

AMME EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

ALLIANCE FOR MULTILINGUAL MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The fastest growing segment of our nation's school age population is students with limited English proficiency. These English language learners (ELLs) currently receive a variety of instructional programs including dual language; transitional and/or some amount of native language support; English as a Second Language; or sheltered instructional approaches. The majority of programs currently serving Bilingual/ELLs have a very narrow focus that emphasizes the acquisition of English including the acquisition of a very narrow range of English skills (listening and reading English with little attention to speaking and writing).

Nationally, the achievement gap between Bilingual/ELL students and all public school students is significant in all grades and content areas. There is a need for refining *effective, research-based practices* in order to create access and opportunity for Bilingual/ELL students that prepares them to be career and college ready.

Accountability for Bilingual/ELL students is critical; however, accountability must be meaningful and credible. The majority of high stakes assessment systems used to *identify* and *reclassify* Bilingual/ELL students lacks validity and reliability, and as a result raises serious concerns about their use for accountability.

The following recommendations are guided by the **Castaneda v. Pickard** decision: (1) Programs must be based on 'sound educational theory' (2) Programs must be implemented effectively; and (3) Programs must be evaluated and determined to be effective not only in the teaching of language but also in access to the full curriculum (math, science, social studies and language arts).

I. COMMON CORE STANDARDS

The stakes for districts and states are now higher emphasizing knowledge of curricula and assessment and mandating these be linked to standards; be scientifically based on research; and should focus on the improvement of subject knowledge and increased student achievement. Bilingual/English Language Learners (ELLs) have a dual challenge: to increase their proficiency in English while learning cognitively challenging content and skills in English.

Parallel to the movement to adopt common core standards in English Language Arts and other content areas, we recommend that English Language Proficiency Standards be aligned to Language Arts and Content Area

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Standards so that Bilingual/ELLs have access and opportunity to demonstrate their language and academic growth:

- The Council of Chief State School Offices (CCSSO) and National Governors Association (NGA) should work with the English learner experts and/or the national organizations, The Alliance for Multilingual Multicultural Education (AMME), Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), to develop English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards aligned to the Language Arts Standards and Content Area Standards;
- The ELP standards should be written by all states to address the different English learner proficiency levels and descriptors for K-12; and
- The CCSSO and NGA should work with language experts and/or World Language professional organizations to develop Spanish, Asian Pacific and other heritage language Language Arts and Content Area Standards comparable to all English Standards.

II. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION DEVELOPMENT & EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

A 21st century curriculum must take advantage of what students know in their first language. It should focus on content, language and literacy goals. Instruction should be meaning based and contextualized, rather than concentrate on isolated linguistic skills. Literacy instruction should be based on both reading and writing across the curriculum with a strong oral language component.

There is a need for a broader and more additive vision for Bilingual/ELL programs that focus on biliteracy and academic achievement across the curriculum giving Bilingual/ELLs ample opportunities to develop all facets of language through balanced literacy and analytical thinking across the curriculum. Brain research informs us that bilingualism and multilingualism are cognitive strengths. English language development needs to be a component of all programs for English learners and academic language development should be a part of all content instruction.

SEAs should consult and work with American Indian tribes for appropriate expertise and consultation with tribal entities in accordance with the policies set forth in the 1990 American Indian Act.

Funds must be earmarked for **innovative programs** that are comprehensive in nature and have the following goals:

- Support the development of L1 literacy proficiency to ensure successful L2 literacy development across the curriculum via best practices and pedagogy;
- Provide discretionary support to school districts in partnership with IHE's, CBO's, ECBO's, and FBO's civic organizations, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, and parent groups in creating/revising curriculum

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in multiple languages for Bilingual/ English Language Learners to achieve top academic standards;

- Provide discretionary support to school districts in partnership with IHE's, CBO's, ECBO's, and FBO's civic organizations, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, and parent groups to create and sustain Bilingual/ELL evidence-based practices in multiple languages in support of their curriculum;
- Provide discretionary support to school districts in partnership with IHE's, CBO's, ECBO's, and FBO's civic organizations, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, and parent groups to create or adapt innovative computer-based instruction in multiple languages, online or in-class, for Bilingual/ELL students; and
- Provide competitive funding to identify best practices, pedagogy, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate curriculum in L1 and L2.

