



Sweetwater Union High School District

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Date: September 17, 2015

To: Dr. Karen Janney, Superintendent

From: Ana Maria Alvarez, Assistant Superintendent

RE: Science Courses for English Language Learners

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Board of Trustees with an overview of the district's Science courses that are available to our English Language Learners and clarify the information that was provided in DELAC's presentation to the Board of Trustees this past Monday.

A summary of the district's comprehensive English Language Program was provided in a separate Superintendent's Update that provides background information. At the high school level, the district offers the following courses to our English Language Learners in the area of Science (not a fully inclusive list; Advances Placement information is not included in the data):

1. Bilingual Biology
2. Dual Language Biology
3. Bilingual Chemistry
4. Structured English Immersion Biology
5. Structured English Immersion Chemistry
6. Structured English Immersion Physics
7. SEI Biology – Collaborative Teaching (for students who are ELL and in the SPED program)

As was mentioned in the previous memo, school sites utilize triangulated data to determine student placement in core classes. Based on this data, students are enrolled in the appropriate course that best meets their needs. The district's graduation requirements for Science include one (1) full year of Biology, which is usually offered at the 9th grade, and one (1) full year of Chemistry. Physics is a third year Science elective course that is usually provided to students in their senior year. There are other elective courses in Science including Advanced Placement courses that are also available to students at each site.

There are several pertinent reasons that we do not offer Bilingual Physics in the district. The most notable reason is that Physics is not a requirement for graduation. By the time students take Physics in the 12th grade, the Structured English Immersion placement is the most appropriate setting for the students. At most high school sites, there is only one section of Physics in the master schedule. Additionally, there is a shortage of highly qualified bilingual credentialed Physics teachers.

The graphs and information provided at the Board of Trustee's meeting this Monday were originally part of a presentation given by the Office of Language Acquisition with regard to the English Language Learner Census Data that is commonly known as the R30. As a clarification to information that may have been misinterpreted, General Science is a middle school course that is offered to all middle school students; it is not offered to high school students.