECTION 2: CURRICULUM OVERVIEW



2. In-Class Engagement, Activities, & Interaction with Course Materials

Framing/Context	
Background or Mini-lessons	
Engagement & Activities	
Checking for Understanding	
Closing Activity & Ongoing Questions	
Homework & Beyond this Lesson <i>(Civic, Community, and/or Family Engagement)</i>	
Differentiation and Scaffolds <i>(see Universal Design for Learning)</i>	



3. Additional Resources

Extensions <i>(Museums, Archives, Cultural Centers, Spaces of Memory, etc.)</i>	
Related Articles, Books, Videos, Websites	



Intergenerational Collage Activity Station at Talleres en Comunidad, November 15th, 2025. Photo credit: Limarys Caraballo.

SECTION 3: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TO SUPPORT THE CURRICULUM

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING WORKSHOPS AND CURRICULUM WRITING SESSIONS

During the 2025-26 academic year, we invited teachers, learning coaches, and school leaders interested in the teaching of Latinidad to attend **a series of Knowledge Building Workshops** facilitated by scholars specializing in a variety of fields related to our curriculum, from history to gender studies to music and art education. With the goal of enabling NYC Public Schools teachers to collaborate on and implement our curriculum, we organized four workshops at Teachers College, Columbia University, each featuring different but interrelated topics and teams of experts:

1. Centering Afro-Latinidad in New York City

Oct. 9, 2025, with Yosef Medina, Afro Latin@ Forum, Director of Community Initiatives at Virginia Humanities and Alexa Rodríguez, Assistant Professor, University of Virginia

This workshop introduced participants to our Latinidad conceptual framework, focusing on how we can define and explore Latinidad while addressing the intersectional experiences of students within this broader experience in multidisciplinary ways and across grade levels. Yosef Medina presented on ways to recognize African diasporic identities through the curriculum, detailing several lesson plans he has developed drawing from his extensive experience in NYC's K-12 public schools and juvenile justice systems. Alexa Rodríguez presented on opportunities and resources to learn about the experiences and impacts of Dominicans in NYC through children's books, novels, excursions, scholarly research articles, music, and other visual media.

2. Narratives of Latinidad in New York City

Nov. 4, 2025, with Carlos Decena, Professor of Latino and Caribbean Studies and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Rutgers University and Eddie Rivero, Visiting Associate Professor in Bilingual/Bicultural Education

This workshop highlighted key thematic areas and issues in the study of Latinidad in NYC, like immigration and community formation; transnationalism and labor movements; political mobilizations and activism; gender, sexuality, and the Latinx community; and the politics of representation in US arts and media. Carlos Decena shared print and audiovisual resources to help teachers guide students to compare the experiences of different Latino groups in NYC and to assess their presence and impact on the US economy, society, social activism, popular culture, and the arts. Eddie Rivero engaged participants in discussion and activities related to a reading list he created on local, NYC-based histories, cultural practices, and everyday life and includes developmentally appropriate texts that can inform culturally responsive teaching across K-12 settings.

3. Sounds of Latinidad: Integrating Music and Arts Education into the K-12 Curriculum

Jan. 13, 2026, with Priscila Santana, EdD, Doctoral Candidate, Music and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

This workshop focused on the potential of arts and music education to complement the study of Latinidad across grades and content areas. Priscila Santana, doctoral candidate in Music and Music Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, presented on the role and importance of including the history and study of music into a culturally responsive Latinidad curriculum in NYC and review resources, such as artists active in NYC's cultural ecosystem and cultural institutions, that play a critical role in sustaining these musical traditions and fostering spaces for cultural expression.

