Four Corners
Regional Education Cooperative #1

**Bloomfield Public Schools &
Four Corners Regional Education Cooperative #1**

Plan for Creating and Deploying a Navajo Dual Language Curriculum

as part of the broader
Comprehensive Navajo Dual Language Project

Four Corners Regional Education Cooperative #1
&
Bloomfield Public Schools

Plan for Creating and Deploying
a Navajo Dual Language Curriculum

Summary:
The Four Corners Regional Education Cooperative #1, with Bloomfield Public Schools as the fiscal agent, received WKKF funding for the development of a Navajo Dual Language Curriculum This document contains the products achieved to date and a look at future needs for both development and deployment.

This report contains 4 major sections, as follows
1.   Overview of current offerings in Navajo Language Instruction
2.   Framework for Instruction in Navajo Language—Speaking
3.   Need for Further Development
4.   Plan for Deployment of Navajo Language Framework

Navajo language teachers and administrators from Bloomfield Public Schools and surrounding districts and schools contributed to the structure, design, and content of the framework, as they provided guidance and recommendations pertaining to conditions and actions to support implementation. They include the following:
*   Jacquiline Harris and Patricia Marquez from Bloomfield Public schools,
*   Shawl Iron Moccasin from Farmington Municipal Schools,
*   Kimberly Zah from Aztec Municipal Schools,
*   Belinda Begay from Central Consolidated Schools,
*   Shawna Becenti from Navajo Preparatory School, and
*   Nadine Chatto from Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Community Grant School.

Special thanks go to Jacquiline Harris and Nadine Chatto for helping to finalize the benchmark skills and assessments that form the core of the Navajo language framework, as presented in this report.

Plan for Creating and Deploying a Navajo Language Dual Language Curriculum

Table of Contents

Section I: Overview of Current Offerings

Structure, Perceptions, and Outcomes of the Current Curriculum

The Bloomfield district places a priority on supporting interested Navajo students in developing proficiency in their historical native language: Diné. The participating teachers, too, clearly expressed their passion for helping students develop language proficiency and articulated a clear, shared vision for student language learning. In spite of this vision and priority, however, few students attain proficiency as a result of instructional offerings.

Most participating teachers relied on curriculum based on guidance from the Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education (DODE). The DODE guidance, in the teachers' perception, focuses on basic terminology, scripted or formulaic speech patterns, and simple expressions. Curriculum based on the DODE guidance, therefore, follows the same approach and does not provide guidance on establishing a continuum of skills from most basic to advanced, nor tools for differentiating instruction based on students' proficiency.

Student engagement and interest appears to be negatively correlated with the number of language classes or years of instruction in Navajo language. The teachers reported that students complain that classes revisit the same basic skills and content that students learned in previous years, i.e., students were not presented with new or advancing skills. From year to year, students received instruction or were asked to meet expectations that seemed identical or similar to the prior year's instruction, resulting in students not receiving support to attain higher levels of language proficiency. This condition, as the teachers explained, has led to low engagement and participation in instructional activities and low interest in completing class work.

Interestingly, this effect was subsequently noted by a school board member during a public presentation of the in-progress framework, who described upper grade Navajo students in language classes seemingly disinterested in learning their historical language or engaging in the language instructional coursework.

The teachers, too, were frustrated that instructional expectations did not advance based on the current course descriptions and curriculum.

The teachers explained that they had little guidance on how to help students expand their skills or on "next steps" for learning and instruction. Similarly, they discussed at length the difficulty of addressing a range of student proficiency within a classroom cohort, contributing to instructional focus on the most basic needs of the lowest-proficiency students. In simple terms, as they explained, they would like to "do more" with students, but did not know what to do.

Of note, all participating teachers, regardless of the school district, expressed identical concerns. Their overall sense, therefore, was that the current curricular guidance does not support their passion and vision for helping students become proficient users of the Navajo language, which was the rationale to engage in this re-development of the curriculum.

Problems to be Addressed

Participating teachers identified a number of difficulties resulting from the current curricular approach, which align with the rationale for initiating this re-development process.

Problem One. The curriculum is based on one or two faulty assumptions. Either every student at

a particular grade level can demonstrate the same language proficiency and is, therefore, equally prepared for the current course content, or all students are perpetually at the beginning level requiring the most basic instructional content. Neither of these are true, and the teachers provided many examples demonstrating the error of these assumptions.

