

Center for Educational Leadership & Accountability

Doctoral Program

St. John's University

Oakdale

Policy Brief

EDU 5103 Educational Governance and Policy

Jonathan Hughes, Ed.D, Professor

Submitted By

Chelsea Brown

Donna Jones

Izzet Mergen

Cohort 9

June 3, 2010

Executive Summary

This policy brief addresses the need to change the certification requirements for bilingual education in order to adequately address the instructional needs of a growing immigrant population. In the pages that follow, key elements of the policy that should be recommended to the Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education will be discussed in order to address the demographic trends that are impacting the Long Island region.

Context

Over the past five years, the Long Island region has experienced a major increase in the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Below you will find Table 1 which depicts the growing number of Limited English Proficient students in specific Long Island school districts. Of particular interest are two Nassau and two Suffolk County school districts: Hempstead and Westbury. Hempstead and Westbury have experienced respective increases of 12.5% and 7.7% in the number of LEP students enrolled in their districts while Brentwood and Central Islip have experienced respective increases of 16.3% and 12.5%. These percentages and others reflected in Table 1 demonstrate that there has been a significant increase in the number of LEP students enrolling in Long Island school districts over the past five years.

% Limited English Proficiency							
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change
Freeport	16.7%	17.1%	13.7%	16.8%	16.9%	18.0%	1.3
Glen Cove	11.1%	10.4%	9.6%	11.9%	11.3%	14.0%	2.9
Hempstead	19.5%	17.5%	17.7%	21.5%	16.9%	32.0%	12.5
Lawrence	6.4%	6.2%	7.2%	8.2%	8.8%	9.0%	2.6
Westbury	24.3%	27.3%	27.3%	31.1%	32.3%	32.0%	7.7
Brentwood	13.7%	15.2%	17.7%	19.2%	20.8%	30.0%	16.3
Central Islip	15.5%	10.7%	15.1%	21.1%	13.8%	28.0%	12.5
Copiague	9.4%	7.8%	7.4%	7.6%	10.6%	15.0%	5.6
Hampton Bays	9.5%	10.4%	9.5%	11.1%	12.0%	15.0%	5.5
Huntington	12.0%	14.4%	10.2%	11.3%	13.4%	14.0%	2.0

Table 1: Limited English Proficiency

In addition to the increasing population of Limited English Proficient students on Long Island, the population of residents ages 65 and over has increased significantly over the last five decades. In 1970, only 10% of the Long Island population fell into the age range of 65 and over. More than 60 years later, the total population of residents ages 65 and over is projected to double. This statistic, as shown in Table 2, suggests that residents are living longer and migration rates continue to increase on the Island.

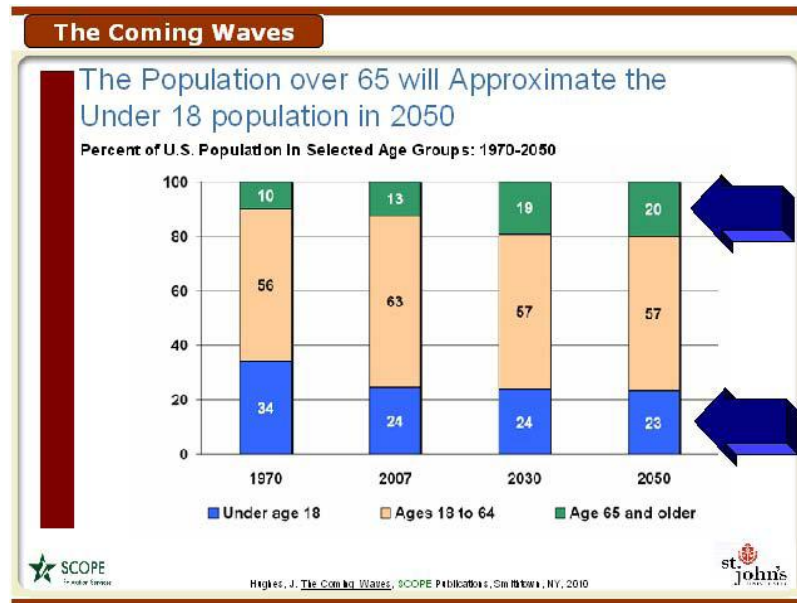


Table 2: Age Distribution of Population

In 1980, almost 75% of the Long Island population was White. It is projected that by the year 2030 that the percentage of white residents on Long Island will decline to 52%. This represents a 25% decline in the white population over a 50 year period as shown in Table 3.

To further emphasize the migration trends, it is imperative to analyze the changes projected for the Hispanic population. In 2000, 12% of the total Long Island population was of Hispanic descent. As shown in Table 3, it is projected that by the year 2030, 24% of the Long Island population will be of Hispanic descent. This trend represents a 50% increase in the population during a 30 year period. In addition, over 50 years the Hispanic population will represent 25% of the total Long Island population.

