
Evaluation of the Dual Language Bilingual Education Program at Bedford Central School District

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Section 1: Introduction and Overview

The research on the benefits of DLBE programs for ML students is solid (Howard & Zhao, 2023; Howard et al., 2018; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2010; Lindholm-Leary & Block, 2010; Lindholm-Leary & Hernandez, 2011). Furthermore, studies have consistently shown that, when well-implemented, DLBE programs are the best option for ML students (Genesee et al., 2006; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). A well-implemented DLBE program provides the socio-emotional, academic and linguistic supports students need to successfully participate in grade-level classroom and school activities and develop their bilingualism, biliteracy and sociocultural competency.

During the summer of 2025, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) was awarded a contract to conduct an evaluation of policies and practices in the Spanish-English dual language bilingual program (DLBE) at Bedford Central School District (BCSD). This report is based upon listening sessions with staff, students and families, a site visit by one CAL researcher to BCSD schools with a DLBE program, and the collection of extant documentation including student performance data reports listed in Appendix C. The report provides a description of policies and services provided at the time of the collection of information and includes research-informed recommendations for improvement.

Organized around the topical strands of the *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education*, 3rd edition (Howard et al., 2018; <https://www.cal.org/publications/guiding-principles-3/>), the report addresses the following aspects of effectively educating students:

- Strand 1: Program Structure
- Strand 2: Curriculum
- Strand 3: Instruction
- Strand 4: Assessment and Accountability
- Strand 5: Staff Quality and Professional Development
- Strand 6: Family and Community
- Strand 7: Support and Resources

The report begins with an introductory overview, methodology, study limitations, and demographic information about students in BCSD that pertain to the review of their Spanish/English DLBE program and includes a description of CAL's evaluation findings followed by research-informed recommendations specific to the strand at hand. Research about successful DLBE program implementation is provided in Appendix A.

Methodology

The CAL study was mainly qualitative in design, employing observation and listening sessions protocols, but also included quantitative data reports related to extant academic and language performance outcomes provided by the district. The *Guiding Principles for Dual Language*

Education, 3rd Edition (2018), abbreviated as *Guiding Principles* in the remainder of this report, was used as the foundation for the review of the DLBE program at BCSD.

The evaluation was guided by the following primary research questions:

- Are the policies and practices for serving students representative of research-based, effective practices in DLBE programs, and are the policies and practices implemented appropriately?
- Given available performance data, how are DLBE students performing academically and linguistically?
- What do staff and stakeholders believe is working well and what needs improvement?

CAL has developed classroom observation instruments and listening session protocols that are aligned with CAL's *Principles of Effective Instruction for English Learners* (2014) and the *Guiding Principles* that were used along with other research-based, best practices for language and content teaching and learning. These instruments were tailored to the context of the DLBE program at BCSD and research questions addressed in this evaluation. A summary of the research on dual language implementation from the *Guiding Principles* (2018) in Appendix A. The CAL Instructional Observation Protocol can be found in Appendix B.

Prior to the in-person visit in October 2025, CAL conducted virtual listening sessions on Zoom with teachers, central office and school administrators and parents. Listening sessions with students took place in person during the visit. District staff were responsible for recruiting participants for the sessions.

In total, sixty-six people participated in the listening sessions (Table 1). Four separate listening sessions were held with teachers: K-2 teachers (n=5), grades 3-5 teachers (n=8), grade 6 teachers (n=5) and elementary school support staff (n=7) with representation from Spanish and English zone teachers across different grade levels. Specifically, this included three ESOL specialists, one bilingual learning specialist, one Spanish zone instructional specialist, a psychologist, and a speech and language pathologist.

Three separate listening sessions were conducted with central office, one with the ESOL director, one with the Superintendent and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and one with the Special Education team, and two with school administrators, one with elementary administrators and one with middle school administrators. Four listening sessions were scheduled with elementary and middle school DLBE families separately, two in Spanish and two in English, but the two Spanish sessions were consolidated into one due to low attendance. Finally, two in-person listening sessions were conducted with middle and high school students who enrolled in the program in kindergarten.

At the request of a small group of parents who felt that they had not had the opportunity to share their views about the DLBE program fully in the listening session, parents were invited to complete a brief survey available in Spanish and English. 30 parents completed the survey, and 2 chose to do so in Spanish and 28 in English.

All virtual listening sessions were recorded so that the CAL researcher could replay them as needed to ensure accuracy of understanding. To ensure confidentiality, individual roles and responses are not reported, and all data in this report is aggregated in such a way as to not reveal individual identities. The recordings will be destroyed after the completion of the project.

Table 1. Description of Listening Sessions Participants

Participant Roles		Number of Participants
District-level administrators		8
School-level administrators		6
Teachers		25
Students		18
Parent representation		
Language	Spanish	2
	English	13
Total participants		66

During a three-day visit October 28-30th, 2025, a CAL researcher visited the two schools. Instructional practices were observed in a total of 21 elementary classrooms representing K-5 grades during Spanish and English instruction (13 and 8 observations respectively). The visit to the middle school grade 6 DLBE classrooms included 2 observations during Spanish instruction. Each observation lasted 20 minutes on average. School administrators created the schedule for the listening sessions and classroom observations and disseminated the information to all relevant stakeholders.

CAL also reviewed available student demographic data and outcome data reports, together with other documents providing information about the DLBE program and services for multilingual learners (MLs). The term MLs in this document is used to refer to students who speak a language other than (or in addition to) English at home. English learners (ELs), the term used by the U.S. Department of Education to refer to MLs may be used interchangeably with MLs in this report in particular when discussing students' classification in schools.

This program evaluation was completed by CAL staff, with a team member transition during the process; despite this change, steps were taken to ensure continuity and quality throughout its duration.

After analyzing all the information provided and observed, a draft report was provided by CAL to BCSD school administrators for review to ensure clarity and accuracy, and the final report was developed based on the review by the district.

Limitations

CAL was able to conduct virtual listening sessions and direct observations of classroom practice, which provided much of the data for this report. All staff were welcoming and cooperative and

made themselves available for the purposes of the evaluation. It is important to note that short-duration classroom observations always have their limitations because the observer sees only a snapshot of the teachers' methods on a particular day and time. Nevertheless, visiting all classrooms provides a generalizable picture of widely observed effective practices for DLBE students, as well as practices less frequently or not observed but which, if used, would likely lead to positive outcomes for the students.

Multilingual Learners at Bedford Central School District

In order to provide some context for the report, CAL requested student demographic information (i.e., ethnicity, home language, ML status, eligibility for free/reduced lunch and special education status) by school for the current school year (2025-2026).

The Spanish/English DLBE program at BCSD is housed in Mount Kisko Elementary School (MKES), one of five elementary schools in the district. Table 2 presents demographic data for elementary schools in the 2025-2026 school year. To illustrate the degree to which MKES differs from peer schools, MKES figures are compared to the range observed across the four other elementary schools in BCSD (Bedford Hills, Bedford Village, Pound Ridge, and West Patent).

Table 2. Mount Kisko Student Demographics in Comparison to Other Bedford Central School District Elementary Schools, 2025-2026

Demographic Variables		n	%	Other 4 ES Range
<i>Gender</i>	F	251	50.10%	38.9% - 51.9%
	M	250	49.90%	48.1% - 61.1%
<i>EL Status</i>	ELs	248	49.50%	0.50% - 17.0%
	Former ELs	19	3.79%	0.30% - 3.2%
	Never ELs	234	46.71%	79.1% - 99.0%
<i>Native Language</i>	Spanish	311	62.08%	0% - 23.3%
	English	181	36.13%	75.1% - 99.5%
	Other	9	1.80%	0.50% - 2.9%
<i>Race/ Ethnicity</i>	Hispanic	382	76.25%	7.8% - 35.3%
	White	77	15.37%	50.1% - 83.5%
	Other	42	8.38%	8.4% - 16.5%
<i>Economic Status</i>	Qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch	245	48.90%	5.8% - 21.5%
	Do Not Qualify	256	51.10%	78.6% - 94.2%
<i>Have IEP?</i>	Yes	78	15.57%	10.7% - 26.9%
	No	423	84.43%	73.1% - 89.3%

As shown in these tables, the school with the DLBE program differs significantly from the other elementary schools in the district in its demographics. Notably, it enrolls by far the largest number of students overall, and specifically multilingual learner students (over 50% when former MLs are considered), Hispanic students (76.25%) and Spanish-speaking students (62.1%), and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (48.9%).

While some variables – including gender distribution, racial and ethnic composition, and IEP rates – remain largely stable, several key observations emerge with direct relevance to dual language program design and outcomes. Table 3 presents demographic trends in ML status and native language composition.

Table 3. Mount Kisco Student Demographics, 2023-2024 through 2025-2026

Demographic Variables		2025-2026		2024-2025		2023-2024	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Gender</i>	F	251	50.10%	279	52.54%	273	51.12%
	M	250	49.90%	252	47.46%	261	48.88%
<i>ML Status</i>	ELs	248	49.50%	268	50.47%	243	45.51%
	Former ELs	19	3.79%	32	6.03%	53	9.93%
	Never ELs	234	46.71%	231	43.50%	238	44.57%
<i>Native Language</i>	Spanish	311	62.08%	366	68.93%	372	69.66%
	English	181	36.13%	157	29.57%	154	28.84%
	Other	9	1.80%	8	1.51%	8	1.50%
<i>Race/ Ethnicity</i>	Hispanic	382	76.25%	406	76.46%	415	77.72%
	White	77	15.37%	92	17.33%	85	15.92%
	Other	42	8.38%	33	6.21%	34	6.37%
<i>Economic Status</i>	Qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch	245	48.90%	346	65.16%	342	64.04%
	Do Not Qualify	256	51.10%	185	34.84%	192	35.96%
<i>Have IEP?</i>	Yes	78	15.57%	88	16.57%	81	15.17%
	No	423	84.43%	443	83.43%	453	84.83%

The proportion of Spanish-speaking students decreased from 69.7% in 2023-2024 to 62.1% in 2025-2026 – a decline of 7.6 percentage points – while the proportion of English-speaking students increased correspondingly from 28.8% to 36.1% over the same period. Although the school remains predominantly Spanish-speaking, this trend suggests a gradual movement toward greater language balance that, if continued, could positively support program success.

Of equal significance, the proportion of students currently identified as ELs has increased over the three-year period, rising from 45.5% in 2023-2024 to 49.5% in 2025-2026. This means that

approximately one in two students is currently identified as an EL – a proportion that has remained consistently near or above 49% even as overall enrollment has declined. This trend is particularly notable when considered alongside the corresponding decline in former ELs over the same period.

Enrollment data from district documentation reveal additional structural differences across elementary schools. For 2025-26, MKES operates with 26 sections – substantially more than Bedford Village Elementary, which has 18 sections, and the remaining three elementary schools, each of which operates with 12-16 sections. While class sizes at MKES are generally comparable to those at other elementary schools, two exceptions are notable: kindergarten sections at MKES are smaller than those at peer schools, reflecting the addition of a fifth kindergarten section this year after operating with only four sections the previous year; and Grade 4 sections at MKES are larger than those observed at the other elementary schools. The 2024-25 enrollment pattern was largely similar to 2025-2026, though MKES operated with four kindergarten sections rather than five, and kindergarten class sizes were comparable to those at other elementary schools. Additionally, the Grade 3 cohort at MKES was larger than the corresponding cohort at peer schools during 2024-25.

Students who choose to continue in the DLBE program for one more year can do so at the only middle school in the district, but the program does not continue beyond grade 6. Table 4 displays demographic information for all middle school students in the district.

Alternatively, ELs may receive services through a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) model at Fox Lane Middle School and Fox Lane High School. A freestanding English as a New Language program at Bedford Hills Elementary School, Bedford Village Elementary School, Pound Ridge Elementary School, and West Patent Elementary School is also an option for ELs.

Table 4. Demographic Information for Students in Fox Lane Middle School, 2025-2026

<i>Demographic Variables</i>		n	%
<i>Gender</i>	F	377	48.52%
	M	400	51.48%
<i>EL Status</i>	ELs	117	15.06%
	Former ELs	91	11.71%
	Never ELs	569	73.23%
<i>Native Language</i>	Spanish	246	31.66%
	English	510	65.64%
	Other	21	2.70%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	Hispanic	327	42.08%
	White	376	48.39%
	Other	50	6.44%
<i>Economic Status</i>	Qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch	215	27.67%
	Do Not Qualify	562	72.33%
<i>Have IEP?</i>	Yes	140	18.02%
	No	637	81.98%

Section 2: Program Structure

Evaluation Findings

This section includes a discussion about the program model, enrollment policy, program mission and vision, language allocation, and staffing. The information for this section comes from the Program Self-Report completed by the ESOL director, listening sessions with the various stakeholders, extant documentation received by district administrators, and the district's Dual Language Bilingual Education website. Recommendations will be provided at the end of the section.

Program Model

Research shows that the duration of the program is a significant factor. Dual language programs lead to higher student outcomes when they are provided to the participating students for a period of at least 6 years. This is the average time required to reach native-like proficiency and grade-level achievement, as confirmed by a number of evaluation studies on immersion and bilingual programs and by large-scale studies on English learners (Carroll & Bailey, 2015; Genesee et al., 2006; Hill, Weston, & Hayes, 2014; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2010; Parrish et al., 2006; Thompson, 2015; Umansky & Reardon, 2014).

