Personalized Professional Learning for Elementary Bilingual Educators: A Policy Advocacy Document

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PERSONALIZED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR ELEMENTARY BILINGUAL EDUCATORS: A POLICY ADVOCACY DOCUMENT

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Doctor of Education in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

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This document was created as one part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006). For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

**Works Cited**


ABSTRACT

This policy advocacy document advocates a policy to strengthen an existing elementary bilingual program through personalized professional development. Twin goals of the proposed policy are to (1) increase student achievement and (2) increase bilingual teacher retention. District 32’s bilingual program recently shifted from a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) model to a Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) model, which emphasized biliteracy. As a small suburban school district with a rapidly rising Hispanic and low-income student population, this shift raised awareness among district administrators of the need for a new professional development model geared toward its mostly inexperienced bilingual teachers. To be immediately effective, this new professional development model would need to be more classroom-based, frequent, and focused on sustained personalized professional learning. Key to providing this kind of in-depth, individualized professional learning is hiring a full-time bilingual consulting teacher. Browder’s (1995) policy advocacy needs analysis framework is used to analyze the educational, economic, social, political, and moral/ethical dimensions of the proposed policy, and to identify related best practices in professional learning for bilingual educators. Guskey’s (2002) five-level professional development framework and Escamilla’s (2014) biliteracy observation protocol are utilized in the policy’s implementation plan and assessment plan.
PREFACE: LEADERSHIP LESSONS LEARNED

While writing the Change Leadership Plan a year ago, I began to realize that the professional learning opportunities offered within Brighton School District 32 were not sufficient for the growth of the bilingual teachers in the district. After reflecting upon the high quality experiences provided to monolingual classroom teachers, I became passionate about advocating for the same experiences for the bilingual teachers who had been crying out for more support. I knew something had to be done when the most senior teacher in the bilingual program at Taft Elementary School, where I serve as principal, resigned just weeks before students were due to arrive in classrooms for the fall and I was required to fill the position with yet another inexperienced bilingual teacher. No more could we allow our bilingual students to suffer as we placed novice teachers in front of them year after year. Teacher quality in the bilingual program had to be on the top of the list of priorities within the district, and I knew it must be the focus of my policy advocacy document.

Through researching and writing this policy advocacy document, I learned many lessons essential for my current role as a principal and for my future as a district administrator. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 2015) publishes ten Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, which serve as a guide for the role of school administrators. The policy I advocate for in this document, to provide personalized professional learning to bilingual educators, attends to each standard; in particular, Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness, Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel, and Standard 10: School Improvement are addressed. By
providing in-depth, intensive professional development to bilingual educators, we will see increases in educational equity, teacher capacity, and student outcomes.

Advocating increased funding for professional learning for teachers might seem a controversial or risky policy position to take, especially in smaller, cash-strapped communities where many may not see or understand how sustained, focused learning to improve teachers’ professional practice can and does positively affect student outcomes. These community stakeholders, and even other professional educators, may believe it more beneficial to put any additional dollars to use “directly” for students by hiring an additional teacher, classroom aide, or more curriculum materials, for instance.

However, there is a bigger picture to consider. Nationwide, we see teacher shortages, teachers leaving one district for another next door for better pay, particularly in the hard-to-fill areas like bilingual education. And, each year, a growing number of teachers simply leave the profession altogether, due in large part to the increasing demands and responsibilities placed on educators. Principals and school district hiring officials have proclaimed for years that university teacher education programs do not adequately prepare teachers for their jobs. At the same time, first-year, novice, and significant numbers of veteran teachers have been asking for more on-site, in-house professional learning needed to address the educational and social-emotional needs of a rapidly changing, more diverse, and more mobile student population. It is time to invest in the professional learning needs of our teachers, and in particular, our bilingual educators, to ensure that students in all classrooms receive a high-quality education.
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SECTION ONE: VISION STATEMENT

Statement of the Problem

Brighton School District 32 is in the process of transitioning from a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program to a Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) program at the elementary level. DBE programs, also known as late-exit or maintenance programs, “aim to promote high levels of academic achievement in all curricular areas and full academic language proficiency in the students’ first and second languages” (Genesee, 1999). Not only has the school district expanded the program from Grade 2 to Grade 5, they have also changed the overall purpose of the program to one in which biliteracy in both English and Spanish is the goal. Currently, students in BSD32 who qualify for services in the district’s bilingual program have scored a low level of English proficiency on a language assessment administered upon registering for school. Thus, they begin their education in a self-contained Spanish bilingual program from pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2. At the end of Grade 2, some of these students matriculate to a monolingual English classroom, while others continue to receive services in a bilingual or Sheltered English classroom in Grade 3. Students in the Sheltered English classrooms are taught in English by certified Spanish bilingual teachers who provide native language support as needed. In Grades 4 and 5, students who continue to need support in learning English are placed into Sheltered English classes as well.

Staffing these additional bilingual classrooms has proven challenging for all principals in District 32, as recruiting and retaining quality bilingual Spanish teachers with the appropriate certification is a daunting task. Of the 20 bilingual teachers at the elementary level, only five have tenure in the district. Three-quarters of the bilingual
teachers have fewer than four years of experience. This amount of turnover in the bilingual department makes teaching and learning difficult for the students and staff and has hampered the progress in moving from a transitional program to a developmental program model with biliteracy as the focus.

As the principal of Taft School, one of two elementary schools in the district, I have been involved in the process of redesigning the bilingual program model for over a year. In an interview conducted with five bilingual teachers for a change leadership plan, the teachers cited rapid turnover in the Director of English Language Learning position as well as lack of support from district and building administrators who are not trained in ESL or bilingual education as reasons many teachers do not stay in the district. Many bilingual teachers have also pointed to the lack of experience of teachers in the department as a hardship, as they feel there is nowhere to turn for support among their colleagues. Additionally, the team has mentioned the lack of support for new teachers, including infrequent professional learning opportunities that are specifically dedicated to teaching English Learners, as a reason for the frequent turnover (Robinson, 2015).

To address the above issues in a systemic way, because of the many changes in the program, the inexperience of the majority of the teachers in the bilingual department, and the lack of administrative knowledge of and support for the growth of bilingual teachers, the district needs to commit to a policy of providing ongoing in-service professional development for bilingual teachers that gives them the tools they need to be successful now and in the future within Brighton School District 32. Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) identify several elements of effective professional development for teachers, emphasizing that learning experiences must be
“intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice” and that professional development should focus on building collaborative relationships among educators (p. 9-11).

Critical Issues

Brighton School District 32 services nearly 2,200 students in a small village in the western suburbs of the city of Chicago. The demographics of the school district in 2014 included 35% English learners, most of whom speak Spanish as their first language. All students enrolled in public schools in the state of Illinois are required to take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments in English in Grade 3. Given the double load of learning both Spanish and English in less than four years, the students in the bilingual program need and deserve the best instruction from the most effective teachers, and the teachers need more frequent professional development to meet this immediate and future challenge. The mostly inexperienced teachers working in Brighton’s bilingual department must be given ample opportunities to learn with and from colleagues to grow. I believe that a more holistic, personalized approach to professional development will attract quality bilingual teacher candidates and will aide in the retention of District 32’s current bilingual teachers.

The Illinois State Board of Education supplies the Illinois Administrative Code, which gives professional development requirements for bilingual educators in public schools. The current requirements include at least two professional learning opportunities each school year that address one or more of the following areas:

A) current research in bilingual education; B) content-area and language proficiency assessment of English learners; C) research-based methods and techniques for teaching English learners; D) research-based methods and
techniques for teaching English learners who also have disabilities; and E) the culture and history of the United States and of the country, territory, or geographic area that is the native land of the students or of their parents (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE], 2016b).

Additionally, districts with a Transitional Bilingual Education program for students who speak Spanish, like Brighton School District 32, are required to provide at least one training session each year related to the integration of Spanish language arts standards into the curriculum for the bilingual staff who are teaching Spanish language arts (ISBE, 2016b). Unfortunately, some of these requirements have not consistently been introduced in Brighton School District 32 and should be implemented immediately. Furthermore, I would argue that these requirements do not go nearly far enough in providing the tools and supports the new and inexperienced bilingual teachers in the district need to successfully transition to a biliteracy program model, particularly when veteran, experienced teacher leaders in this department are few.

