

2026



LATINIDAD

in Schools

CURRICULUM RESOURCE GUIDES

SUPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD



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

THE LATINIDAD CURRICULUM INITIATIVE, EDMUND W. GORDON INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY



The Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI) for New York City Public Schools is based at the Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study at Teachers College, Columbia University and 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.

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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/>

ABOUT THE LCI CURRICULUM RESOURCE GUIDES



The Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI) for New York City Public Schools aims to enhance the quality of education by providing a dynamic, interdisciplinary curricular framework and lesson plans that celebrate Latinidad and its connection to the histories, accomplishments, and cultures of our City and nation. The resources provided through this initiative seek to help teachers recognize who their students are and to enable the study, active reflection upon, and celebration of the histories, cultures, and intellectual contributions of Latinas and Latinos, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the city we live in and the places we call home. A curriculum that enables the study of Latinidades and their multiple and ever-evolving forms is meant to enhance school experiences by providing children and youth of all backgrounds opportunities to celebrate where we come from, what we have achieved, and what we desire for our families, communities, city, country, and world in the future.

As part of our curriculum development, in the second year of our initiative we hosted a series of Knowledge Building and Curriculum Writing Workshops during the 2025–2026 school year. The knowledge building workshops invited scholars and topical experts to engage with New York City Public Schools educators and administrators around the concept of Latinidad. We held four of these workshops at Teachers College, Columbia University:

- **Centering Afro-Latinidad in New York City**, on October 9, 2025
- **Narratives of Latinidad in New York City**, on November 4, 2025
- **Sounds of Latinidad: Integrating Music and Arts Education into the K–12 Curriculum**, on January 13, 2026
- **Lessons for the Study and Celebration of Latinidad**, on March 12, 2026

During knowledge building sessions, educators discussed the dynamic and multidimensional aspects of Latinidad; reflected personally and professionally on their connection(s) to this concept; and brainstormed in conversation with workshop facilitators and each other around how to incorporate lessons and resources about Latinidad into their teaching practice. As an outcome of these workshops, the LCI has created an ongoing series of **Curriculum Resource Guides**, published on our website (tc.columbia.edu/latinidadnycschools/) and designed for New York City educators, that is meant to complement the lesson plans we are developing for New York City Public Schools. The first five guides, described below, highlight content from our knowledge building workshops. These Curriculum Resource Guides thus represent a collaborative effort and body of knowledge and, while not exhaustive, include valuable and reliable resources—including scholarly and fictional texts; primary source documents; music, film, and audiovisual content; and historical and conceptual contexts—that teachers aiming to address the overlooked histories, knowledges, and contributions of the various communities that make up Latinidad in K–12 classrooms will benefit from using. They address just a few of the many important topics, regions, and heritage and national identities of Latinidad in New York City; our aim is to publish more as our curriculum develops. Our first five guides cover the following topics:

- **Centering Afro-Latinidad in New York City:** This guide, authored by Yosef Medina and utilizing work done by the [afrolatin@](#) forum, offers a brief historical and conceptual background for understanding the importance of New York City as a main locus of Afro-Latinidad—including for intellectual, political, and artistic life and culture—in North America since colonial times. It also provides summaries of the interdisciplinary lesson plans within our larger curriculum prepared by Medina and his colleagues at the [afrolatin@](#) forum that specifically address Afro-Latinidad, or the experience of descendancy from both the African as well as Latin American and Caribbean diasporas.



