

Report and Recommendations of the Superintendent's Two-Way Immersion Task Force

March 20, 2012



Berkeley Unified School District

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Composition of Task Force

The members of the task force were chosen by the District, in consultation with principals at Cragmont, LeConte, Rosa Parks, and Thousand Oaks. Each of these four schools had four voting members on the committee, and one alternate teacher. The four voting members from each school were comprised of the principal, one teacher, and two parents. In addition, there were a number of non-voting members of the Task Force. The Task Force was chaired and facilitated by former BUSD principal Cheryl Chinn.

Below is the complete list of Task Force members:

Voting Members

School	Principal	Teachers	Parents
Cragmont	Evelyn Tamondong-Bradley	Nancy King Greg Martin (Alt.)	Diego Dugatkin Sabrina Pinell
LeConte	Cheryl Wilson	Luis Argueta Natalia Bernal (Alt.)	Gazel Valdez Angela Gallegos-Castillo
Rosa Parks	Paco Furlan	Michelle Contreras Mathilde Merello (Alt.)	Francisco Romero Ty Alper
Thousand Oaks	Julianna Sikes	Patty Cassetta Gabriela Fuentes (Alt.)	Albert Lopez Diana Iniguez

Non-voting Members

Cheryl Chinn, Chair
 Cathy Campbell, Berkeley Federation of Teachers
 Elaine Eger, Program Supervisor, Special Education, BUSD
 Christina Faulkner, Curriculum and Instruction, BUSD
 Maya Hernandez, Office of Family and Community Partnerships, BUSD
 Beatriz Leyva-Cutler, Berkeley School Board
 Nabila Massoumi, English Language Development Coach, BUSD
 Cynthia Medina, Alameda County Office of Education, EL/Bilingual Coordinator
 Mary Patterson, Longfellow Middle School
 Heather Tugwell, English Language Development Coach, BUSD

Charge of Task Force and Executive Summary

In May 2011, following several years of discussion in the BUSD community about the possible consolidation of TWI programs at one elementary school site, the School Board voted 5-0 to direct the Superintendent to convene a group of parent, teacher, and administrative representatives to make recommendations regarding possible consolidation.¹

The impetus for this discussion stemmed from a recognition that national research uniformly identifies a well-administered TWI program as one of the most, if not the most, successful ways to boost the academic achievement of English Learners (ELs). Yet despite its success relative to other EL programs (and its popularity among English-speaking families), the lack of coordination across the District has inhibited the ability of Berkeley's TWI program to reach its full potential. Because the goal of closing the achievement gap is one of the District's highest priorities, the District decided to explore how it can strengthen and sustain the TWI program, which was created in Berkeley expressly to lift the academic achievement of Spanish-speaking ELs. Consolidation of the elementary school TWI strands at one site (as they are at the middle school level) was identified as one significant revision to the program that would likely address many of the concerns about the current administration of TWI in Berkeley.

The School Board's May 2011 vote led to the creation of our task force. We, the task force, understood our primary charge as recommending a site for a consolidated TWI school. We were also asked to "analyze the conditions that must be met for a successful consolidation of the TWI programs into one TWI school."² We report to the Superintendent, who will then make recommendations to the School Board.

According to the approved School Board minutes from the May 2011 meeting, which are attached to this report as Appendix A, the task force was charged with operating under a timeline that would enable a consolidated site to open in time for the 2013-2014 school year.

After some initial confusion, the Superintendent clarified for us that it was *not* our charge to determine whether or not the District should consolidate its TWI strands at one school. We understand that the School Board voted to create our Task Force in order to assist the Superintendent in making recommendations for *how* that consolidation would work best, if the Board ultimately votes to make that move. The larger policy issue of "whether to consolidate" came up in our discussions and in several of the public comments we received; we understand that there are strong feelings on both sides of the issue. Nevertheless, we do not here make specific recommendations about whether the District should consolidate the TWI programs, because we were not asked to do so and we did not discuss the issue, except in passing. However, we want to stress that the decision whether to consolidate the TWI programs is a complex one, involving many different stakeholders, and the District and Board must provide a

¹ See Appendix A for the School Board minutes memorializing the vote to create the task force.