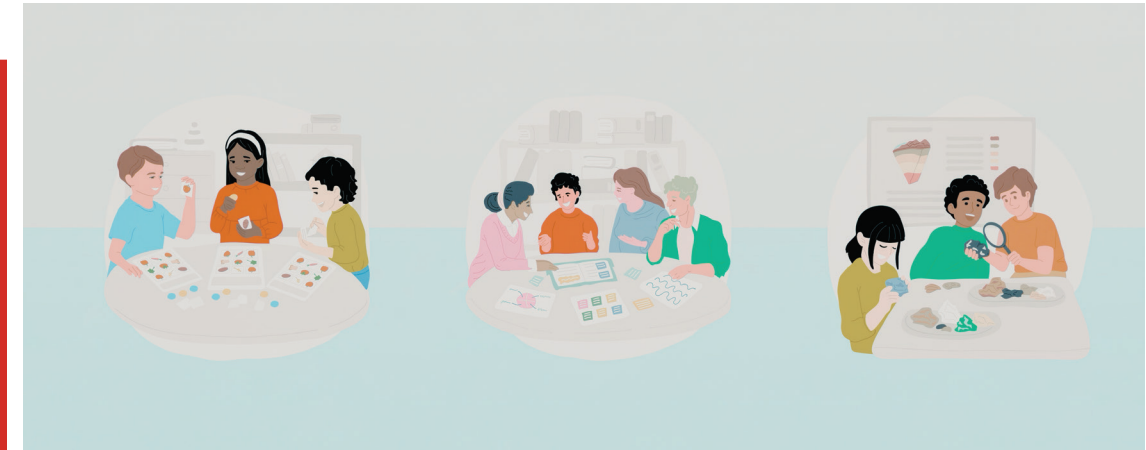
4. Lessons for the Study and Celebration of Latinidad

March 12, 2026, with members of the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative Team

Through interactive presentations with members of the LCI Team, participants explored the framework of Latinidad as a diverse dynamic concept for teaching. The presenters highlighted sample activities and lesson plans that we have created for grades 6-9, including lessons on Activism in NYC Public Schools: Fighting for Bilingual Education and Community Control; Cigar Factories and Revolutionary Activities: The Foundation of Afro-Latinidad in NYC; and Cultivating Well-being & Solidarity: Community Gardens and Latinidad in NYC.

We also selected a **cohort of 20 teachers** to participate in **9 Curriculum Writing Sessions between October 2025 and June 2026** (see below for more detailed information on this group). The sessions provided professional learning and implementation support around the concept of Latinidad to ensure teachers can design, pilot, and refine curriculum lessons that meet student needs while building sustainable instructional practices.

Teachers from all districts are encouraged to email latinidadnyc@tc.columbia.edu for information about joining our future Curriculum Writing Cohorts.



Latinidad Curriculum Initiative Blueprint Animation, Kindea Labs, 2025.

SECTION 3: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TO SUPPORT THE CURRICULUM



Curriculum Writing Session Topics During Academic Year 2025-2026

Date	Curriculum Writing Support
October 21, 2025	Pre-Classroom Planning
November 19, 2025	Objectives, Standards, and Curricular Connections
December 10, 2025	Questions, Assessment, and Misunderstandings
January 14, 2026	Opener and Mini-lesson
February 11, 2026	Activities and Closure
March 17, 2026	Students with Disabilities and Differentiation
April 15, 2026	Newcomer Students
May 7, 2026	Community and Participatory Approaches
June 10, 2026	Reflection and Celebration



Latinidad Curriculum Initiative Blueprint Animation, Kindea Labs, 2025.



Distribution of Teachers per School (Including the Borough and District per School)

School	Number of Teachers	Borough	District
M630 High School of Art and Design	1	Manhattan	2
M427 Manhattan Academy for Arts and Language	1		3
M075 Emily Dickinson	3		
M333 Manhattan School for Children	1		
M199 Jesse Isidor Straus	1		
02M241 STEM Institute of Manhattan	1		
M256 Lafayette Academy	1		
PS87 William Sherman	1		
M185 The Locke School of Arts and Engineering	1		
M421 West Prep Academy	1		
X334 International Community High School	1	Bronx	7
X349 Bronx River High School	1		8
X315 PS315 The Lab School	1		10
X556 Bronx Park Middle School	1		11
Q744 Voyages Prep	1	Queens	24
Q137 M.S. America's School of Heroes	1		27
Q145 I.S. 145 Joseph Pulitzer	1		30
Q417 Gotham Tech High School	1		

We are grateful to District 3 for providing a classroom to hold in-person workshops during the 2025-26 academic year and facilitating the Zoom meetings for those who could not join in person.

