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## **No. 12, October 2023. The Impact of the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program: Expanding Opportunities to Grow the Profession**

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# THE IMPACT OF THE BILINGUAL TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW THE PROFESSION

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## INTRODUCTION

California is a national leader in its commitment to policies and practices that support English Learners (ELs) and Multilingual Learners (MLs)<sup>1</sup> to benefit from a rigorous and linguistically and culturally responsive education. Yet multilingual/dual language instruction – a valuable practice for supporting ELs and MLs – is still inaccessible to many students. One reason for this is the lack of qualified bilingual teachers to provide instruction in multilingual/dual language settings.

The Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program (BTPDP) was implemented between 2017 and 2021 and was designed to help California schools meet the growing demand for bilingual teachers in alignment with increasing state policies promoting multilingualism. Funds were distributed equally across the eight local education agencies, with each successful grantee receiving \$625,000. This research brief examines the implementation of BTPDP across the eight state grantees to document trends in program impact and develop policy and program recommendations to address bilingual teacher shortages.

## A Multilingual California: Aspirations and Efforts

### Multilingual State Policies

California's commitment to multilingualism is evident in a series of recent policies that celebrate and promote bilingual education across the state. As noted by the California Department of Education (CDE), 73.5% of California voters approved Proposition 58 (CDE, 2016) creating a "new era in bilingual education" (Hopkinson, 2017, p. 1) that effectively dismantled the former restrictions on bilingual education. In 2017, California adopted the English Learner Roadmap (CDE, 2017) to guide districts and schools in the design and implementation of high-quality education for ELs and MLs. In 2018, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, announced California Global 2030, a call to action urging parents, educators, and legislators to support a multilingual California where students are proficient in more than one language (CDE, 2018).<sup>2</sup>

While these policies continue to inspire educators and families to increase dual language opportunities for students, the goals remain aspirational and dual language programs are still limited. The primary cause of this phenomenon is a lack of sufficient bilingually authorized/credentialed teachers – a challenge spurred by the Proposition 227 era (Callahan & Gándara, 2014; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; de Jong, 2011; Lavadenz et al., (2021); DeMatthews & Izquierdo 2017, 2019; Grissom et al., 2021; Lavadenz & Colón Muñiz, 2017; Ramos Harris & Sandoval-González, 2017; Valenzuela, 2017), which effectively eliminated bilingual education classes. Today, a contributing factor to this shortage is the state's limited success in attracting and supporting prospective bilingual teachers to attain the requisite Bilingual Authorization (BLA). In 2017, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) noted that the state had issued 13,082 new teaching credentials in 2016-17, of which just 749 (5.7%) were BLAs (CTC, 2022) – a notably low percentage given California's more than 1.1 million English Learners (CDE Data Reporting Office, 2022).

### State Support for Additional Bilingual Teachers

In 2017, the legislature approved AB 99, establishing the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program (BTPDP) to "ensure that California can meet the demand for bilingual teachers necessary for the implementation of dual language and other bilingual education programs" (CDE, 2017, p.2). More specifically, grantees were to use grant funds to (1) support credentialed teachers to acquire their Bilingual Authorization (BLA), (2) support paraprofessionals to earn a credential and BLA, and (3) provide professional learning on bilingual/dual language education to teachers, paraprofessionals, and

administrators. The BTPDP request for applications underscored the urgent need for bilingual teachers, stating, "While most districts (58%) have plans to expand bilingual education opportunities in the future, an overwhelming majority (86%) reported facing a shortage of bilingual teachers as a hurdle to realizing those plans" (Ramos-Harris & Sandoval-González, 2017, p. 4 ).

The BTPDP grant encouraged applications from consortia of local education agencies (LEAs), including county offices of education, school districts, or charter schools and partnerships with at least one school or department of education in a public or private four-year institution of higher education (IHE) that prepares teachers or other regional providers that are actively implementing a CTC Approved Bilingual Authorization program (CDE, 2018). Applicants submitted detailed applications outlining their plans to implement partnership activities and their capacity to measure continuous progress (CDE, 2018). The applications were reviewed by representatives from the CDE (CDE), CTC, and two professional organizations – Californians Together and the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE).

Eight grantees were selected, all of whom participated in LEA consortia and partnered with local universities. (See Figure 1 for a list of grantees.) Each grantee received equal amounts of funding (\$625,000) to support their efforts to meet the grant goals between January 2018 and June 2021 (including a one-year extension due to the pandemic). A summary of grantees' project descriptions is available on the CDE website.

### Measuring Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program Implementation Impact

Grantees submitted periodic progress reports to the CDE at the end of each project year. Outside of this state requirement, the Center for Equity for English Learners at Loyola Marymount University (CEEL), in collaboration with Californians Together and CABE, invited grantees to a series of voluntary convenings to share implementation and evaluation strategies throughout the grant period.