Problem Two. Students, or their parents and guardians, may become interested in learning the Navajo language when the students are in various grade levels. For example, some parents may wish for their first grade students to begin learning Navajo, and those students may receive several years of instruction. Conversely, a student in high school may be interested for the first time. This, itself, is not a problem. The problem is that the current course offerings are neither sufficiently numerous nor sufficiently differentiated to allow students to participate in instruction that is aligned to their proficiency levels.

Problem Three. Years of instruction, class attendance, participation, and coursework are perceived as indicators of language proficiency, rather than the ability to demonstrate clearly defined skills. However, without an articulated, i.e., spiraling, continuum of skills, teachers have few other metrics upon which to estimate or evaluate student learning.

Problem Four. Assessment of a student's proficiency currently allows for a high degree of subjectivity. Because proficiency levels are not pre-determined with clear indicators, teachers must use their own experience and language ability to suggest that a student is more or less proficient. For example, what one teacher may describe as intermediate proficiency may be described differently by another teacher. Again, this is a primarily caused by a lack of clearly defined skills beyond the most basic level. Assessment, therefore, produces highly unreliable results, with results as determined by one teacher not providing practical, usable information to a teacher at the next grade or school level to guide instruction for any particular student.

Problem Five. The current curricular guidance documents do not establish a clear progression of skills in which students first begin learning foundational skills and concepts and then advance systematically to higher skills and concepts dependent upon prior skills. Without a clearly articulated, objectively defined progression of skills, teachers are unclear about what to teach students next, they may provide instruction that does not sufficiently prepare students for upcoming courses, and they cannot predict what a student already knows at the beginning of a course. The result, as demonstrated, is that teachers keep starting over at the basic level, producing the predictable decrease in students' interest and engagement and, for many students, the inability to progress towards higher language proficiency.

The framework presented in subsequent sections is intended to address each of these problems.

Section II: Instructional Framework Design

Structure and Rationale

The framework presented below is based on five proficiency levels of language use:

- beginning
- upper beginning
- intermediate
- upper intermediate
- advanced

Each proficiency level describes a set of skills that students should master before attempting more advanced skills described by the next higher level. The levels are not intended to describe all the possible skills, terminology, or concepts that may be represented in a particular level but instead provide a representative sample. If teachers determine that students can independently perform the listed skills, then he or she can be reasonably assured that the student is ready for more advanced learning.

Note that the upper intermediate level approximately aligns with the skills necessary for passing the language assessment required for the Navajo language seal upon graduation.

Within each proficiency level, language skills are divided into four subcategories, each representing a component of language use:

- scripted language: language usage that is pre-determined and typically applied the same way across multiple events, e.g., songs
- vocabulary: specific words and appropriate usage of the words
- conventions: the rules and forms governing the manner in which words are correctly assembled and language is modified to accurately communicate ideas, e.g., grammar
- usage / application: the combination of vocabulary and conventions to communicate ideas appropriately.

Skills represented within these subcategories demonstrate an ongoing shift from scripted to applied language use and from individual vocabulary terminology (vocabulary) to a focus on the structure of the language (conventions), with the overall emphasis on applying language skills in an increasingly more natural context.

The skills represents a "spiraling" framework, in which (a) foundational skills support the acquisition more advanced skills and (b) skills and concepts of one proficiency level are revisited at a more complex or deeper degree at a higher level. In this manner, students not only are prepared for more challenging skills but also receive reinforcement of earlier learning. As a result, although concepts and skills at levels 2 through 5 may be similar in nature to earlier topics, students learn and apply those skills at a more advanced level.

Teaching Application

Of note, although the framework defines proficiency levels for speaking, the skills necessarily reflect development of corresponding listening skills, which is the second of four literacy areas: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Speaking and listening are collectively described as oral skills. Reading and writing skills, described as print skills, are not addressed, though they will applied in the development of speaking skills. Fortunately, as students develop their oral skills with the applicable phonological skills, they will be positioned to apply those skills to the decoding and production of written language, leading to ability in reading and writing Navajo.

With the differentiated proficiency levels and associated skills and assessment tasks, teachers have guidance on instructional content to answer the question "what should I teach next?" The end result is that teachers can assist students in continually improving their proficiency by providing new and more challenging instructional content, rather than repeating already learned content. Conversely, by following the framework level by level, teachers ensure that students have the foundational skills necessary to understand, acquire, and apply more challenging content.

