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HEADLINE: What do America's "traditional" forms of school choice teach us about school choice reforms? presentation by professor **Carolyn M. Hoxby** at the Excellence in Education: Views on Improving American Education conference; Transcript

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BODY:

The majority of U.S. states are currently considering or have recently passed reforms that increase the ease with which parents can choose a school for their children (Tucker and Lauber 1995). At first view, these reforms seem to take elementary and secondary education into wholly unknown territory. Yet this view neglects the fact that choices made by American parents have traditionally been an important force in determining the education their children receive. Parents' ability to choose among fiscally independent public school districts (through residential decisions) and to choose private schools (by paying tuition) is such an established feature of American education that it is almost taken for granted. Yet, through these choices, American parents exercise more control over their children's schooling than do many of their European counterparts. Of course, American parents are not all equally able to exercise choice. High-income parents routinely exercise more choice because they have more school districts and private schools within their choice sets. In addition, there is significant variation in the degree of choice across different areas of the country. Some metropolitan areas, for instance, contain many independent school districts and/or a number of private schools. Other metropolitan areas are completely monopolized by one school district or have almost no private schooling.

The purpose of this paper is to answer three related questions. First, what general facts can we learn by examining the traditional forms of school choice in the United States? In particular, we need to understand the general relationship between school choice and five factors: (1) student achievement, (2) student segregation (along lines of ability, income, and taste for education, as well as race and ethnicity), (3) school efficiency, (4) teachers' salaries and teacher unionism, and (5) the degree to which parents are involved in and influence their children's schools. Second, how do the general facts that we garner from traditional school choice carry over to analyses of reforms such as charter schools, vouchers for private schools, and open enrollment programs? Third, what information do we still need if we are to predict accurately the effects of reforms? And, what empirical strategies might we pursue to get such information?

For evidence, I draw upon previous empirical work contained in several studies. (2) Although I briefly sketch the empirical strategy of these studies, this paper does not attempt to present the results in detail. Rather, the goal is to summarize the results and discuss their implications for school choice reforms.

TRADITIONAL CHOICE AND THE ISSUES

There are two basic forms of school choice in the United States. The first is choice among public school districts that have a substantial degree of fiscal and administrative autonomy. The second is choice between public and private schools. In this section, I take each in turn. Later, I briefly discuss intradistrict choice--a scheme that contains some characteristics of the two basic forms of choice.

TRADITIONAL CHOICE AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Households choose among public school districts by selecting a residence. The degree to which households can exercise this form of choice depends heavily on the number, size, and residence patterns of the school districts in the area centered around their jobs. Some metropolitan areas in the United States have many small school districts with reasonably comparable characteristics. Boston, for instance, has seventy school districts within a thirty-minute commute of the downtown area and many more within a forty-five-minute commute. Miami, on the other hand, has only one school district (Dade County) that covers the entire metropolitan area. People with jobs in rural areas typically have only one or a few alternative school districts to choose from.

This form of choice (among public school districts) has several important properties. First, districts that are good, efficient providers of schooling tend to be rewarded with larger budgets. This fiscal reward process works because a district's budget nearly always depends on property taxes, which in turn depend on home prices within the district, which in turn depend on how the marginal home buyer values the local schools. Rewards for good, efficient provision occur as long as districts have a significant amount of fiscal autonomy (especially over marginal revenues and expenditures).⁽³⁾ The fiscal reward process tends to be sustainable over the long term because it depends on decentralized choices. This process is in contrast to centralized reward systems--for example, financial or other "merit" awards for successful school districts that are distributed by the state. These systems tend to be unsustainable because states cannot, *ex post*, credibly adhere to processes that reduce (in relative terms) the amount of money going to failing school districts.

The second important property of traditional choice among public school districts is that parents who prefer different amounts of school spending and different types of schools sort themselves into different districts. As a result, each district tends to be more homogeneous than the area, and the residents of each district tend to vote for taxes and schools that approximately fulfill their spending and curriculum desires. This means that districts offer somewhat differentiated schooling that follows local parents' preferences to a certain degree.

Consequently, choice among public school districts creates residential patterns (residential segregation) that mirror households' desired levels of school spending. This result is in contrast to residential patterns that purely reflect households' incomes or housing desires. Of course, desired school spending depends partly on income, but it also depends on the extent to which a household prefers to spend money on schooling relative to other goods or investments. Low-income and minority households are the most likely to be prevented from making reasonably optimal investments in their children's schooling. The ability of these households to choose residences in more than one district may be severely constrained by their budgets or by discrimination.

Another consequence of choice among public school districts is that parents' preferences have some influence over local schools. Any given school district budget, for instance, is allocated more according to parents' preferences (than, say, according to the preferences of school staff or the state department of education) when parents have more choice among districts. This is true simply because when parents have more choices, school budgets are more elastic with respect to parents' preferences. Therefore, policy is more responsive to those preferences.

Evidence of what happens when an area has more choice among public school districts is useful mainly for analyzing charter school reforms and open enrollment reforms. A charter school receives a charter to educate public school students and a "tuition" payment (from public revenues) for each pupil it enrolls. The school admits students nonselectively or at random. Charter schools are supposed to have a high degree of administrative autonomy from local public schools and to have as much fiscal autonomy as a stable tuition payment per pupil can give them.⁽⁴⁾ Thus, opening a charter school has some, but not all, of the features of creating additional public school districts to compete with the initial district.

An open enrollment program allows students to attend schools in districts outside their districts of residence. Whether or not an open enrollment program closely resembles an expansion of choice among

public school districts depends largely on the financial transfers that accompany transferring students. If a program has financial transfers that closely simulate the fiscal pressures of choice among public school districts, it can be regarded as a means of intensifying traditional choice among public school districts by reducing mobility costs and by allowing many more households to be on the margin between districts. Most open enrollment programs, however, have financial arrangements that do not simulate the fiscal pressures of choice among districts. For instance, the transfer is often small compared with the receiving district's average expenditure per pupil. Also, the money that accompanies the transferring student often comes wholly or partly from the state rather than from the sending district.

In summary, traditional choice among public school districts is helpful for analyzing charter school and open enrollment reforms because all three types of choice give us a general sense of (1) the bases on which parents choose among schools, (2) how public schools differentiate themselves given that they are all subject to public scrutiny and public constraints, (3) whether public providers can and do react to competition for students by improving their programs, (4) how the degree of choice among public providers affects parents' willingness to pay for private school alternatives, and (5) how students self-segregate among schools when they are given more choices at the same time that the receiving schools cannot discriminate among them. (5) Traditional choice among public school districts is less helpful for understanding charter school and open enrollment reforms to the extent that the financial arrangements of the reforms have quite different properties than traditional choice. In addition, charter schools and open enrollment programs depend on the sufferance or cooperation of local school districts, making them less sustainable than traditional choice programs.

TRADITIONAL CHOICE BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The second way in which parents have traditionally been able to exercise choice in the United States is by enrolling their children in private schools. Private school tuition in America is not subsidized by public monies (as it is in some European countries), so parents can afford private school only if they can pay both tuition and local taxes supporting public schools. (6) Partly as a result, private schools tend to enroll fewer than 15 percent of American elementary and secondary students. This percentage reached a peak of just under 15 percent in the early 1960s. Although it declined to 10 percent by 1980, it has since rebounded to 12 percent.

There is tremendous variation in the schooling offered in and tuition paid for private schools in the United States. Approximately 90 percent of private school students attend a school that is affiliated with a religious group, including a variety of Christian and non-Christian groups. Tuition for these schools ranges from a token amount (" \$ 100 or whatever parents can pay") to more than \$ 10,000. The remaining 10 percent of private school students attend schools with no religious affiliation; these institutions include many of the college-preparatory, "independent" schools that charge tuition of \$ 5,000 or more. More than 65 percent of U.S. private school students attend a school affiliated with the Catholic Church; these institutions vary from modest parochial schools asking for token tuition to elite, college-preparatory schools that compete with the "independents" for students. The modal private school student in the United States attends a Catholic school that is parochial or diocesan and charges a tuition of about \$ 800 (for elementary school) or \$ 2,000 (for secondary school).

A key feature of American private schools is that they typically subsidize tuition with monies from donations or (less often) endowment income. The share of schooling costs that is covered by subsidies is larger in schools that serve low-income students; even relatively expensive private schools, however, charge subsidized tuitions. For instance, Catholic elementary schools, on average, cover 50 percent of their costs with donations from local households and the local diocese (they are also implicitly subsidized by teachers who are members of religious orders and accept minimal payment). Catholic secondary school tuitions are less subsidized: on average, they represent about 75 percent of the actual costs of schooling. Even the most expensive religiously affiliated private schools in the United States--schools affiliated with the Friends (Quakers)--charge tuitions that average only 80 percent of their costs. (7) Note that schools that serve low-income households and charge highly subsidized tuitions are frequently oversubscribed and must ration school places using waiting lists.

Some cities and areas of the United States have significantly larger shares of students in private schools

than do others. The shares for metropolitan areas, for instance, range from 35 percent to roughly 0 percent. This variation is created by historical accident, by the donations available for subsidizing private schools in an area, and by the quality of public schools. I return to these sources of variation below.

Choice between private and public schools has several important properties. First, private schools that efficiently offer high-quality education tend to be rewarded by gaining more applicants. At the very least, the larger applicant pool allows the private school to be more selective. More often, a larger applicant pool allows a private school to expand. Symmetrically, public schools that do not offer quality education efficiently are likely to lose students to private schools. The students who are drawn away are, for any given public school, those with the greatest taste for the type of education offered by private schools. Second, private schools are likely to have an ambiguous impact on the finances of local public schools. On the one hand, an increased supply of private schools tends to draw into the private school sector many parents who might have supported generous public school spending if their children had remained in public schools. This phenomenon tends to decrease voter support for public school spending. On the other hand, an increased supply of private schools tends to draw into the private sector many students who otherwise would have had to be educated at public expense. This phenomenon tends to increase public school spending per pupil.

An increase in private school availability should change patterns of residential segregation for the following reasons: private school parents who would choose to live in districts with expensive public schools if private schools did not exist would be willing to live in less expensive districts. Such changes in residential segregation, however, are limited by the fact that private school parents prefer to live with neighbors who have similar professions, educations, and preferences for other local public goods. For instance, private school parents are unlikely to live with low-income neighbors just to avoid paying taxes to support moderately expensive public schools. Finally, private schools put mild pressure on public schools to pay the same input costs that they (private schools) pay. In particular, private schools are less likely to be unionized and to accept supply contracts for political reasons. If they do not pay union wage premiums and are charged competitive prices for supplies, their lower costs indirectly put a little pressure on public schools to be cost efficient. The pressure is small because the fact that private school parents continue to pay taxes to support public schools drives a considerable price wedge between private and public schools with comparable costs.

Evidence about the effects of traditional private school choice is most useful for predicting the effects of vouchers. Some properties of vouchers are quite similar to those of traditional private school choice: successful private schools are rewarded with larger pools of applicants; the least efficient public schools are the most likely to lose students. The fiscal impact of vouchers on public schools is ambiguous, although it is possibly less positive than the fiscal impact of private school competition on public schools. The difference is that vouchers are typically funded with monies from the local public schools. Some students who would attend private schools even in the absence of a voucher program will use vouchers: this fact will have a negative impact on per pupil spending in the sending district. This effect, however, will be offset by the positive impact on per pupil spending that occurs whenever a voucher is used by a student who would have, in the absence of a voucher program, attended a public school. This positive impact occurs because all voucher amounts proposed thus far have been significantly smaller than per pupil spending in the sending public school district. Some of the indirect fiscal impacts of vouchers on per pupil public school spending are positive as well. For instance, some parents with a high taste for education are likely to remain in districts that they would have abandoned for suburban districts if vouchers were not available. Keeping these parents has a positive effect on a district's property prices and, thus, on the tax base that supports public schools.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE TWO TRADITIONAL FORMS OF SCHOOL CHOICE

We expect that the two traditional forms of school choice will substitute for one another to some degree. Parents who can choose a district that offers schooling and a per pupil cost closer to their desires have less incentive to send their children to private school. Of course, public and private school choice are unlikely to substitute for one another completely because the two sectors function under somewhat different constraints. For instance, parents with strong preferences for religious education cannot satisfy

such preferences in the public sector; parents with strong preferences for public schooling cannot satisfy such preferences in private schools.

Similarly, we expect some interaction among the reforms. Availability of charter schools is likely to reduce the use of private school vouchers or open enrollment programs. Logically, the more one reform offers a needed type of choice, the less the alternative reforms will be desired or used. For instance, the less autonomous a charter school is, the more parents will want to use private school vouchers. In addition, areas that already have substantial amounts of choice among public school districts or choice of private schools are unlikely to make heavy use of a charter school program or an open enrollment program (unless the latter has perverse fiscal arrangements). Also, areas with substantial amounts of choice among public school districts are less likely to make heavy use of vouchers. The same cannot be said of areas that already have substantial amounts of private school choice. Since vouchers give a transfer to any parent already using private schools, vouchers would be highly utilized in areas with high shares of private schools. The means testing in most proposed voucher programs attempts to reduce transfers to parents already using private schools.

EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTS OF COMPETITION AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

To determine the effects of competition among public schools, we might compare metropolitan areas that have had long-term differences in parents' ease of choice among districts.⁽⁸⁾ Ease of choice depends on both the number of districts in the area and the evenness with which enrollment is spread over those districts. Choice is easier in a metropolitan area where parents choose among twenty districts of equal size than in an area where three-quarters of enrollment falls into one of twenty districts; choice in the latter area is easier than in an area with only one school district. The inverse of a Herfindahl index based on districts' enrollment shares is a good measure of the ease of choice because it incorporates both these facts--the number of districts and evenness of districts' enrollment shares.⁽⁹⁾

The sizable differences between metropolitan areas in the amount of choice available are largely a result of historical accident and geography. However, we should consider that districts' enrollments can reflect their success: a highly successful and efficient district might attract a disproportionate share of its metropolitan area's enrollment. It might even attract smaller districts to consolidate with it. These phenomena would tend to make simple comparisons of metropolitan areas with public school enrollment concentrated in a few districts versus metropolitan areas with enrollment spread evenly over many districts biased against finding positive effects of competition among districts. Formally, the observed degree of choice available among public school districts may be simultaneously determined with the school quality experienced by the typical student.

To obtain unbiased estimates, we need to identify geographic or historical factors that increase a metropolitan area's tendency to contain many small, independent school districts. We need instrumental variables related to the demand for independent school districts but unrelated to contemporary public school quality. I use the fact that metropolitan areas with more streams had more natural barriers and boundaries that increased students' travel time to school and caused the initial school district lines to be drawn up into smaller districts.⁽¹⁰⁾

This estimation strategy allows me to control for a wide range of background variables that might also influence schools or students. For instance, I control for the effect of household income, parents' educational attainment, family size, family composition (for example, single-parent households), race, region, and metropolitan area size, as well as for the local population's income, racial composition, poverty, educational attainment, and urbanness. Also, because I have good measures of self-segregation by school and school district (for racial, ethnic, and income segregation), I can also differentiate the effects of choice among school districts on self-segregation from those on student achievement or school efficiency.⁽¹¹⁾

My best estimates of the effects of competition among public school districts are gauged in terms of a one-standard-deviation increase in the Herfindahl index. This corresponds to a substantial increase in the degree of choice among districts; for instance, it is the difference between having three and thirteen equal-sized districts or the difference between having four and a very large number (say, one hundred) of

equal-sized districts. An increase of one standard deviation in the degree of choice among districts causes a small (and statistically significant) improvement in student achievement. Students' reading and math scores improve by about 2 percentile points, for instance. However, an increase of one standard deviation in choice among districts causes a large improvement in schools' efficiency. This increase occurs because the small improvement in student achievement takes place even though schools lower their per pupil costs by 17 percent when they face a standard deviation increase in choice. What is striking is the opposite sign of these effects: an increase in choice improves student achievement even while it accomplishes substantial cost savings. The implications for schools' productivity (the ratio of student achievement to dollars spent) are powerful.

