

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 79TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

March 14, 2005

TO: Honorable Florence Shapiro, Chair, Senate Committee on Education

FROM: John S. O'Brien, Deputy Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: SB61 by West, Royce (Relating to the teaching of foreign languages in public schools.), **As Introduced**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for SB61, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$21,100,000) through the biennium ending August 31, 2007.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2006	(\$10,550,000)
2007	(\$10,550,000)
2008	(\$10,550,000)
2009	(\$10,550,000)
2010	(\$10,550,000)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable Savings/(Cost) from GENERAL REVENUE FUND 1	Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2005
2006	(\$10,550,000)	5.0
2007	(\$10,550,000)	5.0
2008	(\$10,550,000)	5.0
2009	(\$10,550,000)	5.0
2010	(\$10,550,000)	5.0

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would direct the commissioner of education to establish a program to provide grants to senior college or university-based educator preparation programs for the purpose of providing exemptions from tuition and fees and providing textbooks to students seeking certification as bilingual education, dual-language instruction, or English as a second language teachers. The bill would direct the commissioner of education to establish eligibility requirements for the grant program, including a financial need requirement.

The bill would direct the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to establish Master Language Teacher Certifications at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.

The bill would require SBEC to adopt rules to allow an educator to fulfill continuing professional

education requirements through the acquisition of conversational skills in languages other than English.

The bill would require that recipients of an initial or renewed educational aide certificate be notified of the existing availability of exemption from tuition and fees for educational aides who seek certification as teachers.

The bill would permit school districts to supplement the exemption from tuition and fees for educational aides described above with state and local funds for educational aides seeking certification as bilingual education, dual language instruction, or English as a second language teachers.

The bill would direct the commissioner of education to establish a master language teacher grant program to encourage master language teacher certification. Grants awarded to districts could be used to pay fees associated with training and certification.

The bill would allow school districts to pay an annual stipend to master language teachers.

The bill would direct the commissioner of education to establish an international exchange program for language teachers and would permit the commissioner to solicit gifts and grants for the purpose of supporting the program.

The bill would direct school districts to develop or select examinations for the purpose of granting high school credit for a language other than English to a student who received instruction in that language in elementary, middle, or junior high school.

Methodology

The bill would establish a grant program to public senior colleges and universities to support students seeking certain language teacher certifications, but does not stipulate a funding level. Since the grants are for tuition, fees, and books for educator preparation programs, an assumption of annual grants in the amount of \$5,000 - \$7,000 would be appropriate for each prospective teacher. Assuming annual demand for the relevant certifications to be from 750-1,500 teachers, a grant program to sustain that entire population could be from \$20 - \$40 million per year. For the purposes of this estimate, it is assumed that grants would be provided to a population representing half the of the lower end of the cost spectrum, or \$10 million annually, presuming that financial need criteria can be used to lower the cost of the grant program.

The bill also establishes the master language teacher certificate for three grade groupings. It is presumed that the cost for providing this certificate would be recovered through fees at no net cost to the state.

The bill would require SBEC to provide notice of certain tuition and fee exemptions to educational aides at time of certification or renewal. It is assumed this notice requirement can be fulfilled at no significant increase in cost.

The bill provides for a grant program to school districts to provide assistance to teachers pursuing master language teacher certification or participating in nationally recognized programs for bilingual education or dual language instruction preparation. The amount of the grant program is unspecified by the bill, but would depend on demand from language instructors. At the present time, more than 24,000 teachers are serving in bilingual/ESL settings. The cost of an additional certification acquired through examination is currently \$75. In addition, grants could also be made for assistance with fees paid for teacher training related to master language teacher status. Assuming that not all qualified teachers would immediately seek this certification, the cost is estimated at \$250,000 per year.

The bill would require the commissioner to establish an international teacher exchange program for language teachers. At the present time, there are bilateral agreements with several other countries, but the bill seems to direct the commissioner to expand on those efforts. To formalize those contacts and promote such agreements will require an additional FTE resource within the agency.

The bill requires SBEC to issue teacher certificates for dual language immersion programs. It is assumed the cost of this program will be covered from fee income at no net cost to the state.

Additional agency staffing will be needed to manage the grant programs, and to coordinate an expanded international teacher exchange program. Additional administrative costs at the Texas Education Agency are estimated at \$300,000 annually for 3.0 additional manager full-time equivalents and 2.0 program specialist full-time equivalents.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 701 Central Education Agency, 705 State Board for Educator Certification, 781 Higher Education Coordinating Board

LBB Staff: JOB, CT, UP, JSc