
Education Committee

ESSB 5714

Brief Description: Creating a pilot program of Spanish and Chinese language instruction.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Prentice, Rasmussen, Oemig, Clements, Rockefeller, Tom, Fairley, Hobbs, Shin, Swecker, Holmquist, Benton, Stevens, Parlette, Delvin and Kline).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Creates a pilot program for Spanish and Chinese language instruction in elementary schools.

Hearing Date: 2/21/08

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

Currently there is no requirement for elementary, middle, or high school students to receive instruction in languages other than English. High school students must have at least five and one-half elective credits to graduate and the study of a world language, or the study of a world culture, may satisfy the elective requirements. Washington's four year public institutions of higher education require that entering students have at least two years of the same foreign language, Native American language, or American Sign Language.

Washington's Essential Academic Learning Requirements do not cover world languages. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has, however, endorsed for voluntary use the standards for world language instruction adopted by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Although not required, there are some elementary schools in Washington that provide foreign language instruction. Some provide dual language instruction in Spanish and English. The John Stanford International Elementary School in Seattle offers dual language programs in Spanish and Japanese.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

A pilot program is created for two school districts to provide Spanish and Chinese language instruction in elementary schools. Interested districts must apply for a grant by May 15, 2008. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must determine the grant recipients by June 15, 2008. For purposes of the pilot project, school districts are authorized to employ people of unusual competence who are not certificated to work under the general supervision of a certificated instructional staff person.

Participating school districts must inform parents of the availability of the pilot program and participate in the program's evaluation. The OSPI must report to the Governor and the Legislature regarding the effectiveness of the pilot program, and recommend whether or not to continue, modify, or expand the program, which is set to expire on July 1, 2010.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.