SECTION 3: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TO SUPPORT THE CURRICULUM

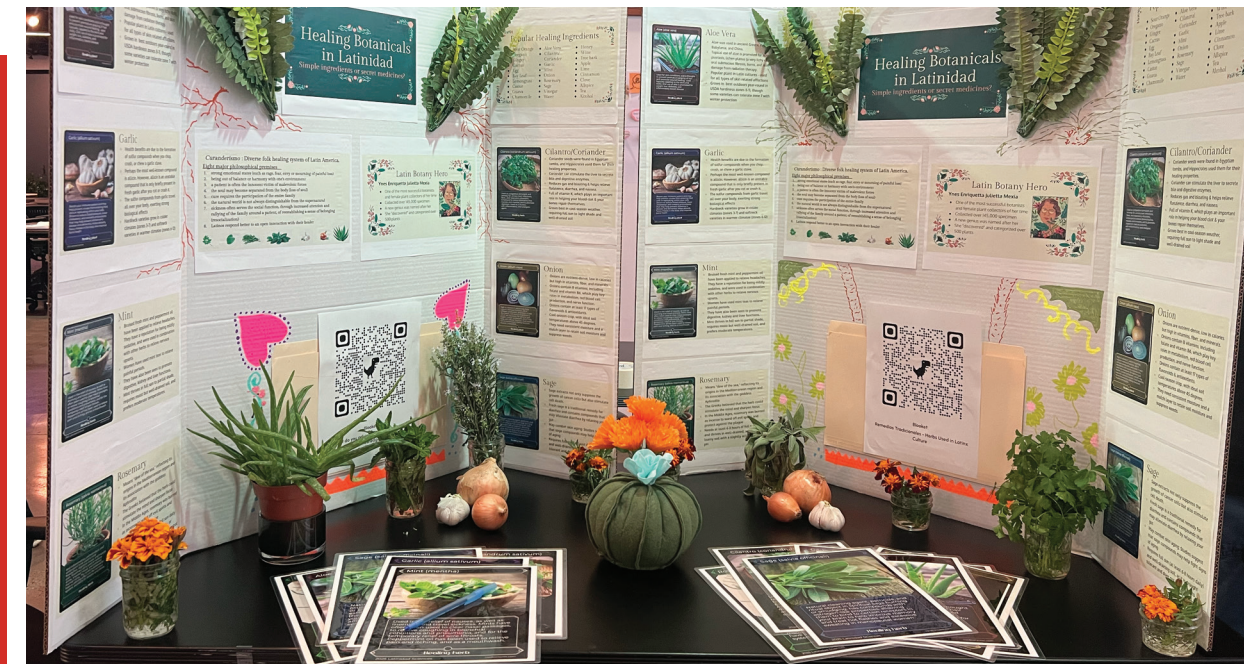


INNOVATION IN COLLABORATION: INTERGENERATIONAL CURRICULUM DESIGN AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In 2025-2026, a cohort of 22 teachers across boroughs was selected to participate in a Teacher Inquiry Group, a collaborative professional learning community where educators explored culturally responsive and sustaining curriculum design, reflected on practice, and co-created an upper-level elective course as well as curriculum modules and high school lessons grounded in the four pillars of our conceptual framework, centering Latinidad, student voice, and community knowledge.

Similarly, 35 NYC public high school students across boroughs joined the LCI team in exploring and shaping a curriculum that centers the diversity of Latinidad and amplifies student and community voices. Like the teacher inquiry group, students initially met online but came together in person for an intergenerational weekend symposium in November 2025, where teachers and students collaborated on the curricular materials and activities that they developed with their peers.

The LCI Team is also collaborating with Students and Educators for Equity (SEE), an educator-student partnership administered by the Office of Safety and Youth Development. These schools are partnering with LCI in varying degrees, from piloting curriculum materials to incorporating feedback about the Latinidad curriculum into the inquiry work that their own student and educator teams have taken up for the year. SEE hosts an annual NYCPS Youth Summit, where students and educators provided feedback on the LCI framework and vision in Year 1. In Year 2, they partnered with LCI in field-testing high school lessons.



Healing Botanicals in Latinidad Activity Station at Talleres en Comunidad, November 15th, 2025. Photo credit: Kathryn Caster.



