
Senate Bill 560

Emergent Bilingual Strategic Plan

January 2023



Executive Summary

The 87th legislature approved Senate Bill (SB) 560 requiring the development of a strategic plan to improve and expand bilingual education. The authors of SB 560 charge the Texas Education Agency (TEA), The Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas Workforce commission (TWC) to act on several points that would expand and improve bilingual education for emergent bilingual (EB) students in Texas.



1 out of 5 students
in Texas is an Emergent
Bilingual Student.

Currently, Texas serves more than 5.4 million students with 21% identified as emergent bilingual students. For the past 10 years, overall student enrollment in Texas has steadily increased, leading to an increase in Hispanics. Now the largest ethnic group, Hispanics make up 52% of the state's population, making Spanish-speakers the largest language group served in schools, at 92%. Given the continued increase of emergent bilingual students in classrooms across Texas, this strategic plan is timely in providing a blueprint for support needed to bring intentionality and focus to such a large, specialized population impacted in Texas schools. Our goal for Texas is to ensure that schools and staff are properly equipped to support our EB students on an individualized basis, because all students deserve access to the same programs and instruction that could lead to academic success.

The strategic plan will provide context of the current state of bilingual education followed by a summary of SB 560 and coordinated efforts outlined to strategically improve outcomes for EB students in Texas. The approach to improvement should be balanced and designed to improve student outcomes while maintaining federal and state identified program requirements.

The recommendations within this plan include substantial stakeholder engagement. Collectively, more than 4,500 perspectives were captured over a three-month period, via online surveys, and virtual or face-to-face roundtables. With the goal of gathering diverse perspectives from all over Texas, the Emergent Bilingual Support Division utilized three previously planned speaking engagements in locations throughout the state as opportunities to host roundtables. Invitations for the face-to-face sessions were extended to ensure voices were heard and dialogue was solutions focused. In addition, the division offered four virtual roundtables during the month of June. Invitations to these sessions were emailed to 138 regional, district and campus educators, as well as fifteen university faculty members. The virtual roundtables were well attended, each with 40-50 participants actively engaged throughout the session. The session protocol allowed small groups to discuss the topic and offer potential solutions. After the sessions were completed, the Emergent Bilingual Support team analyzed the feedback and identified overall themes, which are reflected in section IV, with section V detailing current initiatives either planned or underway at TEA that serve as foundational efforts to meet the requirements of SB 560. Additionally, the report includes a list of recommendations that would expand the statutory authority of TEA and supporting agencies to more fully and intentionally create meaningful practices that would truly transform bilingual education in Texas.

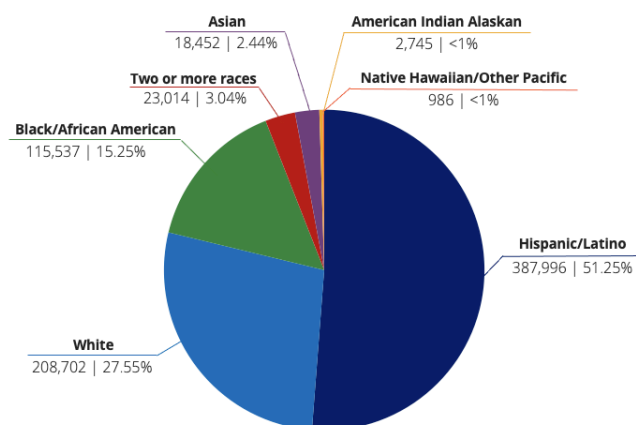


Figure 1

Further, this strategic plan focuses on the agencies within the report's responsibilities as related to supportive resources, teacher training and certification, and monitoring of program implementation. There are minimal additional requirements for a local school system outside of standard expectations outlined in federal and state statutes. As the state serving the most emergent bilingual students in the nation, Texas is viewed as a leader in bilingual education. We respectfully request lawmakers carefully consider each of the suggestions listed in this report, as they are well-informed by the field of bilingual educators and experts in programming for EB students.

Defining the Need

Enrollment for emergent bilingual (EB) students continues to increase in Texas to the point that the state now leads the nation in both the total number of EB students served and the overall percentage of EB students in the general student population. Now more than ever, it is critical that school systems are well-equipped to meet the needs of this ever increasing student group.

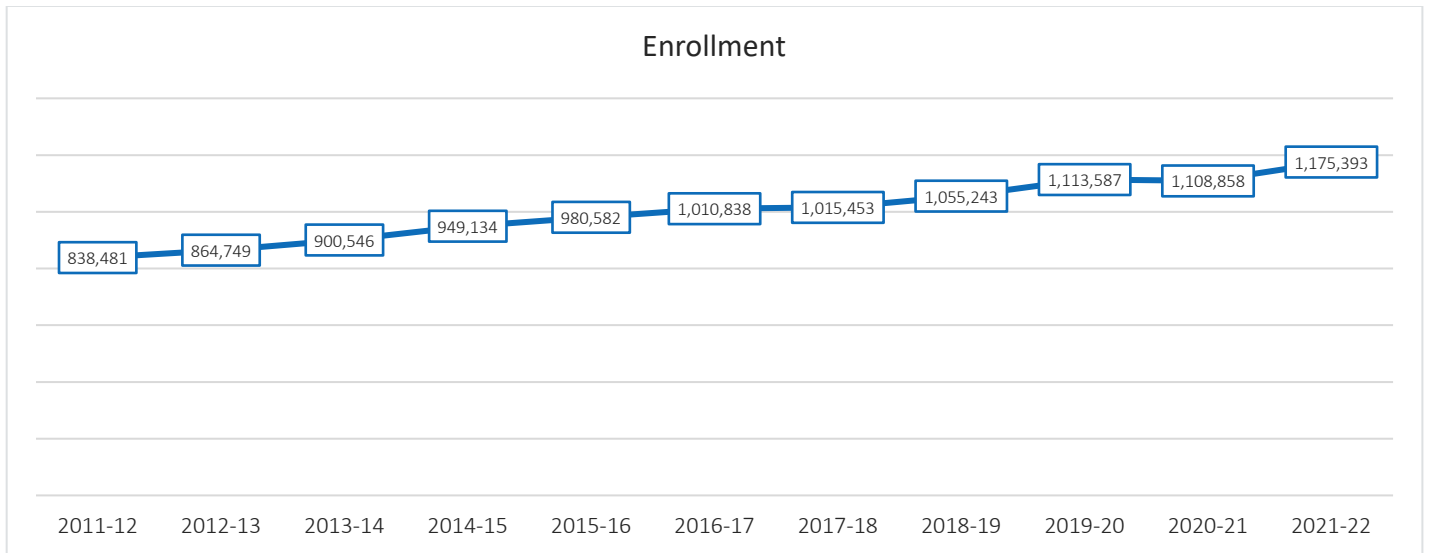


Figure 2

While emergent bilingual students still are graduating at lower rates than their same-age peers, they have started to close the gap over the last 5 years.

