



## **NM-WIDA Collaboration**

### **New Mexico Bilingual Multicultural Education Program Study: Focus on Spanish-English Programs**

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This study represents the first phase of a larger two-phase mixed methods study that examines learners' language learning and outcomes in Spanish–English New Mexico Bilingual Multicultural Education Programs (BMEPs). Phase 1 surveyed the characteristics of BMEPs and their language assessment practices across NM districts and charter schools.



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## Executive Summary

New Mexico (NM) has implemented research-based bilingual multicultural education programs (BMEPs) to promote bilingualism and biliteracy in English and a second language while ensuring students meet academic content standards and benchmarks. NM BMEPs include five program models: dual language immersion, maintenance, enrichment, heritage, and transitional models. Recent program evaluation reports and annual reports on NM BMEPs highlighted potential areas of improvement in BMEPs, such as better supporting the language development of learners or increasing qualified bilingual educators in BMEPs. In addition, recent literature on bilingual programs has emphasized the need to better understand the extent these programs support language development in both English and a second language and the need to examine assessment practices used within these programs.

This study represents the first phase of a larger two-phase mixed methods study that examines learners' language learning and outcomes in Spanish-English NM BMEPs. Phase 1 surveyed the characteristics of BMEPs and their language assessment practices across NM districts and charter schools. The following three research questions guided the study:

1. What are common assessment practices in BMEPs for measuring learners' language development?
2. What decisions are made using the assessment practices?
3. What are assessment practices that lead to successful BMEPs?

Initially, 96 district-level educators/administrators in NM who serve ELs across 75 districts and charter schools were invited to participate in the survey study. Findings represent responses from 56 educators who serve BMEPs across 42 districts/charter schools. Heritage language and dual language immersion were the most prevalent BMEP models among the participating districts. The survey findings revealed insights regarding current formative and summative language assessment practices in the BMEPs and ways to improve them:

- **Formative assessment practices and decisions made:** Frequently used formative assessments include classroom discussions, informal presentations, and exit tickets. These formative assessments were often used for monitoring students' language progress and planning lessons for small or large groups of students based on their performance.
- **Summative assessment practices and decisions made:** The commonly used summative assessments were ACCESS (for English) and Avant STAMP (for Spanish). The top three decisions made based on the summative data were (1) monitoring students' progress, (2) placing students into appropriate BMEPs or levels, and (3) making programming decisions, such as budgeting or hiring teachers.

- **Assessment practices that lead to successful BMEPs:** The key factors that respondents believed contributed to the success of BMEPs included qualified teachers, quality assessment practices, and strong community support. Yet, challenges in BMEPs were noted, indicating the need for more bilingual teachers, resources, and support, such as professional development to continuously train and maintain bilingual teachers and enhanced assessment practices to measure both Spanish and English language development.
- **Suggestions for improving assessment practices:** Respondents expressed a need for formative assessments to measure learners' bilingual development and for tailoring the assessments to the needs of varying student groups. They also suggested activities that were more interactive and focused on writing. Regarding summative assessments, respondents wanted assessments that could track student progress and were tailored to the needs of the learners. They also requested assessments that were less time intensive.

Results provided practical implications to support and enhance assessment practices in BMEPs. They underscored the following key points:

- **Importance of monitoring student progress:** District-level BMEP educators were most interested in monitoring student progress, using both formative and summative assessments. State-level administrators and test developers could keep this in mind when providing resources and support for districts.
- **Improving access to data:** Respondents indicated that having access to assessment data—through either hard copies or online systems—was helpful for instructional purposes. However, up to 20% of respondents did not have access to assessment data, which underscores the need for better assessment data systems for BMEP educators so that they can make more evidence-based and informed decisions.
- **Increasing assessment literacy training:** Findings suggest that educators may need more training aimed at enhanced assessment literacy to differentiate between formative and summative assessments and to more appropriately use assessment data. Having adequate assessment literacy could enable educators to understand the purpose of assessments and how data could be used for decision making.
- **Research and development of new assessments:** Results revealed a particular need for tools that measure both Spanish and English languages in BMEPs, rather than using the traditional approach of assessing each language independently. This finding highlights the importance of adopting a multilingual approach as a future direction for assessment research and development.



Moreover, findings provided implications for the design of Phase 2 of the study, which examines BMEP learners' language learning and outcomes in select districts. Phase 1 results depicted the current status of the language assessment practices in NM BMEPs and informed the areas we want to further investigate. These include, but are not limited to, gathering detailed information on how educators differentiate and utilize varying formative and summative assessments.

## Introduction

New Mexico (NM) is the first state in the United States to enact a bilingual multicultural education law, known as the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act of 1973. This law was expanded in 2004 with additional items for BMEP implementation, including the provision of professional development for educators and instructional requirements that center learning experiences for students. The objective of BMEPs is to ensure that all students, including English learners<sup>1</sup> (ELs), achieve bilingualism and biliteracy in English and a second/partner (also known as home or heritage) language while meeting academic content standards and benchmarks.

There are five program models within NM BMEPs, each tailored to provide culturally and linguistically responsive instruction to learners: dual language immersion, maintenance, enrichment, heritage, and transitional models (see New Mexico Administrative Code 6.32.2 for details). Local districts decide which models to implement in their schools. In School Year (SY) 2023–2024, BMEPs served more than 45,000 students across 62 districts. The NM Public Education Department (December, 2024) has annually monitored student progress in English and a second language in addition to student performance in content areas, such as reading, math, and science. Reports indicate a steady growth of BMEPs, reflected in the number of participating schools and the total student enrollment. Students' language performance is reported in terms of percentage of students in each language proficiency level in both English and Spanish. More details (e.g., amount of growth among students over time in both language and content) are required to determine the effectiveness of BMEPs.

A recent program evaluation report by the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee (2022) noted that BMEPs were not meeting program goals, with almost half of the students in Spanish BMEPs not being proficient in Spanish. The report recommended further evaluation of the programs, prompting to "report English [and Spanish] language proficiency rates by grade level, years in program, and participation in a BMEP" and "evaluate student achievement data by individual BMEP models to identify successful practices and identify programs that need

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<sup>1</sup> Following Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, the term "English learner," when used with respect to an individual, means an individual—(A) who is aged 3 through 21; (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school; (C)(i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and (D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual—(i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards; (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

additional support” (p. 2). The reports suggest that these programs could improve in developing students’ proficiency in a second language. Such findings appear to differ from existing research, which indicates more favorable second language proficiency outcomes of children in bilingual programs, in particular dual language immersion (DLI) models. These somewhat contradictory results underscore the need for an in-depth examination of BMEPs to better understand how they could effectively meet their intended goals and adequately support students’ language development and academic success.

As one of the BMEP models, DLI models are implemented in 26% of districts and charter schools in NM BMEPs (NM Public Education Department, December, 2024, p. 7) and have received significant attention from scholars. Previous studies (e.g., Adesope et al., 2010; Freeman et al., 2005; Lindholm-Leary & Block, 2010) have highlighted the benefits of DLI models, including improved academic (Valentino & Reardon, 2015), linguistic, and emotional outcomes (Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2001), and for closing the achievement gap for ELs (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Thomas & Collier, 2012). However, more research is needed on DLI models, including the exploration of language development in learners from English-speaking vs. partner-language (i.e., second language, such as Spanish) speaking homes. Empirical evidence suggests that children from English-speaking homes may outperform those from Spanish-speaking homes, potentially favoring certain learners over others in DLI models (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Dörnyei & Cervantes-Soon, 2020). Although DLI models are designed to remove barriers for students from historically underserved populations, they may offer more benefit to students from language majority families (Flores & García, 2017; May, 2017). When there are two distinct groups of learners that comprise one model, it is difficult to accurately understand the benefit of the model without considering the subgroup performance based on the learners’ background. Therefore, research needs to consider the diverse language background of the students enrolled in DLI models and bilingual programs in general.

Additionally, there is a gap in the literature regarding children’s biliteracy development, particularly their writing proficiency in both English and a partner language in bilingual programs. This is partly due to the dearth of literacy assessments available, especially in the partner languages, despite the program emphasis on bilingualism and biliteracy. Thus, to better understand how BMEPs, especially bilingual programs, facilitate language development in English and the partner language, it is essential to investigate the assessment practices for both language practices.

The current study is the first phase of a larger two-phase mixed methods study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) that examines NM BMEP learners’ language learning and outcomes. We focus on Spanish-English BMEPs due to their prevalence across NM BMEPs (with 85% of schools offering Spanish-English BMEPs for more than 37,000 learners). Phase 1 of this study examines the characteristics of BMEPs and their assessment practices across all NM districts

and charter schools through an online survey. It is essential to understand the assessment practices, particularly language assessment practices, in order to examine language learning of students. Building on Phase 1 findings, in Phase 2, we investigate the language learning (Spanish, English) and academic outcomes (content area performance, EL reclassification) of ELs enrolled in BMEPs, which may provide insight into the effectiveness of these programs. The following research questions guide Phase 1:

1. What are common assessment practices in BMEPs for measuring learners' language development?
2. What decisions are made using the assessment practices?
3. What are assessment practices that lead to successful BMEPs?