Beginning teacher quality is not only an issue of concern in the bilingual department in Brighton School District 32, but it is also a concern throughout the nation. Gagnon and Mattingly (2015) argue that inexperienced teachers provide a lower quality education than teachers who have been teaching for at least two years. In analyzing beginning teacher rates in high- and low-poverty schools, the authors found that high-poverty schools tended to have many more inexperienced teachers than low-poverty schools. Gagnon and Mattingly suggest that the results of these differences in teacher experience and quality may contribute to the achievement gap between students of color and poverty and their peers. Recommendations to combat these issues of inequity include
the creation of policies that specifically combat teacher turnover. High quality professional development and mentorship are important strategies to retain novice teachers and improve the quality of instruction students receive (p. 233).

Recommended Policy and Envisioned Effects

The policy recommendation in Brighton School District 32 is the implementation of a comprehensive professional development plan for the bilingual educators which extends far beyond the state requirements of two professional development sessions on topics related to the field of bilingual education. This proposed policy provides a full-time consulting teacher (CT) for the bilingual department through the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program, which has already been established in Brighton School District 32 for monolingual teachers. The PAR program, first developed in the 1980s in the Toledo, Ohio public schools, was designed for improving teacher quality by assigning a teacher, who has been rated Excellent in his or her practice, to give feedback and provide individualized support and mentorship to novice teachers (Goldstein, 2007). Studies conducted in districts that have implemented a PAR program have found that new teacher attrition was reduced by more than 10% over districts without such a program (Darling-Hammond, 2013). These results provide hope for the future of the bilingual department in Brighton School District 32.

Some schools and districts employ an instructional coach to provide professional development and mentoring to teachers. In contrast, this policy advocates for hiring a consulting teacher rather than an instructional coach due to the addition of an evaluation component in the consulting teacher role. The ability for the consulting teacher to evaluate teachers in the bilingual program is advantageous for two reasons. First, because
the consulting teacher must be trained in the evaluation process, it can be argued that he or she is more intimately familiar with the Danielson framework that is used to evaluate teachers in the district (Danielson, 2013). As a trained evaluator, the consulting teacher understands the finer details within the rubric and can more easily identify areas of strength and weakness related to the Danielson components. Another advantage of the consulting teacher being able to evaluate teachers is a response to the concerns raised by bilingual teachers in the district that they have no evaluators that have any expertise in the area of bilingual education. The bilingual consulting teacher would provide the expertise as an evaluator that these teachers have been looking for.

The bilingual consulting teacher will provide professional learning opportunities for individual bilingual teachers in addition to developing a series of workshops to be delivered to the entire bilingual department over the course of the school year. In this way, bilingual educators will receive ongoing training on best practices in bilingual education that will be job-embedded and related directly to their classrooms with their students with real-world application. The consulting teacher will serve as the mentor for new teachers, model instruction, and help the teachers plan and deliver effective biliteracy lessons. Each teacher will receive individualized support based on his or her areas of strength and areas in need of development. Drago-Severson (2009) asserts that adult learning is most effective when developmental diversity is addressed. She explains that adults make sense of their experiences in different ways based on their “ways of knowing,” which vary from person to person (p. 9). The consulting teacher will be able to attend to these learning differences by providing personalized learning experiences for each teacher in the bilingual department.
With a full-time bilingual consulting teacher to provide ongoing feedback, support, and personalized professional development to the teachers in the bilingual program, the effectiveness of the inexperienced teachers will increase. Teachers will feel more supported and will likely remain in the district as a result. Students will be positively affected through effective biliteracy instruction. Student achievement in both English and Spanish will increase in response to the effective teaching.
SECTION TWO: ANALYSIS OF NEED

Introduction

In this section, the proposed policy to provide personalized professional learning opportunities for bilingual teachers through the employment of a bilingual consulting teacher in Brighton School District 32 is analyzed through five different lenses: educational, economic, social, political, and moral and ethical (Browder, 1995). In the educational analysis section, the impact on teaching and learning is addressed. In the economic analysis section, the cost to implement the proposed policy is discussed, along with the long-term economic impact on bilingual students. In the social analysis section, the proposed policy’s impact on the school, community, and society at large are considered. In the political analysis section, the controversial nature of bilingual education is addressed. Finally, in the moral and ethical analysis section, equitable access to quality instruction for all students is examined.

Educational Analysis

Teacher quality is arguably the most important factor for student success. The quality of the education provided by a teacher greatly influences student achievement. Without highly qualified, competent, and capable teachers, teaching and learning is compromised and students are likely to have a less than adequate schooling experience (Bétielle, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Drago-Severson, 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Hattie, 2009; Weisberg et al., 2009). For students in the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32, access to high quality teachers has been a concern for several years. More than half of the teachers in this department are inexperienced in the field and new to the district.
Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) assert that teachers reach their peak effectiveness in years eight through 20 (p. 178). Only four out of 20 (20%) of the bilingual educators across the district have eight or more years of teaching experience.

Additionally, access to quality mentoring and support for new teachers in the department is limited because there are few experienced bilingual educators to provide these services. This lack of experience and access to support affects teacher quality, making it essential that the district and school leadership provide high quality, personalized professional development for the teachers in the bilingual program.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) discuss elements of high quality teaching that must be in place to maximize student learning. High quality teachers are constantly seeking new ways to improve instruction. They collaborate effectively with colleagues to plan and deliver lessons to students. They carefully analyze student data to inform instruction and plan interventions for those students who need it. Becoming a high quality educator is not easy and it does not happen by chance; rather, it takes high levels of education and ongoing professional learning in order to achieve.

The majority of students who enter the bilingual program in BSD32 have significant factors that contribute to learning difficulties, such as poverty, lack of access to quality health care, and low levels of pre-literacy skills and school readiness. These barriers to educational success may not be overcome by ineffective teachers. English Learners (ELs) have not been able to keep pace academically with their non-EL peers in the district, as evidenced by an analysis of achievement on standardized and local assessments. For example, on the 2015 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for
College and Careers (PARCC) in District 32, ELs scored significantly lower than their monolingual peers in both reading and mathematics (see tables 1 and 2).

Table 1

2015 PARCC ELA Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>English Learners - Meets/Exceeds</th>
<th>All Students - Meets/Exceeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

2015 PARCC Mathematics Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>English Learners - Meets/Exceeds</th>
<th>All Students - Meets/Exceeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nationwide, the same trend exists. The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) found English Learners to earn scores significantly lower than their monolingual peers on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). On the 2013 Grade 4 NAEP Reading Assessment, for example, the average score for ELs was 187 and for non-ELs the average score was 226, a discrepancy of 39 points. A similar gap is found on the 2013 NAEP Mathematics Assessment, where ELs earned a score of 219 and non-ELs averaged 244, a discrepancy of 25 points (OELA, 2015b). Moreover, the achievement gap between ELs and their monolingual peers increased significantly from Grade 4 to Grade 12 in both reading and mathematics, indicating a potential over time for English Learners to fall farther behind
their peers. To overcome these significant gaps in achievement between English Learners and their monolingual peers, effective teachers who are able to counteract learning challenges and provide the best education to ELs possible are essential. Providing a bilingual consulting teacher who will support the inexperienced bilingual teachers and develop them into highly effective educators will address these concerns.

Economic Analysis

In this era of financial instability in the state of Illinois, it is incumbent upon school leaders to demonstrate fiscal responsibility. In an article in the Naperville Sun newspaper, Danahey and Bookwalter (2016) reported on Illinois’ state budget woes and its effect on public education. Illinois’ Republican Governor and the largely Democratic Legislature have been at odds for more than a year and have failed to pass a budget. Because going into a second fiscal year without a budget in place would place many school districts at risk and leave some unable to open for students in the fall, the Governor passed a stopgap measure to release money for public schools. Danahey and Bookwalter (2016) explain that while this temporary measure will help schools immediately, it is nowhere near a permanent resolution to the state budget crisis that has persisted for more than a year. In the face of such economic uncertainty for public schools in Illinois, the economic impact of any new policy in the school district must be closely analyzed, with costs and benefits weighed carefully.

