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An Analysis of Texas Superintendents' Bilingual/ESL Teacher Recruitment and Retention
Practices

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The number of English language learners (ELL) students as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census are over 53,000,000 with Spanish being the top language group among the students (National Clearinghouse of English Language Acquisition, 2003). More specifically, in 1997-98, Texas public schools reported 519,921 students enrolled and identified as ELL in Early Education (EE) through Grade 12. According to the Texas Education Agency (2000), between the six-year period of 1991-92 and 1997-98 Texas public schools experienced an increase of 44% in the ELL population. Although the increase in enrollment indicated a total growth of 44% in the ELL population, it is important to note that 122,526 or 77% of the 158,794 new LEP students reported were enrolled in elementary grades in 1997-98. This extraordinary growth places further demands on districts to hire specialized teachers with appropriate certification to address the academic and linguistic needs of ELL students required to be served in a bilingual education program (Texas Education Agency, 2000). A study conducted by researchers at Texas A&M University in 2001-2002 determined that the greatest shortage in the bilingual/ESL area occurred at the elementary level; the study also found a critical shortage at the secondary level, as school districts were unable to fill 40% of open secondary bilingual/ESL positions (Texas A&M University, 2002).

Increases in the U.S. and Texas ELL population contrast with the shortage of teachers that serve these ELL students. Although the ELL population in Texas was reported in 2000 at 13%, only 8% of the certified teacher population in the state served bilingual/ESL students (AEIS, 2002). The Texas Education Agency, in 2001, listed bilingual/ESL teachers as among the four critical shortage areas for certified personnel and issued a press release that indicated a critical

need for certified bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) teachers (Texas Education Agency, 2001), and in 2002, the Texas State Board of Educator Certification (“Number and Percentage of Texas Public School Teachers on Emergency Permits by Selected Subjects”, 2002) indicated that among all teaching fields the field of bilingual/ESL had the highest number individuals teaching under emergency permit (23.6%) with the field of special education following with 8.7% emergency permits. Other figures from previous studies indicate alarming numbers of uncertified teachers as well. For example, according to information available from State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) for 1996-97, approximately 95% of the total number of teachers assigned to non-bilingual classrooms in Grades 1-6 were certified for the assignment, whereas only 59% of the total number of teachers assigned to bilingual classrooms in Grades 1-6 were certified for the assignment. The remaining 41% of teachers not properly certified were also products of a formal teacher-training program such as the college preparation program and the alternative certification program (Texas Education Agency, 2000). More recently in December 2003, the Texas Education Agency reported that there were over 7000 uncertified bilingual teachers (Personal communication, December 6, 2003).

Not only was Texas experiencing a shortage of bilingual/ESL teachers in 2001 and 2002, a shortage at the national level was also recognized. Data collected from a wide-scale survey of educator preparation programs by the American Association for Employment in Education (AAEE) indicated a considerable shortage of teachers in bilingual education (AAEE, 2001). This shortage was not limited to specific states that have historically received large influxes of immigrants; rather, AAEE found that institutions in every region of the U.S. reported a shortage of bilingual/ESL teachers, with the most severe shortage in states that have not traditionally had large immigrant populations. A year prior to the AAEE report, the Urban Teacher Collaborative

had already determined that bilingual educators were in very high demand, as were ESL teachers (The Urban Teacher Collaborative, 2000). The Oregon University System (2000) found that almost half of Oregon's school administrators had experienced difficulty recruiting and finding teachers, including minority candidates, in bilingual/ESL education. Additionally, the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (2001) expressed a concern related to the imbalance that exists in the ethnic diversity of teachers prepared to serve Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students.

The exact reasons for the shortage of teachers certified to serve bilingual/ESL students are difficult to pinpoint because of related complex and interconnected factors such as (a) 30-50% teacher attrition rates in the first five years (Connolly, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Grissmer & Kirby, 1991; Ponessa, 1996), (b) subject matter, (c) grade level, (d) class size, (e) student demographics, and (f) geographical region (Oregon Research Report, 2002). Previous literature revealed that one of the prominent causes specific to bilingual/ESL teacher shortages is the lack of systematic psychological and academic support (Colbert & Wolff, 1992; Gold, 1996; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). Our study sought to determine how Texas school districts address the need of bilingual/ESL teachers through recruitment and retention. Specifically, the research was guided by the following question: What recruitment and retention strategies are school districts in Texas implementing to address the need for bilingual/ESL teachers?

