

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY YEAR TWO: ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL (ALD4ALL)
PROJECT SUPPORTED BY THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

Project directed by the
NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (PED)
BILINGUAL MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION BUREAU (BMEB)

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CENTER FOR POSITIVE PRACTICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Positive Practices (CPP) submits this Year Two, Annual Evaluation Report for the Academic Language Development for All (ALD4ALL) project (*the project*), which is directed by the Bilingual Multicultural Education Bureau (BMEB) of the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) and supported by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF, *the project sponsor*). The purpose of the project is...

To provide statewide teacher training and build capacity of administrator leadership to address the needs and academic language development of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, including English Learners (ELs) in New Mexico.

We are focusing the evaluation report framework primarily on WKKF's External Evaluation Questions, which are succinctly categorized as **Pathways, Implementation, Vulnerable Children, Data Collection, Unexpected Results, and Challenges**. A full evaluation compendium for the reporting period, available upon request, provides descriptive detail and evaluative evidence to support the assertions in this summary.

What follows in this Executive Summary are CPP's external evaluation *Findings and Responses* for year two, and *Recommendations* for year three, for the ALD4ALL project.

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

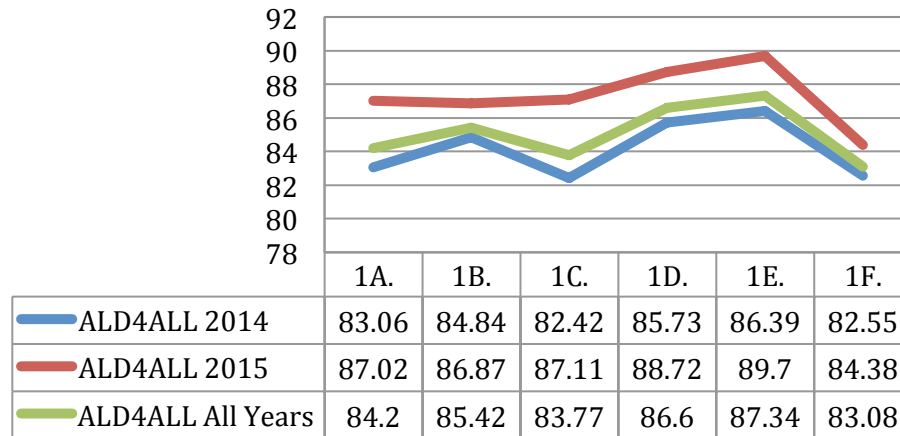
The year-two intention of the project design was to learn how the state education agency can better support schools and districts to better understand their own issues and opportunities, and to get them started on generating internally-collaborative solutions.

1. **Pathways.** *What are the key factors or pathways identified to ensure that activities are leading to the Project's success?*
 - a. The project acted diligently on the recommendation in last year's report that it express its intentions, strategies, and predictions for success as a **Theory of Change**, which is itself is a pathway for clarifying the project and for subsequently improving the education of children in bilingual schools and programs. It did this by explicating the project theory and providing a status update on its objectives and activities in the **2014 Stakeholder Report**.
2. **Implementation.** *Were the activities implemented as planned? Were there changes and why the changes?*
 - a. The project's proposed three-year activities, categorized as 1) **Selection**, 2) **Inquiry Process**, 3) **Professional Development**, 4) **Adopting Standards**, and 5) the **Bilingual/Biliteracy Seal** are mostly on track for timely and successful completion, as detailed in the full evaluation report.
 - b. Objectives 1, 2 and 3 were completed as planned. *Selection* is being expanded to add new schools to year three.
 - c. *Adopting Standards* has been partially completed by the project. The project now realizes that home/heritage language development standards are not available for multiple languages, but Spanish Language Development standards have been identified by the task force, and approval for policy implementation is anticipated by the State Education Agency (SEA) Secretary of Education. The identification and adoption of Spanish Language Arts

standards remains in progress, as a matter of practicality, awaiting further research and development in the greater field of bilingual education.

