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## Development and Support of Dual Language Policies

Hollis Derek Cone

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## DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF DUAL LANGUAGE POLICIES

by

H. DEREK CONE

(Under the Direction of Yasar Bodur)

### ABSTRACT

Teaching a second language is not a new idea. Bilingual education has gone through a metamorphosis over the years. The most current bilingual program is the two-way or dual language program. Dual language programs educate students that speak a different language in the same classroom. The idea is that one group is strengthened in its native language; the other group acquires the second language.

Each local school board must implement its own policies to create a dual language program; unfortunately, few, if any, research studies exist that identify how local school boards can implement a dual language program. School districts interested in implementing a dual language program are forced to discover for themselves what types of policies, support, and funding are needed to create and manage a dual language program.

A greater understanding of critical factors involved with creating and sustaining a dual language program is needed to guide educators toward policies and procedures for implementing and maintaining these programs. The purpose of the study was to examine the development of and support for dual language program policies in a school in a southeastern state. The study provided literature and data on bilingual education, specifically, dual language programs. The study investigated an existing dual language program in a public charter school in a southeastern state. Data was taken from state

standardized testing and the dual language student's scores were compared against a comparable school's scores, the district's scores, and the state's scores. The results showed that that with support from both leaders and the community, having qualified teachers, and starting the program early in a student's educational career, dual language students are able to learn a second language and have comparable test scores with traditional students.

**INDEX WORDS:** Dual Language, ELL (English Language Learners), FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary Schools), FLEX (Foreign Language Experience), Immersion, LEP (Limited English Proficiency), Submersion, Transitional Bilingual Education, Two-Way Immersion

DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF DUAL LANGUAGE POLICIES

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DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF DUAL LANGUAGE POLICIES

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## DEDICATION

Many people have helped me in this momentous task of which I will be forever indebted. I would like to thank all the members of my committee, Dr. Melton and Dr. Brinson, I would especially like to thank my chair, Dr. Yasar Bodur. Each of you have displayed the patience of Job. Thank you for all of your help.

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I would like to thank the administrators and teachers of [BDLCS], you know who you are. Thank you for opening up your school, your hearts, and your dream. You are doing a tremendous job and will change lives forever.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

If you don't know foreign languages, you don't know anything about your own.-Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

Different languages have existed since the emergence of man. Although the physical size of the earth has changed little over billions of years, in just a few decades, the advancement of technology has made the world smaller figuratively and created a global community. Technology has created computer-based language translators, and with just a few keystrokes, a person can translate a document into many different languages. Even with these advanced technologies, nothing can replace an individual who is able to speak two or more languages. If a person is able to communicate in a different language in addition to his/her first language, he/she will have a tremendous advantage in today's world (Freeman, Freeman, &Mercuri, 2005).

Teaching a second language in schools is not a new idea. For many years states have implemented different programs to teach second languages to students. In 2006, President Bush implemented the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) to teach critical languages. The NSLI was implemented in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001 on America and also as an aid to America's involvement in foreign affairs. The NSLI provided funding to increase the number of programs in Arabic, Chinese, Eurasian languages, Hindi, Persian (Farsi), Korean, and Urdu. The U.S. government views languages included in the NSLI as critical languages because these languages are needed to establish relations with countries around the world. The NSLI wanted to develop a program for students K-16 (NSLI Brochure, 2006). Even with the existence of

government recognition, there is still a lack of a national or state policy for creation of educational programs to help English-speaking students master a second language in this southeastern state.

Bilingual education has gone through a metamorphosis over the years. The most current bilingual program is the two-way or dual language program (Freeman et al., 2005). The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (2000) describes dual language as a program where non-English-speaking and students speaking English only co-exist in the same classroom. The predominant language of each group is used throughout the day to reinforce each group's language. As one group is strengthened in its native language, the other group acquires the second language. The acquisition of both languages benefits both groups, especially the English Language Learners. However, most policy makers do not understand first and second language acquisition (Forte, 2012). Bilingual education is opposed because some politicians believe it will prevent immigrants from assimilating. Forte (2012) stated, "Illinois is one of just a handful of states to require that students be taught in their native language by certified bilingual teachers" (p. 2).

Each local school board must implement its own policies to create a dual language program; unfortunately, few, if any, research studies exist that identify how local school boards can implement a successful dual language program. School districts interested in implementing a dual language program are forced to discover for themselves what types of policies, support, and funding are needed to create and manage a dual language program.

A greater understanding of critical factors involved with creating and sustaining a successful dual language program is needed to guide educators toward policies and procedures for successfully implementing and maintaining these programs. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the development of and support for dual language program policies in a school in a southeastern state. The study provided literature and data on bilingual education, specifically, dual language programs. The study investigated an existing dual language program in a public charter school in a southeastern state and evaluated its successes and shortcomings.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The United States, since its founding, has been a conglomerate of different languages and cultures. The federal government and a growing number of Americans believe globalization will necessitate that American students learn a second language. In today's global community, where interactions between different cultures are commonplace, it is important to prepare students by teaching foreign languages early in their schooling (Stewart, 2005). Teaching students foreign languages early in their schooling will not only allow the growth of the country in the global community, but it will provide students with the understanding and ability to speak critical languages needed to advance and protect America.

Although research shows the benefits of students becoming bilingual, bilingual education programs continue to be under-funded and under-supported (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 2000). Berriz (2005) reported many people continue to resist the idea of Americans becoming bilingual. As no blueprint for

successful implementation of a dual immersion education program exists, individual school districts are forced to carry both implementation and the monetary burden.

### **Research Questions**

The following overarching question guided this study: What does it entail for a school system to create and implement a successful dual language immersion education program?

The researcher employed the following research questions to explore factors related to the development of a successful dual language school program in a southeastern state:

1. What are the contributors in creating a public charter dual language program?
2. What are the challenges in creating a public charter dual language program?
3. Do standardized state scores from students in a dual language program compare to the scores of students from a traditional program?

### **Significance of the Study**

National and state policies dealing with bilingual education have been created, modified, and in some cases eradicated for many years. Although some private dual language education programs exist in the southeastern United States, neither national nor state policies exist to create public education dual language programs at the local level. The researcher examined the policies of a local board created to support and maintain a dual language education program. Without the support of local administrators, faculty, and community members, a dual language education program cannot be successful.

In this study, student test scores from a bilingual charter school with a dual language immersion program, referred to as a bilingual dual language charter school

(BDLCS), were compared with a comparison school, other schools in the county, and throughout the state. If dual language programs increase test scores, other school systems may be more receptive to the idea of implementing a dual language program for students who speak only English. If dual language programs can teach a second language to both students who speak only English and students speaking another language, then state and federal governments will recognize the need to create and fund dual language programs throughout the United States.

Although bilingual education has existed in different forms for years, and the overall concept is not new, the dual language program is the newest innovation in a long line even though research on the dual language program is minimal (Esposito, 2006; Giacchino-Baker & Pillar, 2006; Howard, 2002; Lessow-Hurley, 1990; Lindholm-Leary, 2004/2005; National Clearing House, 2000; Potowski, 2007; Zehr, 2004, 2005, 2007). The conception and creation of policies and procedures to form a program, the means to continue the program, and data from the program are needed to show its triumph or failure. The knowledge gained from this study may help augment the limited information that already exists.

As its name suggests, a dual language immersion program has two goals. Before implementation of dual language programs, students who spoke only one language were placed in the same classroom and taught a second language. A dual language program places students who speak different languages in the same classroom and allows them to learn each other's language together. The first goal is to teach students who speak only English a second language, while the second goal is to teach English to students who are

unable to speak the language. The program entwines both goals and pursues them simultaneously.

Thanks to the rapid development and implementation of technology, our local communities have become global communities. The world is a diverse society where many different languages are spoken. Current policies and procedures in school systems throughout the United States and specifically in the Southeast are not producing students who are fluent in a foreign language when graduating from high school. Students graduating from high school may be prepared for college; however, they are ill-equipped to face the diversity of the world.

### **Procedures**

This study was designed as a qualitative case study of a bilingual dual language charter school (BDLCS) in the Southeastern United States. The school is the oldest public dual language school in a southeastern state.

The researcher conducted interviews with administrators to learn policy processes and challenges in creating a bilingual dual language charter school (BDLCS) along with procedures and evaluations used to start and continue the program.

In addition, data were collected on students' scores on standardized state tests administered at the grade levels that are tested. The scores were used to compare English Language Arts, ELA, reading, and math scores from BDLCS students with scores of students from other schools in the district as well as with state wide scores. Coding allows the researcher to synthesize information and place the information into manageable sequences. A copy of the original charter petition, memorandum notes, interviews, and standardized and state test scores of students were collected. Coding was

used to organize information, find patterns, and seek further information based on gaps revealed by the codes.

### **Limitations/Delimitations**

The school district housing the BDLCS lost accreditation in 2008 (Jacobson, 2008), and the superintendent position has been held by two different people since the creation of BDLCS in 2006-2007 school year. The school is still in its infant stages, so it was difficult to obtain a long history of data. The school district regained its accreditation in 2009; however, it remained on probation for 2 years.

Since only one public dual language school exists in the state, this study is delimited to that school and school community members. There may be some things unique to this school and community that could affect the outcome and, therefore, limit transferability of the study.

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

*Bilingual Education* - education in an English-language school system in which students with little fluency in English are taught in both their native language and English.

*Dual Language* – a program that teaches both English-speaking students and non-English-speaking students in the same classroom.

*ELL (English Language Learners)* - students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses.

*FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary Schools)* - an umbrella term for pullout-type programs in which students have a language class for a designated number of minutes per week.

*FLEX (Foreign Language Experience)* - a program where students study a culture and learn a smattering of words from the culture being studied.

*Immersion* – students are taught in their native language and in English for a portion of the day.

*LEP (Limited English Proficiency)* – a student age 3 to 21 years whose native language is a language other than English and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant.

*Submersion* – known as sink or swim. A non-English-speaking student is placed in an all English-speaking classroom.

*Transitional Bilingual Education* – Education providing initial instruction in the students' native language and gradually phasing in use of all English for instruction.

*Two-Way Immersion* – the early name for a dual language program.

### **Chapter Summary**

Over the course of U.S. history, language acquisition has been focused on immigrants coming to America. Although controversy and debate has surrounded immigrants learning English, some Americans are beginning to focus on the importance of learning a second language. Dual language immersion helps both immigrants and English-only speakers learn both English and a second language. Dual language immersion teaches a second language to two different monolingual-speaking student groups concurrently. Both groups learn and become proficient in a second language.

The federal government has recognized the importance of students speaking a second language; however, it has done little to support a state or national program for bilingual education. Fortunately, a few local school boards and individual schools throughout the U.S. have taken the initiative to rectify the problem. If the federal government and local school systems employ the policies and methods used to create a dual language program, then other school systems may implement the program and promote teaching a second language in their own systems.

This study was conducted by interviewing key informants involved in creation and continuance of a dual language school. School test data was also included in the study. The study identified the framework used to help establish a dual language school that may help other school boards and school systems replicate creation of the policies needed to establish and maintain a dual language school. Research indicated that although both English learners and native English-speaking students in dual language programs start out performing below students in traditional schools, by the time the dual language students reach 4<sup>th</sup> grade, they perform as well or better in academic subjects than students in traditional schools (Crawford, 1999). In addition to comparable scores in academic subjects, students at a dual language school also learn a second language. The comparison of scores between BDLCS students and students statewide showed that scores for dual language students are comparable with students' scores statewide.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In order to understand the current position of schools on teaching a second language, it is important to first understand the history behind immigration. This chapter begins with a history of immigration by looking at important immigration laws and important court cases, the reasons students should learn a second language, different ways to learn a second language, the brain research behind learning a new language or a language foreign to English-speaking students, programs used to teach a second language to English-speaking students, and policy development in public education.

Immigration is an issue that makes the news almost daily. Some people want the United States to shut down its borders to keep illegal immigrants at bay. The idea of a national language also surfaces at least annually during the Congressional session. Over the years, emphasis has been placed on immigrant students learning English.

On July 3, 2001, the Associated Press reported that a southeastern state passed a new immigration law that was to go into effect despite considerable confusion. A federal judge blocked two parts of the law (Fox News Latino, 2011). The first of the two parts blocked authorized police to check the immigration status of a suspect who lacked proper identification. The other part that was blocked was a state penalty for someone who knowingly transports or harbors an illegal immigrant while committing another crime. This example shows just how complex the subject of immigration is in the U.S.

Technology has created a global market where businesses big and small are able to compete for business locally, nationally, and internationally. With the controversy about a national language and immigration laws, starting a public school where students

learn a language besides English is difficult. Although BDLCS was not the first dual language school to be created, creating a dual language school in the Southeastern United States is a momentous task. If BDLCS is successful, then other areas in the state and nation may want to start a school where students learn a language besides English. This dissertation used a qualitative study to discuss the monumental task of creating a dual language school and looked at the process from obtaining the grant used to fund the program, to hiring the right administrators and teachers, to the difficulty of sustaining the school over time.

### **History of Important Immigration Laws and Court Cases**

Since its creation, U.S. citizens have represented a mix of cultures and languages with every citizen, except Native Americans, either coming to the U.S. from a foreign country or tracing the roots of his/her ancestors to another country. The first immigration law was embedded in the U.S. Constitution in 1790. Article I of the Constitution allowed Congress to create rules and regulations for people to become U.S. citizens. Article I, Section 8 gives Congress the power to establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization. The Act stated that if a person had lived in the United States for 5 years and was a free white person, then that person could abdicate allegiance to his or her old country and become an American citizen (Garraty, 1991). Congress has used this section of the Constitution for the past 220 years. Even though some of the regulations have been re-written and even repealed over the years, immigration rules and regulations continue to be discussed, reviewed, re-written, and even fought over even today. See Appendix A for a comprehensive summary of immigration acts and laws.

As the U.S. population has changed over the years, immigration laws have been passed almost annually. Two major acts that have dealt with immigration are the Immigration Act of 1990 and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The 1990 act increased limits on legal immigration to the United States, revised all grounds for exclusion and deportation, authorized temporary protective status to aliens of designated countries, revised and established new nonimmigrant admission categories, revised and extended the Visa Waiver Pilot Program, and revised naturalization authority and requirements. The 1996 act included provisions that would deny most forms of public assistance to most legal immigrants for 5 years or until they attain citizenship. The legislation not only included immigration but also rules and regulations dealing with language issues (Digital History, 2010; Garraty, 1991).

As much as state and national legislators have influenced immigration and bilingual education over the years, the courts have had the most impact on the issue. Court cases continue to have a profound influence on all education, specifically bilingual and dual language education. See Appendix B for a comprehensive summary of court cases on immigration and language.

Supreme Court rulings have shifted over the years as the composition of the court changed. In most cases, the Supreme Court has ruled on the side of educating non-English-speaking students. Three of the cases included *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954, where the court said separate was not equal. This was written for the civil rights of African-American students; however, the ruling has carried over into other areas to help guarantee an education for all students. In *Lau v. Nichols*, 1974, students were guaranteed a *good* education even though they may not speak English. In *Plyer v. Doe*,

1982, *illegal* students could no longer be denied a public education (Cerda & Hernandez, 2006; Digital History, 2010; Garraty, 1991). Although many other laws and court cases have had an effect on immigration and bilingual education, these are a few of the most important cases. The court cases of today will continue to revamp and transform the immigration laws and the bilingual education of tomorrow.

### **Bilingual Education**

When immigrants enter the U.S., they not only bring their cultures and beliefs, they also bring their languages. The influx of non-English-speaking students into American schools has placed multiple challenges on the entire educational system. According to Shin and Ortman (2011), the U.S. Census Bureau reported use of a language other than English at home increased by 148% between 1980 and 2009. The Census Bureau reported that in 2009, 57.1 million people, or 20% of the population 5 years of age or older, spoke a language other than English at home. In 2010, there were 11.8 million school-age children, ages 5 to 17, who spoke a language other than English at home (Census, 2012). The State Department of Education reported that in the 2011-2012 school year, there were 83,965 students considered to be Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or English Language Learner (ELL) students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the federal government uses both the census and a school-based approach to gather information on LEP students.

Educating LEP students has become a controversial issue. California, Arizona, and Massachusetts have passed legislation for English-only movements (Berriz, 2005). The movement suppresses bilingual education so students are taught in English only. The use of bilingual education causes multiple challenges for schools because it disrupts

established school patterns. Parents of English-speaking students in bilingual schools are worried their own children may be neglected and that such programs must be funded with government resources or system and school resources (Crawford, 1991).

It is important for non-English-speaking students to learn English; however, it is also important for English-speaking students to learn a second language. As Naserdeen (2001) stated, “Americans fluent in other languages enhance the economy, strengthen their competitiveness abroad, improve global communications, and maintain political and security interests” (p. 21). Spring (2006) stated, “As the global economy expands, issues of diversity and multiculturalism are important for international corporations. Business is interested in selling products and services to culturally and racially diverse markets and in employing a multicultural workforce” (p. 88).

In the past, national, state, and local governments have fought to establish policies to educate non-English-speaking children (Moran, 2005; Zirkel, 2001/2002). Although all policies created have not succeeded, these policies have helped set a precedent and indicated a need to develop a curriculum to teach non-English-speaking students English as well as help English-speaking students learn a second language. Learning a second language can benefit any student. In a speech, Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education, stated that language skills are an asset to the global economy, and it is encouraging and positive for a person to know more than one language (Riley, 2000). Children who enter school speaking more than one language will benefit academically as long as both languages are encouraged and developed (Lessow-Hurley, 1990). Fostering a second language in English-speaking students will help amalgamate the global community.

## **Policy Development**

Public school policies have been created, changed, re-invented, revamped, and scrutinized for many years. The most important thing to remember about policy is that policy comes from federal, state, and local governments, and, now, from private and wealthy philanthropists (Strauss, 2013). It seems as if everyone knows the best way to educate the children of America.

Policies have driven education since its inception and have created many different scenarios in American education history. Restrictive language policies are threatening bilingual education in America, and it is up to local agents to create bilingual programs (Johnson, 2009). Harper (2011) stated, “The hands-off approach that the United States often adopts with respect to language policy generally reflects the nation’s cultural tendency to place the communicative burden on non-English speakers” (p. 518). However, it is important to remember that past policies have given way to create the policies of today. There continue to be more policies about non-English-speaking students learning to speak English than there are about English-speaking students learning a foreign language. The policies of today will help create the policies of tomorrow. By following the policies used to create a BDLCS, the hope is that the future of bilingual education will thrive in the southeastern U.S. as well as in all states.

The policies needed to create a bilingual education program have been developed in different ways. A policy is created by a governing body, on the federal and state levels by Congress and state legislatures, and on the local level by the board of education. The policy must then be funded, implemented, and enforced. Fowler (2004) reported that every issue must travel through a certain process in order to become a policy. The issue

must first be defined, an agenda must be set, and a policy must be formulated. The policy must then be adopted, implemented, and finally evaluated. The process seems simple; however, it can be lengthy and cumbersome. The issue may also be terminated at any juncture in the process. Fowler stated that passing a policy is just one part of the equation; getting the policy funded is the other part. For a school system, the local school district superintendent and school board help create and pass the policy. Likewise local, state, or federal entities help fund the program.

### **Policy Development for Charter Schools**

The following information comes from the states website. A state charter school is a public school that operates under a charter or contract and under an authorizer. The authorizer is a local or state board of education. A charter school is publically funded and must serve all student populations. A charter school may not select its students or deny any eligible student admission when the school has space; however, the school can give preferential treatment to younger siblings of students already enrolled and to the child of a board member or teacher.

A charter school is different from a traditional public school in that it has what this southeastern state housing the BDLCS in this study calls autonomy and flexibility. The school is governed not by the local board of education but by a non-profit board of directors. The state also gives the charter school flexibility from state and local rules. Along with this flexibility, the state housing the BDLCS in this study holds the charter school to higher standards.

The BDLCS is what this southeastern state calls a start-up charter school. This means that a charter school did not exist prior to becoming a charter school. At the time

of this research there were 110 charter schools in this state not including the schools within a charter system. Out of 110 charter schools, 80 of those schools were start-up charter schools. Although many charter schools exist, the BDLCS in this study was the first public bilingual dual language charter school in this state.