To implement the proposed policy, an additional full-time teacher must be hired. This teacher will serve as the bilingual consulting teacher who will provide personalized professional learning experiences for every non-tenured teacher in the bilingual department, as well as design and deliver professional development opportunities geared
specifically to bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. The cost to the district to hire an additional teacher for this program is approximately $75,000 per year for three years. Therefore, the overall cost associated for the entire length of the program is approximately $225,000. While this figure may appear at first to be high, the increase in effectiveness of bilingual educators, rise in student achievement as a result, and decrease in teacher turnover in the bilingual program far outweigh this cost.

Odden (2012) asserts that even in tight times, school districts must prioritize professional development for teachers. First, providing high quality professional development leads to increases in student achievement, which is the overall goal of all school systems. Second, teachers who have been given adequate support, mentoring, and collegiality are more likely to stay in the position, providing consistency for students and reducing the likelihood of high levels of attrition (Drago-Severson, 2009; Kang, 2011; Shakrani, 2008). Teacher turnover in the bilingual department in Brighton School District 32 has become rampant with many teachers citing lack of support as a key reason they chose to leave the district or the profession.

Odden estimates the cost of teacher attrition to be $7,000 to $12,000 per teacher (2012, p. 83). Levy, Joy, Ellis, Jablonski, and Karelit (2012) claim there are numerous additional hidden costs, such as administrator and teacher time spent to fill vacancies and acclimate new teachers to the system, which are often not factored into the cost of teacher attrition. The authors also indicate that the hard-to-fill positions, such as science teachers in their case study, cost much more in terms of recruitment time and effort, as well as professional development for highly specialized areas. For example, in the Boston Public Schools, Levy et al. found that teacher attrition costs between $19,460 and $39,170 per
teacher (p. 120). In the past three years, Brighton School District 32 has lost nine educators in the bilingual department, costing the district nearly $100,000 according to Odden’s estimate, but likely much more due to the difficulty in recruiting and hiring bilingual teachers. The high cost of attrition is reason to implement a more strategic, intensive, and individualized level of support to the bilingual educators in the district.

In addition to analyzing the economic impact to the district, the proposed policy must be analyzed to determine the long-term economic impact on the students in the bilingual program. Providing ongoing mentoring and individualized support to bilingual educators will not only increase the likelihood that they will stay in the district, it will also increase the effectiveness of these teachers and have a positive impact on student achievement and outcomes for children in the bilingual program. In Brighton School District 32, biliteracy is the expected outcome for students exiting the bilingual program. Children who become fully literate in both English and Spanish have significant advantages as they leave school and enter the work force. Bialystok (2011) found that bilinguals have cognitive advantages over monolinguals, including better executive control, working memory, and attention. Recently, several states, including Illinois, have introduced a State Seal of Biliteracy to be awarded to students who graduate from high school literate in two or more languages, including English. The introduction of such an award highlights the benefits of biliteracy as students enter college and careers.

Porras, Ee, and Gándara (2014) surveyed human resource directors and recruiters from several industries in the state of California. The results indicate that bilingual candidates were solicited in more than half of all open positions across ten fields. In the health care, retail, and educational services fields, 90% or more of the employers sought
bilingual candidates for their open positions. When employers were asked if they would give an advantage to a bilingual candidate over a monolingual candidate, given all other factors were equal, 66% said yes. Furthermore, employers responded that they believe bilingual employees to add more value to their companies than monolingual candidates. These results indicate that biliterate students have a long-term economic advantage over monolingual students.

Social Analysis

The Illinois State Board of Education publishes a document entitled, *Equitable Access to Educational Excellence: Framing Services for English Learners in Illinois*, which guides schools and districts in providing the highest quality services for English Learners. The authors define a vision for ELs in Illinois:

Multiliteracies and multilingualism offer both individual and societal advantages. Students’ home language(s) should play an essential role in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Students should be encouraged to use their existing skills across languages in the acquisition of new knowledge. Furthermore, development of pathways to multiliteracies will ultimately contribute to students’ college and career readiness (2016a, p. viii).

Providing a full-time consulting teacher to meet the professional learning needs of the bilingual educators in Brighton School District 32 will benefit the students, the community, and society in many ways. When students have access to high quality instruction on a daily basis, they will achieve at higher rates. Successful students are more likely to contribute to their schools, communities, and society. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the entire Brighton community to invest in the bilingual program.
The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) found that the graduation rate for English Learners (ELs) in the United States lags far behind all other subgroups. In the 2011-2012 school year, the national graduation rate was 80%, but only 59% of English Learners earned their diplomas. The large percentage of ELs who did not graduate from high school present a challenge to society, as earning potential for these citizens is greatly reduced. The U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) reports that the average weekly earnings for employees without a high school diploma are $494 per week, whereas employees with a high school diploma are $679 per week. This difference of $185 per week translates into nearly $10,000 per year for a full-time employee. When ELs are exposed to high quality instruction and have the opportunity to develop literacy in both English and their native language, they will be less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to earn higher wages as adults. The positive impact this earning power has on the community and society is immeasurable.

Political Analysis

In the United States, bilingual education is often a politically charged and contentious issue. There are many who believe that the role of the public schools should be to instruct students in English only, and several states have banned native language instruction in public schools. Others believe strongly that bilingualism is an asset and students deserve the opportunity to retain their native language through quality instruction in that language at school. Illinois Administrative Code 23, Part 228 mandates the establishment of a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program that provides
instruction in a student’s native language and English for any public school with enrollment of 20 or more ELs who speak the same language (ISBE, 2016b).

In Brighton School District 32, the Spanish bilingual program has recently begun to transition from a TBE program, with the focus on preparing children to be instructed in English by the end of Grade 2, to a Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) program, with an emphasis on maintaining the native language and developing fully biliterate students by the end of Grade 5. This programmatic change was questioned by some educators within the district who believe that extending instruction in Spanish will produce children who are not fully proficient in English by the time they move to the middle school. However, longitudinal research comparing student outcomes in both program models have shown that extended DBE programs are the only bilingual program models that have consistently produced students who achieve at or above the 50th percentile in English in all subject areas. Additionally, DBE programs produce fewer high school dropouts than the transitional programs (Thomas & Collier, 2003). Despite the political nature of bilingual education, Brighton School District 32 is fortunate to be part of a community that supports the development of biliterate students.

To successfully implement a Developmental Bilingual Education model emphasizing biliteracy, teachers must be properly trained. Providing appropriate professional learning opportunities for bilingual educators is another controversial issue in the field of education. Téllez and Varghese (2013) studied professional development offerings for bilingual teachers in the United States and found access to quality learning opportunities focused specifically on bilingual education to be insufficient. The authors contend that because the field of bilingual education is controversial in the U.S., limited
opportunities exist to build the capacity for these professionals. Therefore, they argue that bilingual educators must serve as advocates for their own learning and that of the students they serve. Several recommendations given to bilingual educators include partnering with the teacher union, gathering longitudinal data from research in their classrooms, connecting with key leaders in the community who are proponents of bilingual education, and remaining professional when advocating for teacher and student needs (p. 133).

Bilingual educators in Brighton School District 32 have professionally advocated for their needs and those of their students. The addition of a bilingual consulting teacher will be a step in the right direction toward fulfilling those needs.

Moral and Ethical Analysis

Building capacity for bilingual educators in Brighton School District 32 is a moral and ethical imperative. The students in the bilingual program need access to high quality instruction to reach their potential and it is not an easy task to ensure that teachers have the knowledge, skills, and attributes to become effective educators. Elmore (2004) describes the “principle of reciprocity” that must be addressed for any improvements in teaching and learning to occur. This principle suggests that for every unit of performance demanded of a teacher, a school leader must provide an equal unit of capacity (p. 244). While this principle may seem like common sense, building teacher capacity is not always at the forefront of school and district improvement plans. In this age of constant reform in the field of education, higher demands have been placed on educators to teach to new standards and to develop curriculum and assessments aligned to those standards. New accountability systems have been put in place, and teacher evaluation has changed
dramatically. Despite these changes, teacher efficacy and capacity has not been adequately addressed.

