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School leadership along the trajectory from monolingual to multilingual

Laura Ascenzi-Moreno^a, Sarah Hesson^b and Kate Menken^c

^aChildhood, Bilingual & Special Education Department, Brooklyn College, City University of New York (CUNY), Brooklyn, NY, USA; ^bCity University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center, New York, NY, USA; ^cDepartment of Linguistics, Queens College of the City University of New York (CUNY), New York, NY, USA and Research Institute for the Study of Language in an Urban Society of the CUNY Graduate Center (RISLUS), New York, NY, USA

ABSTRACT

This article explores the critical role of school leaders in language policy change, and specifically in shifting their language education policies and practices from monolingual to multilingual. We examine the process of language policy change in three schools that were involved in a project aimed at increasing the knowledge base of school leaders about bilingualism and language learning, and which required that participating schools use bilingualism as a resource in instruction and cultivate a school-wide ecology of multilingualism. The project encouraged translanguaging pedagogical strategies that engage the entire linguistic repertoire of emergent bilinguals flexibly. Our findings demonstrate that the school leaders made significant language policy changes that included structural changes in programming and pedagogy as well as ideological changes in adopting more favorable approaches towards emergent bilinguals and their languages. A significant finding to emerge is that shifts within schools were associated with changes in school leadership structures from hierarchical to collaborative, wherein principals widened school leadership to be shared among multiple official and unofficial leaders. This paper contributes to the field of language policy by providing a portrait of how school-wide policies favoring multilingualism influence leadership ideology and structures.

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Introduction

US schools have grown significantly in their linguistic diversity in recent years (Pandya, McHugh, and Batalova 2011). Emergent bilinguals¹ are increasing in number and speaking more languages than ever before, and they are also changing in distribution across the United States (Batalova and McHugh 2010; United States Census 2011). Despite these rapidly changing demographics, school language policies have yet to embrace multilingualism and instead largely remain steadfast in their monolingualism, firmly rooted in what García (2009) terms monoglossic ideologies and structures.²

Because few studies have examined the role of school leadership amidst language policy change, in this paper we document the efforts of school leaders to shift their language education policies and practices from monolingual to multilingual. The literature suggests that school leaders are critical in catalyzing school change, serving either as change agents or as barriers (Bryk 2010; Robinson 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova 2008; Elmore 2004). They also wield great power in the creation and implementation of language education policies in schools, yet this area has received little attention in prior language policy research (Hunt 2011; Menken and Solorza 2014).

Because it is relevant to our findings, in this paper we adopt an expansive definition of school leadership influenced by recent scholarship in distributed leadership (Spillane 2006). Many school principals leave the instructional fate of emergent bilingual students in the hands of 'unofficial' teacher leaders, most commonly bilingual and English as second language (ESL) teachers. These teachers are typically knowledgeable about emergent bilinguals and their educational needs, but oftentimes not well-positioned to leverage cohesive school-wide change (Brooks and Morita-Mullaney 2010). Accordingly, in this paper we define school leaders as including both official school leaders (defined as those with formal supervisory or management positions, e.g., principals, assistant principals, and other administrators³) as well as unofficial leaders (defined primarily as those with instructional positions, e.g., teachers and other staff who take on leadership responsibilities within their building).⁴

In this paper, we describe school-based language policy shifts as a result of school leaders' participation in a project called the City University of New York New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals (CUNY NYSIEB).⁵ The goal of this project is to develop the knowledge base of school leaders and staff in order to transform language policies and practices in schools enrolling emergent bilinguals, such that bilingualism is used as a resource and multilingualism is valued in schools. The project emphasizes translanguaging pedagogy (García and Wei 2014). García and Wei (2014, 92) define translanguaging pedagogy as, 'building on bilingual students' language practices flexibly in order to develop new understandings and new language practices, including those deemed "academic standard" practices.' Translanguaging pedagogy as they note (2014, 77), 'has the potential to change the nature of learning, as well as of teaching.' In this way, translanguaging pedagogy can be conceived as transformative in that it positions emergent bilingual students as resource rich rather than framing them through a deficit perspective.

Our purpose in this paper is not to evaluate the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of this project *per se*, but rather to document what the process of change looks like in schools that are actively shifting their language policies. Moreover, this article explores how language policy is 'lived' in schools by drawing upon interviews and field notes with official and unofficial school leaders in CUNY NYSIEB's first cohort of schools. The following research questions guided this study:

- (1) From the perspective of school leaders, in what ways has participation in the CUNY NYSIEB project spurred changes in the school in favor of multilingualism, if any?
- (2) How do school leaders conceive of language policy shifts at their school and the structures that support these changes?

In the following section, we present a literature review, which draws from two distinct bodies of scholarship: language education policy and distributed leadership. The literature review is followed by the research design, where we provide a more detailed description of

the CUNY NYSIEB project to clarify the context for this study, and in which we discuss the research design and methods used. Subsequently, in the findings we present four key themes that emerged from the data, and conclude with recommendations for future research.

Literature review

This review of the literature is divided into two parts. In the first part, we present an overview of research on language policies in schools. We focus primarily on cases in the US because this is where our research was conducted, yet we do also include international examples. In the second section of the literature review, we define distributed leadership and make the case that it is a useful framework for understanding multilingual language policy changes in schools.

Language policies in schools

Recent research in language education policy has increasingly moved away from a solely top-down perspective towards more nuanced understandings of the role of human agency in the interpretation, negotiation, contestation, and/or appropriation of policies by educators within schools charged with their implementation (Johnson 2013; Menken and García 2010; Ramanthan 2005).

This is ... part of a newer wave of language education policy research that refocuses our attentions from governments to local school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members—the so-called bottom of the educational policy structure. (Menken and García 2010, 3)

As McCarty (2010) likewise notes, language policy is 'a situated sociocultural process – the complex of practices, ideologies, attitudes, and formal and informal mechanisms that influence people's language choices in profound and pervasive everyday ways' (xii). Such scholarship highlights how language policy development and adoption within schools is in actuality a fluid, dynamic, and multilayered process. Our research is aligned to this work, in that we regard language policies as far more multidimensional than a government's written policy statements.

