

Yiddish Native Language Struggling Readers NCLB Title III Part A Funded Program

Program Description, Legislative, Policy and Research Sources

by
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“The importance of assisting struggling beginning readers in Spanish to become competent Spanish readers cannot be overstated. Literacy instruction contributes to the development of foundation skills in Spanish, which can later transfer to English” (*Effectiveness of Spanish Intervention for First-Grade English Language Learners at Risk for Reading Difficulties*. Sharon Vaughn, et al. Journal of Learning Disabilities Jan/Feb 2006).

- 1. Summary:** For many years, Jewish parochial schools (yeshivas) in New York have asked if an instructional services program could be added to the menu of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) *Title III Part A Language Instruction for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Immigrant Students* Program funded services. The request came from the schools with large numbers of LEP students whose native language is Yiddish. In 2010-2011 there were close to 27,000 Yiddish native language speakers attending parochial private schools for grades K to 12 in New York City (and another estimated 17,000 Yiddish native language students attending private parochial schools in Orange and Rockland Counties). ***As a linguistic minority, Yiddish native language speakers are the second largest group for all New York City students (Spanish is first and Chinese is third); Yiddish is also the second largest linguistic minority for school age children in New York State.*** The Title III Yiddish Native Language Struggling Readers Program (YNLSRP) is very similar to programs offered in other states with large numbers of students whose native language is not English (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Illinois and California). Various models already in use in these states and funded through the NCLB Title III, local funds (or Title I) were reviewed for applicability. The YNLSRP is also based on the three tier model of the Response to Intervention (RTI) program. The purpose of Yiddish language instruction is to improve native language skills only as needed for successful acquisition of English language skills.
- 2. Goals and objectives:** The guiding goals and objectives of the YNLSRP are very similar to the comparable reading programs operating in other school districts:
 - Ensure native language children become strong and confident readers in English.

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- Based on the main findings of the National Reading Panel Report 2001, provide supplemental instruction in reading skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.
- Begin providing services as early as kindergarten
- Minimize over and underutilization of special education services.
- Use the NCLB Title I certified teacher-paraprofessional model of instructional services.
- Provide continuous assessment (and professional development training) to ensure progress is obtained

3. Target population: The target population are children struggling to master basic reading skills (phonemic awareness, phonological, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension) in their native language of Yiddish. Until these children are confident readers in their native language, it will be very difficult for them to learn a second language (English). This approach has shown strong results when used with Spanish native language readers. “The importance of assisting struggling beginning readers in Spanish to become competent Spanish readers cannot be overstated. Literacy instruction contributes to the development of foundation skills in Spanish, which can later transfer to English” (*Effectiveness of Spanish Intervention for First-Grade English Language Learners at Risk for Reading Difficulties*. Sharon Vaughn, et al. Journal of Learning Disabilities Jan/Feb 2006). The Title III Pilot will be directed to the students with the lowest LAB-R scores and/or those students identified by their teachers as having the most difficult time with mastering English (and Yiddish) language reading and speaking skills. While Title III can be offered to all grades from K to 12, the Pilot will be targeted to grades K to six. The target population is students who would be grouped for Tier Two services in the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. Using the RTI model, if a student does not make adequate progress with the Title III funded supplemental services, they should be able to receive the Tier III more intensive services (very small group or one to one instruction) before being recommended for special education services.

4. Difference between Title I ESL and Title III bilingual instruction program: Title III can be a wonderful opportunity to target resources to children most in need (usually referred to as struggling readers). For schools with existing Title I ESL programs, Title III will only complement these services. The Title III Pilot will be targeted to these children struggling with reading, writing and language acquisition skills (somewhere between 10% to 20% in

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a typical school). This group of children does not presently have an IEP nor can they fully benefit from the existing Title I ESL program. In a Title I ESL program, the children can be competent or even strong readers in their native language of Yiddish. However, they do need help in learning and mastering a second language- English. Also in the Title I program, instruction has to be conducted in English and the instructors do not need to have any bilingual language skills. Title III can be used to devote instruction to improving native language skills to the extent needed to help the struggling reader child improve their English language skills. Also, since it is a transitional bilingual education model, the instruction must be provided by bilingual Yiddish speaking instructors. Title III should be flexible to offer both small group instruction and one to one tutoring (depending on the needs of the student). By providing professional supplemental reading instruction in small groups, the program closely follows the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. Instruction in Yiddish is only used to the extent that it can help improve English language acquisition skills.

