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ABSTRACT

Applicant: Fairfield University

Title of Program: *The BEST Education Project* (**B**ilingual **E**ducation, **S**pecial and **T**ESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Education Project)

Consortia Partners: Four Local Education Agencies will participate in this project: Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk, and Stamford, CT Public School Systems

Project Description:

The Bilingual Education (BE), Special Education (SE), and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programs in the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions (GSEAP) at Fairfield University submit this proposal for a National Professional Development (NPD) grant entitled, "*The BEST Education Project*" (**B**ilingual **E**ducation, **S**pecial, and **T**ESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Education Project). A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted with Consortia school district personnel in February 2011 that identified the districts' need for candidates with the knowledge and expertise being provided in this grant project. Several other data sources also supported the need for this proposal: 1) discussions with cooperating teachers, student teaching supervisors, program Advisory Board members, and district personnel; 2) the Connecticut (CT) statewide Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) initiative; and 3) the recent adoption of the *Common Core State Standards*.

This project also supports the CT State Department of Education's Priority School District Initiative for school improvement by partnering with 4 urban school districts (Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk, and Stamford) identified as high priority school districts in need of academic support. These partner districts enroll over 25% of all students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) in the state, 48% of whom speak Spanish as their first and primary language. The grant will provide in-service (already certified) elementary, secondary and, special educators from these districts with coursework and professional development activities that will enable them to serve ELLs and/or those with special learning needs, fulfilling State of CT initiatives to more effectively educate these populations of students. Since this grant project is designed solely for in-service teachers, a major goal of the NPD program to provide services is being immediately met because accepted candidates will be able to readily implement their newfound knowledge in the classrooms in which they teach.

The BEST Education Project is designed to cover a five-year period and during this time, 50 participants are anticipated to be enrolled. To comprehensively address the goals of the NPD grant and the needs of school systems in the state of CT, four tracks will be available for differently trained candidates: 1.) Bilingual General Educators (approximate N = 25) will be eligible to earn a cross-endorsement (XE) in BE; 2.) Bilingual General Educators (approximate N = 15) will be eligible to earn XEs in BE and SE; 3.) Monolingual General Educators (approximate N = 5) will be eligible to earn a XE in TESOL; and; 4.) Special Educators (approximate N = 5) will be eligible to earn a XE in TESOL.

The BEST Education Project Goals:

1. To reduce the critical need for certified and highly qualified teachers of BE, SE and/or TESOL serving ELLs in the State of CT and, especially, in Consortium Cities;
2. To provide candidates with a scientific research-based program of study designed to develop specific competencies through course work and field experiences that will enable them to fulfill CT State requirements for a XE in BE, SE and/or TESOL;
3. To provide candidates with expertise in consultation, collaboration, and teacher leadership so that they may assist administrators, other teachers, and support staff personnel in the implementation of SRBI and the development of appropriate educational programs for ELLs with or without special learning needs;
4. To increase participants' understanding of, and ability to, effectively use technology in the design of instructional programs serving ELLs and/or students with special education needs in k-12 classrooms;
5. To support teachers' development of evidence-based strategies that are effective for ELLs at different language levels that will enable teachers to deliver grade-level, linguistically appropriate curricula; and
6. To provide opportunities for teachers to analyze their content instructional programs and align curricula with the Common Core State Standards, The CT Framework for ELLs, and accreditation standards.

Priorities Addressed in the Proposal

The BEST Education Project addresses the following Priorities: Competitive Preference Priority 2 – Enabling More Data-Based Decision Making and Invitational Priority 2 – Improving Preparation of All Teachers to Better Serve English Language Learners. Competitive Priority 3 - Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics will also be addressed as secondary teachers with related content area knowledge will be recruited for the project.

GPRA Measure Targets

Results from the February 2011 needs assessment of the four Consortia Partner Districts indicated the critical need for their k-12 certified general education teachers to become XEd in BE, SE and/or TESOL. Thus, *The BEST Education Project* addresses two relevant GPRA Measures:

Measure 1.5: *Percentage of in-service teacher completers who complete State endorsement requirements in EL instruction as a result of the program.*

Approximately 55 in-service teachers will be served by *The BEST Education Project*: 20% should complete in Year 2 in BE or TESOL; 10% in Year 3 in BE; 30% in Year 4 in SE and BE, and 40% in Year 5 in BE or TESOL.

Measure 1.6: *Percentage of in-service teacher completers who are providing instructional services to EL students.*

100% of *The BEST Education Project* completers will be in-service teachers currently working in schools with ELLs in mainstream classroom settings or in BE, SE, or TESOL programs.

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PART III: PROGRAM NARRATIVE

The BEST Education Project: Bilingual Education, Special and TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Education Project

Need for the Project

A) The extent to which the proposed project will provide needed professional development for educational personnel serving English language learners.

The Connecticut (CT) State Department of Education (SDE) identified Bilingual Education (BE), Special Education (SE), and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) as teacher shortage areas in 2010. A needs assessment conducted in February 2011 with administrators in the four Consortia partner school districts indicated their highest areas of need were for in-service teachers to become cross-endorsed (another certification) in BE, SE, and/or TESOL with a focus on English Language Learners (ELLs). Fairfield University's *The BEST Education Project* (Bilingual Education, Special, and TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Education Project) *will* meet the demands of the partner school districts and the State of CT by providing elementary and secondary teachers with the opportunity to earn a cross-endorsement (XE) in BE, SE and/or TESOL. Since *The BEST Education Project* participants are already working in schools that serve a high percentage of ELLs and will continue in their positions during the grant, they will immediately be able to positively affect/impact the learning needs of those students in public school settings. They will be applying what they are learning in program coursework to their own classrooms and school contexts. The following statistics demonstrate the extreme need for preparing highly qualified teachers to obtain certification in these areas and meet the needs of the large linguistically and culturally diverse student populations within the four partner districts.