At the end of the project, CEEL independently examined the implementation of BTPDP across the eight state grantees to document trends in impact and develop policy and program recommendations to address bilingual teacher shortages for English Learner/Multilingual Learner students.

Figure 1. BTPDP State Grantees\*

- Anaheim Union High School District
- Los Angeles County Office of Education
- Oak Grove School District
- Patterson Joint Unified School District
- Riverside Unified School District
- Sacramento County Office of Education
- San Bernardino County Office of Education
- San Luis Obispo County Office of Education

\*Source: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ps/btpdpgrants.asp>

The following questions guided the investigation:

1. What successes and challenges do BTPDP grantees identify in their efforts to increase the number and quality of bilingually authorized teachers?
2. What policy and practice implications and recommendations logically follow from the findings?

The investigation employed a three-phased approach. In Phase 1, we analyzed the content of the December 2021 final reports submitted by the eight BTPDP grantees to CDE. The results of our analysis informed the development of the semi-structured interview protocol in Phase 2, during which we conducted interviews with each of the grantee leads. In Phase 3, we analyzed and interpreted all data using the software platform Dedoose to allow for data interpretation and conceptualization. Further details regarding the methodology are available in Appendix 1.

**Key Analysis Findings**

The following findings represent the results of our Phase 3 analysis. To the extent both successes and challenges were identified in each of the key findings, we highlight those and share voices from the field to illuminate what those experiences looked like on the ground.

**Key Findings**

1. BTPDP succeeded in expanding the bilingual workforce, but it was hampered by logistical barriers.
2. Program structures helped develop educator and administrator knowledge and skills; still, better planning and support structures are needed.
3. Partnerships fostered positive outcomes and revealed structural challenges.
4. A short grant period and limited funding challenge sustainability.

**Finding 1: BTPDP succeeded in expanding the bilingual workforce, but it was hampered by logistical barriers.**

**Successes**

*A significant number of teachers received or began the process of acquiring the state bilingual authorization.*

Prior to and during the grant period, California provided a variety of authorizations for instruction in bilingual classrooms. These included the Bilingual Authorization (BLA) on teacher certificates or credentials, as well as intern credentials, permits, or waivers. With the commitment to increase fully authorized bilingual teachers, the state increased its focus on Bilingual Authorization on teaching certificates or credentials. Consistent with this change in emphasis, this report focuses on the impact of the BTPDP on the BLAs on certificates/credentials (not intern credentials, permits, or waivers.)

In the three years during which the BTPDP was in effect, there were consistent increases in new BLA certificates/credentials issued by the state. Figure 2 illustrates the number of BLA certificates/credentials attained before, during, and after BTPDP. Immediately after the grant ended in 2021-22, the number of BLA certificates/credentials declined.

There is also strong evidence that the BTPDP played a significant role in these increases. Table 1 below presents the statewide number of BLAs attained and increases in the number of BLAs attained during the grant period for both the state as a whole and the BTPDP participants. As seen in the table, there is almost complete overlap between the statewide three-year increase in the number of BLAs earned (372) and the number of BTPDP participants who reported applying for and/or earning their BLA on their certificate/credential (374).<sup>3</sup>

