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Project Title: **Factors in School Administrators' Decisions about Educational Programming for Emergent Bilinguals**

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Introduction

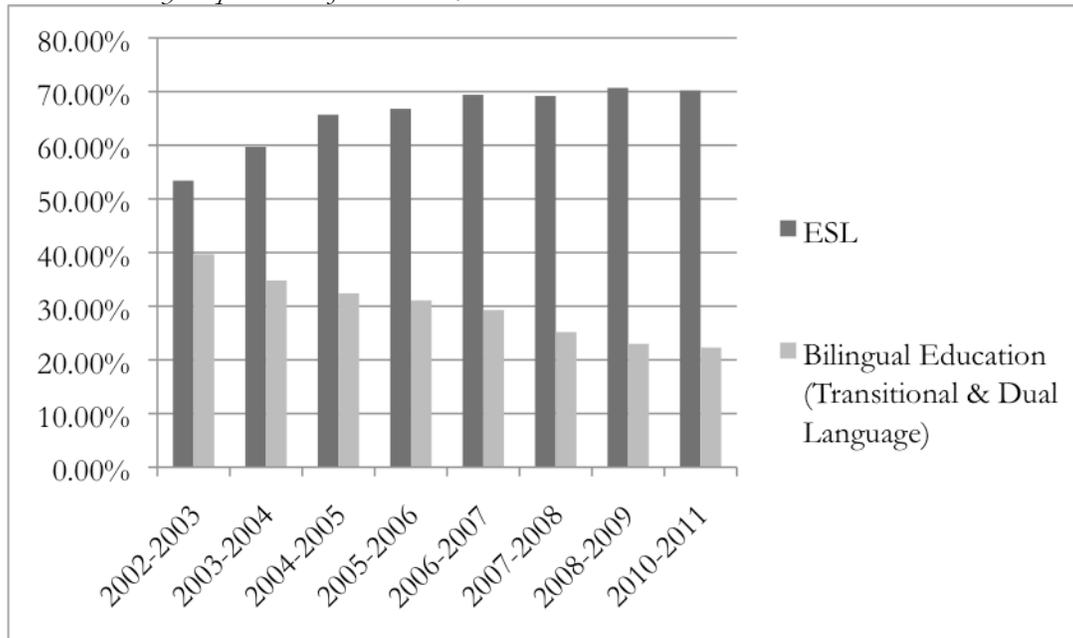
Language education policies¹ in the U.S. have historically approached immigrants and their linguistic diversity with alternating restriction and tolerance, like a pendulum swinging between opposing ends (Menken, 2008). Preferences regarding language support programming for emergent bilinguals (also known as English language learners or ELLs) – specifically, whether to offer bilingual education or English-only education such as English as a second language (ESL) – have likewise changed over time, in response to demographic and political pressures (Cummins, 2000; National Council of Teachers of English, 2006). Yet programming decisions are crucial for emergent bilingual students, as they have a longstanding impact on their language skills and academic performance, either promoting language loss or language maintenance over time. The past decade has borne witness to a significant loss of bilingual education programs in New York City schools and elsewhere, an alarming trend that turns its back on the convincing research base on the educational benefits of programs that use the native language of emergent bilinguals in instruction.

Because schools in New York City are highly decentralized, individual schools decide which language support program(s) they will provide for the emergent bilinguals in their building. This responsibility ultimately falls on each school's principal. In this study, we examine the factors that determine the language education policies adopted by school leaders, through research in schools that have recently eliminated or reduced their bilingual education programs in favor of ESL programs. Although city policy has historically supported bilingual education (Reyes, 2006), in recent years the number of emergent bilinguals in New York City public schools enrolled in bilingual education has decreased while the number in ESL programs has increased (see Figure 1).

¹ Language policy is broadly defined as all of the “language practices, beliefs and management of a community or polity” (Spolsky, 2004: p. 9). With regard to language policy in education, included under this definition would be decisions about which language(s) will be taught and/or used as the medium of instruction (Corson, 1999; Menken, 2008).

Figure 1. Program Enrollment of New York City Emergent Bilinguals by School Year, 2002-2011

Source: New York City Department of Education, 2011

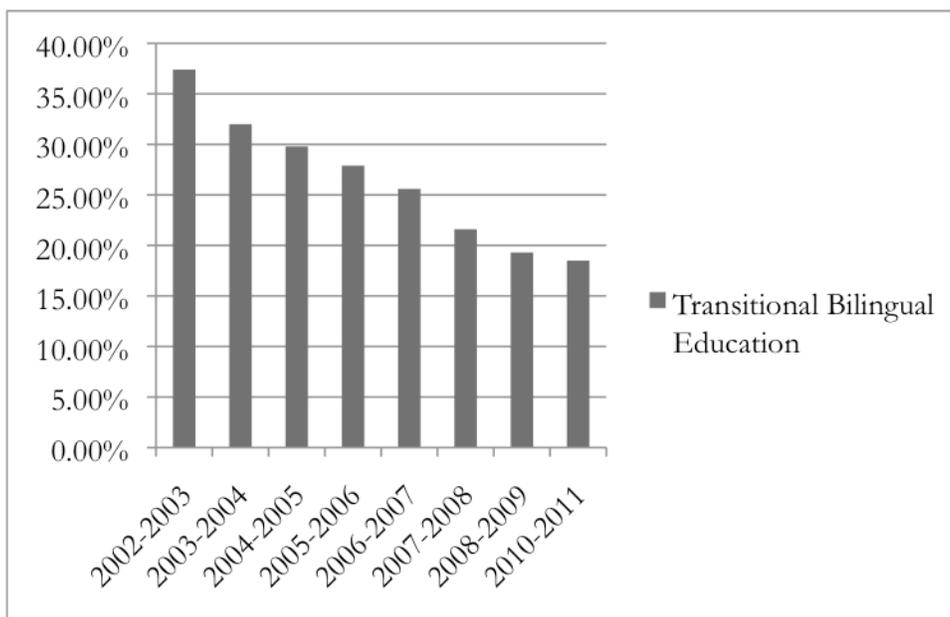


As can be seen in the K-12 enrollment data presented in Figure 1, the number of emergent bilinguals enrolled in bilingual education programs in New York City has decreased in recent years while the number in ESL programs has increased. In the 2002-2003 school year, 39.7% of all emergent bilinguals were enrolled in some form of bilingual education programming, while 53.4% of were enrolled in ESL programs. By contrast, in the 2010-2011 school year, only 22.3% of emergent bilinguals were in bilingual education programs while 70.2% were enrolled in ESL programming (New York City Department of Education, 2011).

While the preceding chart combined two different kinds of bilingual education programs – dual language and transitional – in order to highlight an overall loss of bilingual education programming, it is important to note that the real loss has occurred among transitional bilingual programs. Transitional bilingual education has been the predominant bilingual model in city schools since the *Aspira Consent Decree* in 1974 established the right of emergent bilinguals in New York to receive a bilingual education (Reyes, 2006). Dual language programs have actually experienced a

slight increase from serving 2.3% of emergent bilinguals in 2002-2003 to 3.8% in 2010-2011. That said, the percentage of students enrolled in dual language bilingual programs remains very small, and the increase of such programs has not been enough to curtail the dramatic loss of transitional programs. Figure 2 shows the loss of transitional bilingual programs.

Figure 2. The loss of transitional bilingual programs in New York City schools, 2002-2011
Source: New York City Department of Education, 2011



As shown in Figure 2, 37.4% of emergent bilinguals were enrolled in transitional bilingual programs in the 2002-2003 school year, whereas just 18.50% were enrolled in these programs in 2010-2011.