According to data from the Program Self-Report, BCSD introduced the Spanish/English DLBE program in the fall of 2014 at Mount Kisco Elementary School, launching in Grade 1. The decision to house the program at the school was driven by the fact that MKES has the largest concentration of ELL-eligible students who share Spanish as a home language in the district. Prior to this launch, the district conducted a two-year study to explore options beyond the TBE program in place at that time, which had served only K-2 ELLs. At the time, kindergarten ELL students received Spanish literacy instruction and a Spanish enrichment period for all students every third day through a FLES-style model. The Superintendent at the time introduced the DLBE program as an optional offering for interested families, and virtually all families at Mount Kisco enrolled in the Grade 1 program, eliminating the need for non-DLBE first grade classrooms. Over time, the district developed a plan allowing families who preferred monolingual instruction to enroll in other district schools. In 2019-2020, as the program expanded to serve a growing student population, the DLBE program began to transition to a whole school program and MKES became a school of choice.

Students are able to participate in a dual language program from K through 5th grade at MKES. According to district reporting, the majority of DLBE students continue in the program, following a Spanish Language Arts pathway, which offers advanced Spanish language courses designed to deepen their biliteracy skills and prepare them to earn the NYS Seal of Biliteracy. For these students, social studies in Spanish and a world language course serve as the primary vehicles for structured biliteracy development.

In grade 6, Spanish instruction is limited to two subjects - SLA 6 and social studies. DLBE students are grouped with students in the general education program for all subjects taught in English. BCSD offers three Home Language Arts (HLA) courses in Spanish (HLA 6, HLA 7, and HLA 8) for newcomer and heritage speakers of Spanish middle school students with the goal of transitioning students to the SLA track (SLA 7 or SLA 8). Students outside the DLBE program can take world language courses in Spanish, Italian, and French.

Although originally planned to run through 8th grade, the program effectively ends at 6th grade for most students – a finding described as a cliff by every stakeholder in this evaluation. The middle school has historically organized students into interdisciplinary teams, making it difficult to schedule DLBE content courses without isolating DLBE students from their peers. While the FLEX house model introduced in recent years has created some flexibility, allowing the 6th grade social studies course to run, this flexibility has not yet been extended to 7th and 8th grade. Teacher union resistance to changes in the teaming model were cited as a possible reason with the acknowledgment that there is tension between the desire to integrate all students and the need to maintain program integrity.

The impact on students demonstrates the most direct evidence of what the cliff feels like for students. Students described a feeling of getting stuck and not learning in Spanish upon entering middle school. High school students echoed these sentiments stating a feeling of not advancing in Spanish as well. Families also expressed feeling the weight of the cliff and the information gaps surrounding it. Some parents described not being informed about the program's limitations until the end of the 5th grade with other parents noting that they were unaware of the continuation option in middle school.

Enrollment policy

Families residing in the Mount Kisco neighborhood receive priority enrollment in the program, while families from other neighborhoods within the district may opt in if space permits. Mount Kisco families also retain the option to opt out of the DLBE program and request placement in another district elementary school. The close geographic proximity of BCSD schools helps make these placement adjustments feasible.

The district has been collecting DLBE program opt-out and opt-in information over the past few years and is working towards establishing a consistent procedure to track these data. As shown in Table 5, over the past six years, the number of families opting out of the DLBE program has ranged from 8 to 19, stabilizing between 12 and 13 in the most recent four years. Similarly, the number of families opting into the program fluctuated between 8 and 20. When aggregated across all six years, the total number of families opting into the program (85) slightly exceeds the number opting out (78).

Table 5. DLBE Program Opt-in and Opt-out Counts, 2020-2021 through 2025-2026

<i>Academic Year</i>	Opt-in	Opt-out
2025-2026	12	12
2024-2025	20	13
2023-2024	8	13
2022-2023	20	13
2021-2022	15	8
2020-2021	10	19
<i>Total</i>	85	78

Program Mission and Vision

Studies of effective schools consistently and conclusively demonstrate that high-quality programs have a cohesive school-wide shared vision; a set of goals that define their expectations for achievement; and an instructional focus and commitment to achievement and high expectations that are shared by students, parents, teachers, and administrators (Berman, Minicucci, McLaughlin, Nelson, & Woodworth, 1995; Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011; Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2010; Marzano, 2003; Parrish et al., 2006; Slavin & Calderón, 2001). The importance of these shared values is reinforced in studies of mainstream schools, low-performing schools, dual language schools, and other bilingual programs serving English learners.

As such, a foundational element of any effective dual language bilingual education program is a clearly articulated, written mission and vision statement that defines program goals, establishes shared expectations across stakeholder groups, and provides a framework for decision-making, resource allocation, and program evaluation. Evidence gathered across all data sources in this evaluation – including administrator and teacher listening sessions, parent focus groups, a parent survey, student listening sessions, and classroom observations data – converges on a consistent and significant finding: the DLBE program in Bedford Central School District does not have a written, publicly accessible, or broadly shared mission and vision statement.

While the three pillars of dual language education – academic achievement, bilingualism and biliteracy, and sociocultural competence – are referenced informally in some administrative contexts and on the district website, they have not been formalized into a program document that articulates specific goals, grade-level benchmarks, stakeholder expectations, or programmatic commitments across the K-12 continuum. District leadership acknowledged this gap directly, noting that the program’s mission and vision are not published and that a formal commitment to families has not been established.

The absence of a written mission and vision has had cascading effects across the program. At the district leadership level, the absence has contributed to competing visions among administrators, curriculum coordinators, and external consultants – a pattern described consistently by teachers across grade levels as receiving conflicting messages. Listening sessions noted that CAL’s

Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education serve as the primary anchor. The impact of this gap is felt most acutely by families and students. Parents across English- and Spanish-speaking focus groups described a consistent lack of clarity about program goals, outcomes and expectations. One survey respondent stated that the goals are not clearly communicated, and there is not a clear leader of the program. Some parents also expressed that they were unaware of basic program parameters, including the existence of a continuation option at the middle school level. Students in high school reflected on their experience and described a sense that the program lacked long-term planning.

The absence of a formalized mission and vision exposes the program since there is no standard against which to evaluate instructional decisions, assess resource adequacy, or hold leadership accountable. This vulnerability is particularly acute during leadership transitions – of which there have been four principals and four superintendents over the program’s history - when direction resides in the informal understanding of individuals rather than in a durable institutional document.

Language allocation

Information regarding the program’s language and content allocation plan and delivery was obtained via the Program Self-Report, extant documentation, and listening sessions with the various stakeholders. Mount Kisco currently has a 50/50 DLBE program, such that instructional time in core subjects is split equally between the two languages daily in grades K-5.

In reference to the content allocation, data from the Program Self-Report and district-provided documents revealed that core subjects are taught in both languages across the elementary DLBE program and specials are taught in English. With regard to the language allocation, CAL received master schedules by grade level for MKES as well as staffing schedules. However, no formal language allocation plan document was confirmed to exist at the time of this evaluation – a gap that is reflected in broader patterns of inconsistent implementation and understanding across stakeholder groups.

A clearly defined and consistently implemented language allocation plan is a critical structural component of any dual language bilingual education program. It establishes the parameters for how instructional time is distributed across the two partner languages, guides teacher decision-making at the lesson level, and ensures that both languages receive equitable instructional attention across content areas and grade levels.

The following two examples illustrate how the absence of a language allocation plan has impacted instruction. First, the transition to a self-contained single-teacher model in kindergarten this year introduced uncertainty about how language allocation is implemented. Secondly, teachers across grade levels described receiving conflicting messages about translanguaging practices from multiple sources simultaneously.

Staffing

Information regarding staffing was obtained from listening sessions, classroom observations, extant documentation and the Program Self-Report completed by school administrators.

An examination of EL enrollment and dedicated FTE support across the five elementary schools is included in Table 6. In 2025-2026, BCSD is serving a total of 331 ELs in grades K-5 supported by 14 FTE – an overall ratio of approximately 23.6 ELs per FTE. However, the ML population is highly concentrated, with MKE accounting for 74.9% of all ELs in elementary schools in BCSD. The school receives the largest FTE allocation in absolute terms – 9 FTE when the seven ESOL teachers and two Spanish Zone instructional specialists are combined, representing 64.3% of elementary EL support staff. While this allocation is proportionally the largest among the five elementary schools, the scale and complexity of serving 248 ELs in a dual language setting represents a qualitatively different operational demand than serving smaller populations not in a dual language setting. As discussed in the Staffing and Professional Development section, this has been an area of focus and work in expanding the staff to align with the program is an active part of the district’s commitment. The remaining four schools serve between 1 and 54 ELs each, with FTE allocations ranging from 0 to 3. Among schools with dedicated FTE support, ratios range from 9.3 to 28.0 ELs per FTE – a wide range that reflects fundamentally different service conditions across the five elementary schools.

Bedford Village Elementary School, serving 14 ELs, has a 0.5 FTE dedicated to language support. A partial position of this size poses questions about the continuity and depth of support available to students. Pound Ridge Elementary School, serving 1 identified EL, reports 0 dedicated FTE. It is possible that this student is being served through an alternative arrangement.

Table 6. ESOL and Bilingual Specialists by Elementary School, 2025-2026

School	English Learners	FTE
Bedford Hills Elementary School	54	3
Bedford Village Elementary School	14	.5
Mount Kisco Elementary School	248	9
Pound Ridge Elementary School	1	0
West Patent Elementary School	14	1.5
Total	331	14

*MKES has 7 ESOL teachers and 2 Spanish Zone instructional specialists.

The FTE analysis establishes that the dual language school carries the largest share of EL enrollment among the five elementary schools. What that analysis cannot capture, however, is the degree to which serving a dual language population places qualitatively different demands on staffing – demands that extend beyond headcount to the distribution of bilingual expertise, the structure of co-teaching partnerships, and the equitable allocation of support across the program’s two language zones. See Table 7 below for snapshot of staffing at MKES.

Table 7. Instructional Staffing at Mount Kisco Elementary, 2025-2026

Classroom Teachers		Specialized Instructional Support Staff	
Grade		Spanish Zone instructional specialists	2
PK	1	Tiered Support	7
K	5	Consulting Teacher	1
1	2	ESOL	7
2	2	Special Education Teacher	5
3	2	Speech	2
4	2	Teaching Assistant	6
5	2	Special Education Teaching Assistant	5
Total	16	Total	35

*Bilingual Instructional Specialists is the label used in the documentation.

In Mount Kisco Elementary, the majority of ESOL services are provided through a co-teaching model with an ESOL teacher joining the English Zone classroom teacher for 75-90 minutes daily during literacy/language arts instruction in K-5. Spanish Zone instructional specialists co-teach for 45-60 minutes daily with the Spanish Zone classroom teacher in grades 2-5. Seven full-time ESOL and two Spanish Zone instructional specialists support students at MKE. Of the five special education teachers, two use the partner language to support students with most of the paraprofessionals serving the DLBE program.

A recurring concern across listening sessions is the practice of pulling Spanish Zone instructional specialists from their assigned co-teaching roles to serve as substitutes when classroom coverage is needed elsewhere in the building. With only two specialists serving the entire elementary program, the loss of even one specialist to substitute coverage on any given day eliminates Spanish Zone co-teaching support for an entire grade level. This was described as a recurring rather than occasional occurrence, noting that the Spanish instructional time is effectively treated as more expendable than English instructional time when operational demands arise.

This pattern reflects a broader structural inequity between the two language zones that is inconsistent with the program's 50/50 model and with CAL's *Guiding Principles* emphasis on equitable treatment of both program languages as a foundational condition for program integrity. This practice has direct and measurable consequences for the availability of Spanish language support at MKES.

In Fox Lane Middle School, there are three teachers who teach in Spanish, but only two of them serve in the DLBE program available in the middle school. The third teacher teaches Spanish as a world language to students outside of the DLBE program. Middle school MLs receive instruction in ELA and science in either a sheltered or co-taught environment (ESOL teacher with content area teacher). There are four full-time ESOL teachers for 117 ML students in the 2025-26 school year.

An additional consistent finding is based on collaboration, particularly in elementary. Some teachers referenced monthly grade-level planning days but also noted that they are inconsistent across years and grade levels. Ultimately, even these are insufficient given the complexity of planning instruction in two languages with multiple co-teachers. Teachers strongly voiced a desire for dedicated co-planning time that aligns with the program's co-teaching model.

This is notable because co-teaching is the primary vehicle for ESOL service delivery at MKES, yet every educator group described a co-planning structure that is informal, unprotected, and insufficient. The 40-50 minute morning window available for co-planning is not contractually protected, is frequently co-opted by competing demands, and is described by teachers as wholly inadequate for the planning demands of a dual language co-teaching model.

Despite the absence of formal co-planning time, teachers described finding ways to collaborate informally and several described these informal relationships as among the most valuable aspects of their professional experience. However, teachers were clear that informal collaboration is not a substitute for structured planning time and the reliance on individual initiative to create collaboration opportunities means that co-teaching quality varies significantly depending on the personal relationships and schedules of the individuals involved.

The consequence of co-teaching without co-planning is not merely inconvenience – it fundamentally undermines the instructional coherence that co-teaching is designed to produce. When co-teacher cannot plan together, language objectives are not jointly developed, crosslinguistic connections are not intentionally built into lessons, and the complementary roles of the language-specific zone teachers and specialized instructional support staff are not coordinated in ways that maximize language development for all students.

Collaboration between general education and special education teachers is described as a structure that has historically operated in silos and is only beginning to develop more integrated practices. The recent work to support dually identified students is described as still in its early stages. For example, ESOL and special education collaboration is in the initiation of a push-in co-teaching model in which ESOL teachers join self-contained special education classroom. This practice was described by support staff as happening for the first time this year. This is a meaningful step forward.

