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**Abstract**

**Bilingual ESL STEM Teachers for ELLs (BEST 4 ELLS)**

Through STEM improvement, teacher education and a strong native language foundation, the project *BEST 4 ELLS*, seeks \$1,956,092 to train 24 pre-service teachers, 20 master in-service teachers and 150 in-service teachers through a program of teacher development with the ultimate goal of improving the education of English learners in the Permian Basin region of Texas. *BEST 4 ELLS* is a collaborative project, consisting of a consortia of local education agencies (school districts), including the Ector County ISD, The Midland ISD, The McCamey ISD, the Crane ISD, Monahans-Wickett-Pyote ISD, Seminole ISD, Pecos-Barstow-Toyah ISD, Midland Academy Public Charter School and one institution of higher education, The University of Texas of the Permian Basin. The partner schools are all fully committed to participating in the project and increasing the abilities of teachers in the region to improve the academic performance of English language learning children in the region to meet the following:

Goal 1: To improve the performance and learning of area bilingual and ESL elementary children, especially in STEM disciplines on multiple measures of school achievement.

Objective 1a: ELL Elementary Students in the bilingual and ESL education programs in collaborating districts will experience a growth of 30% in reading, and Science by August, 2016.

Objective 1b: By 5th grade, ELL elementary Students in bilingual and ESL education programs in collaborating districts will experience a annual growth of 30%in mathematics by August 2016.

Objective 1c: UTPB in cooperation with its collaborative LEAs will provide training to 20 in-service teachers in science and mathematics curriculum improvement for ELL students.

Goal 2: UTPB and LEA partners will prepare 24 pre-service teachers including Bachelor's degrees and certification along with 20 masters degreed students and 150 in-service teachers (non-course based) for work with ELL students, with an emphasis on STEM achievement.

Objective 2a: 24 pre-service teachers will obtain bilingual/ certifications and Bachelor's degrees by August 2016 with the goal of improving class performance in mathematics and in reading.

Objective 2b: 20 students will pass the *Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT)* and the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TEExES) passing rate for the STEM areas will go from 91 to 98% of all test takers by 2016.

Objective 2c: 20 in-service teachers will obtain certification and master's degrees in bilingual ESL education by 2016, including passing the BTLPT and TEExES as appropriate.

Objective 2d: 150 in-service teachers will receive training in language acquisition, foundations of bilingual and ESL education along with methods and strategies for ELL students by August 2016 and will implement these strategies in ELL classrooms

Pursuant to these goals, curriculum will be revised and a new major in bilingual studies, which will include a stronger STEM foundation than current students have is proposed. This will strengthen the 24 candidates and will offer an improved program for teacher education in the future at UTPB. School districts in the region will provide referrals from their pools of paraprofessionals, while at the same time providing mentoring and field based placements for the pre-service teachers. The district consortia are fully committed to placements for student teaching, for assisting with hiring and placement of the candidates and for providing administrators to provide information on professional development.

Twenty master teachers in two cohorts of 10 each and 150 in-service teachers in two cohorts of 75 each, will participate in non-course based bilingual and ESL training activities

twice monthly (20 sessions per year) with the goal of improving instruction for all ELL students in the collaborating districts. The districts will host the training and provide training sites as well as recruit the candidates for participation. Districts will provide data, with appropriate IRB and privacy laws followed and the projects rigorous evaluations will be conducted annually to ensure that objectives are being met and to allow for data based decision making and continuous improvement.

Through this project, **Competitive priority 2** (enabling data based decision making) and **competitive priority 3** (promoting STEM fields) are met, as well as **invitational priority 2** (training all educational personnel). In order to meet GPRA targets, it is expected that **12 pre-service teachers per year and 85 in-service teachers (10 master teachers and 75 non-course based)** will participate in each year of the project, (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), while serving ELL students. It is further anticipated that **12 pre-service teachers will complete by December 2013**, while **10 in-service teachers will complete masters degree by December 2013**. Similarly, it is anticipated an additional **12 pre-service teachers will complete by August 2016**, while **10 in-service teachers will complete masters degree by August 2016**. One cohort of inservice teachers will complete training by **December 2013**, while another will finish by August of 2016. Twelve new preservice teachers will be placed in districts by September 2013 and 12 more by August 2016 will be serving ELL children. All preservice teachers will be certified in bilingual or ESL education.

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**(a) Quality of the Project Design**

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin will serve as the fiscal agent and lead institution in the *Bilingual ESL STEM Teachers for ELLs (BEST 4 ELLS)* collaborative designed to improve the academic performance and graduation rates of ELL students in the region through an emphasis in teacher education, a model of improved preparation in native language and STEM subjects in ELL classrooms. Local educational agencies that will participate include the following rural districts in West Texas: Crane ISD, Monahans-Wickett-Pyote ISD, Seminole ISD, Pecos-Barstow-Toyah ISD and two larger districts: Midland ISD and Ector County ISD (the primary districts) along with one public charter school, Midland Academy. The proposed project meets competitive priorities two and three as well as invitational priority two.

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin (UTPB) has traditionally been the hub for training bilingual education and ESL teachers for a 17 county area of vast geographical size. Most school districts in the region report that the majority of their students are Hispanic and as the recent census shows, Hispanic population represents approximately 40% of the total population. More significantly, the Texas Education Agency indicates that English Language Learners in the area represent 9.2% of the total school age population in the region with 80% of ELL students failing 11<sup>th</sup> grade state math exams, 91% failing science exams and 48% failing to graduate high school. These scores demonstrate the need for a project focused on early grades in STEM areas in order to reverse the current trend. Chart One illustrates the current achievement among ELL students in the area in Reading, while Chart two indicates the achievement in Math.

In order to assess the achievement of the ELL population in this region and the perceived needs of the district, a needs assessment was conducted among area school districts, which

revealed a need for at least 35 new bilingual and ESL teachers and 35 in-service teachers to be trained for ESL instruction for the Permian Basin Region of Texas. Districts indicated that they had at least 50 in-service teachers who could participate in such training.

