

March 20, 2019

On behalf of the nearly 13,000 members of the National Association of Social Workers – New York State and New York City Chapters, we are writing to support funding for ESL and culturally sensitive preparation materials for the Licensed Clinical Social Work exam and Licensed Master Social Work exam.

NPR reported in 2017 that the majority of ESL students – 3.8 million – speak Spanish, and 4% of New York’s students do not speak English as their primary language.¹ Further, in New York, English Language Learners (ELL)² graduate from high school at a significantly lower rate than native English speakers – 37.1% compared to 77.8% – which indicates that ELL students struggle in unique and different ways from English-natives. These statistics follow through college and graduate programs.

A review of the LMSW and LCSW exams shows that schools with large student populations of students who identify as Hispanic and international students also have some of the lowest exam pass rates.

The five schools of social work with the lowest ASWB Masters and Clinical Exam Pass Rates are:³ CUNY Lehman College (56%); Touro College (59%); LIU Brooklyn (59%); Nyack College (60%); and Daemen College (62%).

The five schools of social work with the lowest ASWB Clinical Exam Pass Rates are:⁴ Adelphi University (68%); CUNY Lehman College (28%); LIU CW Post (67%); SUNY Stony Brook (69%); and Fordham University (72%).

The above schools also report large populations of international students and students who identify as persons of color:

¹ <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/02/23/512451228/5-million-english-language-learners-a-vast-pool-of-talent-at-risk>

² Students who do not speak English as their first language.

³ For first time test takers; 2017.

⁴ For first time test takers; 2017.

Schools	% Total non-White/ethnicity unknown	% of International Students ⁵
Adelphi University	49.2%	5.5%
CUNY Lehman College	43.9%	2.8%
Nyack College	80%	5.5%
CUNY Hunter College ⁶	74.3%	5.0%
LIU Brooklyn	79.3%	8.2%
Touro College	38.5%	3.3%
Daemen College	26.9%	1.5%
LIU CW Post	48.6%	5.6%
SUNY Stony Brook	65.2%	17.2%
Fordham University	41.4%	14.5%

Research consistently shows that students who speak a language other than English as their primary language tend to do worse on standardized testing/exams than do native-English speakers.⁷ The above demonstrates a strong need for ESL and culturally sensitive test preparation materials to help ensure that those completing graduate programs can obtain the licensure they seek.

We thus respectfully urge the legislature and administration to ensure that future social workers receive the supports they need to successfully pursue licensure.

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⁵ 2019 Rankings from Collegefactual.com

⁶ CUNY Hunter is the only school in the above list that is in the top 10 of NYS Schools of Social Work ASWB Masters Passage Rates. The range for the top 10 schools is 78%-97%.

⁷ Substantial research on K-12 education shows that students who do not speak English as their primary language do worse on testing than English-natives. <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/reports/nyseslat/nyseslat-tr-15w.pdf>