The data across stakeholder groups describes the elementary and middle school collaboration structure as minimal, late, and largely one-directional. The primary formal articulation mechanism is a single meeting at the end of 5th grade in which elementary teachers provide information about incoming 6th grade students to middle school staff. One of the most emotionally resonant collaboration findings in the data is the complete absence of feedback loops between elementary and secondary teachers. Elementary teachers described investing years in students and then losing all contact with information about their outcomes. This absence of longitudinal tracking and feedback interrupts the program's capacity to evaluate its own effectiveness and to make data-informed decisions about curriculum, instruction, and resource allocation.

Recommendations

- Convene a DLBE advisory group made up of diverse stakeholders with defined roles and decision-making authority. The advisory group should formalize a clearly articulated mission and vision for the DLBE program and designate a primary program authority for instructional and programmatic decisions, define the role of building principals in implementing and monitoring the program.
- Develop a written commitment to families that articulates the program's scope, expectations, and goals.
- Develop and publish a formal written language allocation plan. The district should develop this document in collaboration with the ESOL director, classroom teachers and specialists, and ensure it addresses language distribution, expectations for student language use during designated instructional time, guidance on translanguaging practices that is consistent with the program's biliteracy goals, and protocols for monitoring language allocation fidelity across classrooms.
- Protect Spanish instructional time as a non-negotiable program priority. The district should develop a substitute coverage plan that does not consistently pull Spanish zone teachers from their assigned roles.
- Provide a structure with increased time for intentional collaboration and planning between teachers.
- Schedule time for collaboration between DLBE elementary and middle school classroom teachers, support staff, and administrators to ensure vertical alignment.
- Continue with a vertical expansion of the DLBE program in middle school and consider adding a strand program in high school to create a K-12 DLBE pathway to the NYS Seal of Biliteracy.

Section 3: Curriculum

Evaluation Findings

This section includes a discussion about curriculum materials, bilingual scope and sequence, and language objectives. The information comes from extant documentation, classroom observations, and listening sessions with various stakeholders. Recommendations will be provided at the end of the section.

Curriculum Materials

Mount Kisco Elementary School uses a different language arts curriculum than other elementary schools in the district. While the other four schools use Bookworms, BCSD has recently adopted the American Reading Company (ARC) CORE ELA and SLA K-5 curricula for MKES and is in the middle of a three-year implementation plan (2024-2027) with program specific and job-embedded PD for MKES staff. The PD includes implementation support for all components of literacy with emphasis on bilingual bridging, translanguaging, and alignment of foundational skills (phonological awareness & phonics).

The adoption of the ARC curriculum was described as a meaningful improvement over previous materials – the first time the program has had a bilingual literacy curriculum with resources available in both languages and responsive to teacher and student needs as well as providing authentic, culturally relevant texts. The ARC curriculum was observed in use across both program languages.

For foundational skills in kindergarten in both languages MKES also uses Heggerty and IRLA/ENIL. The instructional leadership team is in the process of exploring the use of UFLI as a foundational skills program for ELA in K-2 in the future while continuing to use ARC phonics for SLA.

Bilingual Scope and Sequence

Despite the improvement ARC represents, the ESOL director acknowledged the absence of a coherent bilingual scope and sequence for language and literacy. A bilingual scope and sequence is a structured curriculum framework that maps out what language and literacy skills will be taught, in which language, at which grade level, and in what sequence across the K-12 continuum. In a dual language context, it serves three interconnected function: it specifies the language and literacy standards students are expected to master in each language at each grade level; it coordinates instruction across the two languages to avoid redundancy and maximize transfer; and it provides teachers with a shared framework for planning crosslinguistic instruction.

There have been previous efforts to develop a scope and sequence in the upper grades – including work on grammar in context for writing – but noted these efforts have not been

sustained or extended. Teachers in intermediate grades also referenced support with a district-provided external consultant who worked with teachers on a scope and sequence, but it was reported to feel fragmented. That work is currently not in use. K-2 teachers described a scope and sequence that gets rebuilt from scratch every year rather than maintained and refined.

Fidelity with the curriculum and an established scope and sequence would also address the described mixed messages around translanguaging and crosslinguistic practices. The ESOL director expressed interest in working with teachers and a consultant to make crosslinguistic connections more intentional and systematic across both languages – an effort that would be well supported by the kind of coherent curricular framework the program currently lacks. Such work would also be strengthened by attending to a distinction that is particularly relevant at the middle school level: the difference between a world language pedagogical framework, which is grounded in second language acquisition principles and does not typically encompass literacy instruction in both languages, and a biliteracy development framework, which centers literacy instruction in both languages as the vehicle for academic achievement.

Language Objectives

A substantial body of research supports the integrations of language and content instruction across the field of language education (Coyle & Baetens-Beardsmore, 2007; Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Fortune, Tedick, & Walker, 2008; Heritage et al., 2015; Lyster, 2007; Valdés et al., 2015). This research is unambiguous: language objectives must be embedded in curriculum planning, and oral and written language development must be cultivated systematically across content areas so that students can acquire the academic language they need to access and build knowledge in both languages (Bunch et., 2012)

Given the importance of language objectives and content objectives, it is important to note that across every grade level, both language zones, and every content area observed, language objectives were only observed in one classroom. In this 6th grade SLA classroom, the observer noted a language objective posted and read aloud by students. In every other observed classroom, language objectives were either absent or not observed. The absence of language objectives can reflect an absence of intentional language planning – meaning teachers were not systematically identifying what students should be able to do linguistically by the end of the lesson.

Furthermore, this absence of intentional language planning manifests most concretely in the scaffolding decisions teachers make during instruction. Without a language objective to anchor instruction, decisions about scaffolding – what supports to provide, for whom, and when – are left to chance rather than design. For example, the observer observed a teacher working with a small group of students with two-syllable words that appeared out of context and were presented without visual support. Language objectives could have guided the lesson and provided word selection that better aligned to the students' existing language knowledge or part of a developmental sequence of Spanish literacy skills.

This relationship is further illustrated by an observation in which a teacher used a graphic organizer but dictated to students what to write rather than using sentence stems aligned to the language objective to scaffold independent production, directly supporting the language objective. When a teacher has not pre-identified the language demands of a task and the supports students will need to meet them, the default is often to reduce the task to dictation rather than to scaffold independent production.

The listening session data corroborates this finding. Although explicit discussion of language objectives was largely absent across stakeholder groups, an ES administrator described the absence of intentional language development in co-teaching, asking: “*What opportunities do we have for the whole class to be intentional about language development?*” Similarly, in educator listening sessions, a teacher noted that instruction had “*no focus on language.*”

Recommendations

- Continue implementation of the ARC ELA and SLA curricula with fidelity through the full three-year implementation plan before considering any modifications. Premature changes to curricular materials during the implementation period risk interrupting the full implementation cycle and compromising the data needed to make well-informed decisions about future adjustments.
- Prioritize the development of a documented bilingual scope and sequence for language and literacy as an immediate program need. This work should be led by the ESOL director in collaboration with classroom teachers, language zone specialists, and an experienced biliteracy curriculum consultant – ensuring that cross linguistic connections, metalinguistic instruction, and language transfer strategies are explicitly mapped across grade levels, content areas, and both language zones. The resulting document should be formally adopted, maintained across leadership transitions, and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Establish a program-wide expectation that every lesson in both languages includes a posted and verbally stated language objective that is distinct from the content objective, supported by job-embedded coaching from a bilingual instructional literacy coach and monitored through regular instructional walkthroughs.

Section 4: Instruction

Evaluation Findings

This section includes a discussion about language of instruction, scaffolding, and interaction. Recommendations will be provided at the end of the section.

The information about instructional practices comes largely from classroom observations coupled with listening sessions with various stakeholders. The purpose of the classroom visits was to examine the extent to which teachers use practices aligned with research-based instructional practices in DLBE known to support students' success and to inform professional development needs. It should be understood that the classroom observations represent a snapshot of the teachers' methods that provides general trends.

As previously noted, a CAL researcher conducted a total of 23 classrooms visits in the two schools with a DLBE program. 21 out of the 23 observations occurred in the elementary program and included Spanish (13) and English instruction (8). The two grade 6 observations occurred during Spanish instruction. Each observation lasted 20 minutes on average. Context of what came before and after each observation was not collected, and the make-up of the classes in regard to language proficiency levels in each program language was not known.

Staff across the schools were welcoming, cooperative, and generous with their time during the evaluation. Overall, teachers demonstrated a strong commitment to quality instruction. Most teachers were dynamic and engaging, had good rapport with students, and exhibited effective classroom management skills.

Language of Instruction

An important aspect of DLBE instruction includes fidelity to the language allocation model and attention to the language used by the teacher and the students. The data from classroom observations and listening sessions across stakeholders reveal a picture of emerging strength in some instructional areas and some areas with room for growth. As noted in the other sections, the absence of a language allocation plan and the absence of language objectives contribute to some inconsistency in language use observed across classrooms and grade levels.

Classroom visits revealed that teachers primarily used the target language during instruction. However, in a primary classroom the teacher conducted the lesson primarily in English, using Spanish only occasionally when referencing Spanish-specific letters. This classroom was designated as a Spanish foundational skills lesson, yet instruction defaulted to English. Students were caught between two phonological systems with no clear signal from the instructional environment about which language's rules applied. The student responded correctly according to English phonological rules, but the lesson was operating in Spanish. Adding to the complexity, this same classroom had a second adult observed supporting four students primarily in Spanish –

meaning both languages were present simultaneously with no structured protocol governing which language was in use, by whom, and for what purpose.

In another primary classroom, the observer expected to observe Spanish instruction, but it was actually English phonemic awareness. However, unlike the previous instance, the teacher was making intentional crosslinguistic connections. For example, pointing out that the word “*to*” sounds like the Spanish letter “*u*” - suggesting a more deliberate drift from the designated language of instruction.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a consistent strength across grade levels and both language zones. Modeling, gestures, visuals, and think-alouds were the most reliably observed instructional supports across K-5 and into middle school. This is a genuine program-wide strength, not isolated to a few teachers. In classrooms where the Spanish Zone specialist was present and co-teaching, scaffolding was present as well as other dimensions: interaction, critical thinking and crosslinguistic work. Similarly, middle school observations documented effective scaffolding supports such as a word bank, visual map, step-by-step guiding questions, and metacognitive prompt. Across both schools scaffolding was further reinforced through consistent teacher circulation and responsive checking for understanding.

Interaction

Research on cooperative learning has identified a range of instructional strategies that strengthen how students work and interact together (Cohen, 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kagan, 1994). When students from diverse language backgrounds collaborate toward shared academic goals, the outcomes are consistently positive: attitudes and expectations across peer groups improve, academic achievement increases, and language development is supported through sustained interaction between native and non-native speakers.

Structured peer interaction was inconsistently implemented across observed classrooms. It was most reliably present in math classrooms at the upper elementary level and largely absent in literacy rooms across grade level, where teacher-led whole-group instruction was the predominant mode. For example, a math class used think-pair-share multiple times within a single lesson, with the teacher explicitly reinforcing collaboration alongside the academic task. A social studies class was the strongest observation – structured pair work was documented, with students engaging with content collaboratively. Another classroom consisted of student presentations, but it was noted that it lacked opportunities for student question-generation – meaning even the existing oral language activity was teacher-directed and evaluative rather than genuinely interactive.

Listening sessions explain the observation findings. Teachers across grade levels described instruction through a lens of coverage with some describing “taking on too much curriculum” and other “building the plane while flying it,” reflecting a professional environment where getting through content is the dominant pressure, and structured peer interaction, which requires planning, management, and time is what gets sacrificed. Students in middle school described

instruction in the middle school level as largely presentational and teacher-led, consistent with what was observed.

A connected observation during the classroom visits consisted of student participation during whole group discussions largely voluntary. It is structurally the same as the absence of structured peer talk. The same students speak, and most students produce little to no oral language during the lesson.

In a dual language program, peer interaction carries a purpose beyond general pedagogy – it is one of the primary mechanisms by which native Spanish speakers and native English speakers develop language through each other. The *Guiding Principles* identify intentional, language-mixed peer groupings as a hallmark of effective programs.

Recommendations

- Carefully reconsider the language demands of academic content during lesson preparation and incorporate differentiated language-embedded supports to enable all students to engage in sustained (oral and written) language use.
- Provide carefully planned and structured opportunities for students to engage in extended oral discourse with peers in pairs or small groups strategically created in such a way that students must work interdependently, with individual and group accountability for all group members and social equity (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).
- Increase intentional and strategic instructional opportunities to draw connections between the two program languages – while maintaining the integrity of each language zone - by highlighting similarities and differences across different dimensions of language (sound/letter, word/phrase, sentence, and discourse) to promote cross-linguistic transfer and the development of metalinguistic awareness in ML students in all content areas.
- Incorporate sociocultural building practices in the elementary classrooms so that students have the opportunity to engage with rich language and culturally appropriate content beyond holidays and cuisine and in learning activities that promote social justice (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Banks & Banks, 2010; de Jong, 2011; García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2016; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006).

Section 5: Assessment and Accountability

This section includes a discussion about assessment data. The information comes largely from extant data coupled with listening sessions with various stakeholders, and classroom observations as relevant. Recommendations will be provided at the end of the section.

Evaluation Findings

CAL obtained 15 documents related to assessment from the district (see Appendix C). Two of them included ML's performance on the NYSESLAT in the two most recent school years. Three documents reported on students' performance on STAR Reading and Math (Spanish and English) assessments from 2019 to the Winter 2025 administration. Three additional files pertained to language arts curriculum-based assessments, language arts in particular, and June and December 2025 administration of the ENIL assessment and June 2026 of the IRLA assessment. Three presentations to the Board of Education included, among other information, students' performance on the NY State ELA and Math assessments. Two files included information about the first DLBE cohort (class of 2026) as it pertains to their June 2025 weighted GPA and their scores in AP English Language and AP Spanish Language and Culture. The final document comprised of June 2025 core phonics data for K-2 students.

