



Dual Language Immersion Playbooks: STAFFING

December 2024



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Table of Contents

Dual Language Immersion: Staffing Playbook	1
SEAs.....	1
LEAs.....	2
Schools	3
Families and Communities	5
Endnotes	6

Dual Language Immersion

STAFFING PLAYBOOK

Staffing is critical to the success of dual language immersion programs. Taking the actions necessary to ensure the preparation, hiring, retention, and ongoing professional development of staff contributes to the consistency, sustainability, and scalability needed to achieve the goals of bilingualism and biliteracy.

This playbook includes examples from the five state visits and roundtable discussions as well as examples identified through literature and research scans.

SEAs

Examine the state licensure system to ensure it supports but does not restrict high-quality dual language immersion (DLI) staffing. Confirm requirements are in place for DLI educators at all levels of the system to be knowledgeable about bilingualism, emergent bilinguals, and bilingual education and well prepared to facilitate high-quality DLI programming. Policies should allow bilingual teaching candidates flexibility in credentialing/licensure while still requiring them to meet high standards for certification.

- 🍏 Ensure that each component for licensure is essential to supporting high-quality instruction—and that no components serve as barriers to certification.

Example: In order to increase the number of teachers qualified to serve English-speaking and multilingual students in New York schools, the [Board of Regents](#) recently incorporated additional flexibility in working toward bilingual certification types.¹

- 🍏 Work with traditional teacher training programs to design the scope and sequence of courses to be both theoretical and hands-on. One such approach includes teacher residency programs that model themselves after medical residencies. Candidates in these programs obtain classroom experience while taking teacher preparation classes and often earn a full teaching certification within two years.

Example: The [State of California funds competitive grants](#) to support collaborative partnerships between local educational agencies (LEAs) and teacher preparation programs offered by regionally accredited institutions of higher education to expand, strengthen, improve access to, or create teacher residency programs in high-priority areas, including bilingual education.²

- 🍏 Establish provisional teacher licenses that allow adults with bachelor's degrees and native proficiency in non-English languages to teach in DLI classrooms. Provide multiple flexible pathways for provisionally licensed bilingual teacher candidates to secure long-term licensure, such as by enrolling in additional teacher preparation courses or the successful completion of an apprenticeship with a master DLI teacher.

Example: Utah allows for a flexible [Temporary Associate Educator License](#) for teaching candidates who have completed a bachelor's degree with a major in the field in which they are seeking licensure OR who have passed appropriate content area tests OR who have appropriate career and technical education (CTE) certifications of expertise, but have not met other requirements to earn a teaching license.³

- 🍏 Revise reciprocity requirements for bilingual teachers who have been certified in another state or country.

Example: The [residency license in North Carolina](#) provides an alternative route to certification for those who have a bachelor's degree or higher and want to transition to teaching in the state through J-1 visa program placements.⁴

Bolster opportunities for bilingual staff through funding support. States launch and administer grants and alternative funding programs explicitly targeted at growing bilingual teacher training pipelines, increasing the linguistic diversity of the state's teaching force, and supporting professional development opportunities for educators of English-speaking and multilingual learners.

- States work directly with LEAs to direct or locate funding.

Example: [Texas's Region 8 Education Service Center \(ESC 8\)](#) provides technical assistance to 46 school districts in Texas's northeast corner, some of which boast particularly high levels of linguistic diversity. ESC 8 uses its convening power to help school districts and regional institutions of higher education understand paraprofessionals' ambitions, find funding to close the financial gaps that prevent bilingual paraprofessionals from becoming bilingual K–12 teachers, and tailor their systems to make those ambitions achievable.⁵

Example: The U.S. Department of Education's [Title III National Professional Development Program](#) makes grants to institutions of higher education or public or private entities with relevant experience and capacity, in consortia with LEAs and/or SEAs, in support of professional development opportunities intended to improve instruction for English learners (ELs).⁶

- States structure scholarships, fellowships, and other financial aid programs to cover the cost of bilingual candidates' coursework.

Example: The New York State Education Department partners with state universities through the [Clinically Rich Intensive Teacher Institute \(CR-ITI\)](#). This program provides financial support to future bilingual educators pursuing certification in bilingual education and English as a new language.⁷



Figure 14. Bilingual word wall.

