



### *Celebrating the Legacy of Our Leader: Pedro Mendia-Landa*



Pedro Mendia-Landa has left an indelible mark on NHPS through his unwavering dedication to Multilingual Learner Programs. His visionary leadership, transformative programming, and relentless advocacy will positively and profoundly impact the future of the district's Multilingual Learner Programs for generations to come.

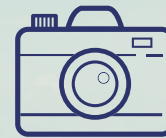
Under Pedro's guidance, NHPS has witnessed a pivotal shift from Transitional Bilingual Education programs to Dual Language Programs. This transition has been critical, as it signifies a move from subtractive to additive programs, with the goal of nurturing fully bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural students. His instrumental role in expanding the International Academy at Wilbur Cross is among his many significant contributions to the District. His efforts in providing essential resources to teachers and administrators have addressed the cultural, linguistic, and academic needs of Multilingual Learners for years. We are grateful for his service and inspired by his commitment to equity and inclusion. Happy retirement, Pedro!

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### *Announcements*

- [June Dates to Celebrate](#)
- [Pedro's Retirement Party](#)
- [Summer English Language Academy](#)

[Click here to see what we've been up to!](#)



### *In the News*

[Four Wilbur Cross Students to Participate in Yale Intensive English Summer Program](#)

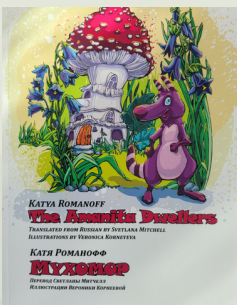
[Alma Exley Scholarship Foundation Updates](#)

### *Be a Language Learner* [Speak Basque!](#)

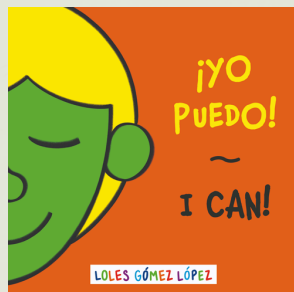


### *Did You Know?*

Did you know we have educator-authors among us?



Click on the book covers to learn more about NHPS's own Ekaterina Barkhatova & Loles Gomez.



### *Author's Alcove*



Hafsa Tuna, Grade 2

[Click here to view all winning contest entries](#)



### *Summer Resources to Share with Families*

(Spanish Versions Available Within Each Link)

- [Summer Reading Tips to Share with Families](#)
- [Use Summer to Build Background Knowledge](#)
- [New Haven Free Public Library Summer Events](#)

Contact Us: [MLDnewsletter2023@gmail.com](mailto:MLDnewsletter2023@gmail.com)  
We'd love to hear from you!

## ***Language, Leadership, and Legacy: An Interview with Pedro Mendia-Landa***

### **Where did you grow up, and how has your background shaped your approach to Multilingual Education?**

I grew up in the Basque Country until I was 17 years old. Although my parents had migrated to the city, we returned to our farm in the country on weekends and during summers. Out of the six siblings, 4 of us became educators.

### **What languages do you speak, and how has being multilingual influenced your career and advocacy for Multilingual Learner programs?**

The language instruction in my schools, given that it was before the transition from a dictatorship to a democracy, was in Spanish. It was prohibited to speak in Basque.

Later on, beginning in the fifth grade, I learned English and received a scholarship to complete my senior year of high school in the United States. I landed in Pennington, New Jersey, where I completed my senior year. That was a really challenging year as my English was limited, but more significant was the cultural shock. Not only was I by myself, away from my family, but everything was completely different. It was difficult to fit into a culture that valued the individual over the community. Additionally, I was living with a family of significant economic means but had grown up in a blue-collar farming community.

### **Describe your educational background and what inspired you to pursue a career in education, specifically in Multilingual Learner Education.**

My educational background is in early childhood education. That's where I first started after I had a serious accident that did not allow me to pursue a career in ceramics. I worked as a pre-kindergarten teacher for three- and four-year-olds for the Headstart program. After that, I returned to the Basque Country, where I taught English in an Academy. A year later, I returned to the U.S. to pursue a master's degree in research and statistics in the field of the social sciences. I then began working for the Veterans Administration as a biostatistician and after, as an independent contractor for the Connecticut State Department of Education. I later received a Title VII fellowship, where I completed my 6th year in Administration while pursuing a doctoral degree in Bilingual Education and Curriculum and Instruction. By then, I had already worked as a language specialist and bilingual teacher for NHPS.

### **What motivated you to focus on Multilingual Learner Education, and how has that passion evolved throughout your career?**

What motivated me the most to focus on Bilingual or Multilingual Education were my personal experiences as a child in a country that valued languages and cultures. This passion has grown because of the opportunities granted by my different roles as an educator. I felt that I was impacting the lives of hundreds of new arrivals to the United States, their families, and the multiple educators who became their greatest advocates.

### **What has your career path looked like leading up to your current role as the Director of Multilingual Learner Programs at NHPS?**

After working as a bilingual teacher, I became a dual language teacher, Dual language program coordinator, instructional coach for the Bilingual and ESL Department and finally became the Director of the Department.

### **Are there any particular experiences or moments in your career that have been especially influential or memorable?**

On a personal level, my experience as a teenager arriving to a new culture was one of the most influential and memorable moments in my life, which impacted my career that followed. In addition to my experience as a teacher, being an instructional coach for the Bilingual Department allowed me to learn from teachers and administrators from across the district.

### **What do you like to do in your free time? Do you have hobbies or activities that you're passionate about?**

I like to disconnect from my daily routine when I have free time. Among my hobbies are gardening, yoga, reading, and collecting pottery.

### **What are your plans for retirement?**

I see my life in three stages. In the first stage, I pursued my dreams and got an education. In the second stage, I used everything that I learned, guided by my dreams and the goals in my life, and worked in the field that I personally loved. I now enter the third, which I will dedicate to continuing to give back to the community.

*Thanks, Pedro, for everything you have done for the Department and NHPS. We miss you already!*