**Chart One Baseline Data Reading**

**2010 ELL Student Reading Achievement as Compared to Local Non-ELL Students and State Wide Achievement on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills/STAAR**

Grade Level % Passing Reading TAKS	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade		8 <sup>th</sup> Grade		11 <sup>th</sup> H.S.		% Grad Ready		% College	
	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL
Comparison Groups	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL
STATE OF Texas	86%	62%	91%	57%	93%	54%	80.6	49.2%	62%	7%
Midland ISD	79%	43%	89%	12%	89%	9%	76%	26%	43%	<1%
Ector County ISD	82%	52%	88%	58%	93%	44%	71%	50%	40%	<1%
Midland Charter Acad	65%	n/a	49%	n/a	88%	n/a	100	n/a	80%	n/a
Monahans WP ISD	84%	n/a	87%	n/a	81%	n/a	83%	n/a	35%	n/a
Seminole ISD	88%	33%	93%	n/a	95%	n/a	94%	n/a	44%	<1%
Crane ISD	83%	n/a	97%	n/a	94%	n/a	86%	n/a	32%	n/a
McCamey ISD	69%	76%	90%	80%	93%	75%	96%	95.6	33%	45%
Pecos BT ISD	72%	69%	81%	20%	87%	n/a	79%	71%	41%	10%

Red(Source AEIS: Texas Education Agency 2011)

**Chart Two Baseline Data Math**

**2010 ELL Student Mathematics Achievement as Compared to Local Non-ELL Students And State Wide Achievement on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills/STAAR**

Grade Level % Passing Math TAKS/STAAR	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade		8 <sup>th</sup> Grade		11 <sup>th</sup> H.S.		% Grad Ready		% College	
	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL
Comparison Groups	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL
STATE OF Texas	86%	73%	81%	55%	89%	62%	80.6	49.2	60%	23%
Midland ISD	77%	59%	73%	24%	84%	38%	76%	26%	62%	17%
Ector County ISD	81%	65%	71%	43%	81%	36%	70.5	50%	40%	11%
Midland Charter Acad	49%	n/a	58%	n/a	n/a	n/a	100	n/a	20%	n/a
Monahans WP ISD	82%	n/a	81%	n/a	91%	n/a	82.8	n/a	35%	n/a
Seminole ISD	92%	100	83%	n/a	93%	n/a	94.4	n/a	53%	<1%
Crane ISD	78%	n/a	70%	n/a	92%	n/a	86.4	n/a	43%	n/a
McCamey ISD	56%	63%	68%	71%	93%	100	96.9	95.6	57%	45%
Pecos BT ISD	73%	85%	79%	20%	89%	n/a	79%	71%	44%	27%

(Source AEIS: Texas Education Agency 2011)

### Chart Three Baseline Data Science

#### 2010 ELL Student Science Achievement as Compared to Local Non-ELL Students

#### And State Wide Achievement on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills/STAAR

Grade Level % Passing Science TAKS/STAAR	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade		8 <sup>th</sup> Grade		11 <sup>th</sup> H.S.		% Grad Ready		% College	
	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL	ALL	ELL
Comparison Groups										
STATE OF Texas	88%	73%	78%	40%	92%	58%	80.6	49.2	60%	23%
Midland ISD	84%	64%	69%	14%	86%	27%	76%	26%	62%	17%
Ector County ISD	82%	61%	74%	40%	88%	41%	70.5	50%	40%	11%
Midland Charter Acad	58%	n/a	58%	n/a	n/a	n/a	100	n/a	20%	n/a
Monahans WP ISD	89%	n/a	77%	n/a	90%	n/a	82.8	n/a	35%	n/a
Seminole ISD	89%	n/a	81%	n/a	98%	n/a	94.4	n/a	53%	<1%
Crane ISD	91%	75%	60%	n/a	92%	n/a	86.4	n/a	43%	n/a
McCamey ISD	55%	n/a	76%	n/a	73%	n/a	96.9	95.6	57%	45%
Pecos BT ISD	64%	46%	59%	>1%	95%	n/a	79%	71%	28%	<1%

In a recent study among teachers in the Permian Basin region, it was found that 83% felt that their background in academic Spanish was a deterrent to providing quality bilingual instruction in STEM areas. Teachers admitted to feeling “uncomfortable” or “somewhat uncomfortable” with the use of content area Spanish in their classrooms.(Ramirez, 2009).

This research points to a need to improve the preparation of teachers in STEM fields in general and specifically in academic Spanish for the Math and Science classrooms. The current project proposes to incorporate a new major in bilingual studies, which will contain a concentration of STEM courses and additional classes in preparation of STEM vocabulary for STEM fields in Elementary bilingual Education classrooms. This should address a fundamental weakness in teacher education in the Permian Basin as well as the deficiencies in student achievement.

Through the proposed project, it is predicted that bilingual and ESL teachers will be better prepared in native language instruction, STEM fields and in bilingual and ESL

methodology through a revision of curriculum and development of a bilingual studies major at UTPB. The new major will better prepare bilingual education teachers with a foundation in the native language appropriate to teach reading, math, science, social studies and other rigorous academic subjects. Additionally, student achievement in the targeted districts will be addressed through a program of teacher development, structured research through observation of teachers using knowledge gleaned from the coursework and training.

Within the project design, a researcher based at the University will devote at least 50 percent of her time to collaborative training, research and site based school improvement for the collaborative local educational agencies in order to effectively impact teachers, ELL students and school district administrative policy and practice to ensure much greater success for ELL students. The goal is to implement data-based decisionmaking at the school district and university level. Assessments of bilingual teachers will be made routinely using an instrument designed to determine if native language and ESL strategies are used to promote STEM and other subject learning. This instrument will be developed as a part of the proposed project.

In Charts Four, Five and Six, the program targets for student achievement are revealed. These data will serve as baseline information so that the researcher will be able to examine the continuous progress of the proposed project's goals and objectives. The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (the name will change in 2012 to STAAR test) is the primary assessment used for measuring achievement in the State of Texas, used at almost every grade level, beginning at the third grade and students must pass the 11<sup>th</sup> grade level exam in order to graduate from a Texas Public (including Public Charter) High School. In 2012, the TAKS will change to the STAAR test, and as a result both tests will remain critical to the success of EL students. In addition to the TAKS/STAAR test, other data will be used, such as the Texas English Language

Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) and measures of language achievement. For baseline data and to establish a general need for the *BEST 4 ELLS* detailed grade by grade data was acquired for examination and planning purposes from the Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System. It is important to note that EL students in most of the targeted districts have low graduation rates and achievement rates. A few rural districts (Monahans, Seminole, Crane and McCamey) wish to participate as needed for teachers who may be new to the district or need further training. They will have full access to the technology interface as well as the in-service teacher training. They will, however, not participate in the observation and evaluation process. These districts are scoring high on most measures, but wish to be included in the project to maintain their success. They will be included at a minimal level only, so as to put the resources where there is the most need, which is at the Midland and Ector County Independent School districts. For these schools, massive revisions of their programs are planned and UTPB will be a partner in these changes by providing teacher education. The student improvement should begin after in-service teachers have at least one to two years of training; therefore, the goal is for gains to show in May of 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

The annual benchmarks listed on charts four, five and six are reflected in the goals and objectives and it is believed that progress will be seen even during the first year; however, the training will be ongoing and continuous improvement is expected as the teachers gain new skills and competency. The researcher will examine the following information and along with the evaluator will determine if the following targets are being met each year from 2013 through 2016.