Methodology

Instrument and Procedures

The Texas A&M University Bilingual /ESL Teacher Retention and Recruitment Coalition (The Research Team) developed an initial survey based on literature related to teacher retention and recruitment (Beeman, 1998; Slater, 1997). Input on the draft survey was garnered from

public school personnel including bilingual teachers and human resource staff. The survey was piloted with 15 regional administrators to determine face validity. Minor wording alterations were made to the draft after the pilot, and internal consistency was established using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=.89$). The final survey¹ consisted of 41 items composed of both open-ended and forced choice questions and was delivered through the Internet to all superintendents², both public and charter schools, in Texas that had an e-mail address (N=926). This e-mail list of superintendents was supplied by the Texas Association of School Administrators. The survey was launched in early October 2002 and was closed in late November 2002. Participation was voluntary and confidential. Respondents logged on to the designated website and completed the survey. Total responses numbered 635 (68% return rate).

Respondents

The total population from which the sample was drawn represented 926 Texas Superintendents³ with email addresses. Total respondents were 635 (68% return rate).

Gender. Following is a description of the superintendent respondents based on their demographic information (Respondents without missing demographic data totaled 467 Texas Superintendents --50% of the e-mail superintendent population). The respondents consisted of 301 (64.45%) males and 166 (35.54%) females. The number of female respondents represents 14% of the total state superintendents.⁴

Ethnicity. Three hundred and sixty-two respondents (77.51%) reported being White; 74 (15.84%) respondents were Hispanic, while 17 (3.64%) reported being African American. Five

¹ The survey can be found on <http://ldn.tamu.edu>

² There are 1226 school superintendents including public and charter schools in Texas.

³ Texas has 1041 Public School Superintendents and 1226 Public and Charter Schools (TEA, 2002).

⁴ The figures from this survey on numbers of female superintendents (166) responding are higher than numbers (85) responding in a recent superintendent survey in Texas (Largent, 2001); possibly indicating that female superintendents in Texas have increased since 2001, or that this sample included more females in Chief Executive positions in charter schools, or that more responded to this particular survey. In 1999, Iselt (1999) found fewer than 10% female superintendents of K-12 public districts in Texas.

(1.07%) respondents reported being Asian American, while nine (1.92%) respondents chose the “Other” category. According to TEA (2002), the state distribution of all professional staff in school districts (African Americans—8.9%; Hispanic—17.8%; White—72.5%) mirrors the figures from the superintendent respondents from this survey.

Years of service. Two hundred seventy-six (59.10%) superintendents reported serving less than 5 years; 113 (24.19%) reported serving between 5 and 10 years; 31 (6.63%) reported serving between 11 and 15 years, while 47 (10.06%) reported serving over 15 years. The majority of the superintendent respondents were relatively new to the position.

District enrollment figures. The student enrollment figures of districts, as reported by the superintendents in this survey, mirror state student enrollment figures. One hundred and eleven respondents (23.76%) reported that their districts had a student population under 500. These respondents represent 22% of the entire number of districts in the state with this level of student population. Eighty-one (17.34%) reported a student population between 500 and 999. These respondents represent 35% of the entire number of district in the state with this level of student population. Fifty-three (11.34%) reported a student population between 1000 to 1599. These respondents represent 43% of the entire number of districts in the state with this level of student population. Sixty-eight (14.67%) reported a student population between 1600 and 2999. These respondents represent 53% of the entire number of districts in the state with this level of student population. Forty-six (9.85%) reported a student population between 3000 and 4999. These respondents represent 56% of the entire number of districts in the state with this level of student population. Forty-four (9.42%) reported a student population between 5000 and 9,999. These respondents represent 62% of the entire number of districts in the state with this level of student population. Thirty-three (7.06%) reported a student population between 10,000 and 24,999.

These respondents represent 70% of the entire number of districts in the state with this level of student population. Twenty-four (5.13%) reported a student population between 25,000 and 49,999 (100% of the districts with this student population), while seven (1.49%) reported that their districts had a student population of 50,000 or more (54% of the districts with this level of student population). The responses obtained in this survey are more representative of the districts housing 1600 or more students. The responses within the sample, as depicted in Figure 1 mirror the state's district student population distribution (TEA, 2002).

Category of school districts. Superintendents were asked to categorize their districts as “Urban”, “Suburban” and “Rural.” Three hundred and eighteen (68.09%) reported their district as rural; 104 (22.26%) categorized their district as suburban, while 45 (9.63%) described their district as urban. This reporting is also representative of the distribution by urban, suburban, and rural districts in the state, with the majority of Texas being identified as rural or small school districts.