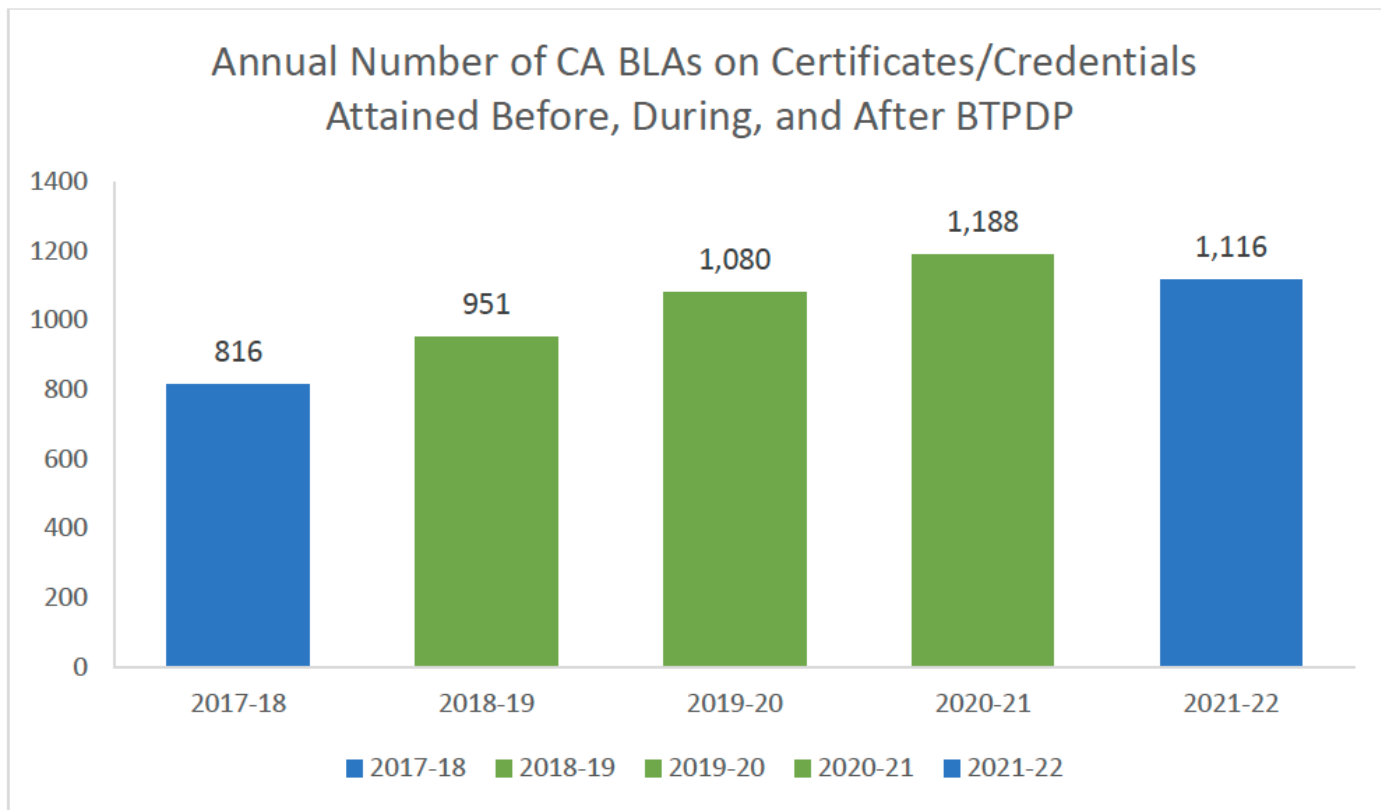
The BTPDP grantee final reports also indicate that the program launched an additional 156 teachers toward earning their BLA at the end of 2021, though it is unknown how many of them actually completed all the requirements to earn their BLA after the grant expired. The BTPDP

Table 1. Number and Increase in California BLAs on Certificates/Credentials During the BTPDP Grant Period (2018-19 to 2020-21)<sup>4</sup>

Year	Number of Annual and Total BLAs Attained	Growth in Annual and Total Number of BLAs Attained	BTPDP Grantee Reported Total Number of BLAs Attained
2018-19	951	135	BTPDP Grantee Reports did not provide annual number of BLAs attained.
2019-20	1,080	129	
2020-21	1,188	108	
Total Grant Period: 2018-19 to 2020-21	3,219	372	374

Source: CTC (2023)

**Figure 2. Annual Number of California BLAs on Certificates/Credentials Attained from 2017-18 to 2021-22**



Source: CTC (2022)

further allowed eight paraprofessionals to earn a college degree (two earned an AA/AS, and six earned a BA/BS) and launched an additional three paraprofessionals to start coursework towards earning their teaching credential.

**Current teachers strengthened their commitment to teaching in bilingual/dual language classrooms.**

In addition to significantly increasing the number of teachers earning a new BLA, grantees reported that a total of 583 current bilingually authorized teachers who participated in optional BTPDP professional learning (see Table 1) confirmed their intent to remain in or return to bilingual classrooms. Additionally, grantees reported that 244 teachers who already possessed a BLA returned to bilingual classrooms as a result of their participation in BTPDP.

**The Seal of Biliteracy was seen as a pathway to teaching.**

The BTPDP also spurred excitement about other ways to increase the pool of bilingual teachers. Some grantees decided to outreach to highly proficient dual language speakers who earned California’s Seal of Biliteracy to talk with them about bilingual teaching careers and district employment opportunities.

**Challenges**

**Testing requirements are burdensome.**

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing requires various assessments of basic and advanced knowledge and skills as one of the options to attain a BLA within the broader credentialing process. Grantees questioned the value and relationship of the tests to the university courses and the realities of being a dual language teacher; as one district grantee commented, “I understand standards, and I think they’re important, but there’s just something that you know a test doesn’t do. It doesn’t tell me who’s going to be a great teacher.”

