

Program Evaluation Updates: Bilingual Multicultural Education Programs

May 2024

Language and Culture Division

New Mexico Public Education Department

PRIORITIZING BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Millions of dollars from the SEG (\$42.7 million in SY 22-23) are designated to support bilingual education every year in New Mexico. Yet with the bilingual differential per student at its “highest level in recent history,” there are obstacles in the way of this money getting where it is intended to go, which should be to *unique Bilingual Multicultural Education Program (BMEP) costs that directly benefit students*. To continue to mitigate this, the Language and Culture Division (LCD) is proposing establishing a permanent fund like the Bilingual Multicultural Education below the line allocation for fiscal year 24, which was not renewed for fiscal year 25 (school year 24-25), as an ongoing, middle of the line budget item at \$5 million annually.

- ❖ Our management of this relatively small fund will require districts and charter schools to complete funding pre-approvals and thereby use their money exclusively in service of BMEP students.
- ❖ The LCD has a clear understanding of how BMEP money can and should be spent, in alignment with the Bilingual Multicultural Education (BME) Act and regulation, and the LCD wants to collaborate with districts and charter schools to help them make better choices in support of their BMEPs.
- ❖ LCD can also use SEG dollars to accomplish other goals set by the LFC, such as supporting bilingual teacher education programs and grow-your-own initiatives, creating a Bilingual Education Teacher Scholarship (BETS), developing New Mexico-specific curricular materials, promoting dual language immersion programs, and providing more robust professional development opportunities.

To achieve the LCD’s long-term, overarching goals – the full implementation of the BME Act – the Division needs to have more control of how BMEP funding is spent. Management of an annual \$5 million middle of the line allocation would be a key step in the right direction. The LCD is confident that with increased involvement in spending decisions, truly meaningful changes could be made in BMEP implementation. Over the long term, these changes would allow the LCD to realize the vision of comprehensive bilingual education that our state first envisioned more than 50 years ago.

CURRENT USE OF BMEP FUNDS

The LCD guarantees, based on our extensive thrice-annual desktop auditing procedures, that BMEP funding for schools is generated ethically through the bilingual differential. The LCD has questions, however, about how BMEP funds are being utilized at the local district and charter level. A close reading of the [Bilingual Multicultural Education Program Annual Report 2022-2023](#) Appendix D (Total BMEP Expenditures by Budget Entity) clearly shows that **only 3% of BMEP funds from the SEG went toward unique BMEP costs, while 97% was spent on administrator/teacher salaries, retirement, retiree health, FICA payments, insurance (medical/dental/vision/life), Medicare payments, disability, and Workers’ Compensation.**

Only 3% of funds from the SEG were put toward unique BMEP expenses.

As the LFC knows, the personnel expenses are included in the SEG as part of staff salaries whether or not a district or charter has a BMEP. The BMEP differential should *only* be spent on expenses that are *unique to BMEP implementation*, such as professional development, stipends for endorsed teachers, high quality instructional materials, or locally informed curriculum and resources, to name a few.

When 97% of the SEG’s BMEP funds are going toward teacher and administrator salaries and benefits, students do not receive what has been promised to them, their parents, and their teachers – and although there does not appear to be fraudulent intent behind these funding use choices, the negative effect on BMEPs occurs.

LEA	Difference
Española Public School District	\$(51,238.09)
Dulce Independent Schools	\$(55,044.19)
Cuba Independent Schools	\$(101,654.56)
Albuquerque Bilingual Academy	\$(152,659.31)
Bernalillo Public Schools	\$(350,608.22)
NM International School	\$(430,606.82)
West Las Vegas School District	\$(465,569.81)
Carlsbad Municipal Schools	\$(602,938.62)
Las Cruces Public Schools	\$(1,120,423.22)
Santa Fe Public Schools	\$(1,960,225.94)

❖ Ten Districts and charter schools self-reported BMEP spending that exceeded their differential-based allotment by at least \$50,000 (with one exceeding that number by over \$1 million and another by almost \$2 million), though only a small percentage of this went toward actual bilingual expenses, beyond salaries.

