

# **Bilingual Special Educator (BiSPED)**

US Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)

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**Purpose:** The Bilingual Special Educator (BiSPED) project will coordinate with a consortium of school districts and local community colleges to develop and provide a high-quality, research-based program for bilingual/bicultural instructional assistants leading to initial special education licensure in high incidence disabilities and ESL/bilingual endorsement.

**Method:** The project will develop and provide a research-based licensure program leading to highly qualified special educator status and ESL/bilingual endorsement to 40 bilingual or bicultural instructional assistants to increase LEP student success in general education and reduce referral to special education; mentor participants during their internship and first year teaching to increase retention of special education teachers trained in culturally and linguistically responsive research-based interventions, English language development, and equitable assessment; and, provide interns, first year graduates, and a team of school professionals on-site professional development that will enable them to avoid mistaking linguistic and cultural differences for disabilities and reduce disproportionate LEP student representation in special education.

This project will also address the longstanding issue of disproportionate (over and under) representation of LEP and other minority students in special education. This issue has plagued the field of education since first identified by Dunn in 1968. "A child's race and ethnicity significantly influence the child's probability of being misidentified, misclassified, and inappropriately placed in special education programs" (EMSTAC, nd).