

By: Shapleigh

S.B. No. 78

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to a two-way developmental bilingual education pilot
3 project in certain school districts.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. (a) This Act may be cited as the "21st Century
6 Texas Educational Competitiveness Act."

7 (b) In the 2002-2003 school year, over 50 percent of the
8 students enrolled in the first grade in the three largest school
9 districts in this state, the Houston, Dallas, and Fort Worth
10 Independent School Districts, were Hispanic. Forty percent of
11 those students were classified as students of limited English
12 proficiency. The data for those school districts represent a
13 growing statewide trend that will pose significant challenges to
14 educators of children who are required to learn in a language other
15 than the primary language spoken in the home. Two-way
16 developmental bilingual education programs provide instruction in
17 both English and the native language of the non-English speaking
18 students. Those programs promote bilingualism, biliteracy, and
19 grade-level academic achievement by placing both native
20 English-speaking and non-English speaking students together in one
21 classroom. Wayne Thomas and Virginia Collier conducted a study in
22 which they examined the records of 700,000 students in various
23 bilingual education programs. The study found that those students
24 who received grade-level cognitive and academic instruction in both

1 their first and second languages for many years were succeeding at
2 the end of high school. In fact, by the eighth grade, nonnative
3 English speakers in two-way developmental bilingual education
4 programs were found to outperform native English speakers on
5 standardized tests. Those programs also experience lower dropout
6 rates than other bilingual education programs. The 21st Century
7 Texas Educational Competitiveness Act establishes a pilot program
8 to study the effectiveness of two-way developmental bilingual
9 education.

10 SECTION 2. Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, is
11 amended by adding Section 28.0052 to read as follows:

12 Sec. 28.0052. TWO-WAY DEVELOPMENTAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION
13 PILOT PROJECT. (a) The commissioner shall establish a pilot
14 project in five school districts selected by the commissioner under
15 which the agency examines two-way developmental bilingual
16 education programs and the effect of those programs on a student's
17 ability to graduate from high school.

18 (b) In selecting school districts under Subsection (a), the
19 commissioner shall select districts with a high percentage of
20 students of limited English proficiency, as defined by Section
21 29.052.

22 (c) The agency shall report to the legislature describing
23 the agency's activities under the pilot project, the effect of the
24 project on grade-level completion and high school graduation rates,
25 and the recommendations arising from the project. The agency shall
26 submit an interim report under this subsection not later than
27 January 1, 2009, and a final report not later than January 1, 2011.

1 (d) This section expires August 1, 2011.

2 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
3 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
4 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
5 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
6 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.