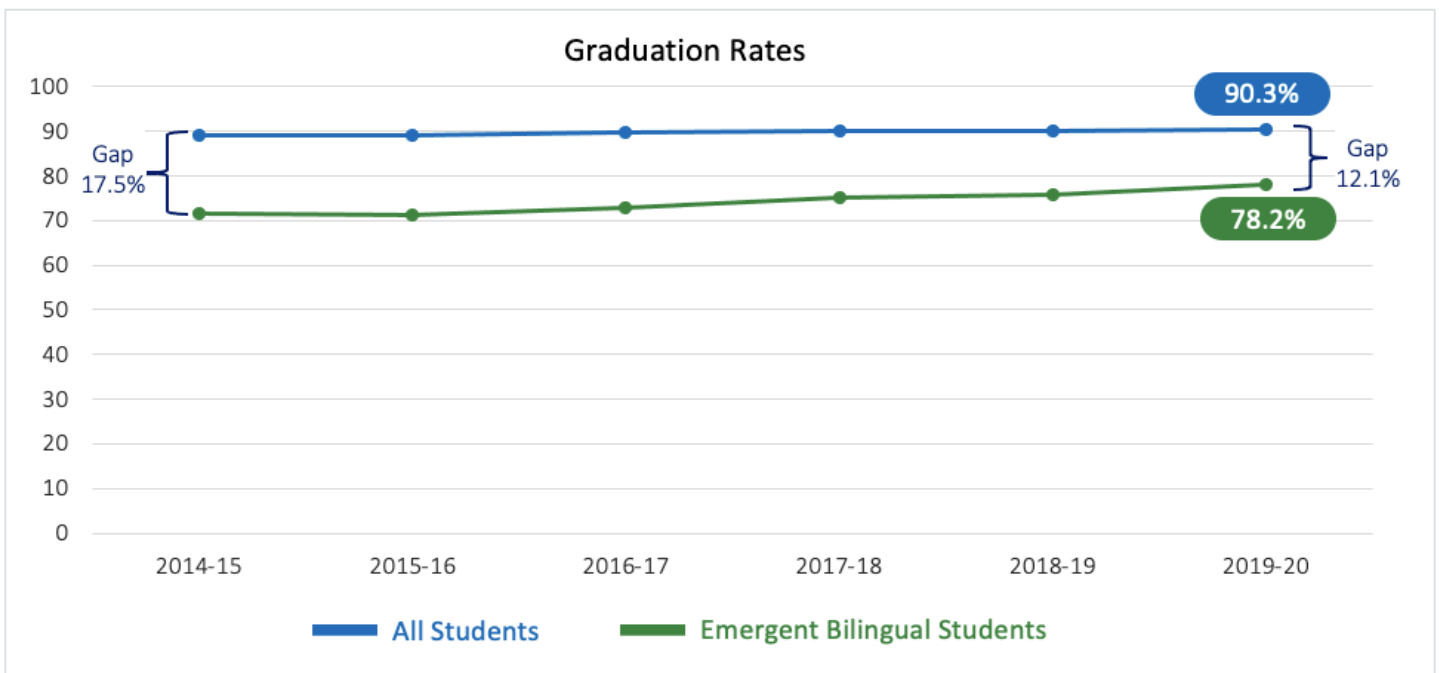


Figure 3

Emergent bilingual students continue to graduate high school at lower rates than their peers. Dropout rates for emergent bilingual students continue to be higher as well.

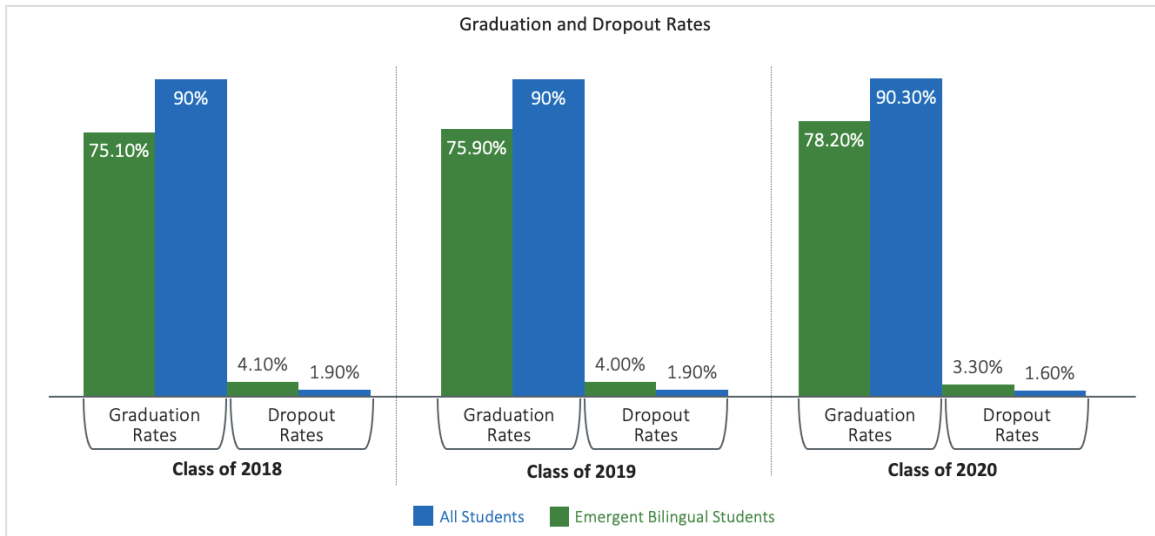


Figure 4

Dropout rates for emergent bilingual students continue to be greater than their same age peers and other student groups.

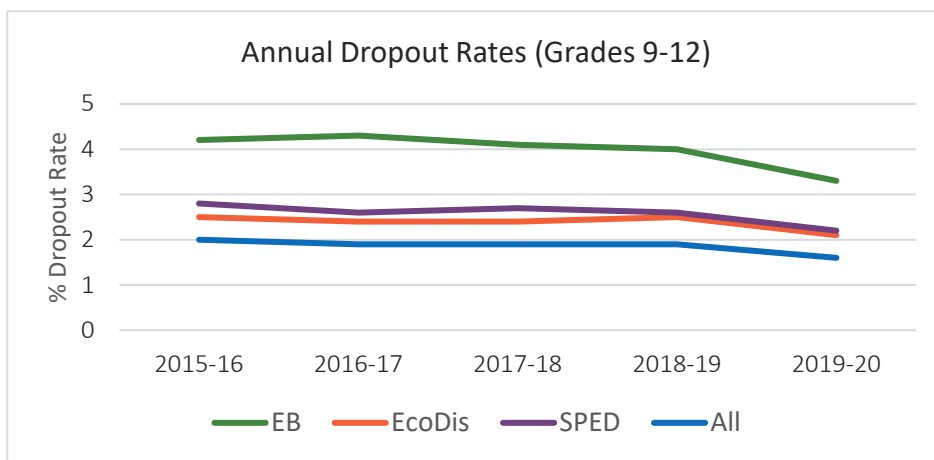


Figure 5

Four-year graduation cohort rates for emergent bilingual students fall below all students and other student groups but are closing the gaps when compared to students served through special education.

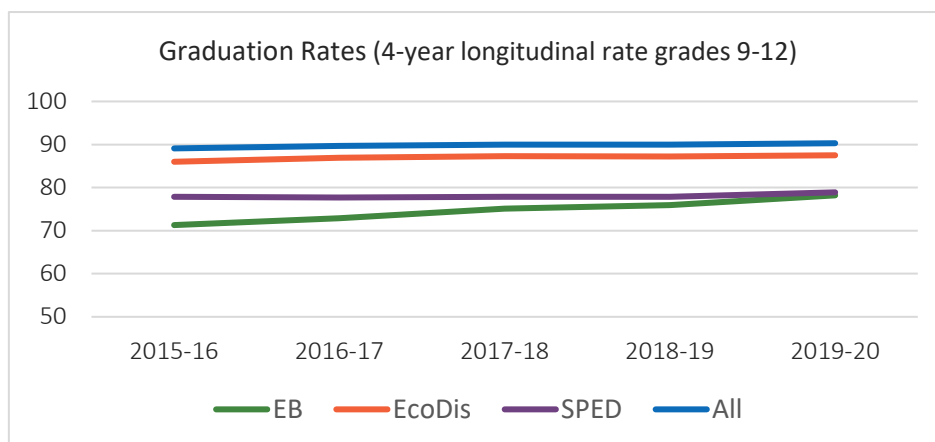


Figure 6

Emergent bilingual students continue to score below their same-age peers in all subjects.

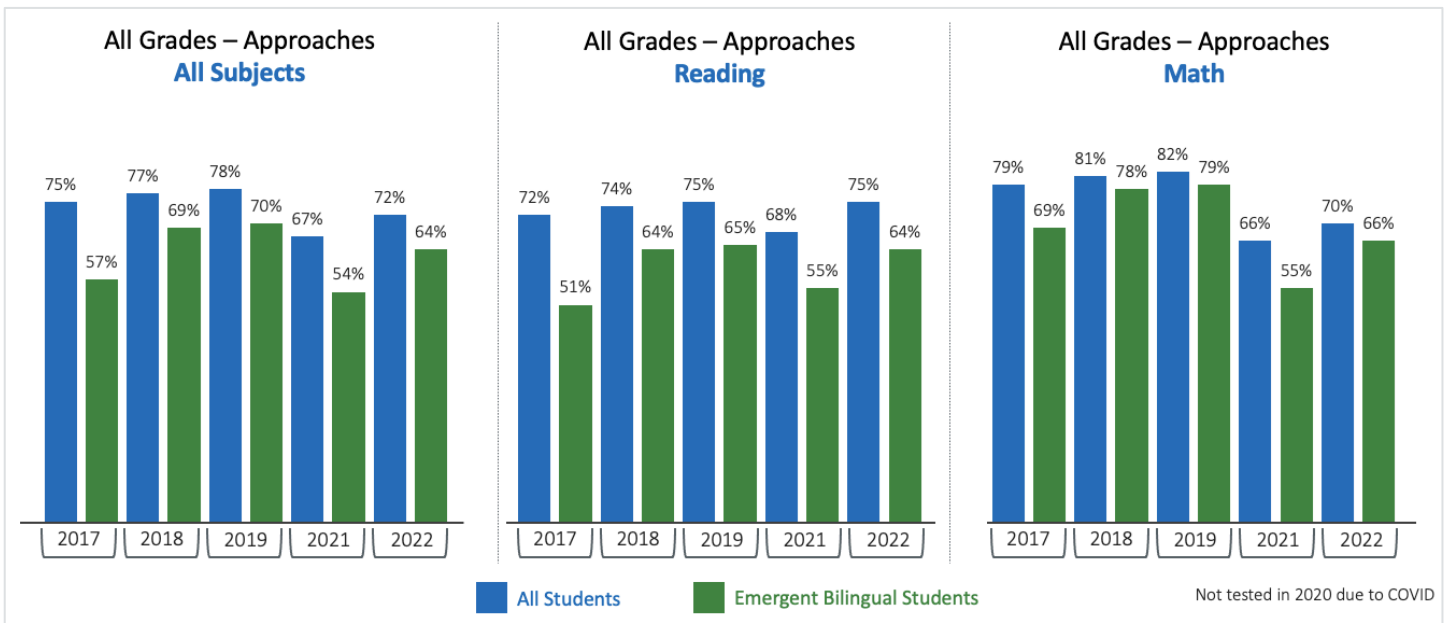


Figure 7

Emergent bilingual students overall are less ready for college, a career, or the military – but the class of 2020 surpassed their same-age peers in being career or military ready.