In Brighton School District 32, nowhere is this lack of capacity building more evident than in the bilingual department. Professional learning opportunities have been plentiful within the district; however, most of those opportunities have not been focused specifically on the content, knowledge, and skills needed to improve teaching and learning in bilingual classrooms. The district must put new professional learning opportunities in place to meet the requirements for bilingual educator professional development outlined in Illinois Administrative Code 23, Part 228 (ISBE, 2016). Moreover, because the program model in the bilingual department has recently changed, teachers are in need of intensive, ongoing professional development in order to successfully implement a biliteracy model in the classroom. It is the moral imperative of all educational leaders to ensure that all teachers receive the proper training, support, and mentoring necessary to provide the best education to all students.

In 2015, Brighton School District 32 engaged in a strategic planning process and developed a new mission statement. The mission of the district is to “maximize the unique potential of each child by honoring a natural curiosity and igniting a desire to learn.” Embedded in this succinct statement is the concept of educational equity and a belief that all children can learn. It is the responsibility of the school district to provide the highest quality instruction for all children in order to help them reach their potential. This task must become a priority for the English Learners in Brighton School District 32, who have been exposed to less experienced educators than their monolingual peers. Weisberg et al. (2009) maintain that when high needs students, such as the English
Learners in BSD32, are exposed to “three highly effective teachers in a row… they may outperform students taught by three ineffective teachers in a row by as much as 50 percentile points” (p. 9). Providing bilingual educators with access to a full-time consulting teacher who will personalize learning for each teacher will increase equity and outcomes for the students who need high quality instruction the most. Because a quality education can open the door to opportunities for children of color, poverty, and those with language barriers, ensuring that students in the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32 have access to the most effective educators must be the “true north” on our educational compass.
SECTION THREE: ADVOCATED POLICY STATEMENT

The policy being advocated for is to provide ongoing, intensive, and personalized professional development to the bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32 as they move to a Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) program model, which emphasizes biliteracy. These professional learning experiences will be provided through the addition of a full-time bilingual consulting teacher through the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program. The consulting teacher would provide mentoring and support for the bilingual teachers to increase their effectiveness in the classroom.

Policy Goals and Objectives

The proposed policy to provide personalized professional learning opportunities for all bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32 has four overarching goals: 1) to increase the effectiveness of bilingual teachers; 2) to improve retention rates of bilingual teachers; 3) to provide for consistent implementation of biliteracy strategies; and 4) to improve student learning outcomes. If these goals are met, the bilingual program in BSD32 will be able to provide equitable educational opportunities for the bilingual students that will accelerate their growth and narrow the achievement gap that currently exists in the district.

*Increase the Effectiveness of Bilingual Teachers*

The primary goal of this policy is to increase the capacity and effectiveness of the bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32. The bilingual teachers have not received the kind of intensive and personalized support that the general education teachers in the district have received. In addition, the bilingual teachers have been charged with moving from a traditional TBE model to an extended DBE program model.
emphasizing biliteracy. A programmatic change such as this requires ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers, as they are expected to change their curriculum and the way in which they teach. Objectives in meeting the goal for increasing the effectiveness of bilingual teachers include increasing teachers’ understanding of the Spanish and English language arts standards and biliteracy teaching practices, as well as enhancing their ability to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the wide variety of English Learners in their classrooms.

It is essential that English Learners in the district be provided with a high quality education that leads to improved outcomes, and for that to occur, they must be exposed to effective teachers. Goe and Stickler (2008) analyzed dozens of research studies related to teacher quality and found that what makes a teacher “good” varies greatly, but there are some characteristics that are true of effective teachers. First, effective teachers are able to clearly communicate learning targets and success criteria to students at the outset of each lesson. Second, they align curriculum and assessments to rigorous standards. Next, they employ instructional practices that engage students in active learning. Finally, they use formative assessments and ongoing feedback to assist in the learning process.

Furthermore, Samson and Collins (2012) assert that to effectively meet the needs of English Learners, teachers must emphasize oral language development, develop students’ academic language, and value cultural diversity. The consulting teacher’s role will include increasing bilingual teachers’ understanding of the curriculum, standards, content, and instructional practice through personalized learning opportunities.
**Improve Retention Rates of Bilingual Teachers**

A second goal of the proposed policy is to provide stability to the personnel in the bilingual department in Brighton School District 32. Rapid teacher turnover in the past several years has resulted in a dearth of experienced bilingual teachers, and as a result, new teachers have few mentors and little support from colleagues. Teacher turnover not only has negative impacts on teachers and students, but it also takes a financial toll on the district. By providing new bilingual teachers with a consulting teacher that will be able to give the support and mentorship they need, teacher attrition will be reduced.

Inman and Marlow (2004) conducted a study to determine the factors that impact a beginning teacher’s decision to stay in his or her current position. Teachers in their first three years in the profession indicated that a strong mentoring program, collaborative colleagues, supportive administrators, and a positive community influenced their decisions to stay in a particular position. In Brighton School District 32, the additional professional development and mentoring provided by a bilingual consulting teacher would make a positive impact on each of these important factors.

To meet the goal of improving the retention rates of bilingual teachers, several objectives must be met. First, the district must begin to explore more creative ways to recruit qualified bilingual teachers. They may consider widening the search for bilingual teachers from a regional search to a national, or even international, search. The district may consider traveling to states or countries with large populations of Spanish-speaking educators, such as Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, or Mexico. Once candidates have been recruited, salary and benefits for these hard-to-fill positions may need to be addressed differently than the typical teacher salary schedule negotiated in the teacher contract.
Finally, to retain qualified bilingual candidates, a strong mentoring program and a collaborative, positive community, including supportive administrators and teachers, must be established. The addition of a bilingual consulting teacher would provide mentoring and would be a positive and supportive part of the new teachers’ community.

*Provide for Consistent Implementation of Biliteracy Strategies*

Another goal to be achieved with the proposed policy is the consistent implementation of biliteracy strategies in the bilingual classrooms. Due to the high numbers of inexperienced teachers and the lack of mentoring and support in the program, it has been difficult to make the change from a traditional TBE model to a DBE program with an emphasis on biliteracy. The bilingual teachers are in different places in their understanding of biliteracy and many of the new teachers have had no professional development in the biliteracy model. As a result, there is little consistency throughout the program in the implementation of biliteracy teaching strategies. The bilingual consulting teacher’s role would include lesson planning, observing, and modeling of biliteracy strategies in each classroom to develop a consistent framework for the team.

To reach this goal, the bilingual consulting teacher would determine a plan for professional development for each new bilingual teacher. Drago-Severson (2009) highlights the importance of understanding the varying needs of adults in the learning process, just as an effective teacher would do in a classroom filled with diverse students. The bilingual consulting teacher would first need to identify the individual learning needs of each bilingual teacher and then customize a plan for professional development for each teacher that would result in effective implementation of biliteracy strategies in each classroom, thus bringing consistency and stability to the district’s bilingual program.
Improve Student Learning Outcomes

The final goal to be achieved through the adoption of the proposed policy, to improve student learning outcomes, is certainly the most important. It will likely take time to see increases in student achievement as a result of high quality professional learning opportunities for bilingual teachers, but there is an expectation that delivering more effective instruction in the classroom will lead to better student outcomes on local, state, and national assessments. Because there are many factors that impact student learning outcomes, including those outside of the control of the school, it can be difficult to find a direct correlation between professional learning and student achievement. However, the school district must keep a close eye on formal and informal measures of student growth over time. Increases in student achievement should be seen as a result of the implementation of this policy as bilingual teachers become more effective in delivering instruction and as the personnel in the bilingual department become more stable.

Stakeholder Needs, Values, and Preferences

Stakeholders represented by this policy include the bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32. Each teacher in the bilingual program has different needs, values, and preferences that can be addressed through the unique, personalized professional learning plan that will be developed in partnership with the bilingual consulting teacher. Some teachers will need to develop classroom management skills, while others will be experts in that area. Some teachers in the program will need intensive support in lesson planning, while others will not. The needs, values, and preferences of each teacher in addition to the intended outcomes of the program – to develop effective teachers of biliteracy – will
serve as a guide for the bilingual consulting teacher as he or she develops personalized learning plans.

