

Report on Review of TUSD Documents Filed December 20, 2019

I have reviewed the referenced documents which apply to the Two-Way Dual Language Program (TWDL) in TUSD. I have focused on:

- 1) TWDL program fidelity, or adherence to the model adopted by TUSD
- 2) TWDL program sustainability and expansion.
- 3) TWDL Professional Development

TWDL Program Fidelity:

1) Classroom Composition

In this report, Rosa Molina acknowledges that “the most compelling factor impacting the development of a robust and well implemented TWDL program is the classroom composition” (p.19) **The TWDL Framework** states that the TWDL classrooms consist of linguistically balanced classrooms where 1/3 of students are Native speakers of Spanish, 1/3 are Bilingual, and 1/3 of the students are English speakers. “This is the ideal classroom configuration: A TWDL program must have no less than 1/3 of the students of either language “ (p.62).

Nevertheless, the **Inventory of Current TWDL Programs** indicates that “prior to SY 2018-19, there were no entry level classes that met the linguistic balance” (p.1). Moreover an examination of Attachment 1 raises several questions: Of the 112 TWDL classrooms, only 4 are linguistically balanced. This indicates that not only is linguistic balance lacking in entry level classrooms, there is no linguistic balance in most classrooms at any level. Given this information, can it be accurately stated that TUSD’s TWDL program is well implemented and robust? If a critical component of a well-implemented program is absent, can the claim be made that the program is replicating the model? The review of this information casts serious doubt regarding the fidelity of the TWDL model to the classroom composition standard.

2) Teacher Certification

In the **Notice and Report of Compliance TWDL** the district makes an important assertion: “The District has addressed the once seemingly insurmountable issue of staffing TWDL programs: in SY2019-20, 105 of 112 teachers in TWDL designated classes have a bilingual or provisional bilingual endorsement (all others are working towards earning one).” (p.6 line 8-9) The data provided in Attachment 1 of the **Inventory of Current TWDL Programs** identified 107 of 112 teachers in TWDL classes as having a bilingual **or** provisional bilingual endorsement.

The term provisional bilingual endorsement can be deceiving. There is a significant gap between the professional requirements for a bilingual endorsement and a provisional bilingual endorsement.(see Attachment 2 for endorsement requirements) A provisional bilingual endorsement is a temporary endorsement, valid for three years and non-renewable. It is assumed that during this period provisionally endorsed teachers will engage in the coursework required for full endorsement, a total of 21 hours of coursework on instructional methodology, materials, curriculum, language acquisition and school community.

A teacher can obtain a provisional bilingual endorsement simply by having a current teaching certificate, and verification of proficiency in a language other than English. At the most minimal level, provisionally endorsed teachers have little knowledge of pedagogy in the TWDL classroom. Because of the significant difference between preparation for a bilingual endorsement and a provisional endorsement, it is appropriate to ask the District to identify teachers separately, those with a bilingual endorsement and those with a provisional bilingual endorsement.

It is critical to model fidelity that teachers in TWDL possess a bilingual endorsement, or be in the process of obtaining the endorsement within a reasonable time (not to exceed 3 years).

3) Progress in both languages

In the **Notice and Report of Compliance TWDL**, the District makes a significant claim:

“The program is bearing fruit: test score school comparisons show that despite State obstacles to obtaining the desired linguistic balance, TWDL still outperform their non-TWDL peers on State assessments.” (p.6 line 14-16)

Yet a TWDL program is not only about achievement in English. **The TWDL Framework** identified as a goal of TWDL that it will “Ensure that Native Spanish and Native English speakers in TWDL programs perform at or above grade level in the content areas in their first language and achieve standardized mathematics and reading test scores on par with their statewide peers by grade 7.” (p.47) In **Ms. Molina’s 2016** report, she raised the question: Is there evidence in the TWDL classrooms that students are progressing in both languages in all four domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing? (p.18) She also noted that TWDL classrooms were particularly weak in Spanish at the intermediate and middle school levels. (p.21) She stressed that teachers and administrators should ensure “students are reaching the bilingual and biliteracy goals set out by the program” and “hold teachers accountable for student progress in both languages, not just English” (pp. 21,22)