This study seeks to understand why bilingual programs, and particularly transitional bilingual education, have fallen out of favor among school administrators in recent years. Language policy research typically overlooks the central role played by school administrators, especially principals, in determining a school's language policy. This study is part of a new wave of research in language policy that refocuses our attention from governments to local policymakers, including school administrators, and thereby offers an opportunity to increase understandings of language policymaking at the school level (Menken & García, 2010). By examining how principals determine

policy, findings from this study offer information about how school administrators negotiate a broad range of complicated and often competing demands to determine their school's language policy, and identifies ways to support these administrators in their decisions about language programming for emergent bilinguals.

Language Education Policy in the New York Context

Schools are primary sites for the implementation as well as contestation of language policies (Cooper, 1989; Corson, 1999), and for this reason language education policy is a growing area of research. The field examines such topics as which language(s) are taught, how they are taught, and how linguistic diversity is negotiated in school. Language education policy both reflects and influences wider societal and cultural ideologies and attitudes about critical issues such as language, culture, and national identity. As such, research in this area serves as a lens through which to analyze and expose issues of power and marginalization in educational contexts.

Because schools often become the battleground for larger societal struggles, particularly in a rapidly changing U.S. where what it means to be American is being redefined by a large influx of new immigrants, bilingual education in the U.S. has become highly politicized. For example, the states of California, Arizona, and Massachusetts have responded to record immigration rates by passing anti-bilingual education mandates in recent years, effectively ending the possibility for emergent bilinguals to receive instruction through the medium of their native language in those states. During this period, the number of bilingual education programs nationally has likewise decreased (Crawford, 2007; Zehler *et al.*, 2003).

Recent federal education policy is a factor in this shift. *No Child Left Behind* has been in effect since 2002, and is the most invasive federal education legislation in U.S. history, using student test scores as a means of holding each school – and thereby each state – accountable for the federal

funding they receive (Menken, 2009). The law requires that emergent bilinguals show continual progress on academic content assessments in English as well as on English language proficiency assessments, with failure resulting in high-stakes consequences for individual schools (e.g., school closure and loss of federal funding) as well as for students (e.g., grade promotion and graduation) (Menken, 2008). This policy has resulted in increasing instruction in English to prepare for the tests, as emergent bilinguals and their schools are disproportionately penalized for failing (Menken, 2008, 2010; Wiley & Wright, 2004). Continuing in the same vein, the Obama administration in 2010 provided funding to selected states – including New York – through a grants competition program called ‘Race to the Top,’ which incorporates the same ‘test and punish’ approach of *No Child Left Behind* (Menken, 2011).

Wholeheartedly adopting this policy direction, since 2002 the New York City Mayor and Schools Chancellor have received national attention for aggressively promoting testing, closing failing schools, and publicizing test scores to evaluate schools in the public eye. City schools are subjected to city, state, and national evaluations. In New York City, as echoed elsewhere across the U.S., emergent bilinguals have received negative attention for poor performance on tests and other accountability measures; accordingly, they have the lowest graduation rates (25%) and highest dropout rates (28%) of all students (Menken, 2009, 2010).

Schools in New York City have the authority to determine the type of educational program(s) offered to emergent bilinguals, although city and state policies set certain parameters that must be followed along with the federal requirements mentioned above (Menken, 2011). While not stating which program model must be adopted, the Language Allocation Policy of the New York State Education Department and that of the New York City Department of Education mandate that schools offer transitional bilingual education, dual language bilingual education, or free-standing ESL to their emergent bilinguals (New York State Education Department, 2009; New York City

Department of Education, 2008). That said, the New York Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 uphold the *Aspira Consent Decree* by requiring that bilingual education be provided in schools where there are 20 or more emergent bilinguals who speak the same native language in the same grade (New York State Department of Education, 2007). As only a small handful of states actually mandate the provision of bilingual education, this policy is considered very supportive of bilingual education (Menken, 2006). In spite of this, the loss of bilingual programs in city schools show that practices today radically differ from what is mandated in written policy statements.

In stark contrast to the decreasing number of bilingual programs and education reforms emphasizing high-stakes testing in English and corresponding accountability, there is now a sizeable research base in bilingual education which convincingly shows that emergent bilinguals who have the opportunity to develop and maintain their native languages in school are likely to outperform their peers in English-only programming and succeed academically (Baker, 2006; Krashen & McField, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 1997). There is strong research support for the interdependence hypothesis (Cummins, 2000), which shows how skills that students learn in their native language are found to positively transfer to English during the process of second language acquisition. For instance, research is conclusive that teaching students to read in their native language promotes higher levels of reading achievement in English (Goldenberg, 2008). Yet in spite of these research findings, the vast majority of immigrants to the U.S. receive instruction only in English with the misconception that doing so will help students learn English better and more quickly.

Research Design

To better understand why so many bilingual programs are being closed in New York City schools, the following research questions served to guide this study:

- What are the factors that school administrators and teachers cite as having the greatest impact on their school's language policy? In specific:

- Why have school leaders in recent years favored ESL programming over bilingual education programming?

This study uses qualitative methods, for their effectiveness in research on language education policy implementation (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Menken & García, 2010), as a means to explore in depth how educators negotiate competing pressures to determine language policies in the schools where they work.

To answer the preceding research questions, data was gathered from 2009-2011. Interviews were conducted with administrators and teachers in schools that recently switched from offering some form of bilingual education to now offering only English as a second language. Principals were the main source of interview data, because in New York City it is ultimately principals who decide which language education program(s) will be offered to emergent bilinguals in their school. A select number of teachers and assistant principals were also interviewed for triangulation purposes, to expose differing views within schools on the new language policy. In some schools, however, the assistant principal holds the same views as the principal, because s/he had actually been the driving force behind the recent decision to close the bilingual program. Interviews were semi-structured and guided by a protocol; the administrator interview protocol is in Appendix A and the teacher interview protocol is in Appendix B.

Schools were targeted for inclusion in this study based on a list provided to the Principal Investigator (Menken) by the New York City Department of Education indicating schools that had previously offered bilingual education programs and had within the past five years eliminated or reduced these and replaced them with ESL programs. In the end, the schools included in this study were those listed with the largest numbers of emergent bilinguals who switched from bilingual education to ESL programming and in which the principal agreed to participate. The schools selected differ in size, structure, and location across city boroughs. A total of ten schools were included in this study, located in Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and Bronx. These included four

elementary schools, three junior high schools, and three high schools. In three of these schools, some bilingual programming remained as the program was gradually phased out.² For the sake of comparison, we also conducted interviews in two schools with strong bilingual programs, making a grand total of 12 schools in our study.

A total of 20 participants were interviewed in depth, with some participating in follow-up interviews: ten principals, two acting principals (who were assistant principals at the school), four assistant principals, and four teachers. Interviews were recorded by digital recorder, transcribed, coded and analyzed to identify prevalent themes (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Codes were refined after initial data analysis, and revised accordingly; the findings reported here are the most prevalent themes that we found in our final data analysis. School policy documents and performance data were also analyzed to contextualize findings from the interviews.