## Annual Benchmarks

### Chart Four

#### ELL Student Reading Achievement Goals for August 2016

#### Achievement on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Grade Level % Passing Reading TAKS	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade		8 <sup>th</sup> Grade		11 <sup>th</sup> H.S.		% Grad Ready		% College	
	Goal	2010	Goal	2010	Goal	2010	Goal	2009	Goal	2009
5 Year Goals by 2016										
Midland ISD										
2013	48%	43%	25%	12%	74%	69%	31%	26%	10%	<1%
2014	53%	43%	35%	12%	79%	69%	36%	26%	15%	<1%
2015	58%	43%	45%	12%	84%	69%	41%	26%	20%	<1%
2016	61%	43%	55%	12%	89%	69%	45%	26%	30%	<1%
Ector County ISD										
2013	57%	52%	63%	58%	49%	44%	53%	50%	15%	<1%
2014	62%	52%	68%	58%	54%	44%	56%	50%	20%	<1%
2015	67%	52%	73%	58%	59%	44%	59%	50%	25%	<1%
2016	72%	52%	78%	58%	64%	44%	65%	50%	30%	<1%

(Source AEIS: Texas Education Agency 2011)

### Chart Five

#### 2010 ELL Student Mathematics Achievement as Compared to Local Non-ELL Students

#### and State Wide Achievement on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Grade Level % Passing Math TAKS	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade		8 <sup>th</sup> Grade		11 <sup>th</sup> H.S.		% Grad Ready		% College	
	Goal	2010	Goal	2010	Goal	2010	Goal	2010	Goal	2010
5 Year Goals by 2016										
Midland ISD										
2013	64%	59%	48%	43%	43%	38%	31%	26%	10%	<1%
2014	69%	59%	53%	43%	48%	38%	36%	26%	15%	<1%
2015	74%	59%	58%	43%	53%	38%	41%	26%	20%	<1%
2016	79%	59%	63%	43%	60%	38%	45%	26%	30%	<1%
Ector County ISD										
2013	70%	65%	48%	43%	41%	36%	53%	50%	15%	<1%
2014	75%	65%	53%	43%	46%	36%	56%	50%	20%	<1%
2015	80%	65%	58%	43%	51%	36%	59%	50%	25%	<1%
2016	85%	65%	63%	43%	56%	36%	65%	50%	30%	<1%

(Source AEIS: Texas Education Agency 2011)

**Chart Six**

**2010 ELL Student Science Achievement as Compared to Local Non-ELL Students and State Wide Achievement on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills/STAAR**

Grade Level Science TAKS/STAAR	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade		8 <sup>th</sup> Grade		11 <sup>th</sup> H.S.		% Grad Ready		% College	
	Goal	2010	Goal	2010	Goal	2010	Goal	2010	Goal	2010
5 Year Goals by 2016										
Midland ISD										
2013	69%	64%	30%	14%	35%	27%	31%	26%	10%	<1%
2014	74%	64%	35%	14%	40%	27%	36%	26%	15%	<1%
2015	79%	64%	40%	14%	45%	27%	41%	26%	20%	<1%
2016	84%	64%	45%	14%	50%	27%	45%	26%	30%	<1%
Ector County ISD										
2013	66%	61%	45%	40%	46%	41%	53%	50%	15%	<1%
2014	71%	61%	50%	40%	51%	41%	56%	50%	20%	<1%
2015	76%	61%	55%	40%	56%	41%	59%	50%	25%	<1%
2016	81%	61%	60%	40%	61%	41%	65%	50%	30%	<1%

(Source AEIS: Texas Education Agency 2011)

**Goals and Objectives:**

The Following goals and objectives have been designed to meet the needs of the project's collaborating institutions.

**Goal 1:** To improve the performance and learning of area bilingual and ESL elementary children, especially in STEM disciplines on multiple measures of school achievement.

**Objective 1a:** ELL Elementary Students in the bilingual and ESL education programs in collaborating districts will experience a growth of 30% (18 percentage growth points) from an average of 60.4% to an average of 78.5% as measured by the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) in reading, and Science by August of 2016.

**Objective 1b:** By 5th grade, ELL elementary Students in bilingual and ESL education programs in collaborating districts will experience a annual growth of 30% (19.5 percentage growth points) from an average of 66% to an average of 85.8% as measured by the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) in mathematics by August 2016..

Objective 1c: UTPB in cooperation with its collaborative LEAs will provide training to 20 in-service teachers in science and mathematics curriculum improvement for ELL students.

Goal 2: UTPB in collaboration with its LEA partners will prepare 24 pre-service teachers including Bachelor's degrees and certification along with 20 masters degreed students and 150 in-service teachers (non-course based) for work with ELL students, with an emphasis on STEM achievement.

Objective 2a: 24 pre-service teachers will obtain bilingual/certifications and Bachelor's degrees by August 2016 with the goal of improving class performance from an average of 66% to 85.8% in mathematics and an average of 60.4% to 78.5% in reading.

Objective 2b: After participating in the curriculum of the newly designed for the Bilingual Studies Major, 100% or 20 students will pass the *Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT)* and the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TEExES) passing rate for the STEM areas will go from 91 to 98% of all test takers by 2016.

Objective 2c: 20 in-service teachers will obtain certification and master's degrees in bilingual ESL education by 2016, including passing the BTLPT and TEExES as appropriate.

Objective 2d: 150 in-service teachers will receive training in language acquisition, foundations of bilingual and ESL education along with methods and strategies for ELL students by August 2016 and will implement these strategies in ELL classrooms.