New York State Assessment Performance

Based on the state assessment data provided to the Board of Education and information available through the New York State Education Department's school report cards, Bedford Central School District demonstrates a consistent pattern of academic performance that reflects the district's strengths and reveals areas of continued attention.

Over the past five years, ELA proficiency rates across the district have remained relatively stable, with no dramatic swings in either direction. 2024-2025 district-wide proficiency across Grades 3-8 was 62%, compared to 53% statewide. When examining performance by subgroup, ELs continue to score lower than other subgroups, including students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students. At the school level, MKES students are scoring the lowest among all elementary schools in the district.

Proficiency rates for all MKES students range from 33% in Grade 3 to 42% in Grade 4. Non-EL students at MKES also score the lowest compared to peers in other elementary schools. Non-economically disadvantaged students at MKES, however, are performing considerably better and at rates much closer to those of their counterparts at other schools, ranging from 50% proficient in Grade 4 to 69% in Grade 5.

These figures require careful interpretation in the context of the MKES program model, a fundamentally different instructional context than the monolingual English settings against which these scores are typically benchmarked. English-only ELA proficiency rates do not capture the full scope of content and language development occurring at MKES.

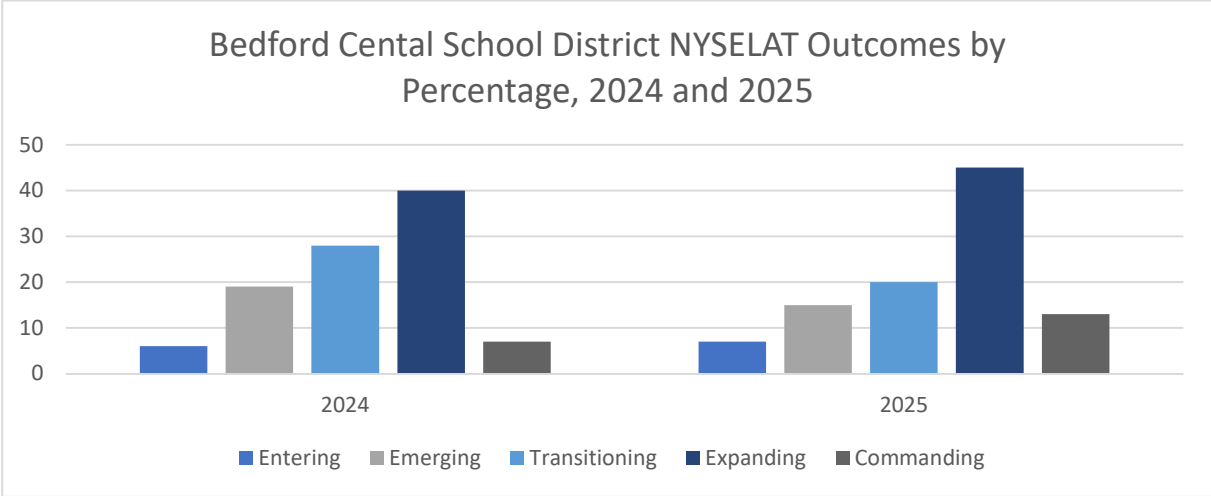
BCSD outperforms the state at every grade level in math. District-wide proficiency across Grades 3-8 was 72% compared to 57% statewide. At the school level, MKES Grades 3-5 proficiency was 49%, below both the district and state averages. Math proficiency at MKES consistently exceeded ELA proficiency across all grades, a pattern consistent with research on bilingual learners. While mathematical concepts are less-language-dependent than English language arts in principle, research suggests that even math assessment performance is mediated by the language of the assessment (Hall, et al., 2025). Non-economically disadvantaged students at MKES performed comparably to peers at other schools. As with ELA, English-only state assessments capture only one dimension of mathematical achievement at MKES. STAR Math data, both English scaled scores and Spanish benchmark performance, presents a more complete picture and is addressed in the STAR Math section of this report.

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSELAT)

The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSELAT) is locally administered English language proficiency standardized, criterion-referenced, summative assessment. It is designed for English Language Learners enrolled in Grades K-12 in New York State schools. The NYSELAT has five grade bands (K-1, 2-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12) and consists of a series of tasks in four modalities – speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students’ proficiency levels will be one of five levels – Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding, or Commanding. Results are intended to be used to inform instruction and determine ELL status.

District-provided data related to NYSELAT included outcomes for years 2024 and 2025 and included in Table 8 below. Between 2024 and 2025, the distribution of English language proficiency levels among English Learners showed some variation across the five proficiency levels. Modest shifts were observed at the higher end of the proficiency continuum, with the percentage of students at the Expanding level increasing from 40% to 45% and the percentage at the Commanding level increasing from 7% to 13%. The percentage of students at the Transitioning and Emerging levels decreased slightly, from 28% to 20% and 19% to 15%, respectively. The proportion of students at the Entering level remained largely stable.

Table 8. Bedford Central School District NYSELAT Outcomes by Percentage, 2024 and 2025



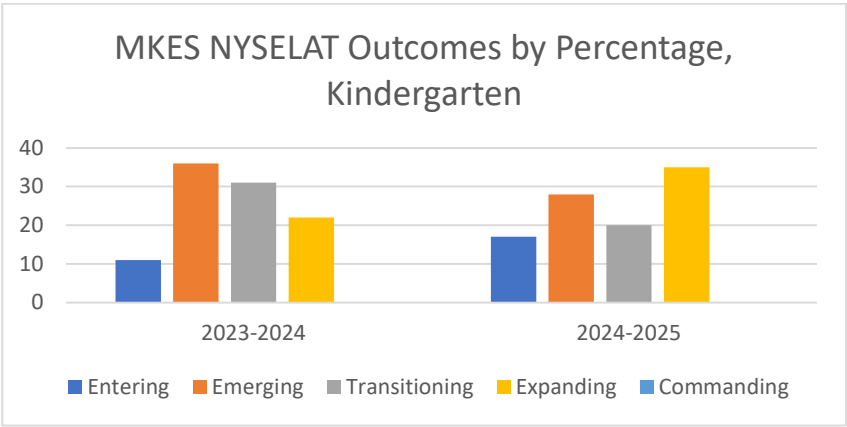
These patterns may reflect growth in English language development, though two years of cross-sectional aggregate data are insufficient to draw firm conclusions. Continued data collection will be necessary to determine whether these shifts represent a meaningful trend.

An examination of NYSELAT proficiency levels distributions across grades K-5 available through the public New York State Report Card, revealed varied patterns that differ by grade level. It is important to stress that two years establishes a starting point. It’s not enough to draw conclusions, but it anchors future comparisons.

It is important to note that these data reflect grade-level snapshots rather than the progress of individual students tracked over time. As such, the patterns described below represent changes in the proficiency profile of the EL population at each grade level from one year to the next, not measures of individual student growth. While the dual language program context provides a useful interpretative framework – particularly given research on expected proficiency trajectories in such programs – cohort composition may vary from year to year.

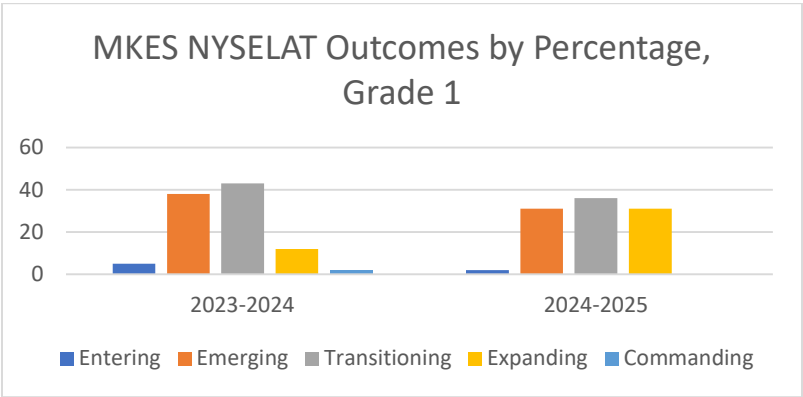
In kindergarten (Table 9), a notable shift toward the Expanding level was observed (22% to 35%), accompanied by decreases at the Emerging and Transitioning levels. No students reached Commanding in either year, which is consistent with expectations for dual language learners at this stage. This reflects typical and expected growth at this point in the program.

Table 9. MKES NYSELAT Outcomes by Percentage, Kindergarten



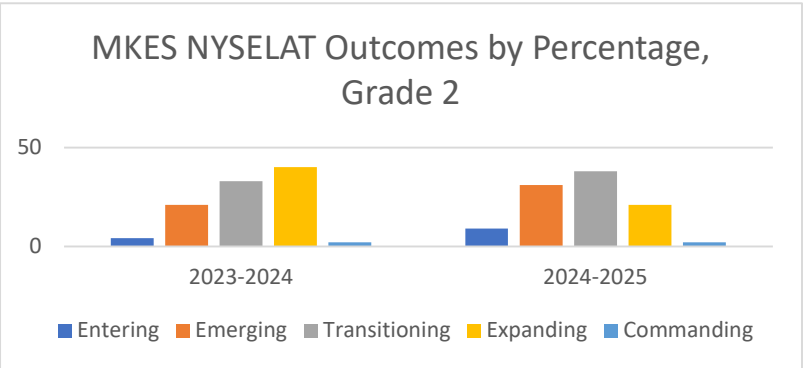
First grade (Table 10) showed a similar encouraging pattern, with an increase at the Expanding level (12% to 31%) and modest increase at Emerging and Transitioning. This upward movement is consistent with what dual language research describes as steady, incremental English language development in the primary grades, where content instruction is deliberately balanced across two languages and rapid English acquisition is not the primary program goal.

Table 10. MKES NYSELAT Outcomes by Percentage, Grade 1



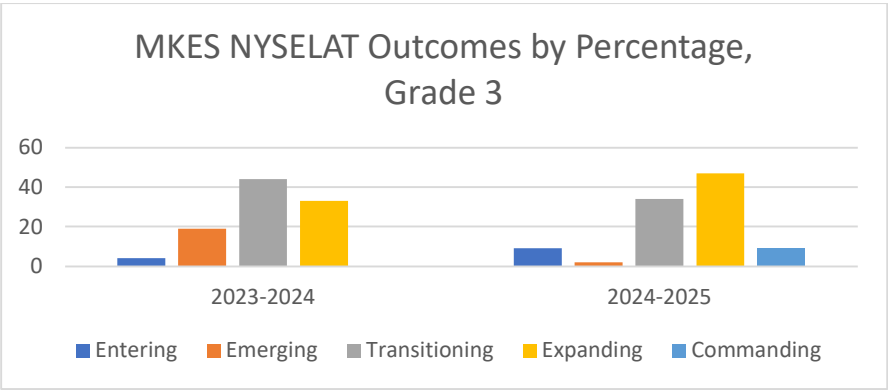
Second grade (Table 11) presents a different picture. The percentage of students at the Entering and Emerging levels increased in 2024-25, while the proportion at Expanding decreased from 40% to 21%. This shift is worth monitoring. Research on dual language learners sometimes documents a temporary plateau or dip in measured English proficiency in the early-to-middle elementary grades, as students navigate increasing academic language demands in both languages simultaneously. However, changes in enrollment composition or student population may also contribute to this pattern, and two years of data are insufficient to draw firm conclusions. Continued monitoring at this grade level is warranted.

Table 11. MKES NYSELAT Outcomes by Percentage, Grade 2



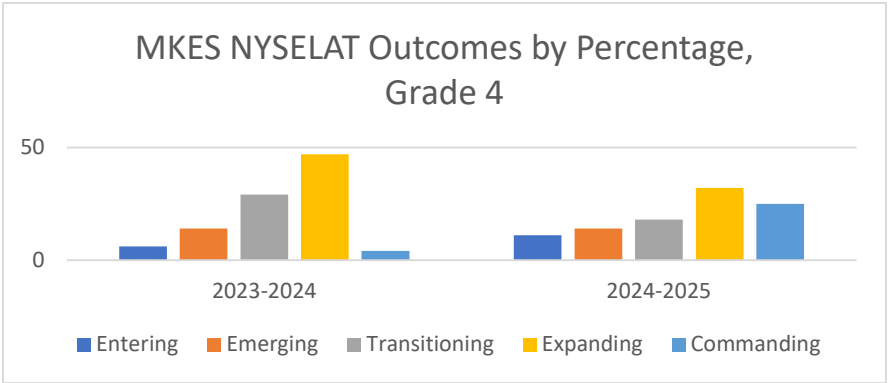
Third grade (Table 12) showed clear movement toward the higher end of the proficiency continuum, with Commanding increasing from 0% to 9% and Expanding rising from 33% to 47%, while Emerging dropped sharply from 19% to 2%. This pattern aligns with dual language research indicating that by third grade, students who have been in the program since kindergarten begin to demonstrate more accelerated English language growth as their academic language foundation solidifies across both languages.