The framework also addresses the faulty assumption that all students in a particular age or grade range should be taught the same content. Rather, the framework provides guidance for instructional content that aligns with students' proficiency levels and learning needs, which allows for appropriate differentiation. This leads to improved student engagement in the instructional content, as well as reduced students' frustration with either repeated content or learning expectations that are inappropriately challenging and inaccessible to students without sufficient foundational skills.

By following the guidance of this framework, teachers can first determine an individual student's current proficiency level, whether through application of assessment tasks, on-going observation of a student's ability to perform various skills, or reports and information from prior teachers. Once a teacher has an understanding of the student's proficiency level, the teacher can apply the framework to determine what new or deeper skills and concepts should be the focus of instruction for the individual student. In a colloquial sense, the teacher may think, "The student can already do 'X' so now I need to focus on teaching 'Y'." In response, the teacher's task is to present age and developmentally appropriate instructional activities, with similarly appropriate learning resources, that support learning of the target skills and concepts.

However, application of the framework will lead to an important question for instructors and leadership: if students are at various proficiency levels, how can instruction be differentiated to allows all students to receive appropriate instruction? Potential answers include

1. Subgroups within classrooms;

2. Multiple classes for age or grade levels (which may require changes to scheduling and increases in staffing);

3. Alternating class schedules for ranges of proficiency levels, e.g., Monday and Wednesday for students in proficiency levels 1 and 2; and

4. Multiple teachers per class to subdivide single classes into multiple classes, each at a proficiency level (which also may require increases in staffing).

Problems Addressed by Framework

In spite of these instructional and policy-level challenges, the framework addresses each of the identified problems with the current curricular offerings.

Problem One. "Faulty assumption that every student at a particular grade level can demonstrate the same language proficiency and is, therefore, equally prepared for the current course content, or all students are perpetually at the beginning level requiring the most basic instructional content." By explicitly defining proficiency levels on the basis of specific observable skills, individual student's learning needs can be identified and teachers have guidance for differentiated instruction that is aligned to students' learning needs.

Problem Two. "Students, or their parents and guardians, may become interested in learning the Navajo language when the students are in various grade levels." The framework is based not on students' grades or ages but on students' proficiency levels. Indeed, the proficiency is not necessarily correlated to age or grade, e.g., a first grade student and a tenth grade student may both be at the same proficiency level, and the framework does not differentiate learning expectations based on grade. As noted previously, the teacher's challenge is to adapt the instructional practices rather than the instructional content to the students by age, grade, and cognitive development.

Problem Three. "Years of instruction, class attendance, participation, and coursework are perceived as indicators of language proficiency, rather than the ability to demonstrate clearly defined skills." Now that specific assessment tasks have been identified per proficiency level, they become the indicators of proficiency. Teachers no longer need to rely on other factors, e.g., participation. They also prevent the assumption that time in school equals student learning. Rather, a student's learning progress, i.e., proficiency, can be gauged solely by a student's ability to demonstrate language skills.

Problem Four. "Assessment of a student's proficiency currently allows for a high degree of subjectivity." Similar to problem three, the clearly defined skills presented in the framework, along with the associated assessment tasks, provide an objective standard against which to measure a student's proficiency. In this way, different teachers may reach the same determination of a student's proficiency because they all have the same standards for assessment and evaluation.

Problem Five. "The current curricular guidance documents do not establish a clear progression of skills in which students first begin learning foundational skills and concepts and then advance systematically to higher skills and concepts dependent upon prior skills." As explained previously, the framework structure is based on a spiraling structure so that foundational skills prepare students for more challenging skills, expectations become increasingly advanced, and students can strengthen current abilities while learning new skills.