Much language policy research in schools examines the imposition of dominant languages in schools and the marginalization of minoritized languages and their speakers, as a means of effecting linguistic and societal change (Menken and García 2010; Johnson 2013; Shohamy 2006). Additionally, there has been scholarship about the promotion of multilingual language education policies (Corson 1999; Freeman 2004). In these two differing lines of inquiry, school leadership in language education policy in general has been overlooked. While there are several studies about school leadership in the context of language policy change, these typically examine how top-down policies promoting monolingualism are managed and ultimately appropriated or adopted by school leaders.

For example, in the United States context, Gort, de Jong, and Cobb (2008) document how school principals and district administrators resist the implementation of new state-wide policy mandating English-only instruction in the state of Massachusetts (US) after the passage there of ballot initiative Question 2. Likewise, Kelsey, Campuzano, and Lopez

(2015) offer two case studies of school leaders who are able to attend to the needs of emergent bilinguals even in highly restrictive, monolingual contexts and set forth a set of tenets for leadership that is inclusive of emergent bilinguals. In contrast, Menken and Solorza (2014) show how school principals do not resist top-down pressures but instead adopt them; specifically, these leaders were found to interpret testing policies as *de facto* English-only policy, resulting in the elimination of bilingual education programs in New York City schools. Johnson and Freeman (2010) studied differing interpretations of federal, state, and local education policies by three school district administrators in the city of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania); they found that two of the administrators who were staunch supporters of bilingual education believed that these policies would not curtail bilingual education and continued to promote it, while a third administrator interpreted the same set of policies as meaning that emergent bilinguals should quickly transition into English-only instruction.

Another body of research examines the implementation of multilingual policies in schools and classrooms around the world, though these studies primarily look at teacher agency rather than focus on the role of school leaders in the implementation of language policy changes. For instance, in her study of bilingual intercultural education policy promoting Quechua–Spanish bilingual schooling in Peru, Valdiviezo (2009) shows that teachers are policy actors, finding that bilingual teachers both reproduced and contested indigenous marginalization in their classrooms as they reinterpreted this language education policy. Taylor (2012) also finds success in developing capacity for multilingual language education programs among educators in Nepal through two 14-day workshops, though the findings are focused on teachers, not school leaders. Finally, García and Velasco (2012) study bilingual education programs in the Chiapas region of Mexico following government policies allowing for instruction in indigenous languages and Spanish. Their research focuses on the pedagogical practices found in the schools as well as the benefits of the program for indigenous teachers, but does not concentrate on leadership.

There are a few noteworthy exceptions to the literature described above, set in multilingual contexts and focused specifically on leadership. For instance, Kirwan (2013) illustrates how school leaders can work organically with students' linguistic resources. The author is a school principal in Ireland, and richly describes how she supported teachers at the school to develop an awareness of their students' linguistic identities, and adopt practices that allowed students to use their entire repertoire of linguistic resources across all content areas. She found that the students learned both content and language as well as developed plurilingual awareness (Kirwan 2013).

Hunt (2011) likewise makes a notable exception in the research literature through her in-depth examination of school leaders in the policy to practice interface within the context of bilingualism. By examining three well-established bilingual education programs in New York City (US) to understand how these programs have been sustained over time in the face of external pressures to dismantle them, she found that a unified and clear mission rooted in a school-wide commitment to bilingual education, collaborative leadership in which staff feel respected, and flexibility were all essential to bilingual education longevity. Like Hunt (2011), a main finding to emerge from our study is how the promotion of multilingual policies in schools corresponded to changes in the schools' leadership structures from being hierarchical to more collaborative, wherein the principals began to share school leadership with more staff members. We elaborate upon this point in the section



that follows, in which we review the scholarship in distributive leadership and its relevance for our research.

Distributed leadership

Our findings are in tune with recent scholarship in educational leadership suggesting the importance of 'distributed leadership' – a reconceptualization of leadership from concentrated in one individual to that of an *interactive* play shared among multiple official and unofficial leaders – to address the complex needs of all students (Leithwood, Mascall, and Strauss 2009; Harris and Spillane 2008). According to Spillane (2006, 4) distributed leadership is defined as, 'leadership practice generated in the *interactions* of leaders, followers, and their situation; each element is essential for leadership practice.' The concept of distributed leadership describes the complex processes through which decision-making practices are enacted in schools. As Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001, 23) explain, 'school leadership is best understood as a distributed practice, stretched over the school's social and situational contexts.' According to Spillane (2006), distributed leadership is a *perspective*, which allows for school faculty and researchers to analyze the extent to which leadership is shared across school faculty.

Shared leadership has the potential for undergirding education change. Bryk (2010) underscores that a powerful way school administrators can support effective practices is through widening leadership among the staff. Although other elements of school change such as professional capacity, school learning climate, and classroom instruction are all inextricably intertwined in making schools successful, Bryk (2010) argues that it is the school's leadership which is the bottom line in effectuating change. He writes, 'school leaders advance instrumental objectives while also trying to enlist teachers in the change effort. In the process, principals cultivate a growing cadre of leaders (teachers, parents and community members) who can help expand the reach of this work and share overall responsibility for improvement' (25).

The distributed leadership perspective offers a lens to examine the processes by which school leaders enlarge the pool of participants actively engaged in school change. Spillane writes (2006, 101), 'viewing leadership from a distributive perspective means that education policymakers must acknowledge that the work of leading schools involves more than the leadership of the school principal. Other leaders are critical, whether they be formally designated leaders' The distributive leadership perspective thereby deepens our understandings of the unofficial school leaders whom we discovered in CUNY NYSIEB schools were very actively engaged in effecting language policy change.

While there is much interest in how leadership evolves and is expressed within bilingual and multilingual schools, there are only a handful of studies in the educational leadership literature that look at leadership within linguistically diverse contexts. However, such work is critical because leadership within multilingual contexts is different from leadership in monolingual settings. In general, school leaders must be able to match *resources* (e.g., materials, personnel, and curriculum) and *actions* (e.g., changes in programming), in order to appropriately and effectively meet students' instructional needs (Robinson 2008). Therefore, school leaders in multilingual settings must have a nuanced understanding of their students' backgrounds and profiles as learners as well as a means to leverage these students' home language resources for their schooling success.

