

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5714

---

**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Education

**Title:** An act relating to instruction in Spanish and Chinese languages.

**Brief Description:** Creating a pilot program of Spanish and Chinese language instruction.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Prentice, Rasmussen, Oemig, Clements, Rockefeller, Tom, Fairley, Hobbs, Shin, Swecker, Holmquist, Benton, Stevens, Parlette, Delvin and Kline).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 3/16/07, 3/27/07 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Creates a pilot program for Spanish and Chinese language instruction in elementary 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:** Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

**Background:**

Currently, there is no requirement for school districts to provide instruction in languages other than English in elementary schools. High school students must have at least five and one-half elective credits to graduate, and the study of a world language other than English or the study of a world culture may satisfy any or all of the elective requirements. In order to enter a public four-year college or university in Washington, a student must have at least two years of the same foreign language, Native American language, or American Sign Language.

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

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.

Although not required, there are elementary schools in Washington that provide foreign language instruction. At least 21 schools currently operate a dual language program, which provides instruction for all students in two languages. Nearly all are in Spanish and English. The John Stanford International Elementary School in Seattle offers dual language programs in both Spanish and Japanese. Usually this model is used with native speakers of English and native speakers of another language.

---

**Summary of Bill:**

A pilot program is created for two school districts to provide Spanish and Chinese language instruction in elementary schools. Interested districts must apply for a grant by May 15, 2007, and the OSPI must determine the grant recipients by June 15, 2007. Participating school districts may use current law to employ people of unusual competence to provide the language instruction under the general supervision of a certificated staff person. The OSPI must provide an annual report for the life of the program, including whether the pilot should be continued, expanded, or modified.

The act expires in July 2009.

---

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) It used to be that many countries around the world were learning English as fast as possible, in part because English was a primary language of business. However, with the global economy that we are now in, it is increasingly important for Americans to have bilingual skills. Having foreign language programs in elementary schools will be a benefit to our country.

(Opposed) The goals of this bill are good, but allowing non-certificated teachers to teach under the general supervision of a teacher means that the non-certificated teacher may be alone in a classroom with the children. Non-certificated language teachers may know the foreign language, but that does not mean they know how to teach. They may not be aware of and able to recognize differing learning styles among the students and how to address those differences. In addition, this bill touches on a core subject, meaning that instruction by non-

certificated teachers would not be in compliance with No Child Left Behind requirements for highly qualified teachers.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Roach; and Brian Jeffries, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(Opposed) Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.