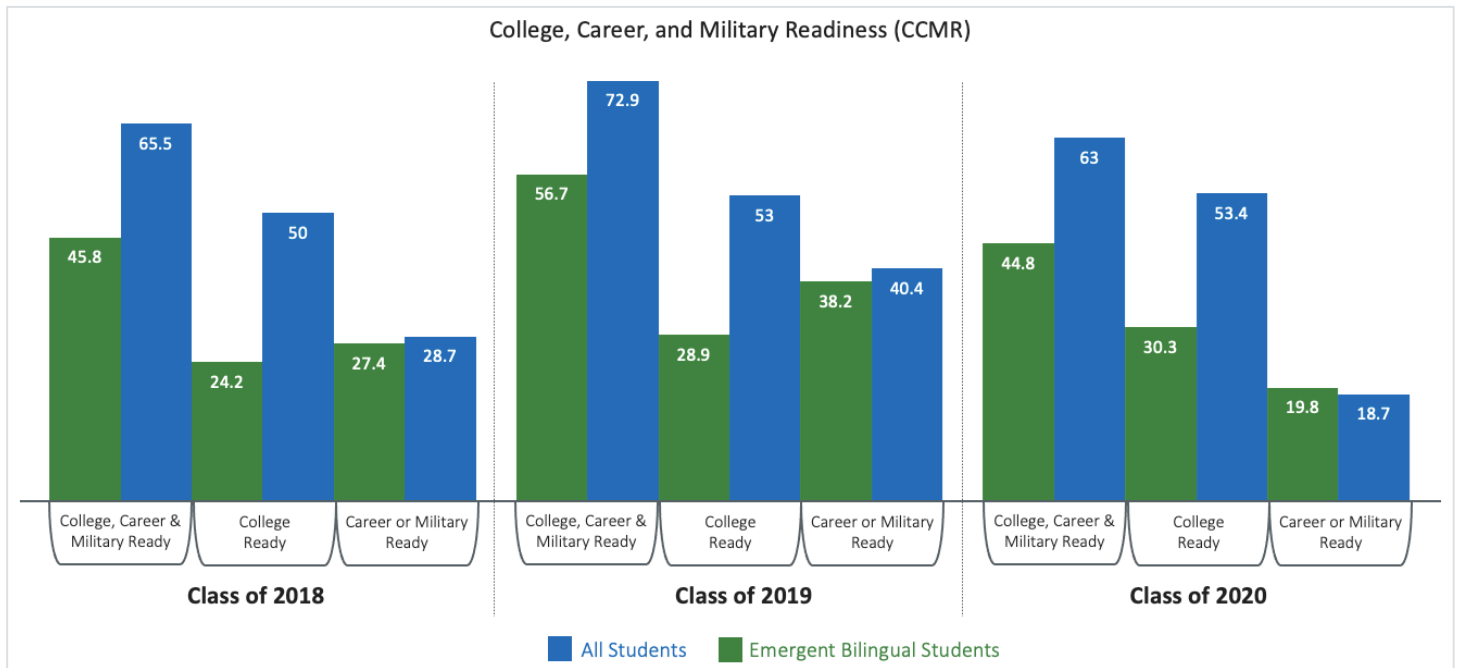


Figure 8

Bilingual Education in Texas

Texas serves a multitude of diverse, multilingual communities, and as a result, the children bring linguistic and cultural assets into their classrooms. For the past 10 years, student enrollment in Texas has continued to increase, along with the number of languages represented in our school systems. See *Figure 9*.

Since the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, Texas has made significant strides in its effort to serve the fastest growing EB student population. Texas school system currently have access to state and federal funds to serve these students in high quality, state-approved program models.

School systems use these funds in various ways, such as equipping teachers with targeted professional development, providing high quality instructional resources, and developing programs to connect families of EB students to parent resources and projects. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 has been amended several times (1974, 1978, 1984, 1988), allowing Texas educators to grow and develop an understanding of the importance of strategically addressing EB students.

Research supported instructional practices include a) instruction in the native language, b) use of authentic resources that meet students' linguistic and cultural needs, c) integration of collaborative learning models and d) multiple, meaningful opportunities to develop oral language within lessons in all content areas. Furthermore, the state has determined and defined six state-approved [bilingual program models](#); English as a Second Language (ESL) Pull-Out, ESL Content-Based, Transitional Early-Exit, Transitional Late-Exit, Dual Language Immersion (DLI) One-way, and Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Two-way. While native language instruction is utilized in transitional bilingual programs, and strategic use of native language knowledge may be incorporated into ESL programs, the goal of both ESL and transitional bilingual program models is English proficiency. Only the DLI program models offer additive bilingual education with goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and sociocultural competence. Research in the field¹ has consistently indicated that EB students enjoy long-term academic success when they participate in a well-implemented DLI program.

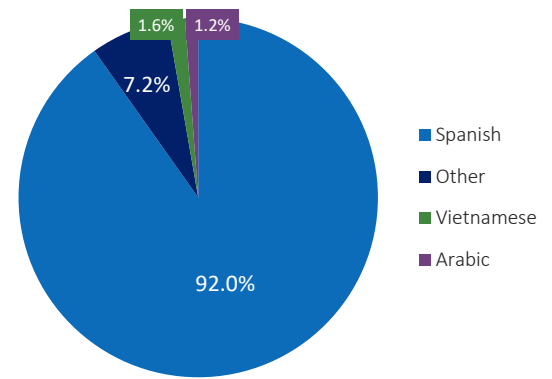


Figure 9

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 focused on the importance of improving the quality of primary and secondary schools by refining the accountability of each student, especially in the areas of reading and math. It was at this time that Texas made all 3rd – 5th grade state standardized assessments available in Spanish so EB students could demonstrate content attainment. In 2019, House Bill 3 (HB3) incentivized dual language programs with additional funding allocated for each EB student participating in dual language and also for non-EBs participating in a two-way dual language education program. The bill also directed TEA to develop resources to increase, support, and sustain dual language programs PK-12 statewide. As a result, the number of EB students participating in DLI programs has steadily increased. In the [2021-22 Enrollment in Texas Public Schools Report](#), almost 21% of the nearly 1.2 million EB students are participating in DLI programs (one-way and two-way). This places Texas as the number one state in the nation to serve the most identified EB in public schools and one of the top states implementing well-supported DLI programs serving EB students statewide.

While the majority of the EB students in Texas speak Spanish as their native language, and most DLI programs have Spanish as the partner language with English, the state has seen an increase in Vietnamese, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, and French DLI programs. This impacts the need for bilingual-certified teachers and creates a critical capacity need to

¹ Collier, V. P., & Thomas, W. P. (2004). The astounding effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All. George Mason University. Retrieved from [The Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All \(berkeleyschools.net\)](#)

Steele, J. L., Slater, R., Zamarro, G., Miller, T., Li, J. J., Burkhauser, S., & Bacon, M. (2017). Dual-Language immersion programs raise student achievement in English. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9903.html.

Watzinger-Tharp, J., Swenson, K., & Mayne, Z. (2016). Academic Achievement of students in dual language immersion. Routledge; International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 21:8, 913-928. Retrieved from [Academic achievement of students in dual language immersion \(utah.edu\)](#)

properly build and sustain the learning of all content areas in two languages to 1) develop bilingualism and biliteracy, 2) reach high levels of academic achievement in both languages, and 3) develop sociocultural competence.

As Texas prepares for the continued increase of EB students, it will be critical to ensure that guidance and support from the TEA are aligned with asset-based and evidence-based practices that meet the linguistic needs of each diverse learner and their families and yield positive long-term EB student outcomes.