Overview of Key Findings

The key themes that arose in interviews are briefly overviewed here, before moving onto detailed description of each. First, the performance of emergent bilinguals on accountability measures (e.g., high-stakes tests and graduation rates) poses a problem for school administrators under tremendous pressure to improve schoolwide performance. As a result, a primary goal of administrators is improved test scores – as emphasized in local and federal accountability systems – rather than more holistic views of language learning. We found that bilingual education programs are immediately blamed for the poor performance of emergent bilinguals. English acquisition has become the main focus in the education of emergent bilinguals, disregarding their native language as a resource in this process. Beyond this, the pressures of accountability create a disincentive to serve

²One of the schools in our original sample received a new principal in our second year of the study, who has since expanded the school's bilingual program. Thus, some of her comments are cited in the section on "Contrasting Examples" while those of the teacher we interviewed under the previous principal appear in the other findings sections.

emergent bilinguals and promulgate negative views of the students; in the extreme, schools do not admit them. The small schools movement – a cornerstone of education reform initiatives in city schools – has also played a significant role in the loss of bilingual education programs, as new schools typically serve smaller numbers of emergent bilinguals and, simultaneously, are under tremendous pressure to be seen as high performing.

Compounding what is a challenging context for schools serving emergent bilingual students in the U.S., we found that the administrators responsible for eliminating their school’s bilingual program typically have no formal preparation in educating emergent bilinguals, in that they do not have a background in either teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) or bilingual education. Coursework in this area is not required for certification of principals in New York. As a result, they hold limited understandings of bilingual education. Related to this issue, the principals interviewed typically believe that bilingual education programs fail to teach students English, and think poorly of the teachers in the school’s former bilingual program for using too much of the students’ native language in instruction. A prevalent misconception among school administrators is that to improve performance in English, instruction should be in English only. School principals in our sample also believe that bilingual education programs are more expensive than ESL programs. Taking all of these issues together, the administrators interviewed for this research show an overwhelming preference for ESL programs over bilingual education, with transitional bilingual education being the model targeted for closure.

Pressures of School Accountability

In the schools included in this study, principals were responsible for deciding to dramatically reduce the size of their school’s bilingual program or eliminate it altogether (total immediate elimination was what occurred in the vast majority of schools in our sample, though some were

gradually phasing out the program at the time of our data collection). When asked about the factors that contributed to this decision, all of the participants mentioned testing and the pressures of accountability as playing a key role. A number of the schools in the sample were seen as low performing due to poor test scores and the requirements of *No Child Left Behind*, and all of the schools constantly sought to improve their performance. At the state level, schools in New York failing to make adequate yearly progress (or AYP) for two years or more risk closure, as noted by their placement on the list of Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI) or, even worse, Schools Under Registration Review (SURR). Schools in New York City also receive a progress report card with a letter grade based on student progress, student performance, and school environment.³

Emergent bilinguals, typically referred to in the city as ELLs, were repeatedly mentioned in interviews as low performing within this accountability context, a great cause for concern among principals who constantly need to show progress and strong schoolwide performance. Below is a quotation from an interview with “Ms. E,”⁴ the principal of a junior high school, in which she states:

[ELLs] are actually why we had not met AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress] in the last 5 years. That’s like the only subgroup that had not made AYP, the English language learners. (Ms. E, junior high school principal, interview transcript)

In the preceding quote, Ms. E notes how emergent bilinguals are a subgroup within the *No Child Left Behind* accountability framework, and how they are the lowest performing group of students in her school.

Mr. A, a high school principal, explains how low performance can become a catalyst for school change, and specifically for the elimination of bilingual education programs (interviewer’s voice in italics):

³ Student progress includes growth in test scores and credit accumulation, student performance includes overall test score averages and graduation rates, and school environment includes attendance and parental views of the school. The first two categories of the report card rely heavily on standardized test scores.

⁴ All participant names are pseudonyms.

So why did you change the [bilingual] program?

The F [city report card] was an overall thing for General Education and everything, not only for the ELL population, but what happens with ELLs affects the whole school. And if you don't address what happens with ELLs then you won't move the school. (Mr. A, high school principal, interview transcript)

In this passage, Mr. A offers a clear explanation for how the performance of emergent bilinguals on tests impacts schoolwide performance. Mr. A chose to eliminate the school's bilingual program in response to the poor performance on accountability measures. What is challenging is that the measures that comprise the citywide evaluation rely heavily on student test scores and, as it is impossible to fully divorce language from content, language proficiency negatively influences the scores emergent bilinguals receive (Menken, 2008).

In the school where Ms. P is an assistant principal (she was acting principal at the time of her interview, and was instrumental in closing the bilingual program), failure by emergent bilinguals to make adequate yearly progress was cited as the main cause for her school being listed low performing and at risk of closure. She explains that the pressures of high-stakes testing do not permit the time necessary for bilingual education programs to bear their fruits in improving student outcomes. As she states:

Children used to be exempt from testing for up to five years. Then it changed to two years, and now after one year they have to take the ELA [English language arts exam]. So it seems we don't have time to waste for the transition...[T]his is about *No Child Left Behind*. (Ms. P, junior high school assistant principal/acting principal, interview transcript)

As Ms. P explains, she promoted the elimination of the bilingual program at her school with the belief that English-only instruction would provide the greatest short-term gains on tests administered in English.

Taken together, the quotations above show how test-based accountability poses great challenges for schools serving emergent bilinguals, as these students are disproportionately likely to be labeled low performing due to their language proficiency. School administrators are under

enormous pressure to improve the performance of their students so that their schools can be deemed successful, and they focus on programming for emergent bilinguals in order to do so.

Blaming Bilingual Programs for Poor School Performance

Another of our main findings is that bilingual education programs are immediately blamed for the poor performance of emergent bilinguals on high-stakes tests and other measures of accountability. We find the decision is typically based on a belief that elimination of the bilingual program will improve the test performance of emergent bilinguals – independently of any actual data analysis. Principals in our sample turn to language programming changes for emergent bilinguals as a way to provide the ‘quick fix’ their school needs to immediately meet the federal and local accountability requirements.

The following quotation provides an example of an administrator making the decision to eliminate a bilingual program independently of available data. In this interview, the participant – a junior high school assistant principal who led the decision to eliminate the bilingual program at her school – explained that prior to the elimination of the program two-thirds of all emergent bilinguals had been enrolled in ESL, while only one-third were in the school’s transitional bilingual education program. In the passage that follows, the interviewer (Menken) probes this point:

It was one-third in bilingual and then the rest in [ESL] class determined by scores...

How did the two-thirds of kids in the [ESL] program do in comparison with the kids in the bilingual program?

This goes back so many years ago. Three years ago. All I know is our scores weren’t as successful as they should have been. (Ms. N, junior high school assistant principal)

Although Ms. N was the primary person at her school leading efforts to eliminate the bilingual program, it is significant that test scores of students in the ESL program were not compared to those in the bilingual program. The elimination of the bilingual program was not a data-driven decision, but rather one based on ideology or a feeling that the program was the problem.

We also find that administrators choose to eliminate their bilingual programs in order to improve school-wide test performance in schools where emergent bilinguals are deemed low performing, as is the case at most schools in our sample.

[He] was a new principal and he was brought in to turn this school around. I think that's probably the way he viewed it, that he saw eliminating bilingual program as critical. (Ms. A, junior high school assistant principal)

In this school, the assistant principal explains how her school's new principal saw that emergent bilinguals were not performing well on high-stakes tests. He was brought into the school to improve it, so dissolved the bilingual program in the belief that doing so would resolve the problem.

English as the Goal

Learning English is a pressing and urgent goal among those we interviewed, who fail to see the maintenance and/or development of a student's home language as a resource in that process. The administrators we interviewed are blind-sighted by the idea that learning English quickly will provide access to college, job opportunities and future success. Quick access to English content, and total immersion, are perceived as efficient pedagogical approaches to meeting this goal. This viewpoint contradicts research that shows how emergent bilinguals who receive native language instruction in school typically acquire the language more effectively (Baker, 2006; Crawford & Krashen, 2007; Cummins, 2000; García, 2009; Krashen & McField, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Indicative of the pressure many principals feel to ensure that emergent bilinguals acquire English, one principal asks, "What keeps me up at night is what kind of jobs and what kind of ultimate opportunities are available to the students if they do not master the English language?" (Ms. E, junior high school principal, interview transcript). In the sample of schools in our study that eliminated their bilingual programs, the pressure to learn English is translated into English

immersion to achieve this aim.