The most recent data regarding the number of ELLs was available from the *Strategic School Profiles 2008-2009* compiled by the CTSDE. The four Local Education Agencies serving as *The BEST Education Project's* partners are Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk and Stamford and they serve approximately 56,517 students. The total number of students identified as ELLs and receiving language support services in the four cities is 7,900 or 14% of the total ELL student population in the state: 2,649 in Bridgeport (13.5% of student population); 1,894 in Danbury (17.25% of student population), 1,257 in Norwalk (11.9% of student population); and 2,083 in Stamford (14.1% of student population). In addition, as documented in Table 1 below (p. 4), the number of students who come from homes where a non-English language is spoken ranges from 34% in Norwalk to 40% in Bridgeport. Although many of these students may have exited from language support services, they are still in need of appropriate and differentiated instruction in their content area classes.

Connecticut classifies its 193 school districts into District Reference Groups (DRGs) (Voices for the Children, 2006). DRGs are groups of districts that have similar student and family background characteristics. They are designated from DRG-A to DRG-I. Districts designated as A are the most affluent with the lowest need and districts designated as I (N=7) are the poorest with the highest need. Bridgeport is designated as DRG-I and Danbury, Stamford, and Norwalk are designated as DRG-H (N=13). DRGs are based on five data elements that indicate need: (1) median family income; (2) percentage of parents with a bachelor's degree or higher and percentage of children's parents holding jobs in executive, managerial or professional occupations; (3) percentage of children living in families with a single parent; (4) percentage of children enrolled in public schools whose families have an income that makes them eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals, and; (5) percentage of children whose families speak a

language other than English at home. In CT, Bridgeport is the second highest enrollment district for ELLs, Danbury is sixth, Norwalk is eighth, and Stamford is fourth. The total percentage of Hispanic students in Bridgeport is 47.3%, in Danbury it is 32%, in Norwalk it is 32.2%, and in Stamford it is 31.6%.

Of the 30,000 ELLs identified in the State, 4,195 were also identified as eligible for SE services. This number is up 33% from the 2007-2008 school year, while the number of non-ELL students in SE declined by 3.7% (CTSDE, 2010). Thus, ELLs with special learning needs are an important population that will be served through *The BEST Education Project*, which has the potential to positively affect the education of a significant number of students within the four partner districts.

According to census data, the minority population of Fairfield County, CT will double by the year 2015. The Hispanic population alone grew nearly 50 percent in the last 10 years with Latinos accounting for 61 percent of the minority growth in the state. Based on these statistics, ELLs and their enrollment in language support services and SE programs in the school systems of Fairfield County will also grow accordingly. There is a critical need for a program such as *The BEST Education Project* that will prepare highly qualified mainstream classroom teachers, who are cross-endorsed in BE, SE, and/or TESOL.

While indicative of an overall need for specialized delivery of services, the number of ELLs receiving language support services and /or placed in special education programs, does not represent the whole context. Additional consideration must be given to the kind of instructional support needed for mainstreamed students who come from homes where English is not spoken. Table 1 below clearly indicates the large numbers of students for whom *The BEST Education Project* has the potential to support.

Table 1: Percent of ELLs in Partner School Districts

Partner District	Total Student Enrollment	Total # of ELL Students	Percent of Total # of Students	Total # of Hispanic Students	Total % of Students Non-Eng Lang at Home
Bridgeport	19,935	2,649	13.5%	47.3%	40.1%
Danbury	10,977	1,894	17.25%	32.0%	38.9%
Norwalk	10,744	1,257	11.9%	32.2%	34.7
Stamford	14,861	2,083	14.1%	31.6%	38.0%

Source: CTSDE (November 2010) and CTSDE Strategic School Profiles 2008-09.

Research on our prior successful programs affirms that program completers will likely meet the needs of hundreds of students each year. Additionally, the availability of dually cross-endorsed (BE and SE) teachers means that ELLs will benefit from trained professionals with expertise in culture and language, and processing and individualized interventions and strategies. These teacher professionals will also be able to serve as instructional leaders to SRBI team members. The result of this is that ELLs may no longer be inappropriately assigned to special education environments or provided with unsuitable curricula because of cultural and linguistic factors.

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

GOAL 1: *To reduce the critical need for certified and highly qualified teachers of BE, SE and/or TESOL serving ELLs in the State of CT and, especially, in Fairfield County Priority Consortium Cities.*

Objective: Through collaboration with Consortia partner school system personnel, a total of 50 in-service teachers will be identified as candidates for *The BEST Education Project* during the 5 years of the grant. A cohort of 25 will be admitted in Year I and new cohorts will be admitted in ensuing years as openings become available.

All candidates will complete an application package and participate in an interview. They will need to meet all regular requirements for admission to Fairfield University's Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions. Bilingual candidates (English/Spanish and/or English/Portuguese) will also be required to pass the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview and Written Proficiency Test with a score of Advanced Low or higher. If their language skills need improvement, they will be required to complete an advanced language course in the Modern Languages Department. Teachers will be encouraged to apply for the program with other faculty in grade-level, discipline-specific, or cross-grade level teams. The goal is to have district partners in *The BEST Education Project* who will collaborate on curriculum development and school-based projects related to their *The BEST Education Project* coursework.

Outcome: The Fairfield University BE, SE and TESOL faculty have designed selection procedures and are prepared to recruit, select, and enroll 25 in-service teacher candidates in *The BEST Education Project* in the fall 2011 academic semester to begin coursework in the spring 2012 semester. Although priority will be given to candidates from the four-city consortium cluster of Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk, and Stamford teachers from other high needs districts will also be considered for admission. The comprehensive recruitment procedures include collaboration with the LEAs identified as consortia members, advertisements in local papers and, the development of *The BEST Education Project* Advisory Board. Candidates will provide evidence of an undergraduate degree from an accredited university or college with an appropriate

grade point average no less than 2.67 as mandated by State standards. Interviews will be conducted by a committee of persons relevant to the project.

Metric: Number of matriculated in-service teachers meeting entrance requirements.