Legislative Call to Action

The 87th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 560: A Strategic Plan to Improve and Expand Bilingual Education. This bill requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in collaboration with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to set tangible goals and timelines to:

- 1) **Increase the number of bilingual certified teachers**
- 2) **Increase the number of dual language one-way and two-way programs**
- 3) **Educate families and educators on the benefits of bilingualism**
- 4) **Adopt a uniform process for identifying emergent bilingual students and monitoring their bilingual learning with meaningful data sources**
- 5) **Increase the number of bilingual and multilingual graduates**



The TEA led the charge in collaborating with the THECB and TWC to outline a process for addressing the requirements of SB 560, and understanding current efforts already related to the legislation, methods, and logistics for stakeholder engagement, and ultimately drafting the proposed and informed response to each charge of the bill. Multiple representatives from each agency met regularly beginning in January of 2022 to strategize, divide tasks, and offer feedback and support as mutually determined. During the regular collaborative meetings, it became clear that the TEA had several initiatives in their early stages that had the potential to be foundational steps toward addressing the requirements of this bill. Acknowledging the need to fully address the charges of the bill, the group developed an intentional strategy to maximize stakeholder engagement to leverage the collective expertise within the state leading to the development of this strategic plan aimed at improving and expanding bilingual education in Texas.

Stakeholder Engagement Recommendations



Increase the number of certified bilingual education teachers in Texas

To recruit bilingual education teachers, stakeholders agreed steps should be taken to streamline the certification process to benefit prospective teachers. Stakeholders strongly recommended a redesign of current certification requirements for bilingual educators as a first and significant initial step, including ways to eliminate the burden of multiple assessments which require more fees. With respect to secondary certification, the groups expressed a desire to establish a different and unique pathway to certification where certifications are content-specific or validate the Spanish secondary Language Other than English (LOTE) certifications. Additionally, participants recommended that requirements for the Bilingual Target

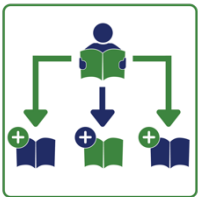
Language Proficiency Test #190 (BTLPT) be redesigned so that candidates who are unsuccessful overall on the test are only required to retest the domain(s) that they did not master and can demonstrate their proficient command of the Spanish with fewer activities, such as the required lesson plan, which general education teachers are not required to submit.

In response to the need for growing a pipeline of bilingual educators, stakeholders reiterated the need for high quality dual language programs that could potentially supply ongoing grow-your-own initiatives with qualified candidates. Moreover, stakeholders indicated that educator preparation programs and universities should continue to support pre-service teachers in the development of high levels of proficiency in the target language (i.e., Spanish) by offering select courses taught in these target languages.

A final stakeholder recommendation is to increase funding for bilingual educators commensurate with the specialized nature of their work, increased workloads, and additional planning requirements.

Summary:

- Redesign certification requirements for bilingual educators.
- Establish a different and unique pathway to certification where certifications are content-specific or validate the Spanish secondary Language Other than English (LOTE) certifications.
- Redesign requirements for the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test #190 (BTLPT) so candidates who are unsuccessful overall on the test are only required to retest the domain(s) they did not master and demonstrate their proficient command of the Spanish with few activities, such as the required lesson plan, which general education teachers are not required to submit.
- Develop high quality dual language programs that could potentially supply ongoing grow-your-own initiatives with qualified candidates.
- Educator Preparation Programs and universities should continue to support pre-service teachers in the development of high levels of proficiency in the target language (i.e., Spanish) by offering select courses taught in these target languages.
- Increase funding for bilingual educators commensurate with the specialized nature of their work, increased workloads, and additional planning requirements.



Increase the number of dual language immersion (DLI) programs

At every engagement, participants eagerly voiced total support of the potential for increasing dual language immersion programs across the state. There were high levels of agreement among stakeholders that, of all the available bilingual program models, DLI programs are the most likely to ensure high academic achievement and cognitive benefits for all participating students. Stakeholders were also in agreement that DLI programs should be accessible to students beyond their elementary experience to expand the continuous biliteracy development through secondary grades.

DLI Programs in Texas have decreased by 16.5% since 2011-2012 and have seen their highest numbers in 2014-2015.

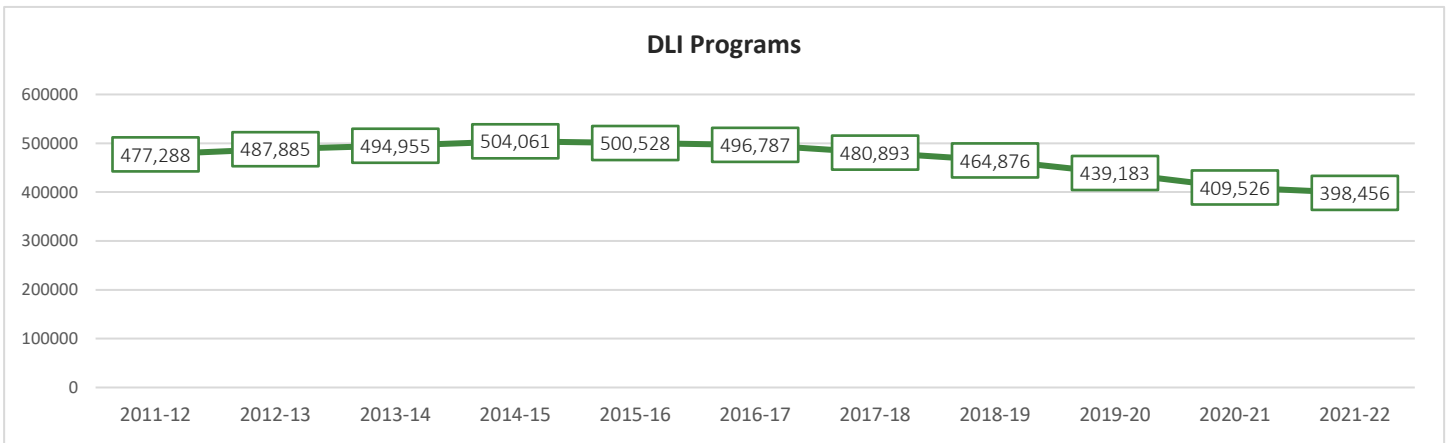


Figure 10

While DLI Programs overall have shown decreases since 2011-2012, **Dual Language Immersion Two-Way Programs** have seen increases (110.4% increase). Since 2017-2018, **Dual Language Immersion One-Way Programs** have also shown slight increases. **Transitional Bilingual Late Exit** has shown the greatest dip since 2011-2012 at a 64.3% decrease. **Transitional Bilingual Early Exit** has also decreased at 34.3% since 2011-2012.

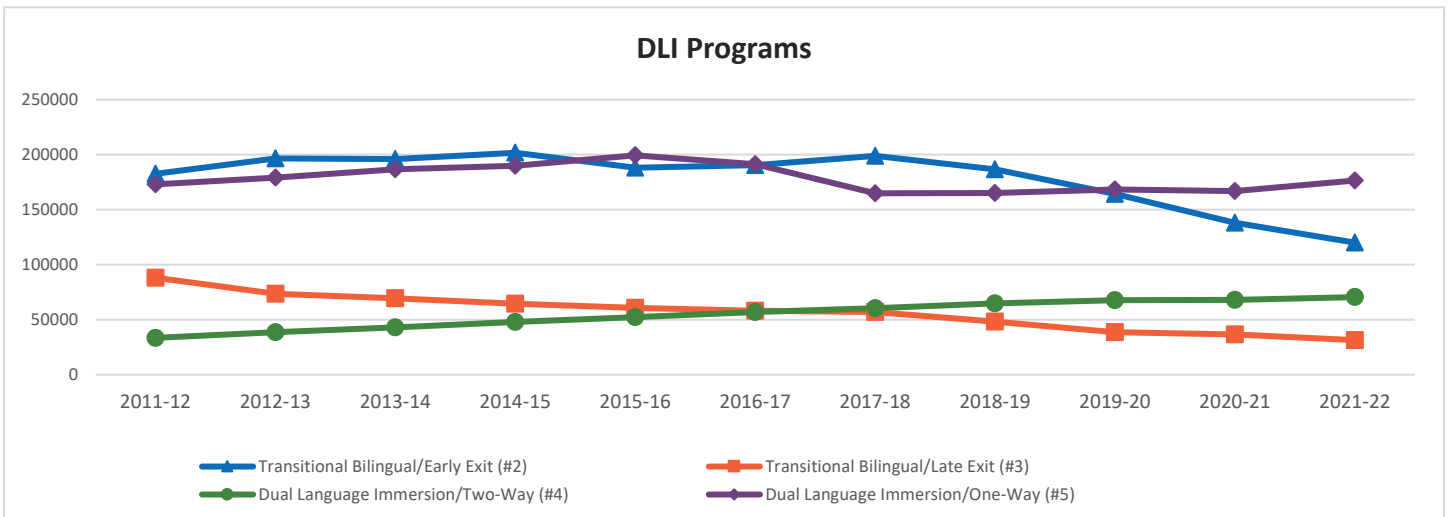


Figure 11

Stakeholders indicated that while one major barrier to increasing effective DLI programs in the state is the bilingual certified teacher shortage, another obstacle is fidelity of program implementation. It was suggested that a reasonable solution to address this concern would be to implement programmatic monitoring, specifically focused on identifying and improving the effective components of DLI implementation. Currently, performance of all emergent bilingual students is reviewed as a part of our state A-F accountability system and Results Driven Accountability (RDA). However, a specific programmatic monitoring system could target and evaluate program implementation and bilingual learning.