A process exists in order to create a charter school. To start the process, a petition must be created. The petition goes to the local board of education. If the local board of education approves the petition, then it is passed on to the state's department of education (DOE). The state's DOE will make recommendations and send the petition to the state board of education. If the state board of education approves the petition, the process continues to create a new charter school. If the state board of education does not approve, then the petition is terminated. If a petition is not approved by a local board of education, the petition is sent to state's DOE for review.

### **History of Policies of Bilingual Education**

Bilingual education in the United States has been affected over the years by national and state policies as well as court rulings. One of the first national acts to help was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Another was the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 which offered some monetary assistance for bilingual programs (*Recent Legislation*, 2003). An important court case was heard by the Supreme Court in 1974, *Lau v. Nichols*, and the Supreme Court ruled that each state needed to break down barriers that kept students from participating in institutional programs (Moran, 2005; Zirkel, 2001/2002).

Some state policies have not been supportive of bilingual education. In 1986, California passed Proposition 63, making English the state's official language. With the

support of Ron Unz, Proposition 227 was passed in California in 1998, further stymieing bilingual education in the state. Proposition 227 supported ending bilingual education except for students who applied for special exemptions. Under Proposition 227, students were to be placed in English-only classrooms. Unz also helped get a similar proposition passed in Arizona (2000) and Massachusetts (2002) (Berriz, 2005; Corcoran, 2002; Schrag, 2006).

Although some states have been defensive and critical of bilingual education, the southeastern states have remained cautiously positive. Although the state in which the BDLCS in this study exists has seen a need for bilingual education, it has not fully supported the idea (Manzo, 2007). In 1995/1996, the state passed the Youthbuild Program Act which provided services for bilingual education to meet the needs of students with limited English proficiency (S.B. No. 315, 1995). During the same session, the House of Representatives introduced a resolution, called “Spoken Languages; Policy of State,” that was to help promote multiple language skills among the state’s students. The state has created and partially funded some bilingual programs, and though it is not ready to completely fund these programs, it has developed a statewide bilingual educational program (H.R. 357, 1995).

### **Debate in Bilingual Education**

California’s Propositions 63 and 227, and the English Only movement have helped stymie bilingual education in the U.S. (Berriz, 2005). Beginning with the Constitution, the federal government has been ambivalent about promoting bilingual education and Congress has passed legislation both promoting and limiting bilingual education. Kingsbury (2006) reported that when the Russians launched Sputnik in 1957,

the U.S. government not only fully funded both math and science programs but also a program for the study of critical foreign languages. However, the foreign language program did little to boost the study of foreign languages in the nation's school system.

In 2000, 44% of American high school students were taking foreign language classes and, out of the 44%, 70% were studying Spanish (Kingsbury, 2006). These statistics show that only 30% of the 44%, about 13 students out of every 100 students studying a foreign language, were studying a language other than Spanish. The American K-12 educational system is not providing a foundation for students in what the U.S. government considers critical languages. In higher educational institutions, one percent of undergraduate degrees were in foreign language studies and only 2% of those degrees were found to be in one of the critical languages identified by the National Security Language Initiative (Jenkins, 2006).

On January 5, 2006, President Bush unveiled a program called the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) giving hope for implementation of foreign language study in educational institutions. The initiative was introduced to increase the number of Americans learning critical languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Eurasian languages, Hindi, Persian (Farsi), Korean, and Urdu for the security of the U.S. (Powell, 2006). The President asked for \$114 million dollars to fund the project (Powell, 2006). Although the President brought the subject into the spotlight and also backed it up with proposed funding, full implementation has not yet been accomplished.

A report sent to Congress by the National Research Council indicated that the Department of Education's programs for teaching foreign languages are fragmented and the Department lacks vision and a plan (Zehr, 2007). The National Research Council is

asking the Department of Education to organize and arrange a blueprint to create a successful foreign language program for American students.

As a result of tepid federal programs, states are beginning to take the initiative to help fund foreign language study. In 2007, the governor of the state which houses the BDLCS in this study, proposed \$1.6 million for the Elementary Foreign Languages Model Program; however, the program needed \$85 million to be fully funded. The idea behind the project was to expose all elementary school students to foreign language instruction (Manzo, 2007). Both federal and state governments are providing some funding, but there still remains a large chasm in funding foreign language programs for local school systems.

Although not all school systems are taking the initiative, some school systems are implementing programs to help students become bilingual and are utilizing different types of programs to ensure student success. Of the different forms of bilingual education being used throughout the U.S., the dual language immersion program is growing and showing the most success in teaching monolingual English-speaking students a second language (National Clearing House, 2000; Potowski, 2007). Unfortunately, the state housing the BLDCS in this study is the only public school implementing the dual language immersion program.

### **Dual Language Immersion Program**

In 1979, there were seven dual language programs in the U.S. In 2000, there were 332 programs in 26 states including the District of Columbia. Though many different types of bilingual programs exist, there are three dual language programs being implemented in the state housing the BLDCS in this study (National Clearing House,

2000). Two of the dual language programs in this state are taught at private schools while the third school is a publicly funded dual language school.

Among the many different versions of dual language immersion programs, the two main programs are the 50:50 and the 90:10 models. Either scenario is used to help students become proficient in a second language, and individual schools implement the dual language program they feel will benefit students the most. In the dual language immersion programs, there are two groups of students. Each group speaks a different language. Both groups are placed in the same classroom to learn a subject at the same time. In the 50:50 model, students are taught 50%, or half of the day, in one group's primary language. The rest of the day is taught in the other group's primary language. Both groups of students are the *leaders* for at least half the day. The students are allowed to help each other understand instruction and information in the second language. In the 90:10 model, students in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade spend 90% of their time in the second language group with 10% of the day devoted to English. The ratio then gravitates to 50% of the day devoted to each language by the time the students reach 5<sup>th</sup> grade (Esposito, 2006; Giacchino-Baker & Pillar, 2006; Howard, 2002; Lindholm-Leary, 2004/2005; National Clearing House, 2000; Pinedo, 2007; Reyes, 2007; Zehr, 2004, 2005).

### **Reasons English-Speaking Students Should Learn a Second Language**

The educational system in America is attempting to create bilingual students; however, the effort is minimal at best. In the past there have been only smatterings of programs that teach English-speaking students a foreign language, and parents wishing to teach a second language to their children either taught the language to the students themselves or placed them in a private school created for the purpose of teaching a

foreign language. A few public school foreign language programs for English-only students have existed for years, but these programs have been sparse and underfunded. Although public school foreign language programs are growing slowly in numbers, a majority of these programs have evolved from earlier programs and have not had the support given to programs that teach English to immigrant children (Corcoran, 2002; Jenkins, 2006; Miller and Lennox, 2011; Nieto, 2009).

Singmaster (2013) stated that Americans lag behind other countries in learning foreign languages. She goes on to say that in Australia, students are given the opportunity to study one of four languages throughout their entire school career. In Scotland, students must begin a second language in grade six; however, there is a new proposal that would have students begin a second language in grade one and start a third language in grade five. Singmaster (2013) continues to talk about the fact that England, Czechoslovakia, Japan, and China require a second language for all students.

Alleyenne (2010) stated five different advantages for elementary school students learning a second language. Being *adequately exposed* to a second language makes a student more flexible and creative. It can boost student achievement in other academic areas. Learning a foreign language can increase cognitive skills and standardized test scores. Finally, being exposed to or learning a second language will increase opportunities for employment.

Hakuta (2011) stated, “Proficiency in two or more languages should be promoted for all students. Bilingualism enhances cognitive and social growth, competitiveness in a global marketplace, national security, and understanding of diverse peoples and cultures” (p. 167). Knowing a second language gives a person many advantages that may not be

seen. For example, the *NY Daily News* reported that Oscar Rodriguez, a boy age 11, was injured when a bus he was riding crashed. Even with three broken ribs, he translated between the English-speaking rescue workers and the Spanish-speaking bus riders. He was hailed as a hero (Kolodner, 2010).

### **The Evolution of Different Ways to Learn a Second Language**

The debate over the best way to teach a second language to immigrants has been ongoing since the conception of the U.S. Although a researcher can find a plethora of information on programs teaching English to students who speak a language other than English, and a majority of the legislation and court cases deal with teaching English to immigrant students, there is little, if any, research dealing with teaching a foreign language to English-speaking students (Hakuta, 2011).

Many researchers over the years have written articles examining the way humans learn. One well-known researcher, Jean Piaget, observed his own children and became curious about how they learned. Carter (2006) discusses the fact that Piaget used what he called “*assimilation*” and “*accommodation*.” As a child learns, he/she assimilates new information with previously learned information. If previous knowledge does not exist, the child will accommodate the new information with previous experiences. The essence of Piaget’s cognitive learning theory is that learning is based on experience.

Most of the nation’s early curriculum was taught as if all students learned in the same way. Through the study of cognitive abilities, different learning styles have been recognized over the years ensuring all students will be able to learn and be successful in school. The southeastern state created new performance standards that were created based on the theory that teachers need to differentiate teaching in the classroom to ensure

the success of all students in the state. Students taking the state test are placed into three categories. If a child makes a certain score then that child is considered to have “met” state standards in that subject. If the child is below that certain score the child is placed in the “does not meet category. If the child makes a certain score above the “met” category, then he/she is considered to have “exceeded” state standards. When discussing student’s scores, the percentage shown shows the percentage of students that “met” or “exceeded” state standards. All state tests are given in English only.

Silverman (2006) broke the different learning styles into three different areas: auditory-sequential, visual-spatial, and tactile-kinesthetic. In auditory-sequential, information is presented in a step-by-step continuous order that allows the student to learn information from beginning to end. With visual-spatial, the student learns information through images while the whole concept is presented at one time instead of in a continuous order. In tactile-kinesthetic, information is presented by demonstration and applications. The student learns by physical touch and sensations. In order to reach all students, a teacher needs to implement a teaching strategy that will incorporate each of the three learning styles. Although all the learning styles cannot be presented simultaneously, a teacher can incorporate the different styles at different times in order to ensure every student will be taught through the strength of his or her learning style.

Understanding how students learn and the different ways in which they learn helps teachers reach all students who enter the classroom. The different learning styles help in all subjects, including foreign language study. If an individual learns from experience, then having early and prior experiences will only accelerate the process of learning later in life

## **Language and the Brain**

Information about cognitive learning theory and different student learning styles has been ascertained through observation. The advent of technology enables observation of students from both outside and inside. With advances in brain research, researchers are discovering many different learning processes in the brain. One area of brain research that has erupted in the last 20 years is the area of language. Researchers have not only discovered the different language areas of the brain, they have also pinpointed the exact area where speech is housed.

By utilizing scans of the brain at different stages of growth and development, researchers have been able to map a chart that not only shows development of the brain as a person learns his or her native language but also the most opportune time for him or her to learn a second language. Although researchers do not agree on the exact age, most believe that it becomes more difficult to learn a second language after age 12.

Sakai (2005) stated that most infants begin babbling around 6 to 8 months of age and begin saying words around 10 to 12 months of age. Before the age of 12 months, infants can distinguish between sounds from their native tongue and a foreign tongue. As an infant becomes more in tune with his or her own language, he or she begins to tune out the sounds of different languages (King & Mackey, 2007). Sousa (2001) stated that it does not matter how long a person speaks a second language; it depends on how early in life he began to learn it. Nash (2001) stated, "The ability to learn a second language is highest between birth and the age of six, then undergoes a steady and inexorable decline. Many adults still manage to learn new languages, but usually only after a great struggle" (p. 5). Jensen (1998) stated:

Before puberty most children will learn any language without a ‘foreigner’s accent.’ But after puberty, the connections have almost disappeared, and the potential cells for language have been usurped by other more aggressive cells for other functions. Schools ought to expose children to larger, more challenging vocabularies and to foreign languages by age 12. Neuronal loss and synaptic pruning make the acquisition of second languages more difficult with each passing year. (p. 34)

Kennedy (2006) stated that around age 4 the brain begins a transitioning and re-wiring stage where it begins to disconnect with areas that are not being fully utilized. A second pruning stage occurs around age 10; while a third pruning stage occurs around age 14. Nash (2001) stated that when a baby is born his/her brain possesses trillions of connections which could possibly be used. However, as the infant grows, these connections are curtailed to streamline the brain. Nash also stated that the brain reaches its highest density of synapses, connections between nerve fibers, around age 2 and the density remains until around age 12.

The research does not say it is impossible to learn a new language, it is just more difficult than it would be to learn the language before age 12 (Jensen, 1998; Sakai, 2005). Researchers have found that the older a person becomes, the harder it is to learn an additional language. Brain scans show, that as a person becomes older, the brain stores the new language in a different area of the brain. Even though the areas are close, about 1/3 of an inch apart, storing the information in a different part of the brain makes it more difficult to master the new language (Kennedy, 2006; Minagawa-Kawai, Mori, & Sato, 2005; Weber-Fox & Neville, 2001). Kennedy (2006) stated:

. . . children who learn an L2 [second language] store that capacity, together with their native language, in one sector of the brain, while adult language learners store each new language learned in a separate area. This finding helps to explain why children who learn two languages develop the ability to speak both with native pronunciation and proficiency when provided adequate time, supporting the argument that foreign language instruction should be included in the elementary and middle school curriculum. (p. 475)

Minagawa-Kawai et al. (2005) contended that even if a person masters a second language later in life, the reaction time when asked a question in the second language is slower. Naserdeen (2001) said that when a student is introduced to a second language in high school, it is difficult for him to master the second language. Researchers agree that the earlier one begins to learn a second language, the easier it is to learn.

Although a second language has been taught in American schools for many years, today's students are not mastering a second language before graduating from high school. Many pass the 2 years of classes; but, few become proficient or master the second language. However it is not the students' fault for not mastering a second language; the school system has failed them. The students are expected to learn a new language when the capacity of their brain to learn a new language has closed. Jensen (1998) stated that the earlier a student is exposed to a second language, the easier it is for him/her to learn a second language. He goes on to say that the part of the brain that learns a second language begins to re-wire itself for other areas around age 12. The door of the brain has not closed completely when the student enters high school; however, only a small crack in the door is left open.

### **Programs that Teach a Second Language to English-Speaking Students**

Among programs that exist that teach a foreign language to English-speaking students, different variations exist. Four programs used in both public and private schools to teach a second language to students will be discussed. These four programs are FLEX, FLES, immersion, and dual language.

Early studies were used to determine the effectiveness the programs used to teach English to non-English-speaking students (Naserdeen, 2001). However, because more emphasis has been placed on teaching English to non-English-speaking students, the research on teaching English-speaking students a second language is not as extensive as the research on teaching English to non-English-speakers.

#### **The FLEX Program**

The first program used in teaching a second language to English-speaking students was the FLEX program. FLEX stands for Foreign Language Experience or Exploratory. Naserdeen (2001) describes the FLEX program as providing students with a foundation for a foreign language while placing less emphasis on students attaining a foreign language. Stewart (2005) stated that a second language is studied once or twice per week in the FLEX program. Since FLEX is an introduction to a foreign language, the students usually study more than one language during the school year. The FLEX program is used to teach simple words and phrases and different cultures from around the world. Flaherty (2007) cited an elementary school classroom in Pittsburg, Kansas where the students in grade three were playing games and introducing themselves in Mandarin Chinese. The students learned to count to 10 in Chinese while studying Chinese for about 30 minutes once a week. Although the second language was used for only a short

period each week, the teacher hopes the time will pay off in later years. The district also hopes to expand the program for elementary school students and increase the time spent on foreign language study.

Even though research suggests the importance of learning a second language in elementary school, districts and schools continue to face obstacles. The primary obstacle is monetary. Most systems feel the cost of having a second language program is too high. Most schools report they would not be able to have a second language program in their system if it were not for grants to supplement money for the system or school. Flaherty (2007) stated the only way the elementary school in Pittsburg, Kansas was able to attain the FLEX program was through a grant. Most schools create a program using grant money and when the grant money runs out and a full program cannot be implemented. Most of the schools find the FLEX program benefits the students (Flaherty, 2007).

The southeastern state housing the BDLCS in this study has funded some elementary programs over the past 12 years. Although funding ran out in 2006 and some schools discontinued the second language programs, others added a second language in their elementary schools. In 2008, the governor of the state proposed \$1.6 million dollars for implementation of the Elementary Foreign Language Model Program. The money was to be shared by the 1,300 elementary schools in the state. According to the governor's press secretary, it would take \$85 million dollars to fully fund and implement the model in every elementary school. The press secretary said, ". . . the idea is . . .for everybody to get a part of it [money] so that every student can at least have some exposure to foreign-language instruction" (Manzo, 2007, p. 1). Manzo (2007) stated that

school systems hope student exposure through the FLEX program will spark student interest to learn a second language.

### **The FLES Program**

The second program used in teaching a second language in school systems is the FLES program. FLES stands for Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools. In most FLES programs, a second language is introduced as a second class for a specified number of minutes per week. One of the earliest reported cases of FLES being used in a school was in 1952 in New Jersey. Naughton (1952) reported that one New Jersey community taught French or Spanish to every elementary school student. Even in the early Cold War years, the U.S. State Department set up a language school; however, there was a lack of trained personnel to teach. Stewart (2005) reported that in one school in rural Pennsylvania, all classes were presented in English; however, 3 times a week for 45 minutes, students attended Spanish class. The instruction included learning vocabulary, numbers, the alphabet, reading stories, playing games, performing math problems, and conversing in Spanish.

The FLES program is not as inclusive as the immersion program, some critics feel time taken away from core subjects will create a deficiency in other subjects and lower students' test scores. Schuster (2005) conducted research to answer the question of why test scores were low on the ITBS for students in a Kansas school district. The Blue Valley School district implemented the FLES program in five of its district's 13 elementary schools during the 1995-1996 school year. All students entering grade two took the ITBS. The students were then tested again in grade six. In order to qualify for the study, the students had to attend the same elementary school for grades two through

five. Grade six ITBS test scores were used from 213 FLES students and 489 non-FLES students who met the study criteria. FLES students received a total of 120 hours of second language instruction during their 4 years in elementary school. Two of the FLES schools taught French while three of the FLES schools taught Spanish. The results of the study showed that the FLES program did not produce a significant reduction in the scores on the ITBS. The results went on to show that, although much less time was spent on the second language than on the primary language, non-FLES students did not significantly surpass FLES students in primary language scores. The FLES students reflected a significant proficiency in the second language.

Even with auspicious results, one deficiency in the FLES program as well as other programs is the lack of teachers trained and available for a second language program. Vuchicand Robb (2006) described a teaching program at the University of Delaware being used to combat the lack of trained teachers. Before implementation of such a program at the University of Delaware, future teachers were trained only in early childhood education or a foreign language. The new program allowed future teachers to become proficient in using the FLES program by concurrently teaching both early childhood education and a foreign language. Prospective teachers in the program were required to observe regular, non-second language classrooms, and FLES classrooms. The involvement of the students in both classrooms allowed for the settings to complement and strengthen each other. The main drawback in observing in a FLES classroom was the minute number of schools participating in the program. At the same time, the drawback was advantageous because students were getting involved in an evolving new program. Some University of Delaware graduates, using the experience they gained in

the early stages of the FLES program, were able to help set up FLES programs in schools. The FLES program is gaining momentum in different school systems (*About FLES*, 2009).

The FLEX and the FLES programs help students gain knowledge and understanding about other languages and cultures; however, the programs do not allow enough time and study for the students to gain proficiency in a foreign language (Met, 2008). The goal of the next two programs is for students to become proficient in a particular foreign language.

### **The Immersion Program**

The third program is called immersion. This program has been used for years in teaching English to students who speak a language other than English. Immersion was the way a majority of early immigrants to the U.S. learned English; however, there is much controversy about this way of learning English.

