

Education Committee

HB 2025

Brief Description: *Changing transitional bilingual instruction program provisions.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Santos, Talcott, Quall, Keiser, Ogden, Tokuda, Schual-Berke and Kenney.*

Hearing Date: *2/22/01*

Staff: *Susan Morrissey (786-7111).*

Background:

Through the Transitional Bilingual Program (also called the LEP program), the state funds assistance for students whose primary language is not English. The funding is intended for students with the greatest need, therefore many but not all students whose primary language is other than English are permitted to obtain program services. During the 1999-00 school year, about 66,281 students (6.7% of total enrollment) were served through the program. During the last two school years, school districts received about \$693.13 for each eligible student. Students in the program spoke about 159 different languages. However, Spanish is the first language of 62 percent of the students, and 85 percent of the students speak Spanish or one of six other languages. About half of the students served through the program are found in kindergarten through third grade.

The program is intended to provide temporary services for up to three years until Limited English proficient students (LEP) have developed a specified level of skill in the English language. About 28 percent of LEP students stay in the program for more than three years and about 12 percent stay more than five years. While many factors can affect the length of a student's stay in the program, students who are served in special education or migrant programs and students with lower levels of previous education and English speaking ability average more time in the program. In addition, students who speak certain languages tend to stay in the program longer.

With some exceptions, all fourth, seventh, and 10th grade students take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). LEP students who have been in the country for at least one year are required to take the assessment. Assessment results for those students are included with the result of all other students when evaluating how well students in each

school and school district are performing on the state's essential academic learning requirements.

Summary of Bill:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) will review the criteria used to determine the point at which limited English proficient students will be required to take the WASL. The review will be used to evaluate if the criteria are developmentally appropriate for students. During the review, the SPI will consult with parents, educators, classroom aides, experts in second-language instruction, and statewide ethnic organizations that represent second-language learners. By November 1, the SPI will report the results of its review to the legislative education and fiscal committees.

The results of the WASL for LEP students who have been in the United States for less than three years will not be included in a school's WASL results. The results may be used to track the academic progress of LEP students.

The SPI will develop and implement an evaluation system designed to measure increases in the academic and English proficiency of LEP students. The system will require school districts to assess potential LEP students within 10 days of school registration. The districts will use assessment instruments approved by the SPI, and will report the results of the assessments to the SPI. School districts will also annually assess LEP students at the end of each school year using assessment instruments approved by the SPI. The results of the annual assessments will also be provided to the SPI. Finally, the SPI will develop and implement a system to evaluate the progress of LEP students in achieving academic and English language skills. The purpose of the system is to help schools, school districts, parents and the state evaluate the effectiveness of transitional bilingual programs.

By November 1, 2002, the SPI will report to the legislative education and fiscal committees on the implementation of the assessment system.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on February 21, 2001.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*