Many migrant Latino and Latina children attending United States high schools possess an academic background marked by insufficient educational resources, inconsistent years of schooling, and inadequate support (Corredor, 2006). Daily responsibilities including family maintenance activities have often been necessitated, resulting in lower school readiness compared with their English-speaking counterparts (Fergus, 2009). Migrant students are further challenged by economic constraints, undocumented status, and adaptation obstacles to new culture and language. Moreover, parental educational attainment level and English proficiency also impede parent-school involvement and student performance.

This pilot study explores how migrant Latino and Latina high school students in New York City Area approach educational pathways based on pre- and post migration factors, as well as, how the perspective on student academic trajectory differ between teachers and students, as they navigate the New York City public school system. Using self-reports of seven student participants ages 18 and 19 along with 10 teacher participants in Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies High School located in the South Bronx, New York, responses were analyzed for patterns of Spanish-speaking migrant students’ school experience.
Students’ highest level of prior education and exposure to country-of-origin textbooks in relation to current academic experiences were explored. Contextual variables, such as school, housing, parental involvement, peer and teacher support, family cultural traditions, and other responsibilities were considered. Preliminary findings offer potential insight and mechanisms of support informing professionals and parents seeking to address learning differences and challenges.