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Dear NABE Member:

In July 2009, a NABE sub-committee was established to begin the development of a *NABE National Action Plan for the Education of English Language Learners (ELLs)* that would serve as a catalyst for *National-Based Advocacy* targeting unified reform efforts related to programs, instruction, assessment, and policy aimed at providing a quality and equitable education that achieves educational parity for Bilingual Learners (BLs...inaccurately referred to as LEP or ELL) in public education. The work of the subcommittee produced the following two documents:

1. *NABE National Action Plan for the Education of ELLs*

designed to outline multiple efforts to *inform* and *educate* various national and state level organizations on programmatic and curricular “best practices” with the intent on unifying national efforts by like-minded *minority* organizations, *mainstream* organizations, institutions of higher education, public schools, and legislative bodies, that will result in affecting policy that better serves Bilingual Learners in this country. *This is an ongoing plan that will continue for many years and will welcome input through June 30, 2010.*

2. *NABE National ELL Plan Submitted to the U. S. Department of Education*

designed to inform and educate the federal government (USDOE) by recommending specific points that would affect federal policy related to the equitable and quality education of bilingual learners beginning with impacting the current reauthorization of the ESEA. *Due to the current reauthorization timetable, this plan must be submitted within the next 30-40 days. Therefore, deadline for membership input will be limited to April 9, 2010.*

To this end, the NABE Executive Board seeks input, feedback and comment from the membership on these two plans. To initiate this process as expeditiously as possible, we are asking members for now to simply provide their comment by email to Mr. Andre Thomas: a_thomas@nabe.org

We are in the process of establishing a discussion board where members can share their comments, read other member’s comments and interact with other members. We hope to establish this system on NABE Website within the next 2 weeks.

Thank you for all your support and commitment to NABE and Bilingual Education!

Sincerely,

Dr. Leo Gómez, Chair
Subcommittee on NABE National Action Plan

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Development of a NABE National Action Plan for Educating ELLs

Introduction:

A NABE sub-committee was established to begin the development of a *NABE National Action Plan for the Education of English Language Learners (ELLs)* that outlines points related to programs, instruction, assessment, and policy related to providing a quality and equitable education that achieves educational parity for Bilingual Learners BLs... inaccurately referred to as LEP or ELL) in public education through **enrichment bilingual education** (i.e. one-way & two-way dual language education) and provides opportunities for bilingualism/biliteracy for native English speakers (two-way dual language education). Sub-committee will continue to work on this plan based on shared input from NABE membership.

Scope:

The *NABE Action Plan* will focus on research-based “best pedagogical practices” for Bilingual Learners (use of native language instruction and dual language enrichment education) and detail specific points for effectively educating and assessing this population. The scope of the plan will be “national” with hopes of far reaching impact both in national and state-level policy. The plan intends to also “define” NABE as **THE** leader in bilingual education at the national level and the “go-to” organization by the USDOE and others for matters related to the education of bilingual learners.

The *NABE National Action Plan for the Education of Bilingual Learners* will:

1. increase the level of partnerships to inform and collaborate with other national and state-level linguistic/minority organizations and/or leaders (HACU, NCLR, MALDEF, LULAC, PRLDEF, AAAHE, ASPIRA, ALAS, TESOL, NALEO, NAAPAE, etc.)
2. **inform and educate policy makers from the U. S. Department of Education (USDOE), congressional legislators, caucuses and any other national education policy making body (see *NABE ELL Plan to USDOE*)**
3. increase the level of partnerships to inform and collaborate with NABE’s Affiliates and other state-level Bilingual Education leaders
4. inform and educate NABE membership through media blasts and the NABE annual conference
5. inform and collaborate with state-level universities, colleges, and public school systems
6. inform and educate state-level legislative bodies
7. increase the level of partnerships to inform and collaborate with other national organizations in the field of education (NAEYC, NCSTIII, NEA, AFT, NAMSE, NASB, ATE, AACTE, AERA, IRA, NAAPAE, Council of Great City Schools, AARP, etc.)
8. International Collaboration
9. Revisit NABE Professional Standards for ELLs to inform proposed national standards

Proposed Goals:

It is hoped that through the *NABE National Action Plan for the Education of Bilingual Learners* the following goals will be realized.

