

Abstract

The Illinois State Board of Education will carry out the new Illinois Transition to Teaching Project in conjunction with Northern Illinois University and a high-need partner school district (Chicago Public Schools #299), and through a contract with the Illinois Resource Center. The project will address the needs of this large industrial school district that is in dire need of highly qualified ESL and bilingual teachers. The project will assist the partner school district with recruitment and training and enable the school district to employ and maintain teachers to serve the rapidly growing limited English proficient student population. The major outcome of this project will be the benefits for students derived from the certification of 225-275 elementary and secondary teachers who will meet state standards for highly qualified ESL and bilingual teachers.

The federal funding priority requirements will be met through development of relationships between the Illinois State Board of Education and universities to create alternative teacher certification pathways and provision of assistance to high-need Chicago Public Schools #299 to develop streamlined procedures to identify, train, employ, and mentor career changers into the ESL/bilingual teaching ranks. The project will have a positive impact on university teaching course requirements and on employment procedures in the partner school district.

By the end of the project, 225 to 275 adults with non-education degrees will be recruited, provided initial training, and employed in the high-need partner school district, and will complete coursework required for Illinois teacher certification and initiate ESL/bilingual approval; Illinois universities will develop alternative pathways and enhancements to encourage those who wish to change careers and become highly qualified ESL and bilingual teachers; and Illinois school districts will have a model to restructure recruitment, employment, and mentoring procedures for career changers who enter a state-approved certification program.

THE ILLINOIS TRANSITION TO TEACHING PROJECT

In today's rapidly escalating, multilingual world, language limitations remain as barriers to a comprehensive education and effective communication. As Illinois becomes more culturally and linguistically diverse—the 2002 Illinois Bilingual Census reports 323,045 students speaking 123 home languages—and the state continues to work toward development of an exceptional education system, it is essential that educators communicate with students through a variety of languages in order for the students to succeed academically. Unfortunately, given the lack of appropriately trained education staff who are able to communicate in the native language of students, the goal of providing an outstanding education to English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual students remains elusive.

Since the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation was enacted, Illinois school districts have been faced with the critical issues of recruiting and hiring “highly qualified” ESL and bilingual teachers needed to educate the rapidly growing number of limited English proficient (LEP) children enrolling as students. Training new ESL and bilingual teachers is a challenging responsibility. These teachers face the enormous task of educating LEP students according to the *Illinois Learning Standards*, as well as the recently adopted *English Language Learner's Proficiency Standards*. The standards outline clear expectations for academic achievement while simultaneously teaching students a new language.

Illinois has been applauded for its history of requiring high qualifications for ESL and bilingual teachers, which include the same type of teacher certification required of monolingual English-speaking teachers, as well as training in how to teach ESL, how to appropriately assess LEP students, how to address cross-cultural issues, and how to use the student's first language as a tool to support learning. Illinois colleges and universities are not training sufficient numbers of

ESL and bilingual teachers through traditional programs to meet the escalating needs of Illinois school districts. It is imperative that Illinois seek out talented bilingual professionals and encourage them to enter the teaching field as highly qualified teachers by offering alternative methods of certification and training.

A) Project Design

1) To develop a program to recruit and retain highly qualified mid-career professionals (including highly qualified paraprofessionals) and recent graduates of an institution of higher education as highly qualified teachers in high-need schools operated by high-need LEAs.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will carry out the new Illinois Transition to Teaching Project in conjunction with Northern Illinois University (NIU) and a “high-need,” partner school district, and through a contract with the Illinois Resource Center (IRC). Chicago Public Schools #299 has committed to serve as the partner district for this project. This Illinois school district meets the established criteria to be considered a “high-need LEA”—according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Chicago Public Schools #299 reported 134,526 students between the ages of 5-17 living in poverty. The school district has also reported 7.6 percent of its teachers working under either provisional or emergency teaching certificates, which is significantly higher than the state rate of 2.1 percent. Moreover, Chicago Public Schools #299 has many schools on the state “Academic Warning” list due to failure to make adequate yearly progress on state assessments.