The need for school leaders to have specialized knowledge is highlighted in the handful of studies that examine leadership within multilingual settings. As previously noted, Hunt (2011) documents how school leaders within linguistically diverse settings necessarily embrace diversity as an opportunity and not as a liability. Brooks, Adams, and Morita-Mullaney (2010) emphasize in their findings that leaders working with emergent bilingual students must also be cognizant and willing to act upon the systemic inequalities facing these students. In their case study of a bilingual public school in the US, Ascenzi-Moreno and Flores (2012) found that the shared decision-making among the school leaders, teachers, parents, and students at the school allowed for the development of a flexible and responsive language policy that reflected the academic and social needs of students. Though these studies provide an important perspective into what qualities are important for school leaders to possess and what processes are critical for responsive language policy changes, they do not examine the role that official as well as unofficial school leaders play or the ensuing changes as school language policies shift along the spectrum from monolingual to multilingual. With this in mind, we turn to the design of our research and methods used to examine these changes in leadership.

Research design

About the CUNY NYSIEB project

CUNY NYSIEB is a multi-year project that was established as a means to assist public schools in meeting the instructional needs of their emergent bilingual students. Schools eligible for participation are those in New York State serving above average numbers of emergent bilinguals, and deemed 'low performing' by the state's education department due to the performance of these students on standardized exams. Schools that participate in the CUNY NYSIEB project apply to be part of this program. Once selected, schools are provided with consistent support throughout one academic year from a CUNY NYSIEB support team and receive additional funding. Starting Spring 2012, 27 schools statewide were selected to be part of Cohort 1 (the project is now serving its third cohort, so 47 schools statewide have participated to date).

The project is anchored in the principle that through the development of a deep understanding of bilingualism and language use, school staff can transform instruction and programming to meet the needs of their emergent bilingual students. CUNY NYSIEB schools must adhere to two basic principles – one is to use bilingualism as a resource and the other is to create multilingual ecologies. The first principle maintains that the use of students' home languages in instruction is critical regardless of the program model (ESL, transitional bilingual, or dual language bilingual), and that further, language in the classroom should match the fluid and dynamic language practices of bilinguals, termed 'translanguaging' by García (2009). The second principle posits that the entire school community benefits when students' language practices are 'palpable' in the school, visually represented in offices, hallways, bulletin boards, and classrooms, as well as present in school-wide functions, announcements, and home communications.

Of the 27 schools that participated in Cohort 1 of the CUNY NYSIEB project, 3 of the schools in the cohort were selected for this specific study. The three schools chosen are situated in urban areas of the state, with one elementary, one middle, and one high school.

These schools were labeled 'excelling' based on an internally devised scale measuring their efforts to implement project principles (using bilingualism as a resource and fostering a multilingual ecology). All three schools made significant changes in their language education policies over the course of their participation in the project, as detailed in the 'Findings' section that follows.

To answer our research questions, interviews were conducted following a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix 1). The following chart details who participated in interviews at each school and when they were conducted:

School	Entry interview February–March 2012	Exit interview December 2012
Hillside Elementary School	Principal and assistant principal (joint interview)	Principal and assistant principal (joint interview)
Heights Middle School	Principal and assistant principal (individual interviews)	Principal and assistant principal (joint interview)
Waterfront High School	Lead teacher ⁶	Lead teacher

We analyzed both entry and exit interviews for evidence of how school leaders conceived of their roles as leaders, their view of leadership in general, and the process of language policy change at their schools. Entry interviews were conducted before schools received professional development from the project, while exit interviews took place after completion of the last seminar within the first intensive year of participation. It is worth noting that school support has continued into the present (Summer 2015 at writing); however, data for this paper were primarily gathered during the first year of participation as that was the period of the schools' most intensive involvement in CUNY NYSIEB.

Interviews are not the only source of data. We also visited each school at least nine times over the course of their first academic year of involvement in the project, during which we gathered extensive field notes from conversations with school leaders, observations of regularly scheduled leadership team meetings, and classroom observations. The field notes thereby captured conversations between the researchers and the school leaders, but most often captured conversations between school employees, including leaders and other staff. Taken together, the data provide the discourse about changes being made in the participating schools to their language education policies and practices.

Entry and exit interviews were conducted by CUNY NYSIEB members. Each interview was digitally recorded and lasted approximately one hour. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Interviews were analyzed using two methods: open coding (through codes that emerged from the data) and critical discourse analysis (CDA).

First, the transcripts were read multiple times. A set of codes was generated, and we analyzed the transcripts according to the codes, while revising the coding as needed. The coding schema included the following categories: ideology, knowledge, organization, programming, challenges, ecology and family, and community. Our multiple re-readings allowed us to identify themes that emerged from the data through both open coding (Creswell 1998) and CDA. CDA permitted us to deepen our understandings of the language policy and school change processes as school leaders worked to implement new language policies that embrace their students' multilingualism. CDA is ideal for analyzing shifts in language policy from the perspective of school leaders (Johnson 2011). First, CDA recognizes that, '[b]ecause systems of meaning are caught up in political, social,

racial, economic, religious, and cultural formations which are linked to socially defined practices that carry more or less privilege and value in society, they cannot be considered neutral' (Rogers 2011, 1). In this way, CDA parallels the larger mission of the project itself, inherently focusing on the manifestation of power dynamics through discourse.

The authors of this paper are also staff members of the CUNY NYSIEB project. Specifically, Kate Menken is the project's co-principal investigator, Laura Ascenzi-Moreno is an associate investigator, and Sarah Hesson is a research assistant. Even though our primary purpose here is to document the language policy change process rather than evaluate the project's effectiveness, as noted above, this is a potential limitation; on the other hand, our involvement in the project is what allowed us access to schools in the midst of change.

Findings

The following themes emerged from our data analysis: structural shifts in language policy, ideological shifts about language learning, theories of language policy change, and collaborative leadership structures. The first theme on structural shifts examines the ways that schools in this sample changed their programming for emergent bilinguals. The second complementary theme provides details about changes in attitudes towards emergent bilingual students and their language practices. Emergent bilingual students are often positioned from a deficit perspective (García 2009; Gutiérrez and Orellana 2006), but the schools in this study demonstrated significant changes both in the services they provide to emergent bilinguals and in how these students are conceptualized, with greater attention and worth afforded to their linguistic resources.

Interestingly, we found that change centered on concepts of dynamic bilingualism also served to widen the community of decision-makers across all of the schools studied. The theme we term here 'theories of language policy change' shows how school leaders described the ways in which they both hoped and expected language policy shifts to occur at their schools through participation in the CUNY NYSIEB project. According to school leaders' discourse, we found that language policy changes in favor of multilingualism correlated with a wider community of decision-makers across all of the schools studied, as described by the theme entitled 'collaborative leadership structures.' This final theme focuses particularly on how leadership was 'stretched' across school actors, borrowing Spillane et al.'s term (2001). In the following sections, each of these findings is described in detail.