LEA	Difference
Taos Municipal Charter	\$95,990.01
Central Consolidated Schools	\$105,606.43
Deming Public Schools	\$111,196.49
Cien Aguas International School	\$130,010.76
Cobre Consolidated School District	\$145,832.16
Roswell Independent School District	\$190,215.85
Ruidoso Municipal Schools	\$314,413.37
Hatch Valley Municipal Schools	\$344,864.60
Zuni Public School District	\$812,781.60
Farmington Municipal Schools	\$5,023,453.35

❖ At the same time, another ten Districts and charter schools self-reported BMEP spending under their budgeted SEG allotment by at least \$96,000 (one by \$5 million).

Both cases indicate inability to provide full financial transparency and accountability around a state program that is a key part of New Mexico’s identity and should be a feather in the cap of public education students. These examples suggest that districts and charter schools need support in their fiscal decision-making around BMEPs.

SUBGRANT 27575

In 2021, the LCD converted assessment funds that had gone unused due to the pandemic into mini grants to support BMEPs. This money, managed by the LCD was used by districts and charter schools for professional development, training for parent advisory committees (PACs), teacher stipends, and curriculum development. The mini grants were so successful that the LCD requested an opportunity to extend the initiative. For SY 23-24, the LCD was allocated a \$5,000,000 allotment intended for implementing the goals stated in the LFC’s *Program Evaluation: Bilingual and Multicultural Education Programs*.

The LCD has taken concrete steps to respond to the recommendations articulated in the LFC Program Evaluation.

The allocation played a significant role in addressing the items from the program evaluation and determining our next steps in support of BMEPs. As part of this allocation the LCD established fund 27575 for BMEP subgrants. To access money from subgrant 27575, districts and charter schools were required to fill out a pre-approval form demonstrating thoughtfulness on how they would use the money. The LCD then had the ability to determine whether the proposed expenditure was aligned with the BME Act and regulation. Because funds could only be accessed via LCD pre-approval, all Subgrant 27575 money was exclusively spent on unique BMEP expenses that the LCD was able to track.

OUR ACTIONS

Professional Development

- ❖ The LCD has deepened and developed its partnership with the WIDA Consortium to provide in-person, research-based professional development and remote eWorkshops and webinars such as Marco DALE, El Marco Ale en Acción, and Explorando Identidades. WIDA Español professional learning opportunities are high quality and easy to access for busy professionals.
 - In SY 23-24, the LCD and WIDA Español hosted in-person professional development workshops for teachers in Albuquerque.

- ❖ The LCD requested that the Bilingual Multicultural Education Advisory Council (BMEAC) create a comprehensive list of BMEP-related professional development for teachers and administrators.
- ❖ To support administrators of schools with BMEPs, and as part of program improvement plans, the LCD has created an asynchronous Canvas course that was informed by external partners called “What is a State-Funded Bilingual Multicultural Education Program (BMEP)?”
 - In SY 23-24, districts and charter schools used subgrant 27575 funds for the following professional development: Fuente365; Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching (CLRT); Culture and Educational Equity; SLA Instructional Scope; Marco DALE; SIOP Training; Teaching for Biliteracy; WIDA Academy; DLeNM Summer Institute; BMEP Observations; Spanish a la Spanish; Heggerty; Guiding Principles DL; K-12 STEM Linguistic Literacy; DLeNM Translanguaging; and GLAD Training.
- ❖ Conferences are a crucial way for bilingual educators to reconnect to the source of their passion as teachers, learn about innovations in the field, develop their practice, network with other educators, and get re-energized for the classroom. The LCD regularly supports, sponsors, or participates in Dual Language NM’s La Cosecha Conference, Education Rising, NMOLE Mini Conferences, and the New Mexico Association of Bilingual Educators (NMABE) Conference.
 - In SY 23-24, Districts and charter schools utilized subgrant 27575 funds to send teachers to the following conferences: La Cosecha; NIEA Conference; Mariachi Spectacular; NMABE; Borderlands NMABE; Sábado Gigante; NABE; DL Cognate Conference; the ADARA Conference; and the SFPS Bilingual Educators Conference.

Instructional Materials

There is a wealth of bilingual education curriculum and instructional materials available to educators. Through our management of the subgrant 27575 funds in SY 23-24, the LCD was able to review and track participating districts and charter schools’ spending choices in these areas.