Section III: Framework for Navajo Language Instruction, Speaking

Level I: Beginner Mastery Definition: Speaks and understands simple Dine statements				
Scripted language	**Vocabulary**	**Conventions**	**Usage / Application**	**Potential assessment activities**
Repeat modeled words with proper enunciation. Introduce self using: name, maternal and paternal clans, where she/he is from, age, parents' name, teachers' name, and grade level	Learn local geographic names Recognize and use word for numbers 0 to 20 Use the names of 7 major body parts in Dine Use Dine words associated with the five senses Use names of common foods Identify some items in the classroom by their name.	Use first person singular A and My with parts of the body in Dine, in simple commands Use the pronouns I, Me, You, Your Correctly produces all sounds of alphabet Make recognizable sounds for simple words	Respond to simple questions. Responds to greetings and departures. Answer simple questions with one or two Navajo words Respond correctly to a few simple commands.	1. Have students make responses in Navajo to all activity items. 2. Show picture cards or point to items, and have kids give names or vocabulary for what they're showing. 3. Have students signal whenever they hear specific words in songs. 4. Use "connect-the-dots" images, saying the names of the numbers as they draw the images. 5. Give the simplified greeting using the information described in the skills. 6. Have students point to and name major body parts using the appropriate personal pronouns. 7. Ask students to perform simple tasks (as appropriate to their age and ability) and have students describe what they are doing.

Level 2: Upper Beginner: Mastery Definition: Generates and uses self-constructed sentences and understands short phrases				
Scripted language	**Vocabulary**	**Conventions**	**Usage / Application**	**Potential assessment activities**
Sing simple songs.

Demonstrate "traditional" oral self-introduction/ 'Adaahane': The student will include maternal and paternal grandparents' clans and name where they are from and raised

Say the Pledge of Allegiance in Dine

Use appropriate modeled etiquette and words/phrases. | Use Dine vocabulary associated with common items found in students' homes, and names for different types of home

Use vocabulary for various times of the day (example, morning, night)

Use Dine vocabulary for animals

Use vocabulary for temperature types (example: hot, warm, cold)

Use words for days, weeks, months

Identify the daily weather

Say 10 colors in Dine

Use vocabulary for different types of texture (example: smooth, rough)

Recognize and state the four cardinal directions in Dine

Identify family members and school teachers and other school staff

Identify common clothing and jewelry

Express Dine words associated with emotions and feelings

Recognize and use word for numbers 0 to 200

Count money and tell time. | Use appropriate form to refer to people, things, places (subject pronouns: I, You, It, They)

Use singular pronouns for maternal and paternal grandmother and grandfather

Use appropriate possessive form (example: my, your, his, hers, theirs, ours) | Describe various characteristics of a person or object

Give simple commands

Greet someone using appropriate kinship term

Identify self with limited personal information

Introduce and describe self using expanded information.

Ask permission and express basic needs

Refer to someone using appropriate kinship terms

Use Dine color and number words to describe his/her clothing

Count individually and by increments (example: 1–2, 5–10–15–20; skip counting). | 1. As a small group, students sing a simple song and say the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Have students give a personal greeting to the whole class using the identified information.

3. Have students participate in simple role play using vocabulary about weather, times of day, colors, and animals, including greeting others.

4. Ask student to respond to simple questions by using simple sentences to describe other people and things, using second and third person pronouns with the listed vocabulary topics (example: In Dine: "Her necklace is blue.").

5 (younger): Have students describe the date, month and weather for that day, with the current time.
5 (older): Have students describe the typical weather and months for various seasons, and typical time when certain daily activities occur.

6. Have students give each other simple commands to perform a task using the listed vocabulary.

7. Have students count whole dollars individually and by increments |

Level 3: Intermediate: Mastery Definition: Speaks using simple ideas in various time frames				
Scripted language	**Vocabulary**	**Conventions**	**Usage / Application**	**Potential assessment activities**
Engage in simple memorized conversations	Use Dine vocabulary to describe stars, the sun and parts of the day	Use the correct form of a handling verb for simple actions depending on the characteristics of an object (example: "Give me the ball.")	Speak with peers in survival language	1. Have students perform and describe the same action applied different types of objects, using the appropriate handling verb (example: pick up the ball, pick up the paper, pick up the bottle).
	Count to 1000	Be able to negate statements	Compare quantity, measurements, shapes, sizes, and colors	
	Identify internal organs	Use definite and demonstrative articles correctly (e.g., dii, ei, eii, nilei)	Articulate distance to and between things	2. Have students participate in simple, scripted role play for various situations using sample vocabulary (example: two people meet and describe what they have done during the day).
	Describe the taste of foods	Use adjectives and adverbs as appropriate for the topic	Describe self in short narration	
	Use language for first, middle, last, beginning, end	Use appropriate form for Myself, Herself, Himself	Explain steps to a simple process, or give simple directions to a place	3. Have students describe the process for making a common food (e.g., hamburger, fry bread), with steps and how they are performed.
	Use common adverbs to describe actions	Refer to present and simple past and future events	Use adjectives and adverbs appropriately to describe people, places, things, and actions	
	Classify animals by their habitat and characteristics	Communicating pairs of opposites		4. Have students provide directions to a nearby place.
				5. Have students provide pairs of things that are different, describing the opposing characteristics. (younger: teacher gives an example, and student describes something different; older: students generate their own pairs)