What about the effects of competition among districts on the segregation of students? These effects turn out to be insignificant for a reason that may not occur to us at first glance. The degree of racial, ethnic, and income segregation that a student experiences is related to the degree of choice among schools in a metropolitan area, but not to the degree of choice among districts. (In fact, the point estimates have the "wrong" sign for the latter relationship.) In other words, students are just as segregated in schools in metropolitan areas that contain only a few districts as they are in metropolitan areas that contain many districts. Households sort themselves into neighborhoods inside districts; neighborhoods and schools are small enough relative to districts so that district boundaries have little effect on segregation. This result demonstrates how important it is to compare realistic alternatives. The realistic alternative to a metropolitan area with a high degree of choice among districts is not a metropolitan area in which all schools are perfectly desegregated and every student is exposed to similar peers. The realistic alternative is a metropolitan area with a low degree of choice among districts and schools that exhibit substantial segregation.

Choice among public school districts has several other effects worth noting. First, choice among districts and choice between public and private schools are substitutes for one another. An increase of one standard deviation in the degree of choice among districts lowers the share of children who attend private schools by about 1 percentage point (on a base of about 12 percentage points). When parents have more choice within the public sector, they are more likely to be satisfied by their public options, and they are less likely to choose a private option.

Second, when parents have more choice among districts, they tend to be more involved in their children's schooling.⁽¹²⁾ For instance, an increase of one standard deviation in the degree of choice causes one out of every three parents to visit the school in the course of a year and causes school administrators to say that parents have a more significant influence on school policy.⁽¹³⁾ Furthermore, parents appear to induce schools to actually pursue the policies that parents say, on average, they want in surveys: more challenging curricula, stricter academic requirements, and more structured and discipline-oriented environments. For instance, one standard deviation in the degree of choice in a metropolitan area raises by 8 percent the probability that a school's regular mathematics sequence ends in a twelfth-grade course that contains at least some calculus.⁽¹⁴⁾

Finally, the beneficial effects of choice among districts on schools' productivity depend on districts' having a significant degree of fiscal independence. In states such as California, where districts depend almost entirely on state per student allocations for their budgets, the positive effects of choice on student achievement and cost savings are reduced by about one-half. This is probably because successful schools are not rewarded through the property tax/budget process for their efforts to improve achievement or reduce costs. This result has implications for analyses of reforms: researchers should consider that reforms do not always give participating schools sufficient fiscal independence to allow them to benefit financially from their own success.

EVIDENCE OF THE EFFECTS OF PRIVATE SCHOOL COMPETITION

To determine the effects of private school competition on public schools and public school students, we can also compare areas with and without substantial private school enrollment. However, low-quality public schools raise the demand for private schools as substitutes for public schools. Therefore, such simple comparisons would confound the effect of greater private school competitiveness with the increased demand for private schools where public schools are poor in quality. Formally, private school

enrollment is likely to be endogenous to (partly caused by) public school quality, and this endogeneity would lead simple estimates to be biased toward finding that private school competition had negative effects on public schools.

To obtain unbiased estimates, we need to identify factors that increase the supply of private schools in an area and that are unrelated to public school quality. Formally, we need instrumental variables that shift the supply of private schools and that are unrelated to the demand for private schools that is generated by low public school quality. I use the fact that a denomination's private schools have more resources with which to provide tuition subsidies in areas that are densely populated by that denomination. Since religious composition of an area is largely a matter of historical accident, it is not likely to have an independent effect on public school quality. Areas with higher Catholic population shares, for instance, have a larger share of teaching services donated by members of religious orders (worth 30 to 35 percent of costs) and provide a larger share of Catholic school income through donations from the diocese and local households (25 to 50 percent of costs). Thus, denominations' population shares fulfill the conditions for a good instrument: they are positively correlated with the supply of private schools but are likely to be uncorrelated with the part of the demand for private schools that is generated by public school quality. Catholic population shares provide the best instrumental variables not only because school subsidies are a relatively high-priority use of Catholic Church funds, but also because Roman Catholicism is spread across the entire United States rather than concentrated in one state or one region. Roman Catholicism is also associated with many ethnic groups, unlike some other denominations, which are associated with only one or two ethnic groups.

Note that this estimation strategy allows me to control for a variety of background factors that might be correlated with both the demand for private schools and public school quality (or public school students' performance). For instance, I control for the effect of a household's belonging to a denomination. If being Catholic, say, affects a household's demand for public school spending or the achievement of its children, this effect is controlled for (and not confounded with the effect of more or less private school competition). I also control for the effect of certain ethnic group concentrations in an area, for the effect of racial and ethnic homogeneity in an area, for the effect of religious homogeneity in an area, and for the religiosity of an area. Numerous other background factors are controlled for: family income, the share of households in poverty, parents' educational attainment, family size, family composition (single-parent households), urbanness, population density, and region of the country.(15)

My best estimates of the effect of more competition from private schools suggest that if private schools in an area receive sufficient resources to subsidize each student's tuition by \$ 1,000 then the achievement of public school students rises. This is true whether the measure of achievement is test scores, ultimate educational attainment, or wages. The effect on mathematics and reading scores is an 8 percentile point improvement. The effect on educational attainment is an 8 percent increase in the probability of graduating from high school and a 12 percent increase in the probability of getting a baccalaureate degree. The effect on wages (for those who work later in life at ages twenty-nine through thirty-seven) is a 12 percent improvement.(16)

Interestingly enough, the estimates indicate that competition from private schools does not have a significant effect on public school spending per pupil.(17) This is probably because the two forces described above offset one another. On the one hand, an increased supply of private schools tends to draw into the private school sector many parents who might have supported generous public school spending if their children had remained in public schools. This phenomenon tends to decrease voter support for public school spending. On the other hand, an increased supply of private schools draws into the private school sector many students who would otherwise have had to be educated at the public's expense. This phenomenon tends to increase public school spending per pupil

What about the effects of private school competition on the self-segregation of students among schools? I will not dwell on these estimates, because their ability to predict the effect of a private school voucher program is limited. The reason is that the estimates are based on private schools that have a religious affiliation, mainly Catholic schools. In contrast, proposed voucher programs often exclude private schools with a religious affiliation and always constrain private schools that accept vouchers to either accept all voucher applicants or to accept some random sample of them.

The estimates do have general applicability in one regard, however: all the self-segregation effects are very small. There are two reasons: First, public schools are already quite segregated along lines of race, ethnicity, parents' income, and students' performance. When people imagine the effect of increasing private school availability, they sometimes conjure up a notional public school that is perfectly desegregated. The effects of private school competition on such a notional public school might be dramatic. Even if we could estimate such effects, however, they would be irrelevant since actual public schools do not correspond closely to this ideal. The actual self-segregation effects of traditional private school competition are small simply because a large increase in self-segregation cannot be obtained by sorting out an already segregated public school. The second reason that self-segregation effects are small is that an increase in private school competition typically allows self-segregation in public schools to increase slightly while self-segregation in private schools decreases slightly. These effects tend to offset one another.

My best estimates suggest that if private schools in an area receive enough resources to subsidize tuition by \$ 1,000, segregation along lines of race, ethnicity, income, and student performance decreases at private schools by small, but statistically significant, amounts. At the same time, segregation along these lines changes at public schools by amounts that have positive point estimates but are statistically not different from zero.(18)

Finally, note that both private school competition and competition among public schools tend to hold down input costs. Specifically, both types of competition constrain the salary increases that teachers' unions gain for their members (the union wage premium of 12 percent is reduced by about one-third for a standard-deviation increase in competition among districts and by about one-half for a \$ 1,000 subsidy for private schools).(19) This result parallels a standard result from private industry: increased competition in the market for a product (in this case, the market offering schooling to students) tends to decrease the wage premia earned by unionized workers and other inputs that are provided by suppliers with market power.

EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTS OF INTRADISTRICT CHOICE PROGRAMS

Intradistrict choice has been utilized by a number of large school districts for some time. The least dramatic forms of intradistrict choice are magnet or alternative schools, to which a student typically applies because of a preference for an alternative curriculum or schooling environment. In the more dramatic forms of intradistrict choice (Manhattan's District 4 or Cambridge, Massachusetts), every student must actively express a preference for a school. Intradistrict choice shares some features of the two traditional forms of school choice discussed above. In particular, the fact that parents and students make an active choice is likely to make them more committed and involved in schooling. However, intradistrict choice programs rarely give schools the degree of fiscal or curricular autonomy enjoyed by independent school districts or private schools. It is important to recognize that a district that gives fiscal or curricular autonomy to a school in a given year has not given the school long-term autonomy unless the district can bind itself to not revoke that autonomy. Such binding often proves to be politically impossible. For instance, intradistrict choice programs sometimes exhibit long-term fiscal incentives that are perverse because the district cannot, ex post, resist taking money from successful schools and giving it to unsuccessful schools.

The evidence on intradistrict choice is at an exploratory stage. My own work demonstrates only that simple estimates (comparing districts that have intradistrict choice with districts that do not) are badly biased.(20) The bias arises because districts do not randomly enact intradistrict choice programs. These programs are usually associated with the hiring of a superintendent who is given a free hand to "turn around" a district that has recently experienced sharp decreases in student achievement. It is difficult to create a control group of schools that can be compared effectively with this type of school. Even before-and-after studies do not enable us to disentangle the effects of intradistrict choice from the effects of getting a new superintendent who is paid more and given greater latitude than previous administrators.(21)

LESSONS FOR REFORM FROM TRADITIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE

The evidence on the effects of traditional school choice gives us several lessons that are helpful for analyzing reforms.

- * First, public schools can and do react to competition by improving the schooling they offer and by reducing costs. They are not passive organizations that allow their students and budgets to be withdrawn without responding. Realistic increases in the competition they face produce significant improvements in students' test scores, educational attainment, and wages.

- * Second, public schools' responses do not depend just on whether they lose students; the responses also depend on the fiscal rewards and penalties attached to gaining or losing students. When competition has little fiscal implication, a public school is less likely to react. When cost competition is weakened by a large price wedge (like that between public and private schools), public schools reduce costs less than they do when cost competition is on a more level playing field (like that between two similar public school districts).

- * Third, the segregation effects of increasing school choice via reforms are likely to be small because schools in the United States (not merely districts) are already quite segregated. To predict accurately the effects of reforms on segregation, one must consider a realistic alternative, not an idealized public school with perfect desegregation.

- * Fourth, parents who have greater choice are more involved in their children's schooling. Parents' influence on school policy, which is greater when choice is greater, will reflect, on average, their stated preferences for tougher curricula and stricter school atmospheres. Note, however, that greater choice is also likely to make schools more diverse through parental influence because like-minded parents will be better able to group together in schools. (I have no evidence on this last point.)

- * Finally, different types of school choice substitute for one another to a limited degree.

Given these lessons, what other pieces of information do we need in order to analyze school choice reforms? Three information deficiencies stand out. Since we know that the fiscal impact of a choice program is an important determinant of the program's effect on schools, the financial arrangements of charter school programs, open enrollment programs, and vouchers will be key determinants of their effects. These financial arrangements often receive little thought, and they are chosen more for convenience and political reasons than because they generate good financial incentives. States that want to avoid perverse financial incentives should consider financial arrangements that purposely mimic the fiscal impacts of the two traditional forms of school choice. In order to estimate the effects of more dramatic fiscal incentives, we will need to observe actual choice reforms that carry a variety of financial arrangements.

The second information deficiency pertains to the long-term sustainability of reforms. All three of the reforms discussed create schools or programs that have less long-term autonomy than do the schools that compete in the two traditional forms of school choice. Public school districts have indefinite lifetimes and will not have difficulty raising tax revenues as long as parents want to send their children to the schools. Private schools have similarly indefinite lifetimes and can raise tuition revenue so long as they attract parents. While some charter school laws are written to give a high degree of fiscal autonomy to charter schools, all charter schools must get their charters renewed by the state (at least) and depend on other organizations to decide their per pupil payments. It remains to be seen whether charters and per pupil payments are politically maintainable when and if charter schools become successful competitors for the revenues and students of public school districts. Most open enrollment programs have even less inherent political sustainability. These programs, at least as written thus far, require the ongoing cooperation of local public school districts. (The receiving district must almost always cooperate voluntarily, although involuntary cooperation is sometimes exacted from the sending district.) The voucher programs passed to date depend on the sufferance of the sending district, but some proposed programs make the vouchers less dependent on that district. Careful analyses of district-level and state-level politics will be necessary to predict the long-term sustainability of all three reforms.

Finally, traditional school choice gives us only limited information about the supply response we can expect from private schools under a voucher program or from charter schools. Supply responses are estimated in the analyses of choice among public schools and choice between public and private schools. (For instance, giving private schools additional resources that are equivalent to a \$ 1,000 tuition subsidy creates a 4.1 percentage point increase in Catholic school enrollment, from a base of about 10 percent.) However, proposed charter school programs and voucher programs sometimes take us beyond the range where extrapolation from traditional school choice results is reasonable. A voucher of \$ 3,500 available to all poor students, for instance, would produce a long-term supply response that would be difficult to predict since the availability and long-term horizon exceed those of current voucher programs (like Milwaukee's), and the voucher amount exceeds those of most current private school subsidies.

ENDNOTES

(1.) Some people unfortunately associate the word "segregation" exclusively with racial segregation. I am using it to describe segregation of students along a number of lines. It could also be described as student sorting, and it encompasses a variety of phenomena, including segregation by ability, sometimes called "cream skimming" or "cherry picking."

(2.) See Hoxby (1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1996d, 1997a, 1997b). Copies of unpublished papers can be obtained by sending a written or electronic request to the author.

(3.) It is important to note that the fiscal reward process works through the residential decisions of marginal home buyers. If marginal home buyers choose to locate in other districts because district X is a poor or inefficient provider of schooling, then all home prices in district X fall. There is no need for all households to relocate for all houses' prices to affect the districts' fiscal rewards. See Hoxby (1996a) for details.

(4.) In practice, however, some states' charter school laws allow the schools very little administrative or fiscal autonomy. For instance, a charter school has little administrative autonomy if it is automatically subject to all clauses of the local teachers' unions' collective bargaining agreements. Similarly, a charter school may have little fiscal autonomy if its tuition payments depend completely on the per pupil spending of the local school district (regardless of the charter school's own success).

(5.) Public schools must admit all students in their attendance district. Charter schools and open enrollment schools must admit a random sample of students who are eligible and interested in attending.

(6.) There are and have been some minor public subsidies for private school expenses, including small tuition tax deductions and credits. Some states also require local public districts to provide certain textbooks and bus transportation to private school students.

(7.) Although tuition understates the true cost of private schooling, private schooling does cost significantly less than public schooling on average. Over the entire period from 1976 to the present, per pupil costs in private schools have always been between 50 and 60 percent of contemporary per pupil costs in public schools.

(8.) For this section, see Hoxby (1997a).

(9.) A Herfindahl index based on enrollment shares is as follows. Suppose a metropolitan area has J school districts, which we index by $j = 1, \dots, J$. Suppose each school district has a share, $[s_{sub,j}]$, of total metropolitan area enrollment. Then, the inverse Herfindahl index is

[MATHEMATICAL EXPRESSION NOT REPRODUCIBLE IN ASCII]

When there is no choice in a metropolitan area because there is only one public school district, the inverse index is equal to -1. As more districts are added and as enrollment is spread more evenly over those districts, the inverse index gets closer to zero.

(10.) This typically took place about the time of Anglo-American settlement, which varies with the area of the country. Many of the original petitions for district boundaries cite streams as a reason for not extending the district lines. Streams are by far the most common natural boundary for school districts. Note, however, that many of the streams that are preserved in boundaries are small and have never had industrial importance. Today, many of the boundary streams are of negligible importance in travel.

(11.) The equations estimated can be summarized as follows. The main equation to be estimated is of the form

$$[y_{.ik}] = [aH_{.k}] + [X_{.ik}][\beta] + [X_{.k}][\zeta] [\Delta] + [[\epsilon]_{.k}] + [[\epsilon]_{.ik}],$$

where y is an outcome such as a student's test score or a school's per pupil spending, i indexes students or schools (depending on the outcome), k indexes the metropolitan area, H is the inverse Herfindahl index that measures the degree of choice among public school districts, $[X_{.ik}]$ is a vector of background variables that describe the student or school (for instance, the race and gender of the student or the homogeneity of household incomes for students who attend the school), and $[X_{.k}]$ a vector of background variables that describe the metropolitan area (for instance, its racial composition and size). The two-tiered error structure adjusts the standard errors for the fact that the degree of choice varies only at the metropolitan area level.

There is also an implied first-stage equation that estimates the effect of streams on the concentration of public school districts in the metropolitan area:

$$[H_{.k}] = [S_{.k}][\gamma] + [\bar{X}_{.ik}][\kappa] + [X_{.k}][\lambda] + [[\iota]_{.k}],$$

where $[H_{.k}]$, $[\bar{X}_{.ik}]$, and $[X_{.k}]$ are as above (except that $[\bar{X}_{.ik}]$ is effectively averaged for the area), and $[S_{.k}]$ is a vector of variables that measure the prevalence of large and small streams in the metropolitan area.