## Literature Review

### *Overview of Assessment Practices in Bilingual Programs*

As accountability of educational programs has become increasingly focal in the United States, standardized testing has become a pervasive aspect of U.S. K–12 education (Au, 2016).

Bilingual programs are also characterized by a variety of assessment practices, catering to the needs of ELs. As Boals et al. (2015) note,

From identification, classification, placement, and instruction, to exiting from ELL [English language learner] status, the need for information about ELLs' language proficiency is critical for informing a vast range of decisions that affect their educational opportunities and outcomes. (pp. 122–123)

Prior to entering bilingual programs, students are identified via a home language survey that elicits information about learners' home language use in order to determine potential eligibility for language instruction education programs (LIEPs), including various bilingual programs (Bailey & Kelly, 2013). When learners' survey results indicate that children use a language other than English at home, they are often directed to an English language proficiency (ELP) screening test (e.g., WIDA Screener). If students' screener results do not meet state-specific thresholds of proficiency, they are then classified as ELs and deemed eligible for LIEPs (Lopez et al., 2016). The English language proficiency of such learners is continually reevaluated each year using a summative ELP assessment until they are reclassified as English proficient (Guzman-Orth et al., 2019).

In bilingual programs, to monitor and evaluate the development of bilingualism and biliteracy of all learners (i.e., ELs and partner language learners), multiple language assessments are used. Broadly speaking, such language assessments fall into the categories of formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments involve "continuous monitoring and collecting evidence of student progressions during the learning process" (Yan et al., 2021, p. 229). These language assessments may include observations, quizzes, oral language assessments, informal reading inventories, and others. The ongoing nature of formative assessment allows teachers to adjust their instruction (e.g., by providing additional linguistic supports or differentiating the complexity of a given task) in order to meet students' evolving and dynamic needs in both languages (Bailey & Heritage, 2014; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008).

Summative assessments, on the other hand, measure student learning at the end of an instructional period (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). These might include standardized tests, end-of-unit exams, and proficiency tests in both instructional languages, among others. Summative assessments are crucial for evaluating learners' language achievement and development over time. For ELs, a key aspect of this evaluation includes reclassification

decisions regarding their institutional status as ELs (Slama, 2014; Thompson, 2017), as mentioned previously.

Information about learners' language development is collected via other means well, such as portfolio assessments (Davidson & Lynch, 2002; Short et al., 2016), where examples of learners' language use and academic work are collected to provide a comprehensive picture of what learners can do with language. Various types of authentic language assessments may also be used (Miller et al., 2009), such as performance-based tasks or service-learning activities in one's local community (Abedi, 2010; Baker, 2018).

### **Standards-Based Assessment Practices in Bilingual Programs**

States have developed or adopted language development standards to inform their instruction and assessment of both English and a partner language (i.e., Spanish) in bilingual programs. This is similar to their practice of using assessments to measure achievement in academic content areas (Howard et al., 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

#### ***Assessment of English Language Proficiency***

To comply with Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states must implement English language development (ELD) standards that are mapped onto the four language skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing and that further align with each state's academic content standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). For instance, WIDA released the 2020 ELD Standards Framework (by updating its 2012 version) by developing grade-level specific proficiency scales to further align with the language demands reflected in the Common Core, Next Generation Science Standards, and other content standards (WIDA, 2017, 2020). The WIDA ELD Standards are used to guide instruction and are reflected in ELP assessments used to monitor ELs' progression in acquiring ELP. Currently, the two major assessments used in the United States for this purpose are WIDA ACCESS for ELLs (hereafter ACCESS) and the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) summative assessment. In addition, various states (e.g., California, Texas) have developed their own summative assessments, which may be aligned with their own state-developed standards or with the standards developed by WIDA or ELPA21.

#### ***Assessment of Partner Language Proficiency***

While monitoring the development of English language proficiency is required by Title I, states may optionally decide to create partner language development standards and assessments to evaluate acquisition of partner languages (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). According to the U.S. Department of Education's (2015) *Dual Language Education Programs: Current State Policies and Practices*, more than 42 U.S. states have adopted partner language development standards and assessments that align with standards frameworks for foreign languages, such as

the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines (ACTFL, 2012; National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). The granularity of these standards and assessments varies by state, with some states (e.g., North Carolina, Ohio, Utah) developing and implementing grade-level specific standards. Illinois presents a unique case for collaborating with WIDA to develop their Spanish language development standards. This framework was modeled from the WIDA ELD Standards, which are aligned with Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards, and was seen as a way of potentially facilitating transfer between Spanish and English languages and content learning within the context of dual language models (U.S. Department of Education, 2015; WIDA, 2017). Partly inspired by these efforts, in 2023, WIDA published the *Marco de los estándares del desarrollo auténtico del lenguaje español de WIDA* (Marco DALE), a Spanish language development standards framework. The Marco DALE is a framework for instruction, curriculum, professional development, and assessments of Spanish language development of multilingual learners in grades K–12 within a bilingual education context. It could inform the development of Spanish language proficiency assessments.

It is worth restating that the monitoring and assessment of partner language development in bilingual programs, including DLI, remains more variable due to the greater autonomy afforded to states in deciding how partner language proficiency is instructionally guided and assessed. Some states, such as New Mexico, require districts to annually assess partner language development in bilingual programs. Since 2018, New Mexico has used Avant STAMP, a summative language assessment based on ACTFL proficiency standards that measures all four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing). This is in addition to adopting the WIDA Spanish language development standards framework (Marco DALE) to guide their second language instruction of PreK–12 Spanish language learner students (see New Mexico Administrative Code [2017] Title VI for details).

### ***Assessment of Academic Content Achievement***

In addition to assessments of language proficiency, students in bilingual programs are also subject to the academic content standards and assessments that all students must comply within K–12 settings as per Title I of the ESSA. Indeed, these standards guide English language development standards and assessments and are designed to bridge ELs' content and language learning. In addition, state education agencies (SEAs) provide guidelines for aligning bilingual program standards and assessments with state-mandated content standards (e.g., in math, language arts, and other subjects). Alignment of programs to state content standards is a requirement that is linked to federal funding programs for LIEPs in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

The degree to which bilingual programs are complying with states' content learning standards is monitored in various ways, including with reference to students' test results across content areas, and is made accountable through the provision of regular program evaluation efforts (see, e.g., New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, 2022). The scope of such testing and assessment regimes is captured succinctly as follows:

To determine how well ELs and other students are meeting state content and performance standards, Title I of the ESEA [or ESSA] requires states to administer annual content assessments aligned with the state's standards in reading/language arts and mathematics in Grades 3–8 and at least one high school grade. Additionally, states must administer annual science assessments aligned with state science standards for each of the following grade spans: Grades 3–5, Grades 6–9, and Grades 10–12. States also must hold districts and schools accountable for ensuring that all students and designated student subgroups, such as ELs, participate in these [assessments] and meet annual state-defined performance goals.

(U.S. Department of Education, 2015, p. 66)

It is noteworthy, however, that, regardless of the language in which specific content is taught in bilingual programs (e.g., whether students learned math in English or in Chinese), and in spite of the ELP level of individual students, state-mandated, summative content assessments are generally administered in English.<sup>2</sup> This could be an issue in the case of ELs with low English proficiency and raise concerns regarding test fairness (Kunnan, 2004). On the other hand, various types of formative assessments, which are relatively lower stakes and may require fewer resources and systems-wide coordination, may offer more scope for language accommodation (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2018; Alvarez et al., 2014).

### **Future Direction of Assessment Practices in Bilingual Programs**

Despite the prevalence of bilingual programs and the need to assess learners' bilingual development, there has been a general lack of assessments that could measure both languages accurately and efficiently. The monolingual view of language considers languages used by learners as separate entities with their own distinct sets of linguistic skills and knowledge (Guzman-Orth et al., 2017; Lopez et al., 2017). In this perspective, each language is assessed independently, regardless of individuals' proficiency in multiple languages, and they are expected to respond exclusively in the target language during assessments (Shohamy, 2011).

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<sup>2</sup> This is not uniformly the case, and some states do make provisions for different categories of ELs to take content assessments in their home language; however, this is not done in a consistent fashion, and when it is, home language content assessments may only be available to some L1 groups (e.g., native Spanish speakers) and not to others (e.g., L1 Chinese students).



However, this perspective fails to acknowledge the complex language practices of bilinguals, neglecting their ability to navigate and utilize multiple languages in diverse contexts. As a result, assessments rooted in this monolingual perspective often fail to provide comprehensive insights into students' language abilities, often underestimating their true proficiency levels (Otheguy et al., 2015; Sanchez et al., 2013). Scholars argue that bilingual learners utilize both languages for different purposes and draw on all of their linguistic resources; therefore, relying solely on a monolingual approach to assess literacy may prove insufficient and problematic for bilingual students (Guzman-Orth et al., 2017; Hofer & Jessner, 2019; Lopez et al., 2017).

