

Banu Valladares is the Executive Director for the [Charlotte Bilingual Preschool \(CltBP\)](#) in Charlotte, North Carolina. CltBP has dedicated 20 years to providing innovative, two-generation solutions for preparing Spanish-speaking children for success. Core services include the 5-star licensed dual-language Preschool Program for children 3-5 and the Family Program, which empowers families as their children's most important teachers. A recent alumni study of CltBP graduates in K-2nd grade indicates CltBP students enter kindergarten ahead of their Hispanic peers and maintain consistent growth and advantage. Banu joined Charlotte Bilingual Preschool (CltBP) in August 2017. Under her leadership, CltBP expanded Preschool Program capacity from 108 to 144 children in 2018 with the Green Room pilot, enrolling English-speaking students alongside Spanish-speaking students for the first time to accelerate language acquisition and facilitate the flow of social capital. In 2019, Valladares established critical strategic partnerships with MECK Pre-K and ParentChild+, enabling CltBP to provide an extended day Preschool Program and a home-visiting intervention for the first time, deepening impact for students and increasing accessibility for working families. She has led restructuring staff roles for efficiency, excellence, and growth, as well as an asset-based redesign of the Family Program. Valladares has grown the CltBP organization to support these successes, doubling the operating budget to \$2M. During her tenure Valladares has also prioritized building an engaged Board of Directors who represent the diversity of our community – now nearly half of our Board members identify as Latinx, two-thirds speak Spanish, and members include two CltBP alumni parents. Prior to joining CltBP, Valladares moved to Charlotte from Venezuela to attend UNC-Charlotte, earning a Master's degree in Literature. Valladares gained extensive experience from a career in education, the arts, and the humanities, serving for many years with the North Carolina Humanities Council, the North Carolina Arts Council, and as the Executive Director of SonEdna. She has led statewide arts and education programs, specializing in forming strategic partnerships with national, state, and local agencies. A proven leader with experience in managing statewide programs, resources, and staff, Valladares also has nearly twenty years of experience writing and securing grants up to \$500K.

Her experience also includes providing capacity-building support to community-based African American, Asian American, Latinx, and American Indian cultural arts organizations. Valladares represents the interests of Charlotte's Latinx families and informs early childhood education policy on the Mecklenburg County Early Learning Initiative Executive Committee, the [NC Early Childhood Advisory Council](#), and the [NC Early Education Foundation](#). She is also a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and serves on the Arts and Science Council Board of Directors and the Latin American Future Search. In 2019, Valladares was honored as one of 50 local "Opportunity Champions" by [Leading on Opportunity](#). She is the author of the bilingual book of poetry *Gypsy Child: Dancing without Veils* (CPCC Press, 2005) and enjoys yoga and hiking.