GOAL 2: *To provide candidates with a scientific research-based program of study designed to develop specific competencies through course work and field experiences that will enable them to fulfill CT State requirements for a XE in BE, SE and/or TESOL.*

Objective: *The BEST Education Project* will provide four XE tracks. Each track will provide a program of study leading to a XE that infuses all State-mandated standards as well as the national accreditation standards from the National Bilingual Education Association, and the Council for Exceptional Children. These standards serve as the framework for program and course development, the design of the experiential practicum, and a capstone action research project. Fairfield University received NCATE accreditation in 2007 and the Special Education programs earned the highly coveted “Nationally Recognized, No Conditions” status in 2007, and the TESOL programs earned that status in 2008. Thus, the course work and field competencies are recognized as being of significant quality to meet the needs of candidates enrolled in our programs. Fairfield University is one of only two nationally recognized TESOL programs in the state, and is the only university that offers a combined BE and SE option. The table below identifies the four tracks, the types and number of candidates being recruited for each track and the number of credits necessary to earn the XE identified.

Table 2: Track Options, Candidate types, Enrollment numbers, XEs and # of credits

Track Options	Candidate types	Approximate Enrollment Numbers	Cross-Endorsement Eligibility	Number of Credits
Track 1	Bilingual General Educators	25	BE	18
Track 2	Bilingual General Educators	15	BE <u>and</u> SE	18 + 30
Track 3	Monolingual General Educators	5	TESOL	18 – 30 range*
Track 4	Special Educators	5	TESOL	18 – 30 range*

* There is a range of the number of credits needed to pursue TESOL that is dependent on the candidates' previous coursework.

Outcome: *The BEST Education Project* has been designed so that candidates will receive a XE in BE, SE and/or TESOL depending on previous certification and track selected.

Metrics: (1) Number and percent of matriculated in-service teachers certified in general education and eligible for XEs in BE, SE and/or TESOL; (2) Number and percent of matriculated in-service teachers certified in special education and eligible for a cross-endorsement in TESOL; (3) number and percent of matriculated students completing their program of study.

GOAL 3: *To provide candidates with expertise in consultation, collaboration, and teacher leadership so that they may assist administrators, other teachers, and support staff personnel in the implementation of Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) and the development of appropriate educational programs for ELLs with or without special learning needs;*

Objective: To develop the skills of in-service teachers in high needs partner districts to interface with pupil personnel staff, implement SRBI, and meet the unique learning needs of BE students, mainstreamed ELLs receiving language support services, and bilingual students with SE learning needs. According to SRBI, all students are mandated to have access to the regular grade-level curriculum. As a result, ELLs and students with identified special learning needs are increasingly being placed in mainstream classrooms to provide them with direct access to the curriculum, and to more appropriately respond to the least restrictive environment clause of federal mandates.

Although mainstream teachers are required to provide appropriate and differentiated instruction to ELLs, ELLs with special learning needs, and students with SE needs, many are not well prepared to do so. By providing them with the XE options in BE, SE and/or TESOL, *The BEST Education Project* will allow them to choose the program track that will best meet their needs, the needs of their school and, the needs of their district

Outcome: All project participants will learn about learning theories, second language acquisition, teaching in multicultural contexts, educational technology, as well as bilingual special education. Candidates pursuing SE will have coursework that addresses disabilities and their diagnoses, assessment practices, related educational theory, development of individualized education plans, and they will perform field-based experiences. Candidates pursuing BE will become XEd in either elementary or secondary BE, depending on previous certification. They will have four courses in common and take two additional courses that are specifically designed

for those grade levels. Candidates pursuing the XE in TESOL will take four courses with the candidates pursuing a XE in BE then specialize in TESOL-specific coursework. BE and TESOL candidates will also participate in field-based practicum experiences, and may complete a site-based action research project designed in consultation with their principal, other faculty, and/or district supervisor.

Metrics: (1) Number and percent of matriculated in-service teachers successfully completing the related course(s); (2) an assessment in using data-based information and in collaborating with data team members; (3) in-service teacher ratings of how well they think the course(s) prepared them to work with ELLs and/or students with special learning needs.

GOAL 4: *To increase participants' understanding of, and ability to, effectively use technology in the design of instructional programs serving ELLs and/or students with special education needs in k-12 classrooms;*

Objective: To have candidates demonstrate an awareness and understanding of available technology to improve reading and writing skills, foster language development, and utilize software technology to improve student performance.

Outcome: Students will complete a course in instructional technology designed to address this goal and objective. Course content will be supplemented by in-class PowerPoint presentations, guest speakers from various sources throughout the state, and site visitations to existing programs utilizing advanced interactive technologies, such as Smart Boards, clickers, and data-based management systems.

Metrics: (1) The number and percent of students successfully completing the course introducing technology for skill improvement and student performance; (2) number and percent of courses in which the in-service teacher utilizes technology as part of the curriculum; (3) extent to which

technology is used in the teachers' actual classroom before, after and at specific time intervals throughout the program.

GOAL 5: *To support teachers' development of evidence-based strategies that are effective for ELLs at different language levels and that will enable teachers to deliver grade-level, linguistically appropriate curricula to them.*

Objective: To meet this goal, assignments will be tailored to classroom-based activities and aligned with benchmark assessments. Teachers will complete detailed analyses of student work and participate in lesson plan evaluations exploring for the integration of best practices taught in the candidates' coursework. *The BEST Education Project* faculty will conduct site visits and provide candidates with structured feedback about their instructional program. If *The BEST Education Project* is funded, the external evaluator will work with data specialists in the partner districts to collect data in a way that protects the anonymity of the teacher but documents impact on student learning as a result of their participation in *The BEST Education Project*.

Outcome: The integration of benchmark program assessments and a district-based study using student progress data over time will document *The BEST Education Project* teachers' development and application of evidence-based strategies and ability to implement SRBI and differentiation of instruction for ELLs and bilingual students with or without special needs.

Metrics: Ratings of their assignments using NCATE benchmark assessments and evaluation rubrics.

GOAL 6: *To provide opportunities for teachers to analyze their content instructional programs and to align their curricula with the Common Core State Standards, the CT Framework for ELLs, and accreditation standards.*

Objective: This goal is aligned with the Goal 5 Objective. In addition to data collection discussed above, candidates in *The BEST Education Project* will successfully complete core coursework, participate in lesson planning and exploratory learning opportunities and, complete field-based and practicum experiences.