The immersion program is one of the most extensive programs in which students gain proficiency in a second language. According to Fortune and Tedick (2003), in an elementary school full immersion program, the teachers do not use English during the early grades. The teachers begin to introduce English in Grade two and continually increase use of English until there is an equal distribution of the second language and English in Grade six. Naserdeen (2001) stated that in the immersion programs, instruction is provided in the second language about 90% of the day while the primary language is used approximately 10%. Akcan (2004) reported on a French-speaking immersion program in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The program was state-funded and taught by two teachers. Both teachers were certified in early childhood education and both had

mastered the French language. In the classroom, the teachers focused on phonics, building vocabulary, and real situations to help the students master the second language. Admission into the program between grades two and five was based on the background of the enrolling student.

Of the early second language programs used, the immersion program offers the best chance for a student to become proficient in a second language. Although the program has many positives, some researchers have qualms about the program. Genesse (1987) reported that there is a temporary lull in immersion students in English with reading, spelling, and vocabulary; however, the discrepancy is nullified in grades two and three after 1 or 2 years of English language arts. Students cannot be rushed into learning a second language; it may take two to three years for students to become proficient in a second language. Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2000) reported that even though there is a temporary lull in English language development, the immersion program actually enhances a student's English language development in the long run.

During the early years of the immersion program, most programs ask for help from the students' parents. According to Fortune and Tedick (2003), if a student is involved in an immersion program, then parents should read stories, play games, and involve students in activities using their native language. The greater the proficiency a student has in his/her native language, the more success the student will have in the immersion program. The FLEX, FLES, and immersion programs have laid the foundation for the fourth program, the dual language program which is being used to help both English-speaking and non-English-speaking students learn a second language.

## **The Dual Language Program**

Dual language immersion first appeared in 1963 at Coral Way Elementary School in Dade County, Florida. The school was used to teach a second language to both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking students (Crawford, 1999). According to Crawford (1999), dual language was a different approach to bilingual education in that it placed both English-speaking students and Spanish-speaking students in the same classroom. The students learned not only from a teacher but from each other. Each language group was allotted a portion of the day to be the primary group and a portion of the day to be the secondary group. Each group was empowered with the ability to lead the other group for part of the day. Dual language programs have been called two-way immersion, have been implemented in different versions, and are relatively equivalent.

It seems that legislators are increasingly aware of the importance of students learning a second language and the need for funding such programs, but legislative interest has not increased enough to make major changes in the foreign education system. Lacking fully funded programs is one more stumbling block that continues to hinder teaching a second language to American students. Cynics continue to hinder second language programs by citing a lack of funding and trained teachers. Critics also state that students' scores will decline if time is taken away from core subjects. They contend a second language is not an essential part of various standards or the Common Core Standards, thus the second language program is not viable in their particular school system.

Although dual language programs have seen some success, there are many hurdles that a program must overcome to become and remain successful. Gomez,

Freeman, and Freeman (2005) stated that effective programs must be well implemented and must have adequate faculty, administrators, resources, and support. Support includes the community and especially students' families. Alanis and Rodriguez (2008) stated that although research supports the effectiveness of dual language programs, many of the programs cannot sustain their initial successful level and soon decline into mediocrity. Many researchers see the lack of teacher preparation as the downfall of most dual language programs (Buysse, Castro, West, & Skinner, 2004; Ryan, Ackerman, & Song, 2005; Ray, Bowman, & Robbins, 2006a, 2006b).

Zepeda et al., (2011) stated that one of the most important, if not the most important, aspect of creating and maintain a successful dual language program is preparation of teachers. They go on to name six content areas in which all educators working with early dual language learners need to receive training before entering a dual language classroom. The six areas include: (a) understanding language development; (b) understanding the relationship between language and culture; (c) developing skills and abilities to effectively teach DLLs (Dual Language Learners); (d) developing the ability to use assessment in meaningful ways for DLLs; (e) developing a sense of professionalism; and, (f) understanding how to work with families (Zepeda et al., 2011).

Using these six areas, a teacher will be able to develop each individual child and bring him or her success in dual language acquisition even though each student begins school at a different starting point.

### **Chapter Summary**

Immigration continues to be a daily topic in conversation across America, and the quagmire seems far from being solved. The nation is ambivalent about teaching English-

speaking students a foreign language. FLEX, FLES, immersion, and dual language programs are successfully helping English-speaking students learn a foreign language. However, much work remains to be done to create and implement foreign language programs in all schools, from implementation of policy changes in local school systems, training teachers to teach a bilingual curriculum, obtaining funding, and successfully implementing and maintaining these programs.

This study followed a bilingual dual language charter school from the perceptions of its founder, administrator, its teachers, petition, and data. Documents and interviews were used to present a framework and policies that other systems can use to create a BDLCS. The study compared scores from students who attended dual language programs with the scores of students who did not attend and added to the research of whether dual language schools can teach a second language without the students falling behind in core subjects. Even though research has been conducted on dual language programs, there continues to be insufficient research about creation and maintenance of these schools as well as their efficacy. This qualitative study added to the body of research on dual language schools.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This study focused on showing the path to creating a dual language school and helping other school systems navigate the process. The following overarching research question was used to guide the study: What does it entail for a school system to create and implement a successful dual immersion language education school program?

The researcher employed the following research questions to explore factors related to the process and development of a successful dual language program:

1. What are the contributors in creating a public charter dual language program?
2. What are the challenges in creating a public charter dual language program?
3. Do standardized state scores from students in a dual language program compare to the scores of students from a traditional program?

The interview questions developed for key informants in the study mirrored the research questions. The founding of any new public school is a monumental task; however, school systems have many models to follow. Starting a school of its kind in a state makes the task even more arduous. By following the research questions in this study, other school systems may be able to replicate the framework created by the BDLCS used as a model in this study.

#### **Research Design**

Although dual language schools have existed for many years, the BDLCS in this study was a public bilingual dual language school in the state. Because BDLCS was one of the first of its kind in the state, this study used a historical single embedded case study

(Bogdan&Biklen,1998; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). An embedded study refers to the study of an organization as a whole. This historical case study examined the history leading to establishment of the school. The research reviewed the entire process, from the original grant, to the charter of the school, to the everyday workings of the school.

The researcher conducted interviews with administrators to learn policy processes and challenges in establishing the BDLCs along with evaluations and procedures conducted to both start and continue the school. Interviews with teachers and administrators were conducted to learn about the funding needed to start the school and the funding needed to continue the school. Questions included how the school's concept was developed, how it continued to be supported, the key players in the process, and the roles necessary to create the school. Interviews showed the levels of support from administrators and faculty needed to implement and continue the school. The interviews showed not only early challenges but the challenges that continue for administrators and teachers.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The people best suited to answer the research questions were district personnel responsible for the original grant and inception of the school: the school administrators and teachers. It was important to interview the personnel who have been at the school since its inception and those who have been hired since the school began; however, school district personnel has changed several times since inception of the school.

The founder who authored the original charter and is now one of two administrators plus the second administrator were still employed with the school and were interviewed. It was of particular interest to ascertain information from the early key

informants in order to understand the foundation of the school. It was important to ascertain information from personnel who had been hired since the school was founded in order to gain a perspective on the school's hiring practices and teacher retention. It was also important to talk to teachers about the qualifications needed to teach in a dual language school.

Purposeful sampling was used to choose 10 teachers. The teacher's names were placed in a hat and were purposefully drawn. Priority was given to teachers who had been at the school the longest; however, teachers who had been at the school less than 2 years were also chosen. Interviewing both experienced and newer teachers was important because each could give a different perspective about the school.

### **Key Informants**

The BDLCS is located in a southeastern state. The school was created in 2006-2007 school year with kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. In 2007-2008, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade was added. The school continued to add grades until 2013-2014 and houses PK through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The school's enrollment was 553 students with 62 staff members. The students included 5 Asian/Pacific Islander students, 285 African-American students, 246 Hispanic students, 13 multi-racial students, and 4 Caucasians. The elementary school and middle school are located on two different campuses. The elementary school is located at the original school site. The building already existed when the school was founded. As grades were added, space became a problem. The middle school grades were moved to the second site, approximately eight miles away, at an existing middle school. BDLCS' middle school shares the facility with another middle school.

The key informants in the study were the writer of the original petition, the administrator, and 10 teachers from the school. The school had approximately 30 faculty members with 16 teaching PK through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Purposeful sampling was used to choose the teachers. Priority was given to teachers who had been at the school since its inception and/or teachers who had been at the school the longest. Consideration was given to selecting teachers from different grade levels. Teachers were divided into groups based on the grades taught. The founder, administrator, and one middle school teacher had been at BDLCS since its inception. Most of the original teachers had left and either went back to their country of origin or to other schools. Because the school does not employ many teachers in each of the grades, the grade levels of the teachers in the study are not revealed to help ensure anonymity. Seven teachers from kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and three teachers from 6<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grades were interviewed.

A year after inception of BDLCS, the school district lost accreditation. The district has gone through two different superintendents, and many changes have occurred on the board of education. Although it would have been beneficial to interview the school district superintendent who helped start the dual language school, he was no longer available.

### **Triangulation**

Using the original charter, interviews with the founder, administrators, teachers, as well as the scores from both BDLCS students and students statewide gave a picture of how BDLCS was created, if the original concept continues or how it has changed, and if the students' scores are comparable to state scores. By using three different sources, the researcher triangulated the data used in the study.

The researcher kept a journal to log thoughts about the study, the interviews, and information obtained from the research. This helped the researcher to reflect upon thoughts and any biases. The researcher needed to be as unbiased as possible.

### **Data Collection**

The data in this study came from interviews with the founder, administrator, and teachers and state standardized test scores. Creswell (2003) stated that there are four types of data collection for qualitative research: observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials. The researcher employed interviews and reviewed the original petition for this case study. Creswell further noted that there are advantages and disadvantages to each type of data collection method. One advantage to interviewing is that key informants can provide important and historical information. Interviewing also allows the researcher to control the questioning. The main disadvantages are the bias an interviewer may bring to the process and interviewees who may not be able to describe an event very well.

Data in this study consisted of interviews, the petition, and state standardized test scores. Interviews were conducted with the founder who was the original grant writer and is now one of two administrators, the second administrator, and 10 teachers. The interviews were structured but allowed clarifying questions. All 12 interviews were conducted in English.

Before each interview a statement was read to ensure the interviewee that his/her answers would be coded and confidential and that he/she would be allowed to review and give approval for the final answers. Time was taken before and after each interview to explain the study, why the interview was conducted, to answer questions, and explain

follow up procedures. The two administrators were interviewed in their offices at each school. The founder was the original grant writer and now one of two BDLCS administrators. The interviews with the administrators lasted between one hour and 1.5 hours. An initial interview was conducted with the administrators before interviewing the teachers. A follow up interview was conducted with the administrators to ask clarifying questions brought up during teacher interviews.

Each teacher interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. Teacher interviews were conducted in each school. The interviews at the elementary school were done in a room in the media center. The teachers were interviewed individually and the interviews were conducted during each teacher's planning period. The middle school teachers were interviewed in their classroom during a planning period. Two of the middle school teachers were interviewed together, and each teacher was given an opportunity to answer the interview questions.

The interviews were recorded with the respondents' permission to avoid losing data. They were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. The transcribed interviews were then emailed to both administrators and teachers for member-checking. Each interviewee had the opportunity to review his/her answers and make any changes each felt necessary. Only one interviewee wanted to change one sentence in her interview. She clarified a point she had made. Administrators and teachers were asked the same questions and clarifying questions were used for each based on his/her answers. Each teacher was assigned a number and his/her answers were kept confidential. No one but the researcher knew the sequence in which the questions were answered. Both administrators and teachers were reassured that their answers would not be shared and no

one from the district would see their responses. Both groups were assured that the information given may help students in other parts of the state and may help start another public dual language school in the state.

Data were collected on statewide student achievement test scores in reading, math, ELA, science, and social studies. The scores were obtained from the state website. The test data showed increases or decreases in student scores. BDLCs students' scores were compared with students' scores from other elementary and middle schools in the district, a comparable school, as well as statewide. The comparison scores were for the years that the bilingual school has administered the state test.

Documents for the study were obtained from the state's website and from the administrators. Documents included the original petition, newspaper articles, and other documents pertinent to the research. The advantage of using historical documents is that the material can be accessed at the convenience of the researcher and is written evidence. The primary disadvantages are that the materials may not be complete and the documents may not be accurate. Test scores were pertinent in that they showed how the school compares to other schools in the district and throughout the state.

### **Data Analysis**

The original charter was dissected to gain information about how a public bilingual dual language charter school was started in the state. It was also scrutinized to determine if the school was able to stay true to its beginnings. The original charter could be used as a starting point by any school district wishing to create a dual language school.

The interviews were coded inductively. The administrators provided a variety of information, from the idea of a dual language school and its inception to the overall

description of what takes place at the school building level. Teachers provided information from the classroom point of view as well as information about what has taken place in the classroom and with students. To help organize the data, codes were used to uncover patterns and categories. The codes were used for each question to show answers that were similar and those that were outliers. The data were reported in figures to make the information easier to understand.

Both the document research and the interviews were conducted, transcribed, and coded so the information could be deciphered and put into a useful format for the researcher and reader. The codes were developed based on the information provided in the interviews with administrators and teachers. The data were used to compare scores from BLDCS students to determine if their test results were comparable to other elementary schools in the district and statewide even though the students were learning a second language.

Test scores from both BDLCS students and students statewide were compared and displayed in figures which are included in this document. BDLCS students' scores were shown with student scores from a comparison school, other district schools, and statewide scores. Comparison scores were used from the inception of the BDLCS in the areas of reading, math, ELA, science, and social studies in the grades where the state test was given.

Interviews with administrators and the teachers were recorded and transcribed. The transcribed interviews were sent back to the interviewee and he/she was asked to make any corrections, deletions, and/or changes necessary. One teacher made one change on the first question; she corrected how many years she had been teaching.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this study, the researcher implemented a qualitative case study using the techniques of searching the original charter and interviewing key informants. The school under study was the a public bilingual dual language school in the state. The school system wrote a petition charter to create the school. By looking at the petition charter, the researcher was able to ascertain information pertinent to the school. The researcher used interviews to gather information from individuals who helped create the school and those who continue to maintain the school. The researcher compared the BDLCS students' scores with those of other elementary school students in the district and statewide.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **Introduction**

Since the beginning of public education in the U.S., both federal and state governments have explored many different ways to educate immigrants who do not speak English. Methods have included submersion (sink or swim), immersion (students are taught part of the day in the student's first language and part of the date in English), Transitional Bilingual Education (students are taught in their first language and transitioned gradually to English), and two-way immersion (dual language) with the expectation that all students will learn English.

As Castro, Paez, Dickinson, & Frede (2011) stated, "TWI [Two-way immersion] also improved the Spanish language development of DLL's [Dual Language Learners] and native English speakers without losses in English language learning" (p. 18).

Although English is important for all students to learn, many languages are spoken throughout the world. Most will agree that speaking a second language will help a person get ahead in life, but most do not agree on the best way for a person to learn a second language. Research shows that one of the best ways for a student to learn a second language is through a dual language program.

#### **Research Questions**

This study was conducted to help show the steps required to create a dual language school and to determine if the data show whether students in a start-up dual language school can compete academically with traditional school students. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the contributors in creating a public charter dual language school program?
2. What are the challenges in creating a public charter dual language program?
3. Do standardized state scores from students in a dual language program compare to the scores of students from a traditional program?

This study helped show the path needed to create a dual language school and may help others school systems duplicate the necessary steps. This chapter presents contextual information about the BDLCS, the research, a demographic profile of BDLCS, contributors in creating the school, challenges in creating the school, and student achievement as measured by state achievement test scores.

### **Contextual Information about BDLCS**

The BDLCS in this study was a public bilingual dual language charter school in this southeastern state. Through interviews and the state website, the researcher developed a short synopsis of the school. The idea for the school was launched when one of the two administrators was in graduate school. She proposed her idea to a district in the state, but another district was the one that put her idea into motion. BDLCS became a Local Education Agency (LEA) charter. For an LEA charter, a school district takes the charter school and provides buildings and services to the school.

BDLCS was started in 2006-2007 school year with kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade as a Title-I school. A grade has been added every year since its inception, up to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. During the 2013-2014 school year, the BDLCS had 651 students PK through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Its student population was 51% African-American, 45% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian, and 2% Multi-Racial.

BDLCS began by sharing a building with another school in the system. As BDLCS added a grade, the other school moved a grade. Today BDLCS houses the elementary school in one building and the middle school shares a building with another middle school. The elementary school and middle school are separated by approximately eight miles. The district has approximately 40 elementary schools and 15 middle schools. BDLCS is a public school and must accept students if they live in the district. Every day both elementary and middle school students at BDLCS state the mission, vision, and Pledge of Allegiance, and announcements of the day are made. One difference between BDLCS and other schools is that one day this is done in English and the next day it is done in Spanish.

The comparison school's student population was 46% African-American, 44% Hispanic, 5% White, 2% Asian, and 3% Multi-Racial. BDLCS first started administering the state achievement test when the students were in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The comparison school is an elementary school and does not have 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grades. As a result, this study compared the scores of BDLCS students with district and statewide scores.

### **Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Twelve interviews were conducted; two with the founder and administrator, seven with elementary school teachers, and three with middle school teachers. One teacher had taught at BDLCS for all 8 years of the school's existence, one had taught there for 7 years, three had taught there for 3 years, four had taught there for 2 years, and one had taught there 1 year. Four teachers held Master's degrees and six held a 4-year degree. Three had ten or more years in education, two had 5 or more years, and five had 3 or fewer years in education. Six of the teachers were from another country: South Africa,

Peru, two were from Columbia, and two were from Puerto Rico. Four teachers were from the United States. All the teachers held a state certified teaching certificate. All ten teachers were proficient in English and Spanish, while three also spoke other languages. Two interviews were conducted with each of the two administrators. One administrator was the founder of the school and the other was hired as an administrator at the school. Both administrators were from the U.S. The founder is fluent in both English and Spanish, while the administrator is not. All interviews were conducted in English.

### **Contributors to Creating a Public Charter Dual Language School Program**

The first research question, which dealt with contributors to the creation of the school, was answered using the petition, information from the founder, and interviews with the founder, administrator, and teachers. The original charter was submitted in November 2005. The founder developed the idea for a bilingual dual language school when she was in graduate school and found her calling to start a dual language school. She believed the existing system failed both non-English-speaking students and students who spoke only English. The charter was written for a 5-year term. At the end of the 5-year term, the administrators wrote and were approved for a renewal charter. The school has now been in existence for 8 years.

According to the charter, the mission of the school “is to attain high academic achievement while promoting informed cultural attitudes and behaviors by developing bilingualism and bi-literacy in our students” (Charter, 2005, p. 9). The four goals of the school are to:

Develop fluency and literacy in two languages: Spanish and English. Achieve proficiency in all academic subjects, meeting or exceeding [district] standards.

Develop positive attitudes toward the two languages and the communities they represent. Be well-prepared to live and thrive in the international community.

(Charter, 2005, p. 9)

The rationale for the school was to give the parents and community a school where students learn subjects taught in traditional schools while learning a second language. Both the founder and the administrator said the school was not created to be condescending or to make administrators, teachers, students, and parents feel that this school is better than other schools in the district. It was created to give the community options.

The founder and administrator both stated there were no public school examples in the state when the idea for the school was launched. The founder looked outside the state to help create the school from scratch. The founder did the majority of the foundation work. The administrator was brought on board because she knew the administrative functions of an elementary school. The founder wanted to create a public school where all students would be able to learn a second language. The only stipulations for student admission would be that a student had to live in the district, or be a sibling of a student enrolled in the school, or have a parent or guardian on the Board of Directors, or have a parent or guardian employed at the school (Charter, 2005, p. 16).

Key players in starting the school were members of the board. The founder chose people for the board for their strengths and abilities. The original Board of Directors had the founder as the President and the administrator as the Vice President. The board consisted of seven total members. The board was to create a Governing Council for the school. The Governing Council was to consist of seven members, three would be from

the Board of Directors and the rest from the community. The community members were represented by both business people and parents. The board members had one-year terms; however, they could be re-elected.