III. BILITERACY/BILINGUALISM

We need to recognize the importance of biliteracy across the curriculum in increasing graduation rates, academic progress and English development. Biliteracy should be considered an asset and a goal for *all* students to make the United States a stronger country that can compete and participate globally. This is a standard in the international community. Dual language education needs to be an opportunity for and accessible to all students:

- Promote and support all students becoming proficient in more than one language as part of an education that prepares them to be career and college ready;
- Provide discretionary support to LEA's, SEA's, IHE's and non profits in a variety of settings to create or revise programs to promote and foster the literacy/biliteracy skills and culture of Bilingual/ELL students;
- Provide competitive funding to LEA's, SEA's and IHE's for creating and sustaining dual language education programs preK-20 and in Adult/Parent Education programs;
- Provide discretionary support for Tribes to develop native literacy, through materials development and professional development for native teachers since the oral tradition is the cornerstone for many tribal language programs;
- Recognize and reward the attainment of biliteracy/multiliteracy with a national seal of Biliteracy/Multiliteracy for graduating seniors; and
- Create regional dual language centers to support state education agencies and school districts with the implementation of dual language and world language programs tailored to the academic and literacy needs of Bilingual/ELL students.

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IV. ASSESSMENT

Appropriate assessments should show a student's growth from where s/he started, not just a ranking within a grade or age level. Assessments need to inform instruction and go beyond filling in "*bubbles*." Appropriate assessment utilizes the language(s) in which students are learning. To use an assessment in English on ELLs at different levels of proficiency is, at best, an English language proficiency test and does not reflect valid content knowledge.

Appropriate assessments also include testing accommodations that use native language supports and linguistically modified English tests for Bilingual/ELLs. In doing so, one is more likely to yield accurate data:

- Require, fund, and monitor states to develop and implement valid, reliable, and measurable language arts and academic assessments in L1 and L2;
- Require states to submit psychometric evidence of validity and reliability of tests for English Language Learners;
- Require states to develop and implement formative assessments aligned to the common core ELP and Language Arts Standards, across the curriculum;
- Require states to use, develop and/or modify assessments that allow for the use of L1 to assess comprehension in L2;
- Provide discretionary support to SEA's to collaborate with IHE's to develop assessments that provide accurate information on what ELLs know and are able to do in the content areas. This must include how to collect and define the kinds of validity evidence necessary to demonstrate results that are equally meaningful for ELLs; and
- Create regional centers to support state education agencies and school districts in developing and using appropriate and multiple assessment measures and testing accommodations for Bilingual/ELL students.

V. ACCOUNTABILITY

Authentic accountability requires federal and state enforcement of inclusion of Bilingual/ELL students; however, accountability must be credible. Mere inclusion of Bilingual/ELLs in statewide assessments is not adequate. High stakes assessment systems used to *identify* and *reclassify* Bilingual/ELL learners need to be based on adequate validity and reliability evidence. States should be required to provide a consistent focus on the needs of Bilingual/ELLs in their accountability systems and establish a policy for accountability models that recognize and build on the interrelationship of Academic English language development and academic content areas, progress and attainment. Further, in order to assess the development of bilingualism/biliteracy, assessments need to be developed in languages other than English. Policies for the identification and reclassification of ELLs, appropriate testing accommodations, and testing requirements must focus on the appropriateness for ELL students:

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- Develop and provide precise language in the ESEA for **identifying** students as ELLs through the use of valid and reliable instruments/procedures approved and monitored by SEAs;
- Develop, implement and monitor accountability guidelines that exempt first year beginning level students with little or no proficiency in English from academic tests in their second language; the English proficiency test should serve as a proxy while authentic academic assessment in all content areas be conducted in L1;
- Develop, implement and monitor accountability guidelines that exempt recent immigrants (two years or less in the US), speakers of indigenous languages, students with little or no schooling, students from war-torn countries with interrupted schooling and students without two consecutive years of educational experience in the US (high mobility) from taking academic tests in their second language for two years; the English proficiency test should serve as a proxy while authentic academic assessment in all content areas be conducted in L1;
- Develop, implement and monitor accountability guidelines for reporting data to include disaggregation by Bilingual/ELL subgroup data: proficiency levels; program type; years in U. S. Schools;
- Develop, implement and monitor accountability data to report the progress of prior Bilingual/ELLs in districts who have exited limited English proficiency status;
- Develop, implement and monitor accountability guidelines that include Bilingual/ELL subgroups in the disaggregation of high school completion rates in AYP determinations;
- Develop, implement and monitor a standard definition/process for determining high school graduation rates for Bilingual/ELL subgroups across states;
- Require states to be accountable for demonstrating changes in school climate, professional development and curriculum design and parent leadership representation to support the learning patterns of English language learners, and to facilitate meeting ELL accountability objectives; and
- Utilize external evaluators in addition to U. S. Department of Education staff auditors to monitor the progress of states toward ELL accountability objectives, and to assist states in establishing and maintaining an accountability system for ELL student achievement in coordination with school districts.