Outcome: Upon completion of *The BEST Education Project*, candidates will have met CTSDE requirements for a XE in BE, SE and/or TESOL. They will have completed assignments in which they have analyzed and revised their instructional programs and integrated the Common Core Standards, CT's Frameworks for ELLs and, accreditation standards ensuring that the needs of mainstreamed ELLs and bilingual students with or without SE needs are met. Candidates selected for enrollment in *The BEST Education Project* will be employed primarily in Consortium cities and work with ELLs.

In addition, *The BEST Education Project* faculty will maintain on-going collaboration with the Advisory Board and partner district administrative personnel. The goal will be to maintain a continuous feedback system that will inform program design and coursework so that it continues to meet the changing needs of the ELL population in CT.

Metrics: (1) Completion of coursework; (2) ratings of their assignments using NCATE benchmark assessments and evaluation rubrics.

Priorities Addressed in the Proposal

The BEST Education Project addresses the following Priorities: Competitive Preference Priority 2 – Enabling More Data-Based Decision Making and Invitational Priority 2 – Improving Preparation of All Teachers to Better Serve English Language Learners. Competitive Priority 3 - Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics will also be addressed as secondary teachers with related content area knowledge will be recruited for the project.

GPRA Measure Targets

Results from the February 2011 Needs Assessment of the four Consortia Partner Districts indicated the critical need for their k-12 certified general education (GE) teachers to become XEd in BE, SE or TESOL. Thus, *The BEST Education Project* addresses two relevant GPRA Measures:

Measure 1.5: *Percentage of in-service teacher completers who complete State endorsement requirements in English Language (EL) instruction as a result of the program.*

Approximately 50 in-service teachers will be served by *The BEST Education Project* with the following approximate percentages for program completers: 20% in Year 2 in BE or TESOL; 10% in Year 3 in BE; 30% in Year 4 in SE and BE, and 40% in Year 5 in TESOL or BE.

Measure 1.6: *Percentage of in-service teacher completers who are providing instructional services to EL students.*

100% of *The BEST Education Project* completers will be in-service teachers currently working in schools with ELLs in mainstream classroom settings or in BE, SE, or TESOL programs.

(2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

Fairfield University continually undergoes periodic accreditation by the CTSDE, NCATE, and the professional organizations. In 2007 and 2008, the SE and TESOL programs respectively were awarded the highest accreditation status and earned “National Recognition, Without Conditions.” The State of CT requires programming for IHEs to incorporate specific, area-related competencies into their curricula and Fairfield University is known for its rigorous

academics and its extensive commitment to enhancing knowledge and providing service to others.

Because University programs were created in direct response to the needs demonstrated within the area's public school systems, two of the strongest features that Fairfield University brings to bear is being a powerful agent for positive change and its healthy and positive relationship with representatives of the school systems identified in our project proposal. Our graduates from the BE, SE and TESOL programs serve as teachers, principals, directors of programs and directors of pupil personnel in the University catchments area. Our student teachers and fieldwork participants are welcomed into numerous school systems and the University and LEA's personnel combine their expertise and direct it toward the development of superbly trained professionals.

The BE and TESOL Programs

The XE in BE is available to bilingual GE teachers at either the elementary or secondary level depending on previous certification. Each is 18 credits and candidates must score Advanced Low on the ACTFL OPI and WPT. The XE in BE certifies teachers to deliver a comprehensive content area curriculum in English and the additional language of instruction used in the bilingual program. The XE in TESOL is available to monolingual GE teachers and SE teachers. The XE in TESOL results in a comprehensive pre-k through grade 12 XE and requires 30 credits. Four courses are common across the BE and TESOL Programs and there are additional courses specific to the grade levels for the XE in BE and to complete the XE in TESOL.

The *Connecticut Discipline-based Professional Standards for Teachers of TESOL* that follows is infused into core courses and will lead to a comprehensive knowledge base. A matrix is provided to candidates that details where and to what extent these procedures are integrated

into each course. All appropriate state standards have been infused in *The Best Education Project* courses, which were recently accredited by the State of CT, NCATE, and the TESOL professional organization.

I. Content Knowledge:

- a. English Syntax and Composition
- b. Language Theory
- c. Culture and Intergroup Relations
- d. Planning, Implementing, and Managing Instruction for ELLs, including student scheduling of classes and coordination of state and district assessments
- e. Curriculum Development, Lesson Planning, Materials Selection and Analysis, Materials Development and Adaptation, and Standards Integration
- f. Linguistic and Academic Assessment, Analysis, and Decision-Making
- g. Learning Theories and Differentiation of Instruction, Identifying ELLs with Special Needs
- h. Professionalism, Commitment to Social Justice, and Advocacy for ELLs and Their Families Including the Understanding of the History and Theoretical Foundations of BE and TESOL, including the Legal Obligations Related to ELLs

II. Collaboration: TESOL teachers in CT work with a variety of program models in the State: traditional pull-out, sheltered content instruction, and co-teaching with a GE teacher. They are part of the SRBI initiative and members of curriculum planning and data management teams. They work with classroom teachers to design and modify instruction to meet the needs of ELLs with or without disabilities and at a variety of language levels.

III. Consultation with the School Community: BE and TESOL teachers collaborate with members of the school community and convey and receive information in the design and implementation of instructional and behavioral objectives. BE teachers are responsible for guaranteeing that ELLs have access to the grade-level general curriculum and English development. TESOL teachers support GE teachers in their delivery of that curriculum.

IV. Instruction: BE teachers are responsible for ELLs' grade-level academic progress and their acquisition of English. TESOL teachers are responsible for students' English and content area language development, including reading and writing. BE and TESOL teachers use their knowledge of language development, English syntax, bilingualism, and learning strategies to modify their instructional methods and materials and to support the GE teachers to foster the academic progress and English language development of the learner. BE and TESOL teachers know and use a variety of strategies and resources including linguistic analysis and other specialized instructional approaches, as well as a variety of materials and technology.