Structural shifts in language policy

The three schools selected for inclusion in this study all made significant changes in their language education policies and linguistic landscapes (Shohamy and Gorter 2009). One of the schools in our sample is Hillside Elementary School, which offers English as a second language programming to a highly linguistically diverse population of emergent bilinguals. During the project period, the school began to infuse translanguaging strategies⁷ into both their general education and ESL classrooms, as well as in the school-wide linguistic landscape. For instance, many teachers took up the practice of asking students to translate new English vocabulary words into their home languages, or looked up these words themselves and displayed them in the classroom (Hillside Elementary School, classroom observation, 30 November 2012). Teachers also worked to provide the objective of

the lesson in all the languages represented in their classrooms – in one case, this meant displaying the objective in English, Spanish, Ukrainian, Polish, and Arabic. In the kindergarten class, the teacher invited multiple parents into the classroom over the course of the year for multilingual storytime, having parents read a book in their home language (Hillside Elementary School, field notes, 17 December 2012). In addition to these changes, the school planned and implemented a Spanish language after-school program for the many students whose home language was Spanish (Hillside Elementary School, field notes, 4 December 2012).

The multilingual ecology of the entire school shifted as well. Teachers as well as an assistant principal collaborated with the CUNY NYSIEB project to create a welcome packet to hand out to all families new to the school. This packet was translated into Spanish, Chinese, and Polish, and the school hoped to continue to add translations to the materials. This included an audio-recorded message of welcome from the principal, a map of the school which was explained by a partner student in a personal tour of the grounds, and materials for the students to familiarize themselves with basic classroom vocabulary and routines (Hillside Elementary School, field notes, 31 May 2012). In addition, the school incorporated students' home languages into the morning routine. The 'student of the day' was always invited to the office to make some of the morning announcements, so bilingual children made the announcements in both languages. Finally, the school worked to put up signs in English, Spanish, Polish, and Arabic to welcome parents and label different parts of the school, for example the staircases, the main office, and the cafeteria (Hillside Elementary School, field notes, 10 October 2012), and also had students create flags of their countries of origin to hang around the school (Hillside Elementary School, field notes, 7 December 2012).

At Heights Middle School, several noticeable changes took place following the first year of intensive work with the CUNY NYSIEB project. The principal and assistant principal worked to foster teachers' commitment to the principles of bilingualism as a resource (in this case through translanguaging pedagogy) and to a multilingual school ecology. To do so, the administrators scheduled co-planning times, made space in teachers' schedules for inter-visitation and co-teaching, and supported teachers in providing related professional development (principal, Heights Middle School, interview notes, 8 October 2014). Although language teachers had previously worked separately from content teachers, after participation in the project all teachers who work with emergent bilingual students began to collectively create common goals and instructional objectives (Principal, Heights Middle School, interview notes, 8 October 2014). They also developed a parent survey intended to transform parent participation at the school. The school continues to work with CUNY NYSIEB and as of Summer 2015 they are planning to begin a new dual language bilingual education program in Spanish and English in the coming school year.

Finally, at Waterfront High School, the school principal delegated responsibility for the project to a lead teacher, who maintained the school's commitment to change in multiple ways, even after the school's principal was replaced at the end of the first project year. For example, the lead teacher took on the work of facilitating teachers in sessions to learn about the principles of translanguaging (Lead Teacher, Waterfront High School, interview notes, 19 June 2014), and teachers began incorporating translanguaging pedagogy in their classrooms. She helped the CUNY NYSIEB team utilize common planning times already in place for teachers to offer targeted professional development, time for sharing lessons,

and collaboration in creating effective learning environments for emergent bilingual students (Lead Teacher, Waterfront High School, interview notes, 19 June 2014). In addition, translanguaging strategies at the secondary level such as using texts about the same content area in multiple languages were used. Most recently, the current principal has announced that the school plans to begin a new bilingual education program in Bengali in the coming school year (2015–2016), in addition to the program currently available in Spanish.

Ideological shifts about language learning

The structural shifts described above are grounded in ideological shifts. A comparison of entry and exit interviews for the principal of Heights Middle School demonstrates such changes. For instance, in her entry interview, the principal of Heights Middle School expresses a sense of urgency that the school needs to rethink their approach to educating emergent bilingual students but had only vague ideas about how to do so. Furthermore, as evidenced in the following quote, the underlying ideology that framed her work with emergent bilinguals is that the 'problem' of educating emergent bilinguals could be addressed through generic and external solutions.

We [the school community] need more, we need to be trained – even the ESL teachers – how to use native language. How do we use it? And we need more, I don't know, books, stuff, software, whatever (Principal, Heights Middle School, entry interview, March 2012)

In contrast, during her exit interview, the principal of Heights Middle School describes increased understandings of bilingualism and language learning in the following quotation:

They [teachers] are learning and they are willing to read and they are willing to research, and I think they have a clear understanding of what bilingualism is. And it's not, I'm in a classroom and I'm, you can't speak in – only English. It's telling the children, 'you can speak in ...' The children, I think, are more comfortable now. (Principal, Heights Middle School, exit interview, December 2012)

In the above quote, the principal speaks to how teachers have acquired a theoretical understanding of bilingualism that they are able to apply in their classrooms. As such, they are willing to continue to engage in further learning about how to teach emergent bilingual students using their entire linguistic repertoire.

We found that all of the school leaders in our sample transformed how they viewed their emergent bilingual students. In the entry interviews, a striking finding was that all of the principals and other school leaders viewed their emergent bilingual student population as 'needy,' requiring outside resources in order to help them be successful academically. For instance, in the following quote, an assistant principal suggests that emergent bilingual students are lacking skills and need more language:

I think they need, they need more small group instruction in the actual skills they're lacking ... to put it simply, we'll say, writing as a whole, um, you know, which I've seen vocabulary and syntax and all that goes with it, you know? (Assistant Principal, Heights Middle School, entry interview, March 2012)

The above quote is representative of how many schools initially viewed their students as subjects, which instruction is 'done to.' Furthermore, this quote also points to the

notion that students are in need of language. This conception of emergent bilinguals as possessing an illegitimate form of language is inaccurate and makes for a deficit view of the instructional needs of these students (MacSwan 2000; Menken 2013). Also well-documented in the literature is the misconception held by many educators that emergent bilinguals need to be divorced from their home language in order to achieve academic success (see for instance MacSwan 2000; Menken and Solorza 2014). Casting students solely in this light does not acknowledge the vital importance of the linguistic resources that emergent bilinguals bring to the table. This framing also situates the 'lack' within the student, rather than in the system or educational program that is failing to address the students' unique sets of strengths and needs.