(12.) See Hoxby (1996d).

(13.) Specifically, the measure of parental influence over school policy rises by two-thirds of one standard deviation.

(14.) Interestingly, an increase in the degree of choice encourages grade inflation, which I measure by comparing students' course grades with their performance on national standardized exams in the same subjects. This finding suggests that although parents want their children to be exposed to harder "real" curricula, parents are loath to set higher "nominal" standards for their children--perhaps because local grade deflation might be misinterpreted by colleges in the admissions process.

(15.) The equations estimated can be summarized as follows. The main equation to be estimated is of the form

$$[y_{.ik}] = [\mu][V_{.k}] + [X_{.ik}]v + [X_{.k}][\pi] + [[\iota]_{.k}] + [[\iota]_{.ik}],$$

where y is an outcome such as a student's wage or a school's per pupil spending, i indexes students or schools (depending on the outcome), k indexes the area (metropolitan areas and counties, depending on the urbanness), V is the average tuition subsidy offered by private schools in area k , $[X_{.ik}]$ is a vector of background variables that describe the student or school (for instance, the student's own religion or the racial homogeneity of the school), and $[X_{.k}]$ is a vector of background variables that describe the area (for instance, its income composition or religiosity). The two-tiered error structure adjusts the standard errors for the fact that average tuition subsidies vary only at the area level.

There is also an implied first-stage equation that estimates the effect of denominations' population shares on the tuition subsidies offered by private schools:

$$[V_{.k}] = [D_{.k}][\rho] + [\bar{X}_{.ik}][\theta] + [X_{.k}][\tau] + [[\omega]_{.k}],$$

where [V.sub.k], [bar X.sub.ik], and [X.sub.k] are as above (except that [bar X.sub.ik] is effectively averaged for the area), and [D.sub.k] is a vector of population shares of denominations $m=1, \dots, m$ in area k .

(16.) These are instrumental variable estimates of the effect of a \$ 1,000 subsidy for private school tuition where the equations are as in endnote 15. The coefficient estimates and their standard errors are, respectively, 7.9 (3.5); 2.2 (1.0); 3.3 (1.1); 12 (5.7). See Hoxby (1996b, 1997b).

(17.) See Hoxby (1996b).

(18.) Statistical significance here refers to asymptotic statistical significance at the 10 percent level. Income segregation is measured using students' free-lunch eligibility. See Hoxby (1997b).

(19.) See Hoxby (1996c).

(20.) See Hoxby (1996d).

(21.) In addition, before-and-after studies suffer from bias produced by "Ashenfelter's dip." This dip is simply the phenomenon that treatment (in this case, intradistrict choice) is frequently assigned to individuals (in this case, school districts) who have recently experienced a negative departure from their own history. Since individuals and districts would typically experience mean reversion anyway (and return to their historic paths), simple before-and-after studies tend to exaggerate the positive effect of treatment.

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LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

IAC-CREATE-DATE: April 16, 1998

LOAD-DATE: April 17, 1998

FOCUSTM**Search: People News;Hoxby, Carolyn**

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April 27, 1998 16:14 Eastern Time

SECTION: NATIONAL DESK, EDUCATION WRITER

LENGTH: 1441 words

HEADLINE: Education Secretary Statement on Helping all Children Learn English (1 of 2)

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, April 27

BODY:

Following is a statement by U.S. Education Secretary Richard W. Riley on " Helping all Children Learn English" (Part 1 of 2):

As we look to the future of American education, one of the most important new developments is the growing number of immigrant children that we must educate. According to the latest census data, nearly 20 percent of all children in our nation's schools -- one out of five -- are immigrants or the American-born children of immigrants .

A new study of immigrant children (note 1) states that 13.7 million children under 18 are either immigrants or the American-born offspring of immigrants, and that they are the fastest growing part of our student population. These children come from over 150 nations with the largest number coming from Mexico, the Phillippines, Cuba, and Vietnam.

Some Americans say that these children are a liability, but I welcome these children, just as the Statue of Liberty or the Golden Gate Bridge has welcomed them for years. They are a great source of strength and hope for the future of America, and we want them to be full participants in the American experience as children and as adults.

These young people, just like generations of immigrants who have come before them, can grow up to be patriotic Americans who will add their voices to our democracy if we educate them to the best of our ability and treat them as we would like to be treated. Indeed, the largest survey ever conducted of immigrant children found that these young people had higher grades and a lower school drop-out rate than other children and overwhelmingly preferred to speak English by the time they were teenagers. (note 2).

These young people represent the hopes of immigrant parents who have come to America because they believe in the American dream. They have stood in long visa lines, uprooted their families, left relatives behind, changed careers, often accepted menial jobs and in many cases now work two jobs for one great purpose -- to give their children a better life in America. Surely we can meet these people half-way by giving their children the best education possible so that they can make their contribution to the American mainstream.

Teaching these young people English is one of the great tasks of nation- building and it falls to our public schools to accomplish. This is not the first time that the task of educating millions of new immigrants to become good citizens has been given to our nation's public schools. At the turn of the century our nation's public schools successfully taught millions of new immigrants English and educated them about our democracy.

Today, we face the same challenge. There are school districts in almost every part of our country -- from Boston to Seattle to Miami -- where children speak more than 40 languages. I believe that our nation's public schools can successfully educate these young people if we give them the same opportunities that other students need in order to succeed: higher standards, safe schools, smaller classes, well-prepared teachers, technology in the classroom, after-school activities, and schools that are

accountable for results.

President Clinton has made education his number one domestic priority to achieve one end -- to prepare all of America's children -- native-born and immigrant -- for the 21st century. President Clinton has also increased funding for those programs -- Title I, immigrant and **bilingual education**, migrant education, adult education -- that directly serve a disproportionate number of immigrant children and their families.

Today, however, there are growing questions about the best way to teach these young people English. In **California**, these concerns about how to teach English center around Proposition 227, the **Unz Initiative**, which would effectively eliminate **bilingual education** and require that all children learn English in one year.

I recognize that the decision to vote for or against the **Unz Initiative** this coming June is ultimately a decision for the voters of **California**. I know that there are many well-intentioned and concerned citizens on both sides of this issue and that the people of **California** are taking this issue seriously.

New immigrants have a passion to learn English and they want the best for their children. We must focus on what is best for the children and in this increasingly diverse society we must make sure that all of America's children are given the best education possible. Our common goal in teaching children English should be to support those approaches that ensure that Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) children are both speaking English and making academic progress.

Proposition 227, however, is not the way to go. In my opinion, adoption of the Unz Amendment will lead to fewer children learning English and many children falling further behind in their studies. There are five significant reasons why I believe that the Unz Amendment is counter-productive to a quality education for all of our children.

First, the one year time limit and one-size-fits-all approach to learning English flies in the face of years of research that tells us that children learn in different ways and at different speeds. A recent National Research Council report (note 3) released last month states that, "hurrying young non-English speaking children into reading in English without ensuring adequate preparation is counter-productive." The report recommends that children with no English proficiency are best taught to read English by first being taught reading in their native language, if teachers and instructional materials in their native language are available.

Thus, while an English-only approach may be effective for some limited- English-proficient children, it is likely to be ineffective for others. I do not oppose special English instructional programs. In fact, about 25 percent of our current federal bilingual funds support this type of instructional approach. What I question is the arbitrary one-year time limit and the demand that only this approach is the right approach to help young people learn English.

The approach taken by Proposition 227 simply ignores the individual needs of each child and certainly is an educational straitjacket for teachers and parents. Good teaching starts with a child's needs and moves the child along in a timely and responsible manner.

By analogy, if we adopted the approach suggested by the **Unz Initiative** to help children learn to read, it would be a disaster. Some children are already good readers when they come to kindergarten and others learn by the end of the first or second grades. Other children need extra help even in third grade and beyond.

Second, the Unz Amendment limits the discretion of teachers to choose the approach that is best suited for the children they teach. Some children may learn best in an English-only class, others may learn faster in a bilingual class or through some other proven approach, but with the Unz approach, teachers are given no option to use their professional judgement.

Third, Proposition 227 would subject teachers, school board members, and educational administrators

to personal liability in litigation by parents if they fail to comply with its requirements. I find this aspect of Proposition 227 both punitive and threatening. This is not the way to build parent- teacher cooperation -- a key to student success.

Fourth, the **Unz Initiative** is a direct attack on local control of education. I am surprised that so many outspoken advocates of local control have chosen not to take issue with this fundamental flaw in the **Unz Initiative**. The **Unz Initiative** would not be a helping hand for language instruction, but rather the heavy hand of overregulation. Local flexibility to choose the approaches that work best for their students should not be constrained by a mandate for one approach over the other. I believe that every school district should choose the approach that works best for them based on sound research.

Fifth, the **Unz Initiative** will in all likelihood result in problems under federal civil rights laws. In the seminal case of *Lau v. Nichols*, the Supreme Court interpreted Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to require school districts to take steps to ensure that national origin minority students with limited English proficiency can effectively participate in the regular educational program.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 27, 1998

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The Fresno Bee

April 28, 1998 Tuesday, HOME EDITION

SECTION: TELEGRAPH, Pg. A3

LENGTH: 375 words

HEADLINE: Wilson leaning toward Prop. 227;
Unz initiative would end **bilingual education** in **California** schools.

BYLINE: Mike Lewis Bee C, Apitol Bureau

BODY:

Gov. Wilson says he's "strongly leaning toward" supporting the **Unz initiative** to end **bilingual education**.

"Even the people who are supporting another reform admit **bilingual education** has failed children in **California**," Wilson said during a news conference in the Capitol Monday.

Proposition 227, sponsored and written by Silicon Valley millionaire Ron Unz, would require **California's** 1.4 million children with limited English skills to be taught in English for a year before being switched to regular classrooms.

Supporters say this "total immersion" method is the best way to teach a language quickly. Detractors counter that these immersed students fall far behind in other classes.

Wilson favorably compared the initiative to the method used by Jews shortly after the founding of Israel. As the Israelis absorbed immigrants, every new citizen was placed in Hebrew classes, he said.

"The first thing you had to do was learn Hebrew," Wilson said. "That was the judgment they made. I happen to think it was a wise one."

Wilson said his only worry about the Unz measure is its price: It requires the state to spend \$ 50 million to hire more bilingual teachers.

Wilson spoke a day after news broke that the Clinton administration opposes 227.

Education Department officials Monday hinted that passage of the ballot initiative could lead to the federal government suing **California** and denying grant funds to local school districts.

"This one-size-fits-all approach may work for T-shirts," said Marshall Smith, acting deputy secretary of education. But in teaching children a second language, "it's a major mistake. . . . It ignores the individual need of each child. Some children need more than one year to learn English."

He said a three-year, non-mandatory "goal" for English proficiency was "more reasonable."

Wilson countered that Californians should have freedom from the federal government.

"I frankly think he (President Clinton) has no business, I think the U.S. Department of Education has no business, substituting his judgment for that of the people of **California**," he said.

California school districts won \$ 80 million in **bilingual education** grants last year.

Bee wire services contributed to this report.

LOAD-DATE: April 30, 1998

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April 28, 1998, Tuesday 01:15 Eastern Time

SECTION: Washington - general news

LENGTH: 992 words

HEADLINE: Clinton opposes initiative on **bilingual education**

BYLINE: Dana Wilkie

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

The Clinton administration announced its opposition to Proposition 227 Monday, the same day that Gov. Pete Wilson all but endorsed the initiative that would end most **bilingual education** programs in **California's** public schools.

The debate over the highly contentious June 2 ballot proposition is certain to heat up soon as administration officials begin arriving in **California** in the coming weeks to campaign against the measure.

This weekend, President Clinton plans a trip to the state, though it was unclear Monday whether he will address the issue in addition to attending planned political events and visiting with his daughter, Chelsea, at Stanford University.

While rejecting the ballot initiative, Clinton's Department of Education argued for a change in how English is taught to students who don't speak the language.

"I join all Californians who are unhappy with the status quo, and I understand the frustration that is encouraging many voters to think about voting for the ... initiative," said Education Secretary Richard Riley.

But the initiative would put limited-English students in a one-year sheltered immersion program before putting them in regular classes. And that, Riley said, "is just plain wrong."

"Proposition 227 may satisfy people's sense of frustration, but ultimately, it is counterproductive to our common goal of making sure children learn English while making academic progress in other subjects as well," Riley said in his statement.

But Riley proposed that **bilingual education** programs across the country aim to teach children English within three years an idea that did not sit well with some educators and Latino activists. Under existing **bilingual education** programs that would be ended by Proposition 227, students can be taught in their native language for up to seven years while they learn English.

Wilson said Monday he had not decided whether to back the initiative.

"I'm strongly leaning that way," he said at a Sacramento news conference. "I haven't made a judgment yet."

The Republican governor, long a critic of the Democratic president, also blasted Clinton for meddling in **California** affairs.

"I frankly think he has no business, I think the U.S. Department of Education has no business, substituting his judgment for that of the people of **California**," Wilson said.

Polls show that up to 70 percent of **California** voters support Proposition 227 authored by Ron Unz, a wealthy businessman and unsuccessful Republican gubernatorial candidate in 1994. Some polls have shown substantial support among Latino voters.

"We're disappointed that President Clinton chose to go against the wishes of most **California** voters," said Sheri Annis, a spokeswoman for the Proposition 227 campaign. "It seems as though he's completely played into the hands of the **bilingual education** lobby."

Predictably, the campaign against Proposition 227, Citizens for an Educated America, was "very pleased that the president has recognized that Proposition 227 is fatally flawed," said campaign spokeswoman Holli Thier.

But while Clinton's position on the ballot measure gratified many leading Latino activist groups, his goal for three-year **bilingual education** programs did not.

"We oppose any kind of limit," said Ambrosio Rodriguez, an attorney for the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund in Washington, D.C. "**Bilingual education** works best when it is run by local schools."

Bilingual education has come under attack from critics who say that teaching children in their native language hinders rather than helps them learn English and perform well in school. Supporters of **bilingual education** say rushing children into English-only classes does the same thing.

Bilingual education programs teach children core subjects, such as social studies and reading, in their native language while trying to teach them English. Proposition 227 would require children be immersed in a one-year English program, then take their core subjects in classes where only English is spoken.

The measure pits the majority of **California** voters including 57 percent of Latino voters, according to a poll by the **California** Public Policy Institute against the Latino activists and educators, some of whom brand the measure as "racist."

As a result, the initiative puts the Clinton administration in the awkward position of trying to satisfy both the educators, who generally support Democrats, and the **California** voters whose support Democrats need this year in battles for the governorship, a Senate seat and House seats.

The proposal for three-year **bilingual education** programs may be one way to seek the middle ground.

"The president is concerned about the impact of that state ballot initiative," said White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry. "We understand the public sentiment in **California**, and one can easily say we are flying in the face of whatever the conventional wisdom is in **California** about the popularity of that measure."

McCurry said the administration opposed the **Unz initiative** because its passage would make it more difficult to defeat bills in Congress aimed at ending federal support of bilingual programs. He said the measure also would jeopardize Clinton's budget proposal for a 17 percent increase in funding for bilingual teachers.

Those backing the measure anticipated, as did Wilson, that Clinton would be on the losing side of yet another popular, yet controversial **California** ballot initiative.

In 1994, the president spoke out against Proposition 187, the successful measure, now blocked by the courts, that barred most illegal immigrants from state benefits. In 1996 he opposed Proposition 209, another successful initiative, which banned racial and gender preferences in **California's** state and local government programs.

Wilson was a strong supporter of both Propositions 187 and 209.

Staff writer Ed Mendel contributed to this report.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 29, 1998

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Search: General News;Bilingual Education and California and Unz Initiative

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The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, TN)

April 28, 1998, TUESDAY, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. A4

LENGTH: 406 words

HEADLINE: CLINTON OPPOSES CALIFORNIA BILINGUAL PROPOSAL;
INITIATIVE WOULD BAN NON-ENGLISH CURRICULUM

BYLINE: The New York Times News Service

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

The Clinton administration announced its opposition Monday to a **California** ballot initiative that would end **bilingual education** in that state, saying that the President and other officials would actively campaign against it.

Administration officials said that there was a high likelihood that the Justice Department would sue the state if the initiative was approved because it would violate the civil rights of students whose English is limited.