LEAs

Establish specific bilingual teacher pathways for current bilingual staff. Whenever possible, these pathways should recognize the experience and expertise of bilingual staff as equivalent to some of the requirements of traditional teacher training programs and include financial, programmatic, and logistical support for participation.

Example: Mount Pleasant Independent School District in Texas offered scholarships for paraprofessionals enrolling in [Texas A&M University-Commerce's Pride Pathway](#). This program allows paraprofessionals to bypass elements of traditional teacher training systems, counting their daily classroom work as student teaching experience.⁸

Establish "grow-your-own" (GYO) programs specifically tailored to preparing a supply of local educators. These programs focus on developing and retaining teachers within local communities and districts and can identify and support potential bilingual educators to complete the certification process. This might include paraprofessionals and teachers without a current bilingual endorsement; students in middle school, high school, or college; and community members, including parents, members of the military, and people seeking a career change.

Example: [Oak Grove School District](#) in San Jose, California used funding from the state's [Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program](#) to develop a GYO approach to support existing bilingual educators who did not have a bilingual teaching credential to get one and those with a bilingual credential who were not teaching in a bilingual classroom to return to that setting.^{9,10}

Example: The National Center for Grow Your Own (NCGYO) launched the [National Registered Apprenticeship in Teaching District Network](#) to support school districts that are addressing educator shortages with a registered apprenticeship model.¹¹

Build partnerships with universities. Collaboration between school districts implementing DLI programs and universities and colleges promotes mutual sustainability. Universities gain preferred placements for student teachers, and districts can access newly credentialed graduates who understand the culture and community in which they will be working.

Example: [Portland Public Schools’ Dual Language Teacher Residency Program](#) provides an innovative model by allowing adults with bachelor’s degrees and proficiency in DLI languages to receive a provisional teaching license and serve as DLI teachers while completing traditional training.¹²

Pursue creative recruitment efforts and incentives. Incentivize educator DLI positions and provide the support that current or new bilingual teacher candidates may need to work toward their certification or endorsement.

- 🍏 Partner with external entities to support staffing efforts and make connections.

Example: [Boston Public Schools](#) has partnered with the Boston Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Advancement (MOIA) and local law firms to successfully obtain H1-B visas that are granted for up to six years and open the door for green card applications.¹³

- 🍏 Provide financial incentives to entice current teachers to earn a bilingual endorsement and fill a bilingual teaching position, or offer bonuses, scholarships, tuition subsidies, or loan forgiveness to attract and retain bilingual teachers.

Example: New teachers in shortage areas such as bilingual education in [Rochester City School District](#) in New York begin one step higher on the salary scale and are eligible to receive a stipend for the first four years of employment.¹⁴

- 🍏 Offer in-kind incentives, such as housing assistance or subsidized meals, to support teachers as they complete the requirements for a bilingual endorsement and begin their careers in education.

Example: Some school districts across the country, including [Jefferson Union High School District in Daly City, California](#), have begun to build housing developments specifically for school staff.¹⁵



Figure 15. Davis Joint Unified School District, Governance Team, Alesha Moreno-Ramirez, Multilingual Support Division, California Department of Education (CDE), Geqigula Dlamini, Administrator, Language Policy & Leadership, Veronica Dunn, Principal at Cesar Chavez Elementary, Amelia Hess, Principal at Montgomery Elementary, Maria Luquin, Director of Multilingual Education, Matt Best, Superintendent at Davis Joint Unified, Kate Wright, Jennifer Blitz, WestEd, Melissa Castillo, Beatriz Ceja and Montserrat Garibay, U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, Office of the Secretary.

Schools

Recruit and retain highly qualified personnel to fully staff programs. Essential staff include:

- 🍏 Teachers with native or native-like ability in the language(s) of instruction and at least an elementary-level understanding of the partner language who are highly qualified to support English-speaking and multilingual learners
- 🍏 Additional master teachers fluent in the partner language capable of supporting all teachers in providing instruction in two languages
- 🍏 Parent engagement specialists to support families in communicating with teachers, understanding educational processes, and accessing resources in their preferred language
- 🍏 Educators to address the needs of special education students within DLI programs at all tiers of the system of supports
- 🍏 Additional support service professionals, including counselors, school psychologists, and speech and language pathologists

Example: The Texas Education Agency provides a [Dual Language Immersion Framework](#) that articulates guidance for staffing.¹⁶

Improve Working Conditions for Staff. Strategies that involve improving working conditions for bilingual teachers can serve as an incentive for bilingual teachers to enter the profession and as a strategy to minimize attrition, leading to increased program sustainability.