In justifying her principal's remarks on the elimination of the school's bilingual program to an upset student, Ms. A says:

It's not that he wants you to lose your Spanish. He wants you to learn English more because it means college, it means jobs, it means you know, being successful, it means having more opportunities...

In this quotation, Ms. A makes clear that the principal of her school has chosen to prioritize English over the student's native language as the sole language acquisition goal. She continues to explain this viewpoint in the following:

How many colleges offer bilingual programs? Like most of the classes you're going to take are going to be in English only. And while in New York City you may be able to find a job where you can only speak Spanish [*laughs*] you're really limiting your choices, if the school really hasn't offered you the chance to learn English quickly, then what happens? (Ms. A, high school assistant principal, interview transcript)

Although Ms. A, like her principal, claims to value a student's bilingualism, her primary concern becomes the development of the English language as it alone is perceived to be linked to college, success, and job opportunities. Embedded within this quotation is the belief that bilingual programs fail to teach English, a theme we return to later in this report.

According to participants in our study, some parents express such urgency as well. The following is a quotation by a dual language bilingual education teacher at one of the schools included in our study that continues to offer bilingual education:

We have a lot of parents who are afraid that their children are not learning enough English [in the bilingual program] and push for them to be in ESL or monolingual earlier than what they are ready for... They are worried that they are not picking up English and don't believe that the Spanish is what's helping them learn the English in the first place. (Ms. T, elementary school teacher, interview transcript)

According to Ms. T, the misconception that students will fail to learn English due to speaking a native language in school weighs heavily among some parents. Given the academic demands in English, parents push to have their children exit bilingual services as quickly as possible out of fear

that continued native language instruction will disadvantage their children. Ms. T is a first grade teacher, and the first grade is seen as a critical literacy period where students learn to read lengthier books; the parents she refers to likely do not realize that students may end up experiencing more difficulty acquiring literacy skills as a result of losing all native language supports (Goldenberg, 2008). It is important to note in that parental preference did not arise in our data analysis as a major factor in the elimination of bilingual education programs; instead, most schools – including the one where Ms. T teaches – host seminars or employ other strategies to influence parents to select whichever program the school provides.

Disincentive to Serve Emergent Bilinguals & Negative Views of Students

Even prior to the passage of *No Child Left Behind*, Rotberg (2000) warned that test-based accountability creates a disincentive for schools to admit or serve students who typically do not perform well on standardized tests, such as emergent bilinguals. In a very frank interview, the acting principal of a small high school, Mr. R, explained to us not only that his school does not offer bilingual education but that they avoid admitting emergent bilinguals altogether. As he explained:

[W]e send [ELLs] back to the region and they move to another school... It's something that is not in writing. It's not in writing, you can't refuse to take a student. Right now I cannot refuse to take any students. What I do is I call the placement center and they work with me.

...So in general you think that is it better not to take English learners or is it [interruption]?

It's much better. It's much better. Well, what I mean is I don't have to worry about student graduation for the ELL population because they need more than four years to graduate and right now they need to graduate in four years. You don't have to worry about attendance issues or credit accumulation. (Mr. R, high school acting principal, interview transcript)

In this interview, Mr. R describes his covert exchanges with the local regional office that places emergent bilinguals in his school, during which he tells regional officials that his school will not admit emergent bilinguals. These officials, in turn, comply with his engineering of the school's student population. Mr. R notes above a number of different areas of both federal and local

accountability where emergent bilinguals perform poorly at his school: graduation rates (all students in New York must pass a set of standardized tests to receive a diploma), attendance, and credit accumulation. Because the students create a downward drag on overall school performance within the existing accountability framework, in areas such as those noted by Mr. R, schools like his engage in behind-the-scenes maneuvers to avoid admitting emergent bilinguals altogether. This is a violation of local and federal legislation, yet it happens.

The perception of emergent bilinguals as a liability to schoolwide performance seems to become conflated with negative perceptions of the students themselves. This theme manifested in interviews in a belief that the quality of emergent bilingual students today is poorer than it used to be, and that the students do not value English or want to learn it. This theme was particularly prevalent in the interviews with junior high school and high school staff. The following excerpt from an interview with a high school principal and assistant principal illustrates this point:

Ms. C: I feel I think we all agree that a lot of these students do not feel that this country is their home in the same way that say my ancestors did who came at the turn of the century, say from Russia and Poland...

Mr. M: They really never get an entrenchment in English. I don't think they buy into the English language. Am I wrong to say that?... Well I feel, how do I say it, I feel that I am working in a Dominican neighborhood, should I say ghetto?

Ms. C: It's a ghetto.

Mr. M: Because until they learn to read and write English, they are going to feel the Dominican Republic is home. When they learn to read English more confidently, I think they will feel more comfortable living here. (Mr. M, high school principal & Ms. C, high school assistant principal, interview transcript)

These school administrators feel that the emergent bilinguals they serve, all of whom are Dominican, are not motivated to learn English in the way that past immigrants were, due to their attachment to their language and country of origin. They use the derogatory term 'ghetto' to describe their students' community, and in doing so further convey a distanced and negative impression about the students they serve.

A quotation from a teacher further supports negative perceptions of the students with regard

to their interest in learning English:

Now it's like, "I don't want to speak English," "I don't care." You know the attitude, oh yeah. Well that's the kind of kids we get. (Ms. L, high school ESL teacher)

Interestingly, Ms. L is very critical of her principal's decision to eliminate the bilingual program at the school where she has worked for many years, even though she expresses similar views in this quote to those of the administrators quoted above. In fact, elsewhere in the interview she attributes this lack of motivation to learn English to the elimination of the bilingual program, saying, "I found more kids trying to speak English and doing better back then when they had the program because it was encouraged."

Impact of the Small Schools Movement

The small schools movement has been another factor contributing to the loss of bilingual education programs in city schools. Mayoral control over New York City schools has been in effect since 2002, and a cornerstone of the mayor's efforts to overhaul the entire school system has been closing large, underperforming high schools and replacing them with numerous new small high schools (Flores & Chu, 2011). Advocates for Children (2009) reported that the New York City Department of Education closed 20 large high schools and opened 212 new small secondary schools from 2002 to 2007 alone. However, many of the high schools that were closed served very large populations of emergent bilinguals in sophisticated bilingual education programs, as they had the numbers of students to allow them to offer highly specialized classes, and these programs were largely replaced with ESL programs (Reyes, 2003). Advocates for Children (2009) document the closure of two high schools in Brooklyn, displacing 800 emergent bilinguals and causing the loss of two large bilingual education programs. The bilingual programs, which were in Chinese and Haitian Creole, were replaced with ESL programming. Furthermore, new small schools were permitted to

deny admission to emergent bilinguals in their first years of operation, so that the schools could succeed within the existing accountability system (Advocates for Children, 2009).

It is important to note that two of the high schools included in our study were small high schools that had recently opened on the campuses of what had been large high schools. Ms. L., a high school ESL teacher who weathered the breaking apart of a large high school into several small schools, held a position in one of the new small schools. She compared programming now to how it had been in the past, in the following:

Can you describe the bilingual model, what it looked like at this school?