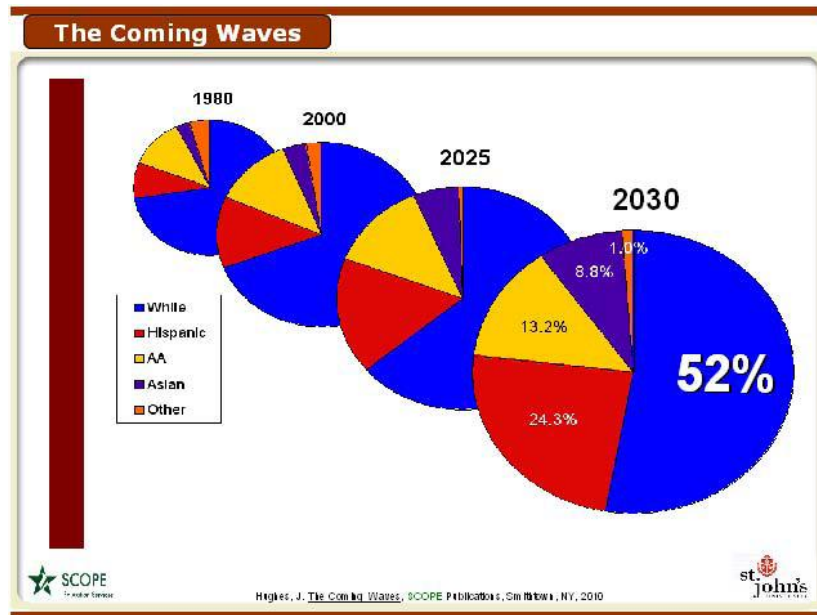


Table 3: Distribution of Ethnic Population

The trends relating to the changes in the minority population and more specifically the Hispanic youth population as depicted in Table 4 were carefully reviewed. In 2008, the percentage of minority youth ages 15-24 represented 39% of the Long Island region. It is projected that by the year 2050, 61% of the youth will be of minority descent. This will represent more than half of the total population. More specifically, the minority youth population in 2008 was 17%. By the year 2050, it is projected that 35% of the minority population will be of Hispanic descent.

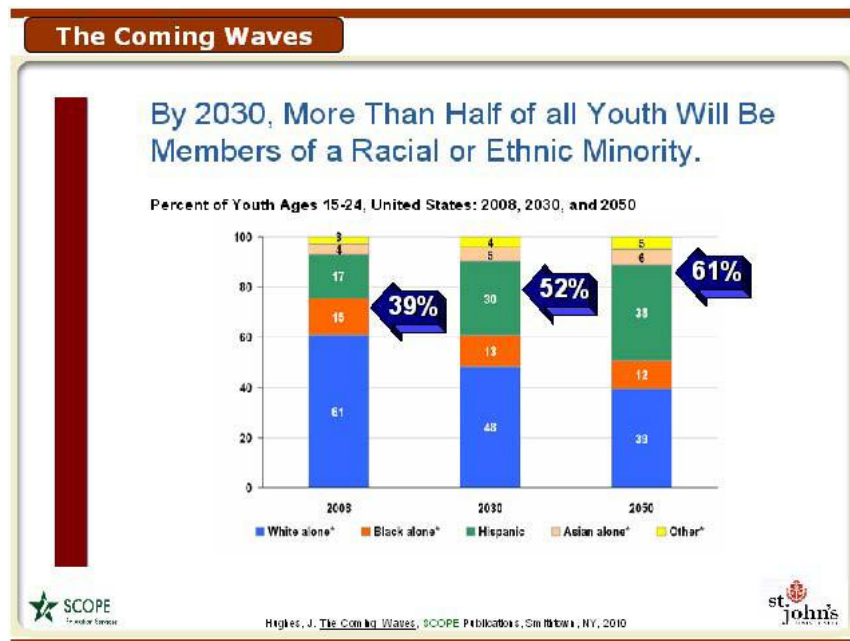


Table 4: Distribution of Ethnic Population

In light of these changes in the migration patterns, along with the significant increases in the LEP and Hispanic youth populations, a policy will be required in order to meet the educational needs of these students.

Action Proposal

In order to address the impact that the demographic trends will have on the education system, it will be necessary to raise the awareness of the need for policy changes with key external stakeholders. Garnering the support of the Board of Regents, key Legislators, union leaders and local newspaper reporters will be critical. Below you will find the series of actions that were taken in order to solicit the support from key external stakeholders.

The initial steps taken to raise the awareness for a policy change were to speak to our local Legislators. Recently we attended a Legislative breakfast that was held at a local school

district. In attendance at the breakfast were a number of politicians including Assemblymen, State Senators, County Legislators and our County Executive, Steve Levy. We each mingled with the Legislators that we knew and began to discuss the demography shifts and how the trends would impact districts covered by their regions. The Legislators listened carefully, but were non-committal in responses.

We next attended a performing arts presentation at the Tilles Center located on the campus of CW Post. It was at this event that we had the opportunity to speak to NYS Regent Roger Tilles. We spoke at length about the changing demographics and more specifically about the need for Non-English certified educators. Furthermore, it was discussed that our concerns would only increase with the migration trends. We asked if we could e-mail him some data that would support the concerns we expressed. He pensively listened to us and agreed to review the data and concerns that we raised with the Board of Regents.