5. **Scheduling:** Participating schools will agree to allocate a minimum of 4 hours per day for the scheduling of the classroom instructional services (for a total of 20 hours per week of instructional services). All students will receive at least two hours of group instruction per week throughout the school year.

6. **Small groups and one to one tutoring:** the bulk of instructional services will be undertaken in small groups (defined as three to four students). For children who have shown that they will not benefit from small group instruction, one to one tutoring should be made available. Federal Title III allows for one to one tutoring. The request for one to one tutoring for the struggling readers will find ample support from Response to Intervention (RTI) policy (Tier Three Services) guidelines **and** current research including Dual Language Development and Disorders A Handbook on Bilingualism and Second Language Learning by Johanne Paradis et al 2011 and *Effective Programs for Struggling Readers: A Best-Evidence Synthesis* by Robert E. Slavin et al. Johns Hopkins University Center for Data Driven Reform in Education. June 2009.

7. **Title III student eligibility and placement:** All participating schools can use the NYSESLAT or the LAB-R placement along with teacher observations. Other comparable placement and assessment tools should be considered as well including most importantly an idiomatic sensitive Yiddish native language assessment tool.

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8. **Curriculum development:** Title III regulations have no specific requirements for curriculum except that the curriculum "is tied to scientifically based research on teaching limited English proficient children and has been determined to be effective". The responsibility for designing and implementing an effective curriculum will be with the LEA selected vendor. The curriculum will be designed to help a child master the critical skills to be a strong reader: phonemic awareness, phonological skills, vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency. There are numerous sources of research and best practices that can be drawn upon. The following sources should be used to develop the curriculum:

- The curriculum should be based upon NYSED policies for English Language Learners as well as research studies of successful models of bilingual education (see attachment for summary article). The curriculum should be designed to help the child master their Yiddish language skills to the extent necessary to master English language skills. For example, a student struggling with phonemic awareness or phonological decoding skills in their native language would be helped first in Yiddish before moving on to English. The participating schools should be strongly encouraged to provide advice and comments during the curriculum development period.
- There are more than a handful of bilingual reading programs designed for struggling readers that have passed a high standard of scientific review for effectiveness. Examples of these reading programs include: Success for All (SFA)-Bilingual Cooperative Integrated Reading Curriculum (BCIRC)Lectura Proactiva. (http://buildingrti.utexas.org/PDF/Student_Book_A.pdf.) Reading Mastery-Direct Instruction, Wilson Reading Foundations, Voyager Passport for Spanish native language speakers. Critical program components are discussed in "Effective Programs for Struggling Readers: A Best-Evidence Synthesis" by Robert E. Slavin et al. Johns Hopkins University -and- University of York. June 2009.
- NYSED has a compendium of professional publishing houses that sell to the schools bilingual learning materials for ELL's in seven different native languages (including Chinese, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Bengali, Korean, Polish, Russian). *The Teaching of Language Arts to Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners: Learning Standards for Native Language Arts Professional Resources*. There are publishing houses with bilingual side by side reading development skills books for beginning and intermediate levels. The big publishing houses (Houghton Mifflin, Harcourt Brace, Scholastic) all have a bilingual books series (and teaching cards for phonemic awareness) for helping beginning and intermediate readers. As the second largest student age linguistic minority group in New York State, efforts should be made to develop comparable materials for Yiddish readers.

9. **Achievement:** Title III also requires that nonpublic schools assess children to determine achievement progress. The YNLSRP program effectiveness (including design, curriculum, and management) will be assessed by annual standardized testing of the students using the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT).

10. **Licensed teacher-paraeducator instruction model:** The bulk of instructional services, at least 70%, will be undertaken by the paraeducators. The paraeducators will need to be bilingual in Yiddish and pass a skills test. The use of paraprofessional or paraeducator for assisting with providing instructional services continues to be an important policy and research area for the education community. Organizations such as The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (NRCP) have been providing technical assistance and conducting research on how to strengthen the teacher-para relationship. Recent research provides strong support for giving the paraeducator an important instructional services role for helping struggling readers. "Educators Guide Identifying What Works for Struggling Readers" which is based on a large 2009 study of reading programs lead by Robert Slavin, the director of the Center for Data Driven Reform at School of Education at Johns Hopkins University, has as one of its main findings that properly supervised and trained paraprofessionals can reach close to the same levels of effectiveness as certified teachers. "The effects seen for paraprofessionals as tutors using structured and intensive programs pose a real challenge to the idea that only certified teachers can be effective tutors."