A lack of testing preparation was particularly challenging. As a district lead observed:

**The universities and the different agencies that provide training, and mainly testing support, like helping teachers pass tests, they didn’t have anything. And so, we were scraping, looking for, ‘Who can help our teachers get the certification that they need?’ We’ve got the three-part series, but even that was not to prepare teachers to pass those tests. And so, that piece of training and education that was needed hadn’t caught up yet.**

**Testing times and locations are too limited.**

Finding sites for California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET)<sup>5</sup> tests was another challenge. The exams are administered by a testing company that provides the tests mainly on weekdays during the school year and only in select locations, requiring teacher candidates to take a day off from work. A county lead provided additional details:

**They're only open till July 5 and then they close down for the summer when a teacher could test, and then they open up again in August or late August when the teachers are back, and then they can't do it....So really there's a disconnect between CTC's expectations of fulfilling these requirements and the testing unit.**

Accessing test centers was also a challenge, particularly for teachers in rural areas. As a district lead noted, "They're not everywhere...some teachers have to travel a couple hundred miles to get to a test, so that's a challenge." A county lead also noted a problem with the language test: "Having enough centers that have the recording ability was almost impossible. I was constantly looking on the website trying to find them a seat...there was a little disconnect between availability of what you had to do and getting it done."

**Paraprofessionals experienced financial and time burdens.**

For paraprofessionals interested in becoming teachers with a BLA, unrealistic grant timelines and insufficient funding were primarily responsible for the very limited attainment of college degrees and teaching credentials. While the intent of BTPDP to support paraprofessionals in becoming bilingual teachers was admirable, grantees felt that the grant timeline was poorly planned and too expensive. As one district grantee observed:

**We were able to recruit. We had interested paraprofessionals across the district but the pathway for them was so long. This is where we speak to the timeline because this was a three-year grant and most of our paraprofessionals have gotten an associate degree. To get them to a BA or BS or from there into a credentialing program needs time, not only for application, but the fiscal means. For them to become a full-time student when their livelihood is their job, they did not have the luxury or resources to be able to put that [job] on hold.**

A county grantee shared the specifics of the funding they had available for the paraprofessionals, noting, "...classified employees get some money towards going to college, again, we're talking 20 [paraprofessionals], \$500 per person that they can get. It's not enough...for their college."

Grantees from another county tried to overcome underfunding that limited paraprofessionals' participation,

but supports were still limited:

**They would help them pass CBEST, analyze what they needed to work on, and then get them on route, so the only challenge with that is that the paraprofessionals thought that most of their education was going to be paid for, and when they realized that [it would not], they kind of ... put a stall on that. I tried to find ways, like let's pay for their books...their CBEST...or any other exam that they needed. So, we were trying to pay for some stuff that was not in the thousands.**

**Finding 2: Program structures helped develop educator and administrator knowledge and skills; still, better planning and support structures are needed.**

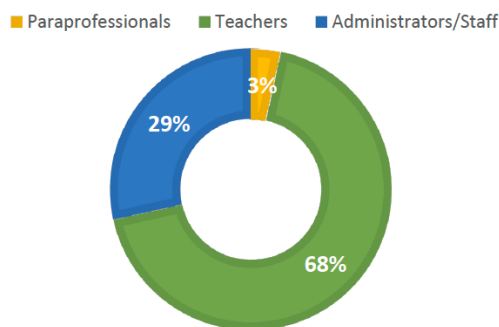
**Successes**

**Educators and administrators participated in extensive professional learning opportunities.**

A total of 3,764 educators participated in a broad range of professional development activities designed to prepare them for teaching in a bilingual classroom. Participants included 129 paraprofessionals, 2,564 teachers, and 1,071 administrators/staff. Figure 3 below illustrates participation rates by group.

Extensive professional learning occurred through various modalities, including monthly partner meetings, periodic statewide convenings, and enrollment in higher education pathways toward a bilingual teacher credential or authorization. This learning focused on key topics to implement effective multilingual/bilingual education programs, including: the history of bilingual education, effective language development strategies for dual language learners; program designs; development of academic Spanish for both students and instructors; and release time for teachers to make instructional rounds and observe high-quality bilingual instruction.

**Figure 3. Percent of BTPDP Participants by Job Position**  
**BTPDP PARTICIPANT PERCENTAGES**



Source: Grantee End-of-Project Reports

### ***Candidates expanded their pedagogic language abilities.***

Networking and professional learning strengthened teacher readiness to serve in bilingual/dual language settings by providing targeted professional learning opportunities in their respective languages of instruction. This increased their reported confidence in their ability to serve as bilingual instructors and in their identities as bilingual educators. One grantee from a school district noted, “We built a lot of target language proficiency, as well as capacity building for pedagogy, translanguaging, and plurilingualism.”

Spanish was the most frequent language for professional learning, in alignment with the 82% of English Learner/Multilingual Learner students whose primary language is Spanish. However, it was not the only language supported. One grantee from a more diverse language community reported support for multiple languages, writing that the “project intentionally partnered with the National Resource Center for Asian Languages (NRCAL) to deliver our professional learning for Pathway B in Vietnamese, Spanish, and Korean.”