While Chicago Public Schools #299 serves 42 percent of all LEP students enrolled statewide, many Illinois school districts that serve large numbers of LEP students are also in crisis for recruiting “highly qualified” ESL and bilingual teachers. Cicero School District #99, School District U-46 (Elgin), Aurora East School District #131, and Waukegan School District #60

serve 14 percent of all LEP students participating in state-funded ESL and bilingual programs. Like Chicago Public Schools #299, these school districts are located in large industrial cities in northern Illinois that have experienced the most growth in language minority populations and have high concentrations of low-income students—15 percent to 18 percent of children age 5 to 17 enrolled in the districts are designated as living in poverty.

The Illinois Transition to Teaching Project will be available to anyone having a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a field other than education, including candidates who may be working in public schools as paraprofessionals as well as those working in careers outside of education. The program model will be able to be replicated by Illinois universities to meet recruitment and hiring needs for all school districts in the state.

2. To enable individuals to become eligible for teacher certification under State-approved programs in a reduced period of time, relying on factors in lieu of traditional coursework in education.

Illinois has been innovative in its efforts to resolve its shortage of ESL/bilingual teachers. The state developed an alternative/provisional certificate to allow bilingual candidates who do not hold standard certificates to prove their language skills and enter the field of bilingual education, while providing a window of time for them to become fully certified to teach in Illinois. As an alternative to traditional course plans, the Type 29 Transitional Bilingual Certificate, in conjunction with participation in the proposed Transition to Teaching Project, will allow project participants to become fully certified bilingual teachers in Illinois within three years.

Participation in the Illinois Transition to Teaching Project will require that candidates have a Type 29 Certificate or work as a paraprofessional in a school district that meets the guidelines of

“high need.” To obtain a Type 29 Certificate, an applicant must:

- Have possessed, within the five preceding years, a valid teaching certificate or comparable legal authorization issued by a foreign country or another state.

OR

- Hold a postsecondary degree from the United States, or from a foreign country that is determined to be the equivalent of a bachelor’s degree in the United States.

AND

- Demonstrate adequate speaking and reading ability in the non-English language in which transitional bilingual education is offered in Illinois.
- Demonstrate adequate English communication skills.

In order to be considered highly qualified during the TTT career change process, a participant must:

- Pass a language proficiency test to receive the Type 29 Certificate.
- Pass the Illinois Basic Skills Test.
- Be enrolled in a program of study leading to teacher certification.

AND

- Pass the Illinois Subject Area Test for the area in which the participant is teaching within nine months of initiating the teacher assignment.

The language proficiency test, the Illinois Basic Skills Test, and the Illinois Subject Area Test are administered under the direction of the State. The third prerequisite requires that Transition to Teaching Project participants be enrolled in elementary certification coursework with NIU, in collaboration with the Transition to Teaching Project, or to develop an approved secondary certification pathway with an Illinois college or university. Transition to Teaching

Project teachers-in-training are more employable by school districts because they meet the “highly qualified” standards during their participation in the program. Paraprofessionals selected to participate in the program will meet the requirements to be considered “highly qualified” under Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act. All paraprofessionals will be required to hold a postsecondary degree from the United States or from a foreign country.

The administrator of the ISBE Division of English Language Learning has encouraged Illinois institutions of higher education to waive general education requirements whenever possible and to seek additional ways to accelerate the completion of Illinois teaching certification requirements for ESL and bilingual teachers. The most successful approach thus far has been developed through the activities of the current Illinois Transition to Teaching Project. The new Transition to Teaching Project will build from those successes.

ISBE was awarded a three-year USDE Transition to Teaching grant in October 2001. Currently, 107 elementary teachers and five secondary teachers are completing their standard certification through this project, while simultaneously teaching Illinois LEP students in ESL or bilingual classrooms. Through the current project, the State has:

- Developed procedures to identify candidates for employment to school districts.
- Worked with NIU to develop an alternative course sequence based on a master in art of teaching format that leads to standard elementary certification and a master of science in education degree within three years.
- Developed requirements allowing those teachers who qualify for and participate in the Transition to Teaching Project to be considered highly qualified for the three-year duration of their Transition to Teaching course sequence.

