

By: Shapleigh, et al.

S.B. No. 553

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

AN ACT

relating to a dual language education pilot project in certain school districts.

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

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

(b) In the 2002-2003 school year, over 50 percent of the students enrolled in the first grade in the three largest school districts in this state, the Houston, Dallas, and Fort Worth Independent School Districts, were Hispanic. Forty percent of those students were classified as students of limited English proficiency. The data for those school districts represent a growing statewide trend that will pose significant challenges to educators of children who are required to learn in a language other than the primary language spoken in the home. Dual language education programs provide instruction in both English and the native language of the non-English-speaking students. Those programs promote bilingualism, biliteracy, and grade-level academic achievement by placing both native English-speaking and non-English-speaking students together in one classroom. Wayne Thomas and Virginia Collier conducted a study in which they examined the records of 700,000 students in various bilingual education programs. The study found that those students 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 dual language education programs were found to
4 outperform native English speakers on standardized tests. Those
5 programs also experience lower dropout rates than other bilingual
6 education programs. The 21st Century Texas Educational
7 Competitiveness Act establishes a pilot program to study the
8 effectiveness of dual language education.

9 SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 21, Education Code, is
10 amended by adding Section 21.0485 to read as follows:

11 Sec. 21.0485. DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION TEACHER
12 CERTIFICATION. (a) To ensure that there are teachers with special
13 training to work with other teachers and with students in a dual
14 language education program, the board shall establish a dual
15 language education teaching certificate.

16 (b) The board shall propose rules establishing the training
17 requirements, including the minimum academic qualifications, a
18 person must accomplish to obtain a certificate under this section.

19 (c) The board shall propose rules establishing the
20 requirements for a teacher who receives training in a foreign
21 country to obtain a certificate under this section.

22 SECTION 3. Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, is
23 amended by adding Section 28.0052 to read as follows:

24 Sec. 28.0052. DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION PILOT PROJECT.

25 (a) The commissioner shall establish a pilot project in school
26 districts selected by the commissioner under which the agency
27 examines dual language education programs and the effect of those

1 programs on a student's ability to graduate from high school.

2 (b) In selecting school districts under Subsection (a), the
3 commissioner shall:

4 (1) select districts that will commit to operate a
5 dual language education program:

6 (A) for at least three years; and

7 (B) on one or more district campuses selected by
8 the commissioner that demonstrate a substantially equal enrollment
9 of students with limited English proficiency and students whose
10 primary language is English or, if a district does not have a campus
11 with a sufficient number of limited English proficiency students to
12 meet the equal enrollment standard, on one or more district
13 campuses selected by the commissioner that will include the
14 enrollment of students with limited English proficiency, students
15 whose primary language is English, and bilingual students; and

16 (2) give preference to a district that:

17 (A) demonstrates the potential for expanding the
18 program through middle school; and

19 (B) will implement the program at the
20 kindergarten level.

21 (c) The commissioner may not select more than 20 campuses to
22 operate a dual language program under this section.

23 (d) The commissioner by rule shall require a district to
24 limit activities of the dual language education program during the
25 first year of the program to planning activities, including:

26 (1) hiring and training teachers and ensuring teacher
27 certification;

1 (2) establishing parental and community support for
2 the program; and

3 (3) acquiring adequate learning materials in both
4 program languages.

5 (e) A program that applies for the expansion of an existing
6 dual language education program is eligible for funding under the
7 pilot project only to the extent authorized by the commissioner in
8 compliance with Subsection (c).

9 (f) Funding provided for a dual language education program
10 may be used by a district for:

11 (1) classroom materials; and

12 (2) tuition and textbook expenses for students seeking
13 teacher certification under Section 21.0485.

14 (g) The agency shall report to the legislature describing
15 the agency's activities under the pilot project, the effect of the
16 project on grade-level completion and high school graduation rates,
17 and the recommendations arising from the project. The agency shall
18 submit an interim report under this subsection not later than
19 January 1, 2011, and a final report not later than January 1, 2013.

20 (h) This section expires August 1, 2013.

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