Additionally, the bilingual students are indirectly represented by the proposed policy, as students are impacted by the quality of education they receive from their classroom teachers. Students’ needs, values, and preferences have been considered in the development of the policy. Well-trained, effective teachers are much more skilled in meeting the needs of individual students than beginning teachers with minimal training. Saphier (2005) explains the difference between beginning and experienced teachers in this way, “Expertise [in teaching] consists in making choices and making decisions based on expert knowledge. These choices are drawn from an extensive repertoire of approaches and practices: a repertoire that beginners do not have no matter how talented or dedicated they may be” (p. 14). Without experienced teachers to guide them, the bilingual students in Brighton School District 32 are missing out on the expertise they deserve.

Rationale for Validity of the Policy

“Every student deserves a great teacher, not by chance, but by design” (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016, p. 2). This powerful opening statement of the book, Visible Learning for Literacy, reminds educators of the great responsibility we have to provide the best education possible to students. The bilingual students in Brighton School District 32, most of whom are at-risk students living in poverty, require the most effective educators possible if they are going to be able to reach the lofty goal of biliteracy by the end of their fifth-grade year. Effective teaching requires skill and expertise that does not come naturally. Rather, good teaching requires deep knowledge of content and
appropriate teaching strategies. Good teaching can be accomplished only through a process of continual improvement, and it requires collaboration and sharing practice with other effective educators (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The proposed policy to add a bilingual consulting teacher to improve the effectiveness of the new, inexperienced teachers in the bilingual program will ensure that the highest quality educators are delivering instruction to the students of BSD32.

The long-term goal of the implementation of this policy is to produce better outcomes for students in the bilingual program. Experienced, effective teachers are able to positively impact student achievement more than inexperienced or ineffective teachers. In *The Widget Effect*, Weisberg et al (2009) assert, “The lesson from decades of research is clear: teachers matter. Some teachers are capable of generating exceptional learning growth in students; others are not, and a small group actually hinders their students’ academic progress” (p. 9). When faced with this reality, it seems incomprehensible that a school district would not want to invest money into providing high quality professional learning experiences to every teacher in order to increase his or her effectiveness, which will ultimately lead to higher levels of student achievement.
SECTION FOUR: POLICY ARGUMENT

When considering the adoption of any new policy, it is essential to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of the policy. Providing high quality, personalized professional development for bilingual teachers is a costly proposal at more than $200,000 over three years. Before enacting this policy in Brighton School District 32, we must consider the arguments for and against the policy.

Counter-Argument

To provide the kind of intensive professional learning that is necessary for the bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32 to improve, the district will need to hire a full-time bilingual consulting teacher. Adding an additional staff member is costly and an argument could be made to provide professional development through other, less costly means. For example, the Director for English Language Learning could plan a book study for the bilingual teachers and get them together for monthly collaborative conversations about biliteracy instructional practices. This professional learning opportunity would be much more cost-effective than a consulting teacher and would provide a basic level of development on strategies teachers should be implementing in their classrooms. A slightly more expensive option for professional development that would still be less costly than adding a bilingual consulting teacher would be to send some of the bilingual teachers to a workshop or conference centered on biliteracy instruction and then require those teachers to relay the information learned to the rest of the department. Both of these professional development options, and countless others similar to these, would meet the basic requirements set out by the Illinois State Board of
Education in Illinois Administrative Code 228 (ISBE, 2016b) and would cost the district very little.

Another argument against providing personalized professional development to bilingual teachers through the addition of a bilingual consulting teacher is that the district already provides high quality professional learning opportunities for monolingual teachers, much of which are applicable to the bilingual classrooms. When professional development is delivered on close reading strategies, questioning techniques, or speaking and listening standards, for example, the bilingual teachers can benefit from the same knowledge and skills. Some educators would argue that good teaching is good teaching no matter who the children are in the classroom. They may contend that bilingual teachers do not need professional development that is specifically targeted to bilingual education.

Argument

The arguments above against the proposal to provide intensive professional learning opportunities to bilingual educators by hiring a bilingual consulting teacher may be valid and compelling for some educators and policymakers. However, there is a great deal of research on effective professional learning for teachers that must be reviewed to determine the best course of action for developing strong bilingual teachers that choose to stay in the district. DuFour (2004) asserts that quality professional learning takes place in the school, not out at conferences or workshops where only one or two teachers benefit from the learning. He further declares that professional learning for teachers must be sustained over time rather than a short-term experience. The consulting teacher, who would work with individual teachers over the course of three years, would provide the
sustainability that is so important for teacher growth and development. Additionally, Odden (2012) purports that, “most professional development has little if any impact on teachers’ practice, unless it is accompanied with coaching” (p. 88). In Odden’s view, school districts may as well throw money away rather than invest in professional development for teachers that is not immediately applied in the classroom and embedded into their daily practice. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) found school-based coaching to be more effective in changing instructional practices than more traditional professional development activities, such as a book study or attendance at a workshop or conference. If the district leaders in BSD32 are serious about effecting real change in instructional practices in the bilingual classrooms, then providing coaching in the form of a consulting teacher may be the best option.

While many of the professional learning opportunities already provided to the monolingual teachers in the district are applicable to the bilingual teachers, there are elements of effective bilingual instruction that are not addressed in the current offerings. For example, bilingual teachers must be well versed on the similarities and differences between Spanish and English language and syntax, and they must also understand how to effectively teach children to compare the two languages. Likewise, the role of oracy and meta-language is emphasized in bilingual classrooms, where reading and writing tend to be the main emphasis in monolingual classrooms (Escamilla et al., 2014). Teachers who are required to deliver specialized content to students deserve the opportunity to learn, grow, and develop in those specific areas through targeted professional learning opportunities.
Moreover, bilingual teachers have differing ideas about exactly what bilingual
education is, what the goals of a bilingual program should be, and how best to teach the
two languages. Because there are many alternative methods of becoming a bilingual
certified educator, teachers come to the position with vastly different backgrounds and
pre-service training. For example, some bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32
are native English-speakers who received their training in elementary education and
passed a Spanish language proficiency examination to become certified as a bilingual
teacher. Other teachers in the district were born, raised, and completed their schooling in
a Spanish-speaking country, such as Mexico or Guatemala, learned English as a second
language, and then became certified to teach in the United States. Still other teachers
were raised in the United States as bilinguals and received their schooling in
bilingual/bicultural education. It is easy to see how these three different backgrounds
could lead to extremely diverse views and perspectives about bilingual education.
Varghese (2004) contends that the variations in teacher backgrounds also lead to
differences in instructional practices, which may impact the overall effectiveness of
instruction. For this reason, Varghese argues that bilingual teachers must receive specific
professional development about what it means to be a bilingual teacher so that all
members of the department or team have the same understanding and vision for success.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, a bilingual consulting teacher will be able
to provide personalized learning opportunities geared toward the specific strengths,
weaknesses, and interests of each teacher in the bilingual department. Drago-Severson
(2008) discusses four pillar practices that support adult learning, all of which are centered
on individualized support that takes into account the different needs and desires of each
adult. Not only will this personalization allow each teacher to grow and develop more than the traditional, one-size-fits-all models of professional development, but it also will increase the positive culture of the bilingual department, leading to the retention of bilingual teachers.

Teachers who feel adequately supported through a robust induction and mentoring program are more willing to stay in their positions than those who do not. An analysis of teacher attrition rates concluded that first-year teacher attrition dropped from 25% to under 12% when first-year teachers were given significant support during their first year of teaching (Shakrani, 2008). A bilingual consulting teacher will provide the support and guidance the bilingual teachers need in order to develop into effective teachers. This level of support will also positively impact the teacher retention rate, and will ultimately improve student outcomes in the bilingual program. Bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32 serve an essential function in developing our most at-risk population of students into fully biliterate citizens by the end of Grade 5. Because of the great importance of this task, these educators deserve the best professional learning opportunities possible.
SECTION FIVE: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Before committing to the adoption of a new policy, it is essential to have a well-developed plan for implementation. Providing personalized professional development and mentoring to bilingual teachers through the addition of a bilingual consulting teacher (CT) to the existing Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program in Brighton School District 32 involves many administrative considerations, including hiring practices, staff development, time schedules, program budgets, and progress monitoring activities.

