

Transitioning
Paraprofessionals Into
Quality Teachers for
English Language Learners
in a Field Based Teacher
Education Program.

Illinois State University

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Purpose

The main purpose of the project is to provide high quality teachers for students whose first language is not English through the preparation of bilingual teachers certified to teach English Language Learners in a Chicago Public School District.

Participating LEA

Chicago Public School District 299. The largest school district in the State of Illinois

Participating LEA

High Need Criteria

1. High Need is defined, according to the U.S 2008 Census Data as the percentage of school age children (5- 17 years) who live below the poverty line. The percentage was 26.5%
2. In addition, 4.9% of teachers are temporarily or provisionally certified.

Partners

1. School District 299, Chicago
2. Little Village High School
3. Community Colleges

Recruitment Requirements

1. Participants in this project will be highly qualified bilingual educational assistants from in or near School District 299
2. An educational assistant must have a minimum of two years' paid employment in a school.
3. A letter of recommendation from principal.

Recruitment Requirements

3. Preference was given to educational assistants who are bilingual, and who are currently employed by the districts identified as High Need District.
4. Possess English Language Skills.
5. Have Two Years Diploma or 60 hours of college course work. (Completed General Education Requirements.

Teacher Education Requirements

In addition to completing the education required courses for Elementary Education, Students must pass:

- Basic Skills Test
- Content Test
- Spanish Language Tests
- Pedagogy Test
- Successful students teaching experience.

Student Services

1. A \$5,000 stipends for two summer sessions and students' teaching.
2. Supervision and Mentoring.
3. Workshops (i.e. English skills, Technology, etc.
4. Teacher Seminars.
5. On-site Field Coordinator & Academic Advisor.

Project Goals

1. Recruit and mentor bilingual educational assistants who wish to be certified as teachers.
2. Prepare potential participants in the Illinois State University Alternative Certification Program to meet application requirements.
3. Provide an intensive Illinois State University Alternative Certification Program in Elementary/bilingual teacher preparation.

Project Goals

4. Provide mentoring and continued professional development for graduates of the Illinois State University Alternative Certification Program.
5. The project will be refined and expanded upon.
6. The project will be available for replication.

Project Personnel

1. Project Director
2. On-site Field coordinator
3. Academic Advisor
4. Cleric/bookkeeper
5. Faculty
6. Teacher mentors and supervisors
7. Steering Committee (Advisory Board)

Successes

- The development and implementation of an alternative route for paraprofessionals to earn an Elementary K-9 Certificate with Bilingual Approval.
- The recruitment of 73 qualified paraprofessionals to participate in the project.
- The successful enrollment of all 73 candidates in the Teacher Education program.
- Twenty three candidates will complete the program at the end of the Fall semester 2010
- Two cohorts of approximately 20 candidates will complete the program each year after.
- All candidates have been offered the opportunity to complete the program.

Challenges

1. Recruitment of qualified paraprofessionals to participate.
2. Transcript evaluation of participants
3. Scheduling of courses in a convenient and accessible place.
4. Schedule courses at times complementing the work schedule of participants.
5. Advisement of non-traditional students.
6. Working with the deficiencies common to non-traditional students as they become apart of the University Culture.
7. Working with University traditional entities to include students in the program.
8. Dealing with personal as well as professional problems that could impact the program.
9. Constant reinforcement of the quality of the program.
10. Constant reminder to partners about the need for their support to the program.
11. Constant reminder to partners about the need for their support to their paraprofessionals.

PDS Program

- Field based
- Partnership
- Internship
- Application
- Cooperative Teaching Processes
- Non-Traditional Teacher Education

Highly qualified teachers are teachers who:

- Possess a deep understanding of the subject they teach.
- Evidence of a clear understanding of how students learn.
- Demonstrate the teaching skills necessary to help all students achieve high standards.
- Create a positive learning environment.

Highly Qualified Teachers Cont.

- Use a variety of assessment strategies to diagnose and respond to individual learning needs.
- Demonstrate and integrate modern technology into the school curriculum to support student learning.
- Collaborate with colleagues parents and community members, and other educators to improve student learning.

Highly Qualified Teacher Cont.

- **Reflect on their practice to improve future teaching and student achievement.**
- **Pursue professional growth in both content and pedagogy**
- **Instill a passion for learning in their students.**