The referendum, known as Proposition 227, or the **Unz Initiative** after its author, Silicon Valley executive Ron Unz, would require that students with weak English skills complete a one-year English immersion course and then be placed in regular classes.

California's current programs for such students include English As a Second Language, in which the instructor primarily speaks English to the students, and **bilingual education**, in which students take classes taught in their native tongue until their English improves. The initiative, which faces a vote in the June 2 primary, would end both methods.

"Proposition 227 would stifle the ability of our non-English children to learn," Mike Smith, acting undersecretary of education, said.

Polls show the initiative has strong support among residents, including Hispanics, whose children make up nearly 80 percent of students in classes for those with limited English. But the administration promised vigorous opposition.

"We understand the public sentiment in **California**, and one can easily say we are flying in the face of whatever the conventional wisdom is in **California**," said Michael McCurry, the White House press secretary.

Monday's announcement represents the culmination of months of study and debate within the administration.

"I believe you'll see a lot of Administration officials in the state in the next month or so," campaigning against the measure, Smith said. Asked if that included the President, he said, "I believe so."

McCurry said the administration opposed the **Unz initiative** because its passage would make it more difficult to defeat bills in Congress aimed at ending federal support of bilingual programs. He said the measure also would jeopardize Clinton's budget proposals to hire more teachers proficient in foreign languages.

Critics of bilingual programs say they do not keep students from falling behind in math or social studies, but hinder their mastery of English.

NOTES:

Different version, First A4

LOAD-DATE: April 29, 1998

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View Related Topics

May 4, 1998, Monday, Ventura County Edition

SECTION: Metro; Part B; Page 1; Zones Desk

LENGTH: 1870 words

HEADLINE: BILINGUAL TEACHERS SAY THEY WOULD DEFY PROP. 227;
SCHOOLS: BRACING FOR THE INITIATIVE'S EXPECTED PASSAGE, SOME EDUCATORS
VOW TO KEEP SPEAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE CLASSROOM.

BYLINE: CHRIS CHI, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

With a month to go before voters decide the fate of **bilingual education** in **California** public schools, Ventura County educators are bracing for a sea change in the way students who speak little English are taught--and some teachers have vowed to defy Proposition 227 by continuing to speak foreign languages in the classroom.

"I think there's going to be a lot of civil disobedience," said Carlos Pagan, principal at Moorpark's Peach Hill Elementary School, where several teachers have pledged defiance. "That is the nature of the teacher, to help the student the best way he can. And if that means getting sued, they'll take that risk."

Proposition 227--also known as the **Unz initiative** because it is sponsored by Silicon Valley software entrepreneur Ron K. Unz--would replace **bilingual education** with English-language immersion and allow parents to sue teachers who repeatedly disobey the new regulations.

The latest in a series of populist state initiatives to target such long-standing liberal government programs as affirmative action, Proposition 227 enjoys a commanding lead in the polls. A Times Poll last month, for instance, found the measure leading 63% to 24% among the state's registered voters. Among Latino voters, 50% favored it and 32% were opposed.

The initiative's popularity reflects a consensus that **bilingual education** has failed to teach students English, leaving generations of minority students ill equipped to compete in the job market, proponents say.

"There is no difference between the system we call **bilingual education** and the Jim Crow system of the 1940s and 1950s in the South that harmed blacks," said Steve Frank, a Simi Valley resident and government consultant spearheading the local Proposition 227 campaign. Frank is scheduled to debate USC professor and **bilingual education** proponent Stephen Krashen today at Cal Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks.

Proposition 227 would dismantle the various programs currently used to educate students with limited English language ability. With certain exceptions, those students would receive one year of English-immersion instruction, then go directly into mainstream classes. Current state guidelines do not limit the length of time students can remain in bilingual classes; most Ventura County school districts aim to have students in English-language classrooms by fourth or fifth grade.

The initiative has drawn fierce opposition from teachers, who say **bilingual education** is the best way to teach English while ensuring that students keep pace in math, social studies and other subjects. They also complain that the initiative encroaches on local control by preventing districts from tailoring their bilingual programs to fit their student populations.

*

School districts in Moorpark, Ventura, Oxnard, Santa Paula and Ojai are among those that have passed resolutions opposing Proposition 227.

In Ventura County, 25,000 students--94% of whom speak Spanish as their primary language--are considered limited-English speakers. They are taught in a variety of ways: About 50% get their first few years of instruction in their native language, while 30% are taught in English-only classes, with special booster classes to help them learn the new language faster. Most others attend regular classes with no special attention.

Yet despite the different approaches to **bilingual education**, teachers across the county agree that passage of Proposition 227 would usher in a tumultuous period of change and open numerous legal, educational and financial questions: Just what legal risks do teachers face? Could the new initiative be struck down in court? How much will it cost to buy new textbooks and train bilingual teachers to retool their teaching methods?

Answers to these questions could unfold quickly: If passed, the new regulations would take effect two months later.

And while refusing to concede defeat, bilingual teachers across the county are already planning for change.

Some Teachers Take Less Militant Stance

The most fervent opponents say they will not change at all. Some bilingual teachers have already informed administrators that they will not revise their curricula but instead continue to teach in foreign languages and face the consequences, said Cliff Rodrigues, director of **bilingual education** for the county superintendent of schools.

"The official position is, 'Oh, yeah, we'll do what the law tells us,' " Rodrigues said. But, he added, "they're going to deliver the content in Spanish and will not go exclusively English."

Others teachers plan a less militant approach, saying they will give English immersion a try. But, some teachers say, if a Spanish-speaking student grows visibly frustrated while trying to grasp such concepts as addition and subtraction because he or she cannot understand the English terms, the teachers will speak to them in Spanish to push them along.

"I'm going to have to" speak Spanish, said Jackie Pinson, a third-grade bilingual teacher at Peach Hill Elementary School in Moorpark. "It's hard to imagine how uncomfortable a student would be if he can't understand. You have to communicate with them. That's why we're here."

Andrea Polido, a bilingual teacher at Oxnard's Marina West Elementary School, said she, too, will revert to Spanish if necessary.

"The sense that I'm getting is that teachers are going to stretch and struggle," Polido said. "There isn't any organized effort, but teachers are going to do whatever they can."

By defying Proposition 227, teachers would presumably face penalties from local school districts charged with implementing the new regulations. School officials throughout the county are just beginning to plan how enforcement will be carried out.

"We'll obey the law," said Joseph Spirito, superintendent of the Ventura Unified School District. "But I won't go monitor the classrooms, just as I don't go to see if the teachers are reading the Bible every day."

Meanwhile, state education officials will convene a committee this month, which among other things will discuss issuing enforcement guidelines to school districts.

*

"It's a really uncertain legal landscape," said Allan Keown, a state Department of Education attorney. "I can't really say" what the recommendations would be.

A key clause in Proposition 227, however, stipulates that parents can take charge of enforcement by suing school boards, administrators and even teachers if a student has been "denied the option of an English-language instructional curriculum."

A teacher's repeated use of foreign languages, even while trying to teach English, could be found to constitute such a denial, legal experts say. Even parents of English-speaking children could sue if a teacher addresses others in another language, proponents say.

Floyd Feeney, a law professor at UC Davis who has written a book on **California** ballot initiatives, noted that the initiative would not subject teachers, administrators and school districts to criminal charges.

Rather, if parents claiming their child was improperly receiving bilingual instruction prevailed in civil court, the court could require school officials to pay attorneys fees. And if parents had to hire tutors or incur other expenses to make sure their child learned English, a court could order school officials to reimburse those costs. Proposition 227 specifies that punitive damages would not be awarded.

"You're not going to get huge amounts of money for bringing these suits," Feeney said. "What you mostly would get is orders for school boards" to implement English immersion.

*

And although Feeney noted that school boards would probably provide legal representation to teachers, bilingual teachers say they still feel threatened by the legal uncertainties and potential financial penalties.

"Do I have to sign off my house, and be poor, just to do my job?" asked Pinson, the Moorpark bilingual teacher.

Both sides of the debate view litigation over the initiative, if approved, as inevitable.

Indeed, in announcing its opposition to Proposition 227 last week, Clinton administration officials indicated lawsuits brought by the federal Office of Civil Rights are possible if parents supportive of **bilingual education** file discrimination complaints.

"They're going to try to get the courts to overturn the voters' wishes," said Frank, the local Proposition 227 campaign chief. "They're going to try to win in the courts, because they can't win in the court of public opinion."

Experts Divided on Legal Question

Experts are split as to what the outcome of such litigation would be. Feeney thinks the initiative would withstand discrimination charges, in part because evidence over which method is best for

students--English immersion or **bilingual education**--is inconclusive.

"There's nothing in here that on its face is blatant discrimination," Feeney said.

But Erwin Chemerinsky, a USC law professor, views a civil rights challenge as potentially strong, saying a failure to provide **bilingual education** could be seen as blocking equal access to education.

"Second, I think there'd be a 1st Amendment challenge," Chemerinsky added, "simply because of the restriction on expression."

Yet even before the issue reaches the courts, teachers say there will be immediate, pressing issues.

In Oxnard and Moorpark, for instance, administrators have already run estimates to figure out how much it will cost to replace foreign-language textbooks. Oxnard elementary school officials say costs could reach \$ 600,000; Moorpark officials say they could spend \$ 70,000 on new English-language texts.

And though the **Unz initiative** proposes the state spend \$ 50 million annually on adult English-language education, school officials complain there is no money earmarked for new textbooks.

"There's going to be a tremendous strain on the materials budget," says Ventura County Supt. of Schools Charles Weis.

*

Meanwhile, officials at Marina West Elementary School have already held several meetings with Latino parents to inform them of a clause in the proposed law that would allow them to pull their children from English classrooms and put them back in bilingual classes. But parents would first have to take several steps, including visiting the school and receiving paperwork describing both options.

"Our feeling is, we really need to be prepared for the passage of the initiative, because it enjoys such wide support," says Marina West Principal Peter Chapa, one of the few county educators who will concede Proposition 227's popularity.

Most school officials say they still have a month to make their case that the initiative represents too radical a change and too much risk.

"A lot of people will be confused and impatient," says Rodrigues. "It will be chaotic."

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

FYI

Proposition 227 proponent Steve Frank of Simi Valley and Stephen Krashen, a USC professor and supporter of **bilingual education**, will debate the measure from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. today at **California** Lutheran University's Preus-Brandt Forum. Cal Lutheran is at 60 W. Olsen Road, Thousand Oaks. For information, call 493-3520.

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: May 4, 1998

FOCUSTM

Search: General News;Bilingual Education and California and Unz Initiative

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May 5, 1998, Tuesday, Home Edition

SECTION: Part A; Page 1; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 869 words

HEADLINE: LEGISLATORS OK ALTERNATIVE TO PROP. 227

BYLINE: CARL INGRAM, TIMES STAFF WRITER

DATELINE: SACRAMENTO

BODY:

The Legislature's alternative to a June 2 ballot initiative that would virtually eliminate **bilingual education** in **California** public schools won narrow final passage Monday and was sent to Gov. Pete Wilson.

The governor, who has acknowledged that he is "strongly leaning" toward supporting Proposition 227, refused to say whether he will sign the bill, but indicated that he was not pleased by its late arrival.

"This comes at the last moment. I'm not going to prejudge it. I will judge it on its merits, but it is very, very late," Wilson told reporters.

"It reminds me of the belated efforts made by the Legislature in 1978 to try to forestall passage of Proposition 13," Wilson said of the Legislature's eleventh-hour attempt to rewrite **California's bilingual education** law.

Twenty years ago, as the popular property-tax-slashing Proposition 13 soared in opinion polls, lawmakers hastily crafted an alternative for the ballot. Proposition 13 crushed it and then sparked other tax-cutting revolts across the nation.

Two weeks ago, the Assembly approved a heavily amended version of the Legislature's **bilingual education** reform bill after Latino Democrats abandoned their previous opposition and agreed to support a compromise. It offers school districts greater flexibility in crafting **bilingual education** programs than the ballot initiative provides.

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The Senate followed on Monday, sending the bill (SB 6) to Wilson on a 21-13 vote, the bare majority required for passage. Most Democrats were in favor and most Republicans were opposed.

"This is not a last-minute attempt to defeat the **Unz initiative**," Sen. Dede Alpert (D-Coronado), the bill's author, told her Senate colleagues. "We should adopt this bill because it is good policy."

The governor has 30 days after he receives the bill to make a decision, a deadline that will not arrive until after the June 2 election.

If signed into law by Wilson, the effort would allow legislators to note that they had belatedly reached consensus on reforming **bilingual education**, and provide an alternative to the **Unz initiative** during the

remainder of the campaign. The bill also would be the standard for **bilingual education** in **California** if Proposition 227 fails or is tied up in the courts.

Proposition 227 campaign spokeswoman Sheri Annis said that even if Wilson signs the bill, it would have no effect on the election. "Most Californians see that this is a last-minute effort to try to justify the Legislature's inaction for the past decade," she said.

The battle over the future of **bilingual education** has attracted nationwide attention. During his just-completed weekend visit to **California**, President Clinton warned that Proposition 227 would make matters worse for limited English speakers.

Proposition 227 would all but abolish **bilingual education** in **California** schools. The initiative would allow as much as one year of instruction in an English-only immersion program. Under the current **bilingual education** system, some students spend years learning in their native languages before they transition to mainstream English classes.

Under the initiative, however, parents could seek waivers to the one-year immersion program under limited circumstances.

Backers of the initiative, which is sponsored by Silicon Valley businessman Ron Unz, assert that the patchwork of **bilingual education** programs has failed to help limited English speakers become fluent or prepare them for jobs or college when they leave high school. About 1.4 million **California** students speak a native language other than English; about 30% of them are receiving formal **bilingual education** at any time.

The Legislature's alternative, which first passed the Senate last year, would give school districts greater flexibility to design and operate bilingual programs keyed to the individual needs of their students.

The Alpert bill would allow local educators to decide whether total immersion in English, instruction in a student's primary language or something in between works best.

But the bill also requires districts to measure and demonstrate that students are becoming fluent in English and are meeting district academic standards.

Critics contend that Proposition 227 contains no accountability standards or any way to assess whether a student is becoming proficient in English or other subjects.

As a magnet for immigrants, **California** was a pioneer in creating **bilingual education** for English learners in the 1970s. Its specific state-mandated guidelines expired a decade ago and have not been renewed, leaving an often fragmented and uneven mix of programs.

Sen. Richard G. Polanco (D-Los Angeles), chairman of the Legislature's Latino caucus who opposed the bill in the Senate last year, said Monday that he reluctantly changed his mind because of Proposition 227.

"It may not run off the **Unz initiative**," Polanco said of the bill approved Monday. "But I'll tell you, the **Unz initiative** will do more damage to the children in the long run."

But Sen. Ray Haynes (R-Riverside), a foe of **bilingual education**, praised the Unz plan as the "best solution" and charged that the Alpert bill "preserves much of the status quo."

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: May 5, 1998

FOCUSTM**Search: General News;Bilingual Education and California and Unz Initiative**

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May 10, 1998, Sunday; Fifth Edition

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A-1

LENGTH: 1450 words

HEADLINE: Educators won't drop bilingual programs ;
Bay Area officials bitterly oppose Prop. 227, plan court fight if measure passes

SERIES: BILINGUAL EDUCATION: FIRST OF TWO PARTS

SOURCE: OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

BYLINE: JULIAN GUTHRIE

BODY:

Polls show voters are poised to say adios to **bilingual education** in **California**, but Bay Area school officials have no plans to switch to a new era of English-only instruction this September.

Rather than assuming that the anti-bilingual measure will pass June 2 and planning for reconfigured classrooms and curriculum, districts from San Francisco to Santa Clara are betting that the voice of the people can be silenced by the din of civil rights challenges.

"If this passes, I will fight this as far and as fully as we can, as we did with 187," said San Francisco schools Superintendent Bill Rojas, referring to Prop. 187, which sought to deny benefits to undocumented aliens but was ruled unconstitutional. "In principle, I couldn't implement this and I wouldn't."

Rojas added: "There are multiple civil rights groups prepared to challenge this. We would either join in or consider our own lawsuit."

School officials in Berkeley, Contra Costa, East Palo Alto, Marin, Oakland, Sacramento and San Jose unanimously and bitterly oppose the initiative.