To address the above limit, some suggest employing a multilingual approach that allows students to draw across their entire linguistic repertoire or to *translanguage* (Guzman-Orth et al., 2017). Translanguaging refers to "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regards for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (usually national and state) languages" (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 283). Recent efforts have been made to develop flexible multilingual content assessment methods, allowing test-takers to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire to demonstrate knowledge and skills across various academic areas (Guzman-Orth et al., 2019; Lopez et al., 2019).

For instance, Guzman-Orth and colleagues (2019) introduced a dual language assessment task (DLAT) where examiners posed questions in English, Spanish, or both languages, adjusting the language according to the student's preference. The DLAT is designed to supplement the information collected through the ELP screener, assisting language teachers in making appropriate instructional decisions to facilitate the language development of young ELs. In their study, the DLAT was used to measure the ability of EL kindergarteners to describe a picture, predict a story, and retell a story utilizing any of their available language and nonverbal resources. Findings suggest that students used different nonverbal resources (e.g., pointing), varying language use patterns (e.g., English only, Spanish only, or a combination of both) to demonstrate their emergent language skills.

Another study conducted by Lopez et al. (2019) also examined a flexible bilingual mathematics assessment for middle school-aged test-takers that incorporates translanguaging needs. This includes options such as utilizing/mixing all languages (English, Spanish, or any combination of both) in various modes (e.g., written language, oral language, and numeric representation). Consistent with Guzman-Orth et al.'s (2019) study, both studies indicate that when given the opportunity, students utilized their entire linguistic repertoire and strategically employed language support to meet task requirements based on their communication needs and preferences. Together, these studies emphasize the importance of developing assessments that enable students to utilize their full linguistic resources, embracing translanguaging practices, to accurately demonstrate their knowledge and skills across diverse academic contexts. Yet, these bilingual assessments are still lacking in the field and need further

development. Until more valid and reliable bilingual assessments are developed for K–12 learners, the field may need to continuously rely on monolingual language assessments.

As discussed so far, bilingual programs have adopted various assessment practices to monitor the development of proficiency in English and partner languages and progress in content areas among K–12 ELs. Prior to investigating ELs' learning and outcomes in bilingual programs (which is the goal of the larger project), it is necessary to examine the assessment practices in these programs, which this study aims to address.

## Methods

The present study utilized an online survey (see Instruments section), along with a mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) for data analysis. This methodology afforded a detailed picture of characteristics and assessment practices of NM BMEPs.

### *Participants*

Initially, 96 district-level educators/administrators in NM who serve ELs across 47 districts and 30 charter schools were invited to participate in the present survey study. A total of 70 participants, including BMEP directors and Title III coordinators, responded to the survey. Due to the incompleteness rate, for data analysis, we examined responses from a total of 56 participants who responded that their district offered BMEPs, including 52 participants who fully completed the survey to the end and 4 participants who finished beyond the background information section of the survey (the total survey response rate was approximately 60%). Survey respondents represented BMEPs across 42 district/charter schools in NM. Specifically, 56.1% were from school districts and 40.4% were from charter schools (see Table 1).

**Table 1:** School Type ( $n = 57$ )

School Type	Count	Percentage
School district	32	56.1%
Charter school	23	40.4%
Other (please specify)	1	1.8%
I do not support students in BMEPs	1	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The three most common positions were bilingual/EL program directors (51.8%), principals/assistant principals (17.9%), and bilingual/EL teachers (12.5%; see Table 2). Other positions included content area/mainstream teachers, instructional coaches, support/resource teachers, test coordinators, and others.<sup>3</sup> More than half of the respondents (58.2%) had less than 3 years of experience in their current positions (see Table 3).

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<sup>3</sup> Respondents specified "others" including superintendent, associate superintendent, and assistant superintendent.

**Table 2:** Respondents' Current Position ( $n = 56$ )

Position	Count	Percentage
Bilingual/EL program director	29	51.8%
Principal/assistant principal	10	17.9%
Bilingual/EL teacher	7	12.5%
Content area/mainstream teacher	3	5.3%
Instructional coach	1	1.8%
Support/resource teacher	1	1.8%
Test coordinator	2	3.6%
Other (please specify)	3	5.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 3:** Respondents' Years of Experience in Current Position ( $n = 55$ )

Time Frame	Count	Percentage
Less than 1 year	12	21.8%
1–3 years	20	36.4%
4–7 years	10	18.2%
8–10 years	8	14.5%
More than 10 years	5	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: Respondents could skip questions throughout the survey, so the  $n$  size varies for each item.

Respondents' educational and professional backgrounds varied. More than half (62.5%) held a master's degree (see Table 4), and more than half had a bilingual endorsement (66.1%) or a TESOL endorsement (55.4%; see Table 5). Nearly half (44.6%) indicated they had more than 10 years of experience supporting K–12 Spanish–English BMEP students (see Table 6).

**Table 4:** Respondents' Highest Level of Education ( $n = 56$ )

Degree	Count	Percentage
Master's degree	35	62.5%
Bachelor's degree	11	19.6%
Doctoral degree	8	14.3%
Other (please specify)	2	3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 5:** Respondents With BMEP Endorsement(s) ( $n = 56$ )

<b>BMEP Endorsements</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Bilingual endorsement	37	66.1%
TESOL endorsement	31	55.4%
MCNL endorsement	13	23.2%
None of the above	12	21.4%

*Note:* Respondents could select multiple answers to this question, so the percentage does not add up to 100%.

**Table 6:** Respondents' Years of Experience Supporting Spanish–English BMEPs ( $n = 56$ )

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than 1 year	3	5.4%
1–3 years	13	23.2%
4–7 years	11	19.6%
8–10 years	4	7.1%
More than 10 years	25	44.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### ***Instruments***

An online survey (see the Appendix) was developed collaboratively between the NM SEA and WIDA researchers. It consisted of 32 items, including mostly multiple-choice items and several open-ended questions. The items were categorized into the following sections: (1) participants' background information; (2) BMEP models implemented; (3) tools/assessments used and decisions made; (4) data access and training; and (5) suggestions for improving BMEPs. Participants had the option to enter a raffle to win a \$25 gift card. The survey was developed using Qualtrics ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)) and was designed to take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete.

### ***Procedures***

The survey link was sent via email to BMEP administrators in all NM districts and charter schools. Recipients could forward the email and survey link to appropriate staff within the district. The survey was kept open for three weeks in Spring 2024.

The survey data from multiple-choice items were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The open-ended items were analyzed using *qualitative content analysis* (Schreier, 2012, 2014). First, one researcher carefully reviewed the responses from the open-ended questions in the survey

and developed an initial coding frame by creating categories and subcategories for each question. The coding frame was refined through discussion among the research team. Second, two researchers coded the qualitative data using the coding framework. In detail, the first coder completed 100% of the coding using the refined coding frame, and the second coder coded an overlapping 20% independently using the same coding frame. Next, inter-coder reliability was calculated using Krippendorff's *alpha*<sup>4</sup> (Neuendorf, 2017) for each open-ended question, with values ranging between 0.90 to 1.00. The two coders compared their coding and discussed any discrepancies until they reached a consensus.

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<sup>4</sup> Krippendorff's *alpha* is often used in qualitative content analysis for calculating inter-coder reliability in order to account for potential chance agreement. The *alpha* (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 325) "relies only on variables with reliabilities above  $\alpha = .80$ ." In other words, in order to draw a valid conclusion, the Krippendorff *alpha* should be above .80.

## Results

In this section, we first describe the BMEP models implemented across NM districts and charter schools. Afterward, we discuss the survey results in terms of (1) formative assessment practices, decisions made, and data access; (2) summative assessment practices, decisions made, and data access; and (3) suggestions for improving assessment practices in BMEPs.

### *BMEP Models Implemented in Districts and Charter Schools*

Regarding the density of the districts that the survey respondents represented, slightly more than half of the respondents (54.5%) were from districts located in rural areas, 30.9% in urban areas, and 14.5% in suburban areas (see Table 7). Also, the districts varied in size: Half (50%) were from smaller districts serving fewer than 500 students, while 25.9% were from larger districts serving 3,000 or more students (see Table 8). More than half of the respondents (53.7%) indicated having 100–499 BMEP students enrolled, and about a quarter (24.1%) indicated having 500 or more students enrolled (see Table 9). More BMEPs were available in elementary schools (82.1%) compared to middle schools (76.8%) or high schools (62.5%) (see Table 10).