11. **Best Practices for using paraprofessionals must be incorporated into program implementation:** A group of practitioners and academics associated with the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (NRCP) have been very involved over the past twenty years working to strengthen the certified teacher-paraeducator model of instructional services (see *The Employment and Preparation of Paraeducators State of the Art 2003* by Anna Lou Pickett). Tutors, also known as paraprofessionals or paraeducators, help to provide instructional services in thousands of school districts across the country. The NCLB Act of 2001 and the regulatory guidance include very specific rules for hiring and supervising paraprofessionals providing instructional services. An important consensus in the research community concerns how the work environment for the licensed teacher and paraprofessional is structured. The key components include clearly delineated roles for the teacher and paraprofessional, sufficient initial and ongoing professional development training, appropriate supervision with plenty of opportunity for teacher feedback and support. *Even the best designed reading program will falter if the paraprofessionals do not receive the necessary supportive structure.* There is a growing body of literature devoted to the improving the teacher paraprofessional relationship including *Paraeducators in Schools* by Anna Lou Pickett 2007 and *Managing Paraeducators in Your School* by Nancy French 2003.

12. **Federal NLCB Title III law, New York State Education Department (NYSED) policy and findings from the professional research community:** all of the issues and recommendations presented here are based on the NCLB Title III Legislation as well as

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NYSED policy guidance for English Language Learners. There is also a very large body of academic research that was undertaken over the past 30 years on native language skills and transition to proficiency in a second language. The vast majority of the research community supports the approach described here. It's important to distinguish between two separate types of instruction. For the majority of students, there is a lack of agreement in the academic community regarding which of two predominant models are most effective: 1) transitional bilingual instruction or 2) immersion method (a program that basically only teaches English using English language teachers). However, our target population is not the vast majority of students, but the minority comprised of struggling readers in their native language. Here, the academic research and practitioner communities mostly all agree that in order for a child to succeed with English language proficiency, intervention must first be devoted to overcoming various hurdles in mastering native language skills. An equally important consideration for choosing the language of intervention is the language of instruction offered during the rest of the school day (not to mention used for daily communication at home). Here the academic research recommends that instruction for the intervention must be in the same language used for the rest of the school day

Legislative, Policy and Research Supporting Documentation:

1. NCLB Title III Legislation

Title III funds can be used to provide instructional services to children whose native language is not English? Title III is basically devoted to helping English Language Learners master English Language skills and be able to pass national and state English Language competency exams. *However, it does allow for some instruction in a native language.*

TITLE III—LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

From Part A: to help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet;

SEC. 3102. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this part are —

- (1) to help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet;
- (2) to assist all limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, to achieve at high levels in the core academic subjects so that those children can meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet, consistent with section 1111(b)(1);
- (3) to develop high-quality language instruction educational programs designed to assist State educational agencies, local educational

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agencies, and schools in teaching limited English proficient children and serving immigrant children and youth;

(4) to assist State educational agencies and local educational agencies to develop and enhance their capacity to provide high-quality instructional programs designed to prepare limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, to enter all-English instruction settings;

(5) to assist State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools to build their capacity to establish, implement, and sustain language instruction educational programs and programs of English language development for limited English proficient children;

(6) to promote parental and community participation in language instruction educational programs for the parents and communities of limited English proficient children;

(7) to streamline language instruction educational programs into a program carried out through formula grants to State educational agencies and local educational agencies to help limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, develop proficiency in English, while meeting challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards;

(8) to hold State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools accountable for increases in English proficiency and core academic content knowledge of limited English proficient children by requiring —

(A) demonstrated improvements in the English proficiency of limited English proficient children each fiscal year; and

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(B) adequate yearly progress for limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, as described in section 1111(b)(2)(B); and

(9) to provide State educational agencies and local educational agencies with the flexibility to implement language instruction educational programs, based on scientifically based research on teaching limited English proficient children, that the agencies believe to be the most effective for teaching English.