By the end of the data collection period, however, students were viewed differently by staff in the schools in our sample. Students in all schools were seen as not only having resources, but also seen as the impetus for innovative educational change at their respective schools. The following quote from the Hillside Elementary School exit interview reflects this change in viewpoint, in which the principal describes emergent bilingual students at the school as follows:

Just because they don't know English doesn't mean they can't think and can't express themselves, and I think that is really important for us to realize as a school. (Principal, Hillside Elementary School, exit interview, December 2012)

The subtext of this quote alludes to the point made earlier that, prior to their involvement in CUNY NYSIEB, school staff (including the principal herself) typically viewed these students as needing instruction to be 'done' to them. Acknowledging that emergent bilingual students are capable of thinking and expressing themselves repositions these students as agents of their own learning. This is a paradigm shift we found across the schools in our sample.

In her exit interview (December 2012), the principal at Heights Middle School goes even further, noting, 'I'm not just teaching my content and they happen to be [English language learners (ELLs); I'm adjusting my teaching to teach ELLs.' She goes on to say:

They [teachers] understand that it's ok for children to talk in their own language and converse in their own language in order to learn the English language, so they understand that they don't have to lose that language or be apart from that language. So they [teachers] have incorporated that in their teaching. (Principal, Heights Middle School, exit interview, December 2012)

In this quotation, the principal describes a shift within her school, where school staff have adopted new ideologies about the languages of emergent bilinguals, which are now to be used in instruction and to help rather than hinder their learning English. Not only does the acquisition of the content matter, but the language identities of the students shape instruction as well. In this way, the principal at Heights Middle School conceives of the learning process as dialectical, an ongoing conversation between teacher and students in which communication is not just about the teacher reaching her students, but also about the students' identities speaking back to and informing the instructional approach of the teacher.

Similarly, by the end of their participation in the project, school leaders at other schools formed their language ideologies and practices based on understanding their student population. In discussing the increasing linguistic diversity of the student population at the

school, the lead teacher at Waterfront High School highlights the need for teachers to work with these students using their home languages in instruction through translanguaging strategies. In her exit interview, the teacher states:

... [O]ne challenge that we are facing is that we have a growing number of students from our population of lower-frequency languages and not a sufficient number of beginning and intermediate students to have a stand-alone class or to provide bilingual education in languages other than Spanish. We will have to be very creative in the types of supports that we're offering...[T]he shift in having teachers feel comfortable in using all of the students' linguistic skills and in utilizing translanguaging strategies will really help with our low-frequency languages. (Lead Teacher, Waterfront High School, exit interview, December 2012)

In this interview excerpt, the lead teacher reflects ideological changes in favor of bilingual approaches and also discusses new efforts to incorporate students' home languages in instruction through translanguaging pedagogy. Taken together, the data presented in this section and the one that precedes it show how each of the schools in our sample made significant structural and ideological changes as they moved from monolingual to multilingual language education policies. We now turn to the shifts in school leadership structures and how school leaders actually enacted language policy changes during their participation in the CUNY NYSIEB project.

Theories of language policy change

This section examines the way that school leaders in our sample speak about the change process at their school, in terms of who will lead the changes as well as the catalyzing forces for changes (e.g., if the implementation of new language policies and approaches would be led by principals or by teachers). In their entry interviews, school leaders described how they viewed change happening in general or the changes they expected to take place in their schools during the period of their involvement in CUNY NYSIEB. The exit interviews asked principals and other school leaders to reflect on the changes that actually took place over the course of the project period and to identify the factors that they saw as most influential in these changes. In this section, we argue that the schools' adoption of multilingual policies was associated with how the change process is conceived.

It is important to note that each of the schools in our sample had different starting points in vocalizing the degree to which they envisioned change at the school being a collaborative endeavor, and as such, each of the schools exhibited different conceptualizations of change by the time of the exit interview. For example, at Heights Middle School, from the outset of the project period the principal saw teachers as essential to the language policy change process. The following two quotations together reveal the way the principal conceives of change as in collaboration with teachers (note that PD refers to professional development, ELL refers to English language learners, and ESL refers to English as a second language):

Well, I'm hoping the grant [CUNY NYSIEB] will support professional development for my teachers, because I think that's key. I'm hoping that the grant will also give us some new ideas on what we can do to really program the children and schedule the children in a way that will really affect their achievement.



(Principal, Heights Middle School, entry interview, March 2012)

I need strong teachers. I need strong teachers in the ELL, as ESL teachers. I need strong regular, general ed teachers, I need to train them and offer PD where they could get, where they could get better, and where they truly – I also need not only training for PD, to learn strategies, I need training also to change the culture. (Principal, Heights Middle School, entry interview, March 2012)

While the focus of the principal's discourse about language policy change centered on the teachers at the outset of the project, at the same time, her view of teachers was as 'deliverers' of material rather than as creative forces in forging new practices; in essence her vision of policy change focused on teachers as implementers and not as innovators. By the end of the project, the principal emphasized the importance of the active construction of knowledge by teachers in improving both content and language instruction for emergent bilingual students. As the principal states:

[What the teachers] are concentrating more on is the language with the content, and making sure that they [students] understand the language. So the teachers are processing and they're doing, they're teaching an understanding that this is, they must teach language. (Principal, Heights Middle School, exit interview, December 2012)

In addition, the principal of Height Middle School attributes the shifts in teachers' thinking to their deepening understanding of bilingualism. In the following quote she suggests that the teachers' learning about bilingualism and translanguaging as pedagogy has spurred on research and action that has had a direct impact on students' comfort level in the classroom:

They [teachers] are learning and they're willing to read and they're willing to research, and I think they have a clear understanding of what bilingualism is. It's not 'I'm in a classroom and you can speak in only English' but telling the children, 'you have to speak in X [your home language]' and the children, I think, are more comfortable now. (Principal, Heights Middle School, exit interview, December 2012)

As evident in the preceding passages, the principal of Heights Middle School placed teachers at the center of the language policy change process. She understood that when dynamic bilingualism was at the core of student learning, teachers were empowered to make instructional choices attuned to students' entire kit of literacy skills. Although the principal's theory of change was collaborative from the start, in the case of Heights Middle School, the principal shifted in her thinking about language policy change. Specifically, she moved from viewing teacher involvement as important to ensure consistency in the delivery of strategies (teachers as implementers, or what Shohamy [2006] terms 'soldiers of the system') to that of teachers being key actors in the development of school language policies and corresponding pedagogies (teachers as change agents in their own right). This is also evidenced in the focus of Fall 2012 meetings and professional development sessions with teachers, in which the school's focus ranged from building pedagogical strategies to brainstorming for increased parental involvement at the school (Heights Middle School, field notes, Fall 2012).