Schools Represented in the Teacher Inquiry Group Convened to Co-design and Pilot Upper Division Latinidad Curriculum Modules and Lessons

School	High School District	Geographic District
High School of Art and Design	Manhattan	2
The Beacon School	Manhattan	3
Innovation Charter School	Manhattan	4
The Magnet School of Inquiry and Expression	Manhattan	6
Bronx Studio for Writers and Artists	Bronx HS 8, 10, 11	8
Bronx River High School	Bronx HS 8, 10, 11	8
West Bronx Academy for the Future	Bronx HS 8, 10, 11	10
High School for the Contemporary Arts	Bronx HS 8, 10, 11	11
Bronx Envision Academy	Bronx HS 7, 9, 12	12
The Boerum Hill School for International Studies	Brooklyn North HS	13
Design Works High School	Brooklyn North HS	13
Lyons Community School	Brooklyn North HS	14
El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice	Brooklyn North HS	14
The Brooklyn Latin School	Brooklyn North HS	14
International High School at Prospect Heights	Brooklyn South	17
Academy Of Finance and Enterprise	Queens North 24	24
Bard HS Early College Queens	Queens North	24
Gotham Tech High School	Queens North	30
Bushwick Leaders' High School	Brooklyn North HS	32

The Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI) team has been made possible by a generous grant from the New York City Council, in partnership with New York City Public Schools, the United Way of New York City, and the Hispanic Federation.
<https://www.tc.columbia.edu/latinidadnycschools/>

SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTING THE LCI BLUEPRINT



CURRENT AND FUTURE PHASES

Year 1 of the LCI initiative focused on demographic research, review of the literature, analysis of current NYCPS curriculum content, intergenerational and cross-community conversations. Curriculum materials provide standards-aligned multidisciplinary content, integrating currently available curriculum resources that all NYCPS educators may access. In the sections that follow, we describe the processes for collaborative design and field-testing alongside current teachers, students, and curriculum experts in Year 2, while laying the foundation for large-scale piloting during Year 3, when all lessons and curriculum materials will become widely available to NYC educators across all boroughs.

The following two-part process and structure for the development and piloting of the curriculum were designed by our project team in alignment with the LCI conceptual framework.

Year 2 - 2025–2026 - Curriculum Design and Development

Year 2 of this initiative was the home of intergenerational and cross-community conversations. The review process for LCI lesson planning guides, lessons, curricular materials, and other resources entailed:

- Curriculum content was sourced or generated by many stakeholders: community members, educators, youth, families, and subject matter experts, in relation to understanding and/or experiences of Latinidad
- Lessons and materials address all four pillars of the conceptual framework (via the three design principles for each pillar)
- Lessons and curricular materials are designed and developed based on a spectrum of collaborative structures aligned with the LCI framework
- Curricular materials, lessons, and activities designed during Year 2 are field-tested in partnership with educators, schools, and districts, as described below
- Ongoing communication with multiple stakeholders via the LCI website, workshops and convenings (e.g. NYCPS Youth Summit, Hispanic Federation Education Summit)



Year 3 - Professional Learning: Planning, Piloting, and Revising Based on Collaboration and Feedback

The structure and process outlined below, to be undertaken as the lesson plans and other parts of the initiative are developed, reviewed, and field-tested, are intended to ensure alignment between the work undertaken by the LCI project team in partnership with various stakeholders, community partners, content area experts, educators, youth collaborators, and families, each with various roles and degrees of engagement in the process at different stages of development.

- Collaboratively developed curricular materials will be field-tested within Communities of Practice and Structures of Support in Schools, such as the Curriculum Writing Sessions or the Teacher and Student Inquiry Groups described in sections above.
- Schools and districts that have been partnering with the LCI team to participate in the design process via teacher inquiry groups and early field-testing have provided ongoing feedback.
- Plans for professional learning to support implementation such as resource guides and webinars, have been developed alongside the curriculum materials.

The role of the LCI conceptual framework is to ground the collaborative work of the partners in operationalizing the various elements of an initiative with a broad scope that engages multiple and diverse stakeholders, in collaboration with schools and project partners. As such, the Blueprint must remain flexible and dynamic, and the curriculum will remain a living document. The curriculum will be revised on a regular basis in response to feedback and constant collaboration from youth, teachers, and researchers as we move through planning, development, implementation, and dissemination. The LCI curriculum materials and resources will be piloted in NYC schools across all grades and boroughs in 2026–2027.



Photo credit: Agron Jashari. Used with permission.

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Notes



For additional resources on engaging children and youth in the study of Latinidades in NYC, visit the Resources page of our website.



Collage, *Latinidad*, November 15th, 2025. Photo credit: Limarys Caraballo.



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