² See October 20, 2011, "Information on Work of the Two Way Immersion Task Force," available at <http://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/TWITaskForceInfoSheet1.pdf>. This document is reprinted in Appendix B.

forum for all of those stakeholders to voice their opinions as this process moves forward to the next level.³

After much deliberation, consultation with our school communities, and research, we have voted 10-6 to recommend LeConte as the best site for a consolidated school. (The minority vote was for Rosa Parks.) Our reasons are discussed more fully in the “Recommendations” section below.

We also recommend that, if the School Board votes to consolidate TWI programs in one school, it must consider the following issues as part of that decision: 1) clear, bilingual communication and engagement with all stakeholders as part of any implementation plan; 2) careful consideration of a gradual “roll out” plan that does not involve the involuntary transfer of any current students; 3) coordination with teachers’, classified staff, and administrators’ unions; 4) develop clear, research-based pedagogic approach to teaching TWI in Berkeley; 5) strong promotion and outreach regarding new school; 6) support for remaining TWI strands at sites not chosen for consolidation; 7) revision to the District’s TWI sibling preference policy; 8) careful consideration of transportation issues so that students from across the District can be adequately bussed to the consolidated site; 9) assessment of eligibility for enrollment in TWI; 10) seed funding for the new site; and 11) ongoing collection of student data to enable meaningful review of the TWI program.

If the District does not consolidate the TWI programs in one school, we further recommend that District staff and the School Board move immediately, and with urgency, to address the other concerns with the current administration of TWI that have been the subject of parent and teacher advocacy for many years, and were also identified in the Rivera Report. Specifically, we recommend:

- 1) Improve coordination of the TWI program through the explicit identification of a full-time employee responsible for District-level TWI coordination;
- 2) Address concerns for students currently in the program, and their families;
- 3) Address concerns related to future students and program growth.

With respect to Thousand Oaks, we note that as part of our outreach to the EL communities at schools with bilingual programs, fully 72% of EL parents surveyed were supportive of changing T.O.’s current early-exit bilingual program and extending it through fifth grade. We did not study the bilingual program extensively, as it was not our charge. But we support the work of the District’s English Learner Working Group, which we understand is undertaking a thorough review of the bilingual program at T.O., as well as a review of parent responses in the recent survey that went out to parents of ELs in the District. It is clear to us that

³ We also note for the Superintendent and the Board that individual school sites have been collecting data and opinions regarding consolidation. For example, some schools have had town hall meetings on the subject, and some have asked about it on the annual parent surveys. Teachers have also discussed the issue extensively in staff meetings at the various school sites. The District should endeavor to solicit opinions from all stakeholders as the process moves forward, but also seek to obtain from the school sites the information and opinions that have already been gathered.

some change in that program is both needed and desired by the majority of stakeholders, and the District should act accordingly.

Finally, we understand and expect that the District will translate this entire report and recommendations into Spanish and make both the English and Spanish versions widely available to the public without delay and prior to Board action.

Methodology

We gathered information to guide our recommendations in a number of ways:

Invited Guests: We heard reports from the following invited presenters: Bill Huyett (BUSD Superintendent); Debbi D'Angelo (BUSD Evaluation and Assessment Office); Lew Jones (BUSD Facilities); Bernadette Cormier (BUSD Transportation); Francisco Martinez (BUSD Admissions); Heather Tugwell and Nabila Massoumi (BUSD ELD Coaches); Marialena D. Rivera (author of the Rivera Report); Mary Patterson (Longfellow TWI Teacher); as well as the principals, teachers, and parents who comprised the voting members of the task force.

Outreach at School Sites: Each school site conducted outreach to their respective communities in an effort to provide information and receive feedback regarding the issues the task force was deliberating. The methods of this outreach differed at each school site, but included presentations and town halls at PTA meetings, SGC meetings, ELAC meetings, and DELAC meetings. We also encouraged members of the community to attend our meetings, follow our progress on the District's website, and make public comments. Many members of the committee did so, which greatly enhanced the comprehensive nature of our deliberations.