Table 12. MKES NYSELAT Outcomes by Percentage, Grade 3



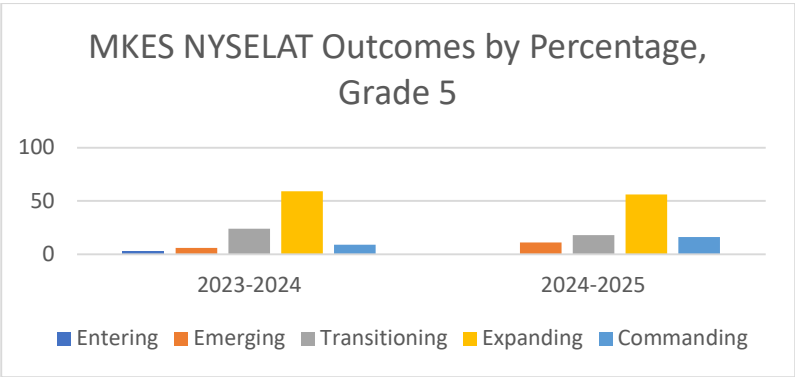
Fourth grade (Table 13) showed the most substantial shift, with Commanding increasing from 4% to 25% and a corresponding decrease at the Transitioning level. This finding is consistent with the well-documented long-term payoff of dual language programs, in which students often show marked proficiency gains in the upper elementary grades as cumulative bilingual development takes effect. If this pattern reflects students who have been in the program since the early grades, it represents meaningful programmatic signal worth highlighting.

Table 13. MKES NYSELAT Outcomes by Percentage, Grade 4



Fifth grade (Table 14) similarly showed growth at Commanding (9% to 16%) while maintaining a high concentration of students at Expanding (56%). The overall distribution in fifth grade skews toward the higher proficiency levels in both years, suggesting that the students reaching the upper elementary grades in this program are developing strong English language proficiency – again consistent with longitudinal dual language research on English academic language outcomes.

Table 14. MKES NYSELAT Outcomes by Percentage, Grade 5

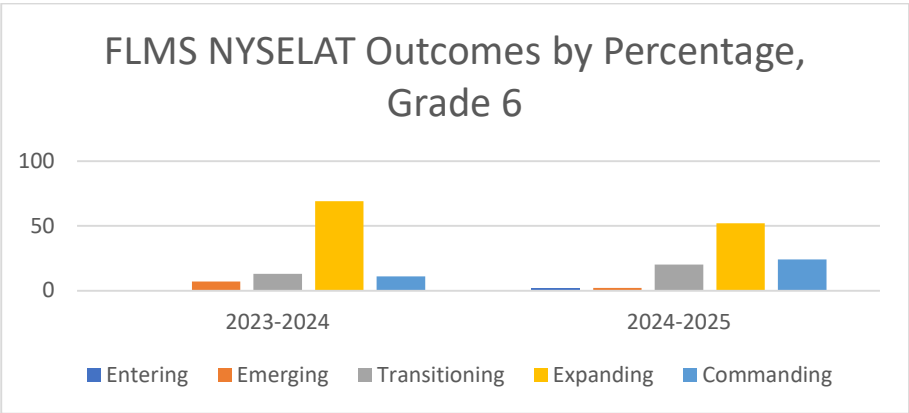


The following analysis examines shifts in the distribution of English language proficiency levels across grades 6-8 between 2023-24 and 2024-25. It is important to note that these data reflect grade-level snapshots rather than the progress of individual students tracked over time. As such, patterns described below represent changes in the proficiency profile of the EL population at each grade level from one year to the next, not measures of individual student growth.

At the middle school level, this distinction is particularly relevant, as each grade’s cohort is composed of students who have been transitioned from multiple feeder elementary schools with varying instructional histories. Differences in cohort composition from year to year may contribute to the observed patterns alongside any instructional or programmatic factors. The programmatic discontinuity described earlier in this report – particularly the limited availability of dual language content instruction beyond sixth grade – provides context.

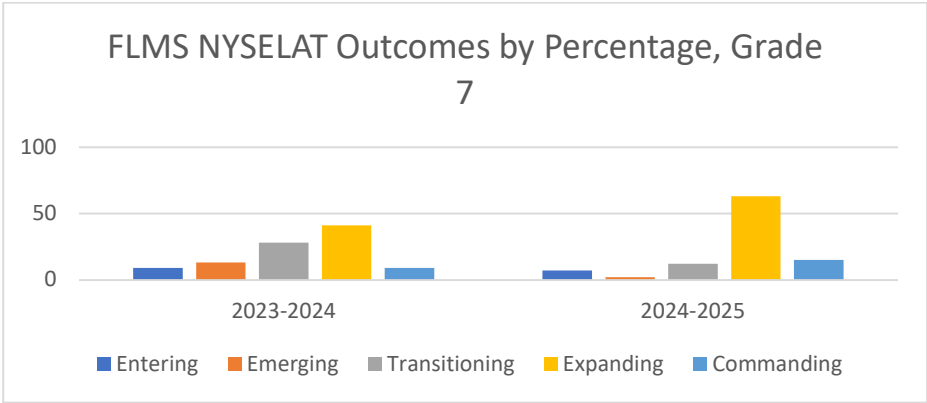
In sixth grade (Table 15) where some features of a dual language program continues through SLA 6 and social studies in Spanish, the proficiency distribution showed a generally positive shift. The percentage of students at Commanding increased from 11% to 24%, while Emerging decreased from 7% to 2%. Transitioning increased modestly from 13% to 20%, and Expanding decreased from 69% to 52%. While these shifts are encouraging, they reflect a single cohort comparison and cannot be attributed to any specific programmatic factor.

Table 15. FLMS NYSELAT Outcomes by Percentage, Grade 6



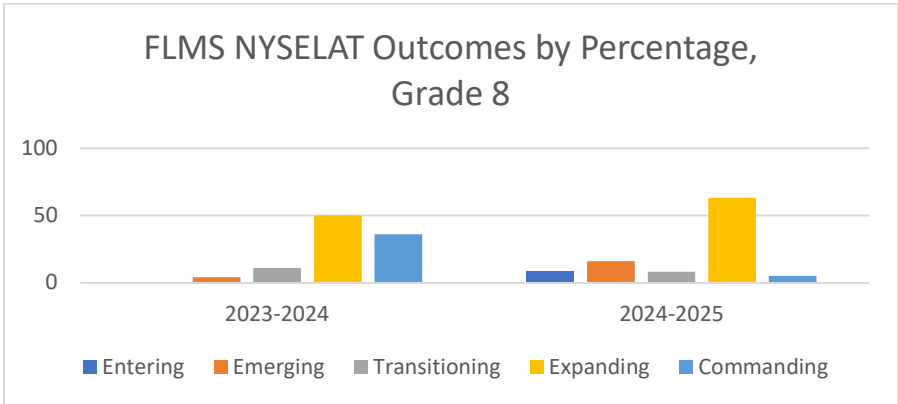
Seventh grade (Table 16), where HLA courses are available for newcomers and heritage speakers, showed the most notable shift among the three grades. Expanding increased from 41% to 63% and Commanding increased from 9% to 15%, while Emerging decreased sharply from 13% to 2%. These shifts are encouraging, though their interpretation is complicated by the lack of a common programmatic thread this this grade level and the possibility that cohort composition differences between years be contributing to the pattern.

Table 16. FLMS NYSELAT Outcomes by Percentage, Grade 7



Eight grade (Table 17) presents a markedly different picture. The proficiency distribution shifted toward lower levels in 2024-2025, with Commanding decreasing substantially from 36% to 5% and both Entering and Emerging increasing. This is the most striking finding in the middle school data. One possible contributing factor is that students who achieved higher proficiency levels in earlier grades may have exited EL status before reaching eight grade, shifting the composition of the remaining EL population.

Table 17. FLMS NYSELAT Outcomes by Percentage, Grade 8



Given the upcoming transition from NYSELAT to WIDA ACCESS, the spring 2026 NYSELAT administration will represent the final opportunity to establish an additional data point. Trends could provide a more stable baseline against which future WIDA ACCESS results can be contextualized – with the caveat that the scores across the two assessment systems are not directly comparable.

An additional consideration concerns scoring methodology. The NYSESLAT is locally administered and scored, with trained school-based educators. WIDA ACCESS, by contrast, is centrally scored by the testing contractor. This shift introduces a meaningful change and may carry some degree of variability across schools and scores that centralized scoring does not.

STAR Reading

STAR Reading data (Table 18) spanning Winter 2020 through Winter 2025 reveals a consistent and persistent performance gap between Mount Kisco Elementary School and its peers elementary schools. Mount Kisco Elementary School and Fox Lane Middle School are the only schools in the dataset for which both English and Spanish STAR Reading data are available, reflecting their shared role in the district’s DLBE program. Each school’s English and Spanish performance is addressed in turn below.

Table 18. STAR Reading BCSD At/Above Benchmark, Winter 2020 through Winter 2025													
School	Winter '20	Spring '21	Fall '21	Winter '22	Spring '22	Fall '22	Winter '23	Spring '23	Fall '23	Winter '24	Spring '24	Fall '24	Winter '25
DISTRICT	64	67	54	59	62	53	59	61	57	64	63	67	71
BHES	67	62	57	67	68	65	70	68	67	73	72	67	78
BVES	81	85	78	84	83	73	79	80	72	82	84	80	85
MKES (E)	45	50	40	46	46	38	45	45	41	47	41	40	47
MKES (S)	56	50	47	49	56	38	50	44	41	49	44	34	
PRES	71	74	66	77	75	69	74	77	72	82	80	78	86
WPES	69	72	66	74	75	60	76	76	66	76	77	72	81
FLMS (E)	–	–	48	48	54	46	48	51	53	57	58	68	71
FLMS (S)	–	–	50	52	49	45	52	57	50	56	57	47	

Across all thirteen available data points, MKES English STAR Reading scores are the lowest of all elementary schools, never reaching the district average at any point in the longitudinal record. Peer elementary schools generally score in the high 60s to mid-80s throughout the dataset.

All schools in the dataset follow a recognizable seasonal pattern, with scores declining in the fall and recovering through the winter and spring terms. MKES English scores follow the same pattern. However, as with STAR Math, MKES’s recovery ceilings remain consistently below the fall floors of higher-performing peer schools.

Unlike the modest upward trend observed in MKE’s STAR Math through Winter 2024 included in the next section, MKES English STAR Reading scores show no clear growth trajectory over

the five-year period. As with STAR Math, interpreting MKE's English STAR Reading performance requires consideration of the program context.

MKES's Spanish STAR Reading scores are available across the same thirteen data points and provide an important additional dimension to the school's literacy profile. Spanish scores generally track alongside English scores, ranging from a low of 34 to a high of 56 over the five-year period. In several terms, Spanish scores exceed English scores. However, data also reveals a concerning trend. Fall 2024 produced the lowest Spanish score in the dataset at 34.

Taken together, the English and Spanish STAR Reading data present a more complete picture of literacy development at MKES than either measure alone. Neither score consistently reaches benchmark levels comparable to peer schools, and neither shows a clear upward growth trajectory over the five-year period. At the same time, the availability of Spanish STAR Reading data at MKES reflects a commitment to biliteracy assessment that is aligned with the goals of the DLBE program.

Fox Lane Middle School STAR Reading data is available beginning in Fall 2021. Like MKES, FLMS reports both English and Spanish STAR Reading scores. FLMS scores show a notably positive growth trajectory beginning at 48 in both Fall 2021 and Winter 2022, English scores climb steadily to 71 by Winter 2025 – a 23-point gain. FLMS Spanish scores follow a less consistent pattern. Beginning at 50 in Fall 2021, Spanish scores fluctuate across the data period, reaching a high of 57 in Spring 2023 before declining to 47 in Fall 2024 and recovering partially by Winter 2025.

STAR Math – English and Spanish

STAR Math data spanning Winter 2020 through Winter 2025 (Table 19) reveals a consistent and performance difference between MKES and its peer elementary schools. Across all thirteen available data points, MKES scores the lowest of all elementary schools, never reaching the district average at any point in the longitudinal record. MKES ranges from a low of 47 to a high

Table 19. STAR Math BCSD At/Above Benchmark, Winter 2020 through Winter 2025													
School	Winter '20	Spring '21	Fall '21	Winter '22	Spring '22	Fall '22	Winter '23	Spring '23	Fall '23	Winter '24	Spring '24	Fall '24	Winter '25
DISTRICT	77	71	64	73	72	67	75	73	73	77	76	68	75
BHES	81	68	74	81	81	73	86	82	79	82	82	67	78
BVES	87	82	83	89	88	85	89	89	80	88	89	73	82
MKES	62	54	53	63	62	57	68	69	60	70	67	47	57
PRES	79	76	79	85	84	78	89	86	80	87	87	73	82
WPES	86	81	74	87	88	78	89	88	78	84	85	64	75
FLMS	–		49	62	58	59	62	60	70	70	67	73	76

of 70 in comparison to BHES, BVES, PRES, and WPES. All schools in the dataset follow a recognizable seasonal pattern, with scores declining in the fall and recovering through the winter and spring terms. MKES follows the same pattern, suggesting the seasonal fluctuation is a systemic phenomenon rather than one specific to MKES. However, MKES's recovery ceilings consistently remain below the fall floors of higher-performing peer schools, indicating the gap is structural rather than seasonal.

A grade-level breakdown of English STAR Math performance (Table 20) adds important nuance to the school-level aggregate data. With scores in the high 40s to low 60s, Grade 5 is the most consistent performer. Grades 2, 3, and 4 follow similar patterns, with moderate performance and the familiar seasonal rhythm. Grade 1 recorded the lowest grade-level data point in the fall of 2024 but recovered in the winter and continued that upward trajectory into spring. Nevertheless, interpreting these benchmark scores in isolation, would present an incomplete and misleading snapshot of mathematical achievement at MKES. Unlike its peer elementary schools, mathematics at MKES is taught in both Spanish and English across grades K-5 so it is critical to include additional data sources.