**Table 7:** District Type ( $n = 55$ )

District	Count	Percentage
Rural	30	54.5%
Urban	17	30.9%
Suburban	8	14.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 8:** District Size: Total K–12 Student Enrollment ( $n = 54$ )

Total Student Enrollment	Count	Percentage
Fewer than 500 students	27	50%
500–999 students	5	9.3%
1,000–1,999 students	4	7.4%
2,000–2,999 students	4	7.4%
3,000 or more students	14	25.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 9:** Total K–12 BMEP Student Enrollment ( $n = 54$ )

Number of BMEP Students	Count	Percentage
1–29	4	7.4%
30–99	8	14.8%
100–499	29	53.7%
500 or more	13	24.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 10:** Grade Level of BMEP Student ( $n = 56$ )

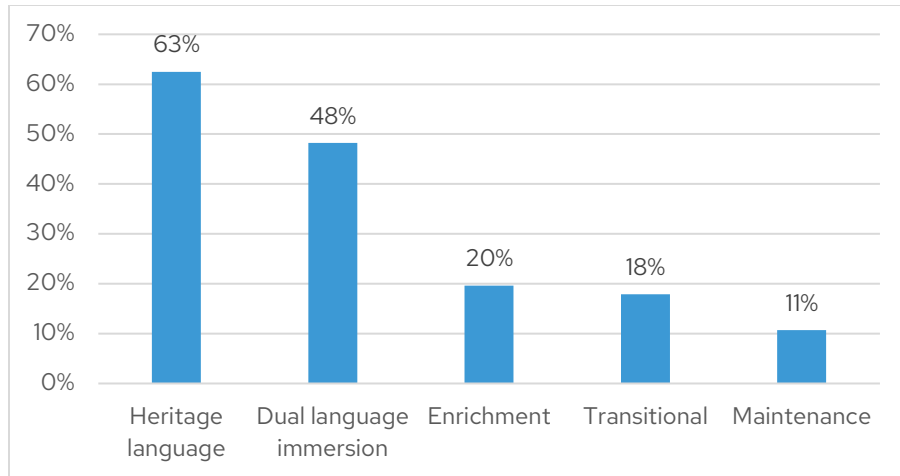
Grade Level	Count	Percentage
Elementary	46	82.1%
Middle	43	76.8%
High	35	62.5%

*Note:* Because respondents could select multiple answers to this question, the percentage does not add up to 100.0%.

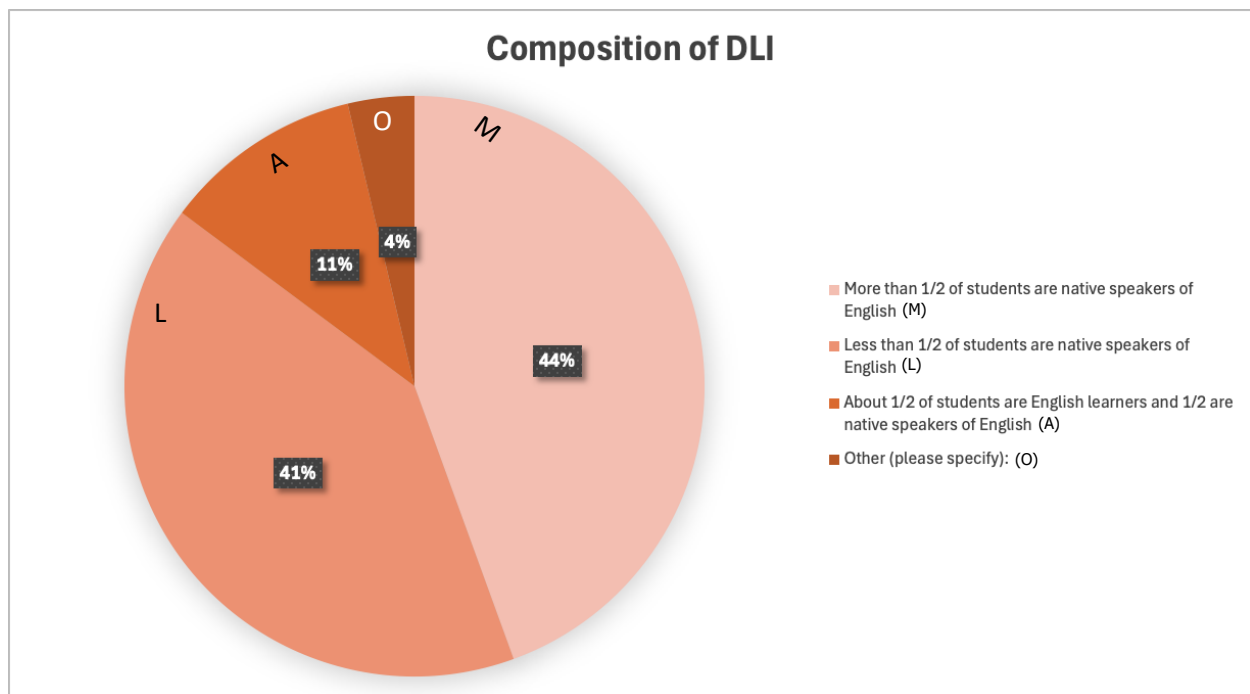
From the survey data, among the five Spanish–English BMEP models, the two most common were heritage language (62.5%) and DLI models (48.2%). Figure 1 presents the distribution of the five models of BMEPs across district/charter schools. Among the 42 district/charter schools, only one charter school, Corrales International School, had all five Spanish–English BMEPs models offered to students. However, seven district/charter schools offered at least three Spanish–English BMEP models; these districts included Las Cruces, Rio Rancho, Farmington, South Valley Academy, Corrales International, Ruidoso, and Gadsden.

Within DLI models, only 11% had a similar number of students coming from English-speaking homes and Spanish-speaking homes. The majority had more students from either English-speaking homes (44.4%) or Spanish-speaking homes (40.7%) (see Figure 2). Regarding the language ratio used in the DLI models, more than half (59.3%) of the models implemented a 50:50 ratio (50% Spanish and 50% English), and 51.9% employed a 90:10 ratio (90% Spanish and 10% English in lower grades, with the percentage of English increasing by grade level) (see Table 11).





**Figure 1:** Spanish-English BMEP Models ( $n = 56$ )



**Figure 2:** Composition of DLI Models ( $n = 27$ )

**Table 11:** Language Ratio in Spanish–English DLI Models ( $n = 27$ )

Language Ratio of DLI	Count	Percentage
90:10	14	51.9%
70:30	2	7.4%
50:50	16	59.3%
Other (please specify)	3	11.1%

*Note:* Respondents could select multiple answers to this question, so the percentage does not add up to 100%.

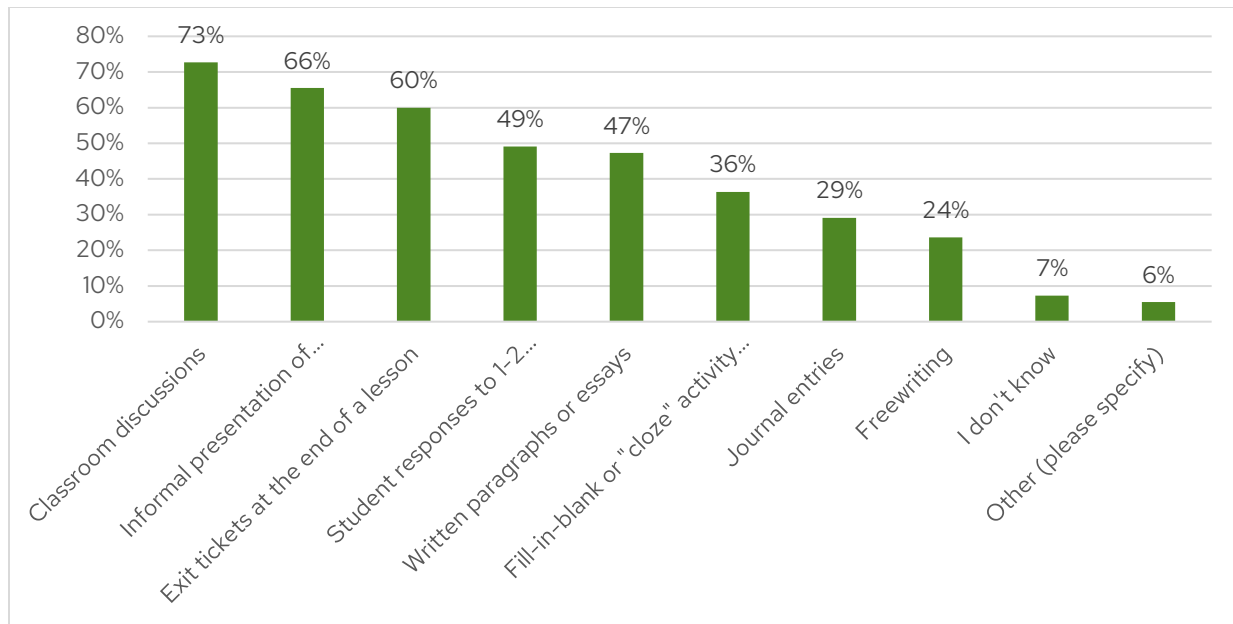
### ***Formative Assessment Practices and Decisions Made***

In the survey, formative assessment was defined as instructional practices educators incorporate to monitor student learning, provide ongoing feedback, and target areas of students' needs and strengths in their language development. As illustrated in Figure 3, the top three commonly used formative assessments were classroom discussions (72.7%), informal presentation (65.5%), and exit tickets (60.0%). Respondents also mentioned other formative assessments in addition to the options provided in the survey item, such as I-Station,<sup>5</sup> I-Ready,<sup>6</sup> and Dictados.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Istation is a formative assessment that measures Pre-K through 8th grade student achievement in reading, math, and Spanish literacy. See more information on [www.istation.com](http://www.istation.com).