This project is designed to prepare bilingual and ESL teachers in critical STEM areas to provide native language instruction for struggling school districts in the Permian Basin. This will be accomplished through three initiatives:

1. Pre-service teachers (24) seeking bilingual certification will participate in a newly designed major in bilingual studies with a STEM emphasis. They will be evaluated critically inside

and outside of the classroom during their teacher preparation and after they complete their studies. This follow-up will assist the researcher and the districts in determining if the program is effective and areas for improvement at the University and District level.

2. In-service teachers (100 regular education and 20 master level teachers) will participate in master teacher training (graduate courses) and STEM ELL methodology development through non-course based instruction with second language methods and when appropriate with native language development in academic language. They will be observed during the training and afterwards to determine if the instruction is effective.
3. Data driven decision making will be employed through examining continuous feedback from the researcher employed to observe pre-service and in-service teachers, using a newly developed rubric, designed to assess teaching in the native language and second language methods, state achievement scores and various rigorous assessments of language acquisition and usage.

Planning Process:

Beginning in the summer of 2010, meetings with the bilingual education faculty and others on campus, along with school district personnel from ECISD and Midland ISD were organized in order to discuss possible projects and program improvement for teacher education at UTPB. Needs of the districts were foremost in these discussions, due to the poor performances of ELL students on state achievement exams and their desire for improvement. It was decided that the strength of bilingual education teachers' native language, the strength of regular education teachers' knowledge of ESL attainment, and a general weakness in STEM subjects constituted the fundamental weakness of the teachers and students in area districts. Cyclical problems with achievement were noted.

During meetings in the 2010-11 school year, the Spanish department and the bilingual education faculty met and agreed to propose a bilingual studies degree to be required of all bilingual education pre-service teachers. The degree will increase the rigor and escalate the academic preparation of pre-service teachers, both in STEM subjects and in academic Spanish. This preplanning was necessary not only for the program, but the current project was discussed as well. A draft plan was completed in March 2011 and will be submitted for approvals soon.

Pre-service Component:

The coursework for the Bilingual Studies Degree will involve the creation of two foundational Spanish courses for native speakers with an emphasis on grammar, writing and vocabulary development. The major would contain two upper level grammar courses, revision of a Spanish course to include teacher preparation content and the creation of two rigorous academic language development courses focusing on STEM areas and reading. These courses will lay the framework for the academic vocabulary needed in the bilingual classroom as well as develop writing and other skills needed for teaching. In addition to these courses, an additional 13 hours of math and science coursework beyond the 18 hours required now will be included to strengthen the STEM preparation of teachers, which should make for stronger bilingual teachers who can adeptly teach STEM material in their classrooms.

A cohort of 12 pre-service teachers will start in the fall of 2011 and will complete by December of 2014 and a second cohort will start in January of 2015 and will complete in August of 2016. These candidates will benefit from the newly designed curriculum and they will be observed using rigorous standards by the researcher, using an instrument developed by the project. The standards will include use of Spanish to deliver native language instruction in STEM fields as well as solid ESL and sheltered methodology and strategies. They will receive

follow up after they begin teaching in order to assess their success as bilingual education teachers. The data acquired from these observations will be used for candidate development and for program improvement. In the Ector County ISD, the Assistant superintendent has pledged his support and has offered three personnel to assist with the teachers once they are hired by the district.

The following plan illustrates the new bilingual studies major at UTPB. Students following this major will be recruited after completing 44 hours.

**Proposed Comprehensive Major in Bilingual Studies Degree Plan**

30 Hours of General Education Courses      12 hours of Math   16 hours of Science

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Spanish 1401, 1402, 2311, 2312 OR 6 hours of new Spanish for Spanish Speakers (14 Hours)

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lang. Acquisition, ESL, Bil.Methods:EDUC 4329, 4317, 4315, 4362, 4363 (15 hrs.)

Academic Spanish for Math, Science, Read. & Lang. Arts SPAN 33xx& SPAN 43XX (6 hrs)

Spanish Grammar & Child. Lit: SPAN 3301, 3302, 4378, 3311 (12 hrs.)

Elementary Teacher Preparation Courses: PSYC 3341, EDUC 3352, 3322, 4311, 4313, 4312,

EDUC 4324, 4325, 4327, 4367, 4368, 4373, EDUC 4681 (Student Teaching) EDUC 4099

BTLPT Test Required prior to bilingual methods, TExES Certification PPR & Bilingual Gen.

Candidates would have completed 44-60 hours of general education, math, science and Spanish applicable to the degree prior to acceptance for the *BEST 4 ELLS project*. ESL candidates will follow the multi-disciplinary plan, which has a rigorous preparation and qualifies by federal standards as a STEM major, according to IPEDS. ESL Students will take the same elementary education classes as bilingual candidates and will take EDUC 4329, 4317, 4336 and 4362.

### Master Teachers

Two cohorts of 10 in-service teachers will be selected to participate in the project to develop master teachers in bilingual education and ESL. Bilingual in-service teachers who choose to enter the master's degree program would be required to take rigorous coursework in the native language as well, in order to strengthen them in the classroom. The minor field in the master's degree will include STEM content in English & Spanish, making these candidates for bilingual/ESL masters degrees well prepared to improve their native language instruction in STEM fields. The master's students will provide a program of mentoring to the undergraduate students where they will observe and participate in classrooms 10 hours per month. The graduate students will be mentored by the researcher, the Director and other bilingual education professors.

In addition to the development of the master teachers, 100 other teachers in the districts will attend non-course based training in native language development, ESL and sheltered strategies, language development and program models. This training will occur twice per month and will be hosted by the Ector County ISD. The Assistant Superintendent and the Superintendent are fully committed to hosting this project with the goals of improving instruction and performance of English language learners. The other six school districts are fully committed to participating in the project as well. The primary candidates and "lead districts" for the in-service (non-course based) training will be teachers of English language learners in Midland and Ector County ISDs, due to the fact that they have the lowest performing students and have identified this type of training as a need. However, the rural districts will be invited to join the training as the need arises in their districts. A cohort of at least 50 teachers per year will participate in the two year training program. The program will include training and rigorous

observation and evaluation to determine if the concepts are being implemented and if students are achieving. The final year will be spent observing and following up through classroom observations on all of the candidates who have completed the training, the pre-service preparation and the Master Teacher preparation.

Formative and summative evaluation will occur through annual observation of test scores for school achievement and English language development will be conducted. In addition, summative evaluations will be conducted at the end of each year. Through the observations, the researcher and ECISD bilingual/ESL specialists will observe each in-service participant at least twice per semester to determine if they are implementing the training concepts.

