

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R2595 JSL-D

S.B. 161
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The State of Texas enrolls the second-largest population of English language learners (ELLs) in kindergarten through the twelfth grade in the United States with over 800,000 students. This is approximately 17 percent of the state's K-12 population. ELLs comprise a diverse group of students who know English in varying degrees when they enter U.S. schools and may have widely differing educational and sociocultural backgrounds. For the majority of these students, Spanish is their native language, but many school districts have a multitude of students who speak languages other than Spanish and English.

There is substantial evidence that significant achievement gaps exist between ELLs and non-ELLs. For example, according to the Texas Education Agency, the percentage of ELLs who met college readiness standards for both math and English in 2013 was less than 10 percent, as compared to 56 percent of all students. Furthermore, ELL students are among the most likely to drop out of school.

The data shows that school districts across the state are struggling to meet the needs of ELLs. Properly funding bilingual and ESL programs will ensure that school districts will be able to these students and meet the high academic benchmarks set by the state. S.B. 161 increases the funding weight for ELLs from the current weight of 0.10 to 0.25.

As proposed, S.B. 161 amends current law relating to the bilingual education allotment provided under the public school finance system.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 42.153(a), Education Code, as follows:

- (a) Provides that for each student in average daily attendance in a bilingual education or special language program under Subchapter B (Bilingual Education and Special Language Programs), Chapter 29 (Educational Programs), a district is entitled to an annual allotment equal to the adjusted basic allotment multiplied by 0.25 rather than 0.1.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2015.