<sup>6</sup> I-Ready is an online assessment and instruction that helps teachers provide all students a path to proficiency and growth in reading and math. See more information on [www.curriculumassociates.com](http://www.curriculumassociates.com).

<sup>7</sup> The Dictado is a routine in which the teacher dictates a series of phrases or sentences, and the teacher and students collaboratively correct them. The Dictado serves to teach and reinforce basic writing skills within each language and to highlight cross-language transfer. See more information on [www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/resource/strategy-overview-the-dictado](http://www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/resource/strategy-overview-the-dictado).



**Figure 3:** Formative Assessment for Spanish–English BMEPs ( $n = 55$ )

*Note:* Respondents could select multiple answers to this question, so the percentage does not add up to 100%.

In addition to their current formative assessment tools, respondents suggested additional formative assessments in an open-ended survey item. They indicated it would be helpful to incorporate additional formative assessment practices, such as assessing bilingual proficiency ( $n = 4$ ). Notably, many respondents ( $n = 10$ ) hoped to incorporate formative assessments specific to classroom activities, which were more interactive and writing-focused. They also wanted assessments that could be tailored for different student groups/levels ( $n = 5$ ). Table 12 summarizes respondents' needs regarding formative assessments with representative examples.

**Table 12:** Respondents' Suggestions on Formative Assessment

Category	Examples
Bilingual formative assessment ( $n = 4$ )	"Formative assessments that incorporate the home language and English."
Classroom-related activities ( $n = 10$ )	Interactive activities: "Classroom interaction with peers"; "Online interactive activities like Kahoots and Nearpod."  Writing activities: "Journals or learning logs to show growth over time in the portfolio"; "Cornell notes (the three divided section note-taking: notes, cues, and summary) or graphic organizers to structure note-taking"; "Interactive notebooks"; and others.
Focusing on content areas ( $n = 2$ )	"Having a content standards-based rubric, that is cross-walked with language proficiency indicators would be a helpful tool for educators to be able to measure student growth."
Tailoring for different groups/levels ( $n = 5$ )	Different grade levels: "A grade-level appropriate test."  Different group sizes and performance levels: "Teachers should be using them to plan lessons based on student performance, plan small group lessons as well as individualized lessons."

Respondents used formative assessments to make various decisions. The top three reasons for using formative assessments were to "monitor students' language progress" (79.2%), "plan lessons for small groups of students based on their performance" (75.0%), and "plan lessons for the entire class based on students' performance" (72.9%) (see Table 13).

**Table 13:** Decision-Making Based on Formative Assessment Practices ( $n = 48$ )

Decisions	Count	Percentage
Monitor students' language progress	38	79.2%
Plan lessons for small group of students based on their performance	36	75.0%
Plan lessons for the entire class based on students' performance	35	72.9%
Plan individualized lesson plans for each child	14	29.2%
Other (please specify)	2	4.2%
NA/No decisions are made	1	2.1%

*Note:* Because respondents could select multiple answers to this question, the percentage does not add up to 100%.

Regarding how they access data on Spanish–English formative assessments, nearly half (46%) of the respondents used hard copies of test scores, while 40% of the respondents used online systems (see Table 14), such as Ellevation<sup>8</sup> ( $n = 3$ ), I-Ready, and Istation’s Indicators of Progress (ISIP)<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, the majority (92.2%) believed that having access to student Spanish–English formative assessment data was beneficial for instructional purposes (see Table 15). Notably, one respondent elaborated that the benefit depended on how the data was used.

**Table 14:** Spanish–English Formative Assessment Data Access ( $n = 50$ )

Formative Assessment	Count	Percentage
Hard copies of test scores	23	46.0%
Online system	20	40.0%
No	10	20.0%
Other (please specify)	5	10.0%

*Note:* Respondents could select multiple answers to this question, so the percentage does not add up to 100%.

**Table 15:** Is Formative Data Helpful for Instructional Purposes? ( $n = 51$ )

Helpful or Not	Count	Percentage
Yes	47	92.2%
No	1	2.0%
It depends (please specify)	3	5.9%

### ***Summative Assessment Practices and Decisions Made***

In the survey, summative assessment was defined as assessments administered at the end of a unit/semester/school year for assessing students’ language development. The survey examined use of summative assessments for both English and Spanish across BMEPs.

For English language proficiency summative assessments, NM uses ACCESS. In addition to ACCESS, 72.3% of respondents indicated using WIDA MODEL to assess students’ English language proficiency (see Table 16). Furthermore, 42.6% of respondents indicated using other

<sup>8</sup> Ellevation is the platform to integrate assessment data with tasks like progress monitoring, reporting, and EL program management, which empowers educators to drive instruction for English learning. It also provides strategies and instruction techniques for educators. See more information on [ellevationeducation.com/about-us](http://ellevationeducation.com/about-us).

<sup>9</sup> Istation uses ISIP to assess student development in early reading, math, and English language acquisition. See more information on [webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/assessment/istation-resources](http://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/assessment/istation-resources).

assessments, including Istation ( $n = 3$ ), Avant<sup>10</sup> ( $n = 2$ ), Biliteracy Trajectory Tool,<sup>11</sup> Fountas & Pinnell,<sup>12</sup> STAR Reading,<sup>13</sup> state mandated tests, and Woodcock-Muñoz.<sup>14</sup> Some of these assessments (e.g., Fountas & Pinnell) are more formative in nature. Further investigation may be needed to examine why the respondents indicated using these assessments for measuring English language for summative purposes.

Regarding Spanish language proficiency summative assessments, NM has implemented Avant STAMP. Twenty-six percent of respondents indicated that, aside from Avant STAMP, they did not have summative assessments for Spanish in their programs. The rest, 74%, used similar assessments as they did for English, such as Istation ( $n = 3$ ), Biliteracy Trajectory Tool, Fountas & Pinnell, STAR Reading, and Woodcock-Muñoz. Other assessments included the Adelante method,<sup>15</sup> Dual Credit Spanish Course Exams, NWEA Spanish,<sup>16</sup> and Spanish AP, among others.

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<sup>10</sup> NM uses Avant STAMP for their Spanish summative assessments. Further investigation may be needed to examine why the respondent indicated using Avant as an English summative assessment.

<sup>11</sup> Biliteracy Trajectory Tool is an assessment tool designed to measure growth in English and Spanish language. It was created by the Sandoval Academy of Bilingual Education (SABE), a school that uses a thematic model and American Reading Company for its English and Spanish curriculum.

<sup>12</sup> Fountas & Pinnell Classroom is a cohesive, multi-text approach to literacy instruction for all students in grades PreK–6. It includes interactive read-alouds, reading minilessons, writing minilessons, shared reading, and others. See more information on [www.fountasandpinnell.com/fpc/](http://www.fountasandpinnell.com/fpc/). Fountas & Pinnell Classroom is viewed as a formative assessment. Further investigation may be needed to examine why the respondent indicated this as a summative assessment.

<sup>13</sup> STAR Reading by Renaissance Learning is a comprehensive examination that tests the range of students' knowledge of reading and language. STAR Reading Test is designed to gauge the reading comprehension skills and abilities of students in grades 1–12. See more information on [study.com/academy/popular/what-is-the-star-reading-test.html](http://study.com/academy/popular/what-is-the-star-reading-test.html).

<sup>14</sup> The Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey III (WMLS III) is a thorough measure of language ability, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, to support English and Spanish speakers. See more information on [riversideinsights.com/wmls\\_iii](http://riversideinsights.com/wmls_iii).

<sup>15</sup> ¡Adelante! is a three-volume introductory program to help students learn Spanish. The lesson includes context for vocabulary and grammar, interactive grammar tutorials, cultural videos, and more. See more information on [learn.vistahigherlearning.com/adelante/](http://learn.vistahigherlearning.com/adelante/).

<sup>16</sup> NWEA Spanish reading refers to MAP Spanish, which is a Spanish assessment that is part of MAP Growth and MAP Reading Fluency, offering a rigorous measure of reading, math, and early literacy skills. See more information on [www.nwea.org/the-map-suite/map-spanish/](http://www.nwea.org/the-map-suite/map-spanish/).

**Table 16:** English Language Summative Assessment Used in Addition to ACCESS ( $n = 47$ )

Summative Assessment	Count	Percentage
WIDA MODEL	34	72.3%
Other (please specify)	20	42.6%

*Note:* Respondents could skip questions throughout the survey, so the  $n$  size varies. In addition, the respondents could select multiple answers to this question, so the percentage does not add up to 100%.

Some respondents shared their opinions (via open-ended questions) about additional English or Spanish summative assessments that would be helpful for measuring students' language development. Respondents also indicated students' test fatigue with the current assessments ( $n = 3$ ) and expressed a need for assessments that are "minimally time intensive and integrated into regular classroom instruction." Overall, the suggestions for summative assessments were somewhat similar to those for formative assessments (see Table 17).