### ***Candidates’ self-confidence and advocacy skills increased.***

The extensive professional learning opportunities provided also increased teachers’ self-confidence in their ability to teach in a dual language setting and helped them become strong advocates for dual language programs. As one grantee from a countywide consortium summarized:

**[E]ither some who didn’t believe in themselves and their proficiency in Spanish [began to] build them [selves] up and build that agency in them so that they were inspired to take the step to clear their credential, or teachers who have gone away from it, but then really had that bridge to bring them back in.**

Leaders from one consortium reported that this grant allowed them to respond to the need to develop their dual language teachers as teacher leaders, become aware of current multilingual research, and feel confident to advocate for dual programs with community parents and other stakeholders. Grantees’ leadership professional learning session evaluations show that many participants were classroom teachers invited by their district leaders to learn how to advocate for and inform the community about dual language programs to foster growth and support of programs.

### ***Administrator knowledge of and support for bilingual/dual language programs increased.***

Administrators also participated in professional learning to enhance their understanding and ability to support bilingual/dual language education. This is critical because, as one lead observed, “We know from the research that you need strong administrators that understand dual language immersion in order for programs to be successful.”

Leadership teams from one consortium reported that they felt fortunate to be part of a grant-funded consortium that provided a network, resources, and research-based training for their teachers and dual language leaders. Without the grant, leaders stated they would not have been able to provide the same level of support for their dual language teachers and principals or foster the attainment of the BLA for teachers within their districts.

Comments from other district leads further underscored the benefits of administrator engagement and learning. For example, the final written report from a school district noted that professional learning for administrators included “bilingual instructional rounds for district leaders, site leaders and instructional coaches where they could observe high-quality bilingual instruction and programming and discuss what they learned.” Another wrote that the BTPDP “established, promoted, and facilitated a dual language network bringing district teams together to strengthen, build, and support dual language.”

### **Challenges**

#### ***More strategic district planning for bilingual/dual language programs is needed.***

The development of effective bilingual/dual language programs begins with thorough planning and professional learning, usually for a year before initiation of the program. Dual language classes should begin in the early grades from preschool through first grade and then expand annually to the subsequent grade levels. As the lead from one county office of education noted about the time needed for planning,

**We learned that there is a lot of misinformation to be addressed about how a good dual language program is implemented. ...Some districts want to just flip a switch and say, ‘Oh, we have dual language, we started at three months,’ as opposed to districts that take at least a year out of planning, recruiting, creating, communicating with teachers, looking at all the partners. ...Unfortunately, a lot of things didn’t work because of the districts who went too fast. We learned that there’s a huge need for technical assistance, support in that area.**

There must also be strong alignment between program growth and teacher completion of the BLA, but this was not always the case in implementation. In some cases, for example, teachers completed their BLA before a dual language teaching position became available. A lead from one county explained the unintended consequences of misalignment in these areas, even in a district with a strong vision and commitment to dual language programs:

**...is a very strong district, with a very strong superintendent who was very collaborative towards this grant and really wanting to get his folks [trained]. Although he had a big desire to get all of them**

trained, they were one of the examples of step by step of adding and growing. So, some of those teachers actually were eager to go and train and be ready, and they're in [another district]; so, they would jump to a different district.

### ***Beginning bilingual teachers need more mentorship and coaching.***

A recurring theme was the need for more supports for current teachers acquiring their Bilingual Authorization. A county consortium lead raised the importance of support for teachers during this time of transition:

**Brand new teachers benefit from a mentor during induction programs, but there isn't a system in place for teachers who change assignments from a monolingual classroom to a multilingual classroom. Coaching, networking, and instructional support may not only retain teachers transitioning to dual language immersion programs but entice them to make the transition.**

This grantee report also referenced previous state initiatives as models of support for multilingual teachers and principals:

**A recommendation for a future grant is to call out the need for coaching of relatively new dual language classroom teachers. There is a precedent with the CSLA 21 statewide grant to support veteran teachers who are considered teacher leaders as well as principals recently out of their clear induction programs to continue to have a coach. The case could be made for teachers and principals of multilingual students and schools to also receive specific multilingual support.**

## **Finding 3: Partnerships fostered positive outcomes and revealed structural challenges.**

### **Successes**

#### ***Networking and collaboration are invaluable.***

Grantees described the wide and much-needed collaboration and professional networking for bilingual teachers made possible by the BTPDP in their end-of-year reports, providing examples of university partnerships, quality and research-based professional development, and resource development and dissemination. Collaboration spanned program planning, communication, and implementation efforts within the local consortiums and with the IHE partners. As one district lead shared,

**A Bilingual Consulting Team provided support to partner districts to expand existing dual language programs or implement new programs. This support included serving as a thought partner, sharing resources, and meeting regularly with them to help them develop their plans for**

**expansion and implementation.**

Leaders also felt that the grant allowed them to identify innovative ways to promote becoming a bilingually authorized teacher during district and county meetings and to foster the positive energy and opportunity for collaboration. As one county consortium shared:

**The network of participating districts discussed and shared strategies around hiring and coordinating with their own human resources/ personnel departments, how to promote their dual programs via websites, and other avenues.**

Another consortium lead summarized the benefits of collaboration and networking in the following way: "What it did for us is it built a community of learners across our county and even across our region because we extended beyond just our county."