In an effort to ensure that the voices of parents of English Learners were heard, Maya Hernandez from the BUSD Office of Family and Community Partnerships developed a survey for parents of English Learners at each of the four school sites. Each site made efforts to achieve maximum participation from EL parents, including in-person meetings and phone calls. The goal was to hear the voices of parents of EL students in mainstream, TWI, and bilingual programs. The majority of the questions on the survey were related to issues regarding the District's EL programs generally (as opposed to our task force's specific charge), and will be most useful to the District's English Learner Working Group. In addition, because more than half of the respondents were from Thousand Oaks, the minority of survey respondents were from schools with TWI programs. We viewed some of the responses as relevant to our work (such as the contrast between support for consolidation among parents of ELs at LeConte vs. at Rosa Parks), but we also had some significant concerns about consistency in the way that the survey was administered at different school sites.⁴ We do not include a detailed summary of the responses here, because most of the questions are not related to our narrow charge and because of the methodological concerns in the administration of the survey. Nevertheless, to the extent the responses to the survey related to our charge, we considered those views and discuss them throughout this report where relevant. We also encourage the English Learner Working Group to review and consider the responses to the survey that are more directly relevant to the work of that committee. With the important caveat that the District's office of Evaluation and Assessment (BEA) has significant concerns about the validity of the results of the survey, we note that the results are posted on the task force's website listed below.

⁴ In particular, the survey was designed to be administered in person, which was not done consistently across school sites. We also had concerns about the number of respondents whose responses were tabulated. For example, while 78% of EL respondents at LeConte were "very much" in favor of consolidation and 75% at Rosa Parks were "not at all" in favor, at each school these figures represented the views of only 18 people.

We do regret that our discussions and the minutes from our meetings were not simultaneously translated into Spanish, and we urge the District to ensure that future public deliberations about the consolidation process (including School Board meetings discussing the subject) be either conducted in, or at the very least translated into, Spanish. This is critical in order for the District to successfully inform, and hear from, members of the English Learner community.

Also, we note that the task force did not view as part of its charge a responsibility to conduct outreach to the community as a task force. In other words, the task force did not conduct District-wide town hall meetings. Instead, we delegated outreach to the individual school sites and heard back multiple reports as noted above. Going forward, the School Board and/or District staff must conduct District-wide town hall meetings and/or other methods of ensuring ample opportunity for community input and engagement.

Knowledge and Experience of Task Force Members: Many members of the task force, including the non-voting members, have expertise and experience in a variety of capacities: as parents, teachers, administrators, and as members of the advocacy group Amigos de Inmersion Dual de Berkeley (<http://www.berkeleytwi.webs.com>). During our many discussions, we drew on the experience and expertise of our members.

Information from Other Districts: We heard presentations regarding the policies and practices at a number of other districts with dual immersion programs, including San Francisco and Oakland, as well as the districts discussed in the Rivera Report. We also interviewed Gorman Bentley, principal of the Central Language Academy, Ontario-Montclair School District, who oversaw the consolidation of TWI programs in that district.

Research: We received and reviewed a number of published and unpublished reports, data and studies regarding TWI programs in Berkeley, and nationally.

The approved minutes from our meetings, as well as much of the documentation and research that we reviewed, is posted on the District's website at <http://www.berkeleyschools.net/superintendents-two-way-immersion-task-force>.

Recommendations

Our recommendations fall into three categories. We understood our primary charge as recommending a site for a consolidated TWI school.

For the reasons explained below, we voted 10-6 to recommend LeConte Elementary School as the best site for a consolidated TWI elementary school.

We were also asked, however, to “analyze the conditions that must be met for a successful consolidation of the TWI programs into one TWI school.”⁵ Therefore, we also outline a series of factors and policies that must be considered as part of the implementation of any consolidation plan. We stress that the success of consolidation will depend on far more than the site chosen for the school; there are a number of significant policy decisions that must be made, and we urge the District to make them with the considered and deliberate input of parents and teachers.

Finally, we make several recommendations in the event that the District decides not to consolidate the TWI programs in one school.

Recommended School Site, Including Pros and Cons of Our Top Two Choices

We were originally tasked with considering Rosa Parks, LeConte, Cragmont, Thousand Oaks, and the Adult School as possible locations for a consolidated TWI elementary school. We briefly considered a consolidated K-8 school, but rejected that idea for expense and logistical reasons.

Relatively early in our deliberations, we removed Cragmont and Thousand Oaks from consideration, due primarily to these schools’ locations on the outer boundaries of the District, and far from concentrated populations of Spanish-speaking families. Those of us who have been involved in consolidation discussions for several years could not remember any discussions about either of these sites as viable locations for a consolidated school, and it appeared to us that they were included on our list of sites to consider simply because we had representatives from those schools on the committee. The vote to remove those sites from consideration was 15-1.