"To recommend to my school board that we do anything other than continue to implement our bilingual programs would be immoral and unethical," said Santiago Wood, superintendent of Alum Rock Union Elementary in San Jose, where 67 percent of the 16,000 students lack English skills.

In Ravenswood City Elementary in East Palo Alto, nearly 70 percent of the 4,700 students speak a language other than English.

"I have no plans to change our method of bilingual instruction," said Superintendent Charlie Mae Knight. "The best way to assist my youngsters is to teach them through their primary language and transition them into English after three years. I will continue to do that. I expect that this will go the same way as 187."

This defiant inaction by school officials comes at a time when the latest Field Poll shows Proposition 227 is favored by a stunning 70 percent of likely voters. The initiative, which would end most **bilingual education** programs, would take effect when school starts in the fall.

"Heads in the sand"

The initiative's author, Silicon Valley businessman Ron Unz, says school districts are behaving irresponsibly and "sticking their heads in the sand" if they believe the initiative would be overturned by lawsuits.

"There is no legal basis for **bilingual education**," Unz said. "There might be some legal delays, maybe of two weeks. Certainly not two months. At this point, districts should be coming up with contingency plans.

"We have been saying all along that 227 is legally constitutional and won't be tied up in court like various past initiatives," Unz continued. "**California** voters can rest assured that their decision on June 2 will be final."

Although the Clinton administration has declared its opposition to Prop. 227, castigating it as counterproductive and "just plain wrong," administration legal analysts said it would not violate civil rights laws, including the Supreme Court landmark 1973 Lau vs. Nichols ruling.

In that case, brought by Chinese parents in San Francisco, a court ruled that school districts must take necessary steps to ensure that students who lack English skills are able to participate equally in classroom activities.

"Likely violations"

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley said that limiting English immersion classes to one year and preventing a school from providing bilingual instruction to students would "likely result in violations" of the Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974.

The act, like the Lau decision, requires public schools to overcome language barriers that impede students from participating in instructional programs.

The organizations said to be considering legal challenges to the **Unz initiative** include the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the Multicultural Education Training and Advocacy group.

"We've come out strongly against the initiative," said Joseph Jaramillo, a staff attorney at MALDEF. "The question before voters is whether Prop. 227 is the best way to educate English language learners in **California**. Clearly, the answer is no.

"This is the most critical issue facing the education of our children in **California**," said Jaramillo, who declined to discuss any potential litigation.

Although many other states grapple with how best to teach children who lack English skills, **California** faces unprecedented linguistic challenges.

About 1.3 million students in **California** public schools speak a foreign language and have limited English skills, constituting 43 percent of the nation's limited English proficient students.

87 primary languages

There are 87 foreign primary languages, but Spanish is dominant, spoken by more than 1 million children in the state.

"The changes under this initiative will be so Draconian for us," said Larry Aceves, superintendent of Franklin-McKinley in San Jose, where 52 languages are spoken in the 10,000-student elementary and middle school district.

"We have students arriving from Vietnam, Mexico and Central America every day. How do you plan for that?" Aceves said. "It takes us three years to get them to move beyond playground English to academic English. This is a real nightmare for my teachers. After one year of instruction we're supposed to place them at random in classrooms with no language support?"

San Rafael City Elementary schools chief Barbara Smith, calling the **Unz initiative** "up there in the top 10 worst ideas I've ever heard," refuses to have "language police going around making sure Spanish is never spoken."

"If there's a child who speaks Spanish and he doesn't understand what the teacher says, and the teacher speaks Spanish," Smith said, "she will speak to him in Spanish."

Key provisions

The initiative would require that all children who lack English skills be taught in English. The key provisions of the initiative are:

For up to one year, immigrant children would be placed in classrooms to learn English. Native languages and grades would be mixed together: A Cantonese-speaking first-grader could attend class with a Spanish-speaking fifth-grader.

Immigrant parents who want their children exempted from such classes would need to apply annually in person for a waiver, first hearing a presentation of the program. Waivers would be granted only to children who already know English, who are older than 10, or who have "special needs" as determined by school staff.

Bilingual instruction would be offered only if 20 parents received a waiver at any school.

\$ 50 million per year for 10 years would pay for English lessons for adults who pledge to provide English tutoring to children in their community.

Schools that refuse to provide English-only classes and instruction could be liable for attorneys' fees and "actual damages." Teachers, administrators and school board members could be held personally liable.

San Francisco school board member Jill Wynns said the board is "certainly not planning to comply," despite the personal legal threat. "Our board is as opposed to this as we can be. Whatever we can do, up to and including legal action, we will do."

But, after three decades of bilingual instruction in **California**, the civil rights obligations of schools remain oblique and unanswered, experts say.

"There has not been a ruling that said students have a constitutional right to an equal education opportunity vis-a-vis language," said Jim Lyons, a civil rights attorney and executive director of the nonprofit National Association for **Bilingual Education**.

"There is a constitutional right to instruction," Lyons said. "But we haven't had any Supreme Court ruling on whether native-language instruction is necessary."

While Lyons and other educators have no doubt the initiative would be challenged by lawsuits, he believes school districts should prepare for the possibility of English-only classrooms.

"Anyone who is aggrieved and harmed would have standing to sue," Lyons said. "Some school districts will feel so strongly about this they'll engage in civil disobedience. There would be a stay, but the initiative could very well be upheld."

Former state Sen. Gary Hart, co-director of the Institute for Education Reform at Cal State Sacramento, agrees that the initiative will likely be tied up in courts, but only for a while.

"This has a good chance of passing and being upheld by the courts," he cautioned. "Districts ought to have a contingency plan."

On Monday, The Examiner looks at an Oakland classroom where children of immigrants are taught only in English.

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: May 11, 1998

FOCUSTM

Search: General News;Bilingual Education and California and Unz Initiative

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May 14, 1998 Thursday COSTA MESA EDITION

SECTION: COMMUNITY; Pg. 01

LENGTH: 1238 words

HEADLINE: CONTROVERSY IN 2 LANGUAGES;
BILINGUAL EDUCATION: Prop. 227 vote nears; school district officials face tough choices

BYLINE: STEPHEN WALL, The Costa Mesa Breeze

BODY:

As next month's vote on the future of **bilingual education** in **California** nears, the Newport-Mesa school board has yet to take a position on Prop. 227, the so-called **Unz Initiative**.

If passed, the controversial measure would require most language instruction to occur in English, with exceptions provided if parents specifically request that their children be enrolled in bilingual classes.

Principals and district administrators met this week to examine how language programs for recent immigrants are working, and how such classes would be affected if Prop. 227 passes.

"We're meeting to get the best bilingual policy for students, parents and teachers," said Sharon Blakely, principal of Whittier Elementary School.

Most educators interviewed for this story declined openly to support the initiative, which would "immerse" children in special English classes for a year, after which students in most cases would be placed in regular language classes.

"The possibility that anybody that opens their mouth is going to be labeled racist is always there," said trustee Wendy Leece, the only board member publicly favoring Prop. 227.

After receiving staff input, trustees expect to debate the initiative _ named for Palo Alto entrepreneur Ron Unz _ at a meeting in two weeks.

As controversy continues, teachers on Costa Mesa's predominantly Hispanic west side tinker daily with how best to educate children who were not born in this country and/or whose parents do not speak English.

Whittier, Wilson, Pomona and Rea elementary schools each have student populations of greater than 80 percent designated Limited English Proficient (LEP), according to March 1998 census data.

In the 1997-98 school year, 216 of 5,416 LEP students _ about 4

percent _ were reclassified as English-fluent in Newport-Mesa, according to census figures.

"We can still do better" to quicken reclassification, said Susan Despenas, assistant superintendent of elementary education.

Trustees are considering changing criteria under which a student moves from special- to regular-language classes.

Before students are "mainstreamed" into regular language classes, they must score at or above the 36th percentile on a norm-referenced test in reading, language and math. Also, they must pass the district's writing sample for their grade level.

Teacher and parent must be consulted, and an evaluation team must accept the redesignation.

At a recent meeting, board member Martha Fluor asked whether the criteria are too strict.

"I have a kid who can never reach the 36th percentile in math, and she can speak English," Fluor said.

Fluor said it takes several years for a student to become literate in a second language.

"I can speak and understand Spanish, but am I biliterate?

Absolutely not," Fluor said.

Teachers like being able to tailor classes to fit specific academic and social needs, which vary.

The notion that most students are taught mainly in their native or home language _ traditionally seen as **bilingual education** _ is a misnomer.

About 18 percent of Newport-Mesa pupils get primary-language lessons in Spanish in kindergarten through third grade.

A few immigrants from non-Spanish-speaking countries _ including Vietnam, Korea and the Marshall Islands _ study in regular language classes.

Educators say it's misleading to categorize students from a country such as Mexico without first understanding each child's unique background.

Some immigrant students were born to parents with professional backgrounds and are almost literate in Spanish. Other students, however, come to the U. S. with little formal education and their parents are struggling.

District officials say that decisions on which classes to enroll students in must be based on parent consent.

Students of relatively equal facility in English and Spanish

could go into an English program with Spanish assistance.

Students with native-tongue fluency are recommended for enrichment in that language until ready for transition to English instruction.

And, students who enter the district after second grade go into a "newcomer" program for up to a year, which may include special English instruction, teaching of subjects such as math and science in the primary language, as well as an orientation to the U. S. school system, reinforcement of self-image and parent education.

When youths enter the district, they're tested for ability in English and their primary language.

After language options are explained, parents sign a waiver if they don't want children in a bilingual program.

"Sometimes they say, 'I just want my child in English classes,' " said Bernie Neil, who oversees the district assessment center.

"The endpoint is to acquire English. The more proficient they are in Spanish, the faster they learn English. "

The vast majority of LEP students are taught in a variety of English-language development programs.

At Whittier school, about half the instruction time in kindergarten is devoted to Spanish. In first to third grades, students receive about a quarter of instructional minutes in Spanish, according to district policy.

Regardless of language level, all students receive daily reading, writing and vocabulary instruction in English.

In Susie Erickson's first-grade class at Whittier, students begin the day with 90 minutes of instruction in Spanish, their home language. Half the classroom is decorated with posters, charts and maps in Spanish, the other half in English.

One recent day, Erickson was reading a story, "Raul Y Saul En La Playa," ("Raul And Saul At the Beach") to five pupils.

She stopped her lesson to ask the rest of the class questions in English about book reports they were writing in Spanish.

In Jill McWhertor's second-grade classroom at Wilson Elementary School, students learn science and history. Some read in English, others Spanish.

If Prop. 227 passes, McWhertor said, students who are "immersed" in English their first year will fall behind in other academic subjects and have difficulty catching up with peers.

"How can they be progressing in content areas of science, social studies, mathematics and reading when they are still in the process of putting five words together to make a coherent sentence? "

McWhertor said.

Some Hispanic parents said they support transitioning students into regular language classes quickly, but disagreed on aspects of Prop. 227, calling it a "one-size-fits-all" solution.

"As a parent, I should be left with a choice," said Eva Marin, a Whittier parent representative. "My personal opinion is that English should be taught immediately. I do consider having two languages important, but knowing English gives them an advantage when they get to higher grades." Rose Marie Bodrogi, director of federal grants for **bilingual education** at Newport-Mesa, said getting parents to learn English with their children is vital.

Trustee Serene Stokes agreed.

"The most successful programs have parent involvement, parent education and a tutorial program for students. If they're not in place, we're not making any gains," she said.

Newport-Mesa offers English language classes to parents through adult education programs at Whittier, Wilson, Pomona and Davis elementary schools and at a leased facility across from the District Education Center.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 22, 1998

FOCUSTM

Search: General News;Bilingual Education and California and Unz Initiative

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Example: House of Representatives

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May 15, 1998, Friday, VALLEY EDITION

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. N3

LENGTH: 564 words

HEADLINE: LAUSD SAYS UNZ MEASURE WILL HURT KIDS

BYLINE: Terri Hardy Daily News Staff Writer

BODY:

LAUSD administrators warned Thursday that the quality of instruction for its more than 300,000 limited-English-speaking students would be devastated if voters adopt a June ballot measure essentially ending **bilingual education**.

While issuing the dire warnings, the same administrators attempted to explain to school board members how the district is preparing for the possible passage of Proposition 227.

Of the about \$ 146 million that the district receives for bilingual programs per year, it could lose \$ 79 million in state and federal grants, administrators said. But they did not know how much of a \$ 50 million statewide pool would be available and what the new classes would cost.

They also were unsure what kind of training teachers would need and what new instructional materials would be required.

Although polls have showed continual strong voter support for the proposition, the district only recently prepared an 18-page draft contingency plan, which administrators discussed Thursday with the school board committee.

Board of Education member David Tokofsky said he believed the district staff was starting to think through the implementation issues, and he didn't expect a detailed plan Thursday.

"They'll wait for what the lawyers and what Sacramento says before they really figure it out," he said.

A spokeswoman for the campaign supporting Proposition 227 said the district should demand to meet with state officials to create a concrete contingency plan.

"They need to set up a working plan, not a vague outline," said Sheri Annis, spokeswoman for English for the Children. "It sounds as though the LAUSD hasn't taken this issue seriously until now."

Tokofsky said that what the district is not looking at - but must - is why it takes on average of four to seven years to transfer its bilingual children into English-language classes.

In 1998, only eight of every 100 bilingual students made the switch to English classes, a slight drop from 1997. Of the district's 680,000 students, 312,471 are considered non-English speakers.

The so-called **Unz initiative** would dismantle the current bilingual program and require students to be taught in an intensive English immersion class for a year before they are transferred to a traditional class.

LAUSD officials said that under Proposition 227, children would fall behind in other subjects during that year of intensive English. Also, they believe it would keep students from critical thinking and

jeopardize early literacy for young students.

Instead of building on years of language learned at home, the **Unz initiative** would give a student only 180 days of instruction - and then expect those students to compete with other English speakers, said Toni Marsnik, coordinator of the language acquisition development unit.

But Annis, from English for the Children, called the LAUSD's analysis of the initiative invalid.

"It is the current program that is holding children back from the ability to compete intellectually with other children throughout **California**," Annis said. "Immersion is the only way to ensure students can later take rigorous courses and eventually enter higher education."

Annis charged that the LAUSD does not understand the immersion concept, and she asserted that children would continue to take the appropriate classes while learning English.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 20, 1998

FOCUSTM

Search: General News;Bilingual Education and California and Unz Initiative

To narrow this search, please enter a word or phrase:

Example: House of Representatives

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San Antonio Express-News

May 17, 1998, Sunday , METRO

SECTION: A SECTION; Language Lessons: The debate over **Bilingual Education**; Pg. 15, Part A

LENGTH: 1215 words

HEADLINE: Hispanics favor controversial proposal

BYLINE: Analisa Nazareno; Express-News Staff Writer

BODY: LOS ANGELES - Alice Callaghan and Michael Jones get a little righteous when they talk about **bilingual education** in **California**.

Callaghan works in a converted clothing factory in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, tutoring children of nearby garment workers.

Jones is the principal of a school 365 miles north of Los Angeles in Watsonville, just a short hike from the strawberry and mushroom fields where his students' parents toil until sunset.

The two are battling over the future of **bilingual education** in **California**, and perhaps the nation.

Callaghan, an ordained Episcopal priest, wants to end **bilingual education**. She's lobbying for a June referendum that would make instruction in any language but English illegal.

Callaghan and supporters of Proposition 227, also called "English for the Children," said the program hurts immigrant children's chances of succeeding in mainstream America.

"It is the worst thing to happen to this state. It's the worst thing to happen to poor immigrant children," she said.

Jones is trying to bolster the program, which he said is blamed unfairly for the neglect most immigrant and poor children face in schools.

"Everyone should be angry about the state of education," Jones said. "But the solution is not to narrow the possibilities of things that we can do to address the problems. The solution is to expand, to improve these things."

Computer software entrepreneur Ron Unz, a 36-year-old self-made millionaire, proposed the initiative last year after reading about Callaghan's successful boycott to force teachers at Ninth Street Elementary School to limit **bilingual education**.

The proposition Unz wrote with Callaghan's help would virtually eliminate bilingual programs in the state and outlaw non-English instruction.

So far, Unz's camp of conservatives, Hispanics who believe in English-only teaching and converted liberals appears to be winning.

Bilingual educators in the U.S. are on notice. Teachers in Texas, New York, Florida and elsewhere say events in **California** will influence policies in their states.

"This is a universal issue, not a McAllen, San Antonio or **California** issue," said Ramon Billescas, director of the migrant students program at the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo School District in South Texas. He donated \$20 to the "No On Unz" campaign in February at a **bilingual education** conference in Dallas.

