

## ***Texas Two-Way Bilingual Education***

### ***Publicity Information***

#### **Definition:**

Two-Way Bilingual Education is a program that has as its educational goal **biliteracy** (on level reading, writing & math proficiency in both languages) for both English and Spanish speaking children by the end of the 5th grade. It differs from transitional bilingual education (majority of current bilingual programs) in that:

- 1) the aim/outcome is **bilingualism** versus monolingualism (English only) by the end of the 5th grade,
- 2) participants include both Spanish and English speaking children learning content (e. g., math, science, social studies, language arts) in two languages,
- 3) it **equally** values, validates and incorporates both languages in the curriculum and the school as a whole,
- 4) parents of both groups (English and Spanish speaking) are actively involved in their child's education due to the incorporation of their respective language and culture throughout the program, and
- 5) it provides a true *equal educational opportunity* for Spanish speaking children because (as we do for English speaking children) it continues to develop the language they bring to school and **adds** a second language (English) versus **subtract** the first language (Spanish) once the child is mainstreamed (typically during 2nd grade). This same process applies to English speaking children (program continues in English and adds Spanish).

In summary, a two-way bilingual education program provides instruction in two languages in grades PK-5 (and may continue through the 8th grade) for all students in that school. Students learn the same content together (in bilingual pairs or bilingual groups), but in a different language of instruction (e. g. math in English, Science in Spanish, etc.). All level teachers are prepared through a series of professional development sessions. Two-way program implementation begins in lower grades (PK-1) and continues with 1st graders going to 2nd grade and Kindergarten going to 1st and so on.

#### **Program Characteristics:**

- program must be implemented for at least 4-6 years
- extensive exposure and use of the two languages (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
- language development should focus on academic subjects (content-areas)
- language arts should be integrated within the curriculum (writing across the curriculum)

- during instruction, languages must be kept separate
- there must be equal consistency in using each language
- overall school climate must reflect an bilingual/bicultural atmosphere
- close balance of the two language groups ideal, but not necessary
- there should be sufficient use of first language
- students must be given plenty of opportunities to use the two languages in meaningful conversational and academic settings that are interactive
- strong administrative commitment/support from the school and district
- instruction should challenge and empower all students
- English and Spanish speaking teachers (team-teaching)
- increased parent involvement of children through home-school

**Program Benefits:**

- native language & cultural development as a right of the child
- both Spanish and English valued *equally*
- bilingualism for both the Spanish and English speaker
- not remedial, but enrichment and challenging
- high level of language & cultural proficiency (balanced-biliteracy)
- learning advantages due to biliteracy (enhances future academic success)
- appreciation and respect of one's own language & culture (enhances self-esteem)
- value and respect of one's language & culture by others
- value and respect of other languages and cultures
- economic advantages (job opportunities, NAFTA, competitive market)
- positive cross-cultural social attitudes (greater respect of diversity)

**Social Implications:**

- cross-cultural respect (students of different languages value and respect one another because they are learning together each other languages)

- Mexican-American language and culture preserved and valued
- greater involvement by Spanish parents/communities in schools and opportunities for parental education activities
- students' self-esteem is greatly improved due to validation of their language and experiences (culture) in school (this usually translates into improved academic achievement)
- great step in truly valuing diversity and using diversity for enrichment and educational opportunities
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**Political Implications:**

- U. S. Secretary of education Riley now understands the potential two-way programs have for effectively education Limited English proficient (LEP) students in this country. The research is very clear and conclusive. Transitional bilingual education is not working (high drop-out rate among Hispanics). Therefore, his proposal calls for 1000 two-way (dual language) programs across the U. S.
- Increased funding opportunities for dual language education through Title VII
- U. S. must effectively educate Hispanics; particularly because of the tremendous population growth of Hispanics in this country (the fastest growing minority group)
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**Economic Implications:**

- Business and corporate America is in need of a biliterate workforce in order to stay competitive with other countries where two or more languages are developed through schooling
- The RGV is in need of a biliterate workforce (maquiladora industry, business, etc.)
- To be competitive in the world of today, you must be proficient in more than one language; our educational system still focuses on producing monolingual citizens; this must change!
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**Academic Implications:**

- The two-way (dual language) program is the only program that has been able to narrow the academic achievement gap between Hispanic and Whites (see research). On average, LEP students educated bilingually (elementary grades PK-5th) achieve equal to or higher than English speaking students educated in English only at the end of middle and high school.
- Two-way programs will positively impact the drop-out rate (which has stayed constant at

approximately 35-45% among Hispanics and increase college attendance rate among Hispanics which also lags behind Whites (recent figures indicate that the gap between Whites and Hispanics for those attending and graduating college is actually widening since 1990 with less Hispanics going to college and less graduating)

- RGV teachers see great difference in student's academic achievement and self-confidence
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**Possible Interviews:**

- Dr. Miguel Nevarez, President, UTPA
- Dr. Rodolfo Arevalo, Provost/Vice President, UTPA
- Dr. Hilda Medrano, Dean, College of Education
- Dr. Leo Gomez, Assistant Dean, College of Education
- Dr. Mary Valerio, Bilingual Education Program Coordinator-COE
- Dr. John McBride, Chair Department of Curriculum and Instruction
- Dr. Encarnación Garza, Superintendent, Progreso ISD
- Mr. Joe Sepulveda Interim Principal, Pharr Elementary-PSJA ISD
- Mr. Enrique Gonzalez, Bilingual Director, RGC CISD
- Ms. Luule Moreno, Principal, Horton Elementary-Weslaco ISD
- Ms. Concepción Guerra, Bilingual/ESL Director-Region One ESC
- Ms. Nelia Rodriguez, Title VII Director, PSJA ISD
- Ms. Maria Rosa Garcia, Bilingual Director-Brownsville ISD
- Dr. Ellen Gonzalez, Executive Director, Region One ESC
- Mr. William Morgan, Superintendent, PSJA ISD
- Ms. Jilpas, Teacher, Horton Elementary-Weslaco ISD