

**SUBJECT:** Requiring a strategic plan for expanding high-quality bilingual education

**COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 10 ayes — Dutton, Allen, Allison, K. Bell, Bernal, M. González, Huberty, K. King, Talarico, VanDeaver

0 nays

3 absent — Lozano, Buckley, Meza

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 29 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

**WITNESSES:** No public hearing.

**BACKGROUND:** Education Code sec. 29.051 provides for the establishment of bilingual education and special language programs in public schools and provides supplemental financial assistance to help school districts meet the extra costs of the programs.

**DIGEST:** SB 560 would require the Texas Education Agency (TEA), in collaboration with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Workforce Commission, to develop a strategic plan related to bilingual and dual-language education.

The plan would have to set tangible goals and establish timelines to:

- increase the number of educators certified in bilingual education instruction;
- increase the number of dual language immersion one-way and two-way program models used in public schools;
- educate families and school district employees about the importance of bilingual education in early childhood;
- adopt a uniform process for identifying students in prekindergarten through 12th grade of limited English proficiency, monitoring the

bilingual learning of students, and collecting data regarding the identification and monitoring; and

- increase the number of bilingual and multilingual high school graduates.

The bill would specify requirements for developing the plan, including studying the use of the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test to certify educators.

TEA would be required to submit the plan to the governor, lieutenant governor, House speaker, and each member of the standing committees of the Senate and House of Representatives with primary jurisdiction over public education by December 1, 2022. The bill's provisions would expire January 1, 2023.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

SB 560 would help to expand high-quality bilingual education in the state by requiring the Texas Education Agency to develop a strategic plan to increase the number of certified bilingual educators in public schools and adopt other measures to improve access to bilingual education.

Texas is home to the second-largest Spanish-speaking population in the nation, with about 1 million Texas school children designated English learners or emergent bilingual students. However, Texas has only one bilingual educator for every 46 ESL students, while the ideal student teacher ratio for such students is one-to-30. The growing population of ESL students in Texas, combined with the disproportionate learning loss suffered by English learners during the COVID-19 pandemic, makes addressing the shortage of certified bilingual educators an urgent matter for Texas education.

By developing a strategic plan to address Texas's longstanding shortage of certified bilingual teachers, SB 560 would help to ensure equity and

access to a quality education for all Texas children.

CRITICS  
SAY:

No concerns identified.

NOTES:

The House companion bill, HB 2258 by Guerra, was considered by the House Public Education Committee in a public hearing on April 20, reported favorably as substituted on April 23, and placed on the General State Calendar for May 12.