
National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SINCE 1982

Oyster-Adams Bilingual School
Washington, District of Columbia

Video: 2020 Terrel H. Bell Awardee Mayra A. Cruz

Hola todos. Mi nombre es Mayra Cruz y soy la directora de la escuela bilingüe Oyster-Adams, que es parte de las escuelas públicas de Washington DC. Quiero agradecer a la comunidad de Oyster, mis tigres, las familias, el equipo de docentes y personal. Y finalmente el equipo de liderazgo de nuestro colegio. Si es cierto que como directora yo doy la visión, pero en nuestro colegio cada uno juega un “roll” para hacerlo realidad. Estoy especialmente agradecida por el equipo de liderazgo: Christina, Peter, Rosa, Zaneta, Daniela, Iris, y (Kiri) sic.

School leadership is not for the faint of heart and it can now more than ever feel like an impossible job to play in society, but it is an incredible one. Being a principal means that you get to lead by example, be creative, be a lifelong learner and researcher. But more than anything, I love my job because I get to lead with my own personal values of love, equity, integrity, anti-racism and multilingualism.

As a flagship for bilingual schools and a two-time blue ribbon winner, Oyster-Adams teaches core content in three languages, Spanish, English, and Mandarin, every day across 10 grades. We are a free and diverse public school that creates lifelong transformational change for students and families. This is possible because we Oyster-Adams believe with every fiber in our body that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or circumstances, can and will achieve bilingually a high academic and social emotional levels.

As a young Latina leader who is a proud public school attendee from pre-K all the way through college, I leave you with the following: This is for all the brown niñas who looked like me in schools across the nation who are grossly underestimated, we can and we will. For all the undocumented families who sacrificed everything for our future, including my own parents, we can and we will. For all the overly qualified Latina teachers who are trying to fight their way into school leadership and are overlooked for promotions. For all the dual language principals who constantly have to and defend our programming against monolingualistic norms, we can and we will.

If you listen to statistics, I was never supposed to be here. I was labeled at risk, free and reduced meals, and an English language learner. Let me be clear, I was never at risk of anything and neither of any of our children. Rather, what was at risk was the status quo that I would grow up and dismantle. They can and they will. Thank you.