Geographic location. Superintendents were asked to report the geographical locations of their districts in Texas. One hundred participants (21.41%) reported their district as located in the Northeast region of Texas, 66 (14.13%) reported their district as located in the Northwest region; 50 (10.70%) described their district as located in the West region of Texas. One hundred and thirteen (24.19%) reported their district as located in the Central region of Texas; 86 (18.41%) reported their district as located in the Southeast region; 39 (8.35%) described their district as located in the Southwest region of Texas, while 13 (2.78%) reported their district as located in the Valley. It is interesting to note that 45.6% of the districts whose superintendents responded were located in Northeast and Central Texas.

English language learner data. Superintendents reported the percentage of students in their districts categorized as English language learners (ELL). Three hundred and ninety (83.51%) reported that less than 25% of their district enrollment consisted of ELL students. These figures are not uncommon since 318 of the districts reported being rural/small school districts. The majority of those districts would have few ELL students. Fifty-eight (12.41%) reported the percentage of ELL students to be between 25-49%. Fifteen (3.21%) reported the percentage of ELL students to be between 50-74%, while four (.85%) superintendents reported a percentage of ELL students between 75-100%. The majority of districts reporting had very limited numbers of ELL students which is related to the fact that the majority of the district superintendents that reported were from rural/small school districts from Central, Northeast, and Southeast Texas.

Teacher vacancies. Respondents were asked the number of bilingual/ESL teacher vacancies that existed in their school districts Fall, 2002. Two hundred eighty-seven (61.45%) stated that they had 0 vacancies, 125 (26.76%) stated that they had one to three vacancies, 24 respondents (5.04%) stated that they had 4 to 6 vacancies while 12 (2.56%) superintendents reported seven to 10 vacancies in their district. Finally, 19 (4.06%) superintendents reported the number of vacancies as over 10 in their district. Approximately 60% had no bilingual/ESL vacancies, while 40% of the superintendents reported bilingual/ESL vacancies. Rural district superintendents reported the lowest number of bilingual/ESL vacancies (67% of zero vacancies was reported), while urban and suburban district superintendents reported the highest numbers of vacancies (74% of one or more vacancies was reported).

Certified teachers. Respondents were asked to report the number of bilingual/ESL teachers who were less than fully certified. Of the 484 who responded to this question, 349 (71.09%) reported that fewer than 10% of their teachers were less than fully certified, 34 (7.28%) reported

that 11-20% of their teachers were less than fully certified. Twenty-nine (6.20%) superintendents reported that 20-30% of their districts' teachers were less than fully certified, and 72 (15.41%) respondents reported the number to be over 30%. These figures appear to correspond to the number of vacancies and the type of district reported. Districts with the least number of teachers who were not certified (71%) are reportedly similar in number to those with the least numbers of vacancies (61%), as well as to the number of rural districts (68%).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using frequency counts, crosstabulations, and logistic regression analyses. By examining frequencies, we identified relations between crosstabulated variables. For this study one variable was deemed most useful as dependent variable-- the number of teaching vacancies in the district. The following independent variables were utilized with the dependent variable: The type of bilingual program offered in the district: (a) The types of incentives/benefits that are provided to bilingual/ESL teachers, (b) The types of strategies that are used by the districts to recruit bilingual/ESL teachers, (c) The geographical sources of bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment, (d) The main reasons for bilingual/ESL teachers' leaving a position, (e) The geographic location of the district in Texas, (f) The percentage of ELL students in the district, (g) The student population in the district, (h) The respondents' perception towards recruitment priority, (i) The difficulty level of bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment, and (j) Active involvement in recruiting college majors. Independent variables, h through j, were designed to measure the current superintendents' attitudes toward and active involvement in bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment. If it were to be found that these independent variables were related to the number of teaching vacancies, then it might be deduced that the attitudes and active involvement of the districts may be influential in the recruitment and retention of bilingual/ESL teachers.

Results

We report the results as follows: (a) types of bilingual programs in the districts reporting, (b) priority placed on and difficulty level of recruitment, and (c) recruitment issues/strategies.

Types of Bilingual Programs

The types of bilingual programs (English as a Second Language--77.2%, Transitional Bilingual Education--30.2% , and Dual Language-- 8.2%) in school districts were reported by the superintendents. Data indicate that the English as a second language (ESL) is the most common program type offered among the school districts. Several districts offered more than one type of program. The overlap in types of programs offered within districts is depicted in Figure 2. Only 36 districts of the 635 reporting offered all three types of programs. The majority of the respondents were from rural/small school districts which offered ESL programs, rather than bilingual programs. The districts with the highest percentage of teacher vacancies offered transitional bilingual education only as their bilingual program (See Table 1).