At Hillside Elementary School, the school administrators had a different starting point with respect to their articulation of how to effect change. During the entry interview, the administrative team, composed of a principal and assistant principal, positioned

themselves as the change agents. In the following quote, they talk about how they would be the primary receivers of information from CUNY NYSIEB because they lacked both a foundation in educating emergent bilingual students and a direction in how to forge policy and programming. Following a statement from the assistant principal that although they have worked with emergent bilinguals previously neither administrator holds formal preparation in this area, the principal goes on to state:

It's different than actually being an ESL teacher and going through those courses. So we [principal and assistant principal] feel like we could use more expertise in that area. And the feedback and the plan that comes out, because sometimes we feel like we are so scattered. (Principal, Hillside Elementary School, entry interview, March 2012)

The statement above indicates that the administrators were looking to gain expertise in how to best educate emergent bilingual students through participation in the CUNY NYSIEB project, but nowhere in their interview do they mention how the expertise of the staff may aid in the process of change at the school. Thus change in this context is construed as happening from the top down – the administration wants to learn from the project, and then pass on that knowledge to teachers for the benefit of students.

Though the administration hinted at teacher leadership in the entry interview, in the exit interview, the principal and assistant principal spoke about how teachers had become leaders of language policy changes at the school through their involvement in the CUNY NYSIEB project. The discourse of the administrators of Hillside Elementary in the entry interviews espoused a more hierarchical view of leadership than Heights Middle School, but by the exit interview, the administrators exhibited shifts both in their conceptions of change and their descriptions of the distribution of leadership at their school (here the 'plan' refers to their school improvement plan, in which they articulate new language policy through specific goals for the coming school year).

Principal: Well they [teachers] have been really immersed and involved in creating the plan, and they have taken a leadership role in implementing the plan, I think very much so. So, I think they're really essential.

Assistant Principal: They're the ones who are doing it. (Principal & Assistant Principal, Hillside Elementary School, exit interview, December 2012)

In this interview excerpt, both the principal and assistant principal regard teachers as indispensable to reforms they have planned as a result of their participation in CUNY NYSIEB. In contrast to the entry interview in which both administrators focused more on their own lack of knowledge and their own actions in improving instruction for emergent bilingual students, in the exit interview, the administrators are more vocal about the wealth of information that teachers provide.

At the same time, the discourse of the administrators in the exit interviews does not conclusively point to structural shifts in leadership at the school. While putting the work of the teachers at the center of change, the administrators emphasize the leadership role of teachers particularly in the implementation of the school's language policy, but do not explicitly indicate that teachers were leaders in formulating the policy, though the principal does acknowledge that teachers were 'immersed and involved in creating the plan.' Based on field notes of school visits (Spring 2012), the significant changes that took place

at the school were more pedagogical than structural in nature, indicating that while teachers may have played a large role in the changes that took place at the school, these changes were confined to the traditional realm of the teachers – the classroom – and not to larger structural or programming shifts.

At Waterfront High School, the way the lead teacher conceived of change happening at the school through participation in the CUNY NYSIEB project was largely based around student–teacher interactions. The lead teacher describes a transformative moment with another teacher at the school (note here ‘ELA’ refers to English language arts):

... [E]ven just yesterday after the PD for translanguaging, to have ... ELA teachers who were not necessarily certain how translanguaging might impact their teaching, to have a teacher pull me aside and say, “I had never considered having students that were former ELLs⁸ potentially read a novel in their home language if they were more comfortable with that option.” Just considering having the options for differentiation, I think seeing that it’s getting teachers to really rethink practices around language is refreshing. (Lead Teacher, Waterfront High School, exit interview, December 2012)

In this moment, the lead teacher interviewed describes the way a fellow teacher rethinks her pedagogical practices in light of her new perspective on her students’ linguistic resources. The lead teacher’s theory of language policy change is intimately tied to moments in which she observes teachers rethinking their practices and views of students.

In our sample, schools leaders began with very different theories of language policy change. However, the schools that we examined all expressed a belief that language policy change would not occur effectively if the process is limited to a select group of administrators or teachers, but rather the policy change process needed to be widened and enacted by many participants. This point leads us to our next category of analysis, collaborative leadership structures.

Collaborative leadership structures

In this section, we shift our focus from how school leaders theorized change to examining how they portrayed the actual language policy changes that took place at their schools. We use a distributed leadership lens in order to analyze how unofficial school leaders are brought into the broader leadership structure. In all three schools notions of leadership widened to move beyond just the principals as they worked to develop and adopt new language policies and practices for their emergent bilingual students. What is more, our research suggests that language policy shifts within schools might necessitate changes in school leadership structures from hierarchical to collaborative.

To illustrate this point, the principal at Heights Middle School described the following programming changes, which resulted in greater power for teachers in sharing their experiences and creating curricula to suit emergent bilingual students. As she notes in the exit interview:

What we did this year, though, is ... we programmed collaborative [teacher] teams, so that ... all the content areas who taught the ELLs ... were able to meet collaboratively at least 2 to 3 times a week, so that they could meet and talk, not only the ELA teacher but the Math teacher, the Science teachers, and the Social Studies teachers, within the grade. We also... made sure that we not only put a second teacher in with ELA, we put a second teacher in

with Social Studies and Science (Principal, Heights Middle School, exit interview, December 2012)

Prior to their involvement in CUNY NYSIEB, these collaborative leadership structures did not exist. But when charged with the task of making changes to their school's language policies and practices to better serve emergent bilinguals, this school – like the other schools in our sample – found that distributive leadership structures became necessary. In the preceding quote, the principal notes that through new collaborative structures, teachers were able to meet together and more effectively teach emergent bilingual students as a result. The model described by the principal at Heights Middle School stands in contrast to the model of isolation that Brooks, Adams, and Morita-Mullaney (2010) described in which only specialists in the education of emergent bilingual students (e.g., ESL or bilingual educators) work with and think about these students.

