
Education Committee

HB 1815

Brief Description: Assuring that education-related information is appropriately provided to parents with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Sponsors: Representatives Moscoso, Appleton, Dahlquist, Ryu, Roberts, Pettigrew, Takko, Maxwell, Pollet, Fey, Santos and Tharinger.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Washington State School Directors' Association to develop a model Language Access policy and procedure that requires use of adult language interpreters, not students, for school meetings and includes a manual of guidelines and interpretation and translation resources.
- Requires school districts to adopt the model Language Access policy, at a minimum, by August 1, 2015.

Hearing Date: 1/15/14

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

According to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 94,176 students in May of 2013 were English Language Learners enrolled in the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP), representing 9 percent of total student enrollment. Data from the TBIP indicates students spoke more than 200 different languages.

The OSPI website contains a variety of information regarding communication with Limited English Proficient parents and families that could be used by school districts or parents directly. There are samples of translated notices from districts to parents and translated resources for parents on topics such as special education, health and safety, student and parent rights, and graduation requirements.

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.

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) is an organization made up of all school board members in the state. One of the services provided by the WSSDA for local school boards is development of model policies and procedures on a variety of topics.

Summary of Bill:

By April 15, 2014, the WSSDA must develop a model Language Access policy and procedure for adoption by school districts, in consultation with the OSPI and other education agencies, parents with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and interested education associations.

At a minimum, the policy and procedure must:

- be aligned with federal and state laws pertaining to the rights of parents of public school students to language access;
- require use of adult language interpreters, not students, for school meetings about high stakes educational situations; and
- include a manual of guidelines, best practices, interpretation and translation contractual services, and electronic or telephonic services for oral interpretation and translation of written communications.

A high stakes educational situation includes discussions about special programs, disciplinary matters, truancy, bullying, academic progress, and written communication provided for parental approval.

Each school district must, at a minimum, adopt the model Language Access policy by August 1, 2015.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.