Oh, we had bilingual classes in the histories, maths, and sciences I believe. Again, that was a wonderful transitional tool at any rate for most of our kids. Since we had, like, between 800 and 1000 ELL students in the building at any time. So, oh, that was wonderful and we had some very, very good teachers who were the bilingual teachers and that I would work a lot with. We also had native language arts as opposed to just Spanish class. Then again that's something else I've been trying to argue for but it's very hard to set up in the constraints that we have to work with. (Ms. L, high school ESL teacher, interview transcript)

In this quotation, Ms. L laments the loss of the bilingual program, because the school no longer has the capacity to provide the quality of programming they had offered emergent bilinguals in the past. As she explains, not only have they lost specialized content courses, but they no longer have the numbers of emergent bilinguals in her new small school to be able to offer Spanish native language arts classes, which can greatly aid Spanish-speaking emergent bilinguals not only in their Spanish maintenance but also in their English acquisition (Menken & Kleyn, 2010). Instead, these students attend Spanish as a foreign language class with English-speaking students who are learning the basics, creating a wide mismatch between the needs of emergent bilinguals and course content.

Funding is a major reason cited by administrators to explain why small high schools prefer not to provide bilingual education programs, and instead in most cases mix emergent bilinguals with native-English speakers in the same classes.

That was one of the reasons too, because the smaller schools that were created in this building they refused to have bilingual programs. They started with 60 students,

I remember that, they started with 60 students and when you start with 60 students you don't want to create a different program based on the reasons that I mentioned to you before – budget, funding. (Mr. R, high school acting principal, interview transcript)

In this quotation, Mr. R explains that none of the new small schools in his building provide bilingual programs, which offered further justification for his school not offering a program either. He attributes this to the small size of the schools, explaining that it is not worth the funding it would require to offer specialized programming for emergent bilinguals.

No Formal Preparation

Another key finding from our research is that none of the principals interviewed received any formal preparation to serve emergent bilinguals, for example by holding certification in TESOL or bilingual education. In addition, licensure to become a school administrator in New York does not require any coursework in TESOL or bilingual education. In other words, not one of the administrators who made the important decision to eliminate their school's bilingual education program was actually prepared to do so. Some administrators in our sample directly stated that they felt at a loss when required to make appropriate programming decisions for emergent bilinguals.

My background is in special education and literacy, I worked as a reading recovery teacher... But I haven't had the training for this, this was an eye opener for me. I was in schools with far lower percentages of ELLs and getting here was daunting. It's been a learning process for me. (Ms. J, Elementary School Principal, interview transcript)

I have no ESL background, mine is in math. (Ms N., junior high school principal, interview notes)

In the first excerpt, Ms. J is open to the possibility that she might not be making the best choices for her emergent bilingual students. Ms. N holds no expertise in this area either, and offers later in her interview that she would be open to feedback to know if her programming choices have been good ones.

Other administrators we interviewed also have not received preparation to work with emergent bilinguals, yet have had many years of practical experience in positions where they were called upon to do so (as most are in New York City schools, where 27% of all students were designated ‘ELLs’ upon entry into the system [New York City Department of Education, 2011]).

I’m a social studies teacher, but most my career was in the Bronx before I became an administrator. I taught different types of ELLs, beginners, intermediates, and advanced. I saw both ways, ESL and bilingual models. (Mr. A, high school principal, interview transcript)

It’s good you’re talking to me, I was directly involved. I’ve always been the AP [Assistant Principal]. Even though ESL was not my background originally it was the area I supervised right from the beginning in 1988. I’ve been here a long time. (Ms. P, junior high school acting principal/assistant principal, interview transcript)

Although these administrators also do not hold backgrounds in the education of emergent bilinguals, they were the ones in their schools leading the decision to eliminate the bilingual education program. In their interviews, they do not express any doubts about their decision because they feel their practical experience has given them the necessary expertise to move all emergent bilinguals into English-only instruction.

In our research, we found a lack of preparation to be associated with a number of misperceptions about bilingual education and second language acquisition – even among administrator(s) with many years of experience working with emergent bilinguals. These include the belief that bilingual education programs fail to teach English, negative perceptions of bilingual teachers for not using enough English in their instruction, and the belief that exposure to more English helps students learn English better. These administrators show an overwhelming preference for ESL models over bilingual ones, in spite of research to the contrary. These findings are each discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

Belief that English-Only Instruction will Improve English Acquisition

Among the administrators interviewed for our research, there was a common misperception that English-only instruction will help emergent bilinguals learn English better. Of particular concern to administrators, as discussed above, is quickly improving the students' performance on high-stakes testing in English. Ms. A brings this to life in the following interview excerpt:

The school used to have a bilingual program, so what factors do you think went into the decision to end the bilingual program?

...I think it was numbers. There was a perception, real or not, that ELLs were bringing the numbers down. Like having the bilingual program, [the principal] felt kids were not learning English as quickly as maybe they could have if they were in an English-only program...But the idea that like if you're in an English-only environment you'll learn English quicker. (Ms. A, high school assistant principal, interview transcript)

As Ms. A explains, the principal at her school decided to eliminate the bilingual program in order to improve the overall performance of the school on accountability measures.

This viewpoint is not unique to the high schools, but was echoed at the junior high schools and elementary schools in our sample as well. In the excerpt below, Ms. E explains how her school had a very large transitional bilingual education program, but she was frustrated at the level of English students in the program had attained. As she states:

It had a huge bilingual program [laughs]. When I first started here there were approximately 12 bilingual classes, so it was a huge bilingual program. And at that point there was no ESL program, it was all bilingual, I guess what they call now transitional bilingual classes except nobody transitioned out... I changed it to the ESL program. I felt bad, but it was important to force both teachers and students to speak in English you know during some point in their day. And I wanted the majority of their day. (Ms. E, junior high school principal, interview transcript)

Here, Ms. E notes that she selected a program that would increase the amount of English instruction students receive, with the belief that doing so would increase their English language acquisition.

Belief that Bilingual Programs Fail to Teach English & Negative Perceptions of Bilingual Teachers

Related to the ideology that English-only instruction will garner better results, many of the

administrators in our sample conveyed a belief that bilingual education programs fail to teach English, and were very critical of bilingual teachers who they felt used too little English in instruction. The following are two quotations that exemplify this prevalent theme in our data:

The kids were learning totally in Spanish, transference wasn't happening, which was key to why they were having the bilingualism program. But kids were hanging onto the Spanish and not learning English, and I looked at that and said that not's working...When you're taught bilingualism you get frustrated because the test is only in English and you can't pass it. And in order to graduate you have to pass that test. So we teach in English so they can pass and be productive members of our society. (Mr. A, high school principal, interview transcript)

The problem to begin with unfortunately is that some of the bilingual program, but not this school, here there was always a push to have them learn English and, by the way, we have a healthy respect for them learning their own language...I do have a Chinese speaking math teacher who is a remnant from the old bilingual program, but he was always a big believer in stressing the English (Ms. P, junior high school acting principal).

In the first quotation, Mr. A explains his view that students failed to learn English in the bilingual program at his school, which is why he eliminated it. In the second quotation, Ms. P implies that the bilingual program had not actually been bilingual because too much instruction was in Chinese. What is created by quotations such as these is an image of bilingual education as a program covertly taught monolingually in the native language of the students.

Administrators were particularly critical of bilingual teachers who used too much of the students' native language in instruction, and labeled them 'bad teachers' for doing so.

I understand that this school used to offer bilingual education.

They used to have a Chinese bilingual program that we changed 2 years ago [*rolls her eyes*].

You're rolling your eyes.