- **Teaching Dominican Histories:** Authored by Alexa Rodríguez, this guide provides lists of materials organized by school level—children’s books, novels, scholarly books, academic articles, city excursions, music, videos, documentaries, and websites—that could be used in the classroom or at home to teach about the history and ongoing contributions of Dominicans in New York City.
- **Latinidad in Sounds:** Integrating Music and Arts Education into the K–12 Curriculum, Priscila Santana wrote this resource for those interested in using a music-centered lens and applying sound as a medium for mapping histories, forging connections, and (re)collecting memories to enrich students’ engagement with the diverse cultural ecosystems of New York City. It includes specific recommendations of genres, songs, and artists to explore.
- **Narratives of Latinidad in New York City:** Eddie Rivero, a scholar of bilingual education, curated this guide which consists of a reading list, organized by grade level, of texts that can inform culturally responsive-sustaining teaching across K–12 settings.
- **Superheroes of Latinidad:** This guide, inspired by ideas generated during the knowledge building workshops and members of the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative team, offers a set of matching flashcards to introduce students to key Latina/o figures that have made important social, political, and educational contributions in NYC. It can be used as an icebreaker or small group activity in classrooms.

We would like to thank the experts who facilitated these workshops and authored the Curriculum Resource Guides, the educators who participated in these workshops and made suggestions for resources, and the New York City Council for providing funding to make these possible.

— LATINIDAD CURRICULUM INITIATIVE AT TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



Five Boro Story Project. (2021). *Micailhuittl: Día de Muertos on 34th Ave.*

SUPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD



About the Authors and Contributors

The idea for the flashcards contained in this guide was conceived through collaboration of the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative team and curricular work and designed by **Amanda K. Earl** and **Sara Pan Algarra**. Special thanks go specifically to **Jonathan Beltrán Alvarado**, **Samantha Chung**, **Regina Cortina**, **Kendal Peterman**, and **Shari Wejsa-Stewart** for contributing their ideas and time to this project.

Dr. Amanda K. Earl is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Teaching in the International and Comparative Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research examines the relationships between schooling and the maintenance of nondominant and heritage languages, cultures, and ways of knowing. Dr. Earl is currently conducting research projects in New York City and rural Mexico. She has also worked as a middle and high school teacher in Philadelphia and a college access professional in New York City. She holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Comparative and International Education from Teachers College and a B.A. in Greek and Latin from Brown University.

Dr. Sara Pan Algarra obtained her Ph.D. in Comparative and International Education at Teachers College, Columbia University in 2026. She was the 2024–25 editor-in-chief of the *Current Issues in Comparative Education* journal. With a passion for advancing education policy and practice, Sara brings a wealth of interdisciplinary experience to her work in education from her engagements in Switzerland, India, Italy, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, Venezuela, and the United Kingdom. She was a Hillary Rodham Clinton Global Challenges Scholar in 2021–22 and an International Fellow at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) in 2023–24.



Hispanic Federation. (2026).



SUPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD: A MATCHING ACTIVITY

While the contributions of certain figures of Latinidad to the US and NYC history and culture are well-known, many more have gone unrecognized and understudied. Particularly when it comes to the collective activism and intellectual contributions of key people to social, political, and educational causes, the achievements of Latinx communities must be celebrated.

This resource guide presents a set of matching flashcards that can be used as an icebreaker, Do Now, small group, or whole class activity in classrooms and professional learning sessions. The goal is for participants to get to know these historical figures in a fun and inspiring way. The images can be printed out and laminated or used on a computer in a digital presentation. Teachers can add to the 12 figures we have included by creating additional cards featuring their or their students' own "Superheroes of Latinidad" by inserting a photo and description into the blank cards we've included at the end.

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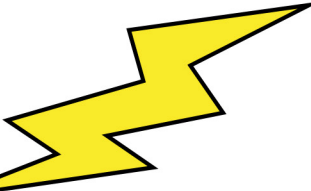


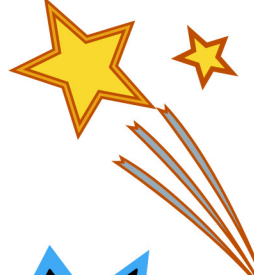
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IN NEW YORK CITY**

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in Schools**

**EVELINA LÓPEZ
ANTONETTY**









**UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
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This person founded United Bronx Parents in 1965, using a Freirean approach to train parents to evaluate schools and demand recognition of Puerto Rican, multilingual, and multicultural students and families in public schools. Their collective activism led to the creation of P.S. 25, the first fully bilingual public school in New York City, in 1968.