NIU has broken away from the standard approach of other Illinois universities through its

discontinuation of unnecessary prerequisites to enter the education program. The current Transition to Teaching Project negotiated with various universities in order to develop the format that is currently being followed by elementary teaching candidates. The average Transition to Teaching career changer formerly needed to take four prerequisite courses before entering the certification sequence at universities. As a result of the successful efforts of the current Transition to Teaching Project, NIU now has only one prerequisite course, which is included in the cohorts' programs of study to guarantee that everyone completes the certification program. About 5 percent of the participants in the current Transition to Teaching Project were able to test out of the math prerequisite. Due to the collaboration of NIU and the Transition to Teaching Project, a more streamlined and effective model for teacher certification of career changers has been developed.

a) The extent to which the goal, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the project are clearly specified and measurable.

Goal: To increase the number of qualified ESL/bilingual and/or ESL teachers in Illinois K-12 classrooms through development and implementation of a program that will enable highly qualified adults with appropriate work experience and/or outstanding academic background to become Illinois-certified ESL/bilingual and/or ESL teachers in.

The new Illinois Transition to Teaching Project will initiate two cohorts of 25 to 30 elementary teachers-in-training in Year 2, and three new cohorts of 25 to 30 elementary teachers-in-training in Years 3 and 4. The project will also support five to seven secondary candidates per year in their pursuit of secondary education teacher certification. By the end of the project, 200 to 240 elementary teachers and 25 to 35 secondary teachers will be trained/certified. The program design is clearly specified in Table 1, with realistic and measurable outcome objectives.

Table 1. Objectives, Activities, Responsible Parties, Timelines

<i>Recruitment, Preparation, and Placement</i>		
<i>Objective 1: Two hundred twenty-five to two hundred seventy-five adults with degrees in fields other than education will be recruited, provided initial training, and employed in the partner school district beginning in fall 2005, will complete all coursework required for Illinois teacher certification, and initiate ESL/bilingual approval</i>		
Activities	Responsible Parties	Timelines
1.1 Form advisory committee to oversee project procedures.	Project director	Fall, Year 1
1.2 Develop brochure explaining the project goal, purpose, and criteria; develop application forms.	Project director, coordinator, and staff	Fall, Year 1
1.3 Develop selection criteria rubrics and forms.	Project director and coordinator	Fall, Year 1
1.4 Approve equitable procedures for the partner school district and candidates.	Project director and advisory committee	Fall, Year 1
1.5 Publish recruitment information in local newspapers and school district communication channels.	Project coordinator	Fall, Year 1
1.6 Work with Chicago Public Schools #299 to identify newly employed teachers who are in the process of career change and qualify for the initial cohort, as well as to enhance local recruitment efforts	Project coordinator and staff	Fall, Year 1

Activities	Responsible Parties	Timelines
for subsequent cohort groups in the funding period.		
1.7 Work with Chicago Public Schools #299 to identify paraprofessionals with BA degrees in fields other than education who may qualify for the project; encourage them to apply.	Project coordinator and staff	Fall, Years 1-5
1.8 Provide recruitment information to various Web sites and listservs, including ISBE at www.isbe.net .	Project coordinator and staff	Fall, Years 1-3
1.9 Review candidates' applications, resumes, academic transcripts, and references; conduct background checks; refer for language proficiency testing for Type 29 Certification.	Project coordinator and staff	Fall, Years 1-3
1.10 Refer candidates to Chicago Public Schools #299 for interviews and selection.	Project coordinator and staff; and advisory committee	Fall and spring, Years 1-3
1.11 Follow up on interviews and selection to ensure that all participants are placed.	Project coordinator and staff	Winter and summer, Years 1-3
1.12 Identify educational deficiencies of participants and the courses needed for teacher certification.	College and university education departments, in conjunction with ISBE Certification and Professional Development Division	Years 1-3