Level 4: Upper Intermediate				
Mastery Definition: Speaks with clarity and fluency, with limited preparation and participates in casual conversations, using sentences that describe an action and name the person or thing doing the action				
Scripted language	**Vocabulary**	**Conventions**	**Usage / Application**	**Potential assessment activities**
Present learned longer, more complex songs, stories, poems, and dialogues	Use vocabulary about health conditions and illnesses Use ordinal numbers for comparison and selection Name constellations, astral bodies	Use proper grammatical language, e.g., enclitics, verb modes and conjugations Refer to complex past and future events Use the correct form of a handling verb for complex actions depending on the characteristics of an object (example: Roll the ball to your sister)	Express facts and opinions about a topic Explain a multi-step, sequential process Use both expressive and receptive language Role play and narrate language Carry on a conversation with self correcting strategies on a selected topic Understand and describe the clan structure within your own family Ask for definition or description when the student hears unfamiliar words	1. Have students perform an unscripted casual dialogue about a shared experience. 2. Have students perform an unscripted casual dialogue about an upcoming event. 3. Have students present learned longer, more complex songs, stories, poems, and dialogues. 4. Have students provide instructions to a complex task, using the correct form of handling verbs. 5. Have students describe common constellations and the order of the 8 planets in the solar system.

Level 5: Advanced				
Mastery Definition: Speaks with strong expressive communication skills, as appropriate for a particular context				
Scripted language	**Vocabulary**	**Conventions**	**Usage / Application**	**Potential assessment activities**
	Use expressive language (e.g., metaphor, similes, idioms) Choose appropriate vocabulary for a situation Use common words to describe something when the specific vocabulary term is unknown	Give directions in different time frames (example: have had, will have had)	Express extended thoughts, abstract ideas, and concepts Discuss multiple topics in multiple situations with ease Be able to interpret English-language text and speech to the Dine language while preserving the original intent and visa versa Use the Dine language to learn and teach new information Explain and discuss factors that affect a person's health Use pacing (example, rate and pauses) and other non-verbal strategies to communicate persuasively	1. Have students perform an unscripted dialogue about a topic in which they try to persuade another student that his / her point of view is correct. 2. Have student translate a short video presentation about a common topic, maintaining the ideas and content being expressed. 3. Have students describe how a set of complex instructions were followed or will be followed, and the results of the instruction. 4. Have students role play providing a sibling or friend with advice about how to life a good life. 5. Have students explain strategies for maintaining good health and potential consequences for not following the strategies.

Section IV: Implementation Needs

The nature and structure, indeed the instructional philosophy behind this framework represents a significant departure from current, typical curricula for language learning. It is focused on students' learning needs without consideration of standard operating practices designed for the convenience of teachers, school leadership, and other policy makers. To embed this framework, therefore, into existing school structures will require not just re-thinking standard operating practices but also meaningful, and likely external, support for implementation.

Following are identified needs for support to implement the framework, as well as needs for continued development of this framework for speaking and a broader language framework.

Teacher Development

Training in Navajo Language.

Some existing, and potentially some new, Navajo language teachers may need their own training in more advanced usage of the Navajo language. In particular, as teachers engage students in higher levels of proficiency that require greater understanding of language conventions and more complex applications, teachers will need support for understanding the language structure to explain language intricacies to students.

Whereas most Navajo language teachers may be fluent in conversational, i.e., informal, Navajo language use, and also may have experience with more formal language use, most admittedly would benefit from formal training in the structure, mechanics, and convention of the language. Such training would not only help them expand their understanding of the proposed higher-level proficiency skills but also provide tools, terminology, and concepts necessary to provide effective instruction.

San Juan College offers formal instruction in Navajo language, and those professors could be contracted to provide training. Conversely, teachers could be enrolled in existing courses. Of concern, however, is the burden of professional learning on teachers' time, which suggests that contracted services, facilitated and scheduled as a series of focused training sessions, may be more applicable and practical. By scheduling such sessions outside the regular work day, instructional time will not be affected, though teachers will need payment for their time.