It was a staffing issue in that the bilingual teachers never spoke English to the kids, I would go in and the kids were only speaking Chinese. (Ms. N, junior high school principal, interview notes)

That too much time in bilingual education programs was spent on native language instruction, at the expense of English, was commonly attributed to the teacher's own English proficiency level, as in the following:

Ms. B: And I think one disadvantage of the bilingual program was that, in thinking of one teacher in particular who was more comfortable in Spanish and did all the instruction in Spanish.

Ms. D: Oh yes.

Ms. B: And it was a Spanish class rather than a bilingual class. (Ms. D, elementary school principal & Ms. B, elementary school assistant principal, interview transcript)

[Transitional bilingual education] doesn't work because the teachers in the program are not good, are not strong teachers. I have to say I don't say that lightly and I feel kind of badly about saying it, but the fact is that they themselves need some kind of English language courses. (Ms. E, junior high school principal, interview transcript)

In these quotations, the administrators interviewed criticize the bilingual teachers in the program that was eliminated for failing to use more English in instruction, a failure they attribute to the teachers' lack of English proficiency. What is striking is how frequently we heard this argument from administrators. It is possible that the teachers truly did not have a strong command of English, in which case is it unclear why the program model was blamed; it would seem if this were the case the focus should then be on teacher preparation to improve the program, not program elimination (e.g., if an algebra teacher was seen to have poor command of course content, the teacher would receive more preparation or else be replaced; algebra would not be eliminated). Given the administrators do not have preparation in bilingual education, it is also entirely plausible that the teachers were simply teaching in accordance with appropriate bilingual pedagogy, but that the administrators' views stem from the fact that they do not support this approach.

Belief that Bilingual Education is More Expensive

Many administrators in our sample believe that running a bilingual education program is more expensive than an ESL program. Low registers, inconsistent numbers of emergent bilinguals, and the hiring of staff are cited as deterrents in creating bilingual classes. While the elimination of bilingual programs is attributed to cost, rather than representing actual truth, we find that there may be other reasons they prefer English immersion. The following case offers an example:

It's hard to sustain a program, 'cause we get paid per pupil. The teachers for that amount of students, so, I think it all came down to number of students and budgets. You know, it just couldn't be sustained. But, parents didn't have a problem with the program. And now that we don't have the program, they're opting to stay in the ESL. I mean they're flexible with it. (Ms. B, elementary school assistant principal, interview transcript)

According to Ms. B, this school offered transitional bilingual classes by creating bridged classes because they felt there were not enough students to sustain a whole class. School administrators attribute the eventual dissolution of their 4th/5th grade transitional bilingual classroom to attrition.

Although Ms. B claims that the "population was different back then," the current emergent bilinguals receiving ESL services are still predominantly Spanish-speaking, comprising 95% of emergent bilinguals in her school. Moreover, given the current number of emergent bilinguals by grade in each language group, as stated in the school's language allocation policy (LAP) report, it would be possible to continue to provide bridged bilingual classes should the school choose to do so. Since parents seemed satisfied with the previous bilingual program, it appears that other factors might have influenced the transition to ESL-only. Other factors suggested in the interview are that students were not advancing in their English abilities, the bilingual teachers spoke primarily Spanish, and an added emphasis on testing in the upper grades.

Another administrator cites the same problem as the main impetus for dismantling the bilingual program.

So we didn't have enough money frankly to have a class for ten kids or whatever... We kept the program when we were funded as long as we could. At the time, we were district funded. The district was willing to support the bilingual programs until the money ran out. The next program to go was the Spanish program because the Spanish speaking population decreased. The Spanish speakers coming in at that time were not ELLs (Ms. P, junior high school assistant principal/acting principal, interview transcript).

Although the Spanish-speaking population indeed decreased dramatically in the community, the number of Chinese-speaking emergent bilinguals has remained steady. According to the school's LAP report, the school currently has 58 or more Chinese-speaking emergent bilinguals in each

grade, enough to maintain the bilingual Chinese program that once existed. Not only is bilingual education plausible given these demographics, the *Aspira Consent Decree* and the State Commissioner's Part 154 in fact require it be provided by the school to its emergent bilinguals who speak Chinese.

Although the issue of money and student numbers is also cited among reasons for not creating a bilingual program in small high schools, other factors seem to play a larger role; this is made evident in the following interview, when an administrator of a small high school is asked about the factors that influenced his decision not to provide bilingual education.

I'm wondering what are the factors that had the greatest influence on your decision?

It's the budget. It's the budget. It's the money. Money. Because we cannot afford to have bilingual programs when you have only 30 or 40 students.

It would be more expensive than having the ESL teacher?

It is more expensive. Yes...

If you had more students who were bilingual in Spanish or French would you offer a bilingual program here?

No. (Mr. R, high school acting principal/assistant principal, interview transcript)

Clearly "money" or low student registers are not the only reasons a bilingual program is not being provided.

When asked to clarify the issues behind what he refers to as the "ELL problem," another high school principal said: "I think this city has to address this problem with more dollars and more, more, many, many newcomer schools that take this [sic] kids and really help them" (Mr. M, high school principal, interview transcript). Mr. M believes using added monetary support to send his newly arrived emergent bilinguals to newcomer schools elsewhere will help alleviate his school's problems.

All the above-mentioned administrators perceive "money" to be the panacea for the "ELL problem." Crawford (1998) believes the stated high cost of bilingual education to be one of the common fallacies of bilingual education:

All programs serving [ELL] students, regardless of the language of instruction, require

additional staff training, instructional materials, and administration. So they all cost a little more than regular programs for native English speakers (Crawford, 1998: p. 4).

To curtail the added cost of serving emergent bilinguals, the New York City Department of Education introduced the Fair Student Funding initiative in 2007 whereby emergent bilinguals receive additional needs-based allocations by grade; in grades K-5, schools receive an additional \$1,515 per ELL student, while in grades 6-12 they receive \$1,894. This funding is awarded for each student, regardless of the program model in place.

Research has shown that ESL “pull-out” programs cost more because supplementary teachers are needed (Crawford, 1998; García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). Although principals we interviewed state the issue is money, they inadvertently support arguments by Crawford (1998) and García *et al* (2008). The following middle school principal in our sample shares details behind the potential added cost for ESL.

Now what we've done is we have these classes and they're grouped by age, by grade, or close to it... Like this year we had a 6/7 class and an 8th grade class. And then when they had their major subjects – English, math, social studies, and science – we grouped them together by English proficiency level... Four different levels between four different teachers... This is a much better, much more expensive, but much better. It's costing a fortune because we essentially have two extra, two additional teachers servicing them. (Ms. E, middle school principal, interview transcript)

In this quotation, Ms. E notes that the ESL program she implemented was actually more costly than the bilingual program preceding it, due to the way she chose to structure the program. The Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) for Mr. R's (cited above) school likewise discusses plans for additional sheltered instruction professional development and a commitment to researching and purchasing supplementary materials, technology, and resources for their ESL program. In these schools, the provision of ESL programming has created a new set of costs.

The principals we included in our sample who have well-established bilingual programs in their schools dispel the idea that bilingual programs are more costly. As one states:

Well you know what some principals will say, that it's money, but it's really not about

money because like I always say to my colleagues, I hate to tell you, but even the kids in the bilingual classes generate money. That's more money [laughter]. (Ms. G, Elementary School Principal, interview transcript)

In this quotation, Ms. G is referring to the additional federal funding allocated to schools for each emergent bilingual they serve. She feels each program is equally costly, but with a good design and creativity bilingual education can be provided.