Part "B"

“SEC. 3202. PURPOSE.

“The purpose of this part is to help ensure that limited English proficient children master English and meet the same rigorous standards for academic achievement as all children are expected to meet, including meeting challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards by—

“(1) promoting systemic improvement and reform of, and developing accountability systems for, educational programs serving limited English proficient children;

“(2) developing language skills and multicultural understanding;

“(3) developing the English proficiency of limited English proficient children and, to the extent possible, the native language skills of such children;

“(4) providing similar assistance to Native Americans with certain modifications relative to the unique status of Native American languages under Federal law;

“(5) developing data collection and dissemination, research, materials, and technical assistance that are focused on school improvement for limited English proficient children; and

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“(6) developing programs that strengthen and improve the professional training of educational personnel who work with limited English proficient children.

115 Stat. 1729 Part C General Provisions

Section 3301. Definitions

“(8) LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.—The

term ‘language instruction educational program’ means an instruction course—

“(A) in which a limited English proficient child is placed for the purpose of developing and attaining English proficiency, while meeting challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards, as required

by section 1111(b)(1); and

“(B) that may make instructional use of both English and a child’s native language to enable the child to develop and attain English proficiency, and may include the participation of English proficient children if such course is designed to enable all participating children to become proficient in English and a second language.

Response to Intervention (RTI) guidance can be found in this 2009 US Department of Education publication.

Implementing RTI Using Title I, Title III and CEIS Funds. Key Issues for Decision Makers. United States Department of Education. 2009.

2. New York State Education Department (NYSED)

Policy justification language for using Title III funds for transitional bilingual instruction

Ch 1, Overview of Native Language Instruction in New York State

The importance of valuing and utilizing the background knowledge and native language literacy skills that our students bring to school cannot be underestimated. Over the past 30 years, there has been a consistent body of research that points to the importance of native language literacy in the development of literacy in

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the second language. In 1998, the National Research Council in its study entitled ***Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*** (Snow, Burn, and Griffin, eds.), recommends that:

“LEP children should be taught to read in the first language while acquiring proficiency in spoken English and then subsequently taught to extend their skills in English.”

Similarly, the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English in *Standards for the English Language Arts* (1996) addressed the importance of instruction in the native language as a means to develop proficiency in English and develop content area knowledge, as described in Standard 10:

“students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.”

In examining the relationship between first and second language literacy, researchers in the field of second language literacy agree that there is a strong and positive correlation between literacy skills in the native language and literacy skills in the second. Students with the highest levels of native language literacy are those who eventually become the strongest readers in their second language. Bernhardt and Kamil (2001) explain that:

“research indicates that about 20% of the process of reading in the second language is predictable on the basis of the level of first-language literacy (Bernhardt and Kamil, 1995; Brisbois, 1995; Hulstijn, 1991). In other words, the more knowledge of reading and an understanding of literacy a student has in the first language, the better off he will be in the second. Even when children are literate in a language that has little or no structural or orthographic overlap with English, the mere fact that they are already literate really helps them.”

Furthermore, research findings suggest that the reading and writing processes function similarly for native and second language learners (Grabe, 1991). There seem to be universal aspects of literacy (Goodman, 1973) that underlie the reading process (which is essentially similar for all languages) and facilitate the transfer of skills and knowledge from one language to another. In support of the transferability of native language literacy skills into English, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD, 1987) indicates:

“In fact, it is clear that the ability to transfer to English what is learned in the first language applies to content-area subjects like science, math, but also applies to skills in reading and writing – even when the orthographic system is quite different from the roman alphabet . . . ”

The transfer of literacy skills from one language to another is made possible through the universal aspects of literacy. Research supports the theory that second language learners transfer native literacy skills into

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the second language reading and writing in an interactive, reciprocal process (Escamilla, 1993; Rodriguez, 1988; Cohen, 1987; Garcia and Padilla, 1985; Barnitz, 1985).

In conclusion, students use their native language literacy skills and strategies to become literate in the second language, and what is learned in the second language enhances native language literacy. Therefore, the development of native language arts plays a pivotal role in the acquisition of English language arts.

source: NYSED-Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies.