V. Students and Their Needs: Under the SBRI Initiative in CT, all students by law are required to have access to the full grade-level academic curriculum. As members of data management teams, BE and TESOL teachers use their understanding of the influence of second language acquisition, bilingualism, culture, and the role of prior experience on students' learning and classroom performance. Their knowledge of ELLs' linguistic and academic development, as well as the continuum of language support program options, informs implementation of an ELLs academic intervention plan.

VI. Assessment: BE and TESOL teachers understand and use formal and informal authentic assessment techniques in their instruction. They interpret and communicate the results of language developments assessments such as the LAS Oral or LAS-Links to students, parents,

and colleagues. They use results to analyze and modify instruction, and work with colleagues to interpret results to ensure the continuous cognitive, social, and emotional development of the learner. In addition, TESOL professionals are responsible for the formal standardized assessment of all ELLs for which they provide language support services and must develop a comprehensive testing schedule for those students.

VII. Environment: Teachers use their understanding of language development, culture and communication, and the need for the integration of the ELL student with his or her grade-level peers to create learning environments that maximize opportunities for ELLs' linguistic, academic, behavioral, and personal success. The implementation of SRBI and data-team collaboration is also included under this domain. Personnel work together to develop a comprehensive school environment that facilitates the integration of the ELL student and his or her family into the school community.

The SE Program

The BEST Education Program's XE track in SE is 30 credits. The Connecticut Discipline-based Professional Standards for Teachers of Special Education that follows is infused into core courses and will lead to a comprehensive knowledge base within SE. A matrix is provided to students that details where and to what extent these procedures are integrated into each course. All appropriate state standards have been infused in all SE courses.

I. Content Knowledge: The key domains of knowledge include:

- a. Task analysis and other instructional modification skills
- b. Negotiation and conflict resolution skills
- c. Appropriate use of formal and informal assessment strategies and instruments
- d. Legal provisions, regulations, and guidelines regarding student assessment

- e. How students learn to read, including evaluating texts; reading and writing as interactive process
- f. How students learn mathematics, including: mathematical concepts and procedures, mathematical reasoning, mathematical tasks
- g. Instructional materials including adaptive equipment and technological resources
- h. Occupational/life skills curriculum and relevance to independent living and employment

II. Collaboration: Teachers work collaboratively in classroom settings as partners with other teachers and related service providers and share responsibility for meeting student outcomes through the design and modification of instruction to meet the needs of students with and without disabilities.

III. Consultation within the School Community: Teachers collaborate with members of the school community, conveying and receiving information, in the design and implementation of instructional and behavioral objectives.

IV. Instruction: Teachers teach language arts, mathematics, and occupational/life skills, and use their knowledge of learning strategies and adaptations to modify the instructional methods and materials of these and other subject areas to foster the independence of the learner. Teachers know and use a variety of strategies and resources including task analysis and other specialized instructional approaches, as well as a variety of materials and adaptive equipment, alternative and augmentative communications systems and assistive technology.

V. Students and Their Needs: Teachers use their understanding of the impact of a disability on learning and classroom performance, as well as their knowledge of the continuum of education program options and services in the implementation of a student's Individual Education Program.

VI. Assessment: Teachers understand and use formal and informal assessment techniques, and they interpret and communicate the results of assessments to students, parents, and colleagues to analyze and modify instruction, and to ensure the continuous cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of the learner.

VII. Environment: Teachers use their understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create learning environments that maximize opportunities for students' academic, behavioral, and personal success. Implementation of SRBI and data team collaboration is also included under this domain.

(B) Quality of project personnel

In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

Fairfield University is committed to non-discriminatory employment practices. Not only does Fairfield University have a comprehensive Affirmative Action Plan, currently there is an opening for an assistant or associate professor in the Program in Special Education and a goal is to fill this opening with a member of an underrepresented group. The full-time faculty of the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions (GSEAP) consists of twenty-four females and four males ranging in age from the early 30's to mid 70's. Females chair the four departments. Five of the major members of *The BEST Education Project* team are bilingual (Portuguese, Spanish). Some faculty members serving on *The BEST Education Project* have disabilities that do not interfere with their ability to perform required tasks. All of the adjunct professors in the bilingual portion of the grant project are bilingual.

Fairfield University is committed to the employment of well-qualified faculty and the matriculation of well-qualified students. The University has a non-discrimination statement that applies to students and the administration of educational policies regarding age, sex, race, religion, color, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry, handicap and disability.

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the Project Director or Principal Investigator.

The Fairfield University TESOL, World Languages, and Bilingual Education Programs currently have one full-time Associate Professor who is the program director. She has 20 years experience teaching in IHEs and 15 years experience teaching elementary BE, middle school developmental reading, and community college ESOL and developmental reading. Nine BE and TESOL adjunct faculty complement the full-time faculty and have specific areas of expertise (c.g., assessment, grammar and syntax, differentiating instruction, elementary or secondary TESOL or bilingual methods, bilingualism, language acquisition, etc.). Five have Ph.D.s in BE or TESOL teacher education and all are bilingual. Three are native Spanish speakers and one is a native Portuguese speaker. One is a retired Dean and internationally recognized as a bilingual scholar. Another is the ESL Consultant for the technical high schools in Connecticut, and one is an Associate Professor at the University of Puerto Rico. The other four adjuncts have their CAS degree (post-Master's degree) in BE or TESOL. All adjunct faculty currently work in BE or TESOL programs in local school districts and two adjuncts work in Consortia Partner districts.

The Fairfield University Special Education Program currently has two full-time professors and one half-time professor. A search is in progress for another full-time professor. Program faculty combined have more than 20 years experience teaching in IHEs and in urban,

culturally and linguistically diverse school systems. Seven adjunct faculty members complement the full-time faculty and have specific areas of expertise (e.g., assessment administration, consultation and collaboration, curriculum development, etc.). They are currently serving in local public school systems as Special Education consultants, Administrators of Special Education programs or as a School Psychologist. During the latest reaccreditation process, the GSEAP was awarded the rating of "Met with Distinction" as it pertains to the involvement of teacher education faculty members and the Programs in Special Education were awarded the highest rating of "Nationally Recognized, No Conditions".