**Table 17:** Respondents' Suggestions on English/Spanish Summative Assessments

Category	Examples
Focusing on content areas ( $n = 1$ )	"Content area alignment with summative [assessments]."
Spanish summative assessment ( $n = 1$ )	"We would like a summative Spanish Language Assessment, we feel Avant is a Bilingual Assessment for using both English and Spanish."
Tracking students' progress ( $n = 3$ )	"Any language assessment that would provide data throughout the school year as we do not receive updated data until the next school year."
Tailoring for different groups/levels ( $n = 1$ )	"Placing students according to their language level and monitoring their progress."

Regarding decisions made based on summative assessments, the top three decisions made were monitoring students' progress (80.8%), placing students into appropriate BMEPs or levels (55.8%), and making programming decisions, such as budgeting or hiring teachers (50.0%; see Table 18).

**Table 18:** Decision-Making Based on Summative Assessment Practices ( $n = 52$ )

Decisions	Count	Percentage
Monitor students' progress to check their development	42	80.8%
Place students into appropriate BMEPs or levels	29	55.8%
Make programming decisions (budget, hiring teachers, etc.)	26	50.0%
Award the Seal of Bilingual/Biliteracy in Spanish	20	38.5%
NA/No decisions are made	3	5.8%
Other (please specify)	3	5.8%

Note: Respondents could select multiple answers to this question, so the percentage does not add up to 100%.

In terms of accessing Spanish–English summative assessment data, the majority of respondents used hard copies of test scores (58%). About 40% accessed data through online systems, similar to those used for formative assessments (see Table 19), such as Ellevation ( $n = 5$ ), Avant assessment platform, I-Ready, ISIP, PowerSchool Student Information System (SIS)<sup>17</sup>, and WIDA Assessment Management System (AMS). Furthermore, the majority (92%) believed that having access to students' Spanish–English summative data was helpful for instructional purposes (see Table 20). Notably, one respondent mentioned that the usefulness of students' summative data depended on how soon it was received.

**Table 19:** Spanish–English Summative Data Access ( $n = 50$ )

Summative Assessment	Count	Percentage
Hard copies of test scores	29	58.0%
Online system	19	38.0%
No	7	14.0%
Other (please specify)	5	10.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>17</sup> Powerschool Student Information System a cloud-based platform used by K-12 schools and districts to manage student data such as demographics, attendance, and grades.



**Table 20:** Is Summative Data Helpful for Instructional Purposes? (*n* = 50)

Helpful or Not	Count	Percentage
Yes	46	92%
No	2	4%
It depends (please specify)	2	4%

Furthermore, the survey also investigated the content assessments that were used for summative purposes (i.e., administered at the end of a unit/semester/school year for accessing information about students' content knowledge development). The four most frequently used content assessments were Measures of Student Success & Achievement (MSSA; 86%), Assessment of Science Readiness (56%), Spanish version of MSSA (48%), and Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP) Reading & Mathematics (46%; see Table 21). "Other" less frequently used content assessments included Benchmark Adelante, Avant, DRA II,<sup>18</sup> Dynamic Learning Maps Assessments, I-Ready, NWEA Reading, and STAR Math.

**Table 21:** Content Assessments (*n* = 50)

Content Assessment	Count	Percentage
Measures of Student Success & Achievement (MSSA)	43	86.0%
Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR)	28	56.0%
Spanish version of MSSA	24	48.0%
Istation Indicators of Progress (ISIP) Reading & Mathematics	23	46.0%
Interim MSSA (iMSSA)	16	32.0%
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	15	30.0%
Other (please specify)	8	16.0%

*Note:* Respondents could select multiple answers to this question, so the percentage does not add up to 100%.

### ***Professional Development Trainings in BMEPs***

In addition to formative and summative assessment practices, our survey explored how professional development (PD) trainings were provided to BMEPs. In-person trainings (88.5%) were offered more frequently compared to online trainings (67.3%) (see Table 22). Regarding

<sup>18</sup> Developmental Reading Assessment Second Edition (DRA II) is an individual reading assessment designed to assess students' reading performance in kindergarten through grade 8. It provides teachers with information that helps them determine students' independent reading level and identify what the student needs to learn next. See more information on [portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/language-arts/dra2\\_2012.pdf](http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/language-arts/dra2_2012.pdf).

the “other” option on the survey item, one respondent stated they conducted “[in-]house PD” and three respondents mentioned they do not offer PD on BMEPs. For in-person trainings, approximately half (54.3%) of respondents indicated they conducted the trainings one or two times per year (see Table 23).

**Table 22:** Types of Professional Development Trainings on BMEPs ( $n = 52$ )

Types	Count	Percentage
In-person training	46	88.5%
Online training	35	67.3%
Self-paced online course	18	34.6%
Other (please specify)	6	11.5%

*Note:* Respondents could select multiple answers to this question, so percentage does not add up to 100%.

**Table 23:** Frequency of In-Person Training ( $n = 46$ )

Frequency	Count	Percentage
1–2 times/year	25	54.3%
3–4 times/year	10	21.7%
More than 5 times	8	17.4%
None	3	6.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>

### ***Assessment Practices Needed for Successful BMEPs***

The last section of the survey asked questions about the characteristics of successful BMEPs, including ways to improve assessment practices. When asked about the *key factors for successful BMEPs*, “quality assessments” (69.2%) was the second most important factor for successful BMEPs, following teacher qualification (94.2%). “Other” responses included “Training on using high quality instructional materials across two languages,” “Fidelity when implementing the dual language model,” “Curriculum,” “School culture,” and “Multicultural perspective systems,” among others.

In a similar survey item that examined district needs for successful BMEPs, respondents indicated that they needed better quality assessments (34.6%) in addition to qualified teachers (73.1%) and additional resources and support (65.4%; see Table 25). These findings suggest that assessments are an important key factor for successful BMEPs, and there is still room for improving the assessment practices in the programs (see Tables 24 and 25).

**Table 24:** Key Factors for Successful BMEPs (*n* = 52)

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Teacher qualification	49	94.2%
Quality assessments to measure students' language	36	69.2%
Community buy-in	34	65.4%
Other (please specify)	8	15.4%

*Note:* Respondents could select multiple answers to this question, so the percentage does not add up to 100%.

**Table 25:** Districts/Charter Schools' Needs for Successful BMEPs (*n* = 52)

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
More qualified teachers	38	73.1%
Additional resources and support (please specify)	34	65.4%
Better quality assessments (please specify)	18	34.6%
Other (please specify)	5	9.6%

*Note:* Respondents could select multiple answers to this question, so the percentage does not add up to 100%.

To gain further insight into respondents' thoughts regarding their BMEP's needs, we qualitatively analyzed the respondents' open-ended suggestions on "better quality assessment" and "additional resources and support" (see Table 25 for questions and Table 26 for results). Notably, they wanted more guidance on how to analyze and use the assessment data. In addition, similar to responses on previous survey items, respondents wanted more options for Spanish assessments to measure students' progress for formative purposes and assessments that could be tailored to the specific needs of test takers.

**Table 26:** Open-Ended Responses on Needs for Successful BMEPs (*n* = 52)

Category	Sub-category	Examples
Better quality assessment	Guidance on data use ( <i>n</i> = 1)	"More specific protocols with which to analyze and use data."
Better quality assessment	Spanish assessment ( <i>n</i> = 3)	"Assessment that assess student daily Spanish register."
Better quality assessment	Tracking students' progress ( <i>n</i> = 1)	"More options besides Avant to test and measure students' progress."
Better quality assessment	Tailoring for different levels ( <i>n</i> = 3)	<p><b>State level:</b> "Relevant at a local level, or state level."</p> <p><b>School level:</b> "School wide assessments that we all use would be helpful" and "Diverse options that fit each school's need."</p>
Additional resources and support	Classroom resources ( <i>n</i> = 5)	"Such as curriculum and instruction, educational materials including books."
Additional resources and support	Funding ( <i>n</i> = 2)	"Additional funding."
Additional resources and support	Resources for parents	"More information on bilingual education. More involvement from parents."
Additional resources and support	Training or professional development ( <i>n</i> = 4)	"More state or district sponsored trainings."
Additional resources and support	Other types of resources and support ( <i>n</i> = 12)	<p>"Translated Texts."</p> <p>"Cultural connection."</p> <p>"We will need to purchase resources to align with our Biliteracy Unit Frameworks that are authentic not translations."</p> <p>"Our dual language model needs more structure to support teachers."</p>

Lastly, educators shared that they face systemic challenges that limit the effectiveness of BMEPs, including gaps in administration, resources (such as funding and time), and staffing. Notably, a significant number of respondents mentioned the shortage of bilingual staff, including administrators and educators, was one of the challenges to implementing BMEPs. Additional challenges of implementing BMEPs included maintaining fidelity and consistency, addressing diverse student needs, and balancing linguistic and cultural priorities. The specific challenges are described in Table 27.