- In the past school year, districts and charters used 27575 funds to purchase the following approved curricula: Heggerty Spanish; Sonrisas; Estrellita; *Qué Chévere!*; Carnegie Learning; IXL Spanish; and Así se Dice.
- At least three districts and charter schools paid their teachers stipends to develop bilingual curriculum using subgrant 27575. (The LCD cross-checks all stipend requests by requesting contracts to ensure they are going to BMEP stipend expenses and not being used for salaries or benefits.)
- ❖ The LCD collaborates with the Instructional Material Bureau (IMB) to support the annual [High Quality Instructional Materials Reviews Summer Review Institute](#). This group’s mission is to guarantee that New Mexico educators have access to an up-to-date, vetted list of instructional materials that are approved by the Secretary of Public Education and in “alignment with state content standards and benchmarks and criteria for high quality.” The LCD informs the search for materials, teacher recommendations for the review committee, and the CLR rubric for the Summer Institute.
- ❖ The [HQIM New Mexico Adopted Multiple List](#), linked on the PED HQIM page, is an enormous resource of linguistically and culturally responsive educational materials for Pre K-12 in all subject areas.
 - Subgrant 27575 pre-approvals indicate that Districts and charter schools purchased the following instructional materials in SY 23-24: assorted classroom books; *Teaching for Biliteracy* (book set); Rainbow Tree SLA software; Raz Plus Spanish; Rosetta Stone; language/culture posters; *Learn Along with Ashkii* (Diné book sets); Arriba la Lectura; composition books; Learning Write (language learning software); Flashlight Learning (multilingual assessment tool); CLR materials; *Del Sur* (Spanish book series); *Treasure Bay* (Spanish book series); *Tierra Amarilla – Stories of New Mexico*; Hexagram Spanish book series; Sube Beginner and Intermediate Kits; Voces.

Translation and Interpreting

- ❖ The PED clearly lays out district and charter school language obligations to families who speak Languages Other than English (LOTE) in its [Language Assistance to Parents and Guardians](#) policy, which can be found on the PED website. Districts and charter schools are required to have a School Language Access Plan that provides for translation and interpretation to prevent teachers from being asked to perform these tasks outside their job descriptions.
 - No Districts and charter schools sought pre-approval from the 27575 Subgrant for translation and interpretation, but it is possible that “teacher stipends” could include this service.

No teacher should ever be asked exclusively to create their own materials when a wealth of handpicked, high-quality materials already exists and is easy to find and purchase by districts and charter schools with the allotted BMEP funds.

Endorsements and Stipends

- ❖ Districts and charter schools currently have full control over how they spend their SEG bilingual differential. Paying for endorsement expenses and providing stipends to endorsed bilingual teachers are excellent ways for districts and charter schools to help teachers feel supported, thereby promoting the recruitment and retention of multilingual faculty.
 - Thirteen Districts and charter schools sought subgrant 27575 pre-approval to pay for BMEP stipends (up to \$3,000 per academic year).
 - Two Districts and charter schools used Subgrant 27575 to pay for La Prueba testing expenses, La Prueba test-prep courses, and test prep books.
 - Two Districts and charter schools used subgrant 27575 to pay for coursework and textbooks for teachers pursuing BMEP endorsements.

Equity and Culturally/Linguistically Responsive Instruction

- ❖ To support educators in creating more welcoming, culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) environments that contribute to the social-emotional health of BMEP students, the LCD has been working in regular collaboration with Dr. Sharroky Hollie and the [Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning](#) (CCRTL). Already, this partnership has allowed hundreds of NM teachers and administrators to experience the transformative effects of CLR.
 - In SY 23-24, the LCD hosted six CLR workshops for teachers and administrators across the state and is committed to continuing this collaboration with CCRTL, as it is an ongoing and evolving part of the efforts to encourage more linguistically and culturally responsive leadership.

The LCD is committed to helping LEAs become welcoming, culturally and linguistically responsive environments.