The school district superintendent was also a critical player in founding the school. The superintendent was from California and had previously worked with dual language schools. Unfortunately, after the school was approved, the superintendent left. However, the founder and administrator both agreed that the superintendent helped get the school off the ground. When the school was acquired by the district, the founder, administrator, teachers, and other staff became district employees. As a member of the school district, BDLCs follows the rules, regulations, curriculum, standards, and state testing protocols of the school district. All state achievement tests are given in English, just as they are in all other schools in the district and in the entire state.

The school was funded by the school district. The only additional money received came from a grant for start-up charter schools. The state grant was not just for BDLCs, but for any charter school originated in the state. The grant money was allocated for buying materials, such as furniture, needed to start a new school. Since its inception, the school has been funded through federal, state, and local funds just like any other traditional school in the district.

The school's policies and procedures have changed since its inception. The school started in 2006-2007 school year with kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. A grade was added every year up until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Policies were changed or implemented to accommodate the additional grades. The founder and administrator agreed that different

policies were needed for students at different ages. Policies were adopted from school district policies.

The founder and administrator stated that BDLCS has the same schedule, curriculum, standards, and expectations as traditional schools in the district except BDLCS teaches in both English and Spanish rather than just English. In the 2013-2014 school year, the school had two PK classrooms, six kindergarten classrooms, five 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms, three 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms, two 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms, and one 8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom.

All schools lose students as they move to higher grades and or because their families relocate. Most schools also gain students due to relocations. However, because of the uniqueness of BDLCS, it does not gain many students after the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The founder stated that in order to maintain stability, more classrooms were added to the earlier grades. The adding of the classrooms allowed more students in earlier grades, so as the school faced the attrition of students as they moved into upper grades, the school would still have the numbers needed to operate. The adding of the classrooms also allowed BDLCS to enrich the education of more students. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students this year are students who started the program in 2006-2007 school year.

The founder and administrator agreed that community support has been growing. The advice the founder gave was to get the school started before asking for community support. She tried to gain support from the community before the school was founded and discovered it was difficult to obtain. However, once the school was founded, community support has grown and continues to grow.

The founder has also changed roles as the school has transformed. When the school was first created she was the dual language coordinator. She was to set up the program and let the administrator handle the day to day events; however, since the middle school has moved to a different campus, the founder's current role is that of administrator of the middle school. Although she does an excellent job as an administrator, it is easy to get bogged down in the quagmire that is everyday school and push back the duties of dual language coordinator.

Even though the school has been in existence for eight years, the founder and administrator agreed that it continues to transform. Both agreed that it continues to be hard work to explain the school. Both stated that people still come up to them and say, "you are that Spanish school." Both respond, "We are a school that teaches in Spanish, not a Spanish school." The founder said that creating a dual language school is not for the thin skinned. It is definitely a tough thing to do; however, the founder and administrator were adamant that it was worth the work and both were proud of the accomplishments the students have made and continue to make.

Six of the 10 teachers interviewed believed that when creating a dual language school, it is important for administrators to be bilingual. The administrators' being bilingual helps with parent communications, observing teachers, and the hiring new teachers. The other four teachers did not believe bilingualism was an advantage or disadvantage for administrators. They said there were enough bilingual teachers in the building to help translate for an administrator if necessary.

Teachers at BDLS are required to be native speakers of the language in which they teach. One of the administrators explained that when a student pushes your buttons,

you respond to the student using your native language. She stated, “Even though the majority of the teachers are bilingual, to get the results we want for the students, we must have native language speakers.” To teach at BDLCS, teachers must also hold a state teaching certificate in the area in which he/she teaches in order to be considered highly qualified in that area. When prospective teachers interview for a position in Spanish, the interview is conducted completely in Spanish. One teacher stated that his/her interview, conducted in Spanish, lasted more than an hour.

Both administrators and one teacher had been at the school since its inception. Another teacher had been with the school for seven years, and the remaining eight teachers had been at BDLCS three or fewer years. Many were unaware of the struggle to found the school; however, all were aware of both the struggles and triumphs since the school had been started.

### **Challenges in Creating a Public Charter Dual Language School**

The founder and administrator talked about the many challenges faced when starting a school based on a new concept. Both agreed the main barriers were the politics and the lack of knowledge about their goals for the school. They were trying to start a bilingual dual language school in a state where immigration is a significant issue. Many people did not understand what they were trying to accomplish. The founder said, “The difficulty was trying to get people to believe in and see the vision.”

The founder needed to find an area that housed the population needed to support the dual language concept. In the dual language concept, the ratio is one-to-one or no more than two-to-one. For example, the ideal classroom would have an equal number of

English-speaking and Spanish-speaking students or would at least have a ratio of two-English-speaking students to every-one Spanish-speaking student.

The founder decided to sell her idea to the school system where she worked. Although she pitched her idea to the school district administration, she believed she was getting the run around. She talked about spending countless hours trying to sell her ideas to school officials, business personnel, and parents. She rode around the county looking at buildings in which the school could be housed. She said she thought she had run into a blockade.

At one of her meetings a lady suggested she talk to a neighboring county that might be interested. The founder pitched her idea to school district administrators in the neighboring county and received a positive response. The school district superintendent in that county was familiar with the dual language model and had experience working with dual language schools in another state where he previously worked. The founder was overwhelmed and excited; however, she stated that then came one of the toughest hurdles for her to face. She had to give her idea to someone else and it was in their hands to create her vision.

One change the school district made was in the program. The founder and administrator talked about wanting the school to use the 90:10 model. This means that PK and kindergarten students would be taught in Spanish 90% of the day and English 10% of the day. In 1<sup>st</sup> grade, students would be taught using an 80:20 model; in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, it would be 70:30; and in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades it would be 50:50. In order for the district to approve the dual language school, the founder and administrator had to settle for the 70:30 model. In the 70:30 model, PK through 1<sup>st</sup> grade are taught 70% of

the day in Spanish and 30% of the day in English. In 2<sup>nd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades students are taught 50% of the day in Spanish and 50% in English. Although the founder, administrator, and nearly all the teachers agreed this percentage worked well, they believed the 90:10 model would bring more success to the students.

The school district was willing to provide a building, custodial staff, bussing, and the materials needed to create a school. The teachers would be employed by the district and would receive benefits like any other teacher in the state. The founder's difficulty was that she had to give up control to allow her idea to come to fruition.

Once she found a school district willing to implement her idea of a dual language charter school, the problem of hiring both qualified and certified teachers was the next step. Not only did teachers need to be hired, the teachers needed to be highly qualified in both the subject and the language they were to teach. Because dual language teaching is not a common concept in the state, no college in the state prepares teachers to teach in a dual language school. The problem of recruiting highly qualified teachers was compounded because, due to budget cuts, the school district does not go out of state to recruit teachers.

In order to acquire the teachers needed for BDLCS, the school had to rely on the Internet and word of mouth to recruit teachers. The founder taught Spanish and was an ESOL teacher before coming to the school district. She had travelled and taught outside the U.S. She had contacts in other countries that helped recruit native speaking teachers. But would teachers from outside the U.S. be able to come to the country, get a teaching certificate in the state, and be considered as highly qualified? The founder had a contact in Columbia and was able to work with him to enable teachers from Columbia to travel to

the U.S. to teach for 3 years. Some passed the state certification test and stayed, and some returned to Columbia after the 3-year period. Not all the teachers were from Columbia; some were from Puerto Rico, Peru, Cuba, as well as the U.S. Although teachers only teach in his/her native language, a majority of the teachers can communicate in either language.

The founder had the vision and the drive to get the school started; however, at this point, she was unfamiliar with being an administrator of a school. This is when she brought the second administrator on board to be principal of the school. The second administrator believed in the dual language concept and had experience with running an elementary school. The founder and administrator had previously worked together in another district.

Once the teachers and an administrator were hired, getting parents to send their children to a dual language school was the next step. The founder and administrator worked hard to publicize the idea of a dual language school to everyone in the county. Meetings, ads, posters, and word of mouth were used to help get the message into the community. Again, misunderstanding was a barrier during this period of the school's inception. The idea of a public dual language school in a state where none existed was a difficult concept to sell. Through the hard work of the founder and administrator, parents began to enroll their children in BDLCS and the school was started in 2006-2007 school year.

Once parents began enrolling their children, getting the students to school was the next step. When the school first started the county provided busses and students were bused from door-to-door. When budget cuts began, bussing was also cut. The first

proposal was that bussing would be cut from the school and parents would have to transport the students. Parents from the school went to the school board and complained. Now the county provides what is called shuttle bussing. Students are no longer picked up at their homes; they are picked up at certain stations or stops. Although this is not ideal, students are still allowed to ride the bus to school without parents having to transport them the entire distance. Without parent support, the school could have lost bus transportation all together. Both administrators said that parent and community support were crucial for the school.

The school does not just want community support; the school wants to help support the community. The founder and administrator feel the school's bilingual parent liaison has a major role in supporting the community. The school's newsletter, *The Courier*, goes out to parents every Monday. *The Courier* and all letters are written in both languages. The founder and administrator talked about the support of the PTA and parents. When the middle school moved to the new facility, there were few books in the media center to support a dual language school. Parents worked to get books and resources for the school. One administrator said 80% of the middle school students had a sibling at the elementary school. Having more than one student in the program shows that parents believe the program is working. Parents are not only supporting the school through work, they are supporting and trusting the program with their children. Both stated that parent support continues to be crucial for the success of the school.

The founder and administrator agreed that there are not more dual language schools in the state because people still do not understand the concept of dual language.

There are many immigration issues and many people do not see the importance of students learning a second language.

The founder and administrator agreed that the school's cultures are promoted throughout the year. There are many cultures that exist in the school. Each Hispanic country has its own culture. Since teachers are from different Hispanic speaking countries, it is difficult to promote all cultures plus the culture of the United States and still teach the state standards required of the teachers and students. The school celebrates Hispanic Heritage month and Black History month. The school uses the same calendar as the school district, but tries to celebrate different cultures throughout the year.

The school also promotes the idea of helping parents. With close to half of the parents not speaking English, it is imperative that the school have the capacity to help parents. The school wants to give help to the whole community, not just the students of the community. Parents may come to the school if needing help. When the school was first started, there were classes where parents could come and learn the other language through Rosetta Stone. The school holds parent workshops in both languages, has an open door policy, and treats all parents with respect.

Six of the teachers believed they were prepared to teach in the classroom, but had difficulty getting used to the concept of teaching in Spanish. Two teachers had gone to school in a dual language program and were prepared because they understood what was expected. One teacher believed it was difficult to teach students in Spanish who did not speak Spanish. One teacher believed he/she could have received more support from the school and the school district.

Most teachers talked about the amount of time it takes to teach in Spanish. Most resources have to be translated into Spanish because there are not as many resources for teachers teaching in Spanish as for traditional teachers. The middle school teachers said there were few resources for them, and there were more resources for the elementary school. Most of the teachers were excited about teaching in Spanish. Many had taught English in another country and were excited to come to the U.S. and teach in Spanish. It is important to note that the school does not teach Spanish, but teaches in Spanish.

The teachers perceived the advantage of teaching a child using the dual language model is that students learn a second language and that gives them more opportunities in life. Most also agreed that parent support is important for both the school and the student. Most teachers agreed that a disadvantage is that some students are not secure in their first language. The greater the proficiency a student has in his or her native language, the more success the student will have. Teachers concluded that a good foundation in the student's first language, whether English or Spanish, would help the student be more successful in the dual language school.

Teachers agreed that it makes it difficult for a student to become fluent in a second language if he/she comes into the school past 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Because BDLCS is a public school, parents can place their children in the program at anytime; however, the founder and administrator try to explain the problem with entering a student after 1<sup>st</sup> grade in the program. The founder agreed that it is important for students to begin in Pre-K or Kindergarten and continue with the program for its duration. However, the founder admitted that the most difficult time for students and parents is around 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The founder said that 2<sup>nd</sup> grade seemed to be the transition grade. She discussed the fact that

students enrolled in a dual language school may lag behind students in a traditional school in earlier grades on state achievement tests; however, around 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, dual language students narrow the gap, if there is one, and usually surpass traditional students by 5<sup>th</sup> grade. It takes time for the program and process to work.

The founder also discussed the fact that it is difficult for a student to come into a dual language program in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Because BDLCS is a public school it must enroll all eligible students; however, students usually have a difficult time because they have missed the foundations of both Spanish and English in PK and kindergarten. BDLCS usually tries to deter both students and parents who try to come into the program after 1<sup>st</sup> grade. In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade the program begins the 50:50 part of the model. Half of the day is spend in both Spanish and English. Students starting after 1<sup>st</sup> grade may not have a firm foundation in his/her first language or may not understand the second language for half of the day. Students usually become frustrated and transfer. The founder said it is not impossible for a student to become bilingual after 1<sup>st</sup> grade; it just makes it more difficult by coming into the program after 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

In their interviews, the teachers talked about some of the advantages of speaking more than one language and some challenges they have had teaching at BDLCS. All the teachers agreed that there are many advantages for a person who speaks more than one language. A person can have a better career, will find it easier to get jobs, will communicate better, understand different cultures better, have a higher income and will have the ability to help his or her community. Half the teachers did not see any disadvantages to speaking a different language; however, half saw a negative to speaking more than one language. The main negative was discrimination outside of school. One

teacher lost friends because her friends did not think her race should speak Spanish; another said when a person does not speak the dominant language, they may be discriminated against. Another teacher was put in ESOL classes because he or she spoke Spanish and all state tests are given in English. Although there were some negatives, all teachers said that becoming bilingual was an overwhelming positive.

All teachers said they were supported by their co-workers. Also, resources were available to help the teachers. Sometimes parent communication was difficult, but all said another co-worker would step in to help with the language barrier if the teacher or administrator did not speak the parent's native language.

All the teachers conveyed the fact that their classroom duties were the same as in a traditional school and their day was typical. The only difference was the time it took to translate material into Spanish and prepare to teach the students. Although traditional teachers work hard, most traditional teachers do not have to translate information into another language before teaching the material. The lack of resources occurred because materials were unavailable from the distributors used by the school district.

Although the teachers talked about a strong PTA and having parent support, many teachers wished there was more parent support and commented that sometimes only a few parents provided support in the classroom. Although poor parent support is typical for most schools, it can be frustrating. Teachers indicated that more community support would be appreciated.

The teachers discussed celebrating different cultures in the school. Many pointed out that most people believe there is only one Hispanic culture; however, there are many. Each Hispanic country has its own culture. An example would be people in the United

States and England both speak English. However, each country has its own culture and traditions. Teachers try to incorporate their own country's culture to help students understand and experience different cultures. They also talked about the school's morning routine in the language of the day.

Teachers discussed the different problems that any typical school may have; however, all teachers were adamant about how great it was to work at the school and with the administrators. All the teachers talked about being a family and working together for the purpose of teaching students to become bilingual. The founder and administrator were just as dedicated. As the founder said, "It really isn't the language you speak; it is the passion and the belief in what we are doing that is most important."

BDLCS was started in the 2006-2007 school year and was a dual language charter school in this southeastern state. The original charter was submitted in November 2005. The school was funded by a local school district and received additional funds from a charter school grant available for the inception of any charter school. The main barrier faced in creation of the school, according to the founder, was people not understanding what the school was trying to accomplish and the politics that comes along with something new or different. Other obstacles included recruiting bilingual teachers, bussing issues, and support from local school authorities and the community. Although the school continues to face issues, the continuous effort of the administration, teachers, parents, and community has helped the school evolve and survive.

### **Student Achievement as Measured by State Scores**

The third research question was answered by using test scores of BDLCS students compared to a student's test scores from a comparable school, the school district in which

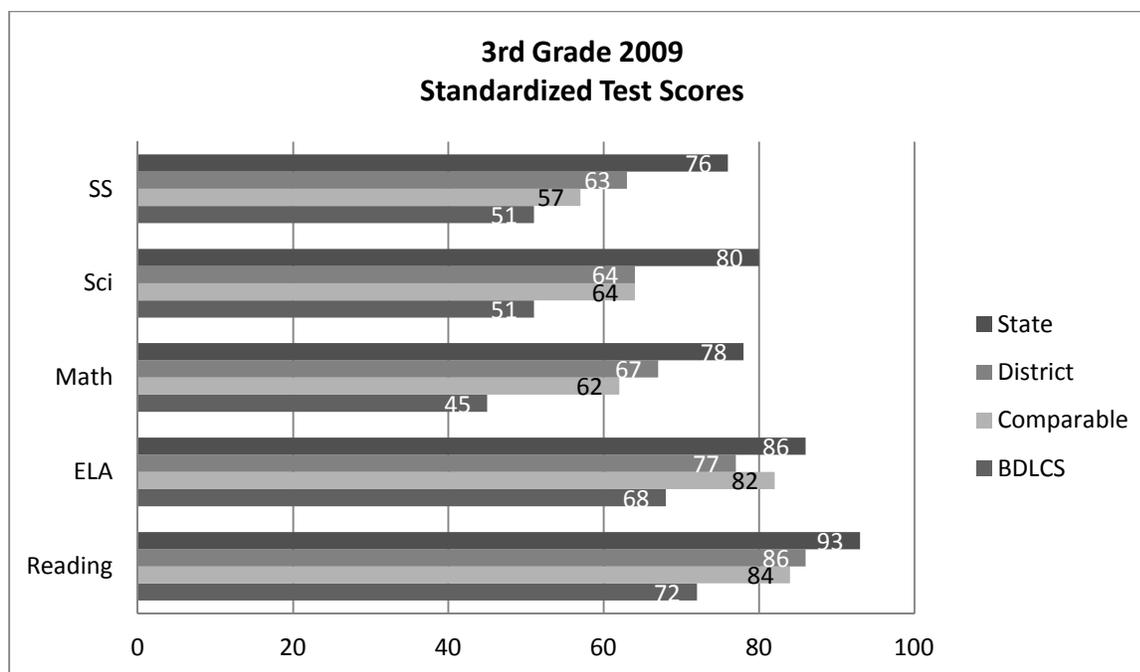
BDLCS is a part, and statewide scores. All data were obtained from the state website. The scores were from state standardized test scores. The following series of figures presents data comparing standardized test scores in reading, math, language arts, science, and social studies of BDLCS students with students' scores from a comparable elementary school, district schools, and schools statewide. The state begins standardized testing of students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. BDLCS had its first 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class in 2009.

Students taking the state test are placed into three categories. If a child makes a certain score then that child is considered to have "met" state standards in that subject. If the child is below that certain score the child is placed in the "does not meet" category. If the child makes a certain score above the "met" category then he/she is considered to have "exceeded" state standards. When discussing student's scores, the percentage shown shows the percentage of student who "met" or "exceeded" state standards.

Each figure represents a certain grade and year. The scores from BDLCS, a comparable school, BDLCS's school district, and the state will be compared. BDLCS will be the bar on the bottom, the comparable school will be the bar above BDLCS, the district scores will be the bar above the comparable school, and the state scores will be the bar above the district and the bar on top. The subjects, from bottom to top will be reading, ELA, math, science, and social studies.

The y-axis will show the subjects in which the students were tested.

The x-axis will show the percentage of students who "met" or "exceeded" on the state test.



*Figure 1.* BDLCS was below all three comparison groups in all categories (Reading, ELA, Math, Science, and SS).

In Reading, 72 % of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards.

- 12% less than the comparable school
- 14% less than district scores
- 21% less than state scores

In ELA, 68% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards.

- 14% less than the comparable school
- 9% less than district scores
- 18% less than state scores

In Math, 45% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards.