Two primary faculty will be involved in the daily operations of Project SETTELL:

Principal Director: Anne E. Campbell, Associate Professor, B.A., M.Ed., and Ph.D.

Areas of expertise include Bilingual and TESOL Curriculum Design, Content Area Instruction in TESOL and Bilingual Programs, and multicultural education. She teaches courses in TESOL methods, assessment, sociolinguistics, multicultural education, and action research methods. In addition, she supervises TESOL student teachers and practicum internships. She has served as Director and Co-Director of SE, BE, and TESOL teacher-training grants. She was the ethnographic bilingual evaluator from 2007 – 2010 for *Acceso a la ciencia*, regularly presents at AERA, and has published in the *Journal of American Indian Education*, *Thinking and Learning Mathematically*. She will primarily be responsible for the BE and TESOL XE tracks. She is directing the final year of an existing grant and will equally share grant management duties with the Project Co-Director.

Project Co-Director: David Aloyzy Zera, Associate Professor, B.S., M.A., C.A.S., Ph.D.,

Areas of expertise include Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorders and Diagnosis. Dr. Zera taught in an urban public middle school for 15 years and maintained a private practice

performing comprehensive cognitive processing and academic achievement evaluations. In 2004 his work in the area of learning disabilities was internationally recognized by the National Research and Development Centre of the European Union (Rice & Brooks) as one of three models that will influence the next generation of theories pertaining to dyslexia. Dr. Zera served as the Director of the Fairfield University Special Education Programs for nine years and successfully served as Director of two previous BE/SE/TESOL teacher training education grants. Dr. Zera will have primary responsibility for managing the grant activities in Year 1 and in ensuing years will equally share grant management duties with the Principal Director identified above.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key personnel.

In addition, the following two partners also provide extensive knowledge and experiences as outlined below:

Gayle A. Bogle, Assistant Professor, M.L.S., M.A., Ph.D.

Areas of expertise include Educational Technology, Library Media, and SE. She has worked professionally as both a school and public librarian in CT. Dr. Bogle is a faculty member in the Department of Psychology and Special Education and serves as a full-time faculty member in the Educational Technology Program.

Antonio Simoes, B.A., M.A., M.Ed., Ed.D.

Areas of expertise include BE, TESOL, Multicultural Education and Foreign Language Acquisition. Dr. Simoes is Dean Emeritus of the GSEAP at Fairfield University, is a former Dean of Education of New York University and has published extensively on issues related to multiculturalism and bilingualism. He is a native of Portugal and maintains close connections with academics in his home country.

LEA Co-Directors:

The four LEA Co-Directors will serve on *The BEST Education Project* Advisory Board and collaborate with *The BEST Education Project* Co-Directors in the Planning Phase of the grant. They will help with advertising and recruitment and provide both formal and informal feedback regarding grant courses and preparation of candidates.

Yvette de Feo: Director of Bilingual Education in Bridgeport, CT

Yvette has a Sixth Year Certificate from Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut. Prior to assuming her present position, she was an administrator and teacher in the Bridgeport school System for 18 years.

Augusto Gomes, District Coordinator Bilingual and TESOL Programs, Danbury, CT

Augusto has a CAS in BE from Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut. He has been a bilingual public school teacher and is active in the association for the CT Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners (CAPELL). He was a member of the leadership team that wrote the 2003 *CAPELL Guidelines for ESOL Program Design k-12*.

Helene Becker, Bilingual and ELL Education Instructional Specialist, Norwalk Public Schools, Norwalk, Connecticut.

Helene has a CAS in Educational Leadership from Southern Connecticut State University. Prior to assuming her present administrative position, she taught ESL in CT, NY, and HI. As a Fulbright Scholar, she trained English teachers in Italy. She is the author of *Teaching ESL K-12: Views from the Classroom* (Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 2001). She is active in the association for CT Administrators of Programs for ELLs. She was a member of the leadership team that wrote the 2003 *CAPELL Guidelines for ESOL Program Design k-12*.

Mike Meyer, Director, Student Support Services, Stamford, Connecticut

Mike has an MA in Human Resources Development and a CAS from Fairfield University in SE and TESOL. He is the Director of Student Support Services for the Stamford Public Schools. In this capacity he oversees efforts to promote positive behavioral supports, school culture, family and community engagement, and early interventions across the district.

External Evaluator: Dr. Thanos Patelis, Ph.D.

Dr. Patelis has over 20 years experience in providing evaluation services and received his doctorate in Psychometrics. Support in the evaluation component will be comprehensive via a formative process culminating in a summative evaluation. The evaluation will provide quantitative data as required by the GRPA and Annual Progress Report, and Dr. Patelis will work jointly with the Co-Directors and consult with the LEA directors. A complete discussion of evaluation activities is included in the Evaluation Plan.

(C.) Quality of the Management Plan

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

The following pages chart the management plan, address the overall design and include objectives related to the Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation Phases. The overall design of this project is predicated upon the interface among *The BEST Education Project* candidates, Project Directors, faculty, Advisory Board, and the LEAs.

The major activities of the project will be carried out at Fairfield University and at schools in the Consortia public school systems. The operational and management plan assures collaboration and continuity. The management of the project will be the responsibility of the

Principal Director, Project Co-Director, and LEA Co-Directors. The Advisory Board will supply input from LEAs, the CTSDE, and appropriate related organizations. The Project is designed to be implemented in the following phases:

Phase I –Planning and Recruitment: Date of grant notification through December 2011

Objective 1: Cooperative planning with LEAs, advertising of grant, recruiting, interviewing, and selecting 25 initial candidates.

Outcome: The Co-Directors will work with the four LEA Co-Directors to advertise the program.

Objective 2: An Advisory Board will be developed.