"This is about the rights of children to learn the best way that they can," he said.

Most polls show support for the initiative, particularly among Hispanics.

An October 1997 Los Angeles Times poll showed 80 percent of a survey of 1,389 adult Californians supported Unz's plan to focus resources into an English immersion program. And 84 percent of Hispanic voters favored it.

In February, the Latino Issues Forum, a nonprofit San Francisco-based advocacy organization, released a statewide poll showing 53 percent of 620 Hispanics were against the elimination of **bilingual education**.

In March, a Field Poll survey had Latino support for the initiative at 61 percent and overall support at 70 percent.

Unz claims **bilingual education** has a 95 percent failure rate because, he argues, only 5 percent of children with limited English skills tested well enough last year to be labeled English-proficient and exit the program.

Critics say his logic is faulty.

"That would be like saying that a high school is failing because its freshmen or sophomores aren't graduating with the seniors," said Mara Quezada, president of the **California Association for Bilingual Education**.

The numbers reflect new students who recently arrived in the country, **bilingual education** backers say, as well as students expected to leave the program, which enrolls only 30 percent of the state's nearly 1.4 million children with limited English skills.

Unz's initiative proposes to educate all students with limited English proficiency in a "sheltered English immersion" program for a "period not normally intended to exceed one year."

He defines sheltered English immersion as "an English acquisition process for young children in which nearly all classroom instruction is in English, but with the curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language."

What he's calling for, said James Lyons, president of the National Association for **Bilingual Education**, is a return to a pre-civil rights era method of dealing with immigrant children.

In the 1960s, Hispanic activists protested the instruction immigrant children received in parts of the country.

In English-only classrooms, the activists argued, children lagged academically because they did not understand English. Students and teachers were punished for speaking Spanish.

"It would be comical if it weren't so hurtful to children," Lyons said. "(Unz) wants to dictate how children are taught, and he doesn't even have a background in education, nor does he have any children in school."

Other educators fear Unz's alternative is untested and vague.

"There is not a single school district that is implementing this type of a program that he has suggested," said David Dolson, manager of the Office of Language Policy and Leadership for **California's** Department of Education. The office is charged with maintaining data and research for **California** schools working with limited-English proficient children.

Dolson said the proposal lacks a clear definition and would be hard to implement.

"It's written like an essay and not a law," he said. "He uses phrases like 'overwhelmingly in English.' How do we know what overwhelmingly in English is supposed to mean? It could mean 100 percent for some and 50 percent for another."

Bilingual education opponents appear to be winning, defenders said, because voters largely are unhappy with **California's** education system and don't understand **bilingual education**.

Roselyn Rodriguez, a San Jose city parks and recreation leader who lives across from an elementary school where bilingual teachers are trained, said she never heard of the initiative.

At first, Rodriguez defended **bilingual education**. She changed her mind after learning the initiative would limit instruction to a year. After being read a definition of **bilingual education**, she changed her mind again.

Bilingual education in **California** is meant to educate children in academic subjects in their own language while they learn to speak English.

Ideally, children enter a bilingual program in kindergarten and learn reading and writing in their native language. Teachers cut back on the native language instruction annually so, eventually, a child can thrive in English-only classrooms.

Bilingual programs differ from state to state. In general, districts tend to either limit the instruction to grade three, or through grade six.

"I will vote in June," Rodriguez said. "But I don't think most people are informed. And I don't think they are aware that they're trying to do away with (**bilingual education**)."

While the debate rages in **California**, educators in other states are watching and waiting.

Unz predicts if the initiative passes, "the rest of the states in the nation will fall like dominos."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: GLORIA FERNIZ / Staff

Ron Unz is the author of an initiative in **California** that would virtually eliminate bilingual education in that state.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 1, 1998

FOCUSTM

Search: General News;Bilingual Education and California and Unz Initiative

To narrow this search, please enter a word or phrase:

Example: House of Representatives

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View Related Topics

May 17, 1998 Sunday MORNING EDITION

SECTION: EDITORIAL; Pg. G01

LENGTH: 970 words

HEADLINE: English for whose children?;
Bilingual education has failed; it's time to stop the experiment

BYLINE: ROSEMARIE AVILA

BODY:

As a parent, I want my five children to know English well and to learn other languages. Our schools should be doing just that.

The issue isn't really about "**bilingual education**" versus "English only" in discussions of Proposition 227, the "English for the Children" initiative. That's political rhetoric. **Bilingual education** seldom produces truly bilingual, biliterate students. And no one wants their children to speak only English.

The issue is about what works for our students: Which method of instruction gives them high levels of academic achievement and enables them to pursue their goals?

Several years ago, our district's bilingual director told a parent group that what our schools were doing was not working. At a **California Association for Bilingual Education** conference in Anaheim, I heard many people say the same thing. They were then recommending "late exit," keeping children in Spanish through junior high school rather than stopping Spanish instruction at the fourth grade. This, of course, was an unworkable solution due to the shortage of bilingual teachers.

Our district's recent extensive **bilingual education** study also claimed that **bilingual education** did not deliver because the original expectations were based on false data. It also documented that it took students about 10 years (ninth grade) to be reclassified as fluent English speakers. That was the average!

Others, of course, never fully become fluent or literate in English.

Elementary teachers love **bilingual education**; the children are learning in Spanish and seem to be doing well. They say it has "heart." But for junior high teachers it is a different story. Most of the teachers at one of our junior highs signed a petition requesting the governor to discontinue **bilingual education**.

Students come out of elementary schools with a second or third grade English reading ability. Teachers now have to work much too hard and hope their students do not get discouraged as they try to catch up. As our bilingual study pointed out, students are often

demoralized, losing academically, as they are trying to transition from Spanish to English. How can you learn fifth-grade U.S. history if you can't read the book?

A district bilingual study in 1987 pointed out that more than 84 percent of the students in these programs were two or more years behind and that it was unlikely that they would ever catch up.

Despair sets in. And when students turn their backs on education, a world of gangs, crime, drugs and violence awaits them. This is when we see the "bleeding hearts. "

We see their faces when they come before us during the expulsion process. Santa Ana has 10 percent of the population of Orange County, yet we account for over 50 percent of the expulsion cases.

Could it be related to the fact that we teach this population differently, crippling students with such low reading levels?

Most everyone acknowledges that what we've done does not work.

And whatever pockets of success someone may point to certainly do not merit its great expense. So what do we do?

Some say, "We just need to fix it, explore more programs, try new theories. We just need more money. We just need to train more teachers. We just need to import teachers from Spain and Mexico.

Give us more time and we'll get it right. " Absolutely not. We have had enough experimentation. Our children are not guinea pigs, some kind of laboratory animals, to be used to promote a theory from academia. The American taxpayers do not have money for these grand experiments. We cannot wait another 20 years to see if a different approach works. Student's futures are at stake. We must do what has been successful. And immersion works.

When I was six, I came to the United States speaking only Spanish and learned English quickly in the schools. Everyone knows you have to hear and read a language to learn it. Asian families want their children to learn in English because they expect their children to go to college.

If parents want the system to continue to experiment with their own children, they will have that choice through the **Unz initiative's** parental waiver process. After they've proved it works with their children, we'll see if it's better than immersion. It's time to give our Latino students success.

Prop. 227 is local control at its best. The people are finally heard. Parents have a choice. School board members are free from the pressure of teacher's unions and an oppressive state bureaucracy that has demanded compliance without even law. The initiative process should never be a vehicle for making educational policy. But when the Legislature and the educational establishment fail to represent the people, the initiative process gives us a final recourse. It was designed for such a time as this.

Under this initiative students would enter English classes after a year of sheltered immersion. This will be easily done, especially when children are young with limited vocabularies. The wording in the initiative - "normally a year" - allows students to be reevaluated and given more help if special needs arise. Be assured teachers will not be sued for giving directions in Spanish. Even a separate class in Spanish (which I recommend) can be held. The initiative says only that the school day must be "overwhelmingly in English."

The only reason a teacher or board members can be sued is if you deny a student the right to an English education. And you should be sued.

No one should be allowed to offend any one of these little ones.

Ms. Avila is a member of the Santa Ana school district board of education.

GRAPHIC: COLOR PHOTO; ROSEMARIE AVILA

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 22, 1998

FOCUSTM

Search: General News;Bilingual Education and California and Unz Initiative

To narrow this search, please enter a word or phrase:

Example: House of Representatives

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The Ethnic NewsWatch
AsianWeek

May 20, 1998

SECTION: Vol. 19; No. 38; Pg. 15

LENGTH: 2664 words

HEADLINE: The Lessons of **Bilingual Education**: Prop. 227 or status quo? Answer may be none of the above

BYLINE: Wong, Bill

BODY:

The Lessons of **Bilingual Education**: Prop. 227 or status quo? Answer may be none of the above

BY BILL WONG

During a break from Anita Bowers' beginning English-language class for new immigrants at Oakland High School, a Chinese teenager, looking lost, approaches her. Another classmate, also a Chinese immigrant, serves as a translator.

The second youth tells Bowers that the first youth is newly arrived from Guangdong Province. Bowers, who doesn't speak Cantonese, tries to elicit some simple answers from the young man in English. He stares at her blankly.

A few minutes earlier, as a student teacher took over her class, Bowers, chair of Oakland High's **bilingual education** department, pointed out a girl who just arrived from Eritrea and knows only the English alphabet, and another new immigrant from China. These three teens and 28 others, all 15 to 17 years old, all relatively new to the United States, are in a Level One (or beginning) English Language Development class. They, and countless others in the state, would be most affected if voters on June 2 approve Proposition 227, which would eliminate most **bilingual education** programs in public schools. Statewide polls indicate that 7 of 10 **California** voters support the initiative.

Most of the public debate over 227, also known as "English for the Children" or "the **Unz initiative**" (for its chief proponent, Silicon Valley entrepreneur Ron Unz), has focused on Spanish-language programs. But many Asian immigrant children and even U.S.-born Asian Americans could be hurt if the measure passes and survives expected legal challenges.

About 1.4 million **California** public school students are classified as limited-English proficient, or LEP. About 80 percent are Spanish-speaking Latinos. According to the **California** Department of Education, students whose primary language is an Asian one (Vietnamese, Hmong, Cantonese, Filipino, Mandarin, Khmer, etc.) make up 15 percent of the LEPs, or about 210,000 students. Some Asian American bilingual-ed experts put the number closer to 250,000, or approximately 40 percent of all Asian American students in the state's public schools.

It is perhaps ironic that the contemporary **bilingual education** movement was triggered in part by a U.S. Supreme Court case brought by San Francisco Chinese American families. In the landmark 1973 Lau vs. Nichols case, the high court said public schools had to offer students who weren't proficient in English equal educational opportunities, which educators have broadly interpreted to mean bilingual programs.

These days, it's not clear whether Asian Americans support or oppose **bilingual education**, or even how much they care. Some polls have shown majorities as high as 70 percent in favor, but bilingual advocates question whether the sampling is large enough to be statistically significant. Among public officials, proponents include Garden Grove Councilman Ho Chung, and Westminster Councilman Tony

Lam, as well as state Treasurer Matt Fong, who is seeking the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate.

"The education issue cannot be distorted by ethnic sensibilities or political opportunism," said Chung, a Korean American. "Children are our future. We have to educate them. We have to have one common language for everybody to be able to communicate."

However, Judy Chu, a Democratic candidate for the state Assembly from the Monterey Park-San Gabriel area east of Los Angeles, says the **Unz initiative** would hurt kids.

"The massive dismantling of bilingual programs under Unz would do a great disservice to limited-English proficient students in our area," said Chu, adding she isn't concerned that her stance could hurt her at the polls. "This is a very diverse area. Lots of people come from other countries."

Jean Quan, a member of the Oakland School Board, worries about losing Asian-language-speaking classroom aides who translate between teachers on one end and students and their parents on the other. If they are cut from school budgets, there will be no one to translate for the parents, she said.

Leland Yee, a San Francisco supervisor and former San Francisco School Board member, said he opposes 227, but criticizes the political and educational establishment for doing a "terrible job" on behalf of limited-English-speaking children.

"The **Unz Initiative** says we can't have non-English primary language instruction. I can't accept that. But I can't accept business as usual" because policymakers have not exercised sufficient political will to hire enough qualified bilingual teachers and provide enough primary-language textbooks, Yee said.

"If I were the parent of a limited-English proficient student, I would think twice about putting my kid into a bilingual class," he added.

* * *

If Proposition 227 becomes law, limited-English proficient students would be placed in English immersion classes, possibly with kids of other ages, for up to one year. After that, students are to be placed in classrooms where English is the only language of instruction. Exceptions could be made if enough parents show up in person to request that their children be enrolled in bilingual classes.

Advocates of **bilingual education** say that core subjects would not be taught during the immersion period and that one year is not enough time for most students to learn the language well enough to grasp core subjects taught in English. Some educators fear that some students will drop out.

"We know from the research that (non-English speaking students) can't learn English well enough in one year to be put into an academic setting to understand subject matter content taught in English," said Gay Wong, an associate professor at **California** State University at Los Angeles who specializes in literacy and biliteracy. Wong said it takes three to four years to learn "social" English, and five to seven years to learn the more abstract "academic" English.

Experts say many factors determine a student's speed in acquiring English: academic background in the student's native culture, socioeconomic status of the family, age of arrival. Stanford education professor Kenji Hakuta, speaking at a forum last month in San Francisco, said it is a myth that young children magically learn English quickly.

"If we take into account socioeconomic status, transitional bilingual programs are more effective than English-only programs" when it comes to reading and math, he said. About half of Asian LEP students are poor; among all limited-English proficient youngsters, 80 percent are under the poverty line, he said.

A child's native language also affects how long it takes to learn English, he said. Cambodian immigrant students, for instance, have more difficulties, in part because of economic status, in part because of a

lack of certified Cambodian-language bilingual instructors. Hmong immigrant children can have a harder time learning English because many come from a non-literate culture.

* * *

Some observers believe there is a middle ground between the **Unz initiative** and the status quo--such as local control. The State Board of Education seems to agree--in March, it decided to turn control over **bilingual education** decisions to **California's** roughly 1,000 school districts.

However, Henry Der, deputy superintendent for public instruction, has warned that the board's decision does not include accountability, and a bill by state Sen. Dede Alpert, D--San Diego, would require districts to assess how their limited-English students were doing. The legislation awaits Gov. Pete Wilson's signature.

Wong said giving local districts control over bilingual program decisions "is the lesser of two evils" compared with the **Unz Initiative**. But she points out that it was local districts' neglect of limited-English speakers 25 years ago that prompted lawmakers to set up bilingual-ed requirements in the first place.

* * *

Contrary to the impression left by the Proposition 227 campaign, **bilingual education** programs at most schools with heavy immigrant populations use several approaches, not just one that uses the primary language for all instruction. They depend on students' needs, and on the availability of materials and qualified teachers and aides. Sometimes, an instructor teaches core subjects like math and social studies using both English and the other language. In "dual immersion," native-English speakers mix with students who speak another language; both learn the other's native tongue. Some models call for an English-speaking teacher and a foreign-language aide, or for instructors specially trained in teaching English as a second language.

In Anita Bowers' two beginning English-Language Development classes, students from China, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Vietnam, Bosnia, Yemen and Eritrea hear only English as the language of instruction. Bowers mixes most students, so they must talk with one another in English. The newest students, when possible, are paired with someone who speaks his or her primary language.

In a Level Two English language class, teacher Paula Li engages in a lively discussion in English with 27 LEP students, mostly of Latinos and Asian descent. They answer in accented, but understandable English--they aren't nearly as shy as Bowers' Level One students. Most of them were, however, in Bowers' class only last year.

In a Level Five (or advanced) English-language class, teacher James Cham's students are reading an English-language textbook. One-fifth of Cham's students were born in the United States. Those students, mostly of Chinese or Mexican descent, were judged to need special help with English-language skills.

And in yet another classroom, Allen Tam teaches Cantonese to native English speakers and Asian immigrants. He is explaining, mostly in Cantonese, differences in how sentences are constructed in Chinese and English.

Students in bilingual programs seem grateful for learning English. Jia Yan Huang, 17, who came to Oakland five months ago from Taishan City in Guangdong Province, said he was "happy" to be learning English in Bowers' class.

A Thai-born teenager in Li's class, comparing his classrooms to an all-white school he saw in a movie, said he preferred the ethnic diversity at Oakland High. "I like this (school) better. I can learn another language, like all the bad words," he said, as his classmates broke out in laughter.