Likewise, while a principal of a dual language bilingual school acknowledges, “the only thing that I would imagine that costs more is that you have to have two sets of books,” she believes the core issue is how principals choose to distribute funds within their schools. She concludes: “So it's not really more expensive, it's just being creative” (Ms. P., elementary school principal, interview transcript). When faced with the “ELL problem,” educating emergent bilingual students clearly requires a strong commitment, regardless of program model.

Preference for ESL

Taking together the various issues they describe above, the principals in our sample who eliminated their school's bilingual program display an overwhelming preference for ESL over bilingual education. This is not surprising, given the data presented above. It is however noteworthy that this preference supersedes demographics or policy mandates, as shown in the following:

My preference is for a push-in or pull-out [ESL] over self-contained or bilingual education programs. This is because I have 366 ELLs out of 955 students, around 40%. (Ms. J, Elementary School Principal, interview transcript)

While the school where Ms. J is principal is linguistically diverse, the demographics regarding number of students per grade speaking the same native language do allow for the school to offer bilingual education to many of its emergent bilinguals.

Not everyone within the schools agree with the preference for ESL. In the following

passage, Ms. L shows her disagreement with the decision of her school's administration not only to eliminate bilingual education but also Spanish Native Language Arts:

As far as they are concerned ESL is the priority and I have a big problem with that you know. Learning, language acquisition is different you know. I don't think that it is an appropriate course of instruction but I mentioned it so many times that I've been berated. (Ms. L, teacher, interview transcript)

In this passage, Ms. L makes evident the school's sole focus is on ESL to serve its emergent bilinguals, a decision she suggests is due to her administrators' lack of formal preparation to serve this student population.

Summing up well what it seems many New York City administrators in our sample believe, Ms. E states her preference for ESL in the following:

So ultimately you think that ESL programs will teach English better than bilingual programs?
Yes, that's my personal opinion. Now granted I have no background in, I say this you know, my background is not in TESOL or any of that, but I do. That's my belief, my layperson's experience. (Ms. E, junior high school principal, interview transcript)

In this quotation, while offering the caveat that she does not have formal preparation to make determinations such as this, Ms. E makes very clear that ESL will be the only programming option for the emergent bilinguals who attend her school. The data presented in this section and elsewhere throughout this report all point towards the spiking popularity of ESL programs in city schools.

Contrasting Example: Prepared Principals with Strong Schoolwide Language Education Policies

Based on our preliminary data analysis, we realized it would be important to include a comparison offered by principals who provide strong bilingual education programs to see how they manage the same pressures faced by the other principals interviewed. Thus, we altered our methodology and conducted interviews with principals of schools that have long-standing⁵ bilingual programs, in order to examine the factors that determine the language education policies adopted in

their schools. In providing an opposing view, these principals help us highlight important beliefs about language programming and the crucial role school leaders play in addressing the needs of emergent bilingual students.

A significant finding is that the principals of these schools all hold prior preparation in educating emergent bilinguals and prioritize the needs of this student population. And, the schools where they work are successful in meeting the adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements of *No Child Left Behind*. The following is an example:

[M]y experiences and my teaching career as a matter of fact as a bilingual teacher in a maintenance program, I come from a school in Brooklyn that had a maintenance program straight up the grades, a very successful program, very well structured. And so it was that experience and knowledge that I brought here... I mean I make AYP every year in spite of the fact that I have 600 ELLs in the building, I'm still making AYP and I'm doing it because these programs work for these kids. If you have a good well-structured program it's going to work and that transfer is going to take place and those kids are going to be able to move. (Ms. G, elementary school principal)

When she discusses 'transfer' in this quotation, Ms. G is referring to Cummins' interdependence hypothesis (as described in Cummins, 2000), which argues that skills students acquire in their native language will transfer to English. She has found support for this theory in her experiences as the principal of a school that offers bilingual education (both through a dual language program and a transitional bilingual education program) as well as ESL. She explains that her school successfully meets the AYP requirements and, elsewhere in the interview, states that the emergent bilinguals in the dual language program are more successful than the students in the other programs in acquiring English over time and meeting AYP requirements.

A key commonality between these principals is a deep-rooted belief that bilingual programs, and particularly dual language bilingual programs, are viable and have proven long-term benefits.

[A]cross the board you teach to a child's strengths, not to their weaknesses. If you have that philosophy then you are building on what a child brings to school. So if

⁵ The bilingual programs at these schools had all been in existence for over 10 years.

he's coming in with another [native language], you are building on that strength, by adding to that child's language capabilities. Because I believe in it, then I can follow through on that... [I]f you do the program right, that you see that it's an additive rather than subtractive, that's going to give you the results that all longitudinal research has proven. That when it's implemented the right way, you get successful results. And honestly if other principals had enough knowledge about bilingual... If they had a better understanding... I don't think they'd be so quick to dismiss the potential of a group of students who are going to succeed. (Ms. P, elementary school principal, interview transcript)

Ms. P's strengths-based approach to working with emergent bilinguals and faith in bilingual program design, fueled by longitudinal research, prevents her from succumbing to the immediate pressures of providing monolingual English instruction.

Ms. P expresses her frustration for other administrators' "lack of understanding of language development" and "ignorance."

So you have an ESL [program] because you think that's a quicker way. That's a band-aid. That's not really looking at the very core, the issues of why the ELLs are not succeeding... It's all about that [principals] don't understand the transference of skills from one language to the other. And that's why they're not going to be successful because they really do think that by just giving them the ESL, it's 'I'm gonna ram the English down your throat.' That's archaic. (Ms. P, elementary school principal, interview transcript)

While Ms. P discusses language as a resource in the education of emergent bilinguals when speaking about her own program, in this quotation she critiques principals who do not provide bilingual education, and attributes their choices to a lack of understanding of theories of bilingualism and language acquisition.

The principals who continue to provide bilingual programs shared that they must work incessantly to challenge anti-bilingual sentiment and support teachers in a demanding climate of accountability. Towards this end, they frequently work with parents who worry that their children will not learn enough English in the bilingual program to perform well on tests.

I think generally speaking, there is a backlash against bilingual education and I think that parents can feed into that, but I think it's a matter of educating them and helping them to understand the benefits of bilingual education... But that requires a lot of advocacy, and belief in [the program], and unfortunately because of the emphasis on testing, and you know,

all the accountability is in students' performance in English, I think people feel that the only way to insure that for students to do well is to teach them in English, and I think we are an example of... that that's not true. (Ms. L, elementary school principal, interview transcription)

As Ms. L clarifies, parents usually support the program if they understand its rationale, and she mentions how her school provides frequent workshops for families and 'family nights' to maintain their support for the program. In her interview, Ms. L also discusses the importance of maintaining careful records of longitudinal data to demonstrate that although her students may not perform as well on the third grade tests, they do perform better when tested in eighth grade.

Together, the interview data shows how these principals continue to provide bilingual education in a climate where public sentiment values performance over bilingualism. Although they face the same pressures that all principals of city schools do, they respond to those pressures differently due to their strong convictions and the data they have gathered showing that bilingual education improves language acquisition as well as test performance over time.

Summary of Key Findings & Conclusion

The city has witnessed a dramatic loss of bilingual education programs in recent years, due to decisions by school principals and assistant principals to dissolve the bilingual programs in place at their schools – particularly transitional bilingual education programs. This study sheds light on the factors school administrators identify as have had the greatest impact on their decision to eliminate bilingual programs at their school.

To briefly summarize the main findings from our research, participants identify the following as main factors in the elimination of their school's bilingual program:

- Poor performance by emergent bilinguals on accountability measures (e.g., high-stakes tests and graduation rates) poses a problem for school administrators under tremendous pressure to improve schoolwide performance.
- In schools, bilingual education programs are immediately blamed when emergent bilinguals do not perform well on these measures, based largely on ideology or beliefs rather than data.