Activities	Responsible Parties	Timelines
1.13 Assist secondary education teacher candidates to develop their university-approved plans of study for certification in their field of expertise.	College and university education departments, in conjunction with ISBE Certification and Professional Development Division	Years 1-5
1.14 Enroll elementary education participants in the NIU elementary certification program. Direct secondary education participants to colleges in order to develop individual educational plans for each participant.	Project coordinator and staff	Years 1-3
1.15 Develop cohort groups where there are sufficient participants enrolled in similar degree programs.	Project coordinator and college/university education department chairs	Years 1-3
1.16 Ensure that participants are enrolled in teacher-education coursework.	Project coordinator and staff	Years 1-3 (50/75/75 participants)
1.17 Evaluate project activities.	Project director, coordinator, staff, and external evaluator	Years 1-5

Mentoring and Follow-Up Support

Objective 2: During their first two years after employment as bilingual and/or ESL teachers, project participants will receive mentoring and support from experienced ESL/bilingual teacher colleagues and/or IRC education consultants.

Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timelines
2.1 Identify mentors from the school district and provide meeting places.	Project coordinator and staff, in collaboration with school district representatives	Year 1, then ongoing
2.2 Match project participants with mentors in similar teaching positions.	School district representatives	Years 1-3
2.3 Meet with mentors and participants to explain roles and set meeting dates.	Project coordinator and staff; IRC consultants	Year 1, then ongoing
2.4 Plan and implement a workshop at the IRC for supervisors of participants who have Type 29 Certificates.	Project coordinator and staff; IRC consultants	Years 1-3
2.5 Schedule quarterly seminars for Transition to Teaching Project participants.	Project coordinator and staff; IRC consultants	Years 1-5
2.6 Conduct regular meetings between mentors and participants, arranged by the IRC. Offer support to school-district-directed mentor programs, as needed.	Project staff	Year 1, then ongoing
2.7 Counsel participants as needed and direct them to appropriate university/college offices and services.	Project coordinator and staff.	Year 1, then ongoing

Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timelines
2.8 Provide supervision to the newly recruited teachers according to partner school district policies and procedures; report dismissals to the project director.	Partner school district	Year 1, then ongoing

b) *The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.*

As early as 1989 and 1992, researchers were reporting that “alternative certification programs do attract talented and experienced individuals to the teaching profession, especially in critically needed areas...where shortages exist.” (Lutz & Hutton, 1989; Otuya, 1992; Shulman, 1992). Levin and Quinn (2003) report in *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms*, that large urban school districts *attract* excellent nontraditional applicants, but lose them because of inefficient recruitment and slow hiring procedures. As a result, the high-need school districts wind up losing the best-qualified alternative certification candidates, and hire the least qualified at the last minute. Holland (2003) suggests that programs offer people with real-world experience the opportunity to teach, but insists that “a strong mentoring program once the teacher is in the classroom” must be established.

Most reports indicate a need for further research on alternative certification. The debate is strong as to whether alternative certification or the traditional approach is the best way to produce high-quality teachers. A recent summary from the National Center of Alternative Certification titled, “Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification: an Overview,” which used data from 2003, reports that 28 percent of those entering teacher education programs at colleges and universities in 1998 already held a bachelor’s degree in another field. The report goes on to list key factors in programs for alternative certification, or “career changers.” They are:

- *Good alternative teacher certification programs are market-driven.* The programs are designed specifically to meet the demand for teachers in geographic areas and in subject areas where the demand for teachers is greatest. Prospective teachers are recruited to meet those specific demands.
- *Teacher preparation programs are tailor-made.* Programs are specifically designed to meet the preparation needs of individuals who already have at least a bachelor's degree and, in many cases, experience in other occupations, to teach in specific areas and in specific subjects.
- *Programs are job-specific.* Rather than train people to teach who may or may not ever go into teaching, alternative route programs recruit individuals for specific teaching positions and place prospective teachers into those jobs early in their training programs.
- *The teacher preparation program is field-based.* Prospective teachers work with mentor teachers while teaching.
- *Candidates usually go through their program in cohorts, not as isolated individuals.*
- *Most of these programs are collaborative efforts among state departments of education whose responsibility it is to license teachers, colleges, and universities that historically have had the responsibility for educating and training teachers, and school districts that actually hire teachers.*