Ratana Mey, a 16-year-old daughter of Cambodian refugees, was born in Oklahoma, where her parents

had settled. At first, she learned the Khmer language of her family; she learned English in East Bay elementary, middle and high schools. Her mixed-ethnicity classes were taught in English.

"It is important to learn two languages," Ratana said. "One is my native language (Khmer)--to communicate with my culture. But you need English to communicate with other cultures."

* * *

Oakland High's varied programs are typical of **California** school districts with significant numbers of Asian immigrants. In fact, says Cal State professor Wong, few Asian limited-English speakers are in "true" bilingual programs, ones in which at least two-thirds of the students speak the same primary language and are taught by a certified primary-language teacher who uses English, too. "We know that a majority of Asian American LEPs, as high as 80 percent, are in immersion classrooms where English is the language of instruction," Wong said.

Outside Oakland High as well, Asian American bilingual teachers paint a diverse picture of what life is like. Helen Joe-Lew, a resource teacher for the San Francisco public schools' bilingual programs, said in her 25 years of teaching, English and Cantonese have been used in tandem as languages of instruction.

Priscilla Der, a second grade teacher at San Francisco's Francis Scott Key Elementary School, said her school uses various bilingual models. She and other American-born teachers use more English, with Cantonese as a "support" language. Other teachers use more Cantonese than she does. "You use whatever language you are comfortable with," she said. "In all my years (15) in **bilingual education**, there's never been a model that satisfies everyone," she said.

The Filipino Education Center in San Francisco serves Filipino newcomers from kindergarten through fifth grade. Leni Juarez, its principal and a former teacher, said most students know little English because they come from rural areas or were poor city dwellers in the Philippines. As a result, teachers use a great deal of primary language while also using English, Juarez said.

Bilingual education can clash with some parent expectations. George A. Louie, who despite a Chinese-sounding name is African American, is suing the Oakland school district because his 5-year-old son, Travell, who speaks only English, was placed in a Lincoln Elementary School kindergarten where Cantonese is a language of instruction along with English. Louie is demanding his son be placed in an English-only classroom, and he is being represented by the Pacific Legal Foundation, which has challenged other bilingual programs.

Not all teachers support **bilingual education**. Jaime Escalante, the famous Los Angeles high school math teacher whose story became a movie, is honorary chairman of the Proposition 227 campaign. He has worked to eliminate his school's bilingual programs, which he felt were holding students back. "It seems a real tragedy that in many cases our public schools are not teaching English to 5- or 6-year-old immigrant children, who are at an age when they can so easily learn the language," he said.

Gloria Matta Tuchman, a Santa Ana kindergarten teacher, co-authored the **Unz Initiative**. "**Bilingual education** deserves an 'F' for failure to teach English," she said in a January 1998 Teacher magazine article. "The earlier a child learns a new language, the better," said Tuchman, who uses immersion English to teach her mostly Spanish-speaking students.

* * *

Unz himself acknowledges that he perceives differences between Asian bilingual programs and the more prevalent Spanish bilingual programs, and that he's mostly targeting the latter. He said Asian Americans he has talked to are surprised when they are told Spanish bilingual programs have, according to him, only 30 minutes of English-language instruction a day. If Asian-language bilingual programs are taught primarily in English, Unz stressed, they would remain legal under his initiative.

Although Unz's attack focuses on Spanish-language programs, Henry Der sees an unfortunate fallout.

"Asian bilingual programs are getting less attention now because he has chosen to attack Spanish-language programs. This does a great disservice to Asian American LEPs."

* * *

Have bilingual programs worked for Asian Americans? Experts say there haven't been enough studies done. On May 1, San Francisco school officials issued a study showing that bilingual students who completed the district's program did as well, if not better, in reading and math scores, grade-point average and attendance as students not in the program. Unz criticized the study for looking only at students who had completed the program and not at those who hadn't.

Absent broad, conclusive studies, Tammy Leung's experience, like that of many others, sheds insight. Leung immigrated to the United States from Hong Kong in 1978, when she was 15. She could read and write English, but couldn't speak it or understand it. She took bilingual classes at Oakland High, including core subjects taught in Cantonese and English.

"It worked for me," she said in barely accented English. "It gave me confidence when I did well in classes. It gave me a feeling I could do well in the United States."

Eventually, she got her bachelor's degree in nursing at San Jose State University and is now a registered nurse.

When asked how she thinks she would have done had she been placed in an English-only immersion program, she said, "I would have dropped out of school."

ETHNIC-GROUP: Asian/Pacific Island

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: August 26, 1998

FOCUSTM

Search: General News;Bilingual Education and California and Unz Initiative

To narrow this search, please enter a word or phrase:

FOCUS

Example: House of Representatives

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THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

May 23, 1998 Saturday, Final Chaser

SECTION: FRONT; Pg. A10

LENGTH: 525 words

HEADLINE: CALIF. TEACHERS FIGHT FOR **BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

BYLINE: By Analisa Nazareno, San Antonio Express-News

DATELINE: LOS ANGELES

BODY:

Facing a battle to protect **bilingual education**, teachers are becoming more resolute in attacking the **California** ballot initiative that would undo a program for the state's more than 1 million students who lack proficiency in English.

By their own admission, teachers have been too slow to defend **bilingual education**.

"It's frustrating that we're so passive, so apolitical," said Antonio Vela, a **bilingual education** teacher at Cesar Chavez Elementary School in San Jose.

The silence, he said, hurt their cause last year when software millionaire Ron Unz proposed an initiative to virtually abolish **bilingual education** in the state, affecting 1.4 million students and the 85,000 teachers who work with them.

Proposition 227, which Unz called "English for the Children," would replace **bilingual education** with an intense one-year English immersion plan. The initiative will appear on **California's** June 2 ballot.

Supporters of **bilingual education** are desperately playing catch-up with Unz, who has pushed the initiative since June 1997, when he financed an effort to gather signatures for the election.

Several polls show the idea has wide support among voters.

Opposing it are the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the American Civil Liberties Union and other civil-rights groups.

President Clinton has said he opposes Proposition 227. So have the **California** Parent Teacher Association, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the United Farmworkers, the mayors of San Francisco and San Jose, and the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Bilingual teachers from other states have donated money to stop Proposition 227.

"I am worried because if it passes, it's going to have a negative impact everywhere else," said Hugo Hernandez, 25, a graduate student in the University of Texas-San Antonio bilingual/bicultural studies program. Hernandez gave \$5 to the "Citizens for an Educated America: No On Unz" campaign.

Laws protecting teachers in **California** from being used for political campaigning kept them from expressing their opinions at school, teachers said.

At first, some remained silent, even when they left the classroom.

"I'm on probationary contract, and I worry that I'll get fired if I say something," said a teacher and San Jose State University student working toward a **bilingual education** teaching certificate, who asked not

to be identified.

But teachers are speaking out more and more.

Some are campaigning door-to-door against the initiative. At national and statewide conferences for bilingual educators, they contributed to the "No On Unz" campaign.

"We're hoping to raise as much money as we can," said Maria Quezada, president of the **California Association for Bilingual Education**.

After the **Unz initiative** qualified for the ballot, lawyers for MALDEF wrote an analysis criticizing it for mandating a "one-size-fits-all" approach to learning English.

They said the initiative would not solve problems facing students with limited English-speaking skills. MALDEF argues that the replacement program proposed by Unz is untested, makes no provision for teacher training, and would eliminate parental choice.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 24, 1998

FOCUSTM

Search: General News;Bilingual Education and California and Unz Initiative

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Example: **House of Representatives**

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May 24, 1998, Sunday 2 STAR EDITION

SECTION: A; Pg. 1

LENGTH: 1775 words

HEADLINE: POLITICS OF LANGUAGE;
California's bilingual education issue is mired in prickly ethnic politics, low Hispanic support

SOURCE: Staff

BYLINE: KIM COBB

DATELINE: LOS ANGELES

BODY:

LOS ANGELES - In the waning weeks of the campaign to abolish **bilingual education** in **California**, activist Alice Callaghan is sweating out each poll that shows diminishing support for Proposition 227 among Hispanic voters.

When word came last week that Gov. Pete Wilson had publicly endorsed the proposition to replace **bilingual education** with a single year of English immersion, she was livid. A phone clamped to each ear, the Episcopal priest paced the concrete floor of her neighborhood center.

"It's important for us to win the Latino vote," she grouched. "Wilson is the Antichrist to the Latino community. We hoped he'd stay out of it. All he can do is hurt us."

Callaghan's Las Familias del Pueblo is ground zero for Proposition 227. In February 1996, the immigrant parents of 90 children who attended an after-school program at Las Familias mounted a boycott of the Ninth Street School to protest their kids' lack of progress in English.

The boycott intrigued software millionaire Ron Unz, a candidate for governor against Wilson in 1994. He contacted Callaghan a couple of months later with an invitation to help mount a referendum to end **bilingual education**. That question goes to a vote June 2.

At risk here are the state's 1.4 million students with limited English-speaking skills, more than the combined public school populations of 38 states.

About a third of those limited-English students are taught subjects primarily in their native language, gradually increasing their exposure to English. The majority of limited-English students in **California** speak Spanish (466,359 in Los Angeles County, alone), but the state's wide immigrant base means large numbers of students are also getting bilingual instruction in languages like Cantonese, Korean and Russian.

In **California**, limited-English students are taught in their native tongue for an average of five to seven years before being transferred into all-English classes. Critics say that's too long, and that too many children in bilingual programs never catch up in English fluency with their native-English counterparts.

Critics further claim that the extra money paid school districts for **bilingual education** as well as the higher pay for hard-to-find bilingual teachers (as much as \$ 5,000 more per year) makes the schools reluctant to wean children over to English-only classes.

The debate over **bilingual education** is part of a larger conflict over **California's** public education as a whole. The state spends \$ 36 billion a year on education, but tied for last place with Louisiana in 1994 federal reading tests.

Yet this education issue is mired in the state's prickly ethnic politics.

Proposition 227 comes on the heels of two other voter-driven initiatives that drove a deep wedge into **California's** multi-ethnic population. Some critics say they see the same the anti-immigrant and anti-minority sentiments in supporters of Proposition 227 that drove Proposition 187, the 1994 measure to cut government benefits and education to illegal immigrants, and Proposition 209, the 1996 measure banning affirmative action in state and local government.

The polls show substantial support for the initiative across the board, but Hispanic support appears to be wavering, just as it did with the earlier ballot measures, both of which had early Hispanic support.

Even with the popular support of a majority of Californians, any position on Proposition 227 is perceived by many politicians as a no-win political liability. The state Republican Party endorsed Proposition 227 over the protests of its chairman, who was still smarting from criticism (and loss of Hispanic voters) after Republican support of Propositions 187 and 209.

Wilson waited until late in the campaign to make his own endorsement.

But Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, elected with a strong base of Hispanic voters, announced last week that he was funding his own advertising blitz on Spanish-language television stations on behalf of Proposition 227. Riordan said he was putting up more than \$ 250,000 of his own money for the campaign, in part because of the charges of racism being levelled by critics of Proposition 227.

And tit for tat, initiative opponents received \$ 1.5 million from A. Jerrold Perenchio, chief of Univision Communications, one of the most prominent Spanish-language media companies, to be poured in to late English-language television ads.

Republican Attorney General Dan Lungren and his fellow gubernatorial candidates oppose Proposition 227, calling it a one-size-fits-all approach to a problem that begs for flexibility at the local school district level.

The **California** Teachers Association is opposed to the measure, as is the Los Angeles Unified School District. And regardless of how Hispanics have registered their opinions about **bilingual education** in polls, the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund and La Raza have been firmly opposed to the measure from the onset.

"Sometimes we take positions for what we consider the best interest of the Latino community," said Thomas Saenz, MALDEF regional counsel. While the views of some registered voters may show up in public opinion polls, he said, MALDEF also represents the views of undocumented immigrants whose children make up a sizeable chunk of the non-English speaking school population, but who cannot vote.

Saenz agrees that the state's current approach to **bilingual education** is flawed, particularly because there is no method to judge success or failure.

"But the **Unz initiative** takes a glass half full, or half empty, and pours it out," Saenz said.

Saenz criticizes the proposition as a magnet for bigots, though he says he does not suspect Unz of racial motivation. Unz was an outspoken opponent of Proposition 187.

"However, his pledge not to accept the support of anti-immigrant groups has not been followed," Saenz said. "I wish I knew what his motives are - probably political."

"For 10 years people have been trying to fix **bilingual education** and have been blocked by groups like

MALDEF," fumed Callaghan. "Our kids are an abstraction to MALDEF and the Democratic Party (which also opposes Proposition 227)."

Callaghan was until recently a staunch supporter of **bilingual education** herself.

"For years, being a good liberal, I defended the program. I thought it was an entitlement," Callaghan said.

But Armando Navarro, associate professor of ethnic studies at the University of **California** at Riverside, hasn't changed his mind.

"Those of us who were very involved in the Chicano movement were preaching a gospel of Chicano nationalism - pride in one's culture, heritage, and so forth," said Navarro, a founder of the La Raza party in **California**. "We were emerging as a powerful community and we wanted to make a statement that there's virtue in preserving your culture and language."

The motivation behind **bilingual education** was to create a multidimensional, bicultural person, Navarro said, regardless of ethnicity.

"And these things have escaped the lexicon of most people today," Navarro said. "They see (bilingual) as a transition.

"What's behind this is not just the idea that everyone should speak English - some people are so frightened and so indignant because of the changing of the color guard, the browning of the state, the browning of America," Navarro said.

Like many other minority leaders, Navarro blames Wilson for the cultural divide in his state. But he also blames the state's Hispanic leaders and activist organizations for becoming moribund as **bilingual education** foundered.

"The fact is that bilingual, bicultural education was conceived . . . in the struggle of the Chicano movement," Navarro said. "There was a sense of urgency to reform the educational institutions.

"Today, little struggle exists in the Chicano community," Navarro said. "Our leadership is weak, and our state leadership is too tied into the system. Part of the blame rests with us - we've been too apathetic, too satisfied."

At Cahuenga Elementary School, on the edge of downtown Los Angeles' Koreatown, principal Lloyd Houske shares Navarro's vision.

Most of the 1,200 students at Cahuenga were born in the United States, but come to school speaking little or no English because it was not spoken at home.

Two-thirds of the students' parents are from Central America, the remainder from Korea. Cahuenga administers five different bilingual programs - one where mostly Spanish is spoken, one where mostly Korean is spoken, dual-track classes where Korean and English or Spanish and English are taught simultaneously, and an alternative program that mixes the handful of "other language" students.

His school is the pride of the district, which is trotting visiting news media through its doors with regularity as an example of where **bilingual education** works.

But even Houske acknowledges that his school is an exception in the massive school district. A comparison of test scores against other district schools shows that Cahuenga students, in the heart of a very poor neighborhood, perform far better than the vast majority of Los Angeles public school students.

In Spanish-language kindergarten classrooms, the children are clustered around an easel and writing

complete sentences in Spanish. They read out loud from first-grade textbooks, showing off excitedly.

Hispanic students in the third- and fourth-grade classrooms prove that the slow transition from Spanish to English can work. They are speaking and writing clear, grammatical English.

The Korean students learn English and Korean at the same time, beginning in kindergarten. Houske believes that while learning Spanish and English at the same time is confusing for a kindergarten student, learning Korean and English at the same time is not because Korean characters are so different from the English alphabet.

In one of the Korean/English kindergarten classes, a little girl steps to the board and quickly writes, "The cat is black." in both English and Korean.

"Now why would you want to stop doing this," Houske asked. "In schools with no strong bilingual program, the children don't get a grounding in either language. The children in my upper grades are all strong English speakers."

MONDAY: How **bilingual education** plays in Texas.

Hispanics and Proposition 227

California Hispanics voiced early support for Proposition 227, which would replace **bilingual education** with a one-year immersion course. But their support has waned as the campaign nears the end.