The value of networking and collaboration extended not only to district participants, but to the county office as well, as evidenced in a county office lead's comment below:

**We have the privilege of bringing [our local educational agencies] together for a network. So, I think the successes are the relationships that the county is able to have with the LEAs and nurturing that and bringing them together with quality resource supports. [It was] nourishment for us at the county level to work to get out of our orbit. I can say this was the most rewarding work that I did while we had this project and allowed me to bring in some wonderful partners. It was a very positive experience overall, exhausting but refreshing, and it really opened our eyes to the possibilities, and so it really did change the way we do business.**

Collaboration between districts, county offices of education, and universities resulted in the development of stronger partnerships, networking, and effective professional learning that supported the development of their programs and contributed to the design and implementation of model programs with innovative pathways.

#### ***Participants were committed to continuous improvement and being responsive to the field.***

Overall, BTPDP grantees, together with their IHE partners, were committed to both developing programming that was responsive to the needs identified by stakeholders and understanding whether that programming was effective through regular data collection, analysis, and review cycles. As one lead shared,

**[BTPDP] supported stronger collaboration between CSU, Loyola Marymount University, the County Office of Education, and participating LEAs to support bilingual education and increase [the] number of teachers with Bilingual Authorization. Needs assessment and collaboration across stakeholders supported increased pathways to**



### **Bilingual Authorization including development of Arabic and Mandarin pathways at CSU....**

A representative example from a county grantee's report also showed how they monitored outcomes:

**Each candidate was asked to complete a pre-survey and post-survey at the beginning and the end of the coursework to measure changes in knowledge and training needs. Results were analyzed and showed a statistically significant difference in means and standard deviations from before and after coursework. Findings point to an increase in new knowledge. In addition, feedback surveys were distributed after each workshop showing participants' high satisfaction with the material presented and facilitators. Several focus groups and interviews were conducted with candidates and key stakeholders. Overall, participants were grateful and would like to continue these types of professional development opportunities in the future.**

### **Grantees strategically expanded dual language program options.**

Grantees recognized the importance of building on the linguistic context of their communities with opportunities for heritage language learners and development of programs to expand proficiency in strategic languages. These opportunities included strategies such as intentional recruitment of initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) students to develop their heritage language through participation in dual language programs, addition of an Arabic language course at the high school level and a 30-minute push-in course at the elementary level, and development of Arabic and Mandarin pathways at a California State University.

### **Challenges**

#### **University Bilingual Authorization pathways were limited and/or presented logistical challenges.**

Grantee leads identified several challenges in supporting teachers through the bilingual certification or authorization process at institutions of higher education. The primary concern was the lack of programs. One district grantee discussed the search for a university offering these programs:

**We were talking to all these universities who were like, "Well, we're thinking about it, or we're working on it," and we didn't have anything for our teachers to immediately tap into once the grant money was available, so we had to wait, and it wasn't so much a planning period as a waiting period. We have to wait for the universities to develop the content before we can put teachers in it.**

Districts need more information to guide teachers on how to obtain their BLA as a multiple subject or single subject credential holder. As one county lead observed, "If

any district, county office, or IHE has figured out a clear, efficient pathway, many districts would like to replicate the model."

The student teaching criteria also presented a challenge for participants since it took time away and/or prevented them from earning income through their existing employment, thus creating a financial as well as logistical strain. A district lead commiserated:

**One of the biggest concerns is that year that they spend as student teachers. If they give their all, they just can't work. They can't go to work, and for some of our students that is a real hardship, given that they depend on scholarships for any kind of support that the colleges provide, but sometimes that's not enough....**

Other logistical challenges came up as well, particularly when federal privacy laws conflicted with the state's requirement that grantees report students' university attendance:

**We had a partnership where we could talk with the university, and I could say, "You know I'm funding this person. I need to make sure they're actually going to your program. And they would always come up, "Because of privacy issues, we can't tell you."**

## **Finding 4: A short grant period and limited funding challenge sustainability.**

### **Challenges**

#### **The grant timeline limited sustainability.**

BTPDP was a three-year grant, with much of the first grant year ideally dedicated to planning and implementation occurring in the last two years. However, many grantees commented on the need for a longer grant period to accomplish their goals: "[we need a] longer grant period in order to better support the completion of credentialing. Two years is not enough time for people to finish." Another county lead recognized the advantage of having gained experience dealing with short grant timelines: "Knowing what we know now, having better systems in place so that folks could access things right away."