Table 20. STAR Math English: Percentage At/Above Benchmark by Grade, Winter 2020-Spring 2025

	W 2020	S 2021	F 2021	W 2022	S 2022	F 2022	W 2023	S 2023	F 2023	W 2024	S 2024	F 2024	W 2025	S 2025
Gr 1	—	—	—	—	55	58	64	58	53	56	52	22	48	49
Gr 2	49	40	39	47	55	45	50	55	41	53	56	32	37	40
Gr 3	44	42	38	51	44	48	59	56	48	61	56	45	52	54
Gr 4	46	42	39	44	53	42	54	61	48	52	56	43	47	56
Gr 5	61	45	43	49	40	46	61	55	50	63	59	47	54	55

A comparison of MKES median scaled scores against national norms (Table 21) presents a more positive picture. In fall 2024, Grade 3 performed above the national median and Grades 4 and 5 performed at or near national norms in English Math scaled scores. Later that winter, all three grades showed continued growth and followed that trend into spring. This scaled score data indicates that upper elementary students at MKES are performing at levels broadly consistent with national peers in English Math, a finding that is not visible in the school-level benchmark when compared to peer schools not delivering instruction in two program languages.

Table 21. Scaled Score MKES vs National

	F 2024		W 2025		S 2025	
	MKES	Natl	MKES	Natl	MKES	Natl
Gr 1	765	793	844		859	
Gr 2	846	861	881		903	
Gr 3	934	924	960		994	
Gr 4	979	977	1007		1039	
Gr 5	1013	1017	1039		1062	

STAR Math Spanish data (Table 22) provides another layer necessary to assess mathematical achievement and addresses the limitation present in viewing mathematical achievement through a single language. For example, in Grade 5, between 69% and 72% of students scored in the 40-99th national percentile consistently across administration windows. Grade 4 shows a similar pattern, with the majority of students also performing in the 40-99th percentile. This level of performance reflects genuine mathematical strength in the language of instruction. This finding aligns directly with classroom observation data, which identified Grades 4 and 5 Spanish math instruction as a strong point.

Table 22. Spanish Math Benchmark Categories

	K			1			2			3			4			5		
n	F	W	S	F 18	W 25	S 30	F 39	W 48	S 46	F 37	W 21	S 26	F 15	W 17	S 21	F 36	W 35	S 33
40-99th	NA	NA	NA	44%	44%	37%	15%	44%	37%	41%	62%	31%	53%	47%	52%	72%	69%	70%
25-39th	NA	NA	NA	22%	24%	23%	18%	15%	20%	22%	10%	19%	7%	18%	24%	11%	20%	15%
10-24th	NA	NA	NA	11%	20%	37%	21%	15%	28%	16%	19%	23%	27%	12%	14%	8%	6%	9%
1-9th	NA	NA	NA	22%	12%	3%	46%	27%	15%	22%	10%	27%	13%	24%	10%	8%	6%	6%

Growth data across grades further supports a more optimistic interpretation of student progress (Table 23). Grade 1 showed a 29-percentage point increase in students scoring at or above proficiency from fall to winter, with a mean percentile rank gain of 26 points. While Grade 3 showed a slight decline, Grades 2, 4, and 5 all demonstrated consistent positive growth. Taken together, the English and Spanish STAR Math data present a more complete account of mathematical achievement at MKES than either measure alone.

Table 23. STAR Math MKES – Within-Year Growth Data by Grade, 2024-2025

Grade	Fall-Winter			Fall-Spring (English/Spanish)		
	Change in % of students scoring at/above proficiency	Change in mean percentile rank	% at or above 50 SGP	Change in % of students scoring at/above proficiency	Change in mean percentile rank	% at or above 50 SGP
K	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	+29	+26	49%	+28	+27	
2	+13	+5	40%	+12	+8	
3	-1	+7	51%	+9	+9	
4	+8	+4	46%	+18	+13	
5	+8	+7	49%	+8	+8	

FLMS Math scores show a positive growth trajectory over the available data period. Beginning at 49 in Fall 2021, scores climb steadily across the dataset, reaching 76 by Winter 2025 – a 27-point gain over approximately three and a half years. As with the STAR Reading data, the FLMS trajectory raises questions about the relationship between the elementary pipeline and middle school performance.

IRLA and ENIL from American Reading Company

The Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA) and its Spanish language counterpart, the Evaluación del nivel independiente de lectura (ENIL) are locally scored criterion-referenced assessments developed by the American Reading Company (ARC). They are diagnostic in nature and can be used with other formative assessments to inform instruction.

The IRLA and ENIL represent a new addition to MKE’s assessment landscape, having been introduced alongside the recent adoption of the ARC curriculum. Because implementation is in its earliest stages, no longitudinal data yet exists against which to measure student growth or benchmark progress over time. The findings presented in this report therefore reflect an initial snapshot rather than a trend and should be interpreted as such.

It is also important to note that the data collected during this period is partial rather than complete. Two significant factors contributed to gaps in data collection. First, personnel shortages limited the capacity of staff to administer the assessments to all students within the intended timeframe. Of particular note is the situation at first grade, where teachers experienced the least amount of coverage during the assessment window, meaning that the data from this grade level is the most incomplete. Second, inconsistent messaging regarding the timing and expectations for assessment administration created confusion among staff, resulting in uneven implementation across grades.

On the English assessment (IRLA) represented with Table 24 below, there is an encouraging general trend toward higher proficiency in the upper elementary grades, suggesting that students are developing English literacy skills over time. However, notable gaps remain particularly in the early grades, and a puzzling dip in fifth grade.

Table 24. IRLA Data, 2025-2026

Grade	Students	N/A	Emergency	At Risk	Proficient or Above
K	80	4		67.5%	27.5%
1	86	3	65.1%	9.3%	22.1%
2	67	1	40.3%	22.4%	35.8%
3	85	6	49.4%	22.4%	21.2%
4	87	5	25.3%	27.6%	41.4%
5	64	6	23.4%	42.2%	25.0%

The Spanish assessment (ENIL) captured in Table 25, tells a more urgent story. Emergency-level rates are strikingly high across all grade levels, and unlike the English data, there is no upward trend in proficiency as students advance through the grades. If anything, Spanish literacy proficiency appears to decline with grade level.

Table 25. ENIL Data, 2025-2026

Grade	Students	N/A	Emergency	At Risk	Proficient or Above
K	77	2	16.9%	45.5%	35.1%
1	86	14	50.0%	10.5%	23.3%
2	66	1	69.7%	16.7%	12.1%
3	84	6	56.0%	27.4%	9.5%
4	88	6	54.5%	23.9%	14.8%
5	66	5	51.5%	31.8%	9.1%

When the two assessments are considered together, students consistently perform better in English than in Spanish across every grade level. This pattern, combined with the severity of the Spanish Emergency rates, suggest that Spanish literacy development is an area of significant and pressing need.

As ARC implementation matures and data collection becomes more consistent and complete, future administrations of these assessments will provide a clearer and more reliable picture of student progress. For now, this baseline points to English literacy as an area of cautious optimism and Spanish literacy as a priority.

Core Phonics, English and Spanish

CORE Phonics and the CORE Spanish survey assess the phonics-related skills as they relate to early literacy and are assessed as a sequential progression, moving from foundational concepts to

increasingly complex ones. Students are categorized as Benchmark, Strategic, or Intensive for each skill assessed. No longitudinal data is available.

Kindergarten

In Spanish, Benchmark rates are comparable on the A-D subtest (46%) but improve notably on open syllables CV (56%), suggesting that students are responding well to foundational Spanish literacy instruction. In English, just over half of the students (53%) are at Benchmark on foundational alphabet/decoding skills, but performance drops sharply on short vowel CVC, where 52% fall into the Intensive category, signaling that short vowel decoding is an area of significant need heading into first grade.

First Grade

In Spanish, foundational phonemic awareness is strong – initial and final sounds show 91% and 86% Benchmark rates respectively – but performance drops sharply on whole sounds (17% Benchmark, 48% Intensive), which emerges as a priority area. In English, Benchmark rates decline steadily as phonics skills increase in complexity, falling from 51% on A-D to just 17% on multisyllabic words, with Intensive rates climbing to 70% by the most advanced subtest. This consistent pattern across nine skill areas signals a need for targeted intervention in advanced phonic and support a cohesive scope and sequence across languages.

Second Grade

In Spanish, the pattern mirrors first grade – strong phonemic awareness on initial and final sounds (90% and 89% Benchmark) but notable weakness on multisyllabic words (35%) and whole sounds (18%), pointing to consistent gaps in complex phonics skills across both grade levels.

Across all three grades, foundational skills are relatively strong in both languages while complex phonics skills represent a consistent and growing area of need. Spanish performance tends to be stronger at the foundational level, likely reflecting the regularity of Spanish orthography, but both languages converge in weaknesses at the most advanced skill levels.

High School AP Course Placement

CAL received AP course placement for cohort 1. Interpreting these outcomes is complicated by significant programmatic discontinuity. As such, these figures should be understood as outcomes despite an interrupted program, not as a measure of what a fully continuous DLBE pipeline would produce.

Of the 46 students in 6th grade, language retention dropped significantly over time – 41% had dropped Spanish by junior year, and 74% had dropped it by senior year. Only about 1 in 4 students maintained Spanish through high school. Among the 24 students who took AP exams in Spanish in 11th grade, 78% scored a 4 or 5. The data shows two trajectories: a majority of students ultimately dropped Spanish, but the minority who stayed achieved at an exceptionally high level.

Recommendations

- Establish a regular data review cycle that triangulates the multiple assessments across both languages, so that patterns in one assessment are cross-referenced with proficiency levels and comprehension outcomes.
- Use longitudinal assessment data from multiple assessments in English and Spanish disaggregated by student demographic variables to make program level and scheduling adjustments, inform DLBE instructional practices, and ensure that students' needs, including ML students' needs, are being met by the program. For example, examine STAR Reading and ARC reading assessment data longitudinally in the two languages to monitor DLBE and DLBE ML students' biliteracy development trajectories and use the information to inform biliteracy instruction.
- Prioritize the identification and implementation of practices and strategies to accelerate academic language and literacy development among ELs across both program languages, drawing on existing district data to inform decision-making. The instructional recommendations outlined in the Instruction section of this report provide an initial framework for strengthening classroom-level supports.

Section 6: Staff Quality and Professional Development

This section includes a discussion about staff quality and professional development. The information comes from extant documentation, classroom observations, and listening sessions with various stakeholders. Recommendations will be provided at the end of the section.

Evaluation Findings

Across stakeholder groups, one of the most consistently celebrated aspects of the DLBE program is the dedication and passion of its staff. Teachers, support staff, and administrators alike were described – and described themselves – as deeply committed to the program’s goals. K-2 teachers acknowledged the emotional and professional weight of the work but spoke with pride about the relationships they build with students and families, and the sense of purpose that sustains them even amid instability. Support staff echoed this, with ESOL teachers described as genuine co-teaching partners who are sought as experts rather than peripheral helpers. Parents across both English and Spanish-speaking groups consistently praised teachers as capable, caring, and well-equipped to work in a bilingual setting, with several noting that their children genuinely loved their teachers and felt emotionally supported in the classroom. High school students, reflecting on their elementary experience, credited specific teachers and bilingual staff with making them feel safe and academically capable during pivotal years.

The program has also made meaningful progress in building a bilingual support staff infrastructure. The presence of bilingual ESOL teachers, Spanish zone instructional specialists, a bilingual speech-language pathologist, bilingual learning specialists, and interventionists represents a substantial investment in ensuring that students can access services in both languages. The ESOL director noted that the expansion to seven ESOL teachers reflects a genuine strengthening of human resources, and the school’s ability to prioritize bilingual candidates during hiring speaks to an institutional awareness of what the program requires. The recent hiring of a bilingual principal was viewed by multiple stakeholders as a meaningful and long-overdue step toward building leadership that understands and can advocate for the program from different levels of leadership.

There is also evidence of pockets of strong professional collaboration. Several teachers described informal but productive planning relationships with their ESOL and Spanish zone colleagues, leveraging each other’s expertise even without formal structures to support it. A 6th grade teacher described proactively coordinating with ESOL colleagues across grade levels on her own initiative, and K-2 teachers recalled earlier periods when teacher-led curriculum development produced work that the staff felt proud of. These examples suggest that when given the time and trust to collaborate, staff can produce meaningful programmatically aligned work.

Professional Development

Despite the talent and commitment of individual staff members, listening session participants across every stakeholder group raised serious concerns about the coherence, consistency, and adequacy of professional development. The most prevalent theme was that PD has been fragmented and could be better coordinated. Teachers report receiving competing messages and no unified vision to anchor their practice. Some teachers described receiving simultaneous and contradictory guidance from multiple consultants, curriculum coaches, and district administrators on topic ranging from translanguaging to phonics to scope and sequence. Without adequate time to process current learning, new content was introduced leaving teachers feeling like they are “building the plane while flying it.” Similarly, other teachers shared similar frustrations, noting that scope and sequence documents have been rewritten nearly every year.

Related and urgent concerns are based on the lens through which decisions and learning take place. Teachers are asking for PD that is specifically grounded in biliteracy development. They shared that literacy curricula have been introduced and replaced without bilingual consideration. Multiple educator groups noted that trainings consistently come through a monolingual lens and do not address the distinct demands of teaching reading and writing across two languages. The absence of a bilingual literacy coach was raised explicitly by teachers describing having to create and adapt Spanish-language materials largely on their own. There was reference to the distinction between world language credentials and bilingual and literacy certifications and the room for PD to prepare teachers for the literacy development demands of a dual language program. There was strong interest from a middle school teacher to participate in elementary-level DLBE PD.