Additionally, stakeholders noted that several common misconceptions about bilingualism and language development have led to inconsistent and even poor programmatic implementation of effective DLI programs. This critical misunderstanding of the language acquisition process remains one of the most detrimental to student achievement and content attainment according to stakeholders. Language acquisition is a dynamic process and students do not acquire predetermined levels of language proficiency in one academic year. Along similar lines, stakeholders indicated that the current lack of access to academic assessments in the target language (i.e., Spanish STAAR) is another barrier to implementing dual language programs more widely. For alignment and consistency, stakeholders suggested an agency-approved list of assessments and that TEA explore options to provide STAAR assessments in Spanish for upper grades, commensurate with their program model.

Another common thread that emerged in support for the expansion of DLI programs for all grade levels is that, according to stakeholders, year after year and despite the pandemic effects, students participating in high quality dual language programs outperform their peers on STAAR Reading and Math. This statement was repeated by multiple leaders of large urban districts who continued implementing DLI programs throughout the pandemic. As mentioned above, strong DLI programs which extend through 12th grades would locally supply Texas' bilingual teacher pipeline with fully bilingual and biliterate graduates prepared to positively impact economic development at the state, national and global levels.

Summary:

- DLI programs should be accessible to students beyond their elementary experience to expand the continuous biliteracy development through secondary grades.
- Implement programmatic monitoring specifically focused on identifying and improving the effective components of DLI implementation.
- TEA should develop an agency-approved list of assessments and explore options to provide STAAR assessments in Spanish for upper grades, as commensurate with their program model.



Educating families and educators of the benefits of bilingualism

Repeatedly, stakeholders reported widespread misconceptions about language acquisition as a significant issue with the public, including families and educators. All agreed on the need for a robust awareness campaign to debunk the misconceptions and clearly message the extensive academic and cognitive benefits of bilingualism from the early stages of development and beyond. While some participants shared ongoing challenges with fully engaging families of emergent bilingual students, others noted successful efforts including home visits, townhall meetings and other high-impact school events that were highly attended.

Participants suggested the agency develop an annual or biannual family-focused survey to begin to understand the perspectives of families more acutely. School leaders stated the agency should provide clear and consistent guidance and model engagement for families of emergent bilingual students.

Regarding the efforts to increase awareness of the benefits of bilingualism for educators, participants agreed that annual or periodic training for *all* educators would benefit emergent bilingual students. Currently, the Texas population of emergent bilingual students is 1,185,511, with about 95% of school systems serving EB students and their families. Given this growing percentage of students, it is likely that most educators are serving an emergent bilingual student at some level. Since more than half of emergent bilingual students are participating in ESL programs, required training for all educators specific to the complexities of language acquisition and the cognitive and academic benefits of bilingualism would strengthen educator efficacy and guide systematic and instructional decision-making impacting EB students.

Summary:

- TEA should develop an annual or biannual family-focused survey to begin to understand the perspectives of families more acutely.
- TEA should provide clear and consistent guidance and model engagement for families of emergent bilingual students.
- TEA should develop required training for all educators specific to the complexities of language acquisition and the cognitive and academic benefits of bilingualism would strengthen educator efficacy and clarify understandings, improving systemic and instructional decisions impacting EB students.



Adopt a uniform process for identification and monitor bilingual learning

The agency has a uniform process for identification; current efforts to align the process more concisely are detailed in a subsequent section of this report. Regarding the monitoring of bilingual learning, stakeholders overwhelmingly stated the need for fundamental changes in the assessment and monitoring of emergent bilingual students. Participants shared that many districts are “double testing” students using existing assessments that measure Spanish and English proficiency and/or measure content in both languages. Stakeholders describe this as inefficient and reinforcing inappropriate assumptions related to biliteracy and the notion of “double teaching”, further adding to misconceptions regarding bilingualism and biliteracy. A solution proposed by stakeholders is the development or procurement of assessments that authentically measure what students know in both languages, allowing the knowledge of one language to influence the other. This is consistent with the dynamic process of language acquisition.

Participants noted the potential benefits of a statewide progress monitoring approach to consistently track trends and outcomes of bilingualism and biliteracy and further recommend the state review and redesign how linguistic progress is assessed and measured for this population.

Summary:

- Development or procurement of assessments that authentically measure what students know in both languages, allowing the knowledge of one language to influence the other. This is consistent with the dynamic process of language acquisition.
- Development of a statewide program and progress monitoring approach to consistently track trends and outcomes of bilingualism and biliteracy and further recommend the state review and redesign how linguistic progress is assessed and measured for this population.



Increase the number of bilingual and multilingual graduates

Participants strongly agreed that addressing the first four charges of SB 560—which include (1) focused attention to increasing bilingual certified teacher capacity, (2) improving dual language immersion programs, (3) increasing awareness through training efforts, and (4) strengthening the identification and monitoring process—should lead to an increase in bilingual and multilingual graduates. One related action

suggested by stakeholders is to re-examine the current State Board of Education rules regarding the performance acknowledgment for bilingualism and biliteracy and make adjustments to align with similar processes in other states. Stakeholders report that many school systems throughout the state implement locally developed seals of biliteracy specifically to recognize DLI graduates, however, the criteria are varied. A newly re-imagined performance acknowledgment or state-wide seal of biliteracy based on student competencies could serve to align these varying systems and recognize the efforts of students and families. Collecting and publishing data relevant to the post-secondary performance of the recipients of this acknowledgment would further serve to strengthen messaging to institutions of higher education and the increasing global workforce regarding the strong cognitive skills and cultural competency our students possess.



Summary:

- Engage with stakeholders to re-examine the current requirements for bilingualism and biliteracy and work with other state agencies to collect and publish data related to the post-secondary performance of recipients.

Survey Outcomes

In addition to the wealth of qualitative dialogue related to this effort, the planning group sought to widen the reach of input. The Emergent Bilingual Support Division, in coordination with the members of the planning group from THECB and TWC, developed and agreed upon questions to be posed via an online survey. The decision to break down the survey based on roles was germane to the diverse charges of the bill. The planning group felt it important to gather

and disaggregate perspectives from three distinct stakeholder groups: classroom educators, administrators making systemic decisions, and families of EB students. The online survey for educators, administrators, and families was available from April through the end of July. The survey was shared via the TEA’s social media outlets, the Emergent Bilingual Support Division newsletter, by Education Service Center staff, by non-profit agencies connected to this effort, and as a request to all virtual roundtable participants to share with their professional networks. In total, 4,524 responses were collected, as indicated in Figure 12.

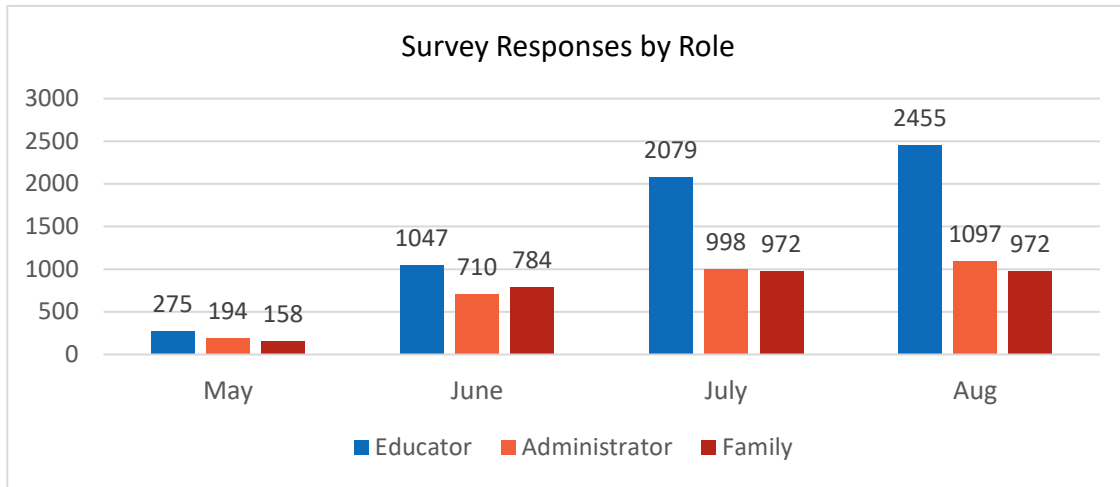


Figure 12

The online survey asked educators in which areas they felt more support was needed from district and/or campus leadership in implementing best practices surrounding emergent bilingual student program instruction. Table 1 shows the respondents’ perspectives.