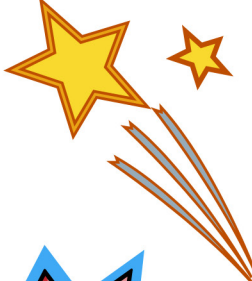
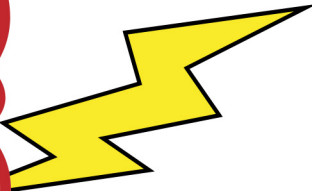




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IN NEW YORK CITY

**LATINIDAD**
in Schools

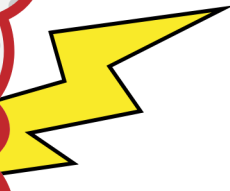
DR. ANTONIA PANTOJA



**UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD**
IN NEW YORK CITY

**LATINIDAD**
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This person was a Puerto Rican educator, social worker, and civil rights activist who was also a founder of the ASPIRA organization. ASPIRA was started in 1961 to promote youth leadership, advocacy, and college access for Puerto Rican and Latino youth. ASPIRA continues to operate today in several states and Puerto Rico.





 **UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
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CARLOS "CHINO" GARCÍA





 **UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
IN NEW YORK CITY**



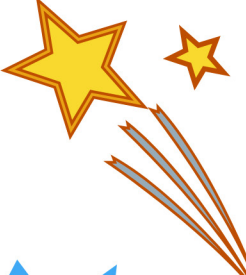
This person was a Puerto Rican grassroots organizer for defense of community space on the Lower East Side (Loisaida). They co-founded the community organization CHARAS, which reclaimed an abandoned school that became El Bohio Community Center.



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**LATINIDAD
in Schools**

ARTURO SCHOMBURG

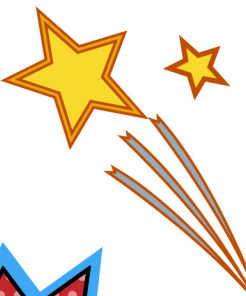


**UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
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**LATINIDAD
in Schools**

This person was an Afro-Puerto Rican who immigrated to New York City in 1891. They became a renowned historian and archivist of the African diaspora and devoted their life to fighting injustice against Africans and their American descendants, proving instrumental in political activism through, for example, the development of associations dedicated to Antillean liberation.



**UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
IN NEW YORK CITY****MIRIAM JIMÉNEZ ROMÁN**

**UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
IN NEW YORK CITY**

This person of Puerto Rican background was a central 20th-century scholar of gender, race, and Latinidad in the United States. A curator at the Schomburg Center, a professor, co-editor of *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States* (2010), and executive director of the afrolatin@ forum, they were dedicated to building coalitions between African American and Afro-Latino communities.





 **UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
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DIANA REYNA

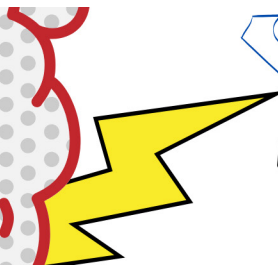


 **UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
IN NEW YORK CITY**



This person is a veteran New York politician who made history as the first woman of Dominican descent elected to the New York City Council, representing parts of Brooklyn and Queens from 2004 to 2013. They have been a vocal advocate for affordable housing, youth programs, and the revitalization of industrial zones in New York City communities.