Priority Placed on Recruitment and Level of Difficulty in Recruitment

The majority of the superintendents (70%) indicated that they considered bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment a high priority. Superintendents perceived it difficult to recruit bilingual/ESL teachers. Two hundred forty-nine (46.6%) of the superintendents believed that successful implementation of bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment is difficult, with 163 (30.5%) indicating that recruitment is “Extremely Difficult;” thus, a total of 77% believed bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment to be difficult to extremely difficult. Only 122 (22.8%) indicated that recruitment was not difficult. In 2000, the U.S. Department of Education reported that 80% of school districts in the nation reported difficulty in finding bilingual teachers (“Promising Initiatives to Improve Education in Your Community,” 2000).

Priority and difficulty in recruitment. Further analysis was conducted to examine more thoroughly the priority and difficulty in recruitment. A logistic regression was conducted to understand the relationship among independent variables and a binary dependent variable. In our study, the binary dependent variable was the perception of priority of bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment where the high priority was recorded as a “1” and a lack of priority was recorded as a “0.” A backward stepwise regression was conducted with 13 beginning independent variables: (a) The difficulty of bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment, (b) The offering of professional development opportunities focused on language and diversity for the bilingual/ESL teachers, (c) Release time for college attendance for paraprofessionals, (d) Academic support for paraprofessionals, (e) Percent of novice teachers, (f) Numbers of less than fully certified bilingual/ESL teachers, (g) Turnover of bilingual/ESL teachers as compared to other districts in the geographic area, (h) The active recruitment of college majors in bilingual/ESL, (i) Location of the district in rural, suburban, or urban areas, (j) Percent of English language learners in district, (k) Percent of teaching vacancies, (l) Gender of superintendent, and (m) Years of service of superintendent.

The final model contained five variables: the perception of successful bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment, the offering of professional development opportunities focused on language and diversity for the bilingual/ESL teachers, turnover of bilingual/ESL teachers as compared to other districts in the geographic area, the active recruitment of college majors in bilingual/ESL, and percent of English language learners in district. Of particular note, superintendent demographics of gender and years of service as superintendent did not load into the final model as having a significant relationship to the superintendents’ perceptions of priority in recruitment of bilingual/ESL teachers. A second logistic regression was conducted using the four significant

variables in the first model. Therefore, the second logistic regression model had priority in recruitment as the dependent variable and four independent variables: (a) the perception of the difficulty of bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment, (b) turnover of bilingual/ESL teachers as compared to other districts in the geographic area, (c) the active recruitment of college majors in bilingual/ESL, and (d) percent of English language learners in district.

Table 2 depicts the second logistic regression coefficients. The analysis revealed the following: (a) as superintendents' perceptions of the level of difficulty of recruitment increased, priority to recruit increased; (b) as they perceived their turnover rate to decrease in comparison to other districts, their recruitment priority also decreased; (c) as superintendents tended to increase their active recruitment on college campuses for bilingual/ESL teachers, the priority for recruitment increased, and (d) as numbers of ELL students increased, the superintendents' priorities for recruitment of bilingual/ESL teachers increased.

Recruitment Issues/Strategies

Recruitment strategies. Among the various recruitment strategies listed by the superintendents, websites, career fairs, college recruiting, newspapers, and recruiting through professional organizations and/or conferences were the most frequently used. These data are depicted in Table 3. Additionally, the superintendents commented positively on the assistance of the Regional Education Service Centers, the collaboration with universities, and the use of in-district recruitment. One district superintendent mentioned the use of CD Rom technology in recruitment. Recruitment strategies used in the districts reporting the lowest number of vacancies included (a) advertisements in newspapers and on websites, (b) recruiting at career fairs and on college/university campuses, and (c) recruiting at professional organizations/conferences.

Several other questions related to recruitment were included on the survey. Response to a question related to in-district/in-state recruitment indicated that 53.4% (N=285) of superintendents reported that their districts recruit from inside Texas, while 43.4% (N=232) recruit within their local districts. The results indicated that 96.8% of the superintendents do not recruit out of state or out of country. On a question related to sponsorship of alternative certification programs, 12.9% (N=69) of the districts sponsored an alternative certification program (ACP) while 87.1% (N=465) did not have an ACP program.

