

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1517

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to enhancing world language instruction in public schools.

Brief Description: Enhancing public school world language instruction.

Sponsors: Representatives Schual-Berke, Priest, McDermott, Anderson, Quall, Kenney, Roberts, Lantz, Kagi, Moeller, Santos, Hunt and Hudgins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/2/07 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/14/07, 2/21/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to assign a full-time staff to serve as world language supervisor and describes the supervisor's duties.
- Subject to funding, directs the OSPI to allocate grants for pilot projects to enhance world language instruction in elementary and middle schools.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, McDermott, Roach, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Instruction in world languages is not a high school graduation requirement in Washington, although students seeking admission to one of the state's public four-year institutions of

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higher education must take two years of the same foreign language, Native American language, or American Sign language. Washington's Essential Academic Learning Requirements do not cover world languages. However, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has endorsed, for voluntary use, standards for world language instruction adopted by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The OSPI does not currently have a staff position dedicated to world languages.

There are different instructional models for teaching young students a second language. The dual language enrichment model provides instruction for all students in two languages. Usually this model is used with native speakers of English and native speakers of another language. In Washington, at least 21 schools operate a dual language program. Nearly all programs are in Spanish and English. The John Stanford International Elementary School in Seattle offers dual language programs in both Spanish and Japanese.

Summary of Bill:

The OSPI must assign at least one full-time staff as the world language supervisor. The supervisor's duties are to:

- develop and conduct professional development for teachers;
- provide technical assistance to schools and advise in the development of online courses;
- create a clearinghouse of information and materials for world language instruction;
- secure and implement grants and implement memoranda of understanding with foreign ministries of education;
- foster an articulated curriculum through elementary, secondary, and postsecondary grades;
- establish and maintain a database on course offerings in public schools; and
- serve as an education liaison and advisor.

Subject to funding, the OSPI allocates grants for pilot projects to enhance world language instruction in elementary and middle schools. At least one of the pilot projects is for a dual language enrichment program using a major Asian language and English as the dual languages, and at least one of the pilots is for a technology-enhanced instructional model using a major Asian language. The OSPI evaluates the outcomes, successes, and limitations of the pilot projects and reports findings after the end of the grant period.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) It is stunning, particularly given Washington's location and global economic ties, that there is no foreign language requirement for graduation. There is great need for leadership at the state level on world language. It is neither feasible nor effective to ask each school district to find, compile, and organize the resources to create a world language program. Washington is losing out on many opportunities because we lack a state supervisor for world languages for example, grants, travel opportunities, curriculum and, hosting teachers from other countries. There is no one to connect teachers in schools to these opportunities or to best practices, assessments, or online classes. Instruction of world languages needs to start in elementary school. Groups of international education and business leaders have identified a significant need to expand Asian language learning opportunities. Another option would be to have bilingual high school students serve as language instructors and tutors to students in lower grades. This would not only provide exposure to world languages, but perhaps encourage more people to enter teaching.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Schual-Berke, prime sponsor; Lynn Klausenburger and Sue Webber, Washington Association for Language Teaching; Michele Anciaux Aoki, Washington State Coalition for International Education; Robert Kazmi and Chris Edwards, Snohomish High School students.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Dunshee, Vice Chair; Anderson, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Ericks, Fromhold, Grant, Haigh, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, McIntire, Morrell, Pettigrew, Priest, Schual-Berke, Seaquist and P. Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Chandler, Dunn, Hinkle, Kretz, McDonald and Walsh.

Staff: Ben Rarick (786-7349).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Education:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) I represent the Washington Association for Language Teaching. I taught world languages for 30 years at North Thurston High School. I ask you to support House Bill 1517. Students and taxpayers would benefit from the reestablishment of the World Language Supervisor position at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). In the absence of a supervisor, the WAFLT receives information requests all the time from organizations like publishers, professional organization request statistics, representative of school districts asking for assistance for textbook selection, etc. The OSPI cannot meet any of these needs. Additionally, there are substantial grant monies available at the federal level but no one available to apply for them here in Washington.

I urge your support for this bill. Many people don't know what "world language" means. Many languages are not "foreign" at all but often spoken right here in our native land – call it political correctness or whatever, but it more appropriately describes what these languages actually are.

Mandarin Chinese is a hugely important language for the economy, as well. As a mother of an incoming Kindergarten student, I couldn't find a public school that had a Mandarin Chinese program in Seattle, other than a PTA-funded after school program. I urge your support for this bill. The need for leadership at the state level, to organize the grassroots support that already exists, is critical.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Schual-Berke, prime sponsor; Michele Anciaux Aoki, Washington State Coalition for International Education; Katy Armagost, Washington Association of Foreign Language Teachers; Sonja Ling; Lauren Kiolet, Washington Association for Language Teaching; and Chunman Gissing, Chinese Language Core Team.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.