

Resolution No. 33-25A2

Supporting Full Inclusion of Alternative Bilingual Waiver Programs in the Reading First Program

- Commissioners Eric Mar, Emilio B. Cruz, Eddie Y. Chin, Dan Kelly, Sarah Lipson, Eric Mar, and Jill Wynns

WHEREAS: The *Reading First* program is one of the most important formula grant programs authorized by the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (20 U.S.C. Sections 6301 et seq.) and is designed to help ensure that the nation's neediest and at-risk children are able to read at grade level by the end of third grade; and

WHEREAS: The following 32 SFUSD elementary schools in the San Francisco Unified School District are on the list of schools published by the California Department of Education (CDE) as eligible for participation in the Reading First program: Bryant, Carmichael, Chavez, Cleveland, Drew, El Dorado, Fairmount, Flynn, Glen Park, Golden Gate, Harte, Hillcrest, Malcolm X, Marshall, McKinley, Milk, Miraloma, Monroe, Muir, Ortega, Parks, Revere, Sanchez, Serra, Sheridan, Starr King, Swett, Tenderloin, Treasure Island, Twenty-First Century, Webster and William de Avila; and

WHEREAS: The elementary schools eligible for participation in the *Reading First* program in the District have the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students and the highest percentage of students identified as limited English proficient (LEP or English Learners); and

WHEREAS: There are many different approaches and models, including the District's *English Plus* programs, to provide instruction to English Learners in both content and English language acquisition that can result in mastery of the subjects, depending on the needs and abilities of a particular child; and

WHEREAS: The preliminary findings of a study funded by the United States Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs entitled "*Transfer of Skills from Spanish to English: A Study of Young Learners*" (September 2000: ED-98-CO-0071) support the practice of providing literacy instruction in Spanish to Spanish speaking English language learners as a means of helping them acquire literacy skills in English; and

WHEREAS: The District's *English Plus* programs comply with the Consent Decree in *Lau vs. Nichols* which requires the District to implement a Master Plan that includes bilingual education for Chinese, Filipino and Spanish speaking students who are English learners; and

WHEREAS: The *No Child Left Behind Act* which funds the *Reading First* program provides that one of its purposes is to meet "the educational needs of low achieving children in our nation's highest poverty schools, limited English proficient children ... and young children in need of reading assistance;" and

WHEREAS: There is a long, positive history of support among parents for the District's *English Plus* programs and the District respects the rights of parents to choose an educational program that best meets the needs of their children; and

WHEREAS: District students participate in alternative, bilingual programs through parent waivers; and

WHEREAS: Approximately 1,680 English learner students from twenty *Reading First* eligible schools in the District are enrolled in alternative bilingual programs; and

WHEREAS: One of these schools (Bessie Carmichael Elementary) offers Filipino dual language enrichment, four schools (Monroe, Ortega, Parks, and Webster) offer Chinese dual language enrichment, seventeen schools (Bryant, Bessie Carmichael, Chavez, Cleveland, Flynn, Harte, Hillcrest, Glen Park, Marshall, Monroe, Muir, Revere, Sanchez, Serra, Starr King, Treasure Island and Webster) offer Spanish dual language enrichment and two schools offer Spanish/English two-way immersion (Fairmount and Monroe).

WHEREAS: The Board requires data-driven accountability for all of the schools in the District and has insisted on annual district-wide improvement in its multiple language development programs; and

WHEREAS: The District's English Learners consistently score significantly higher than the State average for English Learners in all Statewide standardized assessments; and

WHEREAS: The *Reading First* program provides federal funding of up to \$8,000 per teacher for professional development for teachers in grades kindergarten through third grade in eligible schools; and

WHEREAS: The State, without promulgating an official regulation requires that in order to receive the teacher professional development funds under the *Reading First* program, eligible schools must implement the full State adopted reading program in English and provide one hour of instruction daily in English for kindergarten and 2.5 hours of instruction in English for grades one through three; and

WHEREAS: The State eligibility rule is inconsistent with the purposes of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and is not included in the *California Reading First* plan approved by the United States Department of Education; and

WHEREAS: The State eligibility rule excludes the District's alternative bilingual program from receiving funds, is discriminatory and will prevent some of the neediest children in the District from reaping the benefits of a program designed to meet their needs.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District strongly opposes any policy or criteria that denies *Reading First* funding to schools or classrooms solely on the basis that the school has implemented an alternative program and/or has Proposition 227 waiver classrooms or uses bilingual education instructional methods utilizing instruction in languages other than English; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District urges the State to change the *Reading First* eligibility criteria so that students in legally sanctioned bilingual alternative classrooms (and their teachers) are eligible to participate in the *Reading First* program.