At Waterside High School, a shift to distributive leadership structures was also readily apparent in a variety of ways. The leadership team composed of teachers and school leaders that was initially formed as a component of the CUNY NYSIEB project has continued to meet over the years since the project began, with support from the new principal, and has made significant decisions about language policies that affect the instruction emergent bilingual students receive (Lead Teacher, Waterside High School, interview notes, 19 June 2014). Furthermore, the lead teacher was allowed more freedom in her role than she had been allowed in the past, and was now able to reach teachers throughout the school through school-wide professional development. She became more directly involved in administration and would meet with school leadership on a regular basis. In this way, the lead teacher knew the programs intimately, felt qualified to discuss strengths and challenges of the programs, and helped shape education at the school beyond her own classroom (Lead Teacher, Waterside High School, interview notes, 19 June 2014).

The collaborative attitude was also apparent at the school in the way the lead teacher discussed one of the school's goals for the year. In her exit interview, she states, '... [the] struggle for this year is to bring to light the importance of having that cohesive and consistent mindset around language allocation. And that the parallel structures [use of translanguaging strategies across the school] are the vehicle for making sure that students can clearly access language use.' Here the lead teacher sees beyond her own classroom to the importance of larger collaborative structures to undergird consistently high quality education for her students.

At Hillside Elementary, the administration initially saw language policy change taking shape through an increase in their own expertise in regards to educating emergent bilingual students, coupled with support from the CUNY NYSIEB team. As the principal stated at the outset of the project, in describing how she envisions support:

I'll tell you what I envision this to be, and I might be off base, but this is ... for you to ... give us some feedback ... Because none of us in the administration have really taught ELLs, except as a general ed[ucation] teacher, naturally. But none of us have really the degree in ESL. We certainly have gotten a lot of training, and a lot of professional development, and read, but it's different. It's different than actually being an ESL teacher and going through those courses. So we feel like we could use more expertise in that area. (Principal, Hillside Elementary School, entry interview, March 2012)



In the exit interview, the principal returns to this framework of change and does reference the shift in her mindset, but highlights that the collaborative nature of teachers' work rests on a shift in reframing bilingualism as a resource. In discussing the impact of the project on her thinking, the principal states, '... you're looking at it through a different lens now. You're looking at it like, what an opportunity, what an asset to their future' (exit interview, December 2012). The principal explicitly connects her shift in how she thinks about bilingualism with an attitude shift towards her students and the linguistic resources they bring to school. Much of the work of CUNY NYSIEB is foregrounding the linguistic resources that students bring to school; in recognizing students' home languages as an asset, the principal is recognizing that in addition to teaching students new skills, they also come with valuable skills.

In addition to placing greater value on the knowledge that students bring to school with them, administrators likewise placed greater emphasis on the necessity of teachers in making language policy changes at the school, suggesting a shift in how they conceived of the learning community at their school. The principal shows this in how she discusses teachers and their role in making change at the school. Discussing the 'emergent bilingual leadership team' meetings, the principal notes, 'And certainly you know the time we take to discuss with [the teachers] and to meet and work on the plan I think has been very valuable for everyone' (exit interview, December 2012). In the entry interview, the principal noted that ESL teachers had sometimes provided professional development for other general education teachers, yet did not initially see teachers as central to leading the creation and adoption of new language education policies and practices in her school. While the principal did not mention the teachers as much in the entry interview, in the exit interview, she vocalized instances of teacher leadership and noted how she learned from her teachers and their role in the school's successes in making changes to better meet the needs of their emergent bilinguals. The field notes taken during emergent bilingual leadership team meetings indicate that teachers' voices were consistently heard alongside administrators, and ideas from both teachers and administrators alike were implemented in the school's improvement plan (Hillside Elementary School, field notes, Fall 2012).

Conclusion and implications

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of school leaders in changing school language policies. In doing so, we explored the association between how bilingualism was conceived by school leaders with changes in language policy and programming within schools that participated in the CUNY NYSIEB project. The CUNY NYSIEB project, as noted earlier, is rooted in the idea that when schools have a deep understanding of emergent bilinguals' linguistic resources, instruction and programming can more fully and appropriately meet the needs of these students (see García 2009 on translanguaging). Our research lens allowed us to examine the dynamic processes of how multilingual policies and practices are forged by school leaders. Furthermore, we employed a distributed leadership perspective to highlight changes in the ways in which leadership at the schools in our sample was broadened in tandem with their adoption of multilingual policies and practices. Through this approach to examining language policy, we found that in our sample, all schools made both important ideological and structural shifts. One of the most

important shifts which occurred at all schools in the study was that emergent bilingual students were cast in a different light – school leaders and teachers began to see students as having rich linguistic resources rather than as a high-needs population in need of programmatic interventions.

Our findings also demonstrated that both teachers and administrators are critical to successfully changing a school environment with regard to multilingualism. Although the structures at each school were different in character, each of the schools in our sample made movement towards increasing the type and quality of collaborative work and, in turn, redefined how school leadership was enacted and who was involved. These findings suggest that although school leaders may ‘broker’ ideas that enter schools, once these ideas take root the process of reshaping school language policy and practice is necessarily collaborative. Although teacher collaboration was important at all the schools, the nature of this collaboration ultimately differed based upon the leadership style of the school principal. While some teachers at given schools were able to shape school programming and policies as decision-makers, at other schools teacher involvement was limited to instructional components of change. Further research would be necessary to determine the conditions under which teachers’ leadership roles extend beyond pedagogy to include the ability to affect broader policy and structural changes across schools making language policy shifts.

It is important to note that the CUNY NYSIEB project is founded on the idea that shifting school leaders’ understandings of home language as a resource invokes positive shifts in the ways emergent bilinguals are educated. As such, this project provides a rare alternative to programmatic-based reform that is widespread across school districts. Instead of training school leaders on a new program to target academic ‘deficiencies’ evidenced by emergent bilinguals, the approach taken by CUNY NYSIEB was to provide school leaders with a broad understanding of bilingualism and the role of translanguaging, or the dynamic use of students’ entire linguistic repertoire, in the instruction of emergent bilinguals in order to develop policies and programs attuned to distinct emergent bilingual populations at each school.