Professional Development in Instructional Practices and Environments

Along with training in Navajo language skills, teachers may need support for designing, adapting, and implementing effective instructional practices. While there are a number of exceptional teachers, as made obvious by members of the framework design team, others may need basic support for instructional practices. Certainly, as teachers engage students in higher proficiency levels than the basic levels to which they are accustomed, they will need support for various topics, including

- designing instructional activities,
- engaging students in instruction delivery,
- promoting student performance and demonstration of skills,
- developing collaborative learning environments,

- promoting positive student–teacher interactions,

- incorporating social-emotional instruction within the academic content, and

- presenting complex concepts.

To address this need, instructional experts may be contracted for services. These experts do not need to be Navajo language teachers nor speakers, but rather they may be recognized experts in instructional design and delivery, and the other sample topics listed here. A short series of sessions, offered on-site and followed by individual classroom observations and coaching will have a strong positive effect on assisting teachers in providing effective learning opportunities.

Facilitated Professional Collaboration

To support and reinforce the professional development noted above, teachers would benefit from facilitated collaboration regarding potential instructional activities. This support would be particularly beneficial as teachers seek for strategies to present the same content and concepts at multiple age and grade levels. The framework is based on proficiency levels rather than grade levels, which then requires teachers to find novel strategies for presenting the same content at multiple age and grade levels. For example, instructional activities for upper beginner vocabulary may look very different for 7-year-old students than for 15-year-old students.

Teachers are creative and can assist one another in brainstorming potential strategies and activities, but the process will need to be facilitated to ensure both a breadth of ideas and the alignment of activities with students' ages. These collaborative sessions may occur on a weekly or bi-weekly basis throughout the school year, but certainly an initial concentrated time at the beginning of the year or semester, for example over a two- or three-day period, will assist the teachers in providing a solid, effective start to the instruction.

These collaborative sessions will be best situated within a "system" of support, meaning they are combined or provided in conjunction with language training and professional development instruction. In this regard, one, or several, providers can be contracted to provide the professional development (including coaching) and also facilitate the teacher collaboration.

Instructional Guidance and Materials

Field Testing for Usability and Application

The framework in its current iteration needs field testing to examine various issues, such as the appropriateness of the skill placement within the various proficiency levels, the sufficiency of the skills represented, and the overall clarity of the guidance (i.e., do teachers understand what they are expected to teach and students are expected to learn?).

The framework will need testing within a variety of contexts. It may be tested at various grade level bands and with students of varying proficiency levels. Testing should occur, at a minimum, over the course of a full academic semester, during which time, teachers' experiences, impressions, feedback, and recommendations can be collected on a regular basis. After the testing period, teachers can re-convene to review findings collectively and to adjust the content of the framework as needed.

Field testing can, and should, occur simultaneously with the professional supports described previously. Doing to will not create a conflict but will enhance teachers' ability to provide a comprehensive test of the framework. Indeed, the supports will better enable teachers to separate

instructional practice from the instructional guidance so that potential difficulties creating appropriate learning conditions are not misinterpreted as problems with framework content.

Development of Listening, Reading, and Writing Frameworks

The current framework focuses on development of Navajo speaking proficiency, although the other three literacy areas will certainly be addressed through the application of effective instructional practices: speaking skills are best developed with support from the other areas and do not exist in isolation.

To provide students with comprehensive Navajo language skills, frameworks also need to be developed for the other three literacy areas. The natural next step is to develop the listening framework, which will align closely with and draw from the expectations represented in the speaking framework. The move to print skills, reading and writing, will be more challenging. This is true in part because those frameworks will address very different skill sets but to a greater degree because the language complexity represented by the various proficiency levels in reading and writing will need to align with level of complexity represented by similar proficiency levels in the speaking (and listening) framework.

For language learners, and for their teachers, the advantage of having four separate but aligned frameworks is clear. With separate frameworks, teachers will be able to provide a greater degree of instructional differentiation, not only among students but also among literacy concepts for individual students. For example, a student with level three skills in speaking and listening will need instruction in level four skills, yet may have level one skills in reading and writing and need instruction in level two skills. Indeed, many students—and their teachers—profess that they can understand more language (listening) than they are able to produce (speaking) and perhaps can only recognize a limited set of printed words (reading).