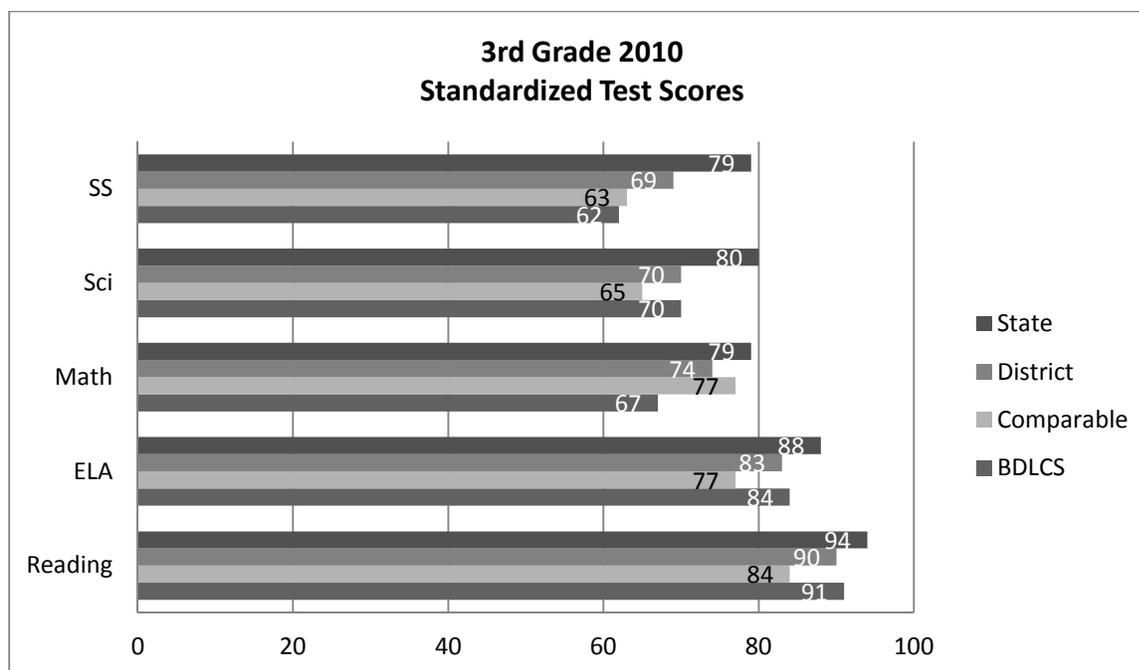
- 17% less than the comparable school
- 22% less than district scores
- 33% less than state scores

In Science, 51% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards.

- 13% less than the comparable school
- 13% less than district scores
- 29% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 51% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards.

- 6% less than the comparable school
- 12% less than district scores
- 25% less than state scores



*Figure 2.* BDLCS was above both the comparative school and the district in Reading and ELA and above the comparable school in Science.

In Reading, 91 % of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 7% more than the comparable school
- + 1% more than district scores
- 3% less than state scores

In ELA, 84% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 7% more than the comparable school
- + 1% more than district scores
- 4% less than state scores

In Math, 67% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

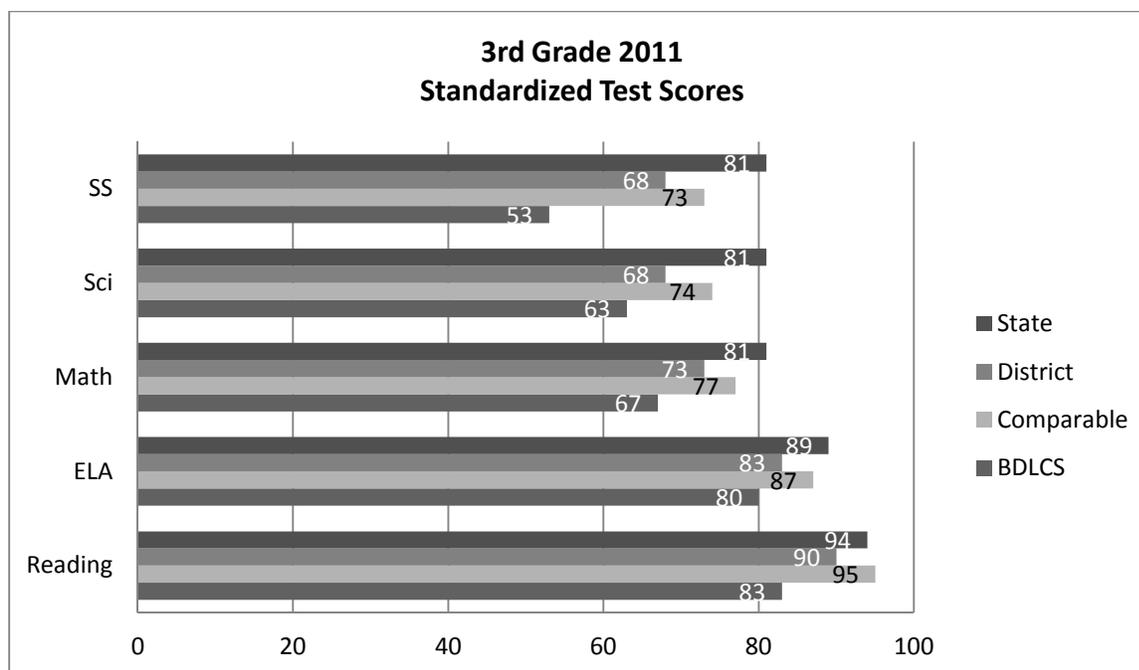
- 10% less than the comparable school
- 7% less than district scores
- 12% less than state scores

In Science, 70% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 5% more than the comparable school
- The same as district scores
- 10% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 62% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 1% less than the comparable school
- 7% less than district scores
- 17% less than state scores



*Figure 3.* BDLCS was below all three in all five areas.

In Reading, 83% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 12% less than the comparable school
- 7% less than district scores
- 11% less than state scores

In ELA, 80% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 7% less than the comparable school
- 3% less than district scores
- 9% less than state scores

In Math, 67% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 10% less than the comparable school
- 6% less than district scores
- 14% less than state scores

In Science, 63% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 11% less than the comparable school
- 5% less than district scores
- 18% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 53% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 20% less than the comparable school
- 15% less than district scores
- 28% less than state scores

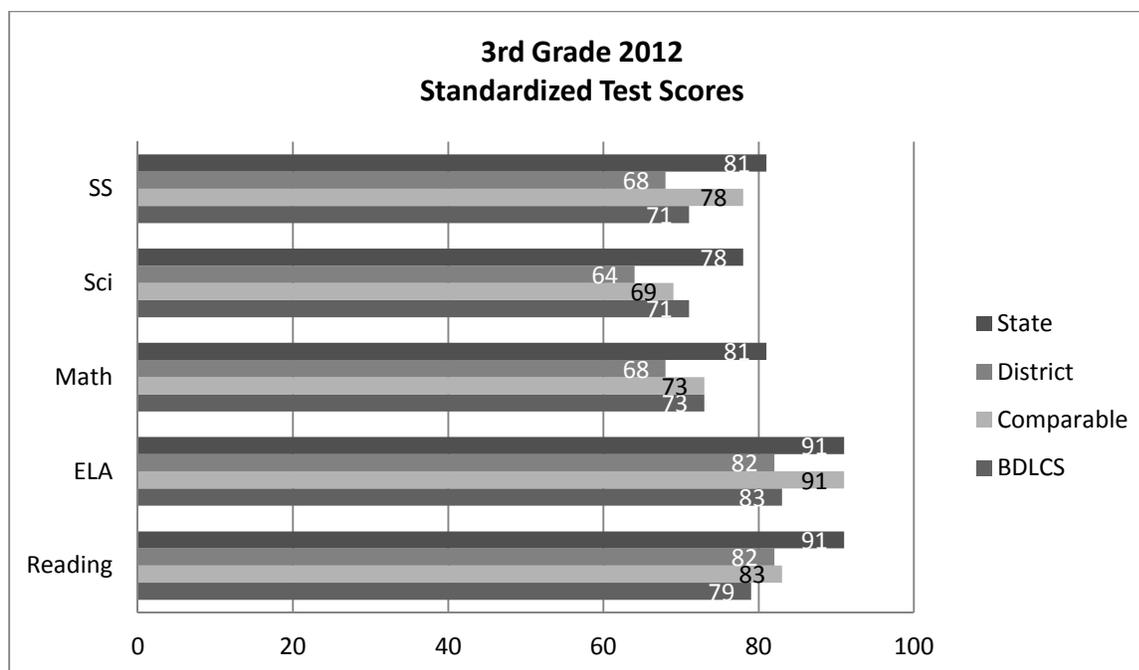


Figure 4. BDLCS was above the district in ELA, Math, Science and SS and above CTS in Science.

In Reading, 79% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 4% less than the comparable school
- 3% less than district scores
- 12% less than state scores

In ELA, 83% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 8% less than the comparable school
- + 1% more than district scores
- 8% less than state scores

In Math, 73% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- The same as the comparable school
- + 5% more than district scores
- 8% less than state scores

In Science, 71% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 2% more than the comparable school
- + 7% more than district scores
- 7% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 71% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 7% less than the comparable school
- + 3% more than district scores
- 10% less than state scores

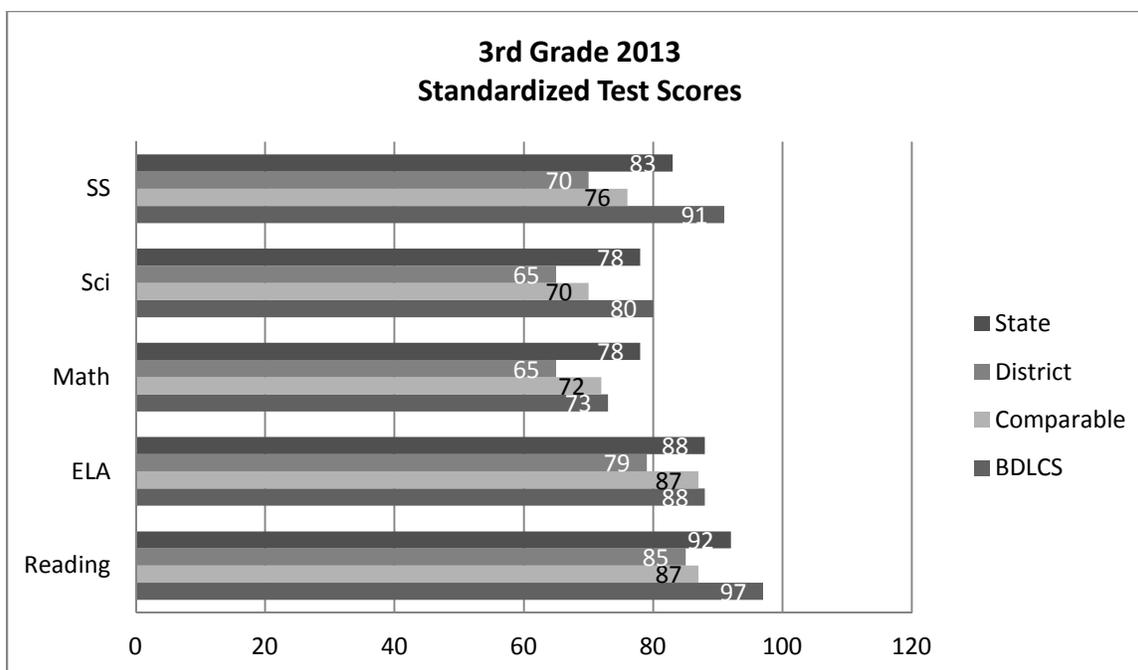


Figure 5. BDLCS was above all three in Reading Science, and SS and above the comparable school and the district in ELA and Math.

In Reading, 97% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 10% more than the comparable school
- + 12% more than district scores
- + 5% more than state scores

In ELA, 88% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 1% more than the comparable school
- + 9% more than district scores
- The same as state scores

In Math, 73% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 1% more than the comparable school
- + 8% more than district scores
- 5% less than state scores

In Science, 80% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 10% more than the comparable school
- + 15% more than district scores
- + 2% more than state scores

In Social Studies, 91% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 15% more than the comparable school
- + 21% more than district scores
- + 8% more than state scores

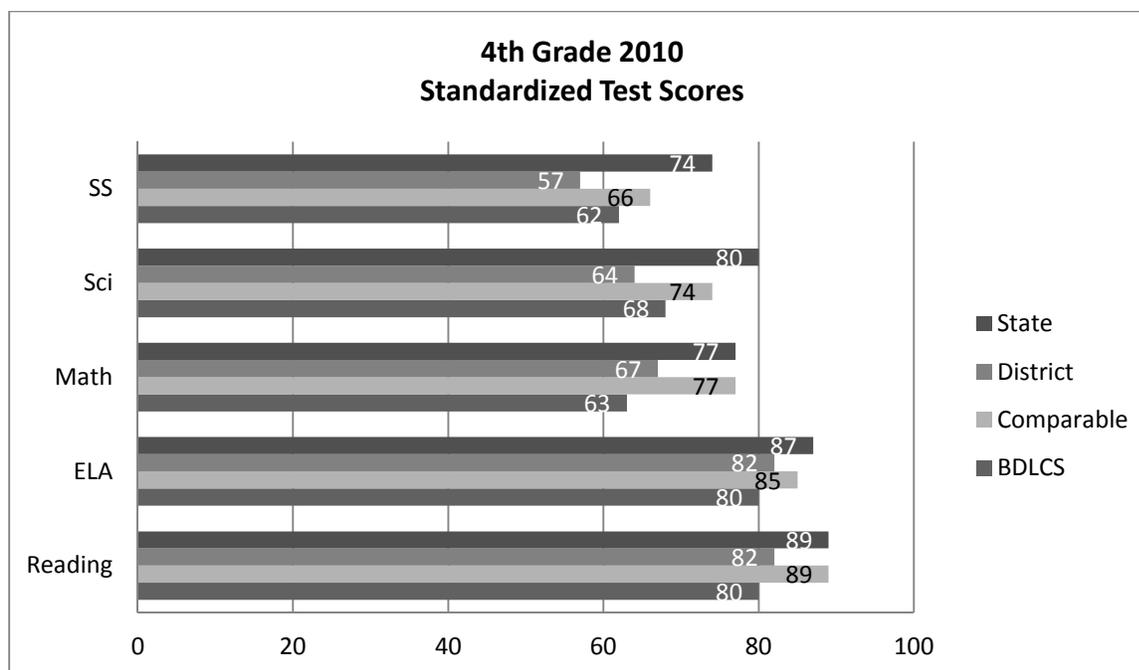


Figure 6. BDLCS was below all three in Reading, ELA, and Math and above the district in Science and SS.

In Reading, 80% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 9% less than the comparable school
- 2% less than district scores
- 9% less than state scores

In ELA, 80% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 5% less than the comparable school
- 2% less than district scores
- 7% less than state scores

In Math, 63% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 14% less than the comparable school
- 4% less than district scores
- 14% less than state scores

In Science, 68% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 6% less than the comparable school
- + 4% more than district scores
- 12% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 62% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 4% less than the comparable school
- + 5% more than district scores
- 12% less than state scores

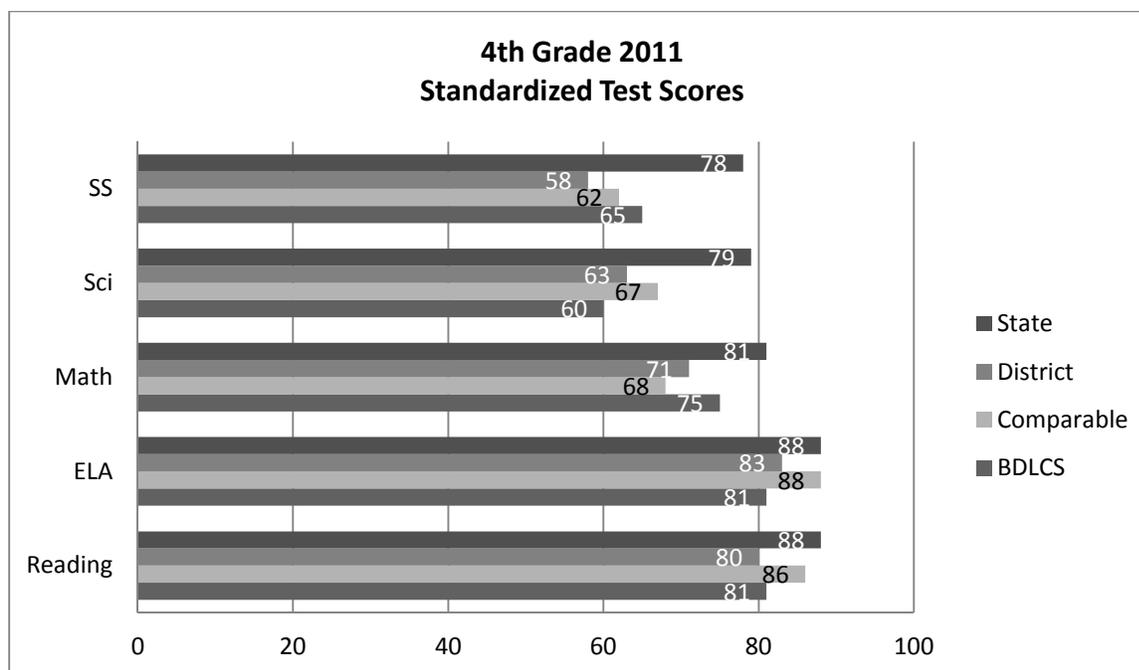


Figure 7. BDLCS was below all three in ELA and Science; Above the comparable and the district in Math and SS; and above the district in Reading.

In Reading, 81% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 5% less than the comparable school
- + 1% more than district scores
- 7% less than state scores

In ELA, 81% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 7% less than the comparable school
- 2% less than district scores
- 7% less than state scores

In Math, 75% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 7% more than the comparable school
- + 4% more than district scores
- 6% less than state scores

In Science, 60% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 7% less than the comparable school
- 3% less than district scores
- 19% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 65% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 3% more than the comparable school
- + 7% more than district scores
- 13% less than state score

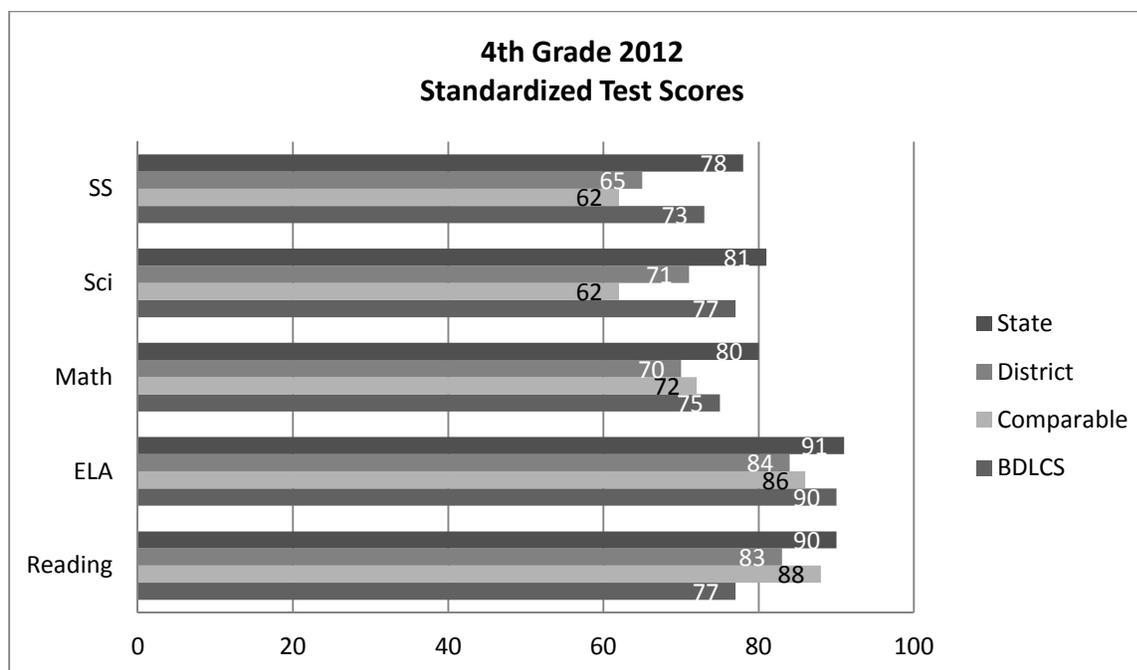


Figure 8. BDLCS was below all three in Reading and above the comparable and the district in ELA, Math, Science and SS.

