

# Paths to Employment as a K-5 Language Immersion Teacher

The Special Challenges of  
Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining  
High-Quality Bilingual  
International Teachers

# How is teacher staffing different in K-5 immersion programs?

- Superior/native language proficiency in L2 (reading, writing, speaking, listening) is a necessary starting point, but not sufficient
- Teachers must have strong command of academic language (CALP vs. BICS)
- Teacher must teach both language and content  
AND
- Teachers must meet all NC teacher licensure requirements

# Why is the SLT involved?

- Since the first year of language immersion in CMS (1992) parents have closely monitored teacher hiring and teacher turnover/retention.
- The immersion program has been in a growth mode since it began – always adding classes/teachers
- Parents directly experience new foreign teachers' adjustment to US public schools and US students
- Immersion program continuity requires a pipeline of new teacher talent - and managing turnover to keep teachers
- *Is great teaching a skill set or a mind set?* Teaching styles in other countries are not always engaging and inclusive – our diverse students need skillful, caring teachers, not just bilingual teachers

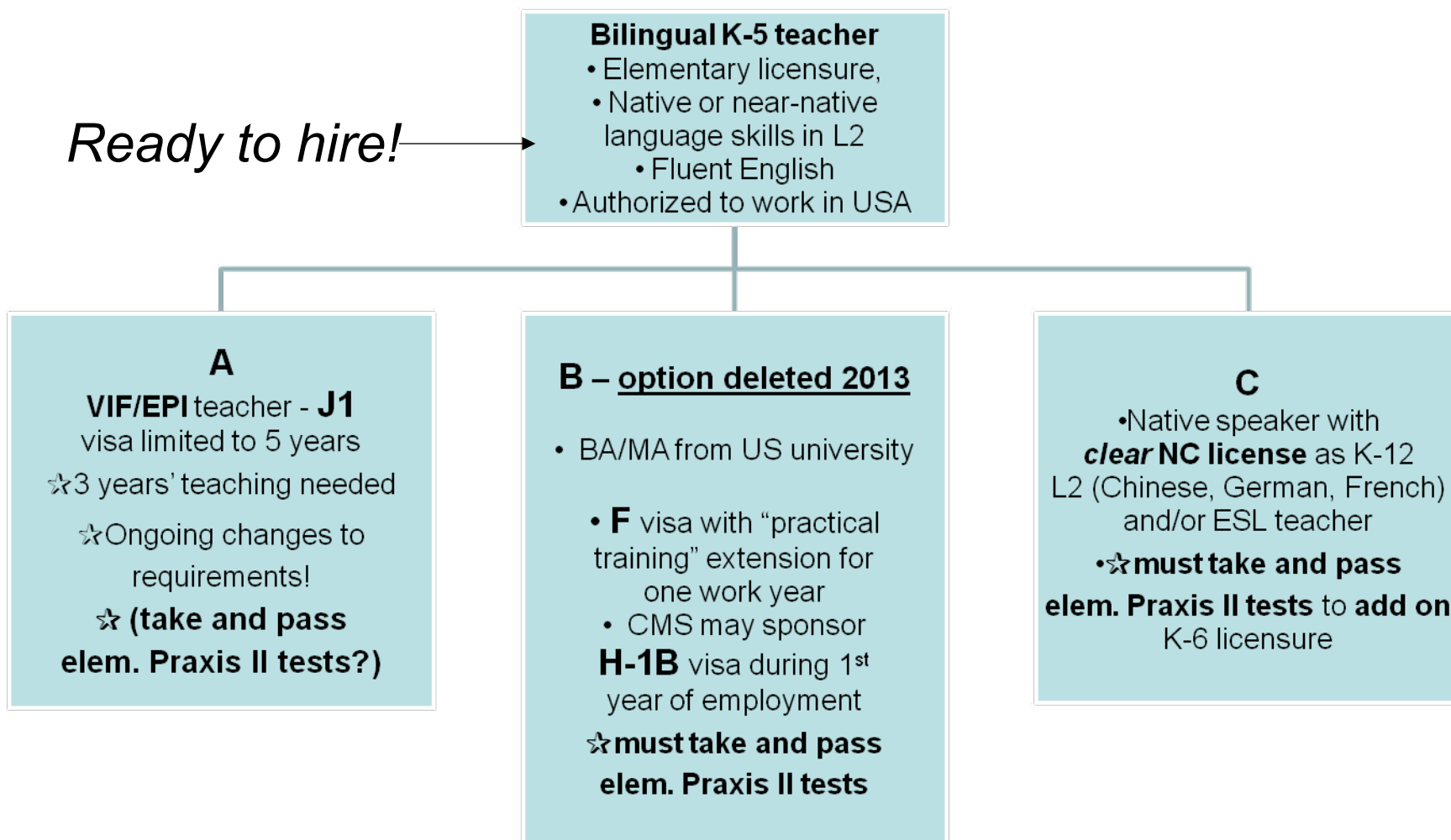
# Finding Candidates – 1995-2012

- Collaboration with organizations/agencies that identify, screen and support experienced international candidates:
  - VIF Visiting International Faculty (current: 2)
  - EPI Educational Partners International
- School-level staff conduct independent recruiting & talent search activities
  - Candidates directed through VIF/EPI
  - Candidates directed through CMS HR
- CMS Transfer Fair – internal candidates (current: 2)
- HR identifies highly-qualified candidates

# Finding Candidates, cont.

- “**growing our own**” – hiring talented local bilingual college graduates as Teacher Assistants, then training for 1-2 years as lateral entry teachers (current 13/40, or 32.5%)
- Former German assistants returning as qualified teachers (through VIF)
- VIF Immersion Intern program (1 year experiment)

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# Visas

- J – “cultural exchange” – maximum 5 years



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- F – student visa; 1 year extension (work)



