
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5280

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT.

SUMMARY

Beginning in FY 23, this bill increases the annual state bilingual education grant from \$1.9 million to \$3.8 million, within available appropriations. By law, grant funds are distributed proportionally to school districts that must provide bilingual education. Existing law requires school districts to do this when there are at least 20 students in a public school who are classified as dominant in a language other than English and are not proficient in English (see BACKGROUND).

Under existing law, each district receiving the grant must annually submit a progress report to the State Board of Education that includes, among other things, a program evaluation and measures of educational effectiveness.

The bill also creates a new a dual-language seed grant program administered by the State Department of Education (SDE). The program must provide grants of up to \$300,000 to up to five school districts to establish new, or expand existing, dual-language programs. Under the bill, a “dual-language program” is a one-way or two-way immersion program that provides literacy and content instruction to all students through two languages and promotes bilingualism and biliteracy, grade-level academic achievement, and socio-cultural competence.

The bill also makes a conforming change.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022

§ 2 — NEW DUAL-LANGUAGE SEED GRANT

Beginning in FY 23, the bill requires SDE to administer a new dual-language seed grant program that annually provides grants of up to

\$300,000 to up to five school districts to establish new, or expand existing, dual-language programs.

Immersion Programs

Under the bill a “dual language program” includes either:

1. a “two-way immersion program” with two groups of students, one composed of native English speakers and the other of native non-English speakers, that learn together in a systematic way so that both groups become bilingual and biliterate in the two languages or
2. a “one-way immersion program” in which a group of students who speak one language are taught in the students’ native language and English throughout the school day.

Application Review

The bill requires school districts to apply for the grants in a time and manner as SDE requires and include a plan describing how funds will be spent.

Under the bill, SDE must review all grant applications and may not award a grant unless it has reviewed and approved the grant’s expenditure plan.

The bill requires SDE, when considering grants, to give priority to applications that:

1. are from alliance districts or districts with at least 20% of students identified as English language learners (ELL);
2. include a plan to collaborate with an institution of higher education;
3. include a letter of commitment from community partners to collaborate on the program’s development or implementation;
4. include a plan to recruit, train, and retain dual-language educators through coursework or appropriate professional

development;

5. include a plan to provide targeted services for specific ELL student populations;
6. provide a program that demonstrates equitable access to high-quality instruction for ELL students; and
7. include a plan for family and community engagement in developing or implementing the dual-language program.

Permitted Grant Expenditures

Under the bill, school districts have three years to spend the grant according to the approved expenditure plan. Grants may be spent to:

1. partner with experts in dual-language instruction and programs to develop and incorporate program elements to serve the student population and the community;
2. create and use approaches to recruit, train, and retain dual-language program educators; and
3. implement culturally responsive teaching practices that promote equity and social justice in dual-language programs.

Non-Lapsing Funds

Under the bill, any unexpended funds appropriated for the grant program do not lapse at the end of the fiscal year and become available for the next fiscal year.

BACKGROUND

Bilingual Education

The law defines bilingual education as instruction in both English and the student's native language with a continuously increasing use of English and the goal of reaching English proficiency. Generally, students are in bilingual education for 30 months (three school years), but the law also allows districts to ask for an additional 30-month extension (CGS §§ 10-17e & 10-17f(d)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference - APP
Yea 39 Nay 0 (03/11/2022)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 50 Nay 0 (04/07/2022)