In Reading, 77% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 11% less than the comparable school
- 6% less than district scores
- 13% less than state scores

In ELA, 90% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 4% more than the comparable school
- + 6% more than district scores
- 1% less than state scores

In Math, 75% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 3% more than the comparable school
- + 5% more than district scores
- 5% less than state scores

In Science, 77% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 15% more than the comparable school
- + 6% more than district scores
- 4% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 73% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 11% more than the comparable school
- + 8% more than district scores
- 5% less than state scores

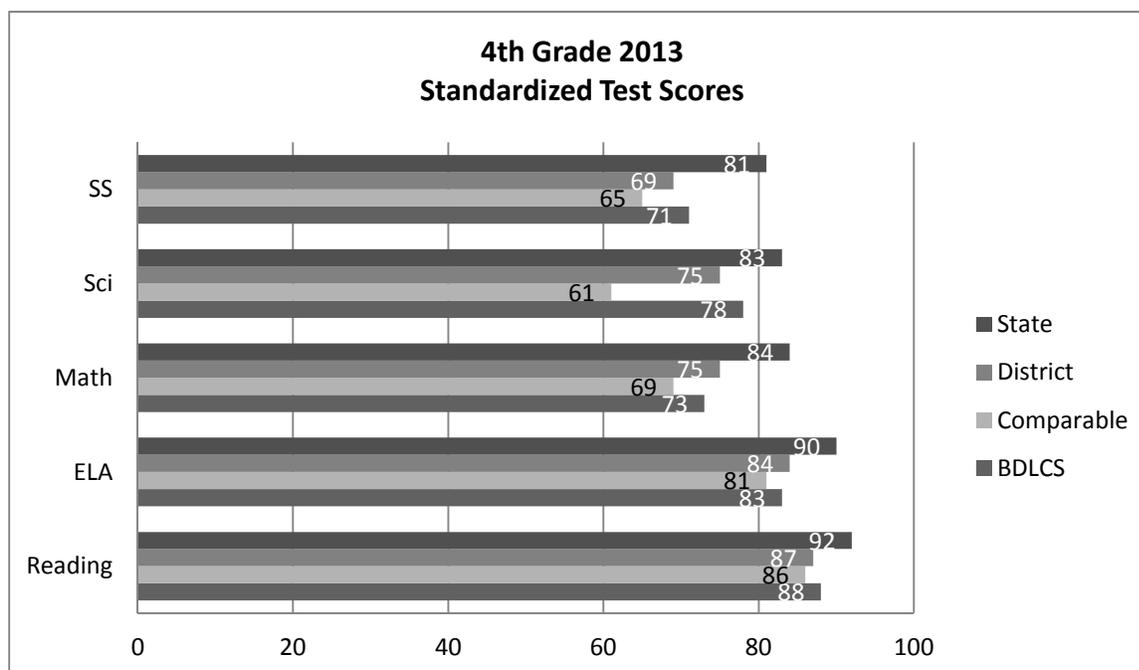


Figure 9. BDLCS was above the comparable and the district in Reading, Science, and SS and above the comparable in ELA and Math.

In Reading, 88% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 2% more than the comparable school
- + 1% more than district scores
- 4% less than state scores

In ELA, 83% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 2% more than the comparable school
- 1% less than district scores
- 7% less than state scores

In Math, 73% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

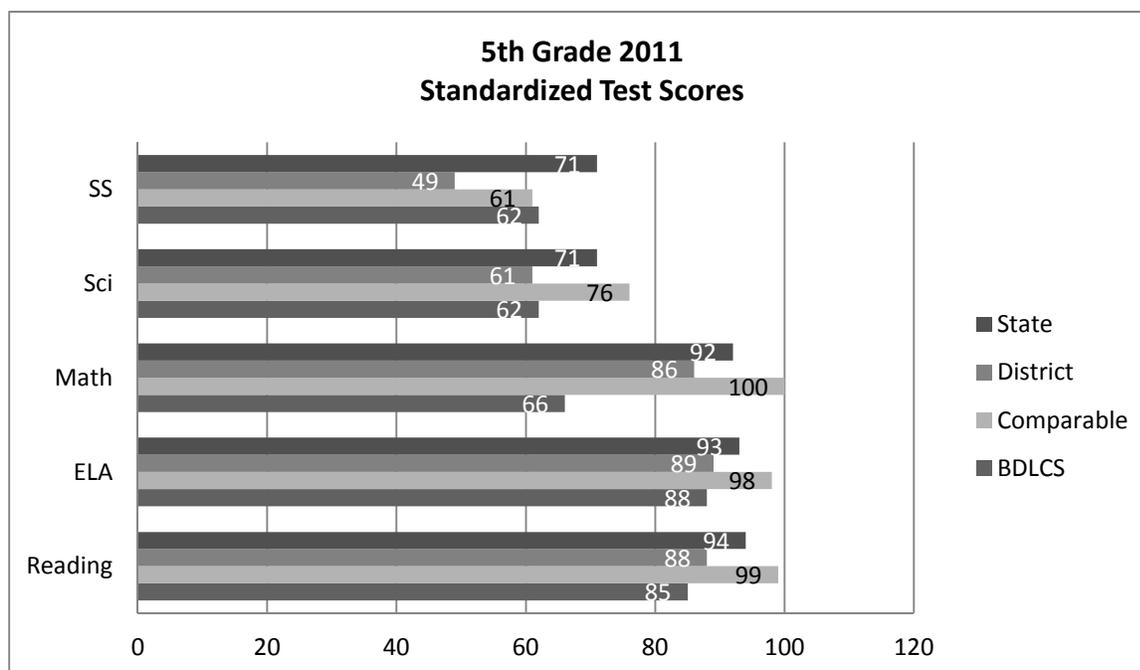
- + 4% more than the comparable school
- 2% less than district scores
- 11% less than state scores

In Science, 78% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 17% more than the comparable school
- + 3% more than district scores
- 5% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 71% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 6% more than the comparable school
- + 2% more than district scores
- 10% less than state scores



*Figure 10.* BDLCS was below all three in Reading, ELA, and Math; above the district in Science; and above the comparable school and the district in SS.

In Reading, 85% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 14% less than the comparable school
- 3% less than district scores
- 9% less than state scores

In ELA, 88% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 10% less than the comparable school
- 1% less than district scores
- 5% less than state scores

In Math, 66% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

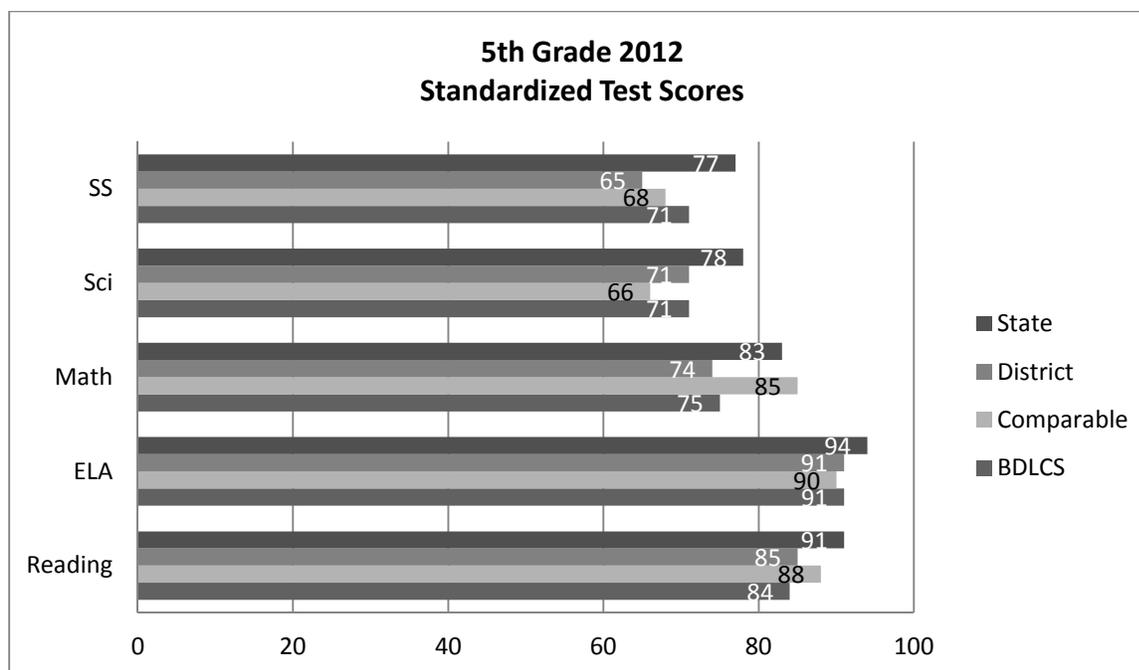
- 34% less than the comparable school
- 20% less than district scores
- 26% less than state scores

In Science, 62% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 14% less than the comparable school
- + 1% more than district scores
- 9% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 62% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 1% more than the comparable school
- + 13% more than district scores
- 9% less than state scores



*Figure 11.* BDLCS was below all three in Reading; above the comparable school in ELA and Science; above the district in Math; and above the comparable school and the district in SS.

In Reading, 84% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 4% less than the comparable school
- 1% less than district scores
- 7% less than state scores

In ELA, 91% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 1% more than the comparable school
- The same as district scores
- 3% less than state scores

In Math, 75% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

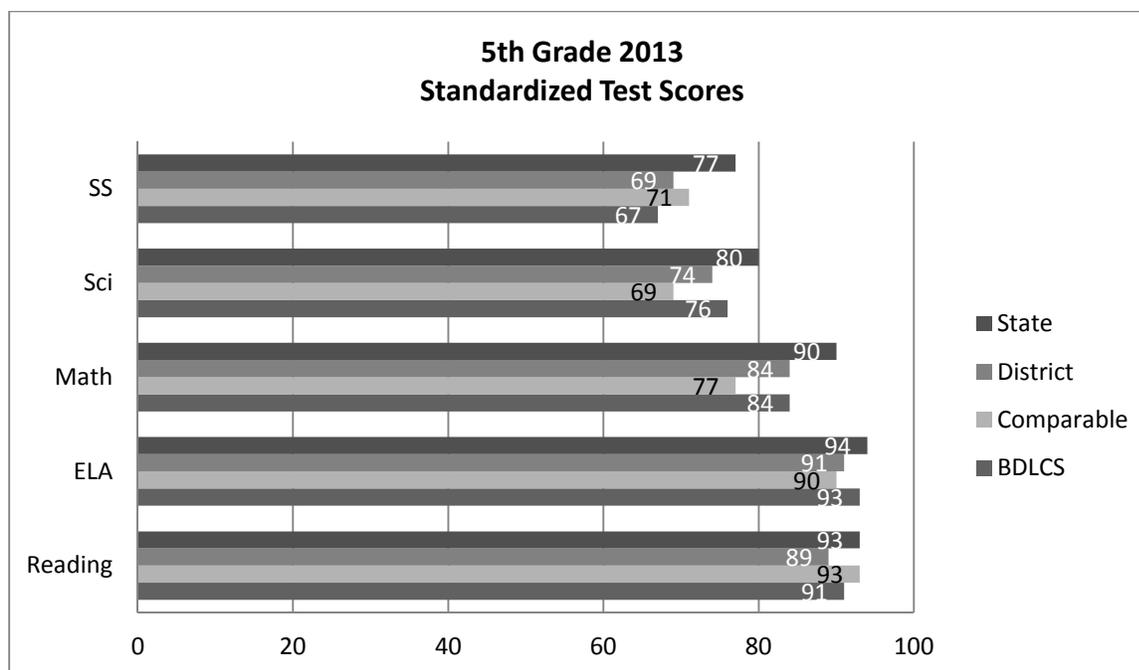
- 10% less than the comparable school
- + 1% more than district scores
- 8% less than state scores

In Science, 71% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 5% more than the comparable school
- The same as district scores
- 7% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 71% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 3% more than the comparable school
- + 6% more than district scores
- 6% less than state scores



*Figure 12.* BDLCS was above the district in Reading; above the comparable school and the district in ELA and Science; above the comparable school in Math; and below all three in SS.

In Reading, 91% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 2% less than the comparable school
- + 2% more than district scores
- 2% less than state scores

In ELA, 93% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 3% more than the comparable school
- + 2% more than district scores
- 1% less than state scores

In Math, 84% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

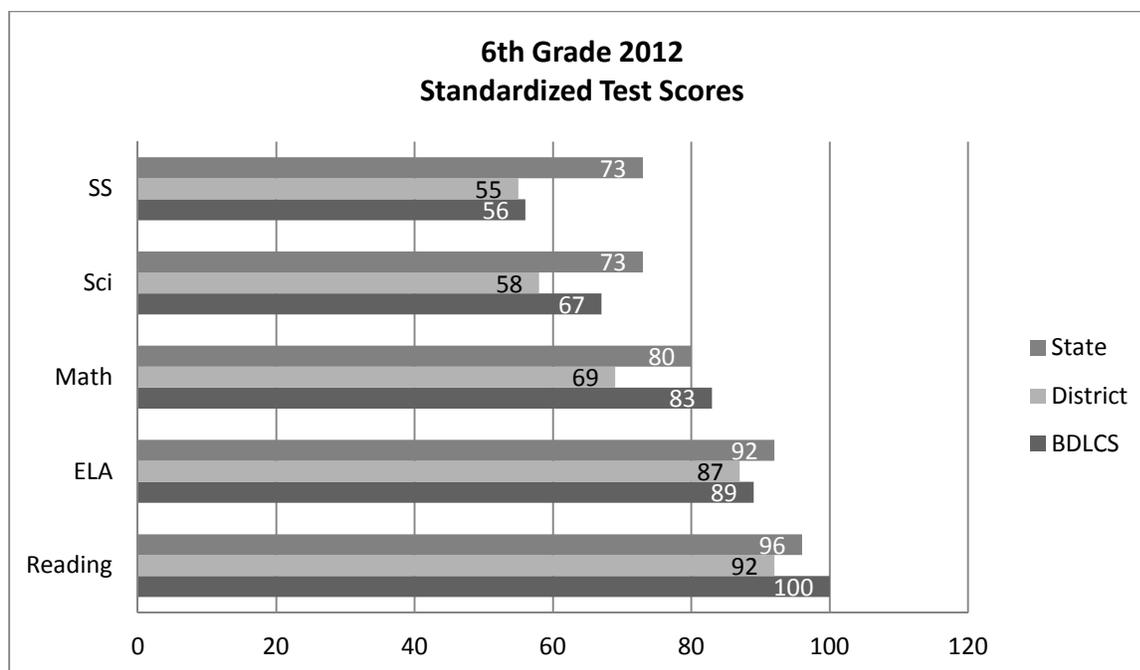
- + 7% more than the comparable school
- The same as district scores
- 6% less than state scores

In Science, 76% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 7% more than the comparable school
- + 2% more than district scores
- 4% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 67% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 4% less than the comparable school
- 2% less than district scores
- 14% less than state scores



*Figure 13.* There are no comparable scores for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade as the comparable school is a K-5 school. BDLCS is the bottom bar, the district is above it, and the state scores are above the district or the top bar.

BDLCS was above the district and the state in Reading and Math and above the district in ELA, Science, and SS.

In Reading, 100% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 8% more than district scores
- + 4% more than state scores

In ELA, 89% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 2% more than district scores
- 3% less than state scores

In Math, 83% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

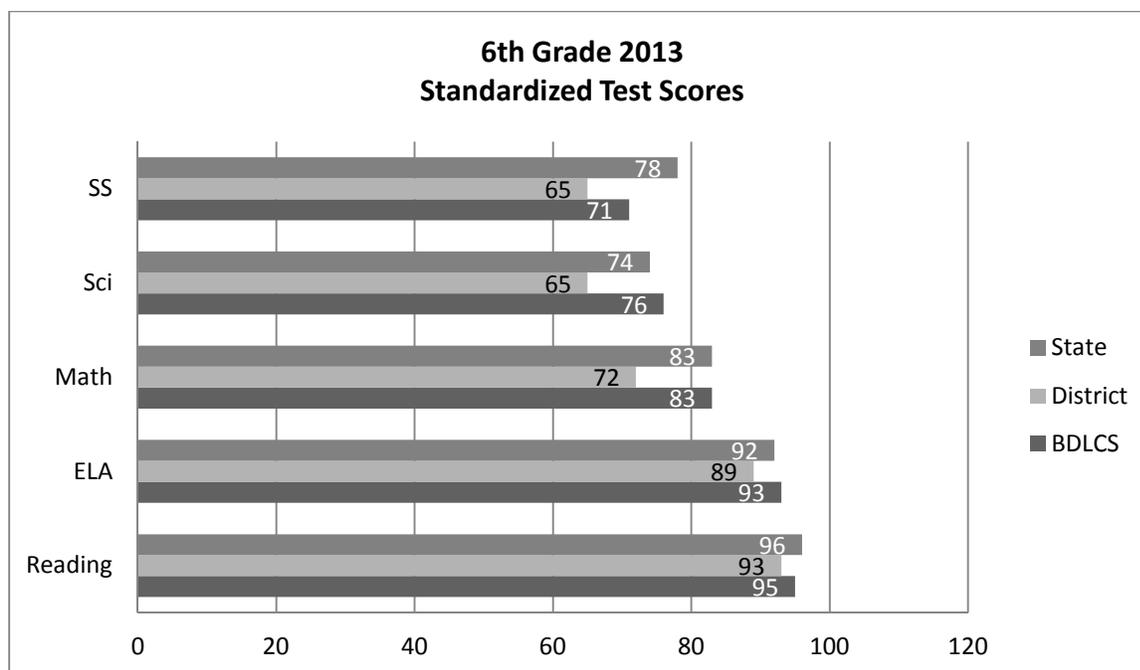
- + 14% more than district scores
- + 3% more than state scores

In Science, 67% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 9% more than district scores
- 6% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 56% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 1% more than district scores
- 17% less than state scores



*Figure 14.* There are no comparable scores for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade as the comparable school is a K-5 school. BDLCS is the bottom bar, the district is above it, and the state scores are above the district or the top bar.

BDLCS was above the district in Reading, Math, and SS and above both the district and the state in ELA and Science.

In Reading, 95% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 2% more than district scores
- 1% less than state scores

In ELA, 93% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 4% more than district scores
- + 1% more than state scores

In Math, 83% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

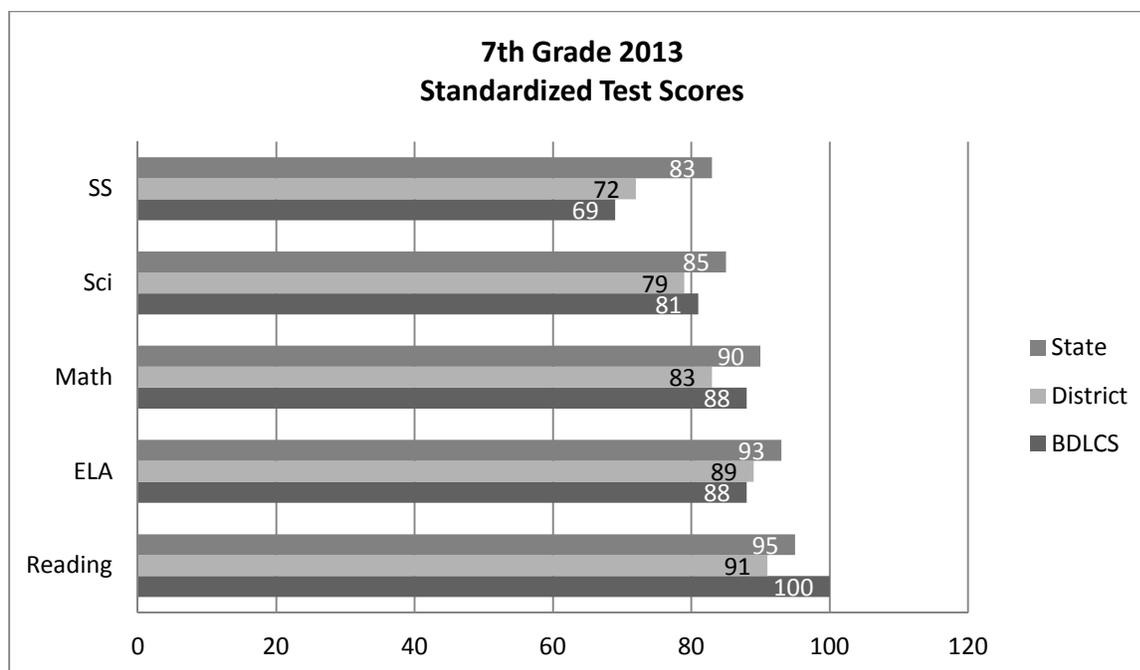
- + 11% more than district scores
- The same as state scores

In Science, 76% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 11% more than district scores
- + 2% more than state scores

In Social Studies, 71% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 6% more than district scores
- 7% less than state scores



*Figure 15.* There are no comparable scores for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade as the comparable school is a K-5 school. BDLCS is the bottom bar, the district is above it, and the state scores are above the district or the top bar.

