

CHARTER LEADERS OF COLOR **MATTER.**

Daniela Anello

Head of School,
D.C. Bilingual Public Charter School



Life as an immigrant and first-generation college graduate hasn't always been easy, but my journey has been profound; it has created the person I am today. As the leader of a top performing bilingual public charter school in Washington, D.C., I represent a population of students and families that look like me and have stories like mine.

"I am my students; my students are me."

It's because of this shared identity that I work beyond what's expected to ensure that DC Bilingual Public Charter School is always poised to support our community, especially our most vulnerable students and families, in every way possible. As a hardworking immigrant from Chile, my father instilled in me in a very young age a strong work ethic that I still adhere to today. His words, "Focus on your education!," in turn, focused my career. I became the first in my family to graduate from college and to receive a Master's degree, placing me on this path to school leadership.

BILINGUAL BEGINNINGS

When I first came to DC Bilingual, the school was not performing well. Our third-grade class tested at 30% proficiency in reading and 3% in math. We were failing our students – particularly, those who were learning English as a second language.

In response, with the support of my team and leveraging skills that I acquired in programs like New Leaders for New Schools, I created and implemented a literacy curriculum that has been the catalyst for our movement from a Tier 3 school to a Tier 1 for the past five years. It is part of what has built a wait list of more than 1,200 families who want to come to our school. Our community sees their students outperforming the city's average in both English Language Arts and Math on standardized tests. It's what has led to an outcry of support of people wanting more - more open seats, more learning, more of us.

We are doing what's right, and our parents know that and support us. 95% of our students return year after year to discover what's next for them at DC Bilingual.

JUNTOS SOMOS LÍDERES

As a charter leader of color, my job is never done; and that's okay. We face issues that are only unique to us, like not having the same access to critical resources that others are more proximate to. The ability to work with less and achieve more not only tests your level of creativity, but forces you to find a team of dedicated adults who care just as deeply about the success of your school community.

"Juntos Somos Líderes, Together We Lead

Juntos Somos Líderes, Together We Lead," is a community commitment that we have made at DC Bilingual. I have been able to assemble a diverse team of teachers, support staff, and volunteers that reflect the cultural identity and traditions of the DC Bilingual community, and practice leadership grounded in connectedness and togetherness.

Leaders of color are important to charter school leadership because we know student success is much more than student academic achievement. Many of us share intersecting stories with our students and families that ground our work, and understands our success is connected and supported by the strength of our communities. And we acknowledge, celebrate, and build upon these cross-sections– in addition to pedagogical models, curricula, and proven best practices for teaching– to cultivate culturally affirming and relevant learning experiences that help us better support our students and families.

"I am my students; my students are me. I am a charter leader of color and my voice matters."

DC Bilingual Public Charter School

Location	Washington, DC
Year Opened	2004
Student enrollment	445
Grades served	PreK-12
Website	www.dcbilingual.org



Student Demographics

Asian	1%	Homeless Youth	1%
Black/African-American	18%	At Risk Students	34%
White/Caucasian	11%	Students with Disabilities	18%
Hispanic/Latino	68%	ESL Students	45%
Two or More Races	2%		



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