This proposal for a new Transition to Teaching Project incorporates all of these items in its design. The partner school district is in high need of highly qualified ESL and bilingual teachers for holders of bachelor's degrees. The project has been designed specifically with NIU to incorporate pedagogy and methodology in a field-based teacher-training program. The proposed project incorporates more-efficient methods of identifying candidates, getting them to assigned teaching

positions, and providing support through mentors and other professional growth opportunities.

c) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

According to the U.S. Census 2000 report, Illinois ranks fifth among states with the largest number of language minority populations, following California, Texas, New York, and Florida. Furthermore, in the past two years, Chicago has displaced Houston and Phoenix as the city with the second largest number of Hispanic residents. (Los Angeles has the most Hispanic residents.) Immigrant and refugee families continue to arrive in Illinois in large numbers since there are strong, established ethnic communities and a multitude of work opportunities.

ISBE last issued an extensive report on educator supply and demand in December 2000. That report projected that between 56,000 full-time and 72,600 full- and part-time teaching positions would need to be filled over the subsequent three school years. The high demand for specific positions was defined in the report as those positions requiring more than a 65 percent increase over then-current staffing levels. Using this formula, the likely high-demand areas for teachers included reading, ESL, bilingual, special education cross-categorical services, computer education/technology, Title I, at-risk, behavior-disordered services, gifted, and learning disabilities resource services.

A more recent report, *The Illinois Bilingual Education Annual Report, 2003*, specifically discusses the need for ESL and bilingual teachers. In 2003-2004, there were 4,889 teachers reported as holding ESL or bilingual credentials. However, more than 1,200 of these teachers were assigned to work in areas for which they held additional qualifications, for example, bilingual reading specialists or bilingual special education, and therefore were not available to fill ESL and bilingual vacancies. The report projects a need for more than 5,400 qualified ESL

and bilingual teachers by 2008. Presuming that some people who hold the appropriate credentials will not accept ESL or bilingual positions, there is a minimum need for more than 2,000 ESL and bilingual teachers in the next four years. The ISBE Division for Data Analysis and Progress Reporting indicates that self-reports from school districts are very conservative, and Illinois demographics for LEP students show a rate of increase much higher than that reported by local school districts. This would indicate an even greater need than anticipated by school districts. Approved funding for a new Illinois Transition to Teaching grant will be instrumental in closing the teacher shortage gap, as well as further demonstrating to Illinois colleges and universities that career changers need university support to enter the field of education.

According to the ISBE *Transitional Bilingual Education and Transitional Programs of Instruction Evaluation Report* for 2003, Chicago Public Schools #299 serves 42 percent of the LEP children in Illinois. Furthermore, school districts within a 60-mile radius of Chicago serve more than 95 percent of all of the LEP children in Illinois, and approximately half of Illinois school districts report an enrollment of LEP students. Local demographic data indicate that school districts will continue to need high numbers of qualified bilingual teachers.

Many school districts in Illinois are coping with recruitment and hiring of the “highly qualified” bilingual and ESL teachers needed to educate the rapidly growing number of LEP students. These teachers must deal with the challenges of educating LEP students according to the rigorous *Illinois Learning Standards* and the *English Language Proficiency Standards*, while simultaneously teaching them a new language.

Bilingual and ESL teachers in Illinois are required to meet the same teacher certification requirements as their peers who speak only English. In addition, Illinois bilingual and ESL teachers must be trained to teach ESL, to assess LEP students appropriately, to deal with cross-

cultural issues, and to use a student's first language as a learning tool. In order for these students to succeed academically, it is imperative that talented bilingual professionals are identified and encouraged to enter the teaching field.