**Table 27:** Challenges of Implementing BMEPs

Challenges in BMEPs	Description	Quotes From Respondents
Funding and staffing	Lack of funding ( $n = 2$ )	<p>"Lack of knowledge from administrators at school and district level. District level superintendent and their directors removing programs from schools and using these funds for other departments."</p> <p>"Not enough funds or time to fully develop teachers based on teacher needs at the site."</p>
Funding and staffing	Shortage of bilingual staff (directors, licensed bilingual teachers) ( $n = 10$ )	<p>"If a school program uses two languages, it would be appropriate to have a director who speaks both languages."</p> <p>"Lack of licensed teachers is hurting our program" and "The lack of teachers wanting to get bilingual certifications."</p> <p>"Some teachers are required to share schools as class sizes are small. This is difficult for teachers. BMEP teachers need time to collaborate district wide since there is usually only one Spanish BMEP teacher at each school."</p>
Funding and staffing	Insufficient professional development ( $n = 6$ )	<p>Need for "more professional development opportunities for heritage language [programs]."</p> <p>"Need for more individualized and differentiated PD and planning time."</p>

Challenges in BMEPs	Description	Quotes From Respondents
Program implementation	Challenges of keeping fidelity to the program ( <i>n</i> = 3)	Difficult to “meet all requirement and expectations set forth by state, district, and school leaders.”
Program implementation	Challenges of standardizing BMEPs	“Our teachers have worked in bilingual programs for different lengths of time and in different bilingual settings. Our challenge is to standardize the [DLI model] we are providing.”
Program implementation	Difficulty of tailoring instruction for different groups of students	“Multiple preps for the varying levels of language abilities of students.”
Program implementation	Lack of authentic instructional resources ( <i>n</i> = 4)	One respondent wished to develop “authentic lesson frameworks for two languages” because “the adopted instructional materials usually are translated pieces and not authentic Spanish Literature.”
Program implementation	Additional challenges	“Our BMEP educators face the challenge of trying to teach two languages within a system that sometimes prioritizes one language over the other.”
Community support	Difficulty in involving parents	“Parents lack understanding of bilingual programs.”

## Discussion and Conclusion

This survey study examined the characteristics of NM BMEPs by focusing on their assessment practices—formative and summative assessments used, decisions made using the assessments, and assessment practices that lead to successful BMEPs.

### ***Assessment Practices***

#### **Formative Assessment Practices**

Regarding assessment practices in BMEPs, survey findings showed that the three most frequently used *formative* assessments included (1) classroom discussions, (2) informal presentations, and (3) exit tickets. These assessments were often used for monitoring students' language progress and planning lessons for small or large groups of students based on their performance. These findings are consistent with the literature, which suggests that the ongoing nature of formative assessment enables teachers to adjust their instruction to meet students' language needs (e.g., Alvarez et al., 2014; Ascenzi-Moreno, 2018).

#### **Summative Assessment Practices**

The *summative* assessments used varied for English versus Spanish. For English, ACCESS was primarily used as it's a state-mandated assessment. In addition to ACCESS, respondents also reported using WIDA MODEL and other assessments, such as Istation. For Spanish, Avant STAMP was mainly used as the state-mandated assessment. The top three decisions made based on the summative data were (1) monitoring students' progress, (2) placing students into appropriate BMEPs or levels, and (3) making programming decisions, such as budgeting or hiring teachers. These findings generally align with previous research, which indicated that ELP assessments, especially summative assessments, are the key tools for identifying, classifying (e.g., Boals et al., 2015), or reclassifying ELs (e.g., Thompson, 2017).

#### **Assessment Practices That Lead to Successful BMEPs**

The study also identified key factors that respondents believed contributed to the success of BMEPs. Key factors included qualified teachers, quality assessment practices, and strong community support. Yet, challenges in BMEPs were noted, indicating the need for more bilingual teachers, resources, and support, such as professional development to continuously train and maintain bilingual teachers and enhanced assessment practices to measure both Spanish and English language development. Not only is access to assessment data important, as discussed previously, but also educators need training on using the data.

Results revealed the needs in both formative and summative assessment practices. Specifically, educators expressed a need for formative assessments to measure learners' bilingual

development and for tailoring the assessments to the needs of varying student groups. They also suggested activities that were more interactive and focused on writing. Regarding summative assessments, similar to their responses on formative assessments, respondents wanted assessments that could track student progress and be tailored to the needs of the learners. They also requested assessments that were less time intensive.

Overall, respondents underscored the need for more structured support from districts and communities to implement BMEPs. The current survey study specifically underscores the need for educator support and training in assessment practices and assessment literacy.

### ***Study Implications***

Study findings provide several implications regarding assessment practices and other areas that could better support BMEPs: (1) recognize the importance of monitoring student progress, (2) improve access to data, (3) increase assessment literacy training, and (4) research and develop new bilingual assessments. These are described here in detail:

- **Recognize the importance of monitoring student progress.** District-level BMEP educators were most interested in monitoring student progress, using both formative and summative assessments. State-level administrators and test developers could keep this in mind when providing resources and support for districts.
- **Improve access to data.** Educators accessed formative and summative assessment data through either hard copies or online systems (e.g., Ellevation) to make various decisions. The majority indicated that having access to assessment data was helpful for instructional purposes. However, not all respondents had access to these data. Up to 20% of respondents did not have access to assessment data, which underscore the need for better assessment data systems for BMEP educators. Having access to student assessment data could potentially help educators make informed decisions.
- **Increase assessment literacy training.** Interestingly, the findings indicated an overlapping use between formative and summative assessments. For instance, when asked about the use of summative assessments in BMEPs, some respondents mentioned assessments that have characteristics of formative assessments, such as Fountas & Pinnell and Istation. This overlap suggests the need for further investigation, for example through interviews, to gather detailed information on how educators distinguish and utilize different formative and summative assessments. It is likely that educators are somewhat unclear on the differences between formative and summative assessments and the appropriate way to utilize them in classrooms. Such findings suggest a need for more training to enhance educators' assessment literacy. Having adequate assessment literacy could enable educators to understand the purpose of assessments and how their scores could be used in programs. For example, considering



the assessment fatigue reported by respondents, with more knowledge of assessment, educators would be able to make informed decisions regarding the selection of assessments to implement in BMEPs and make them more integrated into classroom instruction, particularly in the case of formative assessments.

- **Research and develop new assessments.** This study highlights the critical need for further research on formative assessment practices (see Yan et al., 2021), particularly their uses in bilingual programs. While a few studies, such as Ascenzi-Moreno (2018), have examined formative assessment of reading skills among emergent bilinguals, more studies are needed to investigate formative assessments for writing skills and biliteracy development. Additionally, the current study also indicated a research need on bi/multilingual assessment (e.g., Guzman-Orth et al., 2017) to measure students' bi/multilingual competence (Shohamy, 2011), for example, to better understand and support translanguaging practices among students (Lopez et al., 2017). Survey results revealed a particular need for tools that measure both Spanish and English languages in BMEPs. This finding aligns with the contemporary perspectives advocating for a multilingual approach in K–12 education, where students leverage their entire linguistic repertoire or engage in translanguaging (e.g., Guzman-Orth et al., 2017), rather than using the traditional approach of assessing each language independently. While challenges and limitations remain in implementing bilingual or multilingual assessment to measure Spanish and English proficiency simultaneously (Thordardottir et al., 2006; Peña et al., 2018; Sanchez et al., 2013), this finding highlights the importance of adopting a multilingual approach as a future direction for assessment research and development.

Overall, this study suggests that enhancing assessment practices could better address the needs of BMEPs. While formative and summative assessments are utilized within these programs, there is a significant demand for more tailored assessment tools, particularly those that could measure bilingual proficiency and are capable of tracking progress across diverse student groups. Improving the quality of assessment practices could enable educators to more effectively meet the needs of students in BMEPs.

### ***Study Limitations and Suggestions for the Future***

Despite the meaningful findings regarding assessment practices in NM BMEPs, this study is limited due to the nature of the survey methodology used for data collection. The survey was rather lengthy with more than 30 items. Although we made efforts to allow respondents to skip a number of questions to avoid survey fatigue, given the length of the survey, some respondents may have become tired while completing the survey questions, especially the open-ended questions. This could have led to less thoughtful or rushed responses, which may have affected the accuracy and reliability of the data collected in the survey. Additionally,

survey fatigue may have contributed to incomplete responses, which led to limited responses for certain survey items. We plan on addressing this limitation in Phase 2 of the study, where we will interview BMEP administrators and educators to better understand the assessment practices currently being implemented in their programs.

Another limitation is the possibility that respondents' answers may not accurately reflect the reality of individual classrooms. Since most of our respondents were primarily local district administrators, their perspectives may differ from those of classroom teachers or other staff who are directly involved in day-to-day BMEP implementation. Some questions in the survey pertained to specific classroom practices, such as formative assessments, of which administrators may not have firsthand knowledge. This disconnect could lead to responses that are more reflective of general policies or a broader picture of BMEPs rather than the actual assessment practices in individual classrooms. Again, future studies could address this issue by conducting interviews with BMEP school-level teachers or through classroom observations.

The findings of the Phase 1 survey study will play an important role in shaping the research design of Phase 2. In the next phase, we intend to conduct a case study, investigating BMEP learners' language learning (e.g., rate of progress toward language proficiency) and outcomes (e.g., EL reclassification, content area performance) in select districts using student assessment scores and educator interview data; student assessment data will primarily include their summative test data (if available, formative assessment data as well). Phase 1 results depicted the current status of the assessment practices in NM BMEPs and informed the areas we want to further investigate. These include, but are not limited to, gathering detailed information on how educators differentiate and utilize varying formative and summative assessments.

