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H.B. No. 2814

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a pilot project for language immersion in English and another language in certain school districts and charter schools.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 29, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter J to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. LANGUAGE IMMERSION PILOT PROJECT

Sec. 29.351. ESTABLISHMENT OF PILOT PROJECT. The commissioner shall establish a pilot project under which the agency examines language immersion programs and the effect of those programs on a student's ability to advance to high school, graduate from high school, or prepare for college course work or postgraduation employment. The commissioner shall select to participate in the pilot project established under this subchapter:

(1) school districts; and

(2) campuses for which a charter is granted under Subchapter C, Chapter 12.

Sec. 29.352. PILOT PROJECT ADMINISTRATION. (a) The commissioner shall establish a procedure and adopt criteria for the agency to administer the pilot project.

(b) In adopting criteria under this section, the commissioner shall require the agency to select only school districts or campuses that:

(1) demonstrate parent, teacher, and community

1 support for a language immersion program;

2 (2) will commit to:

3 (A) a language immersion program in English and a
4 language other than English as selected by the district for a
5 minimum of three years in elementary grades; and

6 (B) a requirement that the English immersion
7 component of the program will comprise at least 50 percent of the
8 average instructional time;

9 (3) will offer in secondary grades at least one
10 language program in addition to the language other than English
11 used in the language immersion program provided under Subdivision
12 (2); and

13 (4) demonstrate the potential for expanding the
14 programs provided under Subdivisions (2) and (3) across primary and
15 secondary grades, including:

16 (A) incorporating the program provided under
17 Subdivision (2) in kindergarten; and

18 (B) offering the program provided under
19 Subdivision (3) for four years in high school.

20 (c) The agency shall require a school district or campus
21 selected under this subchapter to provide annual self-evaluations
22 of progress toward language immersion program goals.

23 Sec. 29.353. PILOT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION. (a) The
24 commissioner by rule shall require a school district or campus to
25 limit activities of the language immersion program during the first
26 year of the program to:

27 (1) planning activities, including:

1 (A) hiring and training teachers and other
2 professional development activities as determined by the
3 commissioner; and

4 (B) acquiring adequate instructional and
5 technological materials in each program language, including
6 software; and

7 (2) expanding or improving existing language
8 immersion programs.

9 (b) The commissioner by rule shall develop procedures to
10 assign a technical assistance team that includes university faculty
11 with expertise in language learning to assist participating school
12 districts and campuses in program development, implementation, and
13 assessment.

14 Sec. 29.354. SCHOOL DISTRICT OR CAMPUS SELECTION. (a) The
15 agency shall select school districts and campuses to participate in
16 the pilot project using the criteria provided by Section 29.352(b)
17 and based on the readiness of the district or campus to incorporate
18 language immersion programs into classrooms as demonstrated by the
19 past performance of the district or campus relating to language
20 instruction.

21 (b) In selecting participants, the agency shall consider
22 geographic diversity.

23 (c) The agency shall select not more than 10 school
24 districts and not more than 30 campuses to participate in the pilot
25 project.

26 (d) A school district or campus that applies for the
27 expansion of an existing language immersion program is eligible for

1 a grant under this subchapter.

2 Sec. 29.355. PILOT PROJECT FUNDING. (a) To implement the
3 pilot project, the agency may use only undedicated and unobligated
4 money from the general revenue fund for purposes of the pilot
5 project.

6 (b) The agency may not spend an amount more than \$5 million
7 per year for the language immersion pilot project under this
8 subchapter. The spending limitation imposed by this subsection
9 does not apply to an expenditure made by the commissioner under
10 Section 29.356(c).

11 (c) To supplement the funding for the pilot project, the
12 agency may use any gift, grant, or donation given for the pilot
13 project. The agency may solicit and accept a gift, grant, or
14 donation of any kind from any source, including from a foundation,
15 private entity, governmental entity, or institution of higher
16 education, for the implementation of the pilot project.

17 (d) Funds for the pilot project may not be used for the
18 construction of a building or other facility.

19 (e) The agency shall use funds under this subchapter for:

20 (1) teacher training in implementing the language
21 immersion programs;

22 (2) hiring technical support staff for school
23 districts or campuses participating in the pilot project; and

24 (3) purchasing technology-based instructional
25 materials and resources.

26 Sec. 29.356. PILOT PROJECT GRANTS. (a) From amounts
27 appropriated to the agency, including foundation school program

1 funds, the commissioner shall award grants to school districts and
2 campuses that participate in the program. A grant under this
3 section must be in an amount sufficient to pay the costs to the
4 district or campus of participating in the program, as determined
5 by the commissioner. A determination of the commissioner under
6 this subsection is final and may not be appealed.