Soon after eliminating Cragmont and Thousand Oaks from consideration, we removed the Adult School as well. Although the location of the Adult School was attractive, the cost and logistical issues involved in creating a new school (and displacing the Adult School) appeared prohibitive to us.

Once we had narrowed the choices down to Rosa Parks and LeConte, we spent several meetings discussing the relative pros and cons of each site in a more deliberate and comprehensive manner.

⁵ See October 20, 2011, “Information on Work of the Two Way Immersion Task Force,” available at <http://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/TWITaskForceInfoSheet1.pdf>. This document is reprinted as Appendix B.

Over the course of two meetings, we compiled the following list of pros and cons for each site. We list the pros and cons here so that District staff and the Board are aware of the factors that we considered in ultimately recommending LeConte.

School	Pros	Cons
LeConte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong TWI Staff - Strong ELAC (perhaps strongest in District) - Large, active Latino community (responsible for annual Latino Heritage Festival) - Right size for current number of TWI classes - Majority of EL parents surveyed support consolidation at LeConte - Room for portables if expansion is needed - Less harm to Rosa Parks to remove TWI than LeConte - Will alleviate crowding in Northwest zone - Needs TWI as a draw more than Rosa Parks does - Close to Ashby BART 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some parent resistance (particularly among non-TWI parents) - Transportation costs are greater because more Spanish-speaking families live near Rosa Parks - Facility not as attractive as Rosa Parks - Early start (early A.M. bus) - Some feel school is in a good place and change may endanger that (cuts both ways)
Rosa Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More appealing location for Spanish-speaking families who live nearby - Bigger site; room to grow up to 3-4 K classrooms each year (there were 5 TWI kinder classes in the District in 2008-2009) - Lower cost of busing because of location - Attractive and newer school site - Bilingual principal with experience starting a TWI school - Strong TWI staff - Better for environment (more students could walk to school) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less community support for consolidated site than at LeConte - Northwest Zone already too crowded; zones would have to be re-aligned or school zones changed to accommodate even more students - Will maintain Rosa Parks Collaborative and Environmental Science focus to help attract families (and therefore may need TWI less as a draw than LeConte) - At a good place after years of struggle; any change may endanger that (cuts both ways) - More harm to LeConte than Rosa Parks to remove the TWI program

After discussion and taking into account all of the information and data we received and the pros and cons discussed above, the vote to recommend LeConte was 10-6, with the minority voting for Rosa Parks.

We also heard public comment from some members of the community who suggested that the District consider consolidating the TWI programs at two, as opposed to one, elementary school. In other words, the suggestion was to fold the TWI program at Cragmont into the existing programs at LeConte and Rosa Parks. The idea behind this suggestion is that it might be a way to achieve some of the benefits of economy of scale, and would minimize the disruption to the affected school communities. Although the task force did not vote to recommend this option, we include it here because it was presented to us from members of the community.

Recommendations Regarding Conditions That Must Be Met for Successful Consolidation

We understand that our charge is not limited to solely selecting a school site. As the District's description of our charge explains, we have also been tasked with analyzing the conditions that must be met for the successful consolidation of TWI in one elementary school. Below we more fully address (*in no particular order*) these conditions, which are based on our own views, experience, and knowledge of the District; the testimony we heard from our numerous invited presenters; and our own research and outreach (to the Ontario-Montclair District, for example, which has successfully consolidated their TWI programs):

1. Need to have **clear, bilingual communication with all stakeholders** throughout the transition phase, including parents, teachers and staff in both TWI and English-only programs (as well as the bilingual program at T.O. to the extent it is implicated). If the decision is made to consolidate, we recommend that all stakeholders continue to be involved in the implementation process in the form of another task force or working group. All public deliberations regarding implementation should be simultaneously translated into Spanish.
2. **Carefully consider the “roll-out” plan and make it a gradual plan that does not involve the involuntary transfer of any current students.** The Ontario-Montclair District phased in the new school over a period of four years. We recommend something similar, perhaps over six years, in which the new school is consolidated “one year at a time.” The information disseminated by the District so far has explained that there are “no plans” to involuntarily move current students from their schools. We agree with this approach, and urge the District to explicitly state that no current students will be involuntarily transferred. Not only will this approach relieve significant anxiety from parents who are under the mistaken impression that their children will be transferred against their will, but it also seems that the gradual approach is most likely to ensure successful integration and development of the consolidated school.
3. **Work closely with the unions (teachers’, classified staff, and administrators’)** to ensure a smooth transition and that staff assigned to the school want to be there.