Apparently, progress in Spanish is still lagging. **The Inventory of Current TWDL Programs** reported that “Scores in Spanish reading on both the ELD and Logramos Reading/Language Arts subtest assessment were much lower than grade level overall (p.7) adding that “the program needs to work toward building stronger Spanish literacy skills overall, for both EL and EP students (p.7). A close examination of Attachment 5 finds that many students are far below grade level in Spanish reading and Spanish Language Arts. According to Dr. Kathryn Lindholm-Leary (the program evaluator), “Scores in Spanish reading on both the EDL and the Logramos Reading/Language arts subset assessments were much lower than grade level overall and especially for English Learner (EL) and English Proficient (EP) students...the program needs to work toward building stronger Spanish literacy skills overall, for both EL and EP students, in order to build a stronger foundation in Spanish that will result in higher levels of literacy skills in English and meet the intended goals of the TWDL program.” (p.7)

TWDL Program Sustainability and Expansion

The issues raised above, the linguistic balance of the TWDL classroom, the availability of fully certified bilingual teachers, and lack of progress in Spanish achievement impact the probability of successful program sustainability and expansion.

The District intends to expand its overall TWDL program in three ways: (a) by adding TWDL programs to schools which do not currently have them; (b) by adding TWDL classes at schools which already have a TWDL program (adding a “strand”); and (c) by adding students to existing strands.

The District dismisses the availability of bilingual teachers as a limiting factor and suggests its existing recruiting, incentives and grow your own program can address the need. However, as discussed earlier, it is important to compare and contrast the number of provisional bilingual teachers and their placements in order to get an accurate picture of the number of bilingual endorsed teachers, especially when considering expansion.

Attachment 1 of the **Inventory of Current TWDL Programs** notes that Bloom Elementary added one 3rd grade classroom in 2019-20 rather than two 3rd grades. The expansion plan for Bloom indicates that there will be a 2 classroom increase each year up to 5th grade. This may indicate that the 2 classroom per year expansion is too ambitious at this time, and that it may take more time to recruit students and teachers for the program.

Expansion of the TWDL program at Hollinger (7th and 8th grades) and McCorkle (6th and 7th grades) this year should be closely monitored in view of the concerns raised about grade level achievement in Spanish. The intermediate and middle school grades have shown the lowest performance in Spanish. (see Attachment 5). Implementation of the intermediate and middle school grades expansion depends upon the availability of fully endorsed bilingual teachers who can work on the necessary Spanish literacy and content area skills. (It may be noteworthy in this regard that the chart reporting linguistic balance has no entry (no Y; no N) for the 6 through 8th grade Spanish language courses at Roskruege and Pistor or for the 9th through 12th grade programs at Pueblo. This does not appear to reflect a conscious decision to omit these grade levels because the linguistic balance for 6-8 courses at Hollinger (all N) is reported.)

Teacher Professional Development

A review of the Professional Development Component of the **TWDL Language Framework** includes recommendations for three tiers of professional development. However, very few of these instructional components focus on developing teachers’ proficiency in the target language. While it is assumed that teachers will possess adequate fluency in the target language, they must serve as language models for students. It is essential, particularly at the intermediate and middle school grades, that teachers are fluent in the technical vocabulary required in content areas. As the reader reflects on the low achievement in Spanish and Spanish language arts across the TWDL program, one component to closely examine is teachers’ proficiency in Spanish. Professional development that provides teachers practice and scaffolds their Spanish proficiency is strongly recommended.

Summary

In this report, I have reviewed the documentation provided by TUSD regarding implementation of the TWDL program. I examined the documentation with focus on three areas: Fidelity to the TWDL Model, TWDL Classroom Composition, and Achievement in Spanish.

The District reports on its inability to attain the desired classroom composition, not only at the early grades, but throughout the entire program K-12. This is not acceptable. The District must improve its efforts at designing the appropriate classroom composition. It is hoped that the relaxed State criteria for ELs to participate in Dual Language programs will begin to address this limitation, as well as the District's use of a new screener to enroll students in grades 3-5.

I also reviewed District data on the progress of students in Spanish and Spanish Language Arts. This data showed that students were performing far below grade level in Spanish. Clearly the District needs to focus on student achievement in Spanish, if this is truly a program that promotes bilingualism and biliteracy. Hopefully the implementation of a new Spanish curriculum will begin to address this area. Taken together, the absence of 33% classroom linguistic balance and the lack of student achievement in Spanish underscore the fact that the TWDL model in TUSD lacks program fidelity.