#### **Research and Effective Practice in Bilingual Education (Basis for Project)**

It can be argued that bilingual education teachers are hired by districts under the impression that they are fluent in a language other than English when in reality many teachers with bilingual education certification, while they may have some oral communication skills, are not proficient at the academic level in any language but English (Guerrero, 2003). Their Spanish language proficiencies may be inadequate to teach content area instruction in Spanish. Research (Cummins, 1996; Fishman, 1991; Ovando, Collier & Combs, 2004; Ramirez, 1991) indicates that children retain information and learn concepts best and are able to transfer to English effectively when taught academic content in their heritage language; it is therefore imperative that their teachers be academically proficient in the learners' heritage language. This sort of proficiency will require bilingual teachers to take more rigorous courses, especially in fundamental STEM areas, such as math, science and technology, in Spanish.

When teachers are ill prepared in the child's native language for the academic rigor needed for a successful bilingual instruction, the results is often a subtractive situation for the

students, where they are discouraged from academic success. (Crawford, 2004; Valenzuela, 2005) According to Cummins (2008), bilingual teachers need to distinguish between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency and to understand the stages involved in producing biliterate students, resulting in those students performing poorly on tests of academics skills such as the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™). Cummins' research reveals that the time it takes to attain the academic aspects of English is from 4 or 5 to 7 years. His findings concur with similar studies done within the last 30 years in Europe, Israel, Canada and the United States.

Historically, Teacher certification programs for bilingual education teachers in Texas currently have one pre-assessment of language proficiency to gauge whether or not a teacher is ready to teach bilingually, yet the *Texas Assessment of Oral Proficiency Test (TOPT)* did not address written language or academic competence in Spanish. Now a much more rigorous exam, the *Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT)* will test pre-service teachers at much higher academic level and includes a written portion. This is a good indication of higher expectations in Spanish proficiencies for bilingual certification candidates in the coming years; however, public schools have hired hundreds of bilingual education teachers who needed only an oral proficiency in Spanish in order to teach academic content. The Spanish language deficiency of bilingual teachers hired in the past, has demonstrated a need for in-service and pre-service teachers to have a stronger academic foundation in Spanish. Bilingual certification candidates should be held to the same standard as that of the *highly qualified* teacher within the No Child Left Behind mandate. According to Yell and Drasgow (2009), the NCLB standard for a highly qualified teacher includes the teacher's ability to "demonstrate subject matter

competency in the core academic subjects in which they teach” (p.45). In order to effectively meet this standard, certification programs must include courses that help the candidate gain academic proficiencies and critical literacy in the heritage languages they expect to teach. In the Ramirez study (2009), 83% of teachers agreed that the bilingual certification programs they went through needed more time in a bilingual education classroom and more courses that helped develop academic levels of Spanish. At UTPB, only two courses that focus on teaching methodology are partially taught in Spanish, with one course focusing on STEM fields. While this is better than some preparation programs, research shows that teachers need more background, especially in critical STEM vocabulary and academic preparation in order to succeed in bilingual classrooms.

### **(B) Quality of Program Personnel**

The following positions will be needed for the proposed project:

**Principal Investigator:** The P.I. holds a doctorate degree in bilingual/ESL education and holds a master’s degree in reading education, a bachelor’s degree in elementary education/bilingual, bicultural education and Texas teaching certifications in reading, elementary education and bilingual education. In addition the P.I. has substantial training in early childhood education and gifted education. The P.I.’s experience includes seven years as a teacher in bilingual classrooms in the West Texas area, thirteen years working with Title VII and Title III projects and twenty two years’ experience at various universities and colleges. The P.I. established the bilingual/ESL program at the U.T. Permian Basin and has directed the program’s growth from a group of 10 students to a well-established program of over 200 students. The P.I. will be employed full time by the university and would oversee the grant and would be available to the grant as needed.

**Director:** The proposed .50 time project P.I., Mr. Gilbert Sanchez has extensive experience directing federal grant programs and most recently has served as project P.I. for a title III grant at

the University of Texas of the Permian Basin, which has produced more than 60 educational personnel for ELL children for the Permian Basin. He holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in education and brings 12 years of federal grant leadership experience at UTPB to the program. His experience includes 32 years teaching in public secondary schools in the region and he is well prepared and connected to area school districts. Mr. Sanchez has worked with Latino students throughout his career and has a good understanding of the educational issues that confront ELLs. Mr. Sanchez has overseen programs of student support in the past and has 12 years of experience overseeing student mentor programs. He will be responsible for recruiting candidates for the project, teaching study sessions for teacher certification exams, advising and assisting pre-service teachers.

**Research Associate Position Description:** A half time researcher is needed for the proposed project and will be responsible for directing research activities with the district, including observing and coordinating observation of teachers to ensure best practices training is implemented. The proposed researcher will assist the external evaluator in gathering data and will provide formative assessment activities for the project. The researcher has approximately 12 years of experience teaching in elementary, bilingual education classrooms, 10 Years of experience teaching at the university level and preparing bilingual education and ESL teachers and a Masters in Educational Leadership. She holds a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction with areas of interest in Bilingual Education and literacy from Texas Tech University and has just finished an extensive evaluation of teaching and learning in bilingual and ESL programs in the Ector County ISD. The researcher's other 50% time will be spent teaching and advising and supervising field based instruction for the bilingual education program. This portion of the salary will be paid by UTPB.

**Policy Statement:** *The University of Texas of the Permian Basin is fully committed to meeting the needs of all their students regardless of gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age.*

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin encourages members of all minority groups to apply for positions as employees or candidates. It is expected that many of the employees of this project will be Hispanic and/or female. U.T. Permian Basin is an equal opportunities employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, religion or handicapping condition. Previous projects funded through Title VII have been successful in recruiting the majority of employees and students from minority groups, such as Hispanics and women. .

**Section C. Quality of the Management Plan**

The management plan clearly outlines and delineates the duties of the project staff and the evaluator that will be needed to ensure annual progress in meeting the objectives. The proposed program, if funded, will have adequate resources to provide the support needed for student success, including study sessions for classes and tests, money for tuition, books and living expenses and support through mentoring activities and professional development.