Next, we called John Hildebrand, education reporter for Newsday. We explained the issues associated with the certification process and followed up with an e-mail describing the issues in detail. We also shared our concerns related to the growing number of hate crimes reported on Long Island and other national issues associated with immigration. Lastly, we explained how absent policy changes, children in certain school districts would not be able to be appropriately serviced. Moreover, districts would not even be able to afford to hire the teachers necessary to educate the changing population of students on Long Island. We advised John whom we had spoken to thus far and promised an exclusive story on the issue. John was very interested in the story and the positions of each of the external stakeholders that we had spoken with.

Finally, we spoke to Dick Ianuzzi, President of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). Mr. Ianuzzi attended a function in a Long Island school district recently where Kerry Kennedy was speaking on social change. During a coffee break, we spoke to Mr. Ianuzzi about the issues at hand. Mr. Ianuzzi worked in the Central Islip School District for over 30 years prior to assuming his current position as the leader of NYSUT. He was fully aware of the growing concern and the impact that the issue would have on his members. He expressed the concern that the issue would create tension among his members if the Board of Regents tackled this issue. He indicated that senior teachers that had been placed on special assignment as demographics changed over the years would face the reality that they could suddenly be excessed after many years of District service. Confidentially he discussed some of the racial tensions that this issue would create, but recognized that as the demographics continued to change, we would no longer be able to avoid the issue. He agreed to review the data that we would send to him and concurred that further discussions were necessary on the topic.

Expected Outcomes

As stated earlier, a series of actions were taken in order to solicit the support from key external stakeholders. The Board of Regents, key Legislators, union leaders and local newspaper reporters were contacted. Following our meetings with the external stakeholders, the expected outcomes are presented below with regard to each stakeholder.

There would be a significant impact on school districts if the change in certification were enacted by the Board of Regents. Key Legislators would exhibit varying reactions based upon the constituents they serve in specific regions. In addition, support for or against this policy would be influenced by whether or not specific politicians were up for reelection.

The teachers' unions would receive this change in policy with mixed reviews. Teachers rely heavily on seniority acquiring tenure in specific certification areas as a means of securing their future. The creation of additional certification areas would have a large impact on seniority and tenure across all curricular areas.

The local newspapers and other media would strategically represent their coverage and the reactions that would occur would be based on the responses of the stakeholders in the context of immigration issues both nationally and locally.

Cost

The proposed policy would present an additional cost to teachers and a savings to school districts. Teachers would be required to pay the additional cost of \$100 in order to file for an additional certification through the New York State Education Department (NYSED). However there would be a savings to districts that have carried veteran teachers on "special assignment" in order to avoid the seniority dilemma. In many instances, districts experiencing a major increase in the number of LEP students have had no choice but to hire Bilingual teachers and maintain veteran teachers on special assignment in order to avoid litigation based on seniority. The teachers were being maintained even though the veteran teachers were no longer needed to teach in the classroom. If the certification change was enacted by the Board of Regents, veteran teachers receiving a higher salary than the newly hired Bilingual teachers could be excessed without triggering litigation. Ultimately, enacting this policy change would prompt a district savings.

Options and Alternatives

Within the proposed policy, there exist options and alternatives. The policy proposal would outline one option to include the creation of separate certifications for regular education teachers. These certifications would be classified as Non-English and regular education. This would take on different alternative configurations at the elementary and secondary levels.

At the elementary level, the alternative would be twofold. Teachers would pursue a Non-English and/or regular education certification. At the secondary level, the certification alternatives would be broken down into specific content areas. For example, teachers would acquire certification in regular education mathematics, social studies, and science and/or Non-English mathematics, Non-English social studies, and Non-English science.

Critique

To better understand the policy proposal and its possible impacts based on the options and alternatives, it is necessary to break it down into four categories: Strength of Policy, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The strengths of the policy are driven by the needs of the students. As stated earlier, we need to address the migration trends, changes in demographics and population diversity to be able to create an environment that maximizes learning and meets the individual educational, social, and emotional needs of the students.

Inherently, weaknesses will occur as tenure areas are subdivided and union members are separated. Confusion will be created within the local unions as a result of the policy changes. In addition, the policy needs to include several technological components and enhancements. As it is difficult to predict what technology will look like in a few years, it is increasingly difficult to

prepare for the growing needs of the diverse population coupled with the ever-changing and fast-growing technological applications.

It is important to note the opportunities this policy would create to thoroughly address, on the state level, the significant issues that the Long Island region is facing, with regard to certification. Changes to teacher certification would best meet the needs of the students and the growing population along with the increasing diversity of its students. However, this policy could pose a serious threat to the teachers' unions. Racial and union tension as discussed earlier in paper could be one of the possible outcomes and could surface as a result of this change in policy.

References

Department, T. S. (2007, July). *Part 154*. Retrieved from The State Education Department:
http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/documents/PART154RegAmendment8-2007Final_1.pdf

Hughes, J., *Data Points*, Scope Publishing, Smithtown, NY.

Hughes, J., *Geo-Tracks*, SCOPE, Smithtown, NY

Hughes, J., *The Coming Waves*, SCOPE Publications, Smithtown, NY, 2010