While a large pool of well-trained candidates allows school districts to be selective in employing the best teacher candidates, educational positions that require bilingual credentials often take months to fill. It is not unusual for these positions to remain vacant for several months, or even an entire school year. School districts are in great need of highly qualified professionals to deliver quality education to their LEP student populations. Illinois school districts with such a need currently must scramble and compete to find suitable, certified teachers from a limited selection of eligible candidates. These school districts often must hire teacher candidates who have time-limited certificates, and little mentoring and support are currently available to these teachers.

A major roadblock for career changers has been the traditional requirement of public and private Illinois universities to require career changers to have completed two to eight general education courses before they are allowed to enter a master in art of teaching program. Such general education requirements delay the entry of potential candidates into the Transition to Teaching certification project for one to four semesters, and may not even be necessary for the success of these candidates. NIU reduced its prerequisites to one math class, enabling Transition to Teaching participants to initiate their teacher certification programs immediately. This reduction of general education courses has not had a detrimental effect on the preparation of these teachers, since 98 out of 112 participants in the current Illinois Transition to Teaching Project passed the required Illinois Basic Skills Test, and at least eight of the remaining 14 are expected to pass the next examination.

As a result of the 2001-2004 Transition to Teaching Project, NIU has developed a specific program for career changers and others who need elementary certification and ESL/bilingual approval. NIU has also begun replicating the program for teachers in Chicago Public Schools #299 who had more years of teaching experience and therefore did not qualify for participation in the original Transition to Teaching Project. This replication and capacity building was a direct result of the 2001-2004 Transition to Teaching funding.

Another major deterrent for career changers is the reduction of income, combined with the costs of university coursework. Teacher salaries in Illinois are negotiated by teacher unions, and each school district has its own unique salary schedule. School districts that have large populations of language-minority students, such as Chicago Public Schools #299, are usually districts that also have limited finances. A review of information on the current 112 participants in the 2001 Transition to Teaching Project indicates that most made significant personal sacrifices to change careers and enter the field of teaching. In a recent survey, nearly 80 percent of the teachers in the process of completing their participation in the current project reported a reduction in their former salaries as a result of entering the teaching field, and \$1,000 to \$1,500 per year in expenses for textbooks, supplies, travel, etc. The average reduction in pay among those who reported a loss in salary was \$17,658 per project participant, with a range of \$3,000 to \$50,000 in lost income. Such financial sacrifices, combined with the stress of teaching while simultaneously learning how to teach and completing certification courses at night, make financial support critical as an enticement in the process of career change.

Illinois teacher salaries are influenced not only by coursework, but also by attainment of a master of arts degree, which increases salaries by \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year. The major financial sacrifices reported by the current project participants illustrate the foremost need that a transition

to teaching program include a master of arts degree.

The 2001-2004 Transition to Teaching Project collaborated with NIU to include courses appropriate for elementary certification and ESL/bilingual approval resulting in a master of arts degree, rather than just an elementary certificate. Successful completion of the current Transition to Teaching Project helps participants to increase salaries as rapidly as possible and relieve the financial sacrifices caused by participating in the project, sacrifices that are not only difficult on the candidates themselves, but also on their families.

To expand on the success of the current Transition to Teaching Project that produced 105 ESL and bilingual teachers within three years, ISBE proposes to work with other Illinois public and private universities in alternative programs for career changers, using the current project as a model format. For example, the director of the ESL/Bilingual Teacher Training Program at Illinois State University is interested in applying the Illinois Transition to Teaching model in order to explore how the university may provide a more flexible, alternative path to meet Transition to Teaching candidates' needs and streamline their entry into the certification process.

It is clear that the proposed Transition to Teaching Project will increase the number of teaching professionals available to serve language-minority children by providing a quality and streamlined program that encourages and gives opportunity to those who wish to change careers and serve this high-need population.

d) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards of students.