Outcome: Invitations will be sent to SE and BE professionals and, community members. The Advisory Board will be formally convened at the beginning of the Planning Phase and will serve as the major input and advisory vehicle for the duration of the grant period.

Objective 3: Trainees will be recruited.

Outcome: Twenty-five trainees will be recruited and selected. Recruitment procedures will include:

- a) The administrators in the Consortia school systems will help to recruit qualified GE teachers, bilingual GE teachers and SE teachers, and recommend their admission into the training program.
- b) Descriptive program brochures will be sent to Supervisors of BE, SE, and/or TESOL, Directors of Pupil Personnel, Educational Support Agencies and Principals.
- c) Grant award will be publicized in the newspapers of the Priority Cluster Area Cities and the Connecticut TESOL Association newsletter.

d) Announcements of Program availability will be aired on CT bilingual radio stations (e.g., WPKN (FM) Bridgeport; WNAB (AM) Bridgeport; WNLK (AM) Norwalk, and; WHNC (AM) New Haven, etc.).

e) Grant award will be posted on the Fairfield University website:

<http://www.fairfield.edu>.

Objective 4: Twenty-five trainees will be selected.

Outcome: a) Applicants will submit an application, official undergraduate transcript, and three letters of recommendation to an identified Dean's office staff member in the GSEAP. The completed files will be forwarded to the Principal Director of the Project.

b) A Screening Committee (composed of the Project Co-Directors, one major professor from the Department of Psychology and Special Education and one professor from the Department of TESOL, World Languages, and Bilingual Education) will review the credentials of each applicant and vote, individually, as to whether the candidate should be considered for an admission interview. After discussion, members of the Screening Committee will interview potential candidates.

c) Applicants will demonstrate successful completion of an undergraduate degree, appropriate G.P.A. for admission, proficiency in English and, Spanish or Portuguese (for those candidates pursuing the BE XE), and meet all admissions criteria for the GSEAP.

d) Candidates will meet for an orientation to the University and *The BEST Education Project*.

e) Candidates will complete a pre-assessment to assess their entry-level knowledge and skills of key concepts to be developed in the program and to assist in course planning for the Spring 2012 semester. The pre-assessment will be designed with the program evaluator and

Project faulty. The pre-test will also be administered as a post-test upon candidates' completion of their XE and comparison scores will be analyzed to measure growth with respect to professional content knowledge.

Phase II – Implementation: January 2012 – June 2012

Objective 1: Determine XE track for candidates and assign advisor.

Outcome: a) Candidates will be assigned to appropriate track.

b) Students will take and successfully complete 2 courses spring 2012

c) Students will take and successfully complete 1 summer session I course

Phase III - Program Evaluation – June 2012

Objective 1: Perform ongoing formative evaluation

Outcome: Benchmark assessments will be administered in designated courses and student outcomes will be analyzed.

Objective 2: Complete Annual Program Evaluation.

Outcome: External Evaluator will design and administer the annual evaluation

Comprehensive Phase II: Implementation: January 2012 – June 2016

Objective 1: The schedule for the Five Year Implementation Phase is anticipated to be as follows: In Year 1, the first cohort of 25 students will be admitted followed by other cohorts being accepted in ensuing years after initial candidates complete their XE requirements. The total estimate of completers is 50 by the end of Year 5. Below is an instructional implementation schedule that identifies the number of credits being offered to students each semester for the five years of the grant.

TABLE 3: Instructional Implementation Schedule

	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Summer</u>
Year 1	Recruit	6 credits	6 credits
Year 2	6 credits	6 credits	6 credits
Year 3	6 credits	6 credits	6 credits
Year 4	6 credits	6 credits	6 credits
Year 5	6 credits	6 credits	6 credits

The Plan of Study has been designed to integrate content from the BE, SE and TESOL programs. Course selection and sequence has been designed to first address theory(ies) specific to these disciplines followed by courses that apply the theories to practice through focused coursework and practical, site-based, experiential opportunities that comprehensively integrate program information. All courses are 3 credits each. The plan of study is 18 credits for teachers XEing in BE, 30 credits for teachers XEing in TESOL, and 48 credits for teachers XEing in BE and SE. Candidates pursuing a XE in TESOL may receive credit for prior coursework in English, culture and intergroup relations, or linguistics as approved by the State of Connecticut - this would reduce the number of TESOL credits needed for those candidates. Candidates completing the dual program in SE and BE will likely earn the XE in SE first, followed by the XE in BE.

Training models vary in regard to the methods of educating personnel to fulfill their roles. A review of SE programs in CT indicated that, while all programs have the same basic objectives, they are lacking one significant component: the training of educators who have the skills and knowledge to work with students with limited English proficiency (LEP). It is the major goal of this proposed project to train highly qualified special educators who will address this need. The implementation of SRBI in CT has dramatically changed the role of BE teachers

and TESOL. They are now key members of instructional planning teams working with GE teachers to insure access to grade-level curriculum for all ELLs. In addition, they are co-teaching and providing in-classroom language support to the primary content area teachers. This new role requires consultation, collaboration, and leadership skills. These types of educators are needed to provide to, and interpret data for, team members so that appropriate interventions for ELLs, with or without disabilities, can be designed.

Thus, to meet these important needs, the instructional design of the program is to prepare professionals who combine BE, SE and/or TESOL knowledge. The proposed project will offer a Bilingual/ Multicultural/TESOL Education core to all students, and a comprehensive SE core to those in that track. In all four tracks of *The BEST Education Project* SL 441 Teaching in Multicultural Contexts will be required and a new bilingual special education course (SL 419 Bilingual Special Education) was recently designed and approved for inclusion in the GSEAP catalog.

(2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

To effectively manage the grant, the Principal Director and Project Co-Director will each have a course release each semester. This will allow them, for example, to: advise Project students (in addition to their non-Project advisees); collaborate with and properly coordinate services with the LEA Directors; supervise on-site fieldwork experiences and/or practica with Project candidates; allow for adequate time to properly plan, implement, coordinate, and evaluate *The BEST Education Project*, etc. This is the most cost effective way for the Project Co-Directors to be able to ensure maximum success of the grant while they continue to fulfill their normal faculty responsibilities. Adjuncts will be hired to teach those courses for which they are

released and will be hired based on their areas of expertise, work in the field, and prior knowledge, skills, and qualifications.

