

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Berkeley Unified School District Board of Education
FROM: William Huyett, Superintendent
DATE: June 6, 2012
SUBJECT: Recommendation to Consolidate the K-5 Two Way Immersion Program at LeConte

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the past year, the Superintendent's Two-Way Immersion (TWI) Task Force has studied the proposal to consolidate the TWI program at one school site. Representatives of the TWI Task Force presented a report to the Board on April 11th that supported the creation of a single TWI school within BUSD. The English Learner Master Plan Work Group has reviewed the report and also supported establishing a single TWI school.

The Superintendent's recommendation to consolidate TWI at one site was presented to the Board on May 9th, and since that date there have been two community forums.

At this time, I am recommending that the Board approve the selection of LeConte Elementary School as the single school site for the TWI program, starting in 2013-14 for both logistical and pedagogical reasons. For example, the development of a single school with a dedicated focus on English Learner issues and a clear pedagogical model will provide the most effective support to English Learners who choose TWI. In addition, movement to a single school site will facilitate the tracking of student progress within our student information system and data warehouse.

If the Board approves this recommendation, a .4 FTE Two Way Immersion Teacher on Special Assignment will assist with the transition by helping the new LeConte principal plan and develop transition strategies and identify needs for the new program. This position will also help to coordinate the program at the three sites through professional development for teachers and the selection of common curriculum materials.

Other available resources include the Spanish language texts and materials currently existing at school sites that will be transitioned to LeConte. As the needs for additional resources and materials are identified, such as a greater selection of library books in Spanish, funding will be allocated from appropriate sources.

There are other issues that will need further study if the Board approves the recommendation to consolidate the program at LeConte. Some of these issues are listed below along with my recommendations.

1) Timeline: A gradual roll out of the implementation of this move should begin with all TWI kindergarten students enrolling at LeConte beginning in fall 2013. It is also recommended that the administrators poll prospective 1st grade students' parents to determine if it is feasible to transfer those students from Rosa Parks and Cragmont to LeConte. In subsequent years additional grades will be added with all grades represented by fall 2018. This process will take five years to complete.

2) Model: The District should return to the implementation of a clear research proven pedagogical model based on 50 percent of the students being identified English Learners with Spanish as a dominant home language and 50 percent of the students being Spanish learners.

3) Sibling Preference: The district will, to the extent possible, accept siblings while the issue receives further research and review by staff.

4) Transportation: Any students needing transportation who meet the current standards for services should be provided transportation. This school should be treated the same as any other elementary school. The District will need to allocate additional resources for this.

5) Staffing Considerations: In order to best support the implementation of the program by 2013, Human Resources staff should begin immediately working with both BCCE and BFT to develop a plan to ensure that staff at the single school be bilingual Spanish/English in order to serve all students and families at the site.

6) Spanish Immersion: Should LeConte not fill all spaces for students utilizing the 50/50 model, the District should develop a Spanish Immersion strand within LeConte to serve the additional requests from families of students who are not English Learners.

These issues are presented now to allow the Board to consider them. The only action requested at this time is the decision to consolidate the K-5 TWI program at LeConte. If the Board approves this recommendation, information about the implementation issues will be presented at a later date.

DISTRICT GOAL

I. Curriculum and Instruction

IV. Cultural and Linguistic Relevance

POLICY/CODE

Board Bylaw 9000

FISCAL IMPACT

Additional costs include the transportation of students from throughout the District to LeConte, a part-time Teacher on Special Assignment (approximately \$45,000 from categorical funds), and new materials in Spanish paid from the Instructional Materials budget

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve the recommendation to consolidate the K-5 Two Way Immersion Program at LeConte.