Although no superintendents reported having a Grow Your Own (GYO) program, 128 of them wrote comments similar in content to the following: “It’s not called ‘grow your own,’ but the bilingual department provides tuition and books for any classified personnel interested in becoming a bilingual teacher;” “We do not have an official program, but we do encourage staff and students to seek bilingual/ESL certification;” “We provide opportunities for members to become certified ESL teachers;” “This year, we hired 14 individuals as teachers that had graduated from our high school;” “We provide educational aide time release.” District superintendents who wrote comments related to the GYO programs indicated that their districts encourage and support, particularly, educational aides to get their degrees; and, although they do not call it a GYO program, they implement strategies similar to characteristics of those programs. Sixty-eight (13.7%) reported that they actively seek funds for "GYO" programs. One hundred sixty-nine (33.9%) superintendents stated that they supported educational aides in obtaining their degrees by providing release time for college attendance. Four hundred and forty-two respondents (88.6%) of the superintendents stated that they were aware of the Texas Educational Aide Exemption College Grant Program (TEAEGCP); however, only 35.7% of those superintendents participate in the TEAEGCP. Sixty-six (13.4%) superintendents reported

their districts offered a future teachers club, while seventy-five (11.8%) noted they had a system for tracking future teachers. In only 6.1% (N=39) indicated that they provided scholarships for future teachers planning to become bilingual/ESL teachers. Only 13.4% (N=85) stated that they had ongoing partnerships related to preparation of future teachers with college of educations in their regions. Two hundred eighty-eight (45.4%) superintendents were aware of and provided information about forgivable federal loan programs to their future bilingual/ESL teachers.

Benefits or incentives for recruitment. Stipends, paid health insurance, and professional development opportunities/funds were most frequently provided by school districts as a benefit or incentive to recruiting bilingual/ESL teachers. (See Table 4) It is also noteworthy that 10% or more of the districts reimbursed the alternative certification fees and/or tuition for graduate work. Seven percent of the superintendents indicated that they provided signing bonuses.

As depicted in Table 5, superintendents that reported the least number of vacancies were from districts which provided paid health insurance, professional development opportunities and funds, and stipends as benefits/incentives to their bilingual/ESL teachers. It appeared that there was a high correlation between the number of bilingual/ESL teaching vacancies and benefits and incentives; i.e., the higher the number of vacancies, the fewer benefits and incentives.

Comments related to other benefits and incentives included “We pay for teacher certification testing and preparation,” “We pay for Certification fees and tuition/fees costs.” A few superintendents noted that the districts paid for housing or provided low-rent housing for the teachers. Several superintendents commented that they did not do anything any differently for the bilingual/ESL teachers than they did for the regular teachers.

In relation to professional development opportunities, particularly related to language and diversity issues, superintendents responded overwhelmingly that they worked with the Regional

Education Service Centers and local universities. One district sponsored a 27-teacher exchange program with Mexico; two districts used Anti-Defamation League staff development, while several suggested the use of outside consultants or teacher attendance at professional organization meetings.

Geographic factors. Superintendents were questioned about important geographical factors influencing bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment, as well as retention in their school districts. An examination of the data indicated that proximity to: an urban or suburban area; medical facilities; employment opportunities for other family members; social and cultural events and activities; religious institutions; higher education; individuals of own ethnic group, as well as affordable housing and personal safety concerns, were considered most important. Superintendents of districts with the lowest teaching bilingual/ESL vacancies deemed the following six items to be the most important influences on the recruitment and retention of bilingual/ESL teachers: (a) a feeling of safety, (b) proximity to medical facilities, (c) employment opportunities for other family members, (d) proximity to an urban or suburban area, and (d) affordable housing (See Table 6).

Mentoring/induction. Three hundred fourteen (64.9%) superintendents provided mentoring/induction programs for retention of new teachers. Many of the superintendents commented their districts participate in Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS), an induction program with support, mentoring, and instructional help for beginning teachers, launched by the State Board for Educator Certification in 2000.

Reasons for attrition. Respondents were also asked to report their perceptions of the most common reasons for bilingual/ESL teachers leaving their districts (See Table 7). Those were higher salary, spouse relocation, family circumstances, or retirement. It is noteworthy that only

15 (2.4%) of the superintendents reported that a lack of support was a reason for bilingual/ESL teachers to leave the district, indicating that superintendents perceive that their bilingual/ESL teachers have sufficient support. The level of support teachers feel has a major impact on retention. Teacher and program support was a major finding in the Texas Education Agency's 2000 study on successful schools (Texas Education Agency, 2000).