7 (b) During the 2007-2008 school year, the commissioner may
8 award grants to school districts and campuses under this section
9 only for the purpose of planning activities described by Section
10 29.355(e) in an amount not to exceed five percent of the total
11 amount required to fully implement the pilot program for the
12 2008-2009 school year.

13 (c) To expand language learning opportunities for all
14 public school students and school district or campus employees,
15 including students and employees in school districts or campuses
16 not participating in the pilot project, the commissioner shall
17 enter into a contract to license language-learning software using
18 language immersion methods. Expenditures under this subsection
19 must be sufficient to support language learning opportunities for a
20 maximum of one million public school students and employees for a
21 maximum of three years. The commissioner shall make the software
22 available online to public school students and employees across the
23 state not later than January 1, 2008. The commissioner may not
24 spend more than \$4 million each year to comply with this subsection.

25 Sec. 29.357. COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL PIPELINE PROGRESS
26 TEAM. (a) Each participating school district or campus shall
27 establish a community educational pipeline progress team to assist

1 in developing and implementing the language immersion pilot
2 project.

3 (b) The board of trustees of a participating school district
4 or of a school district in which a participating campus is located
5 shall appoint individuals to the team. The team may be composed of:

6 (1) educators;

7 (2) district-level administrators;

8 (3) community leaders;

9 (4) parents of students who attend a participating
10 campus; and

11 (5) any other individual the board finds appropriate.

12 (c) The team shall develop an academic improvement plan that
13 describes the manner in which the pilot project should be
14 implemented in the participating school district or campus. In
15 developing the academic improvement plan, the team shall consider:

16 (1) the educational problems in the district or at the
17 campus that could be mitigated through the implementation of the
18 pilot project; and

19 (2) the technological and nontechnological resources
20 that are necessary to ensure successful implementation of the pilot
21 project.

22 (d) The team shall recommend to the board of trustees the
23 manner in which the pilot project funds should be used to implement
24 the academic improvement plan developed under Subsection (c).
25 Annually, the team may recommend to the board any necessary changes
26 in the academic improvement plan. The agency must approve the
27 academic improvement plan or any changes to the plan before

1 disbursing pilot project funds to the board.

2 (e) The board of trustees of each district participating in
3 the pilot project shall provide an annual progress report to the
4 agency not later than August 1 of each year that the district or
5 campus is participating in the pilot project. The report must state
6 in detail the type of plan used in the district or at the campus and
7 the effect of the pilot project on the district or campus,
8 including:

9 (1) any effect on the academic progress of students
10 who are participating in a pilot project, as measured by
11 performance on assessment instruments, including assessment
12 instruments administered under Section 39.023;

13 (2) if applicable, a comparison of student progress at
14 a campus or in a classroom in a school district or campus that is
15 participating in the pilot project as compared to student progress
16 at a campus or in a classroom in that same district or campus that is
17 not participating in the pilot project;

18 (3) any elements of the pilot project that contribute
19 to improved student performance on assessment instruments
20 administered under Section 39.023 or any other assessment
21 instrument required by the agency;

22 (4) any cost savings or improved efficiency relating
23 to school personnel or the maintenance of school facilities;

24 (5) any effect on student attendance or dropout rates;

25 (6) any effect on student enrollment in high school;

26 (7) any effect on teacher performance or retention;

27 (8) any improvement in communications among students,

1 parents, teachers, and administrators;

2 (9) any improvement in parental involvement in the
3 education of the parent's child;

4 (10) any effect on community involvement and support
5 for the district or campus; and

6 (11) any increase in student proficiency in technology
7 that would help prepare students for becoming members of the
8 workforce.

9 Sec. 29.358. PARENT OPTION. The parent of a student may
10 prevent the student from participating in a language immersion
11 program under this subchapter.

12 Sec. 29.359. PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION. (a) The agency
13 shall perform an annual review of the language immersion pilot
14 project based on the reports the agency receives from the board of
15 trustees of participating school districts or campuses. The agency
16 shall include a summary of the review of the pilot project in the
17 comprehensive annual report required under Section 39.182.

18 (b) During the 2010-2011 school year, the agency shall
19 contract with one or more educational research centers to evaluate
20 the efficacy of the pilot project to determine whether the pilot
21 project should be continued. The cost of the evaluation may not
22 exceed \$250,000.

23 Sec. 29.360. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHARTER CAMPUS
24 GOVERNING BODY. For purposes of this subchapter, the governing
25 body of a campus for which a charter is granted under Subchapter C,
26 Chapter 12, has the duties and responsibilities assigned to the
27 board of trustees of a school district under Sections 29.357 and

1 29.359.

2 Sec. 29.361. EXPIRATION. This subchapter expires September
3 1, 2011.

4 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
5 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
6 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
7 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
8 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.