

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5070

As of February 7, 2019

Title: An act relating to K-12 dual language and bilingual education.

Brief Description: Concerning bilingual educators.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Zeiger, Wilson, C., Kuderer and Saldaña; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/06/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates annual bonuses for certificated instructional staff with a bilingual education endorsement and paraeducators with an English language learner (ELL) certificate.
- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop Spanish language arts standards by the end of fiscal year 2020.
- Allows new teachers without bilingual education or ELL endorsements to be funded by the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program for up to 24 months if the teacher is enrolled in an endorsement program within six months of transfer or hire.
- Extends the K-12 Dual Language Grant Program to July 21, 2026.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Bilingual Education Endorsement. The Professional Education Standards Board (PESB) establishes the policies and requirements for certification and endorsement of educators. Endorsements are generally required in order to teach in a certain subject area and must be earned through a PESB-approved program. According to PESB, candidates for a bilingual education endorsement must demonstrate proficiency in a language of instruction, and knowledge and pedagogical application of linguistic aspects of both English and the

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additional language of instruction. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) estimates 569 teachers currently hold this endorsement.

English Language Learner Certificate. Paraeducators work under the supervision of teachers to provide various levels of support, including performing instructional duties, assisting with classroom management, and acting as translators. In 2017 the Legislature passed ESHB 1115 establishing the Paraeducator Board and granted it authority to adopt minimum requirements for paraeducators.

The law also required the Paraeducator Board to adopt policies for a certificate in English language learner, including requirements that paraeducators may become eligible for a certificate by completing 20 hours of professional development in the subject area. Currently, candidates must also demonstrate knowledge and skill in acquiring a second language, Washington English language proficiency standards, the legal rights of English language learners, cultural awareness, and various other competencies. OSPI estimates there are 1452 paraeducators with an English language learner certificate.

Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program. The Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP) provides supplemental instruction to English-learning students, and is part of Washington's program of basic education. Students are eligible for TBIP if their primary language is not English, and their English language skills are deficient enough to impair learning. A student's primary language is the language most often used for communication in the student's home.

According to OSPI, TBIP students learn language concepts and knowledge in their primary language at the same time they receive instruction in English. TBIP students take tests in English, and are measured on improvement in English skills at the end of each school year. In the 2016-17 school year, TBIP served 134,014 students, who spoke 225 different home languages. Sixty-five percent of these students use Spanish as their primary language.

Beginning in the 2019-20 school year, all classroom teachers assigned using funds for TBIP to provide supplemental instruction must hold an endorsement in bilingual education, ELL, or both.

Spanish Language Arts Standards. Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), according to state law, are the identified knowledge and skills in which all public school students need to be proficient. These are commonly referred to as state K-12 learning standards, and are based upon the student learning goals of basic education, as defined by the Legislature.

OSPI is required to periodically revise state learning standards to match guidelines under state law and to identify grade level content expectations for state assessments and state and federal accountability purposes. Before developing or revising EALRs, the superintendent is required to notify the State Board of Education and provide reasoning for doing so.

K-12 learning standards currently exist in 14 subject areas, including such areas as English language arts, English language proficiency, mathematics, science, and social studies.

K-12 Dual Language Grant Program. A dual language program is an instructional model that provides content-based instruction to students in two languages, generally English and a target language other than English that is spoken in the local community. The programs typically begin at kindergarten or first grade and continue through elementary school, and, if possible, into middle school or high school.

In 2017, the Legislature passed SHB 1445, creating the K-12 Dual Language Grant Program and seeking to develop statewide capacity to deliver dual language programs in K-12 schools. Grants are given on a competitive basis to establish a language program or expand a recently established program. In 2017-18, ten public schools and two tribal compact schools received these grants, and twelve additional grants were given for the 2018-19 school year. Grant amount totals were \$200,000 in the 2017-18 school year and \$801,000 for the 2018-19 school year. The program expires July 1, 2020.

Summary of Bill: Bilingual Educator Bonus. Certificated instructional staff with a bilingual education endorsement shall receive a bonus each year they maintain the endorsement. The annual bonus is set at \$5,000 for the 2019-20 school year and increased by inflation thereafter.

Instructional paraeducators with an ELL certificate and that demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English must receive a bonus each year they maintain the ELL certificate. The annual bonus must be \$1,500 in the 2019-20 school year and increase by inflation thereafter. Proficiency is to be measured on a standardized test, and candidates must achieve a level comparable to that expected of students who earn the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy.

Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program Qualification. Teachers who do not have an ELL or bilingual education certificate may be funded by TBIP if the teacher has less than one year of teaching experience and is enrolled in an ELL or bilingual certificate program within six months of the date of transfer or hire.

K-12 Dual Language Grant Program. The expiration date for the grant program is extended to July 1, 2026.

Spanish Language Arts Standards. Subject to appropriated funds and by the end of fiscal year 2020, OSPI is required to develop Spanish language arts standards. OSPI must also contract with an organization to conduct a bias and sensitivity review of the proposed standards, and provide professional learning outreach to school districts to help educators with implementation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Future productivity and global competitiveness will depend on students' ability to learn world languages, and Washington could be a national leader in expanding language programs. More teachers with these endorsements will help serve a growing population of English-learner students.

CON: Every educator in the system is critical, not just teachers in certain areas. Money going towards the bonuses could be used to bring people into the profession.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Alex Hur, OneAmerica; Chris Reykdal, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

CON: Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.