Undergraduate students will be mentored by the graduate students and will observe for 10 hours each month in bilingual and ESL classrooms. The teachers who are in the non-course based training will be observed regularly to ensure that they master the curriculum, which includes training in language acquisition, ESL STEM strategies and methods, SIOP, CREDE and other sheltered methodology. Bilingual teachers will receive fundamental training in Spanish for STEM fields as well.

**Adequacy of Budget, Time Commitments of Key Personnel and Continuous Improvement**

The project will employ a 50% time director as well as a 50% time researcher and a 100% time administrative assistant. This will ensure that the project activities will be accomplished. The director will ensure that the project has proper guidance and will provide

leadership for the project. He will provide study sessions for the teacher certification examination and he will monitor and direct the mentor and coaching program for the teachers. The 50% researcher will be paid by UTPB for the other 50% salary and will work directly with the districts to coordinate and provide the training for the non-course based participants and will coordinate the consultants who assist with the research. She will coordinate the observations and teacher assessments with the collaboration of school district personnel and will assist the evaluator in the assessment of the project. The full time administrative assistant will provide clerical support and will manage the office, communicating with candidates, arranging for tuition and book purchases and keeping accounting and files current.

The budget clearly is reasonable and based on the real costs of conducting the project. Adequate resources have been allocated for various training activities and for student tuition and support. Students who study full time as undergraduates and who do not work over 20 hours per week will receive \$250 per month to defray the costs of room, board, transportation and etc. This will help ensure that candidates will focus on their studies, rather than on working 30-40 hours per week. By recruiting students who have completed their general education courses and a total of 45 semester credit hours, the project can ensure that 24 new teachers, 20 master teachers and 150 in-service teachers will be fully prepared by August of 2012.

#### **Adequacy of Procedures for Providing Continuous Feedback and Improvement**

Project personnel will conduct regular formative and summative evaluation of the project. The steering committee will provide insight and suggestions to improve the project on a monthly basis. Students will be surveyed each semester to provide feedback on issue and problems with program completion and coursework. In addition, the director will meet with each undergraduate candidate at least twice a semester to monitor progress, to review program

requirements and to ensure mentoring is of the best quality possible. Graduate students will meet with the director and researcher at least once a semester to ensure that they are properly advised and that they are following program requirements.

### **Mentoring and Coaching**

Mentoring for the pre-service teachers will be provided by the Master teachers. A model developed and refined through previous Title III grants at UTPB will be utilized for this component. Candidates will spend 10 hours per month in the Master teachers' classrooms and mentoring will be conducted after the field experiences. Mentoring for the Master teachers will be conducted by the researcher before and after observations, using a coaching model suggested by Ector County ISD. Ector County will provide three additional coaches to the project, since they plan to train over 100 teachers with the proposed project.

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**Action Plan for BEST 4 ELLS Project**

Timeline	Objectives and Activities	Staff Responsibility	Milestones	Continuous Improvement
Aug. 11	Employ, administrative assistant and outside evaluator. Set Evaluation Plan	Director	. Individuals are hired	Make changes as needed to evaluation
Aug 11	Selection of 12 preservice candidates and 10 graduate candidates for <i>Cohort One</i> of the project. Candidates start coursework at UTPB	Director, Administrative Assistant, School district administrators (provide referrals)	Evidence of 2.75 g.p.a for undergraduates and 3.0 for graduates. Acceptable scores on entrance exams. Recommendation by administrator.	Provide tutorials for candidates who do not meet entrance requirements.
Sep. 11	Select candidates for inservice teacher training and begin training.		Non-course based training bimonthly	

Timeline	Objectives and Activities	Resp. Staff	Milestones	Cont. Improvement
Sep 11 and subsequent semesters	Arrange payment of tuition scholarships & books for candidates each semester.	Director, Admin. Asst.	Student support is provided.	Collaboration with financial aid office.
Sep. 12 and subsequent semesters	Ensure that all candidates have filed degree and certification plans.	Director,	Plans in file, certification completed	Assist candidates with plans, provide tutorials
Oct. 11 & as needed.	Assign undergraduate to graduate mentors within the project.	Director &	Mentor form feedback	Reassign mentors as needed.
Fall 2011 and subsequent semesters	Undergraduate students will be placed in classrooms for field based instruction and for ESL Observation.	Researcher, Cooperating Districts	Completion of field packets, monitoring feedback in packets	Advise students as needed based on feedback in packets.
Oct. 11 Nov. 11 (ongoing)	Begin Training for districts bimonthly at ECISD	Researcher & Consultants &	5% improvement in student achievement	Provide coaching for teachers who are not

Timeline	Objectives and Activities	ECISD Coaches	& use of concepts	mastering concepts.
Dec. 11 and each subsequent semester	Undergraduate Students will maintain G.P.A. of 2.75 & complete at least 15 hours. Graduates will maintain a 3.0 or better G.P.A. with 3-6 hours .	Resp. Staff Director, PI	Milestones Transcripts, progress toward degree plans, passing of pretests for certification	Cont. Improvement Provide tutorials as needed, counsel students not meeting requirements.
Monthly throughout project	Graduate students will meet with director and researcher or ECISD coaches to receive monthly mentoring and coaching	Researcher, Coaches and Director	Use of strategies in classroom, 5% improvement in student achievement.	School district and candidate feedback. Adapt activities to meet needs of candidates and districts.
Spring of 12&subsequent year	Graduate students will present ESL strategies at annual bilingual/ESL conference	Director	Mastering use of concepts in classrooms	Following conference a book of strategies will be prepared for participants.
Spring 12&	Students will participate in	Director,	Sharing use of	Review of strategies

(Annually)	bilingual/ESL education teacher conference at UTPB			concepts learned with each other.	presented and coaching afterward.
Timeline	Objectives and Activities	Resp. Staff	Milestones	Cont. Improvement	
April 12 and all subsequent years.	Students will take practice Teacher Certification exams.	Director	Passing scores on practice examinations.	Results will be analyzed and discussed with each student.	
October 12 and each subsequent semester	All undergraduate students will attend monthly study sessions for TExES/ExCET exams and Spanish Proficiency exams	Director	Number of students fully certified Dec. 13 and Aug. 16	Provide individual tutorials as needed.	
Fall 12 and each subsequent semester	Steering committee will be briefed on progress of objectives. Recommendations for improvements will be given to the director.	Researcher director, school districts, steering committee.	Completion of program objectives	Recommendations will be implemented by project staff.	
May 2012	Researcher will review data,	Researcher,	Student	Provide mentoring and	