- H-1B – “specialty occupation” – up to 6 years \$\$



- “Green Card” – permanent resident \$\$\$\$\$

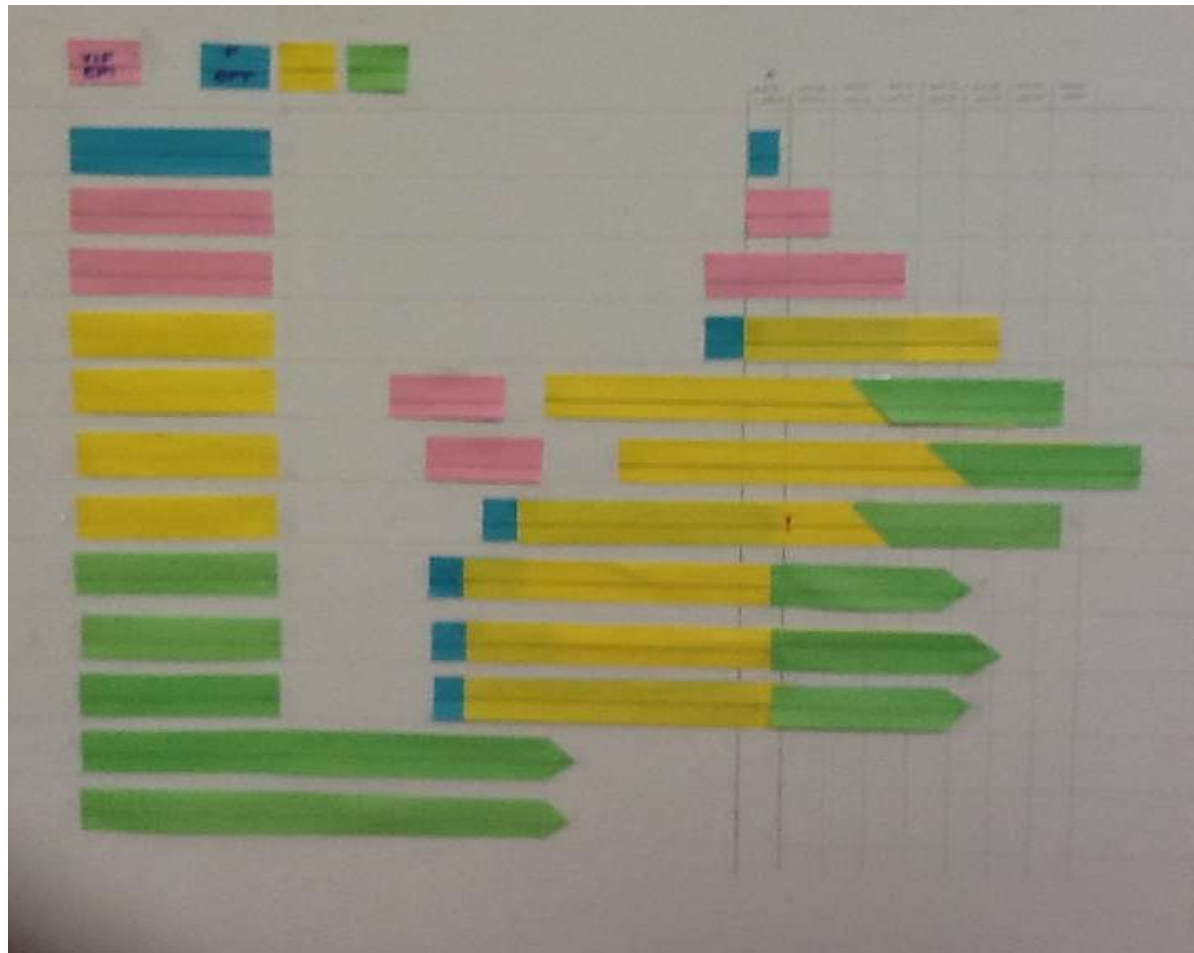
# Concern – losing a teacher

Teacher on “pathway B” cannot continue –  
what can we do?