Hiring Practices

A bilingual consulting teacher has the potential to make a significant impact on the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32. A competent and effective consulting teacher can positively impact the culture of the bilingual department and improve the teaching and learning in each classroom, ultimately leading to an increase in student achievement. To maximize the effectiveness of the new bilingual CT, rigorous hiring practices must be employed. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and National Education Association (NEA), the two largest education organizations in the United States, partnered together to develop a handbook for Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) programs (AFT/NEA, 1998). The two organizations advise local unions and school districts to adopt specific criteria for potential consulting teacher candidates. Many successful PAR programs require the candidates to:

- have taught successful for a specified number of years;
- be recognized as outstanding classroom teachers;
- demonstrate deep knowledge of the discipline(s) they teach;
• possess a repertoire of effective classroom management strategies and instructional techniques;
• have strong verbal skills, both orally and in writing; and
• have the ability to work cooperatively and effectively with others (AFT/NEA, 1998, p. 18).

In addition to requiring the above qualifications, the candidates are expected to undergo a thorough interview process, including a demonstration lesson and practice giving feedback to a teacher after observing a lesson. Both administrator and teacher representatives will serve on the hiring committee to make a joint decision about the ideal candidate for the position. When the above criteria have been required for candidates and the interview process contains multiple performance tasks, the likelihood of hiring an effective bilingual consulting teacher will be increased significantly.

Staff Development Plan

The staff development plan is the most important element of the implementation plan for the proposed policy. Because the policy’s focus is to provide individualized professional learning to improve the effectiveness of bilingual educators, lead to greater retention, and ultimately result in increases in student achievement in the bilingual program, the staff development plan must be thoughtfully developed and implemented. Intensive and high quality training for the bilingual consulting teacher must come before this individual is expected to deliver professional development to the educators in the bilingual department.
Training for the Bilingual Consulting Teacher

Once the bilingual consulting teacher has been selected, he or she must be trained to effectively support and evaluate teachers. First, the consulting teacher must become a certified evaluator by completing the professional development activities and passing assessments as outlined by the Illinois State Board of Education. This certification alone is not enough to effectively evaluate bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32. The CT will also need to work with the Assistant Superintendent for Learning as well as the building principals and other evaluators in the district to ensure inter-rater reliability with regards to teacher observation. To do this, experienced evaluators will observe lessons with the bilingual CT and discuss feedback and ratings to be given to the teacher observed. These practice observations will help acclimate the CT to the role of an evaluator before having to go through the process during a real evaluation cycle.

In addition to becoming an effective evaluator, the consulting teacher will need to increase capacity in coaching strategies, including how to give critical feedback in a productive manner. The CT may benefit from training in Cognitive Coaching (Edwards, 2016), which teaches structured conversations to facilitate the thinking of the novice teachers being coached. Though the bilingual consulting teacher who has been selected will have excellent interpersonal skills, the ability to engage in difficult conversations with struggling teachers that result in positive change requires specific strategies. Edwards (2016) cites multiple studies, including a 2014 study conducted by Jaede, Brosnan, Leigh and Stroot, which demonstrates that mentor teachers who engage in cognitive coaching conversations were more effective in reflecting upon their own practice and in helping their interns reflect on their practice as well. The effective
consulting teacher must have the tools to engage in these critical conversations with his or her colleagues in order to have the greatest impact on instruction.

Finally, because the consulting teacher will be responsible for providing personalized professional learning opportunities for individual teachers as well as for designing and developing presentations for the entire bilingual department, the consulting teacher will need to understand adult learning theory and the tenets of effective professional development for teachers. Darling-Hammond et al (2009), Drago-Severson (2009), DuFour (2004), Elmore (2004), and Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) all provide information on the strategies that work best for strengthening teacher practice.

**Staff Development for Participating Teachers**

As mentioned above, the bilingual consulting teacher will be responsible for designing and delivering professional development opportunities for individual teachers as well as the bilingual department as a whole. The Assistant Superintendent, Director for English Language Learning, and bilingual CT must work together to design these activities for staff throughout the school year. The consulting teacher will gather the entire bilingual department together, at a minimum once a month, for the purposes of collaborating together to learn effective biliteracy instructional practices. The professional development activities will include book study, peer observation, and immediate application of new learning into classroom instruction.

The consulting teacher will also work individually with all new bilingual teachers to provide personalized learning opportunities. Through regular and frequent observations, the consulting teacher will identify areas of strength and areas for growth of each new teacher in the department. The CT will collaborate with the new teacher to
develop goals and a plan for improving the areas in need of development. These professional learning opportunities will vary for each new teacher being supported.

Time Schedules

To implement this policy successfully, a conservative timeline is necessary. Due to the extensive professional development and training required for the bilingual consulting teacher, it would benefit the school district to spend a full school year on recruitment, hiring, and training so that full implementation can begin at the start of the following school year. A suggested timeline for implementation follows in the table below.

Table 3

Timeline for Policy Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>Seek approval from Board of Education to add bilingual consulting teacher position beginning July 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop job description for the position and seek approval from the Board of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post job opening and publicize position across the district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solicit recommendations from district employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organize hiring committee consisting of equal representation of teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November – December 2016</td>
<td>Conduct screening interviews and narrow the pool to a group of 3-4 finalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Invite finalists to teach demonstration lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Invite finalists to observe a lesson and develop a plan for providing feedback and professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>Select bilingual consulting teacher and seek Board of Education approval for the position beginning July 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February – June 2017</td>
<td>Provide professional development in the following areas: teacher evaluation, adult learning theory, effective professional development, coaching strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communicate the purpose for the position to bilingual staff, building principals, and district administration
Administer needs assessment to the bilingual teachers to be used to develop professional learning experiences
Develop bilingual CT caseload for 2017-2018 school year and communicate to participating teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>July – August 2017</th>
<th>Bilingual CT begins the new position with the following priorities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create yearlong plan for professional development for the bilingual department based on analysis of the needs assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop plan for supporting individual bilingual teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above timeline allows a substantial amount of time for the selected bilingual consulting teacher to transition into the new role. The CT will be given nearly six months to learn and develop the skills necessary to be successful from the very start of the new position. Without in-depth professional development for the bilingual consulting teacher, the amount of learning “on the job” would be significant and therefore assistance to participating teachers may be compromised at the start of the year. Thus, it is essential for the interview and selection of the bilingual consulting teacher occur well before the new school year begins.

Program Budget

The budget for implementing this policy involves primarily two items: the salary and benefits for the bilingual consulting teacher and the professional development materials and experiences for the CT as well as the participating teachers. Funds from the district account as well as from state and federal grants will be utilized to cover these
costs. The table below shows anticipated costs for the policy as well as the funding source to cover each cost.

Table 4

Anticipated Budget to Support the Addition of a Bilingual Consulting Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>District Funds</th>
<th>Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary and benefits</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Coaching training for bilingual CT</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration for annual bilingual education conference (CT and 2-3 bilingual teachers)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development materials and membership in professional organizations for bilingual CT</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum materials for participating teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$75,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table outlines a significant annual cost to the school district in the salary and benefits for the consulting teacher. Before committing to such a costly program, it is important to perform a cost-benefit analysis. A study conducted by Papay and Johnson (2012) determined that PAR programs were beneficial to the districts studied and that PAR programs may have actually saved the districts money in the long run by reducing teacher turnover and increasing teacher quality (p. 35). If, after weighing the costs and benefits of the program, the district does not believe there is a way to make such an investment, they may consider reducing a full-time teacher in another area in order to save money to cover the costs of the bilingual consulting teacher. In this case, it would be prudent to look carefully at the technology team for potential reductions in
staff. It could be argued that now that the 1:1 technology initiative has been fully implemented within the district, there is only the need for one district-wide technology specialist, rather than two. If one such position could be eliminated, it could cover at least $60,000 of the $75,000 salary and benefits allotted for the bilingual consulting teacher, thus making this policy implementation much more affordable for the school district.

Progress Monitoring Activities

To monitor progress and determine the effectiveness of the professional development provided by the bilingual consulting teacher, the program’s outcomes must be assessed annually, at a minimum. Guskey (2002) describes a five-level evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of any professional development opportunity. Figure 1 outlines these five levels of evaluation and will be utilized to monitor progress on the effectiveness of the bilingual consulting teacher (p. 48).
Participants’ Reactions and Learning

To address the first two levels of evaluation, participants’ reactions and learning, a short survey focused on teacher satisfaction of the PAR program will be administered annually. Teacher perception of their participation in the program is important to
consider, as one of the major goals of the policy is to provide support and mentoring to teachers to increase their satisfaction and influence their decision to remain in the district. The results of this annual survey will be analyzed by the consulting teacher and used to make adjustments in the process for the following year.