Area in Which More Support is Needed	Percent
Improved instructional resources for emergent bilingual students	67%
Parent and family engagement	43%
Professional Development	31%
Progress monitoring for language	37%
Collaboration with other special populations	29%

Table 1

Table 2 represents the other questions included in the survey and the results. The questions were intended to elicit perspectives on a Likert Scale, 1 to 5. A score of zero indicated no benefit, and 5 indicated the most beneficial.

Question	Average
How supported by campus and/or district leadership do you feel in implementation of best practices surrounding Emergent Bilingual program instruction?	2.91
How beneficial do you feel it would be to have an ESL or bilingual certified administrator?	4.2
To what degree do you feel families of emergent bilingual students and communities are represented in parent engagement initiatives?	2.3

Table 2

From the educator survey results, we can conclude that teachers have concerns about instructional resources and supporting their students’ families. Also, while they feel somewhat supported, they would appreciate a leader who has some level of shared instructional experience.

Table 3 represents the questions posed to current administrators, seeking yes/no responses.

Do all staff who provide language instruction to emergent bilingual students receive training on how to monitor the progress of language development?	57%	43%
Does your district/school explicitly encourage or promote bilingual staff to seek a bilingual education certification?	71%	29%
Do you feel that administrators of programs that serve emergent bilingual students need additional, targeted training?	89%	11%
Does your district/school share the school's written Parent and Family Engagement Policy with the families of EB students, in their home language?	79%	21%

Table 3

Administrators were asked to rate their level of confidence in explaining the benefits of dual language education and its impact on the academic outcomes for emergent bilingual students, 0 being not at all confident to 5 being very confident, the average was 3.61.

Analysis of the administrator survey results indicates that while they are somewhat confident in their understanding of dual language education’s impact on student achievement, they strongly believe additional training related to emergent bilingual students is needed for administrators.

Finally, online family surveys available in Spanish and English were completed, and were completed by 972 family stakeholders. Survey items were broad, but centered on communication in order to get initial view of what families might understand related to the calls of SB 560. Response data to two yes/no questions is as follows:

Question	Yes	No
Have you been informed about the benefits of bilingual education for emergent bilingual students?	65%	35%
Does your school/child’s teacher report your student’s progress in language development to you regularly?	48%	52%

Table 4

Continuing the theme of communication, parents were asked how often the school shared information about their child’s bilingual or ESL services and supports.

How often are you informed about your child’s bilingual or ESL program services and/or supports?	Percent
Weekly	16%
Monthly	27%
Less than once a month	57%

Table 5

Table 6 represents two additional questions included in the family survey with Likert Scale responses (0 indicated not at all welcomed/supported or not important, and 5 indicated extremely welcomed/supported or important).

Question	Average Spanish Response	Average English Response
Do you and your child feel welcomed/supported by the school community (staff, teachers or administrators, other families)?	3.84	3.77
As a parent/family member, how important is it to you that your child be taught by an appropriately trained bilingual or ESL educator?	4.65	4.54

Table 6

Finally, families were also asked how the school can best support them in the learning needs and emotional wellness of their emergent bilingual child. Table 7 displays the results.

How can the school best support you in addressing learning needs or emotional wellness?	Percent
Before/after school services	39%
Training on related topics	38%
Host events that bring resources to one place	22%

Table 7

The extensive stakeholder input gathered to inform this report highlights the significant interest in improving and expanding bilingual education. The TEA, together with THECB and TWC, will develop plans to create resources, training, and use what was learned from experts in the field and families to meet the requirements in SB 560, as detailed below.

Strategic Plan for Support

The multiple stakeholder engagements, state student performance data, and ongoing interactions with families, members of the field, and experts in programming for EB students have culminated in the recommendations and active TEA projects, in both execution and planning phases, listed in this section in efforts to support students, educators, and families in delivering high-quality bilingual programs while strategically planning to build teacher capacity and increase stakeholder, family, and community engagement. The activities in the strategic plan are arranged as 1) Policy and Guidance, 2) Tools and Resources to Support Effective Program Implementation, 3) Teacher Training and Development, and 4) Family and Community Outreach and will provide an effective framework for strategic planning and continuous improvement that, when executed by school systems, will deliver results for EB students. While the strategic plan activities align with the charges of SB 560, the descriptions below are organized according to output as, in many cases, an individual output or project may support more than one of the legislative charges.

Policy and Guidance

In addition to the previously described efforts by the agency to support the policy in SB 560, refinement and revisions to Commissioner Rule, and policy guidance can be implemented in the following ways to improve bilingual education more effectively for emergent bilingual students.

Improve process for Bilingual Exceptions and ESL Waivers

As per §89.1207 (a)(b), school systems that are unable to provide the appropriately certified teachers to implement the bilingual/ ESL education program must request from the Commissioner of Education an exception to the bilingual education program or an ESL waiver for the ESL program and approval to offer a temporary alternative language program by November 1st of every school year. The current system relies upon the emailing of electronic forms and documents. TEA will move this process to be part of the existing waivers platform that is used within the agency for other waiver applications. Beyond streamlining the process by which school systems apply for their respective exception and/or waiver, this electronic method will allow TEA to track trends more accurately within an individual school system to allow for more targeted supports in meeting the requirements for program implementation laid out in statute.

As part of the approval process, TEA staff will continue to meet with leadership from every applying school system to provide technical assistance and support related to program implementation.

Reclassification considerations

The most recent reclassification criteria chart was developed in 2019 to have school systems meet the required state and federal guidelines when reclassifying an emergent bilingual student.

The current reclassification criteria for EB students are: (reclass is also for parental denials)

- Meet Advanced High on TELPAS in each of the 4 language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)
- Pass the state’s standardized reading assessment in English without any linguistic designated supports recommended by the LPAC committee in grades 3 – 10, or receive a score at or above the 40th percentile on both the English reading and the English language arts sections of the state-approved norm-referenced standardized achievement instrument in grades 1-2 and 11-12
- Results of a subjective teacher evaluation using the state's standardized rubric.

The Emergent Bilingual Support Division will continue to collaborate with the Assessment Division to ensure any updates on the TELPAS and STAAR redesign that may impact the criteria are considered. In addition, the EB Support Division will look at statute, rule, and federal guidance on defining “English proficiency” when it comes to EB students and in relation to their non-EB student’s peers considering all appropriate tools and instruments.

Revisions to Texas Administrative Code Chapter §89 Adaptations for Special Populations Subchapter BB Commissioner’s Rules Concerning State Plan for Educating English Learners.

The upcoming proposed revisions to this subchapter of Chapter 89 will specifically address the requirement for a uniform process for identification of students as emergent bilingual. The Emergent Bilingual Support Division is proposing to streamline the already well-established identification process by developing aligned documents for each phase of the process including the Home Language Survey (HLS), the notification of identification, reclassification/exit, monitoring and parental denials (see appendix for sample TEA developed letters). It is the goal of the EB Support Division to ensure that all school systems use a TEA-created form with aligned language related to each phase with assurances by all parties. An additional planned change is the addition of a third question to the HLS designed to determine other languages with which a student may have had significant interaction.

State guidance on the establishment of emergent bilingual family advisories

Guidance for establishing emergent bilingual family advisories will signal to all Texas school systems the importance of this type of engagement, which goes beyond compliance and will move school systems to true partnerships with families of this population of EB students. In a pilot of the Emergent Bilingual Family Empowerment Toolkit (EBFET), the EB Support Division learned from school system participants that family advisories are impactful yet are implemented in a variety of ways thereby yielding inconsistent results. Consistency in guidance, messaging and expectations across the regions will more appropriately support the state effort yet allow the flexibility to meet the unique needs of the regional/local area. The agency will develop a process in which school systems submit evidence of the impact of their family advisory committees and will develop a direct-to-family survey to measure families’ perceptions about their children’s educational experiences. In a cyclical method the agency can gain insight into the needs of families, adjust, and provide guidance to the field while measuring the state-wide efficacy of family empowerment efforts. Indicators of success will include a steady increase in the number of school systems implementing the EBFET and perceptions and

satisfaction scores on the TEA survey. When implemented, the ongoing activities of emergent bilingual family advisories directly demonstrate an increased awareness for families and school systems since awareness is a precursor to engagement, as outlined in SB 560.