Summary

This study, conducted by the Texas A&M University Bilingual /ESL Teacher Retention and Recruitment Coalition, is the first investigation utilizing data from Texas school superintendents to describe (a) the status of recruitment of bilingual/ESL teachers and (b) successful strategies for addressing the need for bilingual/ESL teachers. Our study supports the need for bilingual and ESL teachers as indicated in previous reports (TEA, 2001; AAEE, 2001; The Urban Teacher Collaborative, 2000; Oregon University System, 2000). Despite the fact that school was already in session for the fall semester when our study was conducted, 40% of the superintendents reported teaching vacancies in bilingual/ESL education, and this shortage of certified teachers in bilingual classrooms, in particular, was again supported by the Texas Education Agency in December, 2003, in a personal communication that indicated over 7000 non-certified individuals in the field. Thirty percent of the districts reporting in our study indicated more than 11% of their teachers serving in bilingual or ESL classrooms were uncertified. The greatest area of need for teachers, as determined by our study, is in districts that offer transitional bilingual education only and in suburban and urban districts. Perhaps this is due to the nature of the programs, i.e., ESL, in rural areas where teachers do not have to be bilingual to serve in an ESL classroom. It is easier to certify teachers for ESL classrooms, than it is for bilingual classrooms.

Although previous literature revealed that one of the prominent causes specific to bilingual/ESL teacher shortages was the lack of systematic psychological and academic support (Colbert & Wolff, 1992; Gold, 1996; Odell & Ferraro, 1992), superintendents in our study reported high levels of academic and psychological support. For example, 51% of the districts provided academic support through professional development opportunities and funds for professional development, and over 24% provided funds for tuition and fees for graduate work and/or alternative certification programs. Examples of psychological support from the reporting superintendents included stipends, signing bonuses, day care, moving costs, and health insurance. Only two percent of the superintendents cited a lack of support as a reason for bilingual/ESL teachers leaving the district. The reasons for the bilingual/ESL teachers leaving the district were reported as spouse relocation, family circumstances, retirement, and higher salaries in other districts.

Specific findings from our study related to recruitment and retention of bilingual/ESL teachers follow: (a) Recruitment of bilingual/ESL teachers is a high priority; (b) As superintendents perceived the teacher turnover rates to decrease, recruitment became less of a priority; (c) As numbers of ELL students increased, the priority for recruitment of bilingual/ESL teachers increased; (d) Recruitment of bilingual/ESL teachers is difficult; (e) Recruitment became a higher priority as superintendents' perceptions of the level of difficulty of recruitment increased; (f) Gender and years of service of the superintendents did not impact their perceptions of the importance of recruitment of bilingual/ESL teachers; (g) The following geographic factors influenced the recruitment and retention of bilingual/ESL teachers: a feeling of safety, proximity to medical facilities, employment opportunities for other family members, proximity to an urban or suburban area, and affordable housing; (h) A significant number of districts provide stipends,

health insurance, and professional development funds for bilingual/ESL teachers; (i) Districts with the highest number of bilingual/ESL vacancies offered fewer benefits and incentives; (j) Use of newspapers, websites, career fairs and college recruiting are major recruitment strategies; (k) As superintendents tended to increase their active recruitment on college campuses for bilingual/ESL teachers, their priority for recruitment increased; (l) Superintendents prefer to recruit within the state, as well in their own communities; (m) A number of districts provide mentoring/induction programs for retention; (n) “Grow Your Own” programs were not reported by the superintendents; (o) The use of paraprofessional state grant financial aid was extremely limited; (p) Few examples of collaboration with universities to prepare bilingual/ESL teachers were reported, other than collaborative efforts at career fairs on university campuses; (q) Very few districts sponsored future teacher clubs or provided scholarships for future teachers.

Recommendations

As districts establish policies and develop strategic plans focused on recruitment and retention of bilingual/ESL teachers, the following recommendations, based upon the findings of our study, should be considered: (a) Make recruitment and retention a priority; (b) Monitor the numbers of ELL students and demographic trends in the district to determine needs; (c) Provide stipends and health insurance; (d) Provide viable professional development opportunities related to language and diversity; (e) Use multiple avenues for recruitment, including advertisements in newspapers and websites, other forms of media such as flyers, billboards, radio and television, and displays at career fairs, professional organizations, and colleges; (f) Develop partnerships with schools of education in universities and with Educational Service Centers to assist with recruitment, certification, and staff development; (g) Expand recruitment efforts beyond the local or state geographic area; (h) Encourage paraprofessionals to obtain their degrees and teaching

staff to obtain bilingual/ESL certification and assist them financially; (i) Utilize state grant aid funds to certify teachers; (j) Provide a formal mentoring/induction program; (k) Encourage high school students to become bilingual or ESL teachers through future teacher clubs and GYO programs; (l) Partner with universities and community colleges to build a pool of potential teachers by having teaching fairs for bilingual students. Begin early to recruit through these fairs, even at the sixth grade level.

