Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention of Bilingual Educators

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IDRA Education Associate
IDRA is an independent, non-partisan, education non-profit committed to achieving equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.
Lizdelia Piñón, Ed.D.:
Former emergent bilingual student
Former public school bilingual teacher
Mother of school-age children
1 in 5 students in Texas is an emergent bilingual learner.
Shortage of High-Quality Bilingual Educators

- 50% increase in the need for bilingual teachers, with only 20% of that need being met.
- Texas has struggled to fill bilingual teacher positions since 1990.
- The ratio between students and full-time equivalent (FTE) bilingual/ESL teachers increased from 43.4 students to 1 teacher in 2010–11 to 46.3 students to 1 teacher in 2019–20.
- Highest percentage of substitute teachers.
Obstacles & Barriers

Technical Barriers: Five exams are required to become a bilingual educators as opposed to three to become a general classroom educator.

Financial Barriers: Financial burdens for bilingual education student teachers for the additional tests and the cost of registering with the state if you are an out-of-state educator.

Retirement Penalties: Restrictions for retired bilingual teachers in returning to the classroom.
## Texas Educator Exam & Fee Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Description</th>
<th>Exam Fee</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Bilingual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Subjects Grades EC–6 / 4-8</td>
<td>$ 116</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science of Teaching Reading (293)</td>
<td>$ 136</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>TExES Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities, or PPR, EC–12 exam (160)</td>
<td>$ 116</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>TExES Bilingual Education Supplemental (164) exam</td>
<td>$ 116</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>TExES Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test for Spanish (190)</td>
<td>$ 116</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Exam Fee</strong></td>
<td>$ 368</td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Recruitment Strategies

Classroom emergent bilingual learner to classroom teacher pipeline

Collaborative partnerships between school districts and higher education

Varied modes of recruitment
Prepare future educators

Increase financial incentives
“Invisible Work”
Recommendations

- Reduce the number of exams for bilingual educators and waive costs of additional exams
- Make language test be just about language
- Support the use of recruitment & retention strategies
- Establish a classroom student-to-teacher pipeline
- Require course or overlay of teaching emergent bilingual learners
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