



July 25, 2019

<p><b>SUBJECT</b></p> <p><b>DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNER PILOT STUDY</b></p> <p><b>Priority Area II: Child Development</b>          Goal: All children birth through age 5 have high-quality, nurturing environments that ensure their learning readiness.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Action</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information</p>
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### **SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE**

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The purpose of this agenda item is to provide Commissioners an update on the progress of the Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot Study, including presentation of preliminary qualitative findings. At the July 2016 Commission meeting, Commissioners approved a five-year investment of up to \$20 million for the DLL Pilot Study for Fiscal Years 2016–17 to 2020–21. Since funding approval, First 5 California (F5CA) has solicited input from key stakeholders, contracted an evaluation firm, and launched the study.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

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This is an information-only item. F5CA staff is not requesting action at this time.

### **BACKGROUND OF KEY ISSUES**

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#### **Study Goals**

The DLL Pilot Study seeks to identify the range and distribution of learning experiences for DLLs in California and to understand how these experiences are linked to positive child and family outcomes. Specific goals of this study include:

1. Evaluating effectiveness and feasibility of existing practices for DLLs in early learning and care settings, across three content areas:

- a) Instructional practices
  - b) Professional development
  - c) Family engagement
2. Understanding the context(s) in which strategies are effective and scalable in diverse licensed and unlicensed early learning and care settings.
  3. Disseminating findings about best practices to relevant stakeholders and practitioners.

### **Context for California’s Dual Language Learners**

Nearly 60 percent of California’s children birth to 5 years of age are DLLs (California Health Interview Survey, 2017). This compares with 22 percent of children nationwide.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, California’s system of early care and education does not adequately support DLLs to realize the advantages of bilingualism and multilingualism. Recent studies indicate that, on average, inadequately supported DLLs enter kindergarten behind their peers, particularly in the areas of language, literacy, and mathematics. As part of this support, young DLLs need rich early learning experiences and assessment in their home language so early childhood educators can fully understand what DLLs know and are able to do. However, lack of bilingual staff, limited access to other adults who speak the home language, and lack of valid and reliable assessment tools create barriers to effectively assess the quality of children’s early learning experiences and outcomes. Further, there is a need to consider the unique developmental needs of infants and toddlers separately from those of preschoolers, a group that has had little attention in research.

The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education, in the recent *Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs* note, “The lack of proven instructional practices and evidence-based models that effectively support the development and learning of children who are DLLs also is a contributor to the achievement gap.”<sup>2</sup> To better serve this growing population, F5CA designed this project as a pilot *study*, evaluating the effectiveness of existing strategies implemented in a range of early learning settings throughout California, including assessment of effectiveness and scalability, with a final goal of disseminating findings to programs, policymakers, and the public. By identifying existing strategies implemented in the state, this project differs from typical pilot projects that implement new strategies followed by an evaluation.

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2015). *America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-being, 2015*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>2</sup> “Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs.” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. U.S. Department of Education. 2016. [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/dll\\_policy\\_statement\\_final.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/dll_policy_statement_final.pdf)

The F5CA DLL Pilot will further the ultimate goal for California’s young DLLs to thrive, develop bilingual ability, be ready for kindergarten, and succeed in school and beyond. Findings of the DLL Pilot will support public awareness messages about the benefits of being bilingual.

## Historical Timeline

F5CA’s prior Strategic Plan, adopted by Commissioners in January 2014, laid the foundation for the DLL Pilot Study as follows:

- “Goal 1.2. Early Learning: Children birth through age 5 benefit from high-quality early education, early intervention, family engagement, and support that prepares all children to reach their optimal potential in school and life.”
- “Objective 1.2.2: Support and pilot culturally and linguistically effective strategies to engage Dual Language Learners (DLL) in early learning settings.”

Following approval of the 2014 Strategic Plan, F5CA convened multiple meetings of the DLL Input Group comprised of expert educators, academics, government agencies, non-profits, First 5s, and early education advocates. Based on information from the DLL Input Group during 2015 and 2016, and in collaboration with Peter Mangione, Ph.D., and others from WestEd, F5CA constructed the evaluation Request for Proposal, released in April 2017.

In August 2017, following a competitive bid review process, F5CA contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to assist with further design and implementation of the study. Heather Quick, Ph.D., serves as Principal Investigator, and Karen Manship, M.A., as Project Manager. Additional members of the team have extensive education and experience with research on dual language learners in the context of early care and education. AIR researchers also maintain their own Technical Advisory Group consisting of Linda Espinosa, Ph.D., Professor of Early Childhood Education (Ret.) at the University of Missouri, Columbia; Doré Laforett, Ph.D., Advanced Research Scientist at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute; Yuuko Uchikoshi, Ed.D., Associate Professor at the University of California, Davis; and Mariela Páez, Ph.D., Associate Professor at the Lynch School of Education, Boston College.

During the remainder of 2017 and 2018, F5CA, in collaboration with AIR and advice of the DLL Input Group, continued planning the design of the study, identifying three phases:

- **Study Phase 1: Background Study** with the purpose of identifying current supports for DLLs across the state in participating counties
- **Study Phase 2: In-Depth Study** with the purpose of identifying effectiveness, or what works, to support DLLs within particular sites and classrooms

- **Study Phase 3: Expansion Study** with the purpose of learning how effective strategies can be expanded to other contexts

AIR launched data collection under Study Phase 1 in 2019.

Of the \$20 million approved by Commissioners, F5CA reserved \$7.5 million for the evaluation contract (AIR) and \$12.5 million for dissemination to the counties selected to participate in the study (Phase 2, \$2.5 million; Phase 3, \$10 million).

## **Partners**

As part of its sampling design for Study Phases 1 and 2, AIR selected 16 counties to participate in the DLL Pilot Study creating a demographically representative total sample of the DLL child population in California. Participating counties include Butte, Calaveras, Contra Costa, Fresno, Los Angeles, Monterey, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Sonoma, Stanislaus, and Yolo.

F5CA is in the process of establishing Local Area Agreements for distributing \$2.5 million in support of Study Phase 2 (In-Depth Study). As part of the LAA process, First 5 county commissions have first right of refusal to serve as a fiscal lead agency. Study Phase 3 (Expansion Study) will distribute an additional \$10 million to support expansion of research-based practices to different types of early learning settings, languages, or ages groups. The selection process for Phase 3 will be determined as part of Phase 2 activities.

## **Supportive Webpages and Documents**

In support of the DLL Pilot Study, F5CA created a webpage to describes its investment (<http://www.cfc.ca.gov/partners/investments.html#dll>). Key documents on the webpage for educators and the public include:

- Dual Language Learner Pilot Fact Sheet
- Dual Language Learner Working Paper
- Dual Language Learner Resource Guide

Additionally, AIR created a website to describe the project and its research team: <https://californiadllstudy.org/>.

## **SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

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In January 2014, Commissioners adopted the prior Strategic Plan, identifying the DLL Pilot Study as a key objective (Goal 1.2, Objective 1.2.2). During the April 2016 Commission meeting, Commissioners expressed an interest in shifting the paradigm for DLLs by addressing the benefits of bilingualism and conveying that more than one language is an asset to individuals, families, and our society. At the July 2016 Commission meeting, Commissioners approved up to \$20 million for the DLL Pilot Study (Fiscal Years 2016–17 to 2020–21). At the April 2019 Commission meeting, Commissioners approved a new Strategic Plan (2019–2024), which includes support of dual language learners under Priority Area II, Child Development.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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- A. Dual Language Learner Pilot Update (F5CA Presentation)
- B. Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot Study: Progress Update and First Findings (AIR Presentation)