Another method to measure the effectiveness of the professional learning opportunities provided by the bilingual consulting teacher is to monitor the bilingual teachers’ evaluations. If new bilingual teachers in the district are well trained and supported, their ratings on the teacher evaluation plan should be in the proficient and distinguished ranges (Danielson, 2013). The bilingual CT, ELL Director, building principals, and Assistant Superintendent for Learning will identify components within the Danielson rubrics that have been addressed in the personalized professional learning plans for each teacher. At the end of each evaluation cycle, the ratings in each of these components will be monitored.

Organizational Change and Participants’ Use of New Knowledge

To address the change in the organization as well as participants’ application of new knowledge, progress will be monitored through classroom walkthroughs that focus on the elements of biliteracy that should be implemented in the bilingual classrooms. One goal addressed by the addition of a bilingual consulting teacher is to create more consistency in the bilingual classrooms throughout the district. To monitor progress in this area, a checklist containing essential biliteracy strategies, components, and visuals can be developed and routinely utilized in all bilingual classrooms across the district.
Student Learning Outcomes

Though student learning outcomes may not improve immediately as a result of hiring a new bilingual consulting teacher, it is an expectation over the long-term that increases in student achievement will be demonstrated. The school district’s PARCC assessment data, in addition to other locally developed assessments of student growth, will be analyzed annually to determine the policy’s impact on student achievement.
SECTION SIX: POLICY ASSESSMENT PLAN

Evaluation of the Policy’s Outcomes and Results

There are four goals for the proposed policy to provide personalized professional learning opportunities to bilingual teachers through the addition of a bilingual consulting teacher in Brighton School District 32. These goals are as follows: 1) increase the effectiveness of the bilingual teachers; 2) improve retention rates of the bilingual teachers; 3) provide for the consistent implementation of biliteracy strategies in all bilingual classrooms across the district; and 4) increase student learning outcomes for students in the bilingual program. A comprehensive assessment plan must be in place to accurately measure the outcomes for each of the four goals. These outcomes must be measured annually to determine the effectiveness of the policy and to make decisions about whether or not it makes sense to continue the policy each year.

Assessing Goal 1: Increase the Effectiveness of Bilingual Teachers

The principal goal behind providing intensive, individualized professional development to bilingual educators in BSD32 is to increase their effectiveness and efficacy. To assess the effectiveness of the bilingual teachers in BSD32, teacher evaluation metrics must be analyzed. Through their participation in personalized professional learning experiences led by the bilingual CT, each bilingual teacher will be expected to make improvements in their instructional planning, their teaching practices, and their professional responsibilities. These improvements will be able to be tracked through the formal observation ratings and summative evaluation ratings given to them through the teacher evaluation plan in the district. Each spring, these ratings must be
analyzed to determine if the professional learning has made an impact on overall teacher performance related to the Danielson framework used in the evaluation process.

In addition to analyzing the annual evaluation ratings of bilingual teachers in the district, portions of the Panorama Teacher Survey that is administered within the district twice annually will be analyzed to determine teacher perceptions on the feedback, coaching, and professional learning experiences they have received through the year (see Appendix A). If the program is successful, teachers who participate in the PAR program should indicate higher levels of satisfaction in the coaching and feedback they receive, as the bilingual consulting teacher will be conducting frequent observations with specific feedback to improve instruction.

Finally, as discussed in Section Five of this document, the value of the professional development provided by the consulting teacher will be measured. Guskey (2002) developed a five-level evaluation tool that will be utilized to determine the effectiveness of the personalized professional learning experiences. The results of satisfactions surveys and degree to which the new learning has been applied in the classroom will be analyzed.

Assessing Goal 2: Improve Retention Rates of Bilingual Teachers

Rapid turnover of teachers in the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32 has made it difficult to achieve consistent implementation of biliteracy instructional practices throughout the classrooms. When there is a revolving door of new, inexperienced teachers in the program and when experienced mentors are few, it can be nearly impossible to make improvements in the teaching and learning in the bilingual classrooms. Therefore, a primary goal for the implementation of the policy is to
positively affect the retention rates of the bilingual teachers. Retention data for teachers in the bilingual program throughout the district will be tracked and assessed annually. In addition, exit interviews for any bilingual teachers who leave the district will be reviewed to find any patterns or trends in the reasons teachers cite in leaving the district (e.g., compensation, working conditions, etc.) that may be addressed to improve retention in the future.

Assessing Goal 3: Provide for Consistent Implementation of Biliteracy Strategies

The large number of inexperienced teachers in the bilingual program has led to inconsistencies in the implementation of biliteracy strategies in the bilingual classrooms. Whereas some bilingual teachers who have been in the district for more than three years have had the opportunity to participate in professional development focused on biliteracy instruction, others have very little background in biliteracy teaching practices. The bilingual consulting teacher will be able to provide high quality personalized professional learning around the implementation of biliteracy strategies to each teacher. To assess the implementation of biliteracy strategies, an adapted version of the Literacy Squared Observation Protocol (Escamilla et al., 2014, pp. 187-188) will be used in classroom observations conducted by the consulting teacher and all evaluators of the bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32 (see Appendix B). The results of these focused observations will be analyzed and used to design future professional learning opportunities for bilingual teachers.

Assessing Goal 4: Increase Student Learning Outcomes

Because the goal for the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32 is to emphasize biliteracy, it is essential to assess the students’ English and Spanish progress
annually. The ACCESS for ELLs assessment given to all English Learners in the state of Illinois each January is one measure of English progress that will be utilized. In addition, students in Grades 2 – 5 will be assessed for English reading proficiency three times annually using the Jerry Johns Basic Reading Inventory. Spanish reading ability will also be measured three times annually through the Tejas LEE assessment. Finally, the results of students’ performance on the state-mandated PARCC assessment in Grades 3 – 5 will be analyzed. Performance of English Learners in the bilingual program will be compared with the performance of English Learners who are not enrolled in bilingual classes, as well as with the all student group, to determine if the significant achievement gap discussed in section two of this document persists or is narrowing as a result of the policy. These data will be triangulated and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the program in producing biliterate students by Grade 5.

Responsible Parties

There are multiple parties responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the proposed policy. District administrators, building principals, the bilingual consulting teacher, and the bilingual teachers participating in the PAR program all have responsibilities to ensure the successful implementation of this proposed policy.

School and District Administrators

First, school and district administrators who will be responsible for hiring and training the bilingual consulting teacher must be held accountable for completing this important work prior to the school year. If the recruiting, hiring, and training process is not well implemented, then the ability for the bilingual consulting teacher to meet the needs of the new bilingual teachers will be compromised. As discussed in Section Five of
this document, this process cannot be rushed, as the consulting teacher will have no time to learn the new role once the new school year begins. The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Learning, ELL Director, and building principals must ensure that the best candidate for the position is recruited and hired, and that high quality professional learning experiences are provided for him or her in order to learn to be an effective evaluator, instructional coach, professional developer, and mentor.

_Bilingual Consulting Teacher_

Next, the bilingual consulting teacher is responsible for designing and delivering high quality professional learning experiences to the entire bilingual department, as well as personalized learning opportunities for all new bilingual teachers in the district. The CT’s activities must be closely monitored both by the Assistant Superintendent for Learning who will be the immediate supervisor and evaluator, but also by building level administration who also evaluate staff and provide professional learning opportunities to all teachers. The consulting teacher must be given high quality feedback on his or her performance throughout the year for the policy to be successful.

_Bilingual Teachers_

Finally, the bilingual teachers’ participation in the Peer Assistance and Review program is essential to the overall success of this policy. If bilingual teachers are not open to the professional learning experiences being offered to them, or if they are resistant to changing their instructional practice to meet the needs of their students, the policy may be compromised. It is essential that the consulting teacher reach out to principals, other evaluators, and district administrators for assistance if any of the bilingual teachers
participating in the PAR program are not responding well to the professional learning opportunities.