A short grant term, coupled with a lack of district funding to continue supporting the grant's programmatic efforts, leads to sustainability challenges. As one grantee frankly noted, "Once the grant ended, the district couldn't maintain the cost of paying for college tuition for staff members." Districts recognized the need for long-term funding for these efforts; as one lead indicated, "I think [we need] ongoing funding to encourage and recruit teachers to go ahead and get their bilingual credentials."

#### **Overall funding was insufficient, and project funding was not proportional.**

Grantees identified insufficient overall project funding based on the number and types of participants, citing

misalignment between the amount of funding allocated to grantees and the time and financial commitments required to obtain certification and/or authorization. This was an unintended consequence of the \$625,000 allocated to each grantee, regardless of the target number of participants. Further, insufficient funds limited the number of districts that could fully participate in the program. As one county consortium lead commented, “Look at the outcomes of what we did with this grant and then try to increase the funds because so many want in. ....How do we fulfill the other [districts] that want in? That’s the challenge, too.”

Project leaders reported that funding limitations hindered grantees’ abilities to fully support paraprofessionals in particular, who required more time as well as more funding to complete both an undergraduate degree and the BLA. It also impacted the larger group of participants when it came to making tuition payments as well as reaching the final stages of earning their credentials and authorizations.

Tuition costs and test preparation and fees limited teacher participation. One county consortium lead reported that “Although 67 teachers obtained their Bilingual Authorization thanks to CSET-LOTE test preparation, over 20 additional teachers shared they would strive for the BCLAD if there was funding for prep and test reimbursement.” Regarding tuition, another lead noted that “Paying \$4,000 when you’re on a low teaching salary is very high.”

Beyond high costs, participants also suffered from the loss of wages during full-time student teaching, which for some candidates became an insurmountable obstacle. One district grantee commented:

**In California it’s really becoming an extremely expensive state to live in, and so I feel for those teachers, so maybe some incentives or extra support as needed, especially for the high needs students that struggle to do student teaching and because of that perhaps they don’t finish the student teaching part, and now they don’t become teachers.**

Similarly, a lead from another district observed, “Once it came to student teaching, this is where some staff fell off as they couldn’t afford to not work during this time.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS

California leaders have developed an ambitious set of goals to ensure a multilingual future for the state’s students. Our analysis unearthed both successes in increasing the bilingual teacher workforce as well as significant challenges that must be addressed to ensure the state’s vision can be realized. Here, we propose three recommendations to help state and local policy actors develop a coherent and sustainable bilingual teacher education system by eliminating obstacles and building on the successes illuminated in our findings.

### Recommendation 1: Ensure adequate investments in California’s multilingual workforce.

The BTPDP has a proven track record of success and should be funded as long as schools and districts are still working to build up their bilingual teacher workforce. Current funding allocations must be distributed strategically, and future funding must be dedicated adequately and sustainably.

- A) State leaders must plan for a sustainable approach to funding beyond AB 1127, signed by Governor Newsom on October 10, 2023, that authorizes a one-time \$20 million allocation that funds the BTPDP through 2028-29.<sup>6</sup>
- B) The CDE should create guidance and criteria for the current \$20 million allocation by:
  - ensuring differentiated and proportional funding based on the number and diverse contexts of candidates across California;
  - creating longer grant periods that allow grantees to strategically develop well-planned, sustainable programs and bilingual staffing;
  - formally building partnerships and networking among grantees and multilingual/dual language education experts, including from within the CDE, into the grant program, through statewide convenings and other professional learning opportunities that support cross-grantee learning; and
  - developing grantee and CDE reporting criteria to include participant demographic data, hiring/retention data, and impact data to inform future funding beyond 2029.

### Recommendation 2: Expand multilingual/dual language teacher credential/authorization programs and testing options.

To increase the number of bilingual teachers in classrooms, there must be more educator preparation programs that offer the Bilingual Authorization; program design should be clearly communicated to candidates, including pathway and course requirements. Logistical roadblocks to becoming a bilingual teacher should be removed.

- A) Educator Preparation Programs should clarify and communicate credential/authorization program options for multilingual/dual language teachers by:
  - creating new pathways that allow prospective bilingual teachers to earn their BLA;
  - communicating and coordinating program design to provide greater clarity across preparation programs regarding simultaneous and/or sequential credential, bilingual pathways and course requirements;
  - (for paraprofessionals) developing alternate

pathways, program flexibility, and options for coursework and student teaching to enhance and streamline university programs and make the transition to being a fully certified/authorized multilingual/dual language teacher more realistic.

- B) The Commission on Teacher Credentialing should require that testing companies eliminate logistical roadblocks, particularly for prospective bilingual teachers in rural areas and working professionals, by expanding testing centers and available testing dates (including during the summer). Testing companies should implement those requirements with fidelity.

### **Recommendation 3: Intentionally develop multilingual/dual language programs, and provide the encouragement and support needed to promote successful multilingual/dual language teachers and leaders.**

Schools and districts should design intentional multilingual/dual language programs and ensure that teachers and administrators have access to the supports they need to strengthen their craft.