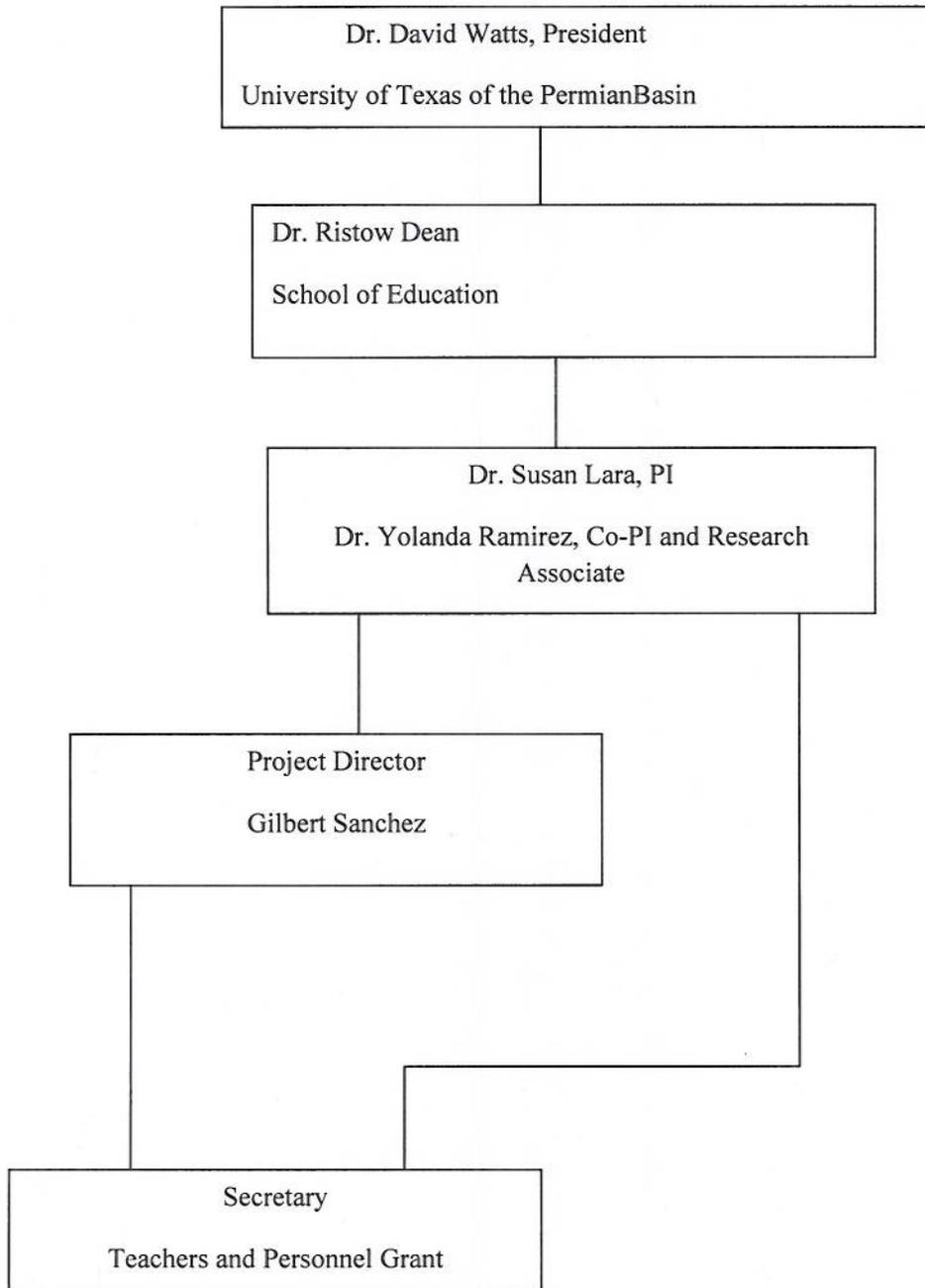
	student achievement and coordinate evaluation	Director, Evaluator	Achievement, Candi-date completion	coaching as needed.
Timeline	Objectives and Activities	Resp. Staff	Milestones	Cont. Improvement
December 12 and subsequent semesters	Project staff will conduct a survey of the students to find out issues and problems and possible actions that need to be taken to improve the project.	Evaluator & researcher	Completion of Survey	Use of results for program improvement.
Summer 12 and each subsequent summer	Conduct annual project evaluation, using measures outlined in the evaluation section, enlisting data from all stakeholders.	Researcher, director, Outside Evaluator.	Completion of program objectives, evaluators comments, progress of candidates.	Evaluators' comments to be shared with steering committee.
Fall 14 and subsequent	Students will pass all teacher certification exams required for	, Director	Passing scores on teacher certification	Provide monthly study sessions for students.

semesters	ESL and subject area certifications.		exams	
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Timeline	Objectives and Activities	Resp. Staff	Milestones	Cont. Improvement
May 2013 and subsequent semesters	Placement of Candidates in school districts for employment upon completion of teacher certification	Director, Area School Districts	Students placed in classrooms.	Provide seminars on resume writing, interviewing and etc. as needed.
May 2012 and each subsequent May	Monitor scores of districts to ensure ELL progress of 5% improvement. Survey districts about candidates' performance in classroom.	Researcher	Improvement of ELL scores by 30% by May 2016	Feedback for program improvement from districts, coaching and analysis of teacher certification training
May 2016	Complete final evaluation of all students in public schools	Director &	All objectives met	

The following management chart illustrates how the program will report at UTPB.

### Management Chart



### **Section D. Quality of the Evaluation Plan**

Design of the Evaluation: The purpose of the proposed project is to increase the overall achievement of English Language Learners in the seven collaborating school districts, with a focus on the lowest two achieving districts, particularly in language development and STEM education. The methods of achieving this growth is through three pronged program of teacher development to include (1) training of both in-service and (2) pre-service teachers and ultimately, (3) master teachers. One objective is for undergraduate students to be developed for the collaborative districts and that they will be stronger teachers in STEM and in native language and ESL instruction. Another objective is to train in-service teachers to be stronger teachers of English language learners through a program of teacher development and formative training throughout a period of several years. A third objective of the proposal is to prepare at least 20 master teachers with Master's degrees in bilingual and ESL education to serve as mentors for others in the targeted school districts, thus adding sustainability to the project, even after the funding ends. In order to do this, a comprehensive program of observations, intervention and evaluation will be needed as the researcher works with the targeted districts.