4. **Develop, in the District Master Plan for English Language Learners, a clear, research-based pedagogic approach to TWI and then stick to it.** The lack of fidelity to model is one of the prominent concerns with the current administration of TWI. The evidence we heard over the course of our meetings was unambiguous: unlike most districts with TWI programs, Berkeley has no consistent, coherent, research-based model of TWI instruction to which it adheres, and this likely suppresses student achievement. Consolidation does present an opportunity to address this issue and ensure consistency across TWI classrooms. In addition, the hiring of bilingual staff sufficient to implement the chosen approach must be prioritized.
5. The District should initiate **strong and favorable promotion of the new school and comprehensive outreach** to prospective families, so that it is seen as an attractive option for prospective students. People are understandably wary of new schools and new approaches. Our discussions with the principal at the consolidated school in Ontario-Montclair convinced us of the necessity of strong, consistent promotion and education regarding the new school. We want to emphasize the need for outreach to the African-American community. Although, as the Rivera Report indicates, the TWI program is more racially diverse than conventional wisdom holds, the District should make specific and identifiable efforts to reach out to members of the African-American community to ensure that this diversity follows the TWI program to the consolidated school.
6. The District should ensure that the **TWI strands that remain at the sites that are not chosen as the consolidated site (i.e., Rosa Parks and Cragmont, if the Superintendent and Board follow our recommendation)** are supported as consolidation is phased in at the consolidated site, and that the efforts of these sites to re-establish their identities without TWI programs is supported.
7. The District needs to consider how its **sibling policy** will be amended with a consolidated school. Currently, there is sibling preference only for the school, not the program. So a younger sibling of a student in TWI is guaranteed enrollment at that school, but not guaranteed enrollment in the TWI program. If TWI is consolidated, we recommend that the sibling policy going forward be clarified so that younger siblings of students at the consolidated TWI school are guaranteed enrollment in that school, and thus in the TWI program as well. We have also discussed (and heard public comment regarding) sibling issues related to families currently in elementary schools, and we recommend the District address these issues as well.

There are a number of considerations with respect to current elementary school families. For the purposes of this analysis, we assume the District chooses LeConte to be the consolidated school. Parents of children in the TWI programs at Cragmont and Rosa Parks who have younger siblings face a potentially difficult choice. If they want their younger sibling to have a chance of enrolling in TWI, it will mean sending their children to two different elementary schools. If they want their younger siblings to remain at the same school as the older siblings, it means giving up the chance to

enroll the younger sibling in TWI. Parents of children at LeConte also face a difficult choice if there are younger siblings. The younger siblings should be able to enroll in TWI by virtue of their older siblings enrollment at LeConte. But if the parents feel that TWI is not appropriate for the younger siblings, they will be required to send their younger siblings to a different school. Although we do not believe that these concerns will affect a great many parents, they are legitimate concerns and are to some extent unavoidable if the District chooses to consolidate. We recognize that many parents, for a variety of reasons, already do have to send their children to different schools from each other. We nevertheless recommend that the District consider a sibling preference policy that accommodates families with current elementary school children and younger siblings.

One sensible policy would be that children with older siblings currently in one of the TWI elementary schools at the time of consolidation get preference in the TWI program, and/or can choose which of the schools in their zone to send their child. For example, if LeConte is the consolidated school, consider a family with a child in the English-only program at LeConte who has no desire to enroll the younger sibling in TWI. That child will not be able to attend LeConte, which may cause both inconvenience and distress for that family. As an accommodation, that family, under this proposal, would be able to, at the very least, automatically enroll their younger sibling in the elementary school of their choice within their zone. (An even more generous variation on this policy would allow affected parents to enroll the younger siblings in the elementary school of their choice, regardless of zone.) We recommend that if the District adopts such a policy, that it be reviewed annually to assess the impact on both diversity and student assignment.

