



May 9, 2022

INFORMATION ACTION

SUBJECT: DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNER PILOT STUDY UPDATE

Strategic Plan Priority Area II: Child Development

Goal: All children birth through age 5 have high-quality, nurturing environments that ensure their learning readiness.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

Commissioners will hear results to date from the Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot Study and engage in discussion with the study's research team from American Institutes for Research (AIR). The study will end in June 2022.

Nearly 60% of California's young children ages birth to 5 years of age are DLLs, learning their family's home language or languages while also acquiring English. It is critical for administrators and educators who serve these children in early learning and care programs to partner with families to support DLLs' education and development, including language development.

In July 2016, the First 5 California (F5CA) Commission approved \$20 million for the DLL Pilot Study to evaluate the effectiveness and scalability of existing early learning, professional development, and family engagement strategies for DLLs in early learning and care settings. In 2017, American Institutes for Research (AIR) was selected through a competitive bidding process to serve as the evaluator. AIR's contract and contracts with the 16 pilot DLL counties are executed through June 2022.

BACKGROUND

The DLL Pilot Study is centered in 16 counties (Butte, Calaveras, Contra Costa, Fresno, Los Angeles, Monterey, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Sonoma, Stanislaus, and Yolo) selected through sampling techniques to be representative of California counties statewide. The DLL Pilot Study was designed and implemented in three phases. (See Attachment A, DLL Pilot Study Overview.) Each phase of the study builds on the other and provides information, fills

gaps in research, and informs policy about effective and scalable strategies and the conditions under which they are effective.

The third phase of the study, the DLL Pilot Study Expansion Phase, was designed to address the changing landscape and disparities for DLLs in California's early learning system, with a focus on educator preparation, learning strategies, and family engagement, including challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. DLL Expansion Phase projects enable counties to engage in cross-system collaboration to integrate a focus on DLLs more prominently in Quality Counts California workforce preparation, instructional strategies, focus on the most vulnerable DLL children and families, and the most often overlooked and under-engaged providers. Additionally, the Expansion Phase enabled alignment of DLL messaging, support, and strategies between early childhood and K–12 systems.

Evaluation of the DLL Pilot Study Expansion Phase builds on emerging findings from the second, in-depth phase, including: (1) the conditions that support implementation of a range of strategies for supporting DLL children and families, (2) if and how those strategies change systems within and across counties, and (3) the extent to which strategies are scalable and sustainable during and after COVID-19 recovery.

AIR has released 10 briefs and reports on the first two phases of the DLL Pilot Study online at <https://californiadllstudy.org/>. In addition, AIR plans to publish at least three additional reports, including results from the Expansion Phase, before June 30, 2022.

Results from the three-phase DLL Pilot Study can help leaders and policymakers understand scalable strategies and inform policy recommendations, including California's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, about how to better support young DLLs in early learning settings. Attachment B provides a crosswalk between focal areas of the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, DLL Pilot Study findings, and research literature.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Commissioners have received updates from F5CA and AIR on the DLL Pilot Study over the past several years, including at the January 28, 2021, October 22, 2020, and July 25, 2019, Commission meetings. Commissioners approved a 12-month extension of the DLL Pilot Study funding authorization (through December 2022) at its January 2021 meeting to accommodate implementation delays resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

FISCAL DETAIL

The DLL Pilot was authorized at \$20 million over five years (July 2016 through December 2022). The funding allocation of \$20 million was drawn from F5CA's Research Development account (\$16 million) and the Education account (\$4 million). This agenda item has no additional fiscal impact.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Dual Language Learner Pilot Study Overview

B. Crosswalk Between Dual Language Learner Policy Recommendations and Dual Language Learner Pilot Study Findings