Ms. Molina has stated that "TUSD has all the elements necessary to implement exemplary TWDL programs throughout the District but needs to refocus on its effort to ensure fidelity to the model." (p. 35). I am in agreement that TUSD has identified all the necessary components of a TWDL program. However, at this time, the TWDL program is not operating with full fidelity to the model. Two critical components, classroom composition and student achievement in Spanish, are severely limited. A more aggressive effort to ensure fidelity to this model is needed and should be the focus of current and future activities.

I find that the District needs to refocus its efforts on TWDL classroom composition and TWDL student achievement in Spanish. Additionally, I would suggest that the District identify TWDL teachers separately as fully bilingually endorsed or provisionally bilingual endorsed, in order to get a better perspective on school level program implementation. I also suggest that professional development opportunities be expanded to include those that support teacher proficiency in Spanish.

Finally, given the attention that needs to be focused on specific aspects of the TWDL program as indicated here, I believe that it would be premature to grant TUSD Unitary Status with regard to the Dual Language Program. Fidelity to the Dual Language Program model must be established at all the program schools before Unitary Status should be considered.

Attachment

AZ bilingual and provisional certification

R7-2-615. Endorsements

Bilingual Endorsements – Pre-K through 12

1. A provisional bilingual endorsement or a bilingual endorsement is required of an individual who is a bilingual classroom teacher, bilingual resource teacher, bilingual specialist, or otherwise responsible for providing bilingual instruction.

2. The provisional bilingual endorsement is valid for three years and is not renewable. The requirements are:

a. An Arizona elementary, secondary, supervisor, principal, superintendent, special education, early childhood, arts education or CTE certificate; and

b. Proficiency in a spoken language other than English, verified by one of the following:

i. A passing score on the Arizona Classroom Spanish Proficiency exam;

ii. A passing score on a foreign language subject knowledge portion of the Arizona Teacher Proficiency Assessment or comparable foreign language subject knowledge exam from another state;

iii. A minimum passing score of “Advanced Low” on the American Council of the Teaching Foreign Languages speaking and writing exams in the foreign language;

iv. If an exam in the language is not offered through the Arizona Teacher Proficiency Assessment or the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, proficiency may be verified by the language department of an accredited institution; or

v. Proficiency in American Indian languages shall be verified by an official designated by the tribe;

c. Proficiency in sign language is verified through twenty four semester hours of coursework from an accredited institution.

3. The holder of the bilingual endorsement is also authorized to teach English as a Second Language. The requirements are:

- a. An Arizona elementary, secondary, supervisor, principal, superintendent, special education, early childhood, arts education or CTE certificate;
- b. Completion of a bilingual education program from an accredited institution or the following courses:
 - i. Three semester hours of foundations of instruction for non- English-language-background students;
 - ii. Three semester hours of bilingual methods;
 - iii. Three semester hours of English as a Second Language for bilingual settings;
 - iv. Three semester hours of courses in bilingual materials and curriculum, assessment of limited-English-proficient students, teaching reading and writing in the native language, or English as a Second Language for bilingual settings;
 - v. Three semester hours of linguistics to include psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, first language acquisition, and second language acquisition for language minority students, or American Indian language linguistics;
 - vi. Three semester hours of courses dealing with school, community, and family culture and parental involvement in programs of instruction for non-English-language-background students; and
 - vii. Three semester hours of courses in methods of teaching and evaluating handicapped children from non-English-language backgrounds. These hours are only required for bilingual endorsements on special education certificates.
- c. A valid bilingual certificate or endorsement from another state may be substituted for the courses described in subsection (J)(4)(b);
- d. Practicum in a bilingual program or two years of verified bilingual teaching experience; and
- e. Proficiency in a spoken language other than English, verified by one of the following:
 - i. A passing score on the Arizona Classroom Spanish Proficiency exam;
 - ii. A passing score on a foreign language subject knowledge portion of the Arizona Teacher Proficiency Assessment or comparable foreign language subject knowledge exam from another state;

iii. A minimum passing score of “Advanced Low” on the American Council of the Teaching Foreign Languages Speaking and Writing exams in the foreign language;

iv. If an exam in the language is not offered through the Arizona Teacher Proficiency Assessment or the American Council on the

Teaching of Foreign Languages, proficiency may be verified by the language department of an accredited institution; or

v. Proficiency in American Indian languages shall be verified by an official designated by the tribe;

f. Proficiency in sign language is verified through twenty four semester hours of coursework from an accredited institution.

source: www.AzEd.GOV/Certification