In the next phase, we also plan on comparing students' bilingual performance with their content assessment scores. Phase 1 results identified the major content assessments used in BMEPs, such as Measures of Student Success & Achievement (MSSA), Assessment of Science Readiness, Spanish version of MSSA, and Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP) Reading & Mathematics. This information will be helpful in Phase 2 when analyzing students' language data along with content area scores.

Overall, study findings from both phases could benefit districts and schools by providing information about students' bilingual and biliteracy development in various BMEPs. In addition, results will help identify successful program practices (e.g., instructional practices, including assessment practices) that could inform New Mexico's BMEP guidelines and accountability; these findings could also inform similar programs in the WIDA Consortium.

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## Appendix: Survey on Bilingual Multicultural Education Programs

Tell us about your Spanish–English Bilingual Multicultural Education Programs (BMEPs)!

**Who should take this survey?** We want to hear from district-level/charter school educators and administrators who support K–12 Spanish–English BMEPs.

**What can survey takers expect?** The survey should take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. All who complete the survey can enter a raffle to win a \$25 Amazon gift card.

**What will WIDA do with my feedback?** We are trying to understand how to better support K–12 Spanish–English BMEPs and educators. In order to do so, we need to better understand your program model, tools/assessments used, and the decisions made using the tools/assessments. Your feedback will help us develop meaningful resources and tools for you and your students.

Thank you in advance for taking time to share your thoughts and feedback with us! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the WIDA Client Services Center at [help@wida.us](mailto:help@wida.us).

### ***Background Information***

1. \*Do you support students in Spanish–English BMEPs either at the district level or charter school level?
  - a. I do not support students in BMEPs
  - b. District level
  - c. Charter school
  - d. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_
2. \*District/charter school (please select the name):
3. How would you describe the district/charter school you work at?
  - a. Rural
  - b. Suburban
  - c. Urban
4. What is the total number of **K–12 students** in your district/charter school?
  - a. I don't know
  - b. Less than 500 students
  - c. 500–999 students
  - d. 1,000–1,999 students
  - e. 2,000–2,999 students
  - f. 3,000 or more students



5. \*What is the total number of **K-12 BMEP students** in your district/charter school?
- a. I don't know
  - b. 1-29
  - c. 30-99
  - d. 100-499
  - e. 500 or more
6. How many years of experience do you have supporting **K-12 Spanish-English BMEP students**?
- a. Less than 1 year
  - b. 1-3 years
  - c. 4-7 years
  - d. 8-10 years
  - e. More than 10 years
7. \*What is your current position? (please select the primary title **closest** to yours)
- a. Content-area/Mainstream teacher
  - b. Counselor/School psychologist
  - c. Bilingual/EL program director
  - d. Bilingual/EL teacher
  - e. Instructional coach
  - f. Principal/Assistant principal
  - g. Support/resource teacher
  - h. Test coordinator
  - i. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many years have you been in **the current position**?
- a. Less than 1 year
  - b. 1-3 years
  - c. 4-7 years
  - d. 8-10 years
  - e. More than 10 years
9. \*Which grade level Spanish-English BMEP students do you support? (select all that apply)
- a. Elementary
  - b. Middle
  - c. High
10. What is your highest level of education?
- a. Associate's degree
  - b. Bachelor's degree
  - c. Master's degree
  - d. Doctoral degree
  - e. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

11. What BMEP endorsement(s) do you currently hold? (select all that apply.)
- a. Bilingual endorsement
  - b. TESOL endorsement
  - c. MCNL endorsement
  - d. None of the above

***Questions on BMEP Type and Model***

The following questions are specifically for **Spanish–English BMEPs** that you support at the district/charter school.

12. \*How many students are in Spanish–English BMEPs at your district/charter school?
- a. I don't know
  - b. 1–29
  - c. 30–99
  - d. 100–499
  - e. 500 or more
13. \*What type of Spanish–English BMEP does your district/charter school offer to students? (select all that apply)
- a. Dual language immersion
  - b. Enrichment
  - c. Heritage language
  - d. Maintenance
  - e. Transitional
14. (if “dual language immersion” was selected in previous question) What is the composition of students in your Spanish–English dual language immersion models? (select all that apply)
- a. Less than 1/2 of students are native speakers of English
  - b. About 1/2 of students are English learners and 1/2 are native speakers of English
  - c. More than 1/2 students are native speakers of English
  - d. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
15. (if “dual language immersion” was selected in previous question) What is the language ratio used in your Spanish–English dual language immersion models? (select all that apply)
- a. 90:10 (90% Spanish and 10% English in lower grades; % of English rises by grade level)
  - b. 70:30 (70% Spanish and 30% English)
  - c. 50:50 (50% Spanish and 50% English)
  - d. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Questions on Tools/Assessments and Decisions Made**

The following questions are designed to understand the use of language assessments in your **Spanish–English BMEPs**. We define **formative assessments** as instructional practices educators incorporate to monitor student learning, provide ongoing feedback, and target areas of students’ needs and strengths in their language development. We define **summative assessments** as those administered at the end of a unit/semester/school year for assessing students’ language development.

16. \*Which of the following **formative** language assessment practices do your Spanish–English BMEPs incorporate? (select the top 3 assessments)
  - a. I don’t know
  - b. Written paragraphs or essays
  - c. Classroom discussions
  - d. Informal presentation of artifacts from individual, pair, or small group work (poster, solution, diagram, etc.)
  - e. Exit tickets at the end of a lesson
  - f. Student responses to 1–2 questions about the topic of an upcoming unit; could include family responses
  - g. Freewriting
  - h. Journal entries
  - i. Fill-in-the-blank or “cloze” activity using sentence frames
  - j. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
17. What decisions are made using students’ Spanish–English performance on the **formative** assessments? (select all that apply)
  - a. I don’t know
  - b. NA/No decisions are made
  - c. Monitor students’ language progress
  - d. Plan lessons for the entire class based on students’ performance
  - e. Plan lessons for small group of students based on their performance
  - f. Plan individualized lesson plans for each child
  - g. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
18. In your opinion, what additional **formative** assessment practices would be helpful for their Spanish–English language development?
19. In addition to WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, which **summative** assessments are administered at the end of a unit/semester/school year for assessing students’ **English** language development? (select all that apply)
  - a. WIDA MODEL
  - b. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
20. In addition to Avant STAMP, which **summative** assessments are administered for assessing students’ **Spanish** language development?

21. What decisions are made using students' performance on the **English and Spanish summative** assessments? (select all that apply)
- a. NA/No decisions are made
  - b. Monitor students' progress to check their development
  - c. Make programming decisions (budget, hiring teachers, etc.)
  - d. Place students into appropriate BMEPs or levels
  - e. Award the Seal of Bilingual/Biliteracy in Spanish
  - f. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
22. In your opinion, what additional English and/or Spanish **summative** assessments would be helpful?
23. Which **content assessments** are administered at the end of a unit/semester/school year for assessing students' content knowledge development? (select all that apply)
- a. Measures of Student Success & Achievement (MSSA)
  - b. Spanish version of MSSA
  - c. Interim MSSA (iMSSA)
  - d. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
  - e. Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP) Reading & Mathematics
  - f. Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR)
  - g. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Questions on Data Access and Training***

24. Is there a tool/mechanism with which teachers at school sites can access previous years' student Spanish–English **formative** assessment data? (select all that apply)
- a. No
  - b. Online system (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Hard copies of test scores
  - d. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
25. Is having access to student Spanish–English **formative** data helpful for instructional purposes?
- a. Yes
  - b. It depends (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. No
26. Is there a tool/mechanism with which teachers at school sites can access previous years' student Spanish–English **summative** assessment data? (select all that apply)
- a. No
  - b. Online system (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Hard copies of test scores
  - d. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

27. Is having access to student Spanish–English **summative** data helpful for instructional purposes?
- a. Yes
  - b. It depends (please specify): \_\_\_\_
  - c. No
28. \*What type of professional development trainings on BMEPs does the district/charter school offer? (select all that apply)
- a. In-person training
  - b. Online training
  - c. Self-paced online course
  - d. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_
29. (if “in-person” was selected in previous item) How often does the district/charter school offer **in-person training** on BMEPs?
- a. None
  - b. 1–2 times/year
  - c. 3–4 times/year
  - d. More than 5 times

### **Factors That Affect BMEPs**

30. In your opinion, what is a key factor for successful BMEPs? (select all that apply)
- a. Teacher qualification
  - b. Quality assessments to measure students’ language
  - c. Community buy-in
  - d. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_
31. \*In your opinion, what is needed in your district/charter school for more successful BMEPs? (select all that apply)
- a. More qualified teachers
  - b. Better quality assessments (please specify): \_\_\_\_
  - c. Additional resources and support (please specific):
  - d. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_
32. In your opinion, what additional challenges do BMEP educators in your district/charter school face? (open-ended)

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