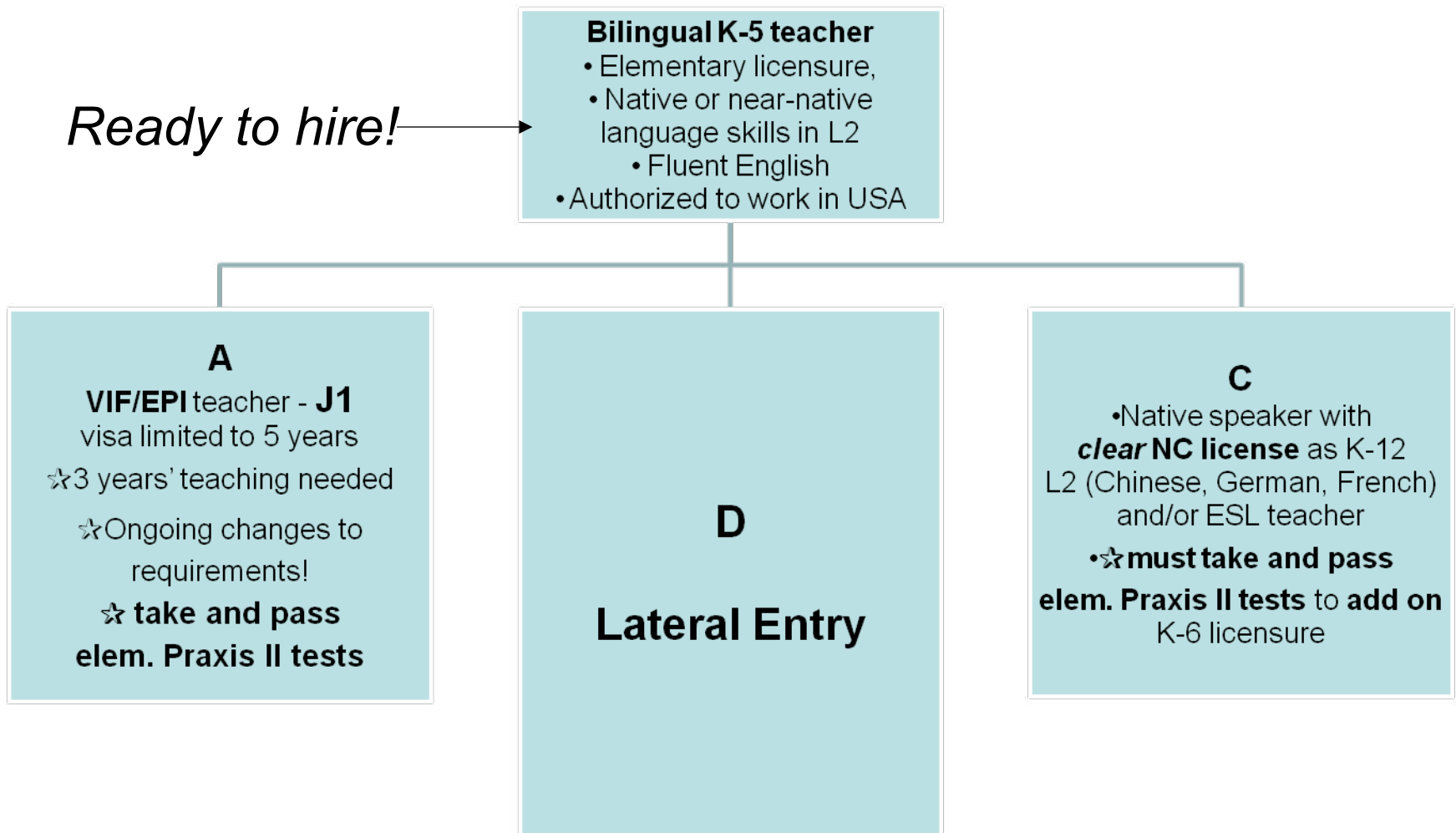
- HR has located a licensed and highly qualified bilingual substitute to complete the year
- We will introduce substitute early to smooth the transition for last 3 weeks of school
- We plan to hire the substitute as a teacher next year
- **AND** we are able to hire back the current teacher using “pathway A” / J visa



# Teachers with visas - an overview



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# D Lateral Entry - Elementary Teachers

- Allowed by NC
- CMS does not typically allow
- Similar to our “grow your own” TA-teacher program
- Principal, HR Manager, LC Superintendent and Licensure work together
- School must have confirmed vacancy and candidate who will qualify for lateral entry

## AFTER HIRING:

- Lateral entry candidate will attend 10 day LEAP training
- Teacher must complete other NC teacher licensure requirements as outlined (usually within 3 years)

# **Who is a candidate who will qualify?**


1. College degree
2. As needed: have foreign college degrees and transcripts officially translated and formally equated to US qualifications (IEE, International Education Evaluations Inc. in Harrisburg)
3. Register for Praxis II test #5015 in Elementary Education ([www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)) \$139 / testing windows
4. Provide certification of native language other than English for extended testing time
5. ★ Take and pass Praxis II test – 2 hours + (results in 3-4 weeks)

## ...**who** will qualify? cont.

Interview with Waddell leadership team

Visit immersion classrooms and conduct L2  
conversation with Waddell immersion teachers

- US citizen
- Non-US citizen



Eligibility for employment is  
determined by HR

# Thoughts

There is nothing more critical to the success of Waddell students than recruiting and retaining the most effective language immersion teachers.

There is no market – local, national, or global – for bilingual people with poor skills. Our students need to master world languages and achieve at high levels to be successful 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens.

Teachers who can make this happen are in high demand across the country. We want to use any avenue that leads to finding the best teacher to put in front of our students.

# Future plans – HR and Waddell

- PTA sponsorship - **match.com** for all new international teachers (note: this is humor)
- Building partnerships
- Creative recruiting
- Learning from successful strategies used in other school districts