Because student outcomes are dependent upon increasing the effectiveness of the teachers in the bilingual program and because the implementation of this policy involves a substantial financial investment by the school district, it is imperative that all parties responsible for proper implementation of the policy do their part. The students in the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32 deserve high quality instruction each day that ensures they meet the goal of becoming biliterate and successful in school and in life.
SECTION SEVEN: SUMMARY IMPACT STATEMENT

The summary impact statement serves as a reflection on why the implementation of the advocated policy would be in the best interest of the students served in Brighton School District 32. The advocated policy would provide personalized learning opportunities for the bilingual teachers in the district by employing a full-time bilingual consulting teacher as part of the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program. This policy requires a substantial financial investment, as well as a significant investment of time from administrators to provide training and supervision for the consulting teacher. The benefits to the staff and students served within the bilingual program in BSD32 far outweigh these costs.

Rationale for Advocated Policy

At the core of this proposed policy is the desire to improve teacher quality in the bilingual program to increase educational equity for bilingual students in Brighton School District 32. The quality of the teacher in the classroom, without a doubt, has a considerable impact on student outcomes. The Peer Assistance and Review Handbook (AFT/NEA, 1998) asserts that teacher quality is much more than just ensuring that poor teachers are identified and removed from their positions. Rather, “teacher quality can only be guaranteed by a more comprehensive approach that supports beginning teachers and provides opportunities for less-than-stellar teachers to improve their practice” (p. 8), which is the charge of the consulting teacher in this proposed policy.

The bilingual program in Brighton School District 32 has recently undergone a change from a traditional Transitional Bilingual Education program to a Developmental Bilingual Education program. With this change in program model comes a substantial
shift in the goals for the program as well as the instructional practices that are necessary to meet these goals. Any programmatic shift of this significance requires professional development for teachers to effectively implement. Additionally, the rapid turnover of bilingual teachers that the school district has experienced in the past five years adds to the difficulty in sufficient implementation of the new program model. The program has few experienced teachers to serve as mentors for the many novice teachers, and there is little collective knowledge about best practices in biliteracy instruction.

Because of the extensive professional learning needs of these educators, more traditional models of professional learning will not suffice. Instead, a personalized learning plan is necessary in order to help the bilingual teachers become more effective in biliteracy practices. A bilingual consulting teacher will provide the personalization necessary to elevate the practice of all teachers in the bilingual program. Moreover, the bilingual CT will positively affect the culture of the bilingual department in the district, leading to higher retention rates. With more consistent support and guidance from a qualified and experienced bilingual teacher, the new bilingual staff will be able to overcome feelings of inadequacy and stress they have reported in recent years. The employment of a bilingual consulting teacher is the best option to provide this level of professional learning and support needed to meet the goals of the program.

Stakeholder Needs and Values Represented

All stakeholder needs and values are represented in the proposed policy. The bilingual teachers, who have been asking for more support and professional learning opportunities that align with their specific needs, are well represented through the addition of a bilingual consulting teacher. If implemented, this policy would address not
only the concerns of the bilingual teachers, but also the school and district leadership, as the consulting teacher would be able to serve as an evaluator. The CT would reduce the number of overall evaluations for the other administrators, as well as provide the bilingual teachers with an evaluator who is specifically trained in bilingual education and can give more detailed feedback regarding biliteracy instructional practices. The needs and values of the consulting teacher him- or herself are also represented in the policy. The consulting teacher can develop and grow new skills in this leadership role in the district, which will personally benefit the CT in the current role as well as in future positions.

In addition, the needs of the bilingual students and their families are addressed through the implementation of this policy. When the students are exposed to high quality teachers, their learning outcomes will increase and their future success in college and careers will be positively impacted. Finally, the entire school system benefits from the addition of a consulting teacher. Darling-Hammond (2013) explains that a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program “can help districts build systems that link evaluation, professional development, and collegial learning – and can help develop a teaching profession that retains talent and continually expands teachers’ individual and collective expertise” (p. 29). The bilingual consulting teacher will provide the kind of high quality professional learning that will impact the effectiveness of the teachers and will lead to increased retention, both of which will positively impact student outcomes.

Over the past several years, the local and state data in Brighton School District 32 have exposed a growing achievement gap between Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students and their non-LEP peers. This alarming trend must be reversed to provide an
equitable education to all students. Without a significant investment in the professional learning for bilingual educators, this gap is likely to increase, and the mission of the district – to maximize the unique potential of each child – will not be achieved. The bilingual teachers in the district deserve high quality professional learning experiences that meet their unique needs as teachers for biliteracy. The implementation of the proposed policy will meet these needs and will produce effective teachers who are equipped to positively impact bilingual student outcomes to narrow the achievement gap.
References


APPENDIX A: PANORAMA TEACHER SURVEY

The Panorama Teacher Survey is given to teachers in Brighton School District 32 twice annually, once in the fall and again in the spring of each school year. The results of two sections, Feedback and Coaching and Professional Learning, will be disaggregated to show bilingual teachers’ results for analysis of the effectiveness of the bilingual consulting teacher. Questions posed in each section are listed below.

Feedback and Coaching

1. At your school, how thorough is the feedback you receive in covering all aspects of your role as a teacher?
2. How useful do you find the feedback you receive on your teaching?
3. How much feedback do you receive on your teaching?
4. How much do you learn from the teacher evaluation process at your school?

Professional Learning

1. How much input do you have into individualizing your own professional development opportunities?
2. Through working at your school, how many new teaching strategies have you learned?
3. Overall, how much do you learn about teaching from the leaders in your school?
4. How often do you professional development opportunities help you explore new ideas?
5. How relevant have your professional development opportunities been to the context that you teach?
6. Overall, how supportive has the school been of your growth as a teacher?
## APPENDIX B: LITERACY SQUARED OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain/Indicators</th>
<th>Spanish Literacy</th>
<th>Literacy-Based ESL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rating 1 – 5</td>
<td>Rating 1 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Selection or Production</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Relevant to teaching objective</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Appropriate linguistic aspects of text (syntax, vocab, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Appropriate literacy aspects (genre, contextualized, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Culturally and personally relevant</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy Objective</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Standards based (includes all language domains)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Authentic to language environment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oracy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Matches literacy objective</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ss likely to encounter or use target vocabulary (from text and objectives)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Opportunities to dialogue are purposeful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- S participation in dialogue is scaffolded to ensure success</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Meaningful selection of language structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Multiple opportunities for Ss to rehearse, appropriate, and respond to target language structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Teacher talk vs. Student Talk (students talk the majority of the lesson)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Multiple opportunities for connected discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Specifically address register and language variation</em></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Structured student talk (think-pair-share, inside-outside circles, etc.)</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Accountability
- T has high and clear expectations
- All Ss held accountable for actively participating
- T checks for S understanding
- T provides appropriate feedback to enhance S learning
- All Ss are held accountable for completing their work

### Cross-Language Connections
- Connection between literacy environments (theme, genre, etc.)
- Visual side-by-side analysis of language (cognates, anchor posters, etc.)
- Metalanguage
- Strategic translation
- T uses languages strategically to enhance S learning (clarification, preview/review, instructions, etc.)
- T flexibly responds to S’s alternations (e.g. response to code switching)

### Student Involvement
- Ss are actively engaged in lesson
- Ss actively use language related to the lesson
- Ss communicate in whole groups or with peers in a way that is relevant to the lesson
- Reading
- Writing (or Drawing)
- Listening
- Speaking
- Ss share prior knowledge
- Ss demonstrate understanding of objectives or new learning
- Ss take pride in their work/learning

### Lesson Delivery
- T clearly communicates literacy objective to Ss (how and why)
- T clearly communicates oracy objective to Ss
- T fosters safe environment for risk-taking
- Language specific metalanguage
**Lesson Delivery (continued)**
- T successfully scaffolds Ss literacy learning based on their individual needs
- T explicitly models literacy and language objectives
- T gradually releases responsibility to Ss in an appropriate way, allowing them to successfully meet the language/learning objectives

**Dictado**
- Ss skip lines
- Ss use colored pen to self-correct
- Ss make self-corrections
- Dictado is comprehensible and contextualized
- Same Dictado 3 times per week
- Clear teaching points
- Explicit talk through is metalinguistic
- Dictado has a title
- T reads entire Dictado for meaning

*We acknowledge that not all indicators will be present at each observation, but teachers should strive to incorporate as many as possible.