BDLCS was above the district and state in Reading; above the district in Math and Science; and below both in ELA and SS.

In Reading, 100% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 9% more than district scores
- + 5% more than state scores

In ELA, 88% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- 1% less than district scores
- 5% less than state scores

In Math, 88% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 5% more than district scores
- + 2% less than state scores

In Science, 81% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

- + 2% more than district scores
- 4% less than state scores

In Social Studies, 69% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standards

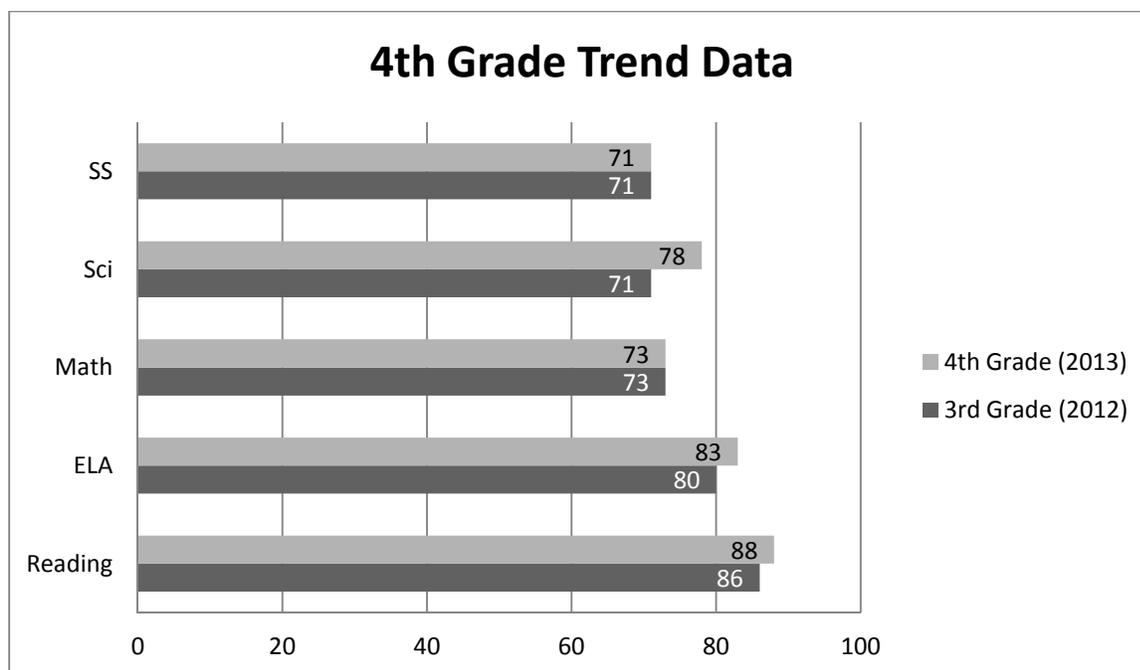
- 3% less than district scores
- 14% less than state scores

The following figures show BDLCS students compared to themselves each year since taking state test in the third grade. The students began taking the state standardized test in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The example below, Figure 16, shows how the 4<sup>th</sup> grade scores compare to their own scores in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The trend data shows if students the percentage of students that “met” or “exceeded” increased or decreased. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade will show two years of comparison data, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Figure 17, will show three years of comparison data, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Figure 18, will show four years of comparison data, and the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Figure 19, will show five years of comparison data.

The bottom bar will be the first year the students were tested in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The bar above that will show the test results for 4<sup>th</sup> grade. In all the figures, the bottom bar will be the first year the students were tested, the top bar will always be the latest scores for that grade.

The y-axis will show the subjects in which the students were tested.

The x-axis will show the percentage of students who “met” or “exceeded” on the state test.



*Figure 16.* The percentage of BDLCS students that passed the state test increased in Reading, ELA, and Science and stayed the same in Math and SS.

In Reading, the 2013 4<sup>th</sup> grade students:

+ Increased by 2% from their 2012 scores

In ELA, the 2013 4<sup>th</sup> grade students:

+ Increased by 3% from their 2012 scores

In Math, the 2013 4<sup>th</sup> grade students:

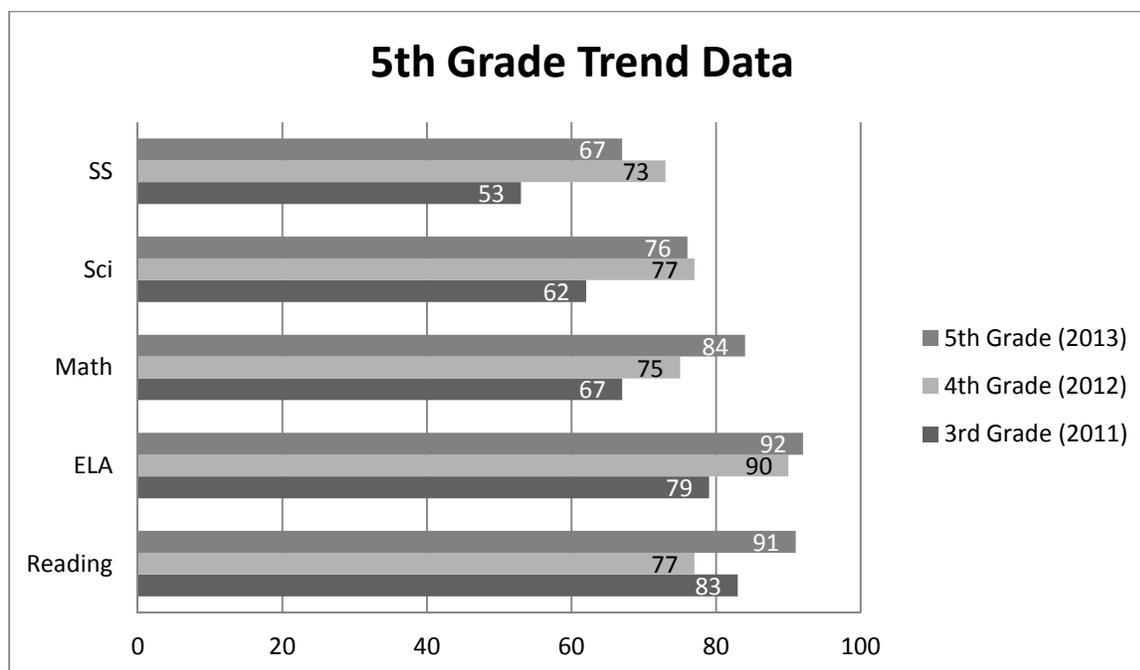
Stayed the same from their 2012 scores

In Science, the 2013 4<sup>th</sup> grade students:

+ Increased by 7% from their 2012 scores

In Social Studies, the 2013 4<sup>th</sup> grade students:

Stayed the same from their 2012 score



*Figure 17.* The percentage of BDLCS students that passed the state test increased in all areas between third and fifth grade.

In Reading, the 2013 5th grade students:

- Decreased 6% from their 2011 scores
- + Increased by 14% from their 2012 scores

In ELA, the 2013 5th grade students:

- + Increased by 12% from their 2011 scores
- + Increased by 2% from their 2012 scores

In Math, the 2013 5th grade students:

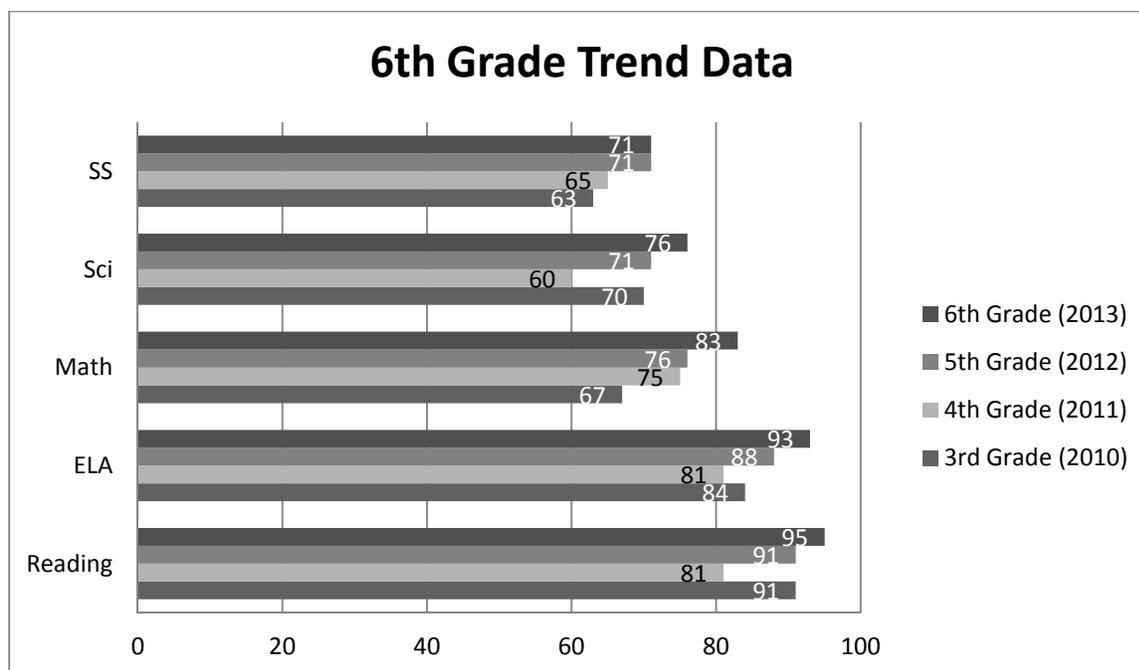
- + Increased by 8% from their 2011 scores
- + Increased by 9% from their 2012 scores

In Science, the 2013 5th grade students:

- + Increased by 15% from their 2011 scores
- Decreased by 1% from their 2012 scores

In Social Studies, the 2013 5th grade students:

- + Increased by 20% from their 2011 scores
- Decreased by 6% from their 2012 scores



*Figure 18.* The percentage of BDLCS students that passed the state test increased in all areas between third and sixth grade.

In Reading, the 2013 6th grade students:

- Decreased by 10% from their 2010 scores
- + Increase by 10% from their 2011 scores
- + Increased by 4% from their 2012 scores

In ELA, the 2013 6th grade students:

- Decreased by 3% from their 2010 scores
- + Increased by 7% from their 2011 scores
- + Increased by 5% from their 2012 scores

In Math, the 2013 6th grade students:

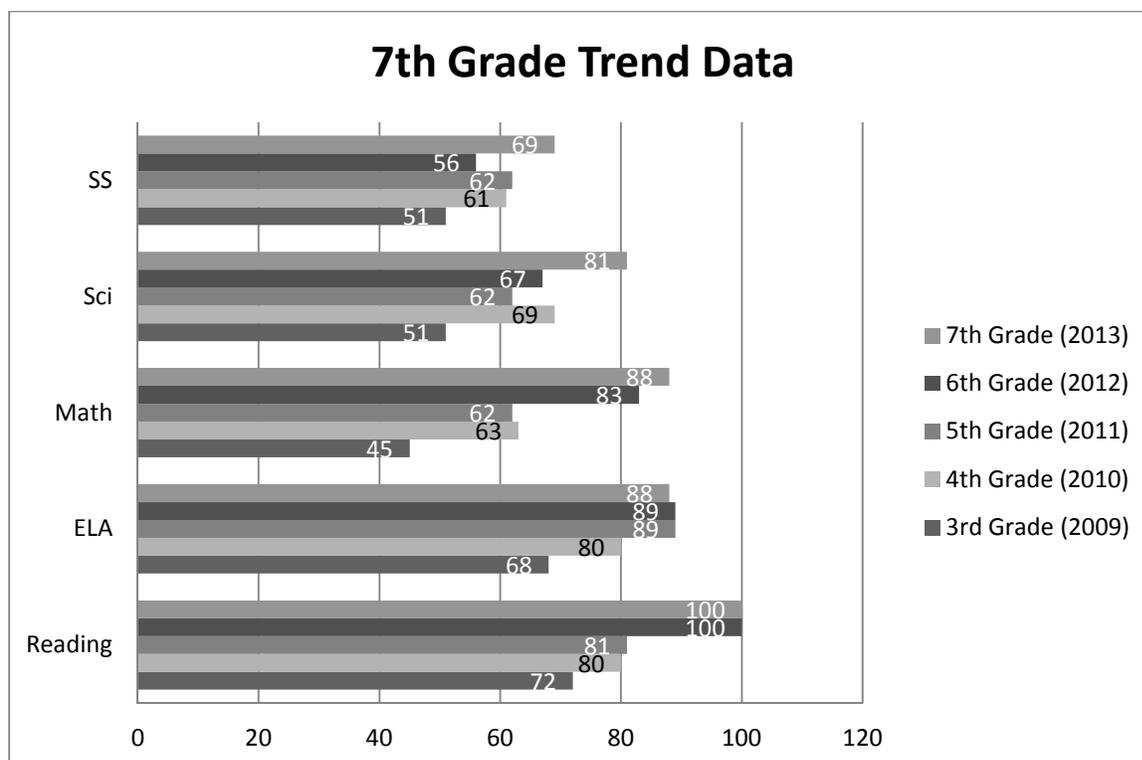
- + Increased by 8% from their 2010 scores
- + Increased by 1% from their 2011 scores
- + Increased by 7% from their 2012 scores

In Science, the 2013 6th grade students:

- Decreased by 10% from their 2010 scores
- + Increased by 11% from their 2011 scores
- + Increased by 5% from their 2012 scores

In Social Studies, the 2013 6th grade students:

- + Increased by 2% from their 2010 scores
- + Increased by 6% from their 2011 scores
- Stayed the same from their 2012 scores



*Figure 19.* The percentage of BDLCS students that passed the state test increased in all areas between third and seventh grade.

In Reading, the 2013 6th grade students:

- + Increased by 8% from their 2009 scores
- + Increased by 1% from their 2010 scores
- + Increase by 19% from their 2011 scores
- Stayed the same from their 2012 scores

In ELA, the 2013 6th grade students:

- + Increased by 12% from their 2009 scores
- + Increased by 9% from their 2010 scores
- Stayed the same from their 2011 scores
- Decreased by 1% from their 2012 scores

In Math, the 2013 6th grade students:

- + Increased by 18% from their 2009 scores
- Decreased by 1% from their 2010 scores
- + Increased by 21% from their 2011 scores
- + Increased by 5% from their 2012 scores

In Science, the 2013 6th grade students:

- + Increased by 18% from their 2009 scores
- Decreased by 7% from their 2010 scores
- + Increased by 5% from their 2011 scores
- + Increased by 14% from their 2012 scores

In Social Studies, the 2013 6th grade students:

- + Increased by 10% from their 2009 scores
- + Increased by 1% from their 2010 scores
- Decreased by 6% from their 2011 scores
- + Increased by 13% from their 2012 score

Table 1 illustrates the results that each grade has made since taking the state standard test in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade scores are compared with the 2013 state standard results. The scores are Trend Data and shows the increase or decrease of scores when the grade is compared to itself. It is important to compare the same student's scores as they move from grade to grade because it shows if those students are increasing or decreasing compared to their own scores. It is comparing apples to apples, not apples to oranges. When data is compared just based on the particular grade, it does not show if the increase was because of the program or because the students are stronger or weaker in a particular subject. Comparing the same students data shows if the program is working or if changes need to be made.

Table 1

*Comparison of Trend Data from 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade until 2013 Test Results*

	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Reading	+2	+8	+4	+28
ELA	+3	+13	+9	+20
Math	Same	+17	+16	+43
Science	+7	+14	+6	+30
Social Studies	Same	+14	+7	+18

The data shows the increase made in one year by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, two years by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, three years by the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and 4 years by the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade have been at BDLCS since its inception. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade students have increased

their scores since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade by double digits in all areas tested by the state standardized test.

### **Chapter Summary**

BDLCS was started in the 2006-2007 school year and was the first bilingual dual language charter school in the state. One of the administrators, the founder, is bilingual and all the teachers are bilingual and teach in their native languages. Although dual language schools exist in different areas of the country, there was no example in the state for the founder to follow. The school was funded by an already existing school system and the school was founded as a public charter school.

There were many challenges in starting the school. The biggest challenge was fighting both politics and ignorance about what the school was trying to accomplish. Other challenges included recruiting and hiring qualified teachers, garnering parent and community support, getting parents to send their children to the school, transporting students to and from school, and obtaining bilingual resources.

In interviews, the teachers discussed the fact that students need to start learning multiple languages early to be successful in the school. This chapter compared state achievement test scores between students at BDLCS, a comparable school, the district, and statewide. The results showed that dual language students lag behind students in traditional schools in lower grades; however, by the time dual language students reach upper elementary school, reading scores are comparable to traditional students. By middle school, dual language students' standardized test scores were comparable to traditional students' scores, and the dual language students had a grasp of a second language.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This study focused on a public bilingual dual language charter school (BDLCS) in a southeastern state. Substantial research has been conducted in the area of teaching English to immigrant students; however, far less research exists on teaching a second language to students who speak only English. This study examined the process of founding a school that taught a second language to both students speaking only English and students speaking only Spanish together in one classroom. Teaching students foreign languages early in their schooling not only enables the growth of the U.S. in the global community, it also provides students with the understanding and ability to speak critical languages needed to advance and protect America. However, the U.S. educational system is not preparing students to speak a second language. Today in this southeastern state, if a student wants to enter a four-year college, he/she must only take and pass two years of a foreign language in high school. A student does not have to have any foreign language if planning to attend a technical school or to enter the workforce.

In the past the FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary Schools) and FLEX (Foreign Language Experience) programs have introduced English speakers to a second language. As English teaching programs have evolved, the two-way immersion program emerged. In the two-way immersion program, both English-speaking and students speaking a language other than English are placed in the same classroom throughout the school day and are taught alternately in both languages. The name changed from two-

way immersion to dual language. Dual language programs have seen success but continue to fight an uphill battle against many obstacles.

Chapters I through IV presented background information, a review of the literature, how the study was conducted, and findings of the study. This chapter presents a summary of the findings, an analysis of the research findings, a discussion of research findings, conclusions from the research findings, implications of the study, and recommendations for future studies.

### **Summary of the Study**

Dual language schools are not new; however, there are few dual language schools in the U.S. and there are certainly few public dual language schools in the southeastern U.S. The purpose of this study was to investigate the process of starting a bilingual dual language charter school to pave the way for other dual language schools to be created in this southeastern state as well as across the nation. The study also showed the challenges dual language schools face through the eyes of both administrators and teachers. The study charted creation of the first bilingual dual language charter school, BDLCS, in this southeastern state and also showed how BDLCS students' standardized test scores compared with students' standardized test scores from a comparison school, other district schools, and statewide.

### **Analysis of the Research Findings**

To answer the three research questions, data were collected through interviews with the founder, administrator, and 10 teachers. In addition, BDLCS students' standardized test scores were compared with students' scores from district schools, a comparison school, and statewide.

The first research question sought to explore the contributors in creating a public charter dual language program. The original petition and the interview with the founder answered the question. The founder had the idea of creating a dual language charter school although there was not another one in the state and there was no example to follow. The founder wrote a petition to start a dual language charter school and the district she petitioned decided it would be something they would like to pursue. The petition laid the groundwork for the BDLCS, and the district helped to create it. The district contributed the building, custodial staff, and all that was needed to start the new school. BDLCS also received a charter school grant given to all new charter schools. Once the concept of BDLCS was created, the school still faced many challenges before opening its doors.