- 🍏 Provide sufficient resources. Adequate instructional resources can be a challenge for bilingual teachers, particularly for those teaching languages other than Spanish. Ensuring access to necessary curricular resources in their target language can be a strong incentive.

Example: California Educators Together provides professional learning, lesson design, and curricular resources for site-based staff in multilingual programs.¹⁷

- 🍏 Ensure new teachers are supported within a positive school environment.

Example: The [New Teacher Center](#) works with schools and districts across the country to build equitable, sustainable learning cultures and to support new and beginning teachers through induction and mentorship.¹⁸

Ensure support structures are in place for ongoing professional learning and growth. Robust professional learning support is offered throughout the year to ensure the ongoing development of teachers' knowledge and skills related to curriculum implementation, bilingual education strategies, English learner support, and cultural awareness. School leaders:

- 🍏 Design schedules with time and space for grade-level/content-area planning and communities of practice to make decisions and solve problems with curriculum, plan instruction, observe each other's classrooms, and share expertise.

Example: [Utah](#) provides a series of grade-span-specific collaboration protocols and DLI partner-teacher resources that schools can use to support horizontal and vertical collaboration.¹⁹

- 🍏 Ensure DLI teachers participate in pre- and in-service trainings that advance their theoretical and practical understanding of high-quality DLI instruction.

Example: The University of Minnesota, through funding provided by the [National Professional Development Program](#), has developed a [set of rubrics](#) that can be used by and with teachers to support improved DLI instructional practices (See Endnote 9).²⁰

Invest in GYO programs. School leaders play a crucial role in building pipelines for DLI program staff by identifying talented classroom teachers, staff, and students who can potentially transition into DLI roles over time.

- 🍏 High school pipelines can be established to lead students into university bilingual educator pathways. Special focus may be placed on English learner and multilingual students pursuing the Seal of Biliteracy.

Example: [Educators Rising](#) is an organization that supports schools and districts to begin a CTE pathway for future educators.

- 🍏 Current school staff (teaching assistants, paraprofessionals, other classified staff, or non-DLI teachers interested in becoming dual language educators) are tapped to receive specific training, often based on university partnerships.

Example: [Building a Bilingual Teacher Pipeline](#) profiles several schools in Washington and details how they have identified and supported promising staff to become certified teachers (see Endnote 21).

Families and Communities

CBOs, colleges, and universities work in partnership with schools and districts to identify and cultivate interest among potential educators.

Example: The [Logan Square Neighborhood Association \(LSNA\)](#) in Chicago works with local public schools to identify promising paraprofessionals and parents and then partners with local teacher preparation programs to offer teacher education classes in Logan Square elementary schools.²³

Example: The [State University of New York New Paltz](#) works in partnership with the [Hudson Valley Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network](#) of the New York State Education Department to develop a GYO program focused on recruiting bilingual high school students to enroll in university education programs.

Community groups support alternative pathways for bilingual educators. CBOs, philanthropic groups, colleges and universities can serve as sources of funding and support to diversify the teacher pipeline.

Example: The City University of New York's [Initiative on Immigration and Education](#) provides support for undocumented educators as they work through the certification process.

Community groups support educators with professional growth.

Example: Organizational connections, such as [Sobrato Early Academic Language \(SEAL\)](#), can make finding and keeping teachers easier by creating professional learning networks across schools and districts.

Endnotes

- ¹ The University of the State of New York. (2023, Sep 12). *Supplemental certificate pathways*. <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/bilingual-ed/final-supplementary-certificate-options-for-esol-and-bilingual-extension-5-a.pdf>.
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- ²³ Institute for Educational Leadership. (n.d.). *Network spotlight - Logan Square Neighborhood Association*. <https://iel.org/lсна/>.

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