8. The District needs to ensure that revised **transportation services/policies** allow for students across the District to be bussed to the site of the consolidated school.
9. There needs to be a reconsideration of the **means by which prospective students are assessed for eligibility** into the TWI program. This is an issue about which we heard many criticisms. The District should undertake a critical assessment of the way in which it assesses language ability for entering kindergartners, including looking to other districts for guidance. This review should entail consideration not only of *who* is conducting the assessments, but what the assessments are based on, and where (which school site) the assessments are conducted. It is our understanding that these assessments in other districts entail more elaborate criteria and data than a single, in-person language test. Moreover, as part of the District Master Plan for English Language Learners, the District should announce a sound, research-based formula for determining the ideal ratio of native Spanish speakers, native English speakers, and bilingual students in the TWI program, and then publicize and consistently apply that formula.
10. We recommend the District provide **seed funding to jump start the program** at the new, consolidated site. Specifically, we recommend \$20,000 per year for supplies and expenses for the first four years, as well as the appointment of a full-time

employee to coordinate the consolidation and integration of the program at one site. We do not make a specific recommendation with respect to the job title of this person, but stress that it is necessary that such a position exists for a successful transition. (It is possible that the person could become the literacy coach at the consolidated site once the consolidation is completed.) This was the strong suggestion of the principal of the Montclair-Ontario school with whom we spoke, two of our task force members with experience opening consolidated TWI schools, and the two ELD coaches on the task force. We recognize the financial difficulties facing the District and the many competing budget priorities, but we also know that quality dual language immersion is proven to most effectively close the achievement gap for English Learners, which is one of the primary goals of the District. Funds are needed for an additional 1.0 FTE to conduct the outreach, training, staff development, recruitment, and programming at a new consolidated school, as well as to support the isolated remaining TWI classes as the program is being phased out at the other two TWI schools. These tasks cannot be the sole responsibility of the principal of the consolidated school, nor of the District's elementary ELD coach.

11. On an ongoing basis, the District should ensure **collection of student data to enable meaningful review of the TWI program**. There is currently very little TWI-specific data, and it was difficult for the task force to even receive data on high school graduation rates, because our understanding is that students are not coded as "TWI students" in the District's systems. Consolidation of the programs in one school should ease logistical concerns, but there must also be an explicit directive for District staff to review and analyze TWI student data.

Recommendations in the Event the District Does Not Decide to Consolidate

We offer our thoughts here with respect to recommendations if the District decides not to consolidate the TWI programs in one elementary school. Because this process exposed us to a great deal of data and information regarding the way in which TWI is implemented in Berkeley at the elementary school level, we felt it was incumbent upon us to offer briefly these observations. These recommendations have been suggested for years by parent and teacher advocates. To a great extent, they are mirrored in the Rivera Report. For these reasons, we do not describe them at length here.

- 1) **Need for District-level coordination of the TWI programs.** We applaud the District for hiring a District ELD Coach for the elementary school level, and we remind the District that the job description for this position was posted publicly as follows: *"Position is for the 2011-12 school year to serve as the District ELD Coach to provide support to the K-8 TWI program. Applicants should have experience with working with elementary teachers and providing support for English Learner classrooms. A significant portion of the job will be to coordinate the District's TWI program, as well as facilitate the working group that was created by the School Board."* The evidence presented to us this year established that, in Berkeley, despite the best efforts of individual teachers, there is no uniform model to which TWI teachers adhere across the District; there is therefore a lack of fidelity to a particular research-based model; and there is a critical lack of time and resources for cross-

grade collaboration and professional development for TWI teachers. These issues are exacerbated if the programs continue to be separated at three different schools. Thus, if the District decides not to consolidate, it must follow through on its *promise* to provide sustained, meaningful, District-level support and coordination of the TWI program. This support and coordination is critical to the ability of the TWI program to continue serving ELs in the District. Again, we do not recommend a specific job title, but we stress that a lack of coordination of the TWI program is a critical gap in the District's provision of EL services.