Illinois will address the teacher shortage by continuing the highly successful use of USDE Transition to Teaching funds to increase the number of certified ESL and bilingual teachers in Illinois K-12 classrooms. Through the new Illinois Transition to Teaching Project, ISBE will

continue its partnership with NIU for elementary teaching certification participants, and will expand the project to partner with various Illinois universities and colleges that offer secondary teaching certification programs. NIU is currently the only Illinois university that has streamlined requirements and created a specific course sequence to accommodate career changers. NIU also offers courses on a contractual basis so that cohorts are more economical than providing stipends per course. Forming contracted courses for cohorts allowed the current Transition to Teaching Project to include more teachers at a lower cost per teacher.

The course sequence that has been developed for project participants seeking elementary certification with the Transition to Teaching/NIU cohort has been designed, critiqued, and redesigned as a result of the NIU College of Education and project participants, staff, and the advisory committee working together under the current Transition to Teaching grant. One example is the traditional course in research that has been required of master of science in education candidates at the university, which was focused on research preparation that would encourage and prepare graduate students to continue graduate studies and pursue research in a doctoral program. The NIU College of Education recognized with the first cohort that the course content did not have much relevance to Transition to Teaching participants. With feedback from students and the department, the college revised the content of the course and developed a new course syllabus for subsequent cohorts. Courses that are required for ESL or bilingual approval that intersect with the goal of the master of arts degree were included in the sequence of courses to be completed. The requirement to take a prerequisite math course before registering for Math 402–Methods of Instruction in Math Curriculum for Grades K-9, is being reviewed before any new program is initiated.

Transition to Teaching teachers-in-training are faced with multiple challenges that redefine

the term “rigor in coursework.” They must successfully meet state and university standards to participate in the project. The state standards require passing a language proficiency test, a basic skills test, and a test in the field they are teaching within nine months of their employment. They must successfully complete coursework required by the NIU College of Education for certification and an advanced degree. Finally, they must successfully learn, plan, and provide instruction to LEP children to the satisfaction of the local school district administration and board. Continuation in the Transition to Teaching Project requires continued employment in Illinois school districts serving language-minority children. All of these components together test the academic and personal commitment of every project participant.

To ensure the quality of the overall project, all of the partners will be stakeholders in its success. Table 2 presents the services and responsibilities of the participating partners.

Table 2. Responsibilities of Project Partners

Partner	Responsibilities
ISBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiate contracts with the IRC and the external evaluator. ▪ Oversee all activities conducted through project contracts. ▪ Facilitate communication and activities among all partners. ▪ Collaborate with other agencies in identifying candidates.
IRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiate and implement grant activities. ▪ Recruit, review, and select candidates. ▪ Conduct background checks on candidates. ▪ Oversee course contractual plans and/or stipend disbursement, including verification of school district employment. ▪ Provide technical support and teacher-training activities.

Partner	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate communication and activities among all partners. ▪ Respond to participants' needs through regular communication.
Partner School District– Chicago Public Schools #299	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommend candidates for recruitment consideration. ▪ Commit to hiring selected applicants. ▪ Provide pre- and in-service training, and comprehensive supervision for teachers with Type 29 Certification. ▪ Send supervisors of participants to annual IRC training sessions.
Colleges and Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promptly evaluate transcripts of participants. ▪ Advise participants on efficient courses of study that will lead to degrees and secondary certification teacher certification. ▪ Provide elementary teacher education for cohort groups in convenient locations and during after-work hours. ▪ Work with ISBE and the IRC to improve ESL/bilingual teacher-training programs. ▪ Provide representatives for membership on the project advisory committee.
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submit applications, resumes, academic transcripts, and reference forms. ▪ Take the appropriate state-required tests, including language proficiency and basic skills tests. ▪ Apply for Type 29 Certificates, if appropriate. ▪ Take at least one course per semester and three courses per summer during the grant period. ▪ Maintain the required grade point average in teacher education programs.

Partner	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="397 241 909 273">▪ Participate in mentoring opportunities. <li data-bbox="397 310 1193 342">▪ Attend required seminars and all in-service training sessions. <li data-bbox="397 380 1442 485">▪ Maintain continued employment as an ESL/bilingual teacher or paraprofessional in the school district.