Support for Proposition 227 among all voters; Support for Proposition 227 among Hispanic voters - (bar graph)

GRAPHIC: Photo: 1. Two kindergartners in a Los Angeles bilingual class show off their skills in Korean and English. The boy, left, wrote the sentence "the cat is black" in both languages without error. (color); Graph: 2. Hispanics and Proposition 227 (color, text, bar graph); Photo: 3. Students in a kindergarten class at Cahuenga Elementary School in Los Angeles participate in a Spanish-English bilingual lesson. (b/w, p. 20); 1., 3. Rene Macura / Special to the Chronicle, 2. Houston Chronicle, Sources: Los Angeles Times Poll, **California** Field Poll, Public Policy Institute of **California** / Baldassare Poll

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The Fresno Bee

May 24, 1998 Sunday,
Correction Appended HOME EDITION

SECTION: TELEGRAPH, Pg. A1, CAMPAIGN '98 PROPOSITION 227

LENGTH: 2928 words

HEADLINE: The Evolution of Prop. 227;
Indecision, inaction and bad programs led to ballot initiative.

BYLINE: Mike Lewis And Robert Rodriguez, The Fresno Bee

BODY:

On June 2, the fate of **bilingual education** will be dumped into the laps of voters, giving them this simple choice: Stick with a system that allows for wild success and dismal failure, or chuck it all for a heavy dose of the unknown - an untested, unstudied, one-year English crash course mandated under Proposition 227.

It didn't have to come to this, according to legislative records and interviews with policy experts, lawmakers, educators and students throughout **California**. But after 20 years of blocking everything from fundamental restructuring to the simple gathering of data, bilingual advocates and lawmakers find themselves as victims of their own success against change, stuck between two bad choices.

Last year, Assembly Democrats blocked reform. Last week, Gov. Wilson did the same when he vetoed the Legislature's belated attempt to overhaul **bilingual education**. He then endorsed the proposition.

'Personally, I think we made a huge mistake (by not passing it in September),' says Assemblyman Ted Lempert, a Bay Area Democrat who was one of the few liberals urging passage last year. 'I wish we all had pushed harder. In fact, it's pretty clear the Legislature should have done something sooner.'

Prop. 227 mandates that children learn English in approximately 180 school days under a concept called 'sheltered immersion.'

The shelter is a tutor who helps the child over rough places. The immersion means the child mostly is taught in English. The cost is \$ 500 million over 10 years.

Existing **bilingual education** programs, broadly speaking, instruct children in core subjects in their native language, while also teaching them to read, speak and write in English. The goal of all bilingual programs is to reach a level of proficiency in English. That takes years, advocates say.

Regardless of the method, the need is acute. One in four of **California's** schoolchildren have limited English skills. In some Fresno Unified School District schools, it's three of four.

Even so, the state has been unable to create a unified plan to teach and monitor all non-English speakers. Worse still, it hasn't been able to gather information to allow it to figure out which programs work.

The simple truth, some educators admit, is that bilingual educators have seen the enemy - and it is themselves. Or, more specifically, it is their own statistics and resistance to tighter state control.

Privately, a state Department of Education analyst says he has spent two decades arguing that the department needs better methods to rate which programs work.

'But assessments always run into roadblocks,' he says, asking that his name not be used. 'Teachers - for valid reasons - don't want to be judged by standardized tests. And I can understand why. It is hard to show the complexity of each teaching situation.'

'But at the same time, we have no numbers, no ammunition in this war. We can't, statewide, point to the programs or methods that are working.'

Carlos Garcia, Fresno Unified superintendent, agrees: 'We can be our own worst enemies.'

The dearth of data and lack of uniform programs aren't new. For the past 20 years, legislative attempts to mandate **bilingual education** data collection have met resistance.

Dennis Mangers, a former principal and legislator, knows all too well. From 1976-80, he was a rare bird in the state Assembly: a Democrat from Orange County and a passionate believer in reform to **bilingual education**.

'Watching the debate over the legislation the past couple of years, it really took me back,' says Mangers, 57, who in 1968 worked as a principal in Earlimart. 'Everyone ran into the same problems I did.'

And those were?

'CABE for one,' he says with a laugh.

If you don't work in **bilingual education**, chances are you've never heard of CABE (pronounced cah-bay). But every Sacramento lawmaker has.

Short for the **California** Association of Bilingual Educators, the 7,000-member advocacy group has been instrumental in stopping most major reforms to **bilingual education** over the past two decades.

Strong believers in traditional **bilingual education** and the current system, CABE played a primary role in convincing Assembly members to stop last session's legislation in its tracks.

Last summer, moderate Democrats had urged then-Speaker Cruz Bustamante to allow a vote on a measure that would bolster and better assay **California's** troubled **bilingual education** program. They feared inaction would lend momentum to an anticipated initiative to gut the program.

But the Latino Caucus, the lawmakers who anchored the Fresno Democrat's place at the top, thought otherwise. Prodded by CABE and, in some cases, their own deeply personal experiences as native Spanish speakers, the caucus asked Bustamante to kill it outright.

Bustamante torpedoed the bill, by Sen. Dede Alpert, a San Diego Democrat who for three years unsuccessfully pushed for reform legislation. Bustamante defended the decision, saying it allowed for far better compromise legislation to be introduced this year.

Even if the original bill had passed, he adds, the initiative was going to be introduced anyway by millionaire Ron Unz, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur and one-time gubernatorial candidate who financed Prop. 227.

'I don't think it would have made any difference at all,' Bustamante says. 'I think Mr. Unz clearly has demonstrated that is he not interested in fixing **bilingual education**.'

Nevertheless, CABE is beginning to feel the heat from those who say their efforts created the perfect environment for the **Unz initiative** to take hold.

Herman Sillas, legal counsel for CABE, says singling out CABE is unfair: 'I'm not sure I buy into that premise. The present situation arises mostly out of a lack of bilingual teachers.'

Sillas says his group only opposes legislation that would erode **bilingual education** in **California**. He did, however, concede that if there had been greater reform historically - reform that CAFE could have supported - maybe the **Unz initiative** would not have happened.

'I think it is fair to say that everybody involved in the issue gets a share of blame for getting us here,' he says.

Assemblyman Lempert says the Legislature and CAFE made a bad bet: 'I don't think you'll find people to say this publicly, but I think everyone expected the initiative to do poorly so they put off reform.'

Now, it might be too late.

Unz has made much political hay over the Legislature's inaction and a state number showing only 5%, or 89,000 students, are redesignated each year as fluent in English and then moved into mainstream classes.

During the past four years, 300,000 students of a possible 4 million have been moved into mainstream classes.

Calling it a '95% failure rate' and pointing out - correctly - that he bases this assertion on bilingual educators' own numbers, Unz effectively has framed the debate not as a good bilingual programs vs. bad ones, but rather bad programs vs. worse ones.

'Look at their own numbers,' he says. 'How can anyone defend them?'

Longtime bilingual policy expert Norm Gold doesn't want to defend the statistics, which have become the Achilles heel of **bilingual education** advocates. He would rather explain them.

'It's like saying if you have 1,000 kids in a high school and only the 250 seniors graduate each year, you have a 75% failure rate,' says Gold, who heads the state's Office of **Bilingual Education**. 'People move through the program over years.'

Moreover, state Department of Education officials add, less than one-third of the 1.4 million limited-English speakers are actually being taught in the student's native language, or full **bilingual education**.

Like the state, only about one-third of Fresno Unified's LEP students receive help in their native language, according to a 1997 district report.

'The perception is that every limited-English-proficient (LEP) student is in a full-blown bilingual program, and that is far from the truth,' says Rose Patron, director of Fresno Unified's multilingual/multicultural office.

Garcia of Fresno Unified says that things are improving, but the public just doesn't know it. 'We need to make sure that we have the data to show our programs are working. We haven't been able to do that, but that is changing.'

In 1996, the district entered into an agreement with the federal Office of Civil Rights to improve the services it offers non-English-speaking students. State and federal investigators found the district's bilingual program severely deficient and ordered it to improve or risk losing more than \$ 20 million.

Since then, the district has made several major changes, including creating a better system of tracking LEP students, establishing clear guidelines for how children will be taught and hiring about 30 bilingual teachers.

It also has launched an innovative bilingual program that combines English- and non-English-speaking students in one class. The idea is to have each group of students learn the other's language. The program

has been a success in the San Jose area for more than a decade.

The program, called two-way immersion, was started this year at Sunset and Leavenworth elementaries. It has been operating for two years at Laton Elementary, with preliminary signs of success.

The goal at the end of six years is for students to be fluent and literate in two languages. Some programs, such as Kerman Unified's, are doing it in less time. Students who enter its program in kindergarten are transferred to mainstream English classes by the fourth grade.

The process is relatively simple. For most of the day, the students are taught the basics of learning in their native language. And they are taught English. As students move from one grade to the next, the frequency of Spanish is reduced, and the use of English becomes dominant.

So why hasn't it worked everywhere?

The reasons, educators say, include a shortage of bilingual teachers, a lack of accountability and the weak commitment of school officials.

It isn't that the system has failed as much as it hasn't been allowed to succeed, says Garcia of Fresno Unified.

As a young bilingual teacher in the mid-1970s, Garcia remembers the lack of textbooks in Spanish and the absence of training. He didn't have a bilingual credential because it wasn't required.

'We just didn't have the tools we needed,' he says. 'Most of us just translated the textbooks because we didn't have materials in U.S. history, geography or civics.'

In some respects, Garcia says, **bilingual education** was doomed to fail. Had the state been serious about teaching limited-English-speaking students, it would have properly trained teachers and worked to make sure everyone was getting results, he says.

'If you look at what we have done in the last few years, we have really come a long way. I know we have not completely succeeded, but we are making significant progress. I would just hate to see all of that wiped out with one initiative,' he says.

Some legislators argue that school districts deserve some blame, too. They accuse districts of not accurately accounting for students who graduate or are 'redesignated' from **bilingual education** into mainstream classes because schools can get more money for limited-English students.

It is the redesignation number that Prop. 227 backer Unz refers to when he talks about failures in the system.

But some say more students may be becoming proficient in English than what the numbers show. Says Gold of the state's **bilingual education** office: 'There is a backlog in students who need to be redesignated.'

Much of the problem, he says, is because the schools sometimes are slow to do paperwork that does not directly relate to the instruction process. 'Paperwork is felt to be a lower priority than teaching kids,' he says.

But when asked whether the reason could be financial, that schools could just simply be greedy, Gold says: 'There is the perception that if you redesignate kids you lose money.'

The annual cost to educate an average student is \$ 5,000, state records show. The cost for a limited-English student is \$ 5,250. For 1,000 students, the difference is \$ 250,000.

Fresno Unified, where only 3.8% of students were redesignated as fluent in English proficiency in 1997

- receives \$ 8.5 million for its limited-English-speaking population. But district officials say money is not a factor in redesignating students.

Some bilingual advocates counter that the money hardly is an incentive when the real costs of providing **bilingual education** are factored in.

Opposition to Prop. 227 has made some headway. Polling last year showed 70% in favor of it. In the most recent Field Poll, it eroded to 65%. In the gubernatorial debate May 13, the three leading Democrats - Jane Harman, Gray Davis and Al Checchi - and the lone Republican - Dan Lungren - said they didn't support Prop. 227 as written.

The growing opposition to the measure could provide little more than cold comfort to opponents. Polling remains solidly in favor of it, to the dismay of those whose programs would be ended under the ballot measure.

Bilingual educators argue that talk of 'failure' has distorted public opinion of what **bilingual education** is.

Among the common misconceptions is that all limited-English-speaking students are in a program where they are taught in their native language, or what the public views as **bilingual education**.

The fact is that only 30% of **California's** limited-English-speaking students get help in their native language. The remainder, 70%, are in specially designed English classes, with little or no native language support.

'It is so frustrating to hear people say that we aren't teaching children English, or that they are somehow stuck in **bilingual education**,' says Kerman-Floyd Elementary principal Nancy Newsome.

Fresno teacher Maria Elena Gutierrez - a bilingual instructor for nine years - knows in her heart that immigrant children need help in their own language before being put into English-only classes.

She is also a realist. She knows that Fresno Unified's attempts at **bilingual education** haven't been successful for most students.

'You think about this whole issue a lot when you are in that classroom working to make sure students are learning,' she says. 'I worry about what will happen to them when they leave my classroom. I don't want them to be left out there without the skills to survive.'

Even with better data, uniform programs and clear evidence of success, however, some say the process does not need to take so long.

Take Dr. Norman Bitter, a Fresno dentist. Or Redding Republican State Sen. Maurice Johannessen.

Bitter, the son of German parents, grew up in Fresno learning English from his older siblings and in school.

'We didn't need bilingual programs when I was going to school. We had kids who were Mexican, German, Japanese and Italian,' Bitter says. 'And we all learned. Our parents felt that because we were in America, we needed to learn English.'

For Johannessen, who grew up in Oslo, Norway, the Army was his English immersion. In 1952, the 17-year-old deck hand walked off a Norwegian freighter and stepped into a new life in Los Angeles. He had \$ 20 in his pocket. No family. No job. And no way to get one.

'When I came to this country, I didn't speak a word of English,' says Johannessen, now in his second term as a state senator. 'And you can't just walk up and get a job. So I joined the Army.'

By his own reckoning, Johannessen says, in '60 to 90 days, I could make myself understood.' And in one year, he could speak in English well, albeit with a heavy Nordic accent. 'It wasn't the king's English,' he jokes. 'But I just told people I was from Minnesota.'

This is why Johannessen believes Prop. 227 is a good thing, beliefs similarly held by many people who arrived in the United States long before **bilingual education** entered the schools or the public debate.

'It was hard,' he says. 'But people took me aside and helped me. There was a pressure to learn fast. And I think that would happen to the kids in school.'

Some advocates of **bilingual education** concede the issue might be lost, at least under the old structure.

Already, such groups as the Mexican American Legal De-fense and Education Fund are preparing to take Prop. 227 to the foster home for all controversial ballot measures in **California**: the courts.

Attorneys for both sides are preparing to enter the fray. They are expected to focus on the initiative's overly broad language for classes to be taught 'overwhelmingly' in English, the lack of a definition of 'sheltered' English and civil-rights decision dating to the early 1970s.

Thomas Saenz, regional council for MALDEF, declined to discuss the specifics of what its legal challenge might be. But he agrees that vague legal language in a ballot measure is the perfect habitat for attorneys.

'We are looking into the legal ramifications if it passes,' he says. 'There are a lot of questions about this initiative.'

Administrators and teachers, who will be in the classroom not the courts, already may have decided what they will do if the initiative passes.

At Mayfair Elementary, where 56% of the students have limited-English skills, principal Al Sanchez suspects his teachers will use whatever tools they have to help their students.

'The truth is that when that teacher closes his or her door, then they have control of the classroom,' he says. 'They will do what is best for their students.'

CORRECTION-DATE: May 29, 1998

CORRECTION:

Kerman Unified teacher Melissa Lenahan's name was misspelled in a story published on Page A16 of Sunday's Bee.

GRAPHIC: JOHN WALKER -- THE FRESNO BEE

Second-graders Nancy Sanchez, right, Janet Cruz, left, and Lizett Milian, center, recite the Pledge Of Allegiance in English at Kerman-Floyd Elementary School. The school offers bilingual programs that have been successful in moving children into English-only classrooms.

Angelina Rivera reads the Dr. Seuss shirt of teacher Dennis Sayers in a bilingual kindergarten class at Leavenworth Elementary. Prop. 227 would change the way children are taught English. **JOHN WALKER -- THE FRESNO BEE**

Teacher Dennis Sayers leads a bilingual class of Leavenworth Elementary kindergartners in an English song. Joining in at left is Rodolfo Farias, A Spanish speaker, and Nicholas Paredes, an English speaker. The program combines English-and Spanish-speaking students in one class to help them learn each other's language. A Fresno Unified study shows that students fluent in two languages are testing slightly higher than English-only students.

Sonja Gomez, a Kerman-Floyd Elementary fifth-grader, wrote a biography of the late Princess Diana. Teacher Melissa Lindahl says Sonja became one of her top students after completing Kerman's bilingual program. **JOHN WALKER -- THE FRESNO BEE**

Conception Bautista observes daughter Noemi, 8, a Leavenworth Elementary second-grader, as she

practices English spelling at home. Bautista says her daughters teach her English and that they are learning well in bilingual classes. She is worried they will fall behind without support in their native language.

Mayfair Elementary kindergarten teacher Maria Elena Guterrez is against Prop. 227, but she is concerned about the quality of education currently given to bilingual students.

Leavenworth Elementary kindergartener Nicholas Paredes, an English speaker, writes the date in Spanish as part of his lesson in bilingual class. He uses two fingers to help him space words. THE FRESNO BEE

Bilingual education in the Valley.

Progress at Fresno Unified.(charts--see microfilm)

LOAD-DATE: May 30, 1998

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