One superintendent in our study pointed out, “Bilingual/ESL teachers are in great demand and merit much more recognition than school districts give them today. These teachers are faced with many obstacles in the classroom including translating and developing their own teaching materials. If salaries matched the work demand, perhaps we could keep them and attract others to the field.”

Ultimately, school districts must develop and implement policies and strategic plans aimed at addressing the need for bilingual/ESL teachers, and if this does not occur, our schools will continue to have shortages of certified, knowledgeable, bilingual/ESL educators in classrooms, severely limiting the academic preparation of the growing ELL population.

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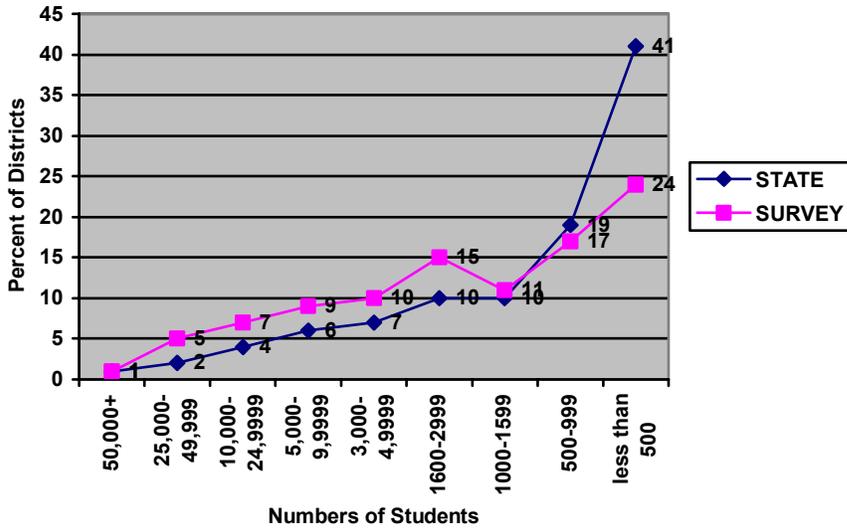


Figure 1. Graph representing the student populations in the districts as reported by the participating superintendents (N=467) as compared to state student populations.

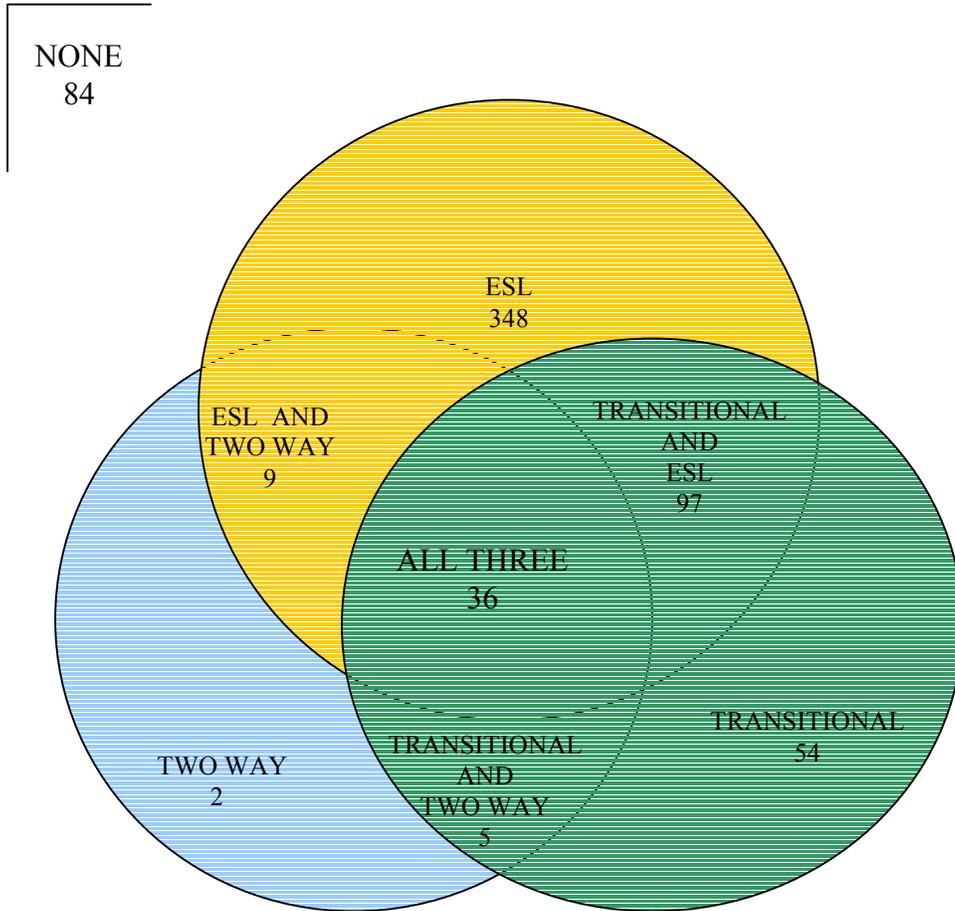


Figure 2. Program type reported by frequency

Table 1.