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VI. TEACHERS & ADMINISTRATORS PREPARATION

State accountability measures reflect the new standards in core subjects. Bilingual/ELLs now have to pass these subjects and tests in order to be promoted and graduate. Two significant barriers compound this already unrealistic challenge: (1) Lack of prepared teachers to make instruction in English comprehensible to Bilingual/ELLs; and (2) Lack of prepared administrators in the areas of second language acquisition and the overall schooling of Bilingual/ELLs.

Addressing the changing demographics of schools and the disproportion between the needs of Bilingual/ELLs and the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators is a priority. States and districts must implement long-term and continuous systemic professional development to create and facilitate access and opportunity for Bilingual/ELL students that prepares them to be career and college ready. We must also find alternative community based teacher preparation partnerships to educate new teachers, counselors and administrators from the communities in which they live.

- Increase discretionary support to IHE's and other non-profit organizations for pre-service and in-service professional development programs for classroom instruction, administration, and counseling in Bilingual/ELL settings;
- Provide discretionary support to IHE's and school districts for creating innovative and sustainable programs and partnerships that include effective parental engagement practices in preparing teachers, administrators, counselors, and in pre-k-12 Bilingual/ELL settings;
- Strengthen teacher and administrator preparation programs to include learning how to create and foster cultural competency in schools;
- Provide discretionary support to IHE's, districts and non-profits to provide second and dual language learning opportunities to teachers, administrators, counselors and other school staff with the purpose of making them literate in a second language and to assist them in providing the best opportunities for ELL students to reach high academic standards;
- Require ESL certification at the secondary level to teach ELD and sheltered approaches to content instruction to Bilingual/English Learners;
- Reinstate and fund the fellows program, as modeled in the previous Title VII legislation, to support a new generation of teachers and administrator leaders, researchers and professors to provide leadership and research for educating Bilingual/English learners;
- Ensure all teacher education programs are performance-based and candidates successfully complete a valid performance assessment of their teaching (including their capacity to teach English learners) as a starting point for beginning-teacher licensing;
- Strengthen teacher and administration preparation programs, with a special emphasis on developing pedagogical knowledge, positive beliefs, skills and ability to teach Bilingual/English learners in K-12 multilingual and English Learner classroom settings;

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- Include Bilingual/English Language Learner knowledges and skills in the definition of effective teachers and administrator;
- Require at least 12 credit hours of university level ESL methods and other related coursework in all teacher and administrator preparation programs, as well as in in-service professional development courses;
- Use discretionary funding to support Alternative Teacher Credentialing that is community based with IHE teacher preparation programs and school districts in fostering “grow your own” models;
- Provide discretionary support to IHEs for content area faculty to receive professional development on second language acquisition and strategies for working with Bilingual/ELLs to support their knowledge base and development so that these elements can be more thoroughly infused in secondary pre-service teacher education;
- Provide financial aid/incentives/fellowships for Bilingual/ELL students in college to recruit them into teacher preparation programs with the intent of teaching Bilingual/ELLs in high-need schools. In addition, provide discretionary support for retention efforts so that these teacher candidates can graduate with proper certification and qualifications; and
- Provide opportunities and incentives for school employed paraprofessionals or other similar employees who have knowledge of and experience with working with K-12 students to pursue full-fledged certification.

