

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2258
By: Guerra
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that while Texas has one of the largest Spanish-speaking populations in the country, the state is currently experiencing a shortage of qualified bilingual educators. Reports indicate that roughly one million children in Texas schools are designated English learners or emergent bilingual students. Though these students represent roughly one-fifth of all Texas students, the shortage of qualified bilingual educators looms large, especially since only a minority of English language learners are currently enrolled in a dual language program. There have been calls for Texas to be more proactive in producing bilingual educators and students given its border location and large Spanish-speaking population. C.S.H.B. 2258 seeks to address this issue by providing for the development of a strategic plan for the improvement and expansion of high-quality bilingual education in Texas.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2258 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Education Agency (TEA), in collaboration with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Workforce Commission, to develop a strategic plan that sets tangible goals and establishes timelines to do the following:

- increase the number of educators certified in bilingual education instruction;
- increase the number of dual language immersion/one-way and two-way program models used in public schools;
- educate families and public school district employees regarding the importance of bilingual education in early childhood;
- adopt a uniform process for the following:
 - identifying students of limited English proficiency in prekindergarten through 12th grade;
 - monitoring the bilingual learning of students in prekindergarten through 12th grade; and
 - collecting data regarding that identification and monitoring; and
- increase the number of bilingual and multilingual high school graduates.

C.S.H.B. 2258 sets out the following provisions relating to the development of the strategic plan:

- requires TEA to consult with representatives of certain stakeholders and authorizes TEA to collaborate with representatives of certain entities in developing the plan; and
- requires TEA to study the use of the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test to certify educators in bilingual education instruction and to make certain related determinations and recommendations.

The bill requires TEA to submit the plan to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each member of the legislative standing committees with appropriate jurisdiction not later than December 1, 2022. The bill's provisions relating to the study expire January 1, 2023.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2258 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes requirements absent from the original for TEA, in developing the strategic plan, to study the use of the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test to certify educators in bilingual education and to make certain determinations and recommendations.