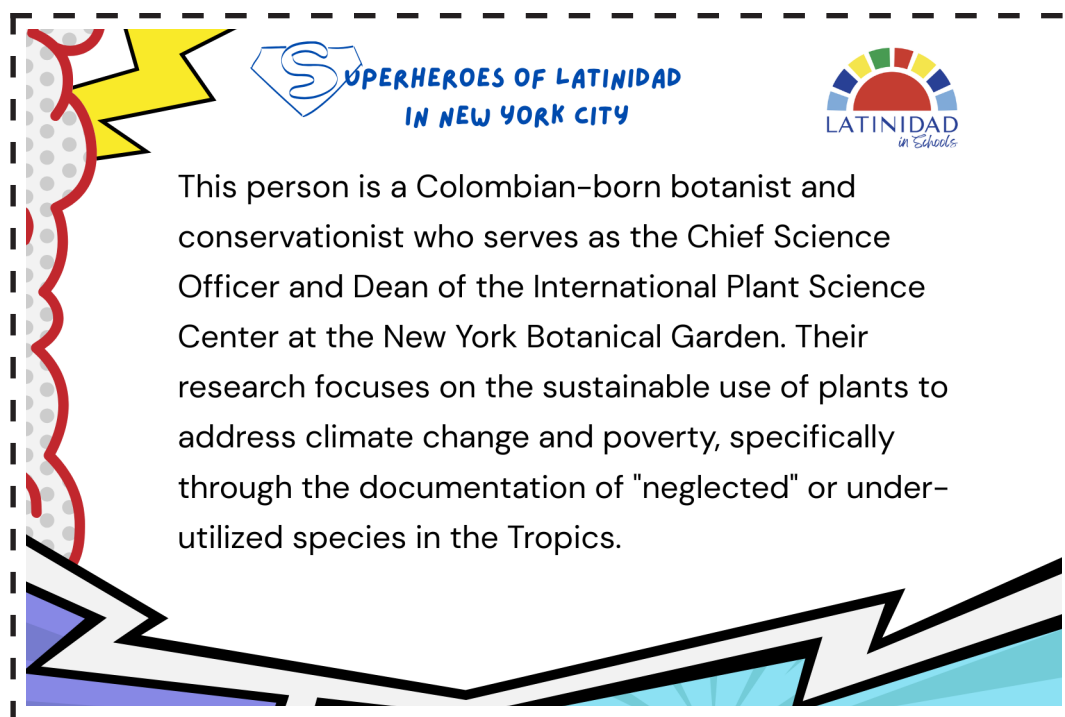


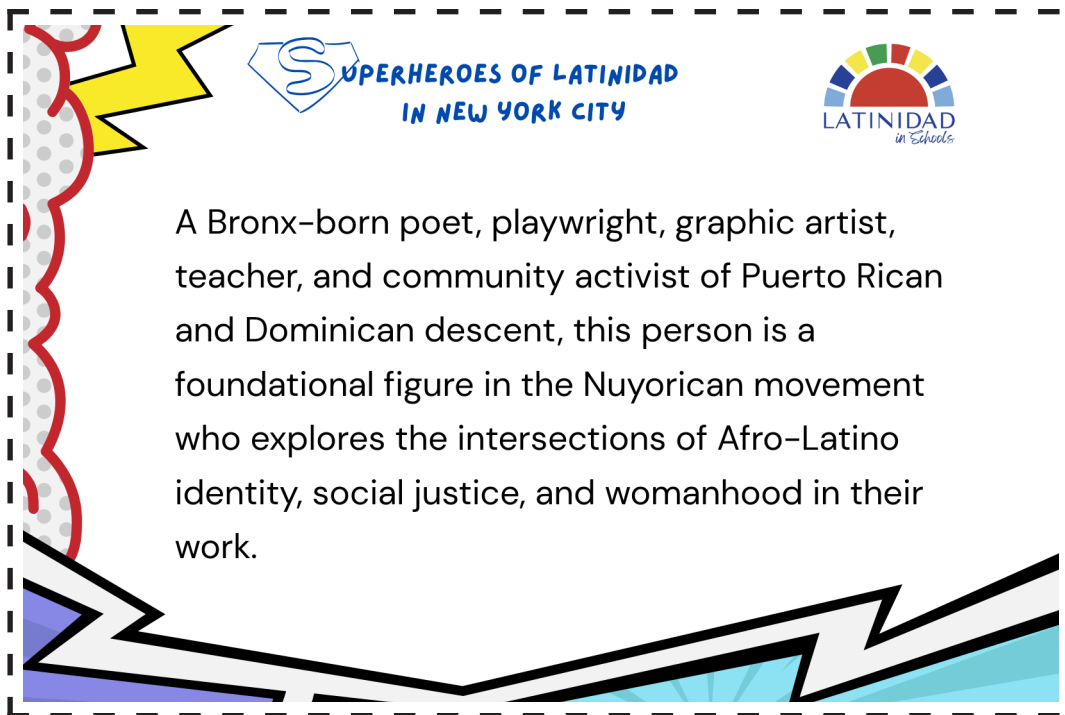
**UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
IN NEW YORK CITY****LUIS MIRANDA, JR.**

**UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
IN NEW YORK CITY**

This person is a prominent Puerto Rican political strategist, philanthropist, and community advocate in New York City and across the United States. They are the founding president of the Hispanic Federation, a founding partner of the MirRam Group, and currently serves as the chairperson of the Latino Victory Fund and The Public Theater.







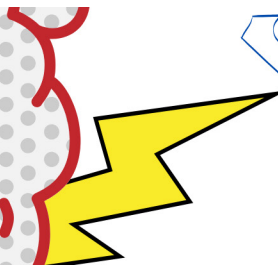


**SUPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
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This person was a Puerto Rican parent activist who, in the 1970s, helped organize and mobilize Spanish-speaking families to advocate for disability rights and better treatment for their children in New York City. Their activism was closely connected to the movement challenging the abusive conditions at Willowbrook State School, where parents and advocates pushed for reforms that became central to the city's disability rights movement.



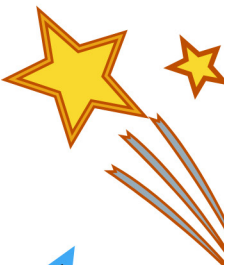


**UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
IN NEW YORK CITY**



MIGUEL ALGARÍN





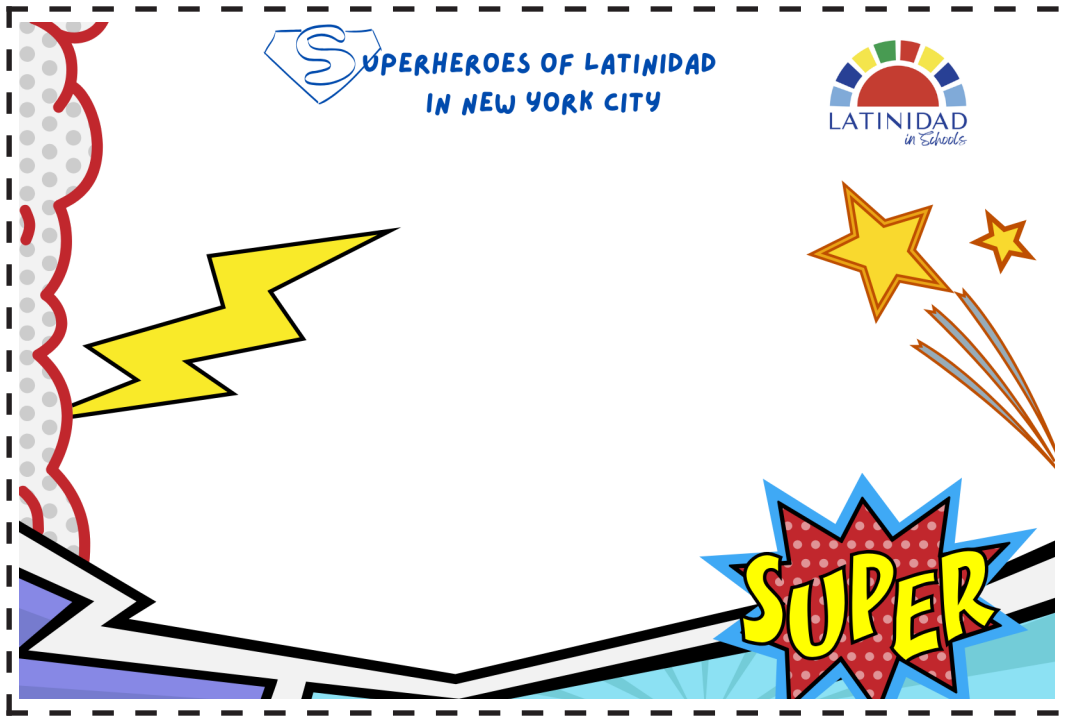
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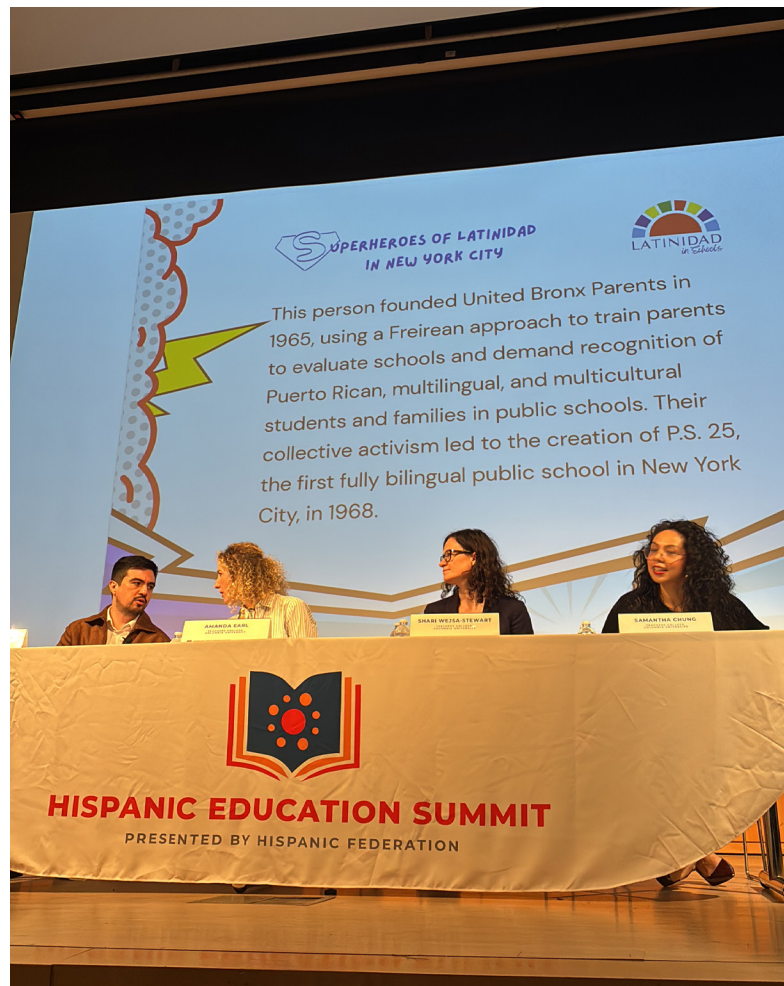


**UPERHEROES OF LATINIDAD
IN NEW YORK CITY**



This person was a Puerto Rican-American poet, professor, and cultural activist who helped create a space for Latino writers and performers in New York City. As a co-founder of Nuyorican Poets Cafe, they played a key role in elevating Nuyorican and broader Latino voices in literature and performance, making the venue a central hub for Latino cultural expression and community activism.





Sara Pan Algarra. (2026).



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