- ❖ The LCD’s and NMPED employees’ participation in the five-module [Embracing Equity](#) program has strengthened our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and the division’s alignment with the essential multicultural component of the 1973 BME Act. The LCD understands that this work is ongoing and is united in a commitment to a more equitable future for New Mexico’s students.
 - Knowing the high quality of CCRTL’s offerings, the LCD was pleased to see that three Districts and charter schools requested subgrant 27575 funds to pay for CLR training and materials in SY 23-24.
 - It was encouraging to see that many schools used subgrant 27575 to pay for Spanish Spelling Bee registration and travel costs.

- Drummers, horno building supplies, parent nights, trajes de baile, transportation to Bilingual Day, transportation to the Mariachi Spectacular, and Indigenous history posters are among the culturally responsive materials that Districts and charter schools purchased with subgrant 27575 to enhance their BMEPs.
- ❖ Another way in which the LCD is working to be more linguistically and culturally responsive is through the development of bilingual programs in additional languages. The Bilingual Competencies Workgroup was convened and will broaden the definition of bilingual endorsement in New Mexico to include any language other than English (LOTE) that is taught in New Mexico schools. A Lakota Heritage BMEP was initiated at the Native American Community Academy in SY 23-24, and in SY 24-25 Rio Rancho will launch new enrichment Model BMEPs in ASL, Mandarin, French, German, Italian, and Latin. Las Cruces hopes to begin an Arabic Heritage BMEP in SY 25-26 to meet the needs of its growing population of Arabic-speaking students.
- ❖ The LCD created a Canvas course on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning for New Mexico district and charter administrators.
- ❖ An important way in which the LCD contributes to CLR educational environments is through the State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy (SSBB). The number of students earning the SSBB is continuing to rise throughout the state, with several new districts and charters adopting the Seal every school year. The New Mexico SSBB is related to a nationwide network of state seal programs that honor bilingual and biliterate individuals. Districts and charter schools consistently report the positive, uplifting effect that the SSBB has on individual students, families, schools, and the wider community.
- ❖ One way the LCD gathered information about the SSBB was through our partnership with [REL Southwest](#), which resulted in the production of informative videos about bilingual education and the State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy (SSBB) in rural and indigenous settings (available on the PED [SSBB Resources](#) page), as well as the published study, [Biliteracy Seals in a Large Urban Districts in New Mexico: Who Earns Them and How Do They Impact College Outcomes?](#)
- ❖ In SY 23-24, the Language and Culture Division covered the costs for all SSBB (and Spanish BMEP) assessments, as funding was not allocated to the Assessment Bureau and the LCD considered this funding to be an essential aspect of our support of bilingual education in New Mexico.
 - Several Districts and charter schools used subgrant 27575 funds to cover SSBB expenses, such as field trips, ceremony receptions, sashes, document cameras, and award medallions.

Accountability and Assessment

In an effort to improve academic achievement, the LCD is working with BMEPs across the state to encourage increased academic accountability.

- ❖ In the 22-23 school year, the LCD provided Program Improvement Plans (PIPs) to three districts and charter schools that had repeatedly demonstrated an inability to align their programs with State BMEP requirements. These plans give detailed observations and recommendations aimed at helping districts and charter schools raise academic achievement in both English and the target language. The LCD worked with each of these districts and charter schools to make recommended changes and exit PIP status.
- ❖ Shortly before the LFC issued its report to the LCD, the Avant STAMP assessment for Spanish proficiency was adopted for use statewide, an important tool for tracking student progress in a consistent way.

A fundamental goal of the BMEP is to improve academic achievement in both languages.

- ❖ Recognizing the documented effectiveness of Dual Language Immersion (DLI) educational models, the LCD continues to partner with Dual Language Education of New Mexico (DLeNM) in exploring the benefits of DLI. This partnership has provided excellent bilingual resources and high quality, meaningful professional development opportunities for New Mexico dual language educators. Currently 110 New Mexico schools are using the DLI model in their BMEPs. The LCD is in conversation with DLeNM and NMABE to encourage the adoption and support of more DLI educational models across the state. DLeNM has developed standards (“[EMMA](#)”) for dual language teacher education that will become increasingly useful as more districts and charter schools embrace the model.
- ❖ The LCD is currently working with Nova to fine-tune data collection systems and maximize the leverage of collected data regarding BMEP models. Increased understanding of how each BMEP model performs longitudinally will help us guide districts and charter schools toward greater program effectiveness.