- The SEA and the project have jointly decided to support the 22 American Indian tribes in New Mexico to develop their own language development standards and language arts standards if they so choose.
- d. Objective 5, *Adoption and Implementation of a Bilingual Seal*, was essentially formalized and signed into law by the Governor in year one. The official rulemaking for awarding the seal is expected to be finalized this Fall. The SEA and the BMEB are still sorting out details about training and implementation support for districts, schools, and tribes.
3. **Vulnerable Children.** *How has the Project improved vulnerable children's lives? What could have been done differently to improve the odds of the Project's impact?*
 - a. We believe that the project is designed to improve the lives of vulnerable children in its bilingual schools and programs for three reasons: 1) the project team is made up of scholars and advocates who are truly interested in improving the education of vulnerable children, and 2) the project objectives, strategies, and theory of change appear to resonate well with the project schools, who themselves are engaging in advanced discussions to more urgently address the needs of all emerging bilinguals, and 3) the project has provided training in data analysis techniques and strategies that illuminate the needs of children at the lowest quartiles of language proficiency and academic achievement.
 4. **Data Collection.** *What are the results from the data collected from groups such as state, district and school administrators, teachers, parents and a wide range of community members?*
 - a. The project has continuously collected a wide array of data using mixed-methods approaches that support greater reliability, validity, complementarity, and triangulation. Data analyses have been used to provide the project with both continuous improvement support and feedback about evidence of effectiveness on specific indicators of project success.
 - b. The *Teacher Self-Assessment Scales* (TSAS), aligned to the content of the state mandated NMTEACH teacher evaluation system, was administered twice (in Fall 2014 and Spring 2015) and indicates three robust findings: 1) that schools selected for ALD4ALL participation in the program report on average greater levels of teacher efficacy than a sample of non-participating schools, 2) that ALD4ALL participants report, overall, greater efficacy from year one to year two, and 3) that project participating teachers report significantly greater growth in teacher efficacy over the school year than that of non-participating teachers. Figure 1 below provides a sample of these results. This is clear evidence that the project is demonstrating a positive effect for raising individual and collective teacher capacity for improving the education of all students.
 - c. The *ALD4ALL Professional Learning Evaluation Form* was designed and developed this year to assess participant responses to ALD4ALL professional learning activities in their schools. On average, based on 99 responses (N=99) on a scale of 1 to 10, the activities were consistently rated very high (8.72 - 8.96).

Figure 1. Sample Chart of the 2014-2015 ALD4ALL TSAS Results.



Note. As demonstrated on all six elements of Domain 1 of the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System, ALD4ALL participants reported, on average, on a scale of 1 to 100, greater levels of teacher efficacy in 2015, surpassing their already high numbers for 2014.

5. Unexpected Results. *What are the unexpected results (positive and/or negative) of the Project?*

- a. School teams were asked to present at the ALD4ALL project-wide gathering and various conferences in order to share their stories with other bilingual and multicultural education programs in the state. The result of these more than 30 presentation sessions has been the establishment of a greater sense of community among the teachers and administrators in the project schools.
- b. *But what is most surprising is this:* The presentation component of the project strategy did more than facilitate networking among the project schools. It also appears to have empowered some of the project schools to reflect on why they are good schools, to clarify their strategies and materials so that they are practical for others, and for them to serve as collegial advisors for the many other schools and participants who have attended their sessions. This activity strongly supports the capacity-building aspect of the project's purpose.

6. Challenges. *What challenges are encountered? How are the challenges addressed?*

- a. 2015 was the first year of statewide implementation of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment. For some project schools, preparing for and implementing the assessment took several weeks, and also disrupted the normal flow of teaching activities and schedules. This caused some schools to suspend professional development activities or reduce their active participation in the project during the assessment timeframe. The project regrouped and made up for lost time by scaling up site visits and conference activities in April and May.
- b. By the end of the school year, teachers and administrators were overloaded. Most teachers were hurrying to meet their routine responsibilities and were not submitting responses to the new round of TSAS and professional learning questionnaires. The evaluator decided not to push teachers for more data collection and settled on conducting end-of-year phone interviews with key informants, including administrators and instructional coaches using the Guskey professional-development assessment protocol.

