

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2330

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to expanding the definition of transitional bilingual instruction.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to English language instruction.

Sponsors: Representatives Sommers, Dorn, Brough, B. Thomas, Ogden, Cothorn, Karahalios, Eide, Carlson, Peery, Roland, Valle, J. Kohl, Brumsickle, Springer and Linville.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, February 4, 1994, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Dorn, Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; B. Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlson; Eide; Hansen; Karahalios; Patterson; Roland; Stevens and L. Thomas.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Cothorn, Vice Chair; Brumsickle; G. Cole; G. Fisher; Holm; Jones; J. Kohl and Pruitt.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: The Transitional Bilingual Instruction program was created to address the needs of students who come from homes where the primary language is other than English. Each school district is required by the act to make transitional bilingual instruction available to each eligible student.

Approximately 34,000 students were enrolled in the program in 1992, or approximately 3.8 percent of the state's K-12 population.

Current law requires school districts to use a "bilingual" instructional model unless it is not practicable. Bilingual instructional programs provide instruction in English and in the student's native language. English as a Second Language

(ESL) and similar instructional models do not normally include instruction in the student's native language.

In 1983, the Thurston County Superior Court ruled transitional bilingual education is part of basic education and must be funded by the state.

Summary of Bill: The Transitional Bilingual Instruction Act is amended.

A legislative intent section is added that encourages the full participation and integration of these children into the public schools as quickly as possible. In addition, the legislation declares that it is the intent of the Legislature to provide school districts flexibility in the selection of instructional programs.

A provision in statute is removed that requires school districts to show that an instructional program using two languages is "not practicable" prior to using an alternative system of instruction, such as ESL.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 17, 1994.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The language in the Bilingual Act that instructs schools how to provide instruction is in conflict with education reform. Educators, not legislators, should make these decisions. The bill does not diminish the state's legal requirement to provide these children education services.

Testimony Against: We must recognize the potential of these students, and stop viewing immigrants as a hindrance. This legislation represents a major departure from current policy. We cannot trust school districts to provide these students a quality education. These students need to learn English and academic content.

Witnesses: Representative Sommers (sponsor); Becky Anderson, Lake Washington School District (pro); Katy Wysocki, Edmonds School District (pro); Frank Irigon, Asian Pacific Directors Coalition (con); Stella Ortega, El Centro dela Raza (con); and David Dena, Commission on Asian American Affairs (con).