- A primary goal of administrators is improved test scores and quick acquisition of English to meet the accountability requirements, resulting in a myopic focus on English as the main instructional goal for emergent bilinguals.
- The accountability system disproportionately penalizes emergent bilinguals and the schools that serve them, creating a disincentive for schools to serve these students; in the extreme, schools do not admit them. Likewise, school staff are found to develop negative views of the students themselves.
- The small schools movement in New York City has played a major role in the loss of bilingual programs in city schools, as emergent bilinguals are dispersed between several schools that do not have the concentrations of students needed to offer bilingual education. In addition, these schools are under enormous pressure to be seen as high performing.
- Administrators we interviewed typically have no formal preparation in TESOL or bilingual education, and hold limited understandings of bilingual education.
- A prevalent misconception among school administrators is that to improve performance in English, instruction should be in English only.
- Administrators in our sample typically believe that bilingual education programs fail to teach students English, and many hold negative perceptions of the abilities of bilingual teachers.
- School administrators also believe that bilingual education programs are more expensive than other program models for emergent bilinguals.
- Taking all of these issues together, school administrators we interviewed overwhelmingly prefer ESL programs.
- Principals of schools with long-standing bilingual programs offer an important counter-example of how school leaders who believe in bilingual education and have formal preparation in this area can swim against the tide created by external pressures and ideologies to continue to provide native language instruction and even meet accountability mandates.

Our research highlights the essential role that school administrators play in determining language policy in New York City schools, as principals in particular wield tremendous power in determining programming for emergent bilinguals. Language policy research typically overlooks school administrators in language policymaking. At the same time, many principals and/or the assistant principals who inform them do not have the preparation they need to shape programming for the emergent bilinguals in their buildings. Clearly, principals need greater understanding of

theories and practices proven effective in the education of emergent bilinguals, in order to make informed decisions about the students they serve.

The dearth of prepared principals in this area can easily be rectified. The State of New York at present does not require that principals have any prior preparation in TESOL or bilingual education, so we recommend that the state mandate at the very least a course for all administrator licenses it issues to principals as well as assistant principals. In addition, school systems need to seek creative ways to work with principals and offer them the preparation their job demands. For instance, in addition to learning the research in the field, administrators need to be shown how bilingual education programming is affordable, through resourceful distribution of the funding available to their schools.

There are several state and local policy implications. Our research uncovers how school practices are in overt violation of official policies, which mandate bilingual education be provided in New York when there are 20 or more emergent bilinguals per grade who speak the same native language, in accordance with the state's Part 154 and the *Aspira Consent Decree*. The problem is that there is no oversight or monitoring of each school's provision of services to emergent bilinguals. There used to be an Office of Monitoring and School Improvement at the New York City Department of Education that was responsible for monitoring schools and filing compliance reports. In more recent years, there has been no enforcement of either of these policies, as city officials turn a blind eye to the closure of bilingual programs.

The federal, state, and city accountability system creates a disincentive to serve emergent bilinguals and has been a major contributing factor in the decrease of bilingual programs in city schools. In specific, testing and accountability provide the justification for blaming and dismantling bilingual programs, and in some instances for denying admission to emergent bilinguals altogether. This will continue to be the case so long as there remain high-stakes tests in English, whereby

standardized test scores are used to evaluate students and their schools. Within this paradigm, emergent bilinguals will always been seen as deficient. Unfortunately, as we complete writing of this report, there appears to be no sign of change, as federal, state, and local policies continue their test-and-punish approach to education reform.

In conclusion, the implications for the New York City Department of Education are clear: efforts to increase bilingual education programs should target school administrators. To reverse the downward trend in availability of bilingual programs for students in city schools, principals, assistant principals, and supervisors should all receive extensive professional development in the theories and practices of bilingual education. City officials would do well to lobby the state to include at minimum a course on bilingual education in the criteria for licensure and certification of school administrators. Likewise, the city and state should inform the federal government about the negative byproducts of test-based accountability for emergent bilinguals and their schools, and pressure for appropriate changes to federal legislation.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Principal/Assistant Principal Interview Protocols for Semi-Structured Interviews

[Below is a list of questions we will ask school administrators. Many questions are followed by a set of follow-up questions, which will be asked only as needed.]

1. [If needed:] We are interested in your ELL student demographics:
 - a. How many ELLs does your school serve?
 - b. What is the percentage of ELLs by grade level?
 - c. What native languages do your ELLs speak?
 - d. What are their countries of origin?
 - e. About how many of your ELLs are beginner/intermediate/advanced/transitional?
2. What is your school's language allocation policy?
 - a. What educational program(s) do your ELLs currently receive (e.g., push-in ESL, pullout ESL, etc.)?
 - b. How is the program structured?
 - c. Can you give an example to describe this?
3. We understand that your school used to offer bilingual education. What educational program(s) did ELL students previously receive (e.g., transitional, bilingual education, etc.)?
 - a. How was the program structured?
 - b. Can you give an example to describe the bilingual model?
 - c. How was language allocated? What was its distribution by subject?
4. What are the pros/cons of these language policy changes and how have they influenced the teaching of ELLs/bilingual students?
 - a. What do you believe were the strengths & challenges of previous bilingual programming?
 - b. What do you believe are the strengths & challenges of current ESL programming?
5. What factors do you believe had the greatest impact in changing your school's language policy? [If the below points not mentioned, then ask:]
 - a. What, if any, has been the influence of the following:
 - i. Testing policy in accordance with *No Child Left Behind* parental choice
 - ii. Bilingual education model(s)
 - iii. Curriculum
 - iv. Administration / teacher / parent concerns & beliefs
 - v. Impact of student demographics/student stability
 1. How does the current percentage of ELLs compare to previous years?
 - vi. Hiring of bilingual staff/leadership
 - vii. The small schools movement

Appendix B. Classroom Teacher/ESL Teacher Interview Protocols for Semi-Structured Interviews

[Below is a list of questions we will ask school teachers. Many questions are followed by a set of follow-up questions, which will be asked only as needed.]

1. What is the title of your current teaching position?
2. We are interested in your ELL student demographics:
 - a. What is the percentage of ELLs in your classroom?
 - b. What native languages do your ELLs speak?
 - c. What are their countries of origin?
 - d. About how many of your ELLs are beginner/intermediate/advanced/transitional?
3. Does your school have a language allocation policy?
 - a. What educational program(s) do your ELLs currently receive (e.g., push-in ESL, pullout ESL, etc.)?
 - b. How is the program structured?
 - c. Can you give an example to describe this?
4. We understand that your school used to offer bilingual education. What educational program(s) did ELL students previously receive (e.g., transitional, bilingual education, etc.)?
 - a. How was the program structured?
 - b. Can you give an example to describe the bilingual model?
 - c. How was language allocated? What was its distribution by subject?
5. What are the pros/cons of these language policy changes and how have they influenced the teaching of ELLs/bilingual students?
 - a. What do you believe were the strengths & challenges of previous bilingual programming?
 - b. What do you believe are the strengths & challenges of current ESL programming?
6. What factors do you believe had the greatest impact in changing your school's language policy? [If the below points not mentioned, then ask:]
 - a. What, if any, has been the influence of the following?:
 - i. Testing policy in accordance with *No Child Left Behind* parental choice
 - ii. Bilingual education model(s)
 - iii. Curriculum
 - iv. Administration / teacher / parent concerns & beliefs
 - v. Impact of student demographics/student stability
 1. How does the current percentage of ELLs compare to previous years?
 - vi. Hiring of bilingual staff/leadership
 - vii. The small schools movement