Pathways for Bilingual Teachers

- ❖ The LCD supports and collaborated with the [Educators Rising](#) task force in grow-your-own programs intended to cultivate high quality bilingual teachers in local communities.
- ❖ The LCD created an informative flyer with guidance for students interested in becoming bilingual educators.
- ❖ The LCD is working on a plan to increase our support of grow-your-own programs at dual-credit high schools, colleges, and universities.
- ❖ The LCD dedicate time and energy to helping skilled bilingual teachers obtain endorsement waivers so that they can serve students as they work toward full bilingual, TESOL or Modern Classical and Native Language certifications.
- ❖ The LCD partners with [CES LEAP](#) (Leading Educators through Alternative Pathways), an organization that is working to mitigate the teacher shortage through “an intensive and innovative approach for a year-long alternative licensure program tailored to prepare teachers to be successful in New Mexico’s diverse classrooms.” So far, LEAP has graduated five cohorts of teachers from all over the state. LEAP offers the ability to complete coursework to obtain a TESOL or bilingual endorsement to their graduates.
- ❖ The Educator Quality and Ethics Division worked with ENMU to have an updated version of the La Prueba de Español (the NM Spanish bilingual teacher assessment) ready by April 27, 2024.
- ❖ In SY 23-24 the LCD was able to complete agreements of \$10,000 (up from \$2,000) for six (up from four) college and university La Prueba preparatory summer intensive programs.

Improved Technical Assistance and Support

- ❖ In 2023 the LCD added an additional BMEP Specialist to the LCD (for a total of 9 FTE in the division). This has allowed us to perform more Technical Assistance Focused Monitoring (TAFM) visits (eleven so far in 2024), provide more comprehensive remote technical assistance, ensure that Nova validations do not overwhelm the division (as the LCD works toward full automation), and provide increased support to Bilingual Education Programs, World Languages, and the SSBB program.

OUR LEARNING

Listening to Communities in New Mexico

In SY 23-24, the LCD utilized New Mexico Highlands University's Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations (CESDP)'s published report, the [BMEP "50th Anniversary Listening Tour](#), as a tool for learning, reflection, and inspiration. This project involved reaching out to New Mexican bilingual community members from all walks of life (students, parents, caregivers, school personnel, etc.) to find out their opinions about and hopes for bilingual education in New Mexico. From this report, the LCD identified a number of issues that are important to bilingual education community members around the state:

In response to the LFC's 2022 report, the Language and Culture Division has engaged in reflection and self-study, meaningful action, and strategic planning for the future.

- ❖ A welcoming, culturally and linguistically responsive educational environment
- ❖ Higher overall academic achievement among BMEP participants, which is in line with the LFC's overarching goal for BMEPs statewide.
- ❖ The social-emotional health of BMEP students
- ❖ High quality professional development for all teachers and staff, which lines up with the LFC's recommendation that the LCD provide more and better professional development, especially in person.
- ❖ Spanish and English language support for parents and caregivers of BMEP students
- ❖ More bilingual higher education faculty and better pathways to bilingual endorsement (the LFC Report recommends that the LCD partner with Higher Education to accomplish this goal)
- ❖ More in-person support from the PED
 - Technical Assistance Focused Monitoring (TAFM) visits at districts and charter schools every three years are a recommendation from the LFC Report that the LCD began to realize in SY 23-24 and will continue to prioritize moving forward. The LCD does not question the value of TAFMs, both to districts and charter schools craving connection and support, and to our Division that gains valuable information from each visit.

Listening to Bilingual Teachers

In early 2024, the LCD and Hanover Research partnered to send out an online survey to the approximately 4,000 New Mexico teachers who hold bilingual, MCNL, and TESOL endorsements with teacher interviews following in April. The goal of the survey and interviews was to determine 1) if teachers are currently teaching in a BMEP, 2) if not, why not, and 3) what kinds of challenges they've encountered that have caused or could cause them to leave the profession.