- **The Teaching of Language Arts to Limited English Proficient/ English Language Learners: Learning Standards for Native Language Arts**
- **NYSED: Overview of Native Language Instruction in New York State Chapter 1.**
- **<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/biling/resource/NLA.html>**

3. Scientifically Based Research literature used in the development of the Title III Yiddish Native Language Struggling Readers Program

NCLB law requires that all instructional services be based on “(A) using a language instruction curriculum that is tied to scientifically based research on teaching limited English proficient children and that has been demonstrated to be effective; and “(B) in the manner the eligible entities determine to be the most effective.

1. **What Work's Clearinghouse** "WWC Quick Review of the Report “Reading and Language Outcomes of a Five-Year Randomized Evaluation of Transitional Bilingual Education. September 2010. United States Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences.
2. **Response to Intervention in Reading for English Language Learners.** by Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., H. E. Hartfelder/Southland Corp. Regents Chair, University of Texas and Alba Ortiz, Ph.D., University of Texas
3. **Response to Intervention (RTI) and English Learners** *Making it Happen* by Jana Echevarria and Mary Ellen Vogt. 2001 Pearson.

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4. **"Teaching English Language Learners What the Research Does—and Does Not—Say** Goldenberg, C. (2008)." *American Education*, (pp 8 - 44). AFT publications and reports
5. **How Do English Language Learners Learn to Read? What Research Says About Reading** Robert E. Slavin and Alan Cheung Pages 52-57 March 2004 | Volume 61 | Number 6
6. **Dual Language Development and Disorders A Handbook on Bilingualism and Second Language Learning** by Johanne Paradis, Fred Genesee and Martha Crago. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company. 2011
7. **Effectiveness of Spanish Intervention for First-Grade English Language Learners at Risk for Reading Difficulties** Sharon Vaughn, Sylvia Linan-Thompson, Patricia G. Mathes, Paul T. Cirino, Coleen D. Carlson, Sharolyn D. Pollard-Durodola, Elsa Cardenas-Hagan, and David J. Francis. February 2006 Journal of Learning Disabilities.
8. **Lectura Proactiva** (http://buildingrti.utexas.org/PDF/Student_Book_A.pdf). **Intensive Small Group Instruction for Spanish Speaking Readers** G. Mathes, Ph.D. Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D. Sylvia Linan-Thompson, Ph.D. Sharolyn D. Pollard-Durodola, Ed.D. Elsa Cárdenas Hagan, M.A., CCC/SLP
9. **Fostering Literacy Development in English Language Learners.** Karen Ford 2005. www.ColorinColorado.org
10. **Language and Learning Interventions for English Language Learners and English Language Learners with Disabilities.** By Mabel Rivera, Nonie Lesaux, and David Francis. 2009. Center on Instruction
11. **What Work's Clearinghouse** Voyager Universal Literacy System August 13, 2007. United States Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences.
12. **Voyager Pasaporte:** Targeted Intervention for Spanish Speaking Struggling Readers and Lesson Sampler.
13. **Clinical Forum Teaching Struggling Readers Who Are Native Spanish Speakers: What Do We Know?** Patricia G. Mathes Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX Sharolyn D. Pollard-Durodola, Texas A & M University, College Station, Elsa Cárdenas-Hagan, University of Houston, TX, Sylvia Linan-Thompson, Sharon Vaughn University of Texas at Austin. Language Speech and Hearing Services in Schools. July 2007.

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14. **Preventing Reading Failure for English Language Learners: Interventions for Struggling First Grade L-2 Students.** 2003. Illiana Alanis University of Texas at Brownsville and Judith Minter and Josefina Villamil Tinajero University of Texas at El Paso.

15. **Expect Results with Voyager, A Summary of Effectiveness of Voyager Reading Solutions.** 2007

16. **Effects of Success for All on the Achievement of English Language Learners .** Robert E. Slavin and Nancy A. Madden. Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk Johns Hopkins University

17. **The Effects of Bilingual Education Programs on English Language Learners From** ASCD's March 2, 2004 | Volume 2 | Number 5

18. **Bilingual Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (BCIRC) What Works** Clearinghouse. United States Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences. Feb.2007.

19. **Effective Programs for Struggling Readers: A Best-Evidence Synthesis** Robert E. Slavin et al. Johns Hopkins University -and-University of York. June 2009.

20. **English Language Learners with Special Education Needs Identification, Assessment and Instruction.** Alfredo Artiles and Alba Ortiz, Editors. Center for Applied Linguistics 2002.