7. **Lessons.** *What lessons have emerged to help the Foundation advance its mission of supporting vulnerable children, families and communities in its four target counties?*
 - a. *An important lesson so far reinforces a major premise of the project: that the BMEB is too small to single-handedly serve the state's districts and schools with targeted or customized training on a regular basis. It is essential to test and refine a general list of strategies that provide guidance to schools so that they can implement localized, organic, generative-learning strategies for raising the language proficiency and academic achievement of their students.*
 - b. *The capacity-building paradigm of professional learning, in which key professionals are trained and self-regulated in a network or community of learners, may add considerably to this generative-learning model. It enables key personnel, from teachers and principals to BMEB staff and consultants, to consistently provide internal and external professional learning that can be disseminated to other colleagues in conferences and institutes across the state.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Years one and two of the project were designed to investigate promising practices and try out the content and processes for building capacity of teachers and administrators to better serve language learners, with each school supported by project facilitators to address its own needs with custom approaches. As we begin year three, it is time to take those learning experiences and translate them into products and guidance for dissemination beyond the project schools.

1. **Pathways.** The project should continuously reflect on and refine its current theory of change, taking into account input from participants and other supporters and advocates in the field of bilingual education. This will allow it to come up with the best, most elegant and succinct framework for school-level, internal-external professional learning that can be shared with all bilingual schools and programs across the state.
2. **Implementation.** Included in the pathways framework suggested above, the project should document the steps required to implement the inquiry and strategic planning processes in order to disseminate guidance for non-participating schools across the state.
 - a. Because New Mexico American Indian tribes will be developing their own language development standards, and criteria for awarding the bilingual seal, the BMEB should design and implement a strategy for how it can support these endeavors.
 - b. The BMEB should strengthen its relationship and collaboration with the Indian Education Division of PED in order to leverage resources and maximize their mutual services to schools serving high numbers of American Indian students.
3. **Vulnerable Children.** While training teachers and administrators is usually thought of as a natural precursor for effecting positive change for all students, it is also possible to do both, simultaneously. For the project to be able to address the day-to-day needs of vulnerable children, it needs to further articulate the logical chain of activities that facilitate how schools and families can do this at the local level.
 - a. This strategy can be further devised in consultation with project schools where students appear to be most confident and high performing. Working together with selected teachers and instructional coaches, the project should

identify or develop a tool or method for assessing student readiness to achieve at greater levels of language proficiency and academic performance. It should utilize this way of seeing what students need, especially those at the lower statistical quartiles, to begin closing the gap with their higher performing peers.

4. **Data Collection.** For year three data collection, the evaluator should consider designing and developing a student academic readiness questionnaire that, when administered to small samples of students, would inform the project whether it is having a direct effect on the education of vulnerable children. The evaluator should also update the TSAS questionnaire items to parallel recent changes in the NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System required of teachers by the SEA.
5. **Unexpected Results / Diffusion of Promising Practices.** As the project learned, teachers and administrators in the higher performing bilingual schools and programs are ready and eager to serve their colleagues in other schools.
 - a. The project should consider how it can sustain this phenomenon by getting the schools themselves to document their promising practices and also by using online technology for disseminating their stories, tools, and strategies.
 - b. The BMEB should consider how it can sustain and scale-up collegial person-to-person and technology-facilitated communications and relationship building by providing BMEB-sponsored activities and/or special sessions leveraged with other on-going training and conference activities. For example, BMEB can conduct webinars at various conferences, which allow for both in-person and interactive telecommunication with colleagues and stakeholders.
6. **Challenges.** The biggest challenge for teachers and administrators in the project appears to be time. The project should consider identifying or developing time-management guidance for how school staff can comfortably schedule ongoing professional learning opportunities with their teaching responsibilities.
 - a. Another challenge that will always arise with the diffusion of new innovations, such a new paradigm for professional learning in the field of bilingual education, is winning over or getting buy-in from slow adopters. The project community and ongoing sustainability efforts will greatly benefit from acquiring training in *Appreciative Inquiry (AI)*, a well-documented and widely used approach for comfortably facilitating fundamental change into new environments. CPP recommends that the entire ALD4ALL team and key school and district personnel attend the AI certification training available nationally at various times and places each year. The cost would be about \$2500 per person, inclusive of the four-day training registration and travel expenses.
7. **Lessons.** Year one was about inquiry and relationship building. Year two was about clarifying, designing, and pilot-testing professional learning theories, activities, and strategies. Year three is presently designed to be about developing products and practices than can be disseminated statewide. For the BMEB to convince non-project, low-performing schools to learn from the exemplary schools it will require more than just telling stories. The project may wish to produce a list of principles and strategies that guide schools, step-by-step, on how to move forward, working confidently, collaboratively, in-school, to facilitate generative, organic solutions.