With the stated objectives from the design section in mind, a comparative *Trend Analysis* design will be employed to measure trends over a 5 year period, compared to change over time with student achievement data using 2010 as baseline comparison data for a district wide starting point for each district. Annual evaluation of data in each of the following years: 2011, 2012, 2014, 2014, 2015 and 2016, will be conducted using district wide comparison and individual classroom comparisons, employing several variables.

Statistical techniques to be employed will include Correlations, Multiple Regression, Chi Square and Analysis of Variance between baseline data (6 year trends) using the

achievement scores of 2010 as a comparison group. While random comparative design is not possible due the fact that equal opportunity for participation must be afforded to all students, the results of public school student achievement over a five year period prior to the project activities will serve as separate comparison groups. Additionally, data on UTPB student achievement, including coursework grades, implementation of best practices in a classroom setting and passing of certification exams in addition to numbers of completers and numbers placed in instructional settings with ELL students will be analyzed and evaluated.

Annual Data to be Gathered from Grant Participants:In order to evaluate the success of the project, the following GPRA data will be gathered: number of preservice teachers who participate and complete, number of masters candidates who complete master degrees and bilingual/ESL teacher certification, and number of inservice teachers who are fully trained in ESL. Additionally, the number of teachers still working with ELL children three years following the completion of their training will be assessed. For each of these groups, the researcher will analyze the passing rates on teacher certification exams, grade point averages where appropriate, coaching activities and observations of teaching to find out if best practices are being employed. This data will be used for continuous improvement of the project and the candidates. Also, to be gathered is placement of pre-service and in-service teachers in classrooms with ELL students. Confidentiality will be assured by use of IRB rules through the Office of Graduate Studies and Research at UTPB.

Data to be Gathered from English Language Learners in the Collaborating Districts: Data to be collected will include student achievement scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (both Spanish and English), Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment of Skills,

LAS or other language proficiency exam (growth from year to year) from project participants' students. Again IRB procedures will be followed to ensure privacy of the students.

The independent variables will be the TAKS/STAAR and TELPAS scores. The dependent variables will be participation in grant training (course based and non-course based), mentoring and coaching data, scores on teacher certification exams, observations of implementation of best practices, length of time in program, language proficiency in English and Spanish as measured by a state approved language proficiency examination and principal.

Given this scenario, the following data will be collected:

1. Beginning with baseline data from 2010 TAKS/STAAR and TELPAS scores, the researcher will gather annual TAKS/STAAR and TELPAS data as well as data on language proficiency scores for students in classrooms taught by project participants. These data will be compared annually to district wide data from 2010 for the appropriate grade level. Beginning at the end of year two, comparison data from each year by participant's classroom will be compared. For example a teacher participating in the training during the 2011-12 school year will submit student data (with identifying information hidden) from 2011 achievement scores and at the end of the year that teacher would submit data from the 2012 school year. This data will be analyzed to determine the amount of academic progress that was made by the students in that particular classroom. A quasi-design model will be employed for this data. During each subsequent year, data on the same teacher will be analyzed for each additional class of students until the year 2014.
2. Total percentage of undergraduate bilingual and ESL participants who maintained at least a 2.75 grade point average for each year, scores on teacher certification exams and

observation of best practices will be analyzed as well as data comparing the students who participated in the new bilingual studies major with bilingual education students of other majors (ESL participants will not be analyzed with this measure). Post-graduation data will be acquired on all graduates after they have taught for at least a year in bilingual or ESL classrooms. Baseline data is the achievement of students district wide from the year prior to the beginning of the candidate's teaching career as well as individual class data comparing the previous year's achievement of the teacher's class to the achievement scores of the class at the end of the year. Other comparisons of school wide and district wide data will be analyzed as well. A dual comparison strategy will be employed where the ELL students are compared to the district as a whole to determine any variance in performance. Depending on the data, Chi Square and/or Analysis of Variance may be appropriate. This will depend on the number of students with like scores.

3. All of the student data will be compared to district, state and regional data over the five year period and two years beyond the end of the project. Trend analysis will be employed to explore the data over time.
4. Due to the fact that ELL students often continue to struggle as they move into the upper grades and research (Thomas and Collier, 2007) shows that they frequently do not learn at the same rate as the academic work becomes more demanding, it will be necessary to follow the elementary students into junior high to measure their progress. It is hoped that students will do well in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade as they matriculate through elementary and junior high school. Eighth grade achievement data will be compared to previous year's achievement and an analysis of annual progress will be used as well.

Instruments to be Developed: (1.) A rubric will be developed to that weights each of the data elements to be collected. Through the use of the rubric, the evaluator will identify the performance and persistence level of candidates at UTPB. Each year the rubric will be applied to give a snapshot of the annual performance and to compare the results from previous year(s)' rubrics. The results of the rubrics will be reported as findings during the fall semester of each of the following years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. (2.) A survey of principals who employ candidates completing the training at UTPB will be developed and conducted to assess the usefulness of the activities in the proposed project as well as the use of candidate and their class data. . (3) A survey questionnaire will be developed and employed to gather the data from principals. A correlative study will be used to examine this data.

Availability of the Outcomes: The outcomes will be available for UTPB and Department of Education use by December of 2012, and each subsequent year through December 2016.

Use of The Findings: The findings will be shared with the Department of Education, all collaborating school districts, the School of Education and College of Arts and Sciences at UTPB and with others throughout the nation who may have an interest in this information. The results will be used to support the continuation of activities from the grant that are helpful.

Additionally, the survey results may be used to develop subsequent projects which build on the activities in the proposed project.

Rigor and Independence of the Evaluation Design: The evaluation will be rigorous in that data will be compared to previous groups and class data as well. This will give two comparative groups to assess the outcomes of the project's activities. The design will be conducted by an independent evaluator who is not employed at UTPB. Dr. Patricio Jaramillo, who holds a doctorate in Psychology from Arizona State University, has extensive experience as a faculty

member and in the area of student services, teaching a non-traditional population and in evaluating and designing research. He has three years of experiences evaluating previous Title III teacher education training projects. His background gives him the breadth of knowledge and experiences to relate well to faculty, staff and students. He will work with the program from the point of funding until several months after the end of the project (December, 2016) in order to provide the rigor needed to fully assess the project. He will submit an annual evaluation report as required to the US Department of Education .