- A) School and district staff should:
- take at least one year to design intentional, strategic multilingual/dual language programs and then seek to align bilingual staffing needs – and teacher preparation timelines and funding – accordingly, with a lens toward future expansion across grade levels;
  - build on the linguistic assets of multilingual youth, including students who earn the Seal of Biliteracy, by fostering their interest in serving as bilingual/dual language teachers; and
  - provide ongoing professional learning to support beginning, current, and returning teachers and develop mentors, coaches, and leaders to ensure effective implementation and support for multilingual/dual language education.

## **CONCLUSION**

We found that the BTPDP grant's central goal of increasing the number of newly authorized bilingual teachers was achieved. Further, BTPDP facilitated increased professional learning among aspiring bilingual teachers, current bilingual teachers, returning bilingual teachers, and administrators to establish firm foundations for implementation of effective bilingual programs. The program also supported the development of strong partnerships between local education agencies and institutions of higher education.

Future iterations of the BTPDP should reflect the

lessons learned from the first grant cycle. Future research is also needed to inquire into the long-term impacts across grantees and funding cycles. Those include the need for sustainable and proportional funding, the elimination of logistical and programmatic barriers to the success of prospective bilingual teachers, and the need for strong planning and support structures. Implementing these changes will ensure the state realizes its vision of a multilingual California.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> English Learners are K-12 students who speak a language other than English at home and are still developing the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English needed for success in a school's regular instructional programs. (See "Glossary of Terms for English Learner Reports," California Department of Education, <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/longtermel/Glossary.aspx>). English Learners are increasingly referred to as "emergent bilingual" students or "multilingual learners" in recognition of both languages they are learning, rather than just progress towards English proficiency. (See "Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students," California Department of Education, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/mleleducation.pdf>).

<sup>2</sup> Global CA 2030 has set two main goals: (1) By 2030, half of all K-12 students will participate in programs leading to proficiency in two or more languages, either through a class, a program, or an experience, and (2) By 2040, three out of four students will be proficient in two or more languages and earn a State Seal of Biliteracy.

<sup>3</sup> The higher BTPDP reporting figure is likely the result of different reporting approaches. While grantees reported on the number of participants who had applied and/or earned a new BLA, CTC reports the actual numbers of BLAs completed/attained.

<sup>4</sup> The numbers in the column "Growth in Annual and Total Number of BLAs Attained" in Table 1 are the difference between the current year and the prior year as reported by CTC (2022a).

<sup>5</sup> The CSET: World Languages examinations used for bilingual authorizations consist of the following three tests:

- Test II (or III, depending on specific language): Language and Communication (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)
- Test IV: Bilingual Education and Bilingualism
- Test V: Geographic, Historical, Sociopolitical, and Sociocultural Contexts

Source: [https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/bilingual-authorizations-\(cl-628b\)](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/bilingual-authorizations-(cl-628b)).

<sup>6</sup> [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=20232024:0AB1127](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=20232024:0AB1127)

## APPENDIX 1

### METHODOLOGY

#### Phase 1: Content Analysis of BTPDP Grantee Reports

End-of-grant reports to the state documented grantees' accomplishments across the life of the BTPDP grant (2018-2021). The final report template provided by the state required standardized reporting of the following information:

- number of educators served;
- number of teachers working on and received or will receive a Bilingual Authorization;
- number of paraprofessionals served, including progress toward a degree, credentialing, and/or Bilingual Authorization, and received professional development;
- number of administrators and other staff participating in professional learning;
- number of previously authorized teachers who participated in the program with the intention to remain in or return to bilingual teaching assignments;
- number of teachers who are still working at least 50% of the time in a bilingual setting;
- key issues/recommendations regarding grant implementation (optional); and
- other notable accomplishments.

To conduct the content analysis, multiple reviewers created a code book to identify key responses and themes from the grantees' reports. These results informed the development of the semi-structured interview protocol for the next phase.

#### Phase 2: BTPDP Grantee Interviews

We conducted 45–60 minute interviews with leads from each of the eight state grantees in spring 2022. The interview protocol allowed us to further investigate successes and challenges experienced by grantees in their efforts to design local policies and practices to address the shortage of bilingually authorized teachers in the state. We conducted seven interviews via Zoom. One grantee submitted their answers to the interview questions in writing.

#### Phase 3: Analyzing and Interpreting BTPDP Data

Using Dedoose, a software platform for data analysis, we applied a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) to integrate and analyze all the available data – including interview transcripts, interview notes, and written grantee reports. We then identified interrelated categories to interpret data, detect patterns and themes, and ultimately generate our findings.

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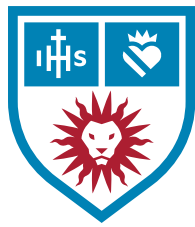
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