
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 476

AN ACT CONCERNING FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS FOR ALLIANCE DISTRICTS, BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND A SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM GRANT.

SUMMARY:

The bill increases the limit, from 30 to 40 months, on the time an eligible student can spend in bilingual education. By law, local and regional boards of education must determine how many students are eligible for bilingual education and provide bilingual education if there are 20 or more students in any school who are dominant in any one language other than English.

The bill makes a conforming change that after 40 months, rather than 30, if the student does not meet the English mastery standard, the board must provide language transition support services to the student. These services may include, English as a second language (ESL) programs, sheltered English programs, or English immersion programs, but cannot include bilingual education.

Under current law when a student eligible for bilingual education enrolls in secondary school and has fewer than 30 months (three school years) left before graduation, he or she must be assigned to an ESL program and may be given intensive services to help the student speak, write, and comprehend English by graduation and meet graduation requirements. The bill extends this time to 40 months (four school years), so this provision would apply to students one grade sooner.

It also:

1. expressly expands the uses of Alliance district funds to include providing full-day kindergarten and

2. allows, within available appropriations, the State Department of Education (SDE) to establish a new summer learning grant program along with the necessary program details, such as the grant application process, and program evaluation and reporting.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014

ALLIANCE DISTRICT FUNDS AND FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

The bill expands the statutory list of activities and programs for which alliance district funds can be used to include full-day kindergarten. By law, alliance district funds can be used for a variety of specified purposes including (1) a tiered system of interventions to improve schools; (2) intensive reading instruction programs; and (3) additional learning time, including an extended day or school year.

SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM GRANTS

The bill permits SDE, in consultation with the after-school committee established under state law, to administer a grant program, within available appropriations, for summer learning programs run by local and regional boards of education, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations. Under the bill a “summer learning program” means a program that provides at least 240 hours of educational, enrichment, and recreational activities during the public school summer recess. It must include small-group instruction in literacy and math for K-12 children, and have a parental involvement component.

Applications and Grant Process

Grant applications must be filed biennially with the education commissioner in a time and manner he decides. The application must include a spending plan for the grant funds.

Eligibility for grants is (1) determined for a two-year period and (2) based on the grant spending plan. To receive funds in a second year, a grant recipient must report performance outcomes for the program and file expenditure reports with SDE. The report concerning performance outcomes must include measurements of the program’s

impact on (1) student achievement, including grade-level reading ability; (2) childhood obesity; and (3) the behavior of student participants.

Evaluation Procedures

SDE and the after-school committee must develop and apply appropriate evaluation procedures to measure the program's effectiveness. By law, after-school committee members are appointed by the education commissioner in consultation with social services commissioner and the Children's Commission executive director and may include individuals with expertise in after-school programs and after-school providers.

SDE Role in Program Development

SDE can retain up to 4% of the amount appropriated for the program to provide grant recipients with technical assistance, evaluation, program monitoring, and professional development.

Recipient Expenditure Reports

The bill requires grant recipients to file expenditure reports with the education commissioner when and how he chooses. Recipients must refund (1) any unexpended money at the close of the program for which the grant was awarded and (2) any grant money not expended according to the approved grant application.

Accepting Public and Private Support

For purposes of the program, the bill allows SDE to accept funds from private sources and from the Department of Social Services (a state agency that is an after-school committee member).

Reporting Requirement

By March 15, 2017, and biennially thereafter, SDE must report to the Education Committee on performance outcomes for summer learning grant recipients including (1) impact on student achievement, including grade-level reading ability; (2) childhood obesity; and (3) the behavior of student participants.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 29 Nay 4 (03/24/2014)