VII. LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

All intervention models for low performing schools must be required to review the Bilingual/English learner data and design comprehensive programs, curriculum, instruction, and adopt appropriate materials and assessments that are culturally responsive and can accelerate the language and academic development of Bilingual/ELLs. The models must:

- Use state instruments to identify Bilingual/ELLs and their proficiency levels in first and second language;
- Require SEA’s and LEA’s to develop a comprehensive plan that addresses the specific linguistic and academic needs of Bilingual/ELLs in their instructional program;
- Teachers and administrators must meet state authorization requirements to teach and lead schools and demonstrate expertise and experience with Bilingual/ELLs;
- Enroll Bilingual/ELLs with the full range of English proficiency in their neighborhood schools;
- Outreach to parents to explain in their language the program options and how to access the schools programs;
- Be held accountable for the same language development and academic achievement targets as traditional mainstream schools; and
- Receive technical assistance from the national, state, IHE’s, district, and/or outside entities for expertise in the schooling of Bilingual/ELLs.

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VIII. RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

The importance of research and development in the teaching and learning processes for Bilingual/ELL students is paramount. We need additional research that is longitudinal and comprehensive and addresses the following topics:

- **Identification and Reclassification:** States across the nation vary in identification and reclassification policies and practices. There is great disparity across the states with respect to the number and types of test, practices and procedures in the identification and reclassification of Bilingual/ELL students.
- **Testing Accommodations:** Currently there are a number of accommodations provided to Bilingual/ELLs that are not related to their ability to demonstrate academic skills. They vary between accommodations for testing *conditions* and *modifications*. Many are not theoretical or researched based and do not consider the language challenges posed to a Bilingual/ELL student. States should be required to provide a consistent focus on the needs of Bilingual/ELLs in their accountability systems and described within the established policy. The current research provides limited information regarding the effectiveness of assessment accommodations and the use of linguistic modifications.
- **Literacy/Biliteracy:** Dual language, transitional, or ESL models, must make literacy/biliteracy a major component in their instructional design. Bilingual/ELL students require substantial support in developing literacy in their L1 to access English literacy across the content areas. Research needs to focus on how literacy/biliteracy is affected or not in different learning contexts. The focus should include community based literacy/biliteracy development in both narrative and expository text across the curriculum that addresses different needs, purposes, and functions.
- **English language development and academic language development through content instruction:** All program models for English learner contain these two components. Funding for research on best pedagogy, curriculum and materials differentiated for grade level and proficiency needs to be addressed.
- **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:** We need to develop culturally responsive pedagogy and innovative strategies, curriculum, and practices that will teach Bilingual/ELLs and Heritage Language students' analytic thinking, problem posing and problem solving ways to meet the many 21st century challenges that face humanity.
- Provide discretionary funding to support mixed-method research efforts related to improving Bilingual/ELL's instruction in a variety of educational settings (e.g. Dual Language, World Languages, American Indian Tribal settings, multilingual/multicultural settings, bilingual transitional, sheltered);

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- Fund longitudinal research that is directly tied to developing effective practices for Bilingual/ELLs that seeks to improve programs that are transitional, dual language or English models;
- Fund research that documents biliteracy development in the home and school from birth through college across different socio-cultural contexts, academic settings, and community situations;
- Fund research that documents the effective characteristics, systemic components, and dispositions of highly effective teachers, administrators and staff in schooling Bilingual/ELL students;
- Provide discretionary funding for mix-methods research related to the academic achievement of Bilingual/ELLs, and heritage language students; and
- Create a unit within OELA to coordinate research efforts across the U. S. Department of Education to assure that academic achievement issues related to Bilingual/ELLs and heritage language students are addressed appropriately as well as shared across all sections of the USDOE.

IX. PARENT/FAMILY LITERACY

As Census 2010 gears up and as the global economy reaches out to all corners of the planet, the issue of parent involvement becomes a priority. Paramount to the success of Bilingual/ELL students is the genuine and meaningful involvement of parents. Parent involvement requires proactive and significant attempts to bridge the school and home environment, particularly for Bilingual/ELL students from national origin and native country communities.

At least, we should consider:

- Fund Pre-K, pre-literacy to 16 and adult literacy programs which opens access to the entire family of tribal, immigrant and refugee communities;
- Fund studies of effective parent engagement programs that build on the capacity of the school to create a structure for the development of Family-School-Community Partnerships where parents have an active role in their children's education and in decision making at the school; this should include parent leadership councils, annual student recognition and scholarships, family acculturation and cross-cultural counseling groups, and most of all opportunities for the family to look at, review and discuss ongoing cross-cultural issues between the home and the school environments;
- Provide funding for the incorporation of afterschool tutorial projects into mainstream agencies such as the library system, the community center, and agencies which allow for access of technology to immigrant, refugee and rural communities;
- Provide funding for local school systems and community colleges through their adult and community centers with the collaboration of CBOs, ECBOs, FBOs and other mainstream non-profit groups to accelerate the learning of the English language as well as the enrichment of other heritage languages to motivate and encourage the maintenance of all languages spoken by members of various diverse ethnic communities;