Improvements to bilingual educator preparation and certification

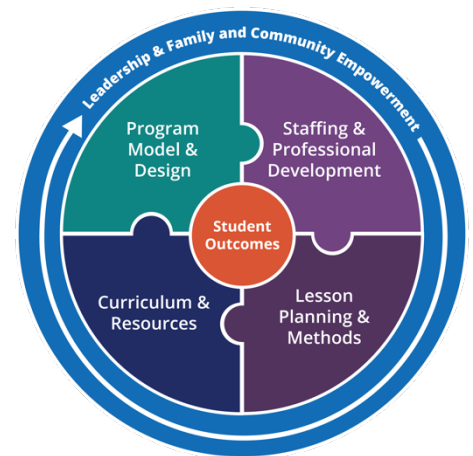
In 2020, the SBEC adopted new Bilingual Spanish educator standards (TAC Chapter 235.117) developed by a committee of educator preparation faculty, teachers, and administrators with expertise in bilingual instruction. The standards now inform the preparation offered to all educators seeking certification the Bilingual Supplemental: Spanish certification. In addition, these standards will inform the development of a new Bilingual Spanish certification exam, which would combine assessment of bilingual Spanish pedagogy and language proficiency into one exam and would remove the BTLPT requirement. This combined assessment could address input from stakeholders regarding the number of exams required of bilingual educators and concerns regarding the BTLPT exam. The development of the new Bilingual Spanish exam will begin with the adoption of the updated English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) to ensure alignment between teacher and student expectations. In addition to the development of the new Bilingual Spanish exam, HB 2256, 87th Legislature, Regular Session, required the SBEC to implement a new Bilingual Special Education certificate. The SBEC approved a committee of bilingual and special education experts to develop the standards in July 2022 and anticipates discussing the standards at their February 2023 meeting. These standards will inform the development of aligned certification exams and additional educator preparation program requirements. These strategies the SBEC has undertaken are specifically aimed at ensuring well-prepared bilingual educators who are therefore more likely to persist in the profession.

Tools and Resources to Support Effective Program Implementation

Texas Effective Dual Language Immersion Framework (TxEDLIF)

With the passage of [House Bill 3](#) in the 86th legislative session, TEA was tasked with providing guidance and monitoring for the implementation of dual language immersion (DLI) one-way and two-way programs, and school systems were incentivized to implement DLI programs. Jointly, HB 3 and SB 560 signal legislative support for the widespread implementation of high-quality, additive bilingual education programs for emergent bilingual students and their English-speaking classmates. In response to HB 3, the [TxEDLIF](#) was developed by the agency in partnership with the Dual Language Guidance Committee.

The TxEDLIF, aligned to the [Effective Schools Framework](#) (ESF), is a manageable instructional framework for school systems grounded in evidence-based dual language pedagogy designed to increase the effective implementation and sustainability of dual language immersion programs and positively impact student achievement. The framework consists of five levers and includes DLI-specific essential actions, key practices, success criteria, and a rubric for self-assessment to support reflective practices and continuous improvement. The framework is currently in its second year of TxEDLIF pilot in fourteen campuses across the state. Each pilot campus is at a different level of implementation of its DLI program; some have well-established programs boasting strong student outcomes and others are in their first year of implementation. A third type are seeking support to strengthen their DLI programs. In the first year, the pilot explored how this framework for quality DLI implementation and sustainability would be implemented by the diverse types of schools with a variety of programmatic implementation. During the school year 2022-2023, the second year of the TxEDLIF pilot, the agency will collect exemplars relevant to each of the five levers from participating pilot schools to further highlight best practices, and to serve as a conduit of sharing tools developed by Texas educators for Texas educators. Full access to the TxEDLIF to all school systems across the state is expected during the 2023-2024 school year.



Successful scaling of this initiative will meet the widely expressed need from stakeholders for consistent guidance and support for DLI, PK- 12th grades, from the state. Currently, this work is funded using Title III funds as it goes above and beyond state-required program implementation. Ultimately, the goal will be for school systems to access the framework and its associated resources via www.txel.org. The agency will continue to rely heavily on Education Service Centers (ESCs) to provide targeted implementation support to their regional school systems.

Dual Language Immersion Pathways: Pk-12

This tool will be a companion to the TxEDLIF to intentionally guide and facilitate the expansion of DLI programs through the secondary levels. Well implemented secondary dual language programs have been connected to more robust outcomes for participating students. Sustainably implemented DLI programs through grade 12 have been shown to have a promising impact on student outcomes as well as influencing the growth of multilingual learners graduating from Texas school systems. The Pathways tool will be designed to support school systems as they plan for DLI programming beyond the elementary grades, ensuring continued bilingualism and biliteracy development through grade 12.

Program implementation rubrics and crosswalks

These program implementation (PI) tools will serve as supplemental components of the current programmatic guidance provided by the agency for the various program models allowed by state law. The tools will provide explicit support for effective and consistent program implementation across all program models. In addition, the tool created specifically to support DLI implementation will align with the TxEDLIF and will specifically address barriers, risks, and mitigation involved in the movement from transitional bilingual programs to DLI program models.

Biliteracy mapping for OER

TEA will develop tools that map biliteracy content and strategies to existing TEA Open Education Resources (OER), High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), and Research Based Instructional Strategies (RBIS). These agency-developed companion resources will respond to needs surfaced both through the stakeholder engagement process undergone by TEA for the purposes of this document and by LEAs related to barriers to implementation regarding current TEA OER materials.

While targeted at the teacher level, curriculum mapping for HQIM in DLI classrooms will also meet the charge of SB 560, as it will directly focus on biliteracy development and content attainment, pillars of dual language immersion and a systemic strategy for monitoring bilingual learning.

Content-Based Language Instruction (CBLI) Guidebook

The EB Support Division is currently finalizing a content-based language instruction (CBLI) guidebook to support an integrated approach to language instruction in which language is developed within the context of content delivery that is culturally and linguistically sustaining. Research, guidance, strategies, and tools for implementation will be created for each level of educator. This guidebook supports the development of the partner language and the acquisition of English for all emergent bilingual students, regardless of the program model.

Emergent Bilingual Family Empowerment Toolkit (EBFET)

This tool is being developed by the EB Support Division and is intended to support school systems as they work to reimagine their engagement with this population of families. The toolkit is made up of 8 modules, and each focuses on discreet aspects of how parental and family engagement support children's educational experiences; each module is complete with a readiness rubric, implementation checklist and tools for implementation. Coupled with the modules is a specifically designed implementation plan which includes guidance for multiple engagements throughout the year.

The agency is currently piloting the Emergent Bilingual Family Empowerment Toolkit in 10 school systems (ESC regions 6, 7, 11, 18, and 20) across Texas. Early pilot results have demonstrated a need for a more systematic approach to supporting family empowerment. This work directly connects to SB 560 as it is designed to increase awareness for families and educators. Moreover, the importance of intentionally including input from families of emergent bilingual students was a consistent theme in the online surveys as well as the round table engagements.

Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language Self-Assessment

The self-assessment has been implemented since school year 2020. This support to school systems has yielded promising trends for programmatic implementation across the state by allowing the agency to offer targeted technical assistance to districts that are in the “developing” state of implementation.

To further strengthen and align to updated program implementation supports, the Division of Emergent Bilingual Support and the Division of Special Populations Monitoring are collaborating on the revision of the BE/ESL self-assessment with the goal of strengthening systemic program implementation.

Implementation grants to strengthen talent pipelines

Grants to support talent pipelines have been a consistent agency focus aligned to the TEA's Strategic Priority 1: Recruit, support, and retain effective teachers and principals. Beginning in 2017, TEA implemented an annual "Grow Your Own" grant focused on supporting school systems in developing their local workforce into educators, including supporting the implementation of high school supporting the implementation of Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, funding school system paraprofessionals and long-term substitutes to achieve their teacher certification, and supporting the implementation of teacher residencies. The grant focused specifically on rural districts. With the implementation of the Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) grant, over 400 school systems have participated in the Grow Your Own and Teacher Residency Support grants which run from 2021-2024.

TEA plans to continue the administration of these grants annually to support school system pipeline strategies, though at a smaller scale than was possible through the TCLAS grant. Based on stakeholder input, TEA will continue to refine grant requirements and incentives to support a focus on growing and developing educators for hard-to-staff areas, including bilingual education.

Training and Professional Development

It is crucial for educators to have access to targeted, intentional, and ongoing professional development opportunities that increase awareness about the benefits of bilingual education as well as support strong implementation for all program models. Professional development created by TEA will be structured around asset-based practices related to second language acquisition and bilingual learning. Educators of all levels will have the opportunity to engage in statewide professional development highlighting effective teaching and learning practices.

Dual Language Immersion Academies

As an additional layer of support for high-quality dual language immersion program implementation, the EB Support Division is currently developing a multi-day training of trainers with the intended audience of a school system team comprised of district and campus leaders, teachers, and support staff to ensure all levels of the school ecosystem are supported with the relevant tools and resources.

Dual Language Immersion Academies will have strands for every level of educator (systems to the classroom) related to second language acquisition, understanding, and implementing culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, instructional best practices that support increased cognitive development, cross-linguistic connections, and student achievement. The development and implementation of the DLI Academies specifically meets the charge of SB 560 related to increasing the number of DLI programs in the state by providing high-quality, research-based training for practitioners at no cost to the school. The statewide scaling of the DLI Academies will be led by TEA with support from our ESC partners.

