

By: Eissler

H.B. No. 2814

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a language immersion pilot project in certain school districts.

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 in school districts selected by the commissioner 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 coursework or postgraduation employment.

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 a substantial enrollment of:

(A) students with limited English proficiency;

or

(B) bilingual students;

1           (2) demonstrate parent, teacher, and community  
2 support for a language immersion program;

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

6           (4) will offer in secondary grades at least one  
7 language program in a language other than English or the language  
8 used in the language immersion program provided under Subdivision  
9 (3); and

10           (5) demonstrate the potential for expanding the  
11 programs provided under Subdivisions (3) and (4) across primary and  
12 secondary grades, including:

13                   (A) incorporating the program provided under  
14 Subdivision (3) in kindergarten; and

15                   (B) offering the program provided under  
16 Subdivision (4) for four years in high school.

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

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

24                   (1) planning activities, including:

25                           (A) hiring and training teachers and other  
26 professional development activities as determined by the  
27 commissioner; and

1                   (B) acquiring adequate instructional and  
2 technological materials in each program language, including  
3 software; and

4                   (2) expanding or improving existing language  
5 immersion programs.

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

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

18                   (b) In selecting participants, the agency shall consider  
19 geographic diversity.

20                   (c) The agency shall select not more than 10 school  
21 districts and not more than 30 elementary schools to participate in  
22 the pilot project.

23                   (d) A school district that applies for the expansion of an  
24 existing language immersion program is eligible for a grant under  
25 this subchapter.

26                   Sec. 29.355. PILOT PROJECT FUNDING. (a) To implement the  
27 pilot project, the agency may use only undedicated and unobligated

1 money from the general revenue fund for purposes of the pilot  
2 project.

3 (b) The agency may not spend an amount more than \$5 million  
4 per year for the language immersion pilot project under this  
5 subchapter.

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

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

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

15 (1) teacher training in implementing the language  
16 immersion programs;

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

19 (3) purchasing technology-based instructional  
20 materials and resources.

21 Sec. 29.356. PILOT PROJECT GRANTS. (a) From amounts  
22 appropriated to the agency, including foundation school program  
23 funds, the commissioner shall award grants to school districts and  
24 campuses that participate in the program. A grant under this  
25 section must be in an amount sufficient to pay the costs to the  
26 district or campus of participating in the program, as determined  
27 by the commissioner. A determination of the commissioner under

1 this subsection is final and may not be appealed.

2 (b) During the 2007-2008 school year, the commissioner may  
3 award grants to school districts and campuses under this section  
4 only for the purpose of planning activities described by Section  
5 29.355(e) in an amount not to exceed five percent of the total  
6 amount required to fully implement the pilot program for the  
7 2008-2009 school year.

8 (c) To expand language learning opportunities for all  
9 public school students and school district employees, including  
10 students and employees in school districts not participating in the  
11 pilot project, the commissioner shall enter into a contract to  
12 license language-learning software using language immersion  
13 methods. The commissioner shall make the software available online  
14 to public school students and employees across the state not later  
15 than January 1, 2008.

16 Sec. 29.357. COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL PIPELINE PROGRESS  
17 TEAM. (a) Each participating school district or campus shall  
18 establish a community educational pipeline progress team to assist  
19 in developing and implementing the language immersion pilot  
20 project.

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

24 (1) educators;

25 (2) district-level administrators;

26 (3) community leaders;

27 (4) parents of students who attend a participating

1 campus; and

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

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

7 (1) the educational problems in the district or at the  
8 campus that could be mitigated through the implementation of the  
9 pilot project; and

10 (2) the technological and nontechnological resources  
11 that are necessary to ensure successful implementation of the pilot  
12 project.

13 (d) The team shall recommend to the board of trustees the  
14 manner in which the pilot project funds should be used to implement  
15 the academic improvement plan developed under Subsection (c).  
16 Annually, the team may recommend to the board any necessary changes  
17 in the academic improvement plan. The agency must approve the  
18 academic improvement plan or any changes to the plan before  
19 disbursing pilot project funds to the board.

20 (e) The board of trustees of each district participating in  
21 the pilot project shall provide an annual progress report to the  
22 agency not later than August 1 of each year that the district is  
23 participating in the pilot project. The report must state in detail  
24 the type of plan used in the district or at the campus and the effect  
25 of the pilot project on the district or campus, including:

26 (1) any effect on the academic progress of students  
27 who are participating in a pilot project, as measured by

1 performance on assessment instruments, including assessment  
2 instruments administered under Section 39.023;

3 (2) if applicable, a comparison of student progress at  
4 a campus or in a classroom in a school district that is  
5 participating in the pilot project as compared to student progress  
6 at a campus or in a classroom in that same district that is not  
7 participating in the pilot project;

8 (3) any elements of the pilot project that contribute  
9 to improved student performance on assessment instruments  
10 administered under Section 39.023 or any other assessment  
11 instrument required by the agency;

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

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

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

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

17 (8) any improvement in communications among students,  
18 parents, teachers, and administrators;

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

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

23 (11) any increase in student proficiency in technology  
24 that would help prepare students for becoming members of the  
25 workforce.

26 Sec. 29.358. PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION. (a) The agency  
27 shall perform an annual review of the language immersion pilot

1 project based on the reports the agency receives from the board of  
2 trustees of participating school districts. The agency shall  
3 include a summary of the review of the pilot project in the  
4 comprehensive annual report required under Section 39.182.

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

10 Sec. 29.359. EXPIRATION. This subchapter expires September  
11 1, 2011.

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