Special Education and Dual Language Education

Finally, there is a clear need for structured, ongoing PD that specifically addresses the intersection of special education and dual language education. Bilingual learning specialists expressed that no formal PD pathway exists for special educators working in the DLBE context, and the bilingual specialists described being the sole evaluator responsible for all bilingual students. The special education central office team acknowledged that the field has not developed a shared philosophy about language acquisition versus disability, and that building-level staff receive inconsistent guidance as a result. Addressing this gap would require not only professional development, but more intentional integration of the ESOL and special education departments in both planning and decision-making.

Recommendations

- Establish a coherent, unified PD plan specifically designed for a dual language biliteracy context coming from a single point of leadership and developed with input from teachers. Any literacy-focused PD brought into the building should be vetted through a bilingual lens before delivery.
- Protect structured co-planning time built into the school schedule contractually protected from other demands, and clear role definitions for what co-teaching looks like in a DLBE classroom so that all partnerships are working from the same model.
- Develop a formal PD pathway for special education teachers. This should include training on language acquisition, bilingual assessment practices, and guidance on how to deliver and coordinate IEP services.

Section 7: Family and Community

This section includes a discussion about communication and engagement across language groups in the community. The information comes primarily from listening sessions but also includes information from the district website. Recommendations will be provided at the end of the section.

Evaluation Findings

The listening sessions reflect several areas where the program has made meaningful progress. Both Spanish- and English-speaking parent groups expressed that they feel welcomed by classroom teachers and building-level staff, and that the relationships between families and teachers are warm and responsive. Spanish-speaking parents in particular noted positive experiences when reaching out to the school, describing staff as attentive and respectful.

There is also evidence of genuine community-building within the school. Multiple parent voices across sessions described the program as a space where diverse families come together around a shared commitment to bilingualism, and several parents noted that the school has made deliberate efforts to bridge Spanish- and English-speaking parent communities over time. There was reference to a Latina parent leadership conference conducted entirely in Spanish, a Latino providers network, and a bilingual social worker who conducts all family intakes – all of which reflect intentional infrastructure for reaching families who might otherwise be underserved. Support staff also noted an uptick in parent engagement as a building priority, including a Parent University that addressed bilingual language acquisition and grade-level programming.

Students, particularly those at the high school level, offered some of the most powerful testimony about the community that the program has cultivated. They described the program as a space where cultural identity is celebrated, where students who speak different languages support one another, and where they are able to use their bilingualism to connect with peers, community members, and family.

Communication

Despite these strengths, listening sessions across nearly every stakeholder group surfaced significant gaps in how the program communicates with, involves, and advocates alongside families – particularly in ways that families represent strategic partners, not simply recipients of information.

The most consistent theme was a lack of clear, timely and proactive communication about the program's design, goals, and trajectory. English-speaking parents from two grade band groups described feeling uninformed about what their children were learning on a day-to-day basis, uncertain about the program's expectations for student outcomes, and unaware that the program effectively ends after 6th grade until very late in their child's elementary experience. Several parents noted that this information gap led families to opt out of the program, not because they

opposed it, but because they did not have enough reliable information to advocate for it or sustain it at home.

Furthermore, stakeholders describe the program's public-facing identity and community presence as underdeveloped. The school's website was described as outdated, outreach for enrollment and program information sessions was characterized as poorly timed. Multiple stakeholders expressed that the district does not champion the program in ways that would attract broader community investment or counter persistent deficit-based perceptions of the school.

Several survey respondents noted that misconceptions about the school's demographics – including the conflation of race, ethnicity, and language background – have contributed to misinformation that influences how the program is perceived by families outside of it. Respondents expressed that these perceptions, which surface in community conversations and online spaces, can create barriers to enrollment and make it harder for the program to be seen as a district-wide asset. While this was touched on lightly in the listening sessions, it was raised with greater consistency and specificity in the survey.

Finally, multiple survey respondents explicitly named the practice of comparing MKES test scores to its peer elementary schools as unfair, misleading, and damaging to the program's reputation. They called for DLBE-specific benchmarks and comparison to other dual language programs statewide. While data use came up in the listening sessions, this specific critique – that the district is evaluating a bilingual program through a monolingual accountability lens and then using those results against the program publicly – was much more pointed and specific in the survey.

Engagement Across Language Groups

The equity of engagement across language groups is another area that warrants attention. While the program has made progress in involving Spanish-speaking families, multiple participants noted that the district-level communication, Board of Education meetings, and broader program advocacy remain primarily oriented toward English-speaking families. Spanish-speaking parents described feeling that the district does not prioritize their input, citing a specific instance in which they organized significant advocacy around a class section cut and felt their voices were dismissed.

Parents also described a meaningful decline in structured family education and support over time. Several noted that in the program's earlier years, there were regular workshops, classroom observation opportunities, and informal sessions that helped families understand how to support bilingual learning at home. Those supports have largely diminished, and parents – particularly those from English-speaking households – described feeling that the responsibility for Spanish reinforcement has been placed on families without adequate tools or guidance to fulfill it.

Recommendations

- Invest in a proactive, sustained public communication strategy that accurately represents the mission and outcomes of the DLBE program.
- Create structured opportunities for families inside and outside the program to learn about it through direct engagement, such as classroom events, family ambassador programs, and early outreach to prospective families before misinformation fills the gap.
- Continue to create opportunities for school staff and families to come together to share linguistic and educational practices and beliefs and build home-school partnerships so that students' language and literacy development and academic achievement can be jointly supported by the school and the home.
- Continue to create opportunities for school staff and families to come together around events that feature a variety of multicultural and multilingual concepts, themes, and topics to create spaces for discussion of socio-cultural topics and continue to promote families' linguistic and cultural heritages.
- Continue to provide informational sessions about the DLBE program in both program languages to DLBE families and add information about the DLBE middle school program.
- Continue community outreach efforts to obtain input from the community at large about the DLBE program.

Section 8: Support and Resources

This section includes a discussion about staffing and district-level support and leadership. The information comes primarily from listening sessions and some of the extant documents. Recommendations will be provided at the end of the section.

Evaluation Findings

Effective dual language programs depend on sustained administrative support at multiple levels, from the school district and local board of education to state policy. This support is most meaningfully demonstrated not through stated commitment alone, but through the structural integration of the program into district systems, long-term planning that extends beyond temporary funding sources and the equitable distribution of resources across both program languages – including staffing, professional development and instructional materials (Genesse et al., 2006; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Montecel & Cortez, 2002).

The evaluation data reveals a program with a strong human foundation and a committed community, even as structural and resource challenges have limited the program's ability to operate at full program strength. A consistent and cross-cutting strength in the dataset is teacher dedication. Across every stakeholder group, teachers were identified as the primary force sustaining the program. Parent survey data confirmed this independently, with 60% of respondents naming teachers as the program's backbone.

Bilingual and Special Education Staffing

In particular, the program also benefits from meaningful investments in bilingual staffing at the elementary level. The number and placement of bilingual staff across roles reflect an intentional effort to build a bilingual support infrastructure and represent a genuine strength relative to many dual language programs nationally. The addition of staff in 2024-2025 made co-teaching between ESOL and special education educators possible, representing a meaningful step toward more coherently integrating supports for dually identified students into the program's structure.

However, the intersection of special education and dual language instruction represents a significant equity concern documented consistently across stakeholder groups. Students who are dually identified – receiving both DLBE instruction and special education supports – are currently provided special education services in English only, and IEP goals are written in English even for students whose primary context is Spanish. Compounded with this concern, bilingual evaluations are currently outsourced rather than conducted by in-house bilingual staff. Across listening sessions, stakeholders described this arrangement as costly and insufficient, noting that evaluation reports frequently reflect a monolingual interpretive lens that does not adequately account for students' bilingual development.

District-Level Support and Leadership Capacity

The appointment of a bilingual elementary school principal was consistently described across educator, family, and administrator listening sessions as promising and long-awaited development for the program. At the middle school level, stakeholders noted greater flexibility in leadership relative to prior years, with the FLEX house model reflecting an openness to program-supportive structures. The ESOL director's sustained stewardship of the program over more than twelve years through four principals and four superintendents – was recognized across stakeholder groups as a stabilizing force.

However, a consistent and cross-cutting theme across listening sessions is the absence of meaningful district-level understanding and support for the DLBE program. Several stakeholders described a perception that the program does not receive the same level of district visibility and advocacy as other schools and programs in the district, with MKES at times feeling, in the words of stakeholders, like “the underdog school.” The credential analysis points to an opportunity for the district to build greater bilingual and dual language expertise at the leadership level. Expanding knowledge base among district administrators would strengthen the district's overall capacity to sustain and grow the program effectively.

Recommendations

- Develop and adopt a district policy establishing that special education services for dually-identified students are provided in an appropriate language, and that IEP goals reflect the student's bilingual instructional context. This policy should be developed in collaboration with the ESOL director, special education leadership, and classroom teachers.
- Develop clear criteria for selecting and vetting external bilingual evaluators to improve quality and cultural responsiveness of outsourced reports until in-house capacity is established.
- Take deliberate steps to elevate the program's visibility and communicate its value across the district community. This could include presenting program outcomes data to the Board of Education on an annual cycle and sharing program updates and highlights with the school community on a trimester basis through existing district and school communication channels.
- Build district-level bilingual leadership capacity to reduce the program's dependence on a single point of advocacy and ensure that bilingual expertise is represented in district-level decision-making on an ongoing basis.

Section 9: Conclusion

There are many promising practices that district and school staff can build on, as well as areas for growth that, if pursued, would strengthen the program. The number of initiatives the district has embarked on recently are a testament to the dedication of the district to the DLBE program and its commitment to continuing to provide students with the opportunity to achieve its three main goals (i.e., bilingualism and biliteracy, high academic achievement, and socio-cultural competence).

The development of a long-term strategic plan that includes an integrated plan is going to be crucial to strengthen the DLBE program and continue its progressive vertical expansion. The plan will need to include expertise, involve representation from all key stakeholders (including students, families, and the community at large), and outline tasks, responsible individuals, a timeline, funding sources, and community outreach. Fortunately for the BCSD community, the DLBE program has competent and committed teachers who will be able to make important contributions to the development of the plan, as well as the expertise at the district level to guide the work so that it can be implemented following research-based, effective practices in DLBE education.

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Appendix A: Research on Successful Dual Language Program Implementation

Program Structure: Research Background

Program structure is the organizational foundation of effective DLBE programs. Though many program structure variations can emerge across schools and systems, the authors of the *Guiding Principles* identified three research-based key principles and 15 key points for successful DLBE program implementation (Howard et al., 2018). School programs should have a clear vision and goals, with a focus on bilingualism, biliteracy, and sociocultural competence, as well as high academic expectations that are shared by all members of the community (de Jong, 2011; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

A focus on equity, including a positive, caring school environment that attends to the needs of linguistically, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse students, and the elevation of the languages and cultures of the students, is another critical feature of successful programs (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; de Jong, 2011; Gay, 2010; Genesee et al., 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Schools also need to cultivate effective leadership for DLBE programs, wherein leaders advocate for the program; carefully plan, implement, and monitor programs; and promote a sense of community and collaboration (Castellano, Stringfield, & Stone, 2002; Herman, Gates, Chavez-Herrerias, & Harris, 2016; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Successful schools have a systematic approach to continuous planning and refinement that is aligned with program goals and detailed in a district-wide plan (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2012; Williams et al., 2007). When designing and refining programs, leaders should consider program duration, language allocation, literacy instruction, and student demographics, among other potential factors. Research shows that, typically, programs should be at least six years in duration (Genesee et al., 2006; Umansky & Reardon, 2014); devote sufficient instructional time to the partner language—50% or more (Lindholm-Leary, 2016); and include literacy instruction in both languages (August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesee et al., 2006; Soltero-González et al., 2016).

Curriculum: Research Background

Successful DLBE programs have curricula with integrated language and content expectations (Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Fortune, Tedick, & Walker, 2008; Lyster, 2007) for all grade levels in both program languages (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Montecel & Cortez, 2002), with clearly articulated vertical and horizontal alignment (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2009; Drake & Burns, 2004). Effective DLBE curricula are relevant and challenging, providing rich and well-supported opportunities for extended language use in both program languages through assets-based approaches to standards-based learning (Montecel & Cortez, 2002; National Academies, 2017). DLBE curricula should also take advantage of the benefits of cross-

disciplinary approaches that engage students in project-based learning and connect learning across subject areas, as well as opportunities to integrate technology into learning experiences (National Academies, 2017). Finally, with sociocultural competence as a key goal of DLBE programs, the curriculum should reflect students' home languages and cultures and guide students toward positive views of both themselves and others (Feinauer & Howard, 2014; Phinney, 1993).

Instruction: Research Background

Effective instruction in the context of a dual language program has similar features to effective instruction in other settings with language learners (Marzano, 2003; O'Day, 2009). However, instruction in a dual language program is more complex given the need to coordinate and balance instruction in the two program languages, to purposefully separate languages while creating opportunities for connecting languages, and to integrate language and content instruction to support students with diverse language proficiency levels within a single classroom (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2011). Instruction in DLBE settings should ensure that language input is made comprehensible for students at varying language proficiencies in the two program languages (Echevarría et al., 2017; Larsen-Freeman & Tedick, 2016); that language development is addressed explicitly in instruction (Lyster, 2007; Saunders, Goldenberg, & Marcelletti, 2013), including use of metalanguage (Schleppegrell, 2013) and opportunities to practice oral language skills (Lyster, 2007; Saunders & O'Brien, 2006; Schleppegrell, 2013); that literacy is taught in a meaningful way using research-based methods such as explicit instruction, scaffolding, differentiation, vocabulary instruction, along with regular opportunities to practice skills (August et al., 2014; Baker et al., 2014); and that translanguaging pedagogies are incorporated to facilitate and capitalize on cross-linguistic connections (García et al., 2016; Hopewell & Escamilla, 2015).