The findings from this research support the argument advanced by García and Wei (2014) that translanguaging can be a transformative force. Specifically, the findings from this study suggest that translanguaging pedagogies may also have an effect on school structures and leaders’ ideologies as well. This is because a translanguaging lens allows educators to reverse the view that emergent bilingual students are language deficient to one in which students’ home languages are valued as a critical linguistic resource. Our research extends the transformative possibilities of translanguaging to apply to leadership structures as well as language policy as a whole. We argue that conceptually based professional development for school leaders can be transformative, resulting in both ideological and structural language policy changes which are conducive to improved learning for emergent bilinguals.

With these points in mind, this research has implications for language education policy at both the state and national levels in the US as well as in educational settings internationally. First, when bilingual practices are rooted in monolingual ideologies, they may not target the actual needs of emergent bilingual students and can continue to perpetuate inequities. In this way, like García and Wei (2014), we maintain that the knowledge of how to use home languages as a resource (or translanguaging) holds the possibility of being transformative for both teaching and learning, and also for leadership. In particular, we recommend that schools and school leaders adopt clear language policies which reflect

a commitment to the use of home languages in the education of emergent bilingual students. Likewise, school districts must support school leaders in adopting language policies that embrace the use of home language.

In light of the findings from our research, we recommend that schools engaging in multilingual language policy shifts reconsider their leadership structures, as we would argue that making a school more multilingual in its stance, programming, and practices would necessitate broadening how school leadership is defined. It would seem that a cadre of school leaders is needed that includes teachers and others who traditionally are not given leadership roles in schools, but who might hold critical knowledge about the work at hand, in order for their reforms to be successful.

Lastly, although our findings illustrate the ways in which school leadership shifted through the process of adopting multilingual policies and practices, this study did not connect these changes to students' learning. We suggest that further research be done in this area and specifically that research be conducted on how students experience shifts from monolingual to multilingual policies and programs in both their academic and emotional lives.

In conclusion, the road from monolingual to multilingual is not one that is traveled alone. Policy shifts that favor multilingual environments occur at multiple levels. Our research suggests that deepening school leaders' understandings of bilingualism can be a transformative process, which not only catalyzes language policy shifts but also results in a wider distribution of school leadership and a brighter learning landscape for emergent bilingual students.

Notes

1. Following the work of García (2009), we use the term emergent bilingual in lieu of 'English language learner' (ELL) as a reminder that in adding English to their linguistic repertoire students are becoming bilinguals rather than English monolinguals. However, in interview excerpts in this paper we use the language of the participants in this study, many of whom are quoted using the term ELL. It is important to note that the term, emergent bilingual, describes students of all ages as language continues to develop throughout the lifespan.
2. English-only policies are favored in US schools. New York State, where this study was conducted, could be misperceived as an exception because bilingual education is encouraged in official state policy statements. Even so, English as a second language (ESL) is the predominant model used to educate emergent bilinguals in New York just as it is the favored model across the country (for further discussion of US language education policy see de Jong [2013]) and of the New York case see Menken and Solorza [2014]).
3. School administrators manage and direct operations of schools. This term includes school principals, assistant principals, as well as district level officials who may manage schools at a macro level.
4. Our characterization of school leaders as official or unofficial is based upon their formal job description. Official school leaders are those members of the school community who formally have supervisory and management roles, while the formal job description for unofficial leaders is primarily instruction.
5. CUNY NYSIEB is a project funded by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). CUNY NYSIEB's Principal Investigator is Ricardo Otheguy. The Co-Principal Investigators are Ofelia García and Kate Menken. María Teresa Sánchez is CUNY NYSIEB's Project Director. The research for this study was not funded.
6. Due to a change in leadership (the principal at Waterfront High School was only employed at the school at the time of the entry interview), we choose to highlight the lead teachers' interviews which include both entry and exit interviews. Lead teachers are selected by the central

department of education for their exemplary instruction. As part of their job description, lead teachers provide professional development through coaching and co-teaching to other members of teaching staff.

7. For a comprehensive review of translanguaging strategies that goes beyond the scope of this paper, see Celic and Seltzer (2013), *Translanguaging: A Guide for Educators*, which provides examples of translanguaging strategies across primary and secondary school settings.
8. In New York, 'former ELLs' refers to students who had been officially designated ELLs upon entry to the school system but had subsequently passed the state's English language proficiency exam and exited their formal ELL status.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Appendix 1. Interview protocol

- (1) What have been your *goals* for education for your emergent bilingual (EBL) student body? How do they differ (if they differ) from your goals for educating your general student body?
- (2) Tell me about the *profile* of your EBL students? How would you characterize the kinds of *strengths and challenges* this subpopulation of students show?
- (3) In your estimation, *what is preventing* EBL students from excelling academically?
- (4) Please describe *in detail* programming you currently provide for the emergent bilinguals in your building. [*Programming for Emergent Bilinguals*]
 - (a) Describe the history of these programs. When? Why?
 - (b) Describe how the home languages and/or cultures of students are used in classroom instruction.
- (5) To what extent do you think the current programming is meeting the needs of all of the emergent bilinguals in your school? [*Pros and Cons of Current Programming for EBLs*]
 - (a) Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the program(s) and the reasons for the strengths and weaknesses.
 - (b) Describe how you assess the programs.
- (6) Please describe your school's challenges in terms of meeting the adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements for emergent bilinguals. [*AYP challenges*]
 - (a) Describe why you think your school did not make AYP for emergent bilinguals.
 - (b) Which areas of AYP pose the greatest challenges for your emergent bilinguals?
- (7) Describe how the languages and cultures of your students are included in your school. [*School-wide Ecology of Multilingualism/Families & Communities*]
 - (a) Describe your schools' engagement with the families of emergent bilinguals.
 - (b) Describe any neighborhood/community partnerships that your school may have.
- (8) Describe the types of *social, emotional, and behavioral issues* that your emergent bilinguals in your school struggle with. [*Social and Emotional Education*]
 - (a) Describe the ways that your school has attempted to address these issues.
- (9) Describe the kinds of *professional development training/supports* that your school has received specific to education for EBLs. What has been helpful and why?
- (10) What's your sense of how the CUNY NYSIEB project can best support your school in meeting your goals to improve education for your EBL students?