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- Provide support and funding of storytelling, podcasting and webinars which continue to explore the language and culture rich mosaic of these United States;
- Provide funding/incentive for IHEs to establish service learning opportunities for college students to serve as tutors, mentors, etc. for Bilingual/ELLs and their parents in after-school and during-school programs, and provide incentives to schools and districts to establish such programs with neighboring IHEs;
- Establish Parental Involvement course requirements for pre-service teachers in their programs of study to understand the importance of parent/school/teacher partnerships and learn strategies for creating these partnerships; and
- Provide the funding of two Parent Multifunctional Support Centers which will serve the needs of all our citizens in continuing to gather data, publish materials and provide training to the nation at large in all aspects of schooling which can contribute to building a stronger support system to the family unit which is the basis and the foundation of learning.

X. REGIONAL & NATIONAL CENTERS

In order to effectively assist SEAs, LEAs and tribal education entities, districts and the general education field in the implementation of creating and using assessment, pedagogy, programs, and research, we need to create regional and technical assistance centers and maintain the one national center, NCELA while changing its name to the National Clearinghouse for Multilingual Education (NCME), that will continue its clearinghouse roles related to the collection, analysis, synthesis, and dissemination of information for policy makers, researchers, and practitioners on topics related to the schooling of Bilingual/ELLs, and heritage language learners.

- Create and fund regional Dual Language centers to support school districts with the development, implementation, and sustainability of Dual Language and World Language programs tailored to the academic language and biliteracy needs and potential of Bilingual/ELLs;
- Create and fund regional evaluation assistance centers to support SEAs, LEAs and tribal education entities in developing and using appropriate assessment measures for Bilingual/ELLs, and heritage language learners. Accountability for Bilingual/ELL students is critical; however, it must be valid, reliable, and available;
- Provide funding to continue operating the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (which will be renamed the National Clearinghouse for Multilingual Education), who will continue to collect, analyze, synthesize and disseminate information for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners in topics related to the academic achievement of Bilingual/ELLs, and heritage language students;
- Create capacity within OELA to review the program of Bilingual/ELLs, and heritage language students towards state academic standards and to collaborate with the proposed regional-language centers in providing support to school districts that are not making satisfactory progress;

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- Create a network of regional technical assistance centers that 1) provide direct assistance to LEAs, SEAs, and tribal education entities on evidence based best practices for ELLs and Bilingual students; 2) focus on creating innovative resources and materials and technologically engaging curriculum; and 3) conduct research on First and Second Language development across the curriculum, Heritage Languages restoration, and World Languages' impact; and
- Create regional family assistance centers that will develop curriculum to enhance parent knowledge of effective schooling, preparing students for post-secondary education and careers, home/school/community partnerships, and advocacy. These family assistance centers will also provide; materials including toolkits, online courses, and training that will prepare both families and educators to support their children's social, personal, and academic success.

XI. OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Based on the Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1964, the Office of Civil Rights in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education must take a leadership role in ensuring Bilingual/ELLs and Heritage Language learners are given equal access and opportunity to core curriculum while learning English as a Second language. All learners must be guaranteed equitable resources, effective teachers and administrators, and policies that support career and college pathways. Greater pressure needs to be placed on states to address identified inequities in educational opportunities for Bilingual/ELL students:

- Regulate and monitor access to core curriculum, effective teachers and administrators who are professionally educated to teach Bilingual/ELLs through state endorsements which follow the national ELP Standards across the curriculum;
- Provide equal opportunity for all students to access core curriculum through means other than segregating by language;
- Monitor programs (dual language; transitional and/or native language support programs; English as a Second Language; or sheltered instructional approaches) to be based on sound educational theory; effective implementation; and ongoing evaluation for effectiveness not only in the teaching of language but also in providing access and opportunity to the full curriculum (math, science, social studies and language arts); and
- Monitor policies at the school and district levels for the identification and reclassification of ELLs, appropriate testing requirements and accommodations, as well as parent involvement activities and parent leadership councils.