Administrator Training Series

The Emergent Bilingual Support Division, in partnership with the ESCs, will develop a series of administrator-focused professional development opportunities. The on-demand training will focus on the dynamic process of second language acquisition and program implementation that supports EB student achievement and positive school outcomes. While much of this training will focus on universal topics related to second language acquisition and bilingual learning, individual program model specific training will be made available to directly address the different goals of each state-approved program model.

Effectively serving and identifying emergent bilingual students with disabilities

To support school systems in effectively serving EB students with disabilities, the TEA EB Support Division will collaborate with the Special Education Program and Policy Department to develop a suite of professional development resources. Included in these resources will be professional development and training materials to address challenges in

both identification and creation of specially designed instruction (SDI) that will meet students’ linguistic needs in addition to needs associated with their identified disability.

Family and Community Outreach

Awareness campaign

SB 560 calls for an increase in awareness of the benefits of bilingualism for families as well as educators. The agency will work with ESCs and other stakeholders to develop and disseminate resources that detail the benefits of bilingualism and how bilingualism can be realized as a result of high-quality programs and services provided throughout a student’s educational experience from early childhood through graduation. Outreach resources should be developed to correct misinformation and misunderstandings related to the language acquisition process, specifically the importance of native language instruction as a foundation for high academic achievement and bilingualism. Misconceptions are often noted as obstacles to program participation as well as the fidelity of implementation of high-quality programs. Clarity for educators, specifically on distinguishing between the differences in the stages of language acquisition has significant instructional implications as educators often make critical decisions about the language of instruction for students based on the likely language of the state assessment without fully understanding the complexities of a student’s phase of language acquisition. The awareness campaign would be marketed through social media posts, press releases, YouTube video series, as well as radio and television ads in multiple languages and markets/outlets.

Current TEA Resources

Currently, the EB Support Division is comprised of one director, one Bilingual/ESL programs manager, one family empowerment manager (federally funded term position to end July 2023), three state program coordinators, and one federal, Title III manager to effectively execute the activities described in this plan to support the expansion and sustainability of the ongoing technical assistance and resource development to improve educational outcomes for Texas’ 1.2M emergent bilingual students.

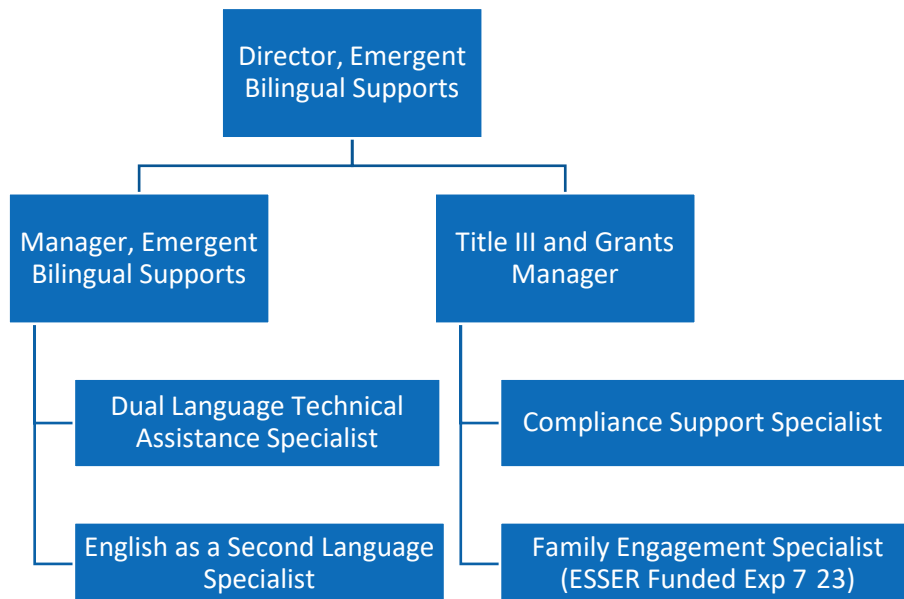


Figure 13

While the currently allocated resources in the form of FTEs could maintain a status quo with regard to the state level support for school systems implementing programs for students identified as emergent bilingual, enhancements to existing work and any additional work would likely result in a need for additional staffing resources to be allocated.

Legislative Recommendations

Increasing support and improving practices, the 88th legislative will need to take action beyond additional allocations of FTEs and fiscal appropriations. The following describes potential actions for the consideration of the 88th Legislature. Please note that these recommendations are not presented in any order of importance.

Revision of certification design and some testing requirements

Statutory Change Consideration: Require and fund the State Board for Educator Certification and TEA to redesign the certifications required for secondary DLI education.

Certifications for secondary dual language teachers need to be designed to fit the specific linguistic and content requirements of effective teachers in secondary DLI programs.

Revision of the Alternative Language Program (ALP) code

Statutory Change Consideration: Authorize TEA to develop a coding system that indicates program model participation while maintaining data necessary for the exceptions and waivers process.

The ALP code is used as the program participation code in the PEIMS data system for students who are being served under an approved bilingual exception or ESL waiver. This code does not impact the Bilingual Education Allotment (BEA) funds that districts receive for all students identified as emergent bilingual who have parental permission to participate in an approved program. However, this code does not generate the funding provided by HB 3 of the 86th Texas Legislature associated with dual language program participation. Additionally, there are frequently valid reasons for a student to wish to have documentation for having participated in dual language programming.

Reconsider criteria for the State Performance Acknowledgment for Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Statutory Consideration: Enact legislation directing the State Board of Education to engage with stakeholders and examine existing rules regarding the criteria for the Performance Acknowledgment for Bilingualism and Biliteracy and potentially make changes to those criteria reflective of similar acknowledgments in other states.

Enact legislation directing the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Workforce Commission to collect and publish data related to the post-secondary performance of recipients of the acknowledgment mentioned above.

Revise House Bill 3 allocation

Statutory Consideration: *Revise House Bill HB3 (2019), TEC 48.105 (a)(1)(2)* (0.05) allocation for EB students that meet reclassification criteria and continue participating as non-EB students in a one-way DLI program.

The goal to increase dual language programs in Texas began with the passage of historic funding allocations from House Bill 3 in 2019. House Bill 3 acknowledged the need for DLI programs to provide an additional (0.05) for all EB students in one-way and two-way programs and non-EB students participating in two-way DLI programs. However, to entice more school systems to also implement DLI one-way programs, the legislature could revise the (0.05) allocation for EB students that meet reclassification criteria and continue participating as English proficient in a one-way DLI program as is the case for those participating in a two-way DLI program. Currently, in this instance, an emergent bilingual student in a one-way dual language program that meets reclassification criteria and is classified as English proficient no longer generates the additional (0.05) funding. This may lead to a discontinuation of program sustainability over time. The primary focus of these bilingual education programs should always continue to be EB students having positive long-term academic outcomes as they prolong the development of bilingualism and biliteracy throughout their educational experience.

Required emergent bilingual program training for educators

Statutory Consideration: Require training for all educators, including administrators and decision makers in school systems, related to second language acquisition and effective implementation of program models designed to meet the needs of students who are emergent bilinguals.

Currently there is no requirement for educators to have training that increases awareness of the importance of bilingualism, fundamentals of language acquisition, effective program implementation, or the cognitive and linguistic needs of emergent bilingual students. Throughout the stakeholder engagements, the theme of common misconceptions permeating the field and the associated negative influence on practice was a significant challenge to appropriate program implementation. The 88th Texas Legislative session could consider implementing the requirement for additional training for all educators, including administrators and decision makers in school systems.

Authority to develop approved list of norm-referenced tests through grade 12

Statutory Consideration: Direct and fund TEA to identify a norm-referenced assessment in all 4 language domains (L,S,R,W), to be used to measure growth in partner language acquisition through grade 12 and to include a requirement for school systems drawing DLI funding to administer and report results to TEA for all participating students.

Explore possibilities for Spanish versions of STAAR through secondary grades

Statutory Consideration: Direct and fund TEA to explore options for providing Spanish assessments to include consideration of psychometrically equated translations of the English version of the test at those grade levels, and report findings back to the legislature.

Stakeholders consistently indicate that the lack of a Spanish version of the STAAR test at grades 6-8 and End of Course is a barrier to implementation of DLI programs at the secondary level.

Direct TEA to develop a deeper and more robust monitoring system

Statutory Consideration: Direct and fund TEA to develop a more robust monitoring system that is designed to review EB program requirements to identify deficient programs to more immediately engage in technical assistance supports impacting practices in school systems to improve outcomes for emergent bilingual students.

The current monitoring system focuses mainly on compliance with state and federal law and does little to provide school systems with actionable feedback on the implementation of the required bilingual or ESL programs. An increased focus on program review and targeted technical assistance would allow the TEA more direct engagement opportunities with school systems.