Crosstabulation of Type of Program Offered with the Number of Teaching Vacancies in the District

Program Type	Teaching Vacancies in the District					Total
	NONE	1-3	4-6	7-10	OVER 10	
ESL only	217	62	2	4	4	289
Two way only		1				1
Transitional only	15	18	4	3	3	43
ESL and two way only	2	5			1	8
Transitional and two way only	1	1	1			3
Transitional and ESL only	34	27	13	2	3	79
All three	10	8	2	3	7	30
None	8	3	2		1	14
	287	125	24	12	19	467

Table 2.

Results of Logistic Regression with Dependent Variable of Recruitment Priority and Four

Independent Variables

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I.for EXP(B) Lower	Upper
Success of Recruitment	2.086	.264	62.540	1	.000	8.055	4.803	13.510
Turnover Rate	-.628	.315	3.970	1	.046	.533	.287	.990
Active College Recruitment	1.680	.311	29.172	1	.000	5.368	2.917	9.878
Percent of ELL	1.362	.454	8.991	1	.003	3.902	1.603	9.503
Constant	-3.494	1.232	8.040	1	.005	.030		

Table 3.

Frequency counts and percents of types of strategies employed by school districts to recruit bilingual/ESL teachers (N=467)

Type of Recruitment Strategy	Frequency	Percent
Newspapers	259	40.8
Advertisement via TV	18	2.8
Newsletters	67	10.6
Websites	353	55.6
Videos	18	2.8
Career fairs	336	52.9
Job referral telephone line	63	9.9
Professional organizations/conferences booths	174	27.4
College recruiting	320	50.4
Other	67	10.6

*Table 4.**Frequency Counts and Percents of the Types of Benefits/Incentives Provided to Bilingual/ESL**Teachers (N=467)*

Type of Benefit/Incentive	Frequency	Percent
Stipends	237	37.3
Signing Bonuses	48	7.4
Moving Bonuses	15	2.6
Day Care	23	3.6
Paid Health Insurance	253	39.8
Professional development opportunities and funds	322	50.7
Tuition and fee costs for graduate work	62	9.8
Reimbursement of Alternative Certification Program costs	92	14.5
Attorney's fees for international teachers	6	.9
Other	69	10.9

Table 5.

Crosstabulation of Type of Benefit/Incentives Offered with the Number of Teaching Vacancies in the District

Type of Benefit/Incentive	No. of teaching vacancies in the district				
	0	1 to 3	4 to 6	7 to 10	over 10
Stipends	100	68	16	9	17
Signing Bonuses	18	15	6	1	1
Moving Bonuses	4	6	0	0	0
Day Care	11	6	2	1	0
Paid Health Insurance	133	61	12	7	11
Professional development opportunities and funds	172	81	13	9	15
Tuition and fee costs for graduate work	25	19	4	4	5
Reimbursement of Alternative Certification Program costs	54	21	2	4	3
Attorney's fees for international teachers	1	4	0	0	0
Other	41	16	1	1	4
Total	559	297	96	36	56

Table 6.

Crosstabulation of Geographical Factors that are Stated as “Important” with the Number of Teaching Vacancies in the District

Geographical Factor	No. of Teaching Vacancies in the District				
	0	1 to 3	4 to 6	7 to 10	over 10
	Proximity to an urban or suburban area	104	53	12	6
Personal safety concerns	137	67	15	4	13
Medical facilities	100	46	11	1	10
Weather	45	12	4	0	7
Employment opportunities for other family members	144	77	14	7	11
Social and cultural events and activities	70	47	6	6	9
Religious institutions	85	35	7	2	7
Higher education access	112	47	15	3	15
Transportation (i.e. traffic and public transportation availability)	36	21	9	0	10
Housing costs	153	70	18	6	15
Individuals living in the district that are the teacher's own ethnic group	67	37	11	4	10

Table 7.

Frequency counts and percentages of reasons for leaving among the bilingual/ESL teachers as specified by the respondents

Reason for leaving	Frequency	Percent
Salary	194	30.6
Relocation	324	51.0
Family	155	24.4
Retirement	98	15.4
Education	49	7.7
Lack of Support	15	2.4