Senate Research Center   C.S.H.B. 2814
80R20951 PAM-F   By: Eissler et al. (Van de Putte)
                                                                       Education
                                                                       5/18/2007
                                                    Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Bilingualism is considered a marketable skill in this era of globalization. In order to maintain international competitiveness, language learning opportunities should be expanded.

Section 28.0015, Education Code, sets forth the requirements for dual language immersion programs, but does not create a dual language education program, which would provide instruction in both English and the native language of the non-English speaking students. Such programs promote bilingualism, biliteracy, and grade-level academic achievement by placing both native English speaking and non-English speaking students together in the same classroom.

Dual language education programs can influence student achievement and ensure that Texas school children are adequately prepared for higher education and the 21st century workforce. Several proven technology support systems for dual language education already exist and could be used to increase student achievement.

C.S.H.B. 2814 establishes a dual language education pilot program to study the effectiveness of dual language education. The bill also directs the commissioner of education to establish a pilot project to implement and study dual language programs and their effects.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Section 28.0052, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, by adding Sections 28.0052, 28.0053, and 28.0054, as follows:

Sec. 28.0052. DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION PILOT PROJECT. Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to establish a pilot project (project) in school districts selected by the commissioner under which the Texas Education Agency (TEA) examines dual language education programs (program) and the effect of those programs on a student's ability to graduate from high school.

(b) Requires the commissioner, in selecting school districts under Subsection (a), to select districts that will commit to operate a program for at least three years and will meet certain enrollment standards to operate a program, and to give preference to a district that will make certain other commitments.

(c) Prohibits the commissioner from selecting more than 10 districts and 30 campuses to operate a program under this section.

(d) Requires the commissioner by rule, except as provided by Subsection (e), to require a district to limit activities of the program during the first year of the program to certain planning activities set forth in this subsection.

(e) Provides that a program that applies for the expansion or improvement of an existing program is eligible for funding under the project only to the extent authorized by the commissioner in compliance with Subsection (c). Provides that

an existing program is not subject to the limitations on activities imposed under Subsection (d).

(f) Authorizes the use of funding provided for a program by a district for classroom materials.

(g) Requires TEA to report to the legislature describing TEA's activities under the project, the effect of the project on grade-level completion and high school graduation rates, and the recommendations arising from the project. Requires TEA to submit an interim report under this subsection not later than January 1, 2011, and a final report not later than January 1, 2013.

(h) Expiration date, this section: August 1, 2013.

Sec. 28.0053. DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION PILOT PROJECT: COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL PIPELINE PROGRESS TEAM. (a) Requires each district or campus participating in the project to establish a community educational pipeline progress team (team) to assist in developing and implementing the project.

(b) Requires the board of trustees (board) of a participating district or of a district in which a participating campus is located to appoint individuals to the team. Requires the inclusion of educators, district-level administrators, and parents of students who attend a participating campus on the team. Authorizes the inclusion of community leaders and any other persons identified by the board as having research-based knowledge regarding second-language learning on the team.

(c) Requires the team to develop an academic improvement plan (plan) that describes the manner in which the project should be implemented in the participating school district or campus. Requires the team, in developing the plan, to consider the educational problems in the district or at the campus that could be mitigated through the implementation of the project and the technological and nontechnological resources that are necessary to ensure successful implementation of the project.

(d) Requires the team to recommend to the board the manner in which the project funds should be used to implement the plan developed under Subsection (c). Authorizes the team to recommend to the board any necessary changes in the plan annually. Requires TEA to approve the academic improvement plan or any changes to the plan before disbursing pilot project funds to the board.

(e) Requires the boards of each district participating in the project to provide an annual progress report to TEA not later than August 1 of each year that the district or campus is participating in the project. Requires the report to state in detail the type of plan used in the district or at the campus and the effect of the pilot project on the district or campus, including certain information set forth in this subsection.

(f) Expiration date, this section: August 1, 2013.

Sec. 28.0054. CONTRACT FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING SOFTWARE. (a) Requires the commissioner to enter into a contract to license language learning software (software) using language immersion methods in order to expand language learning opportunities for all students and school district or campus employees, including students and employees in school districts and campuses not participating in the project.

(b) Requires expenditures under this section to be sufficient to support language learning opportunities for a maximum of one million public school students and employees for a maximum of three years. Requires the commissioner to make the software available online to public school students and employees across the state not later than January 1, 2008. Authorizes a campus participating in the project to have access to the software.

(c) Prohibits the commissioner from spending more than $4 million each year to comply with this section.

(d) Prohibits a school district from using the software to supplant a bilingual education, English as a second language, or dual language education program.

(e) Requires the commissioner to report to the legislature on the utilization and effectiveness of the software not later than January 1, 2013.

(f) Expiration date, this section: August 1, 2013.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.