
Education Committee

HB 1709

Brief Description: Requiring a study to develop a state foreign language education interpreter training program.

Sponsors: Representatives Dahlquist, Santos, Magendanz, Moscoso, Fagan, Ryu, Maxwell, Pollet and Bergquist.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directs the Office of the Education Ombudsman to conduct a feasibility study for development of a foreign language education interpreter training program and submit a report by February 1, 2014.
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Hearing Date: 2/15/13

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

According to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 86,500 students in May of 2012 were English Language Learners enrolled in the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP), representing 8.3 percent of total student enrollment. Data from the TBIP indicates students spoke more than 200 different languages.

The OSPI website contains a variety of information regarding communication with Limited English Proficient parents and families that could be used by school districts or parents directly. There are samples of translated notices from districts to parents and translated resources for parents on topics such as special education, health and safety, student and parent rights, and graduation requirements.

The state Department of Enterprise Services has a contract with a telephone-based interpreter service that provides 24 hour, seven-day-a-week interpretation in more than 170 languages. School districts may participate in the state contract.

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.

The Office of the Education Ombudsman (OEO) was established in 2006 to serve as an independent resource for parents and families regarding their involvement with public schools. The OEO does not represent parents, but does respond to complaints and attempt to mediate concerns with school officials. The OEO also reports regularly to the Legislature and participates in various state efforts to support family engagement in education.

Summary of Bill:

The OEO must conduct a feasibility study for development of a state foreign language education interpreter training program designed to create a pool of trained volunteer interpreters for public schools. The study must include:

- an overview of current need and availability of these interpreters;
- current practices for schools to provide these interpreters;
- an inventory of volunteer interpreter training programs in Washington and examples from other states;
- an examination of applicable federal and state laws that apply to provision of interpretation in public schools; and
- an inventory of community resources for voluntary interpreter training.

The study is due to the legislative Education Committees by February 1, 2014.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 12, 2013.

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