1. NABE’s affiliates, NABE’s membership, universities and colleges will rally around NABE as its national leader in enrichment bilingual education and the *national action plan* will aid state-level advocacy efforts for BLs
2. National and state-level linguistic/minority organizations will benefit from this “deeper knowledge” on best pedagogical practices to help build a “common purpose and common agenda,” as well as help further strengthen an individual organization’s vision and mission
3. Education policy at the national and state-level will change favoring native language instruction and dual language enrichment education through administrative and/or legislative intent
4. Gain support for enrichment bilingual education from non-linguistic/minority organizations based on understanding the academic and linguistic value of native language instruction and dual language enrichment education.

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Intended Outcomes:

1. There is evidence of a strengthened relationship between NABE and its affiliates based on an increased number of NABE affiliates, NABE membership and NABE Affiliate membership
2. There is evidence of a “common purpose/agenda” established by national and state-level linguistic/minority organizations that advocate for language minority students
3. There is evidence of educational parity between majority and minority groups based on changes to national policy and academic and linguistic standardized achievement results at national and state levels
4. There is evidence of support for enrichment bilingual education for bilingual learners by non-linguistic/minority organizations based on organization’s newsletters and other publications, endorsements, and mission statements

Proposed Activities:

1. Activity #1
2. Activity #2
3. Activity #3
4. Activity #4
5. Activity #5

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NABE National Action Plan for the Education of Bilingual Learners

Introduction

As we strive to achieve equity in the education of all students, the need for well-informed educators is more critical than ever. Schools across the country are facing growing enrollment of **Bilingual Learners (BLs)** and many schools lack the necessary preparation for effectively educating this group. Historically, an academic achievement gap has persisted between native English speakers and BLs resulting in a persistent dropout rate in many cases greater than fifty percent (50%) for this population. Positive change requires a comprehensive understanding of the issues negating an equitable education for this population. There is over 40 years of research in second language acquisition in this country that affirms the effectiveness of using a child's native language to learn academic concepts while learning the English language. Consistently, **quality bilingual education programs provide long-term achievement of BLs and help close the academic gap based on standardized assessments in English as compared to native English speakers.**

Research steadily demonstrates that literacy development in a child's first language facilitates literacy development in the second language. There is overwhelming research that tells us that BLs are more academically successful in schools if they receive formal schooling in their native language, while they learn English (Cummins, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1998). As clearly described in gap closure effectiveness studies by Thomas & Collier's (2002), only enrichment forms of bilingual education, that provide instruction in **both** the native language and English throughout elementary, close the *English* academic achievement gap between BLs and native English speakers as they continue their schooling.

The education of BLs is a K-12 issue and therefore must be viewed and addressed as a part of K-12 education. Still, a K-5 elementary education is the foundation for a successful secondary education. **The permanent solution to high schools in academic trouble with this population is largely rooted in their elementary schools.** It makes sense that the learning of "on-grade level" content, knowledge and skills in a K-12 education largely depends on the clear "understanding" of classroom instruction. Academic gaps occur when children do not learn "on-grade level" certain concepts or skills (academic literacy) well or at all. It is critical that BLs learn "on-grade level" academic knowledge and skills, which includes literacy, at the elementary and secondary levels in order to receive an equal and successful academic and linguistic education eventually becoming "English proficient" and academically on grade level.

This is also an economic issue for our country. In light of the increasing diversity in our schools and particularly children who come to school speaking a language other than English, it is increasingly **important to the economic welfare of our country** that we provide these students with the most effective researched-based educational programs and practices for increased linguistic and academic attainment. **NABE** firmly believes that to effectively educate the Bilingual Learner population and **close the academic achievement gap** between this group and native speakers of English, **federal policy must change** and **additional financial resources must be provided** to ensure quality instructional materials, teacher training, specialized staffing, program evaluation, and other essential components consistent with the use of **quality ELL instructional models.**

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NABE National Action Plan for the Education of Bilingual Learners

The points outlined below will provide the needed federal support and guidance to achieve greater equity in our schools with educational success for all children, bilingualism and biliteracy opportunities for all, and a stronger and more prosperous America.