By separating the various literacy areas, the instructional design recognizes that proficiency in one set of skills does not guarantee equivalent proficiency in a different set of skills and that students have varied instructional needs depending on the literacy area. Armed with four different but aligned frameworks, one per literacy area, teachers can provide students with appropriate learning opportunities in all areas.

Instructional Materials

A wealth of instructional materials in Navajo language currently exist, but a review of sample materials suggests that the most materials (1) represent only low levels of language proficiency and (2) are best suited to younger students due to their design and content. With the inclusion of public print (e.g., flyers and notices), the pool of resources begins to approach higher proficiency levels, but they are certainly not developed with the intent of targeting specific language skills and are unlikely to align with framework proficiency levels, though they may be used as supplemental resources.

Addressing the deficiency in instructional material options will require a multi-pronged approach.

1. Identify currently available resources and map them to the proficiency levels and associated skills, as well as to approximate age/grade levels where they may be most appropriate. This may include an examination of teacher-created materials.

2. Identify where resource gaps exist and propose the content for new resources.

3. Work with teachers to draft potential new resources, and then connect teachers with instructional materials developers and publishers for the production of new, reproducible resources.

Cross-Agency Collaboration

Collaboration among Districts

Although representatives of several regional districts were involved in the framework development, district leaders and/or policy makers were not included in the process. Given student mobility among the districts, the framework needs to be shared and potentially applied across regional districts so that students may continue receiving appropriate learning opportunities.

Furthermore, leadership from multiple districts can speak to their local conditions that may affect implementation.

A formal event, with district and school leadership would allow for sharing the framework, gathering input and feedback, and promoting cross-district implementation.

Collaboration with Navajo Nation Department of Dine Education (DODE)

As described previously, the DODE-produced Navajo language curriculum provides the basis for current language instruction but does not offer sufficient guidance for an articulated, objective, and systematic continuum of learning experiences leading to proficiency.

The process has already started for sharing the framework with DODE. A formal presentation and discussion with DODE language and curriculum, as a mini-conference, would allow for greater understanding of the content and concepts behind the framework. This effort would then continue with involvement by DODE staff in the development of the additional frameworks.

Ultimately, it would benefit students for DODE to embrace these frameworks, given the influence that DODE potentially has on Navajo language instruction across school districts and DODE-associated schools.

Staffing

Navajo Language Instructors

Given the intent to provide language classes to an expanded number of students, as well as classes / instruction for multiple levels of proficiency, additional staff members will be needed.

Each elementary school and the early childhood center will likely only need one instructor per school. Instructional time is typically shorter, so that a single teacher could provide the instruction with creative scheduling. Furthermore, given that student are unlikely to reach the advanced proficiency level in elementary grades, specific "classes" for those students are unnecessary.

This is not the case at the middle or high school levels. By those grades, some students will have received language instruction for several or more years or may enter the language program with some existing proficiency, and may need instruction at higher proficiency levels. At the same time, some students may be new learners and require instruction in lower proficiency levels. When combined with the nature of course scheduling at those levels, with discrete classes rather than in-class, pull-out, or other similar instructional contexts, multiple classes will need to be

offered.

The course scheduling, and corresponding staffing needs, will be similar to other content areas, e.g., mathematics, with multiple classes at various levels of advancement and multiple teachers. However, to meet the predicted need in Bloomfield, two teachers may be sufficient at the middle school level, and three teachers at the high school level. (Note: other districts with a higher number of feeder middle schools would require additional high school staffing.) Such staffing will be necessary not only to accommodate the number of students but also to ensure sufficient classes to address the various proficiency levels.

Navajo Language Instructional Coordinator

The entire effort will depend on having focused district-level coordination by a project-specific staff member whose sole responsibility will be the development and implementation of the various components described herein.

The level of effort justifies a staff person. Among other responsibilities, this person would

- Direct or facilitate framework development in the additional literacy areas;

- Manage contracts for, and manage participation in, professional development and training;

- Schedule and facilitate collaborative learning opportunities;

- Conduct a preliminary resource review, and then coordinate a team of teachers to identify and propose additional resources;

- Provide oversight of the field test, collect results, and facilitate ongoing revision;

- Assist schools with scheduling instruction;

- Provide coordination among schools;

- Establish and maintain partnerships among districts and DODE;

- Promote enrollment in Navajo language instruction to students and parents; and

- Work with other district leadership to ensure alignment of policies and practices support full implementation.