(D) Quality of the Project Evaluation

The evaluation design of *The BEST Education Project* will involve the collection of data about and from each of the in-service teachers who are in the program from the start and throughout the program. Faculty from Fairfield University will use NCATE benchmark rubrics to assess the assignments produced by the in-service teachers throughout the program. The evaluation design involves a one-group longitudinal design with multiple measures. Participants will evaluate how well they met some absolute standards of participation. The program will be evaluated in terms of reaching some very specific metrics with respect to participation and completion, and will be undertaken by an external evaluator.

The data that will inform the evaluation will involve a number of measures. For example, a database of information about the in-service teachers participating in the program will be developed that will contain names, and demographic and experiential information. This data will form the basis of the ongoing evaluation of meeting the expected outcomes. Annual surveys of the in-service teachers will also be undertaken and will assess their experience in their courses related to the use of technology, implementation of SRBI, collaboration, and curriculum design in working with ELLs and students with and without special learning needs. Classroom assessments for assessing the skills in using data-based information and in collaborating with data teams will be undertaken in specific course. Direct assessments of in-service teacher assignments will be undertaken by faculty using NCATE benchmark assessments and evaluation rubrics.

Program Goals, Metrics, Data Sources and Anticipated Outcomes

Program Goal 1: To reduce the critical need for certified and highly qualified teachers of BE, SE and/or TESOL serving ELLs in the State of CT and, especially, in Fairfield County Priority Consortium Cities.

Metrics: a) Number of matriculated in-service teachers meeting admissions requirements; b) percent of in-service teachers completing program by Year 2; and c) percent of in-service teachers completing program in subsequent years.

Data Sources: Registrar's database, program records and transcripts, and interview ratings.

Anticipated Outcomes: Twenty-five (25) in-service teachers will be recruited for years 1 and 2 of the grant and twenty (20) in-service teachers will be recruited in ensuing years.

Approximately 50% of the matriculated in-service teachers will complete the program by Year 3 and the remaining candidates will complete the program in subsequent years.

Program Goal 2: To provide candidates with a scientific research-based program of study designed to develop specific competencies through course work and field experiences that will enable them to fulfill CT State requirements for a XE in BE, SE and/or TESOL.

Metrics: a) Number and percent of matriculated in-service teachers certified in regular education and eligible for XEs in BE, SE and/or TESOL; b) number and percent of matriculated in-service teachers certified in special education and eligible for a XE in TESOL; and c) number and percent of matriculated students completing their program of study.

Data Sources: Program records and participant information.

Anticipated Outcomes: 1) Approximately 50% of in-service teacher candidates will be certified in regular education and be eligible for XEs in BE, SE and/or TESOL depending on previous

training and track selection and the remaining in-service teachers will be certified in special education and be eligible for a XE in TESOL.

2) Program candidates will be considered as highly qualified upon completion of their XE coursework and fieldwork experiences and will be able to effectively teach students in need of BE, SE and/or TESOL, serve as teacher leaders, and/or provide professional development support in their schools.

Program Goal 3: To provide candidates with expertise in consultation, collaboration, and teacher leadership so that they may assist administrators, other teachers, and support staff personnel in the implementation of SRBI and the development of appropriate educational programs for ELLs with or without special learning needs.

Metrics: a) Number and percent of matriculated in-service teachers successfully completing the required courses; b) skills in using data-based information and in collaborating with data team members; and c) in-service teacher ratings of how well they think the courses prepared them to work with ELLs and/or students with special learning needs.

Data Sources: a) Transcripts from Registrar; b) classroom assessments in benchmark courses measuring skill in using data-based information; c) rating scale identifying three performance levels (expectations not met, met, or exceeded) as it pertains to using data-based information and in collaborating with data team, and; d) annual survey of in-service teachers.

Anticipated Outcomes: Approximately: a) 95% of in-service teachers successfully completing the courses; b) 95% of students will be in the met or exceeds expectations categories, and; c) 80% of the students will indicate that the courses taken as part of the course of study are helpful in preparing them to work with ELLs and/or students with special education needs.

Program Goal 4: To increase participants' understanding of, and ability to, effectively use technology in the design of instructional programs serving ELLs and/or students with special education needs in K-12 classrooms

Metrics: a.) Number and percent of students successfully completing the technology course; b.) Number and percent of courses in which the in-service teacher utilizes technology as part of the curriculum, and; 3. Extent to which technology is used in the teachers' actual classroom before, after and at specific time intervals throughout the program.

Data Sources: Transcripts from Registrar and annual survey of in-service teachers.

Anticipated Outcomes: Approximately: a) 95% of the students will successfully complete the technology course; b) 80% of the courses will utilize technology as part of the curriculum; and c) 80% of the students will indicate that the courses taken will utilize technology.

Program Goal 5: To support teachers' development of evidence-based strategies that are effective for ELLs at different language levels and will enable teachers to deliver grade-level, linguistically appropriate curricula.

Metrics: Ratings of their assignments using NCATE benchmark assessments and evaluation rubrics.

Data Sources: Selected course ratings from faculty. Rubric classifying students as: not meeting standard, meeting standard, or exceeding standard.

Anticipated Outcomes: Approximately 80% of students will be in the meets or exceeds standard categories.

Program Goal 6: To provide opportunities for teachers to analyze their content instructional programs and to align their curricula with the Common Core State Standards, The CT Framework for ELLs, and accreditation standards.

Metrics: a.) Completion of coursework; and b) ratings of candidate assignments using NCATE benchmark assessments and evaluation rubrics.

Data Sources: a) Student coursework; b) ratings of candidate assignments using NCATE benchmark assessments and evaluation rubrics that identify students as: not meeting standard, meeting standard or exceeding standard.

Anticipated Outcomes: Approximately 95% of students will meet or exceed standard as documented by benchmark assessments.

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