To this end, NABE respectfully submits to the **United States Department of Education (USDOE)** the following points for consideration:

1. Reauthorize ESEA and reinstate the longstanding **Bilingual Education Act**, the **Office of Bilingual education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA)** and the **National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE)**
2. Change the existing stigmatizing and limiting labels: Limited English Proficient (LEP) and English Language Learner (ELL) to a more accurate label: “**Bilingual Learner**” which reflects learning in both languages that will yield bilingualism and biliteracy and higher academic achievement
3. **When bilingual education available**, establish policy and target funding for the following types of quality enrichment bilingual programs for educating bilingual learners:
 1. One-Way Dual Language Enrichment (for BLs only)
 2. Two-Way Dual Language Enrichment (for both BLs and native English speakers)
 3. Late-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) (for BLs only)

In these types of programs BLs develop literacy and learn academic content (math, science, social studies) in two languages throughout their elementary with full biliteracy by the end of 5th grade. For BLs, dual language is the **ONLY** research-based bilingual education model that fully closes the academic achievement gap *at the secondary level* based on English assessments.

4. **When bilingual education not available**, establish policy and target funding for the following type of English as a Second (ESL) program for educating bilingual learners:
 1. Content-based ESL Education (for BLs only...**eliminate ESL Pullout programs**)
5. **Increase and target funding for quality *enrichment* bilingual education training** through educator preparation programs and other in-service programs to include:
 1. professional development on enrichment bilingual education and second language acquisition (SLA)
 2. establish Graduate Bilingual Education Fellowships in higher education to increase highly qualified Bilingual Education leaders at the Masters and Doctoral level
 3. research to continue to yield evidence in the efficacy of quality bilingual programs
 4. acquisition of culturally relevant, content-rich instructional materials with high academic rigor
6. **Increase and target funding for recruitment of bilingual education certified teachers** through the following:
 1. teacher preparation programs to prepare highly qualified teachers for “enrichment models” of bilingual education programs (dual language) and where bilingual education is not available, support “content-based ESL” models (**de-emphasize ESL Pullout programs** that are not serving BLs well)
 2. teacher preparation programs to “initially” prepare K-12 content-area teachers (mainstream-non-bilingual teachers) with second language acquisition pedagogy (ESL, sheltered instruction: how to best teach content in a second language)
 3. professional development of “in-service” K-12 content-area teachers (mainstream-non-bilingual teachers) with second language acquisition pedagogy (ESL, sheltered instruction: how to best teach content in a second language)
 4. higher education and other teacher preparation programs designed to recruit and train highly qualified bilingual and ESL teachers

5. higher education “Public School Administrator Preparation Programs” (principals, superintendents) designed to prepare **highly qualified Bilingual/ESL administrative leaders** (critical need in public schools)
 6. “rehiring” of highly qualified Bilingual/ESL certified teachers that have recently left the teaching profession due to frustration with poorly implemented or supported bilingual/ESL programs
 7. funds to be used by public schools as “incentives” or “stipends” to support highly qualified bilingual and ESL teachers and reduce the attrition rate
 8. student tuition loan forgiveness program for bilingual certified teachers
7. Establish policy and collect Reading, Mathematics, Science, Dropout & Graduation data **disaggregated according to instructional model** used for each Bilingual Learner and former Bilingual Learner served in the state Bilingual or ESL program as they continue their K-12 education. These data is to be reported by school, district, and state level
 8. **Native Language Assessments:** One very large obstacle to promoting native language instruction for BLs is the lack of native language assessments. Even when there is understanding for and commitment to native language assessments, states and districts are faced with overwhelming costs to develop native language tests, at a minimum, at the elementary level. National leadership by the U.S. Department of Education to fund **national academic assessments**, in as many languages as the department deems appropriate, is critical to ensure that BLs receive a quality education. **National assessments** in as many languages as possible would provide an incentive for states to move toward more native language instruction, as well as promote bilingualism and biliteracy opportunities for *all students*, **a vision for America by President Obama**. **Academic assessments in languages other than English will also assist states to meet AYP targets since these tests will more accurately measure the true academic skills of BLs rather than have these skills obscured by the language of the tests**
 9. Form a **National Committee** to review and develop a strong **accountability process** that is non-punitive, fair and responsive to the educational needs of all children, schools and districts