- 2) **Need for greater support for students currently in the program and their families.** Currently, parents and students in the TWI program do not have sufficient information about the structure of the program, the research supporting the program, and the expectations regarding test scores. Part of the problem is the lack of a coherent District-wide approach to TWI instruction. Information cannot be meaningfully provided until the District adopts and implements a coherent, uniform approach. We heard from other districts regarding the student and parent orientations that were a critical part of the TWI experience, and were necessary to improving student retention rates in the program. (A concrete example of parental information/education: Report cards should designate that students are in the TWI program, and should explicitly state in what language the various assessments are conducted. Teachers should be coached on how to explain to parents the implications of assessments conducted in a language other than the primary language of instruction.) Once the District-level coordination is achieved, significant attention needs to be paid to providing ongoing support for students currently enrolled in TWI, and their parents – including clear, bilingual communication about student achievement data, instruction, and the overall operation of the program.
- 3) **Need for consideration of concerns related to future students and program growth.** We appreciate that the District has begun to make some efforts in the last year to reach out to Spanish-speaking families regardless of enrollment in TWI. But our conversations with our counterparts in other Districts leave us concerned about the need for even greater, *in-person* outreach efforts. Many members of the TWI community are willing to work with the District to assist in this outreach, but there needs to be an understanding that this outreach is difficult and time-consuming, yet ultimately necessary if we are to grow and sustain the program, particularly if it is not at a consolidated school. District leadership (from the Superintendent, senior staff, and the School Board) is essential to promoting the District's services for ELs.

In general, we are also seriously concerned about the nature of the District's admissions testing for eligibility. The District must review its current practices, both with respect to the ideal distribution of native Spanish speakers, native English speakers, and bilingual students in the program, and with respect to how language assessment is conducted. Other districts have far more sophisticated measures of language assessment for TWI eligibility and there is no reason why the District should not review and adopt these measures. In addition, the District should review

its policies related to the District's pre-K program, specifically the eligibility for TWI of native Spanish speakers who may be designated as "bilingual."

Bilingual Program at Thousand Oaks

We do not believe that consolidation of the TWI programs will necessarily directly affect the early-exit bilingual program at Thousand Oaks. After all, there is not currently a TWI program at T.O. However, it is clear that enrollment numbers in T.O.'s program are declining, and there appears to be strong support among the T.O. community for an evaluation of the T.O. program and a serious discussion regarding whether it needs to be changed or augmented in some fashion. Heather Tugwell presented the task force with evidence that there is no support in the academic research for T.O.'s early-exit model of bilingual education for K-3, and that the research indicates that a late-exit K-5 bilingual program is far more effective.

The lack of an evidence-based approach at T.O. is a serious concern to us, but one that is beyond the charge of our task force.

We understand that the District's English Learner Working Group is evaluating T.O.'s program and will be making recommendations in the revised English Learner Master Plan. We also understand that, in the recent EL survey of T.O. parents, 72% of respondents supported extending the early-exit program through 5th grade. We also understand that a K-5 model can be in effect at T.O. as early as next year with the addition of one 4/5 bilingual teacher and some modest extra funding for K-5 Spanish materials and books, based on program design from the English Learner Working Group. It is clear to us that some change needs to happen with respect to the bilingual program at T.O., and that it is supported by the parents of ELs surveyed. We support the work of the English Learner Working Group in evaluating the change that is necessary and making the appropriate recommendations to the Superintendent.

Conclusion

According to information we received from the Admissions Office, there were approximately 85 Spanish-speaking English Learners entering kindergarten in the District in 2011-2012. If that number remains constant, it means that as many as one third to one half of all Spanish-speaking English learners will likely be enrolled in an elementary TWI program. If a consolidated school is successful in attracting even greater numbers of English Learners, the total figure is likely to be on the high end of that range.

Because the TWI program in Berkeley is likely to continue serving a large percentage of the Spanish-speaking English Learner population in the District, the decisions of both whether to, and how to, consolidate the elementary TWI programs are of critical importance. We view our recommendations as *long-term* recommendations that will affect the community at large for years to come.

We discussed and deliberated the criteria for our votes, and for the recommendations that we have made. While we viewed the input of current parents and teachers as critical to our deliberations, we ultimately agreed that our primary criterion should be what is best for all Berkeley *students* in the long run, and, particularly, given the nature and primary purpose of the TWI program, what is best for English Learners in Berkeley schools. We hope that the Superintendent, the Board, and members of the community consider these recommendations in that spirit, and act on them accordingly.