Assessment and Accountability: Research Background

Assessment and accountability in an era of high stakes standardized testing is an important and nuanced consideration for DLBE programs. While it is beneficial to use achievement data to monitor programs (Lindholm-Leary, Hargett, & Lambert, 2007), there are concerns about the appropriateness of assessments for use with English learners (Abedi & Gándara, 2006; Kopriva, 2008), and even for native English-speaking students enrolled in DLBE programs (Lindholm-Leary, 2012). Because of this, DLBE programs require multiple measures that are aligned with program goals and curriculum (Lindholm-Leary et al., 2007; Montecel & Cortez, 2002) in both languages for oral language (bilingualism) and literacy skills (biliteracy) for all students (Escamilla, Chávez, & Vigil, 2005; National Academies, 2017). Additionally, the analysis, interpretation, and communication of student progress requires a clear understanding of research in language development and academic performance in the context of DLBE by schools and the communities they serve (Lindholm-Leary et al., 2007; National Academies, 2017).

Staff Quality and Professional Development: Research Background

Staff quality and professional development (PD) are important in any school context and the need for philosophically committed, culturally competent, pedagogically agile staff is heightened in DLBE settings (Howard & Sugarman, 2007; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; López, Scanlan, & Gundrum, 2013; Williams et al., 2007). In DLBE programs, a key factor is teachers' language abilities, with native or native-like proficiency needed for the languages in which they teach (Aquino-Sterling & Rodriguez-Valls, 2016; Montecel & Cortez, 2002). A common challenge to districts and schools is the shortage of qualified bilingual educators; to address this need, districts need to create a recruiting plan to identify potential new teachers through a variety of means, and a well-executed, collaborative recruiting process (Kennedy, 2013). Ongoing DLI-specific PD is a critical feature of successful DLBE programs. When staff lack critical knowledge regarding bilingual theory and practice, they risk making poor choices with regard to program structure, curriculum, and instructional strategies, all of which can impact student performance, reinforce negative stereotypes, and create misperceptions about the efficacy of DLBE instruction (Ballantyne et al., 2008;). PD aligned with program goals and focused on areas of particular pedagogical need for DLBE programs, such as language education pedagogy, biliteracy development, equity, and social justice, can help prepare staff to implement an effective DLBE program and meet the needs of their students (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Hamayan et al., 2013).

Family and Community: Research Background

DLBE programs seek to overcome traditional barriers to authentic and impactful family and community involvement, an important factor in students' academic success (Ferguson, 2008; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; National Academies, 2017). Research shows that families of linguistically and culturally diverse students tend to have high academic expectations for their children and a desire to be involved in their education (Glick & White, 2004; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). DLBE programs should welcome and encourage families' engagement, adopt an assets-based mindset, value the funds of knowledge their families and communities possess, respect and protect the cultural identities of their students and families, and work creatively to meet the needs of both the school and the families they serve (Ferguson, 2008; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; National Academies, 2017). Effective DLBE programs are warm and welcoming environments that provide an authentic sense of belonging for all who enter.

Support and Resources: Research Background

Successful DLBE programs are supported through structures and policies established by district leadership, local boards of education, and states to promote, preserve, and protect the mission and vision of their DLBE programs. Locally developed policies provide important clarity and integrate the program within existing systems, ultimately ensuring appropriate levels of district support and resources to DLBE programs in terms of funding, staffing, materials, teacher training, program structure, planning, and parent engagement (Genesee et al., 2006; Lindholm-

Leary, 2001; Montecel & Cortez, 2002). Local policy should also include a language policy that outlines how languages will be used and instructed within the program to ensure that program goals and integrity are maintained and consistent (Field & Menken, 2015). At the school level, principals and others in leadership positions play a critical role in ensuring that the DLBE program is supported through a variety of means, including professional development, recruitment, funding, equitable allocation of resources, and program advocacy (Alanís & Rodriguez, 2008; Castellano, Stringfield, & Stone, 2002; Genesee et al., 2006; Herman, Gates, Chavez-Herrerias, & Harris, 2016; Kennedy, 2013; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Source: Howard, E. R., Lindholm-Leary, K. J., Rogers, D., Olague, N., Medina, J., Kennedy, B., Sugarman, J., & Christian, D. (2018). *Guiding principles for dual language education* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Appendix B: CAL Instructional Observation Protocol

CAL Dual Language Instructional Observation Protocol

School:	Teacher:	Grade level(s):	Language:
Date:	Start time: End time:	Content area:	Lesson topic:
Number of adults and their roles (teacher, instructional assistants, parents, etc.):			
Resources (including supplemental materials): List the materials in use.		Are resources appropriate for the lesson? Do they facilitate biliteracy instruction for second language learners? Explain.	
Classroom set-up (room configuration, use of wall space, environmental print, instructional materials, classroom library, etc.): Is it conducive to learning for second language learners? Classroom Print (languages equitably displayed, color-coded, percentage in each language)			
Language Use by Staff Teacher uses target language (circle): 100% or less than 100% of the time If less than 100%, when does the teacher use the non-target language? If another person is in the room providing assistance: 100% use of target language or less than 100% If less than 100%, when does he/she use the non-target language? Other: Language Use by Students (Capture responses of students using the non-target language if possible) Number of incidences: Number of students: Description:			

Complete the chart by including evidence whenever possible.

Strand 3 - Instruction	
Instruction incorporates appropriate separation of languages to promote high levels of language acquisition. Evidence:	
Teacher integrates language and content instruction. Evidence:	
Teachers use sheltered instruction and other pedagogical strategies to facilitate student comprehension and promote language and literacy development. Evidence:	
Instruction in one language builds on concepts learned in the other. Evidence	
Instruction leverages students' bilingualism by strategically bringing students' attention to similarities or differences between languages. Evidence:	
Teachers use a variety of strategies to ensure equitable participation among all students. Evidence:	
Teacher uses active learning strategies such as thematic instruction, cooperative learning, and learning centers in order to meet the needs of diverse learners. Evidence:	
Teacher creates meaningful opportunities for sustained language use. Evidence:	
Student grouping maximizes opportunities for students to benefit from peer models. Evidence:	
Students use technology to display their understanding of content and to further develop their language and literacy skills in both program languages. Evidence:	
Instructional staff use technology tools to engage all learners. Evidence:	

Strand 4 - Assessment & Accountability
Teacher checks for understanding and provides feedback when needed. Evidence:
Teacher uses other types of formative assessment. Evidence:

Appendix C: Bedford Central School District Documentation Received

NYSESLAT Data Reports, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024

State Assessments, 2023-2024

STAR, Reading and Math (Spanish and English for MKES), Spring 2024, Winter 2024, and Winter 2025

IRLA/ENIL Curriculum-Based Assessments, June 2025

Core Phonics, June 2025

Board of Education PPT Presentations, 2024 and 2025

High School Graduation Rates, Weighted GPA, and AP Placement

Appendix D:

Prioritized Recommendations to Support Action Planning

The recommendations that follow are organized into two categories and organized by the seven strands. All of the recommendations are best approached through intentional planning and stakeholder collaboration.

Immediate

Immediate recommendations address conditions that are actively limiting program implementation and should be prioritized for action within the current or upcoming school year. These recommendations are grounded in findings that were documented consistently across multiple data sources and reflect conditions that, left unaddressed, risk compounding over time.

Program Structure

- Convene a DLBE advisory group made up of diverse stakeholders with defined roles and decision-making authority. The advisory group should formalize a clearly articulated mission and vision for the DLBE program and designate a primary program authority for instructional and programmatic decisions, define the role of building principals in implementing and monitoring the program.
- Develop a written commitment to families that articulates the program's scope, expectations, and goals.
- Develop and publish a formal written language allocation plan. The district should develop this document in collaboration with the ESOL director, classroom teachers and specialists, and ensure it addresses language distribution, expectations for student language use during designated instructional time, guidance on translanguaging practices that is consistent with the program's biliteracy goals, and protocols for monitoring language allocation fidelity across classrooms.
- Protect Spanish instructional time as a non-negotiable program priority. The district should develop a substitute coverage plan that does not consistently pull Spanish zone teachers from their assigned roles.

Curriculum

- Prioritize the development of a documented bilingual scope and sequence for language and literacy as an immediate program need. This work should be led by the ESOL director in collaboration with classroom teachers, language zone specialists, and an experienced biliteracy curriculum consultant – ensuring that cross linguistic connections, metalinguistic instruction, and language transfer strategies are explicitly mapped across grade levels, content areas, and both language zones. The resulting document should be

formally adopted, maintained across leadership transitions, and reviewed on a regular basis.

Instruction

- Carefully reconsider the language demands of academic content during lesson preparation and incorporate differentiated language-embedded supports to enable all students to engage in sustained (oral and written) language use.

Assessment and Accountability

- Prioritize the identification and implementation of practices and strategies to accelerate academic language and literacy development among ELs across both program languages, drawing on existing district data to inform decision-making. The instructional recommendations outlined in the Instruction section of this report provide an initial framework for strengthening classroom-level supports.

Staff Quality and Professional Development

- Establish a coherent, unified PD plan specifically designed for a dual language biliteracy context coming from a single point of leadership and developed with input from teachers. Any literacy-focused PD brought into the building should be vetted through a bilingual lens before delivery.

Family and Community

- Invest in a proactive, sustained public communication strategy that accurately represents the mission and outcomes of the DLBE program.

Support and Resources

- Build district-level bilingual leadership capacity to reduce the program's dependence on a single point of advocacy and ensure that bilingual expertise is represented in district-level decision-making on an ongoing basis.

Ongoing

While not every recommendation can be acted on simultaneously, the recommendations in this category are not secondary in importance, simply in sequence. Ongoing recommendations support the program's growth and development over a longer horizon and should be incorporated into district planning with clear timelines and designated ownership.

Program Structure

- Provide a structure with increased time for intentional collaboration and planning between teachers.
- Schedule time for collaboration between DLBE elementary and middle school classroom teachers, support staff, and administrators to ensure vertical alignment.
- Continue with a vertical expansion of the DLBE program in middle school and consider adding a strand program in high school to create a K-12 DLBE pathway to the NYS Seal of Biliteracy.

Curriculum

- Establish a program-wide expectation that every lesson in both languages includes a posted and verbally stated language objective that is distinct from the content objective, supported by job-embedded coaching from a bilingual instructional literacy coach and monitored through regular instructional walkthroughs.
- Continue implementation of the ARC ELA and SLA curricula with fidelity through the full three-year implementation plan before considering any modifications. Premature changes to curricular materials during the implementation period risk interrupting the full implementation cycle and compromising the data needed to make well-informed decisions about future adjustments.

Instruction

- Provide carefully planned and structured opportunities for students to engage in extended oral discourse with peers in pairs or small groups strategically created in such a way that students must work interdependently, with individual and group accountability for all group members and social equity (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).
- Increase intentional and strategic instructional opportunities to draw connections between the two program languages – while maintaining the integrity of each language zone - by highlighting similarities and differences across different dimensions of language (sound/letter, word/phrase, sentence, and discourse) to promote cross-linguistic transfer and the development of metalinguistic awareness in ML students in all content areas.
- Incorporate sociocultural building practices in the elementary classrooms so that students have the opportunity to engage with rich language and culturally appropriate content

beyond holidays and cuisine and in learning activities that promote social justice (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Banks & Banks, 2010; de Jong, 2011; García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2016; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006).

Assessment & Accountability

- Establish a regular data review cycle that triangulates the multiple assessments across both languages, so that patterns in one assessment are cross-referenced with proficiency levels and comprehension outcomes.
- Use longitudinal assessment data from multiple assessments in English and Spanish disaggregated by student demographic variables to make program level and scheduling adjustments, inform DLBE instructional practices, and ensure that students' needs, including ML students' needs, are being met by the program. For example, examine STAR Reading and ARC reading assessment data longitudinally in the two languages to monitor DLBE and DLBE ML students' biliteracy development trajectories and use the information to inform biliteracy instruction.

Staff Quality and Professional Development

- Protect structured co-planning time built into the school schedule contractually protected from other demands, and clear role definitions for what co-teaching looks like in a DLBE classroom so that all partnerships are working from the same model.
- Develop a formal PD pathway for special education teachers. This should include training on language acquisition, bilingual assessment practices, and guidance on how to deliver and coordinate IEP services.

Family and Community

- Create structured opportunities for families inside and outside the program to learn about it through direct engagement, such as classroom events, family ambassador programs, and early outreach to prospective families before misinformation fills the gap.
- Continue to create opportunities for school staff and families to come together to share linguistic and educational practices and beliefs and build home-school partnerships so that students' language and literacy development and academic achievement can be jointly supported by the school and the home.
- Continue to create opportunities for school staff and families to come together around events that feature a variety of multicultural and multilingual concepts, themes, and topics to create spaces for discussion of socio-cultural topics and continue to promote families' linguistic and cultural heritages.

- Continue to provide informational sessions about the DLBE program in both program languages to DLBE families and add information about the DLBE middle school program.
- Continue community outreach efforts to obtain input from the community at large about the DLBE program.

Support and Resources

- Develop and adopt a district policy establishing that special education services for dually-identified students are provided in an appropriate language, and that IEP goals reflect the student's bilingual instructional context. This policy should be developed in collaboration with the ESOL director, special education leadership, and classroom teachers.
- Develop clear criteria for selecting and vetting external bilingual evaluators to improve quality and cultural responsiveness of outsourced reports until in-house capacity is established.
- Take deliberate steps to elevate the program's visibility and communicate its value across the district community. This could include presenting program outcomes data to the Board of Education on an annual cycle and sharing program updates and highlights with the school community on a trimester basis through existing district and school communication channels.