From this survey the LCD gathered some valuable information. Bilingual-endorsed teachers report:

- ❖ Feeling unsupported, with very little guidance given in the way of curriculum and pedagogy.
- ❖ That they are often left to create original materials or translate existing materials with no extra pay for extra work.
- ❖ Being asked to translate in meetings and parent-teacher conferences for no extra pay.
- ❖ Having to pay for courses and assessments to obtain additional endorsements, with districts/charters providing little or no reimbursement or stipends.

Hanover made the following recommendations:

“Review and streamline the process of acquiring and renewing language credentials . . . Hanover recommends that NMPED conduct in-depth interviews with staff who have completed the application/renewal process as well as staff who will be completing the application/renewal process to ensure resources, guidance, and structures are designed to address barriers and challenges and lead to successful credential acquisition.”

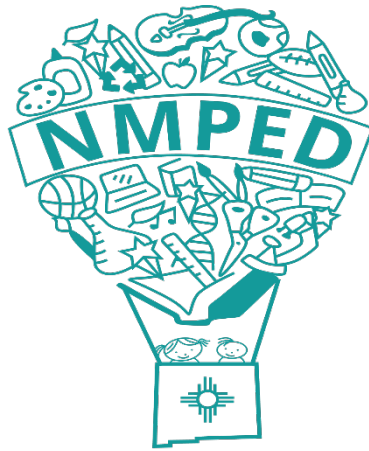
“Equip BMEP instructional staff with high quality instructional resources/materials and dedicated planning time to ensure they are well-prepared for instruction and supported with regards to workload management . . . Hanover recommends that NMPED conduct a vendor scan to identify existing bilingual instructional materials and curricular tools.”

“Consider implementing a pay increase or offering a higher stipend for those teaching in a BMEP . . . Hanover recommends NMPED conduct a compensation benchmarking study to ensure compensation is aligned with peer districts and reaches or exceeds the median total compensation for these positions.”

This information has helped us develop a better understanding of how endorsed teachers feel about working in a BMEP. It has also helped us identify a number of areas where disconnects between the PED and individual Districts and charter schools have led to misunderstandings that can be mitigated through improved communication. In addition, the LCD has identified a connection between teachers’ concerns and the ways in which the PED’s expectations of how districts and charter schools should be spending their bilingual differential are out of alignment with actual spending at the district/charter school level.

Reported Teacher Concerns (Hanover)	LCD Response
No stipend for teaching in a BMEP	BMEP funds are available to pay stipends.
No dedicated prep time	BMEP funds can be used to pay substitutes while bilingual teachers prepare quality lessons.
No access to high quality instructional materials	BMEP funds can be used to purchase vetted, researched, Secretary-approved materials from the HQIM Multiple List.
Endorsement process not supported	BMEP funds can be used to pay teachers’ endorsement fees, course tuition, assessment fees, and testing travel expenses.
No support staff or assistants	BMEP funds can be used to pay for an assistant dedicated to supporting bilingual teachers.
No progress monitoring tool	WIDA provides Proficiency Level Descriptors for both ELD and SLD that can be used for running records and other formative assessments.
Lack of BMEP-specific PD	BMEP funds can be used on trainings (WIDA, DLeNM, GLAD, etc.) and conferences (La Cosecha, NMABE, DLeNM, NABE, SWCOLT, ATDLE, etc.) that directly support bilingual education.
No funding for relevant field trips	BMEP funds can be used for field trips, visitors, performances, and other relevant events that enhance the program.
No access to resources	BMEP funds can be used to purchase resources to support programming.
Need for La Prueba test prep	The LCD subsidizes colleges and universities around the state in offering La Prueba test prep summer intensives.
La Prueba in Portales too far away and inconvenient for most New Mexicans	ENMU just added new La Prueba testing sites in Las Vegas, Deming, and Las Cruces.
No translation or interpreting services	Districts and charter schools are required by the state to provide these services and BMEP funds can be used for this kind of expense.

Reported Teacher Concerns (Hanover)	LCD Response
Grades (thus skill levels) are combined for lack of funding	BMEP funds can be used to prevent the combining of grades (skill levels), which has a detrimental effect on learning.
No way to collaborate with other teachers	BMEP funds are available to pay for coverage so that teachers can collaborate regularly.
No focused training on interpreting ACCESS scores	WIDA offers this training in person and online.



NMPED
Education is Calling