

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SHB 2025

C 6 L 01 E 1

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Changing transitional bilingual instruction program provisions.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Santos, Talcott, Quall, Keiser, Ogden, Tokuda, Schual-Berke and Kenney).

House Committee on Education
House Committee on Appropriations

Background:

Through the Transitional Bilingual Program (also called the LEP program), the state funds assistance for students whose primary language is not English. The funding is intended for students with the greatest need; therefore, many but not all students whose primary language is other than English are permitted to obtain program services. During the 1999-00 school year, about 66,281 students (6.7 percent of total enrollment) were served through the program. During the last two school years, school districts received about \$693.13 for each eligible student. Students in the program spoke about 159 different languages. However, Spanish is the first language of 62 percent of the students, and 85 percent of the students speak Spanish or one of six other languages. About half of the students served through the program are found in kindergarten through third grade.

The program is intended to provide temporary services for up to three years until limited English proficient (LEP) students have developed a specified level of skill in the English language. About 28 percent of LEP students stay in the program for more than three years, and about 12 percent stay more than five years. While many factors can affect the length of a student's stay in the program, students who are served in special education or migrant programs and students with lower levels of previous education and English-speaking ability average more time in the program. In addition, students who speak certain languages tend to stay in the program longer.

With some exceptions, all fourth, seventh, and 10th grade students take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The LEP students who have been in the country for at least one year are required to take the assessment. Assessment results for those students are included with the result of all other students when evaluating how well students in each school and school district are performing on the state's essential academic learning requirements.

Summary:

The SPI will review the criteria used to determine the point at which limited English proficient students will be required to take the WASL. The review will be used to evaluate if the criteria are developmentally appropriate for students. The agency will also review criteria that could be used to make the determination. During the review, the SPI will consult with parents, educators, classroom aides, experts in second-language instruction, and statewide ethnic organizations that represent second-language learners. By December 1, 2001, the SPI will report the results of its review to the legislative education and fiscal committees.

The SPI will develop an evaluation system designed to measure increases in the academic and English proficiency of LEP students. The system will require school districts to assess potential LEP students within 10 days of school registration using diagnostic assessments approved by the SPI. The districts will report the results of the assessments to the agency. School districts will also annually assess LEP students at the end of each school year, and report the results to the SPI, using assessments approved by the agency. Finally, the SPI will develop a system to evaluate the progress of LEP students in achieving academic and English language skills. The purpose of the system is to help schools, school districts, parents, and the state evaluate the effectiveness of transitional bilingual programs.

By November 1, 2002, the SPI will report to the legislative education and fiscal committees on the development of the evaluation system. The report will include a timeline for the full implementation of the system. The Legislature must approve and provide funding for the system before it may be implemented.

Eligibility testing requirements are modified to require the testing of all LEP students.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 98 0
Senate 36 11 (Senate amended)
House (House refused to concur)
Senate (Senate refused to recede)

First Special Session

House 92 0
Senate 40 1 (Senate amended)
House 95 0 (House concurred)

Effective: August 23, 2001