The second research question examined the challenges in creating a dual language program. One major finding through the interviews was that there is still a lot of misunderstanding and ignorance about the function of a dual language school. According to the founder, many people do not understand the concept of a dual language school. Many people refer to BDLCS as “that Spanish school.” Both administrators agreed that it is not a Spanish school; it is a school that teaches in Spanish as well as in English. The founder talked about founding BDLCS and acknowledged that even though other school systems may use the BDLCS charter as a springboard, each charter must be individualized. Each charter must be customized and the individuals behind the proposed school must sell the idea to a local school district willing to provide for the school.

BDLCS showed that the challenges of hiring teachers, garnering community and parent support, getting parents to enroll their children in a bilingual dual language charter

school, and getting the students transported to and from school can be overcome. However, some questioned once the school had been set up and started, would the school's students' standardized test scores show sufficient progress for the district to continue funding and support?

The third research presented data from BDLCS students' standardized test scores as compared to a comparison school, the district schools, and statewide test scores. Unfortunately in education, test scores are used to grade students, teachers, and schools. Most believe that students, teachers, and schools are successful if test scores are high.

The figures presented in Chapter IV show how BDLCS students' test scores compared with students' test scores from a comparable school, other schools in the district, and schools statewide. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at BDLCS had been with the program since its inception. Students taking the state test are placed into three categories. If a child makes a certain score then that child is considered to have "met" state standards in that subject. If the child is below that certain score the child is placed in the "does not meet category. If the child makes a certain score above the "met" category, then he/she is considered to have "exceeded" state standards. When discussing student's scores, the percentage shown indicates the percentage of students that "met" or "exceeded" state standards. For example, in 2013 in reading, 100% of BDLCS 7<sup>th</sup> graders scored at the met or exceeded level on the standardized state test while 95% of 7th graders statewide met or exceeded on the test in reading. In ELA, 88% of BDLCS students met or exceeded on the state test while 93% of students statewide met or exceeded on the test. In math, 88% of BDLCS students met or exceeded on the standardized state test while 90% of students statewide met or exceeded on the test. In science, 81% of BDLCS

students met or exceeded state standardized test scores while 85% of students statewide met or exceeded on the test. In social studies, 69% of BDLCS students met or exceeded state standardized test scores while 83% of students statewide met or exceeded on the test. The scores showed that although students were taught in both Spanish and English using a 70:30 ratio in grades kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade and then a 50:50 ratio in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grades, BDLCS students' achievements are comparable to the achievements of other students in the state, specifically in reading, ELA, and math.

### **Discussion of Research Findings**

Dual language schools are important because of the need in the U.S. and abroad for individuals fluent in more than one language. Bilingual students will help in many different areas of our society, from security to everyday tasks. Spring (2006) stated that it was important for business to create bilingual students. If students are taught a second language in school, businesses would not have to expend resources to teach a second language to their employees. The U.S. government views languages included in the NSLI as critical languages because these languages are needed to establish relations with countries around the world (NSLI Brochure, 2006). In interviews conducted for this study, the BDLCS' two administrators and teachers agreed with the experts that students have an advantage when they are able to speak more than one language.

The founder worked hard to sell the idea of the school to the county in which she worked; however, it was the school district in a neighboring county that ended up creating the school. Even when the district agreed to support the bilingual dual language charter school, the work was far from done. Not only did the school need support, it also needed to enroll students. One important aspect pointed out by the founder was that the

school needed to be created in a community where there were enough students speaking English and Spanish to support the school. Dual language schools have a ratio of no more than 2:1; that is, two students speaking one language for every one student speaking another language. In this way each group of students is considered the experts during periods when subjects are taught in that student group's language. Crawford (1999) stated that students would not only learn from the teacher, but also from the other students when they work together to learn a second language.

One of the downfalls of programs such as dual language immersion programs is that students whose native language is not English are expected to learn English; however, these students may not have an adequate foundation in their first language. In interviews BDLCS teachers discussed the difficulty some students have when they enter the dual language school late and lack a foundation in their first language. Research findings show that the earlier students begin learning a second language, the easier they will learn and more proficient they will become. Stewart (2005) stated that he felt it was important to prepare students by teaching a foreign language early in their schooling. Jenson (1998), in his brain research, stated that it was easier for a young student to learn a second language. Nash (2001) stated, the ability to learn a second language is highest between birth and the age of six and then undergoes a steady decline.

The founder and the teachers at BDLCS stated that it is important for students to begin early and continue in the school. It is difficult for a student to enter BDLCS in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and see success. Most students who start after the 1<sup>st</sup> grade end up transferring to another school. The teachers talked about 2<sup>nd</sup> grade being the turning point in a student's bilingual career. Both administrators and teachers agreed that it was important

for parents to have patience with the program. Before 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, students seem to lag behind their peers in traditional schools; however, by the time a student reaches 5<sup>th</sup> grade, he/she has caught up with or even surpassed peers in traditional schools.

It is imperative for any school to receive support from both parents and the community. Gomez et al. (2005) stated that effective programs must be well implemented and must have adequate faculty, administrators, resources, and support. Support includes the community, and especially students' families, as well as the dedication and commitment of administrators and teachers. Without the dedication of the BDLCS founder, the school would never have been started. Her belief in a better way to learn a second language and her drive to work to improve the process for learning a second language was commendable. The hard work of the teachers and their belief in the school's goals were also important. The teachers believe and have passion about teaching students to become bilingual. One can see it in their work and their faces. They enjoy what they do. It is also critical to have supportive parents. Many schools have excelled or declined because of parent support. The parents' belief in the goals of the school goes a long way in ensuring the school's success.

The final finding indicates that data from the standardized state tests show that students who started BDLCS in Kindergarten increased 28% from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade in reading. The increase was from those students who met or exceeded state standard scores. Over the same period, the same group of students showed an increase of 20% in ELA, an increase of 43% in math, an increase of 30% in science, and an increase of 18% in social studies. Out of the 2013 classes at BDLCS, 4<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grades either remained at the same percentage or increased the percentage of students who met or

exceeded state test scores. These findings show that as BDLCS students get older, they not only increase their skill in a second language, their academic performance also increases. If parents are concerned about the student's academic performance during the early years and take a student out of BDLCS before he/she is able to catch up, then the student may lag behind his/her peers for the rest of his/her schooling.

### **Conclusions**

The data collected from BDLCS administrators and teachers showed that it is possible for a dual language school to be started and maintained in a southern state. The BDLCS administration worked hard to build a school that could be successful both academically and bilingually. The administrators talked about changing some things if they were starting another dual language school; however, they agree it was an exciting project.

The data also showed that students in a bilingual dual language school can learn a second language and compete academically with their peers. Although in the early grades BDLCS students may appear to academically lag behind their peers in traditional schools, by the time they reach 5<sup>th</sup> grade, they have caught up with their peers in traditional schools. Students in bilingual educational programs are learning core subjects and learning, speaking, writing, and becoming fluent in another language.

The research has shown that dual language immersion is a viable approach for teaching a second language to students who speak only Spanish and students who speak only English. The dual language immersion approach allows a student to get a solid foundation in his or her first language as he or she also learns a second language. Castro

et al. (2011) stated, “It is important to ensure children are able to develop their first language while learning English” (p. 16).

The founder talked about the difficulty students have obtaining a second language after the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She discussed the importance of both students and parents sticking with the program. Table 1 shows the double digit increase in all academic areas made by the first students to start the program at BDLCS. These gains were made despite the fact that all standardized tests in this state are given in English. Figure 19 shows that 100% of the BDLCS students’ standardized test scores in reading met or exceeded those of their peers statewide. At the same time, the BDLCS students also learned a second language.

Many people want immigrants to learn English; others want students who speak only English to learn a second language. At BDLCS, students learn a second language while remaining academically competitive with their peers in traditional schools.

### **Implications**

This study shows that it is possible to create a bilingual dual language charter school. BDLCS is a beacon of hope for other educators who wish to create any type of charter school, but specifically a dual language charter school. According to the founder, the southeastern state still does not have policies or procedures for founding a new charter school, and new charter schools are scrutinized more today than when BDLCS was created. The founder stated that in starting a public school, the first step should be finding a system that is willing to help with this daunting task. She said it is difficult to get any support until the school has started, especially parent and student support. Once the idea has gotten support from a school system, it is important to get community, parent, and teacher support.

There were several reasons BDLCS was successfully created. The first was the founder's undying belief in her mission and her drive to realize it. She continued to work when most would have given up. She was the one who devoted the time, effort, and money to help create BDLCS. Her devotion and passion were the most important components of getting the school started. A second reason was that the founder recognized when she needed help. She chose an administrator who not only knew about running an elementary school, but also one who believed in the program. The next reason was having a network that helped recruit high quality bilingual teachers. If the founder had not established a relationship with a friend in another country, the school may not have been able to hire the teachers the school required. Another reason for BDLCS's success was the teachers' devotion to and belief in the program. Support from the BDLCS students' parents and community was another reason behind the school's success as well as BDLCS' effort to bridge the gap between the school and the parents and community. It was critical to start the school in a community that could and would support the school with students. The program needed no more than a 2:1 ratio of students per classroom. Without the required ratio, the success of the program would be in jeopardy. Finally, the ability to adjust and transform has allowed BDLCS to not only start but continue. Even with the best of plans, there are always changes that need to be made along the way. If the founder, administrator, and teachers were not willing to change, the school would not have been able to continue to serve the students and the community.

It was heartwarming to talk to the founder, the administrator, and teachers about BDLCS. All had a devotion and loyalty to both the school and the students. All believed

in what they were doing and were willing to do what it takes to make it successful. It was truly a great environment and a great atmosphere to visit.

### **Dissemination**

There are several groups that would be interested in this research. One would be the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) and The Association of Charter Schools. Others who might also be interested include educators interested in dual language programs or anyone interested in teaching languages. There are many different areas where findings from this study would be of interest and value. The findings could be communicated to those interested by presenting the findings at an educational conference, by publishing an article in bilingual or traditional educational journals, and by presenting the information to school representatives and even legislative representatives in the southeastern state.

### **Recommendations**

The school has been in existence for 8 years, and the 8<sup>th</sup> graders are getting ready to take the standardized state achievement test. The biggest limitation in conducting this research was that this is the oldest public dual language school in the state and at one time the only public dual language school in the state. Some dual language schools have been created since this research began, but they have not been in existence long enough to research. The recommendation is for collection and comparison of the test scores of students in the newer schools not only this year but throughout their school careers until they graduate. BDLC students' test results should also continue to be tracked. This would allow researchers and educators to see the full success of the dual language approach.

The county does not have a dual language high school, so as BDLCS students are released into traditional high schools, so the question of how much of the second language will they retain remains unanswered. Further research should be conducted to determine if BDLCS students enroll in Advance Placement (AP) courses, the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, or take the College-Level Examination (CLEP) program test in Spanish to receive college credit. AP, IB, and CLEP are all advanced programs.

Research should continue to follow BDLCS as changes are made to determine if it will continue to exist and serve students in the community. BDLCS is an excellent program, and with further study and support from the southern state, local school boards may be willing to help expand dual language programs and may want to create them in their own districts.

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## APPENDIX A

### Legislation About Immigration

Year	Act/Law	Summary
1656	Quakers become Illegal Aliens	Records of the Massachusetts Bay Colony are filled with legislation designed to prevent the coming of the Quakers and the spread of their “accursed tenets.”
1717	Pennsylvania Enacts Oath of Allegiance for German Immigrants	The Pennsylvanian Provincial Council ordered that those aliens [German Immigrants] take an oath of allegiance.
1727-1729	Pennsylvania’s Immigration Law Ignored by Ship Masters	The Act was passed in 1727 by the colonial governor who feared that the peace and security of the province was endangered by so many foreigners coming in, ignorant of the language, settling together and making a separate people.
1740	British Parliament Enacts the Plantation Act which Serves as the Model for Future Naturalization Acts	The law, although British, became the model upon which the first U.S. Naturalization Act, with respect to time, oath of allegiance, process of swearing before a judge, and the like, was based.
1781-1788	Articles of Confederation kept Citizenship and Naturalization of Aliens under Individual States’ Control	Under the Articles of Confederation, the question of citizenship and the naturalization of immigrants remained with the individual states.
1790	First Alien Naturalization Act Enacted by the newly created U.S. Government	The Alien Naturalization Act of 1790 provided the first rules to be followed by all of the United States in the granting of national citizenship. The person had to be of “good moral character” and have lived two years in the country. Once the alien petitioned for naturalization, the court would administer and oath of allegiance to support the Constitution of the United States.
1798	Alien and Sedition Acts	Four laws which: increased the residency requirement for American citizenship from five to fourteen years, authorized the president to imprison or deport “dangerous” aliens, and restricted speech critical of the government.
1800	Congress Reduces Naturalization Residency Requirements	Congress lowered the requirement of residency to the previous length of five years.
1808	Foreign Slave Trade becomes Illegal	The slaves smuggled into the U.S. after 1808 became the first illegal immigrants.
1814-	Indians Exempted from	Native Americans could not seek naturalized

1850	Naturalization and Forced from Tribal Land	citizenship because they were not “white.”
1831	The public schools in Pennsylvania	Permitted the use of bilingual instruction in English and German.
1848	Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo	Mexicans living in the territory are allowed to remain and receive citizenship.
1855	The California Bureau of Instruction	Mandated that all schools teach English only.
1868	Treaty of Burlingame	Allowed free migration between China and the U.S.
1870	Naturalization Act of 1870	Extended the right of naturalization of former slaves, making aliens of African birth and persons of African descent eligible to become citizens.
1880	Burlingame Treaty is revised	The new treaty allowed the American government to suspend, but not prohibit, the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States.
1880's	European Immigrants	Between 1880 and 1924, an average of 560,000 immigrants per year entered the United States.
1882	Chinese Exclusion Act Passes	This act narrowed the doorway for immigrant admission into the United States.
1891	First Federal Administrative Agency for the Regulation of Immigration	Congress established the first federal administrative agency for the regulation of immigration in the Treasury Department.
1892	Ellis Island	Opens to process immigrants coming to the United States.
1898	The Fourteenth Amendment	Said that “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”
1910	Mexican Revolution	The Mexican Revolution drove thousands of Mexicans to the United States.
1911	Dillingham Commission Report	The commission stated that the admission of aliens should be based primarily upon economic or business considerations.
1914	Eugenics Movement	Eugenicists contrasted the pedigrees of families carrying superior traits with those that carried dysgenic traits.
1915	Congress Authorizes “Mounted Inspectors”	Congress authorized “Mounted inspectors” to patrol the Mexican-American border to keep illegal aliens out.
1917	Congress enacts an Act	The law requires immigrants to read at least 30 to 40 words in some language. The Act also restricted people, over 16 years old, who were known as “undesirables” to enter the country.

1921	First Quota Act becomes Law	The law limited the number of immigrants that could enter the country from Europe, Australia, Africa, New Zealand, Asiatic Turkey, Persia, and certain islands in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.
1924	Johnson-Reed Immigration Act	The act limited the total European immigration to 150,000 per year, and reduced each nationality's allowance to 2 percent of its U.S. population in 1890.
1924	Labor Appropriation Act of 1924	Congress officially established the U.S. Border Patrol to secure the U.S. border between the U.S. and Mexico.
1940	Alien Registration Act	The law required all alien residents in the United States over 14 years of age to file a comprehensive statement of their personal and occupational status and a record of their political beliefs.
1942	Executive Order 9066	Thousands of Japanese, Germans, and Italians in the United States were arrested and sent to prison camps.
1952	McCarran-Walter Immigration Act	This act collected and codified many existing provisions and reorganized the structure of immigration law.
1954	Operation "Wetback"	When undocumented workers were returned to Mexico.
1963	The first modern Bilingual Educational Program	The program was developed for Spanish-speaking Cubans and Anglos at Coral Way Elementary School in Miami, Florida.
1965	Immigration Reform and Control Act	For the first time restricted immigration from Mexico.
1965	Elementary and Secondary Act	The Act was passed to help fund schools and districts in low income areas. The Act has been renewed every 5 years since its inception.
1965	Hart-Cellar Immigration and Nationality Act	Prohibited the exclusion of immigration based upon race, sex, or nationality. The Act based new immigration criteria on kinship ties, refugee status, and "needed skills."
1968	Bilingual Education Act or Title VII	Allowed federal aid to schools if the school would help create programs that would help students transition into English-speaking classes.
1976	Repeal of Executive Order 9066	President Gerald Ford repeals executive order 9066 and says that Japanese relocation during World War II was a "national mistake."
1980	Refugee Act of 1980	The act allowed persecuted individuals to seek asylum in the United States.
1986	Immigration Reform and Control Act	Granted amnesty to illegal immigrants that were in the United States before 1982, however, it also

		made it illegal to hire an illegal immigrant.
1986	Proposition 63	California made English the official language of the state.
1990	Immigration Act of 1990	The act increased the limits on legal immigration to the United States, revised all grounds for exclusion and deportation, authorized temporary protected status to aliens of designated countries, revised and established new nonimmigrant admission categories, revised and extended the Visa Waiver Pilot Program, and revised naturalization authority and requirements.
1994	Proposition 187	California voters prohibited public service to illegal aliens.
1996	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act	The Act included provisions that would deny most forms of public assistance to most legal immigrants for five years or until they attain citizenship.
1998	Proposition 227	Ron Unz helped pass the Proposition in California. It limited bilingual education by saying it was failing students.
2000		Arizona passed a similar proposition to California's Proposition 227.
2001	Department of Defense	The Department of Defense is expanded to help support the borders of the United States to keep illegal immigrants out.
2002		Massachusetts passed a similar proposition to California's Proposition 227.
2002		Colorado was the first state to vote down a proposition to change bilingual education.
2006	National Security Language Act	The Act provided funding to increase the study of critical languages such as Hindi, Persian(Farsi), Korean, Urdu, Chinese, and Russian.
2006	Secure Fence Act	The act authorized the construction of 700 miles of double-layered fencing along the nation's Southern border.
2010	Arizona Bill (SB1070)	The law states that it is a state crime to be in the country illegally and legal immigrants will be required to carry paperwork proving their status.
2012		Presidents Obama allows illegal immigrants who came to the U.S. as children to stay in the country without fear of deportation.

(Digital History, 2010; Garraty, 1991)

## APPENDIX B

### Court Cases for Immigration and Language

Year	Court Case	Summary
1875	<i>Henderson v. Mayor of New York</i>	The Supreme Court held that all immigration laws of the seaboard states were unconstitutional because they usurped the exclusive power vested in Congress to regulate foreign commerce.
1923	<i>United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind</i>	The Supreme Courts stated that Asian Indians do not qualify for naturalization because they are not considered “white.”
1923	<i>Meyer v. State of Nebraska</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No person should teach any subject in any other language than English.</li> <li>2. No foreign language could be taught before the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.</li> <li>3. English should be the mother tongue of all children raised in Nebraska.</li> </ol>
1927	<i>Farrington V. Tokushige</i>	Hawaii’s restriction on Foreign language schools were overturned. The law said schools had to have a permit to teach a foreign language.
1944	<i>Korematsu v. U.S.</i>	The Supreme Court said it was constitutional to keep Japanese-Americans in camps.
1954	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>	The Supreme Court struck down <i>Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896</i> , by stating separate was not equal.
1972	<i>Aspira of N.Y. Inc. v. BOE of the City of N.Y.</i>	The case provided for a transitional bilingual education for Spanish-speaking student, specifically Puerto Rican students.
1973	<i>Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1</i>	The case determined that Latino students, like African-American students were not receiving the same equal education as white students.
1974	<i>Lau v. Nichols</i>	Students were guaranteed a “good” education even though he/she may not speak English. Also, districts with more than 20 ESL students were to report to the Office of Civil Rights the program used to teach these students.
1982	<i>Plyer v. Doe</i>	“Illegal” students could no longer be denied a public education. Being denied an education violated the 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment.
2010		A U.S. district court judge blocked parts of Arizona’s immigration law.
2011	<i>Arizona v. United States</i>	The Supreme Court upheld an Arizona law that imposes sanctions against businesses that hire

		illegal immigrants.
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(Cerde and Hernandez, 2006; Digital History, 2010; Garraty, 1991)