

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: CS/SB 1552

SPONSOR: Education Committee and Senator Wasserman Schultz

SUBJECT: Public School Curriculum

DATE: March 11, 2002 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Gordon</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Favorable/CS</u>
2.	<u>Gillespie</u>	<u>Maclure</u>	<u>CM</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>AED</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____
5.	_____	_____	<u>RC</u>	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 1552 requires each school district to develop and submit a plan to the Commissioner of Education for implementing a K-12 foreign language curriculum, beginning in the 2006-2007 school year. The committee substitute directs the commissioner to report to the Governor and the Legislature, summarizing the district plans.

This committee substitute creates an unnumbered section of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

According to the Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, research has shown that foreign language study offers many benefits to students in terms of improved communicative ability, cognitive development, and cultural awareness.¹ The research also cites that students derive other benefits from foreign language study, including improved overall school performance, superior problem-solving skills, and a competitive advantage in employment, thereby providing additional job opportunities.² A 1992 study conducted by the College Entrance Examination Board reported a correlation between foreign language study and scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), as compared to the study of other subject areas.³ Students who averaged

¹ Kathleen M. Marcos, Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, *Second Language Learning: Everyone Can Benefit*, in 6 *ERIC Review* 2, 4 (Educational Resources Information Center, U.S. Department of Education Fall 1998).

² Kathleen M. Marcos, Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, *Why, How, and When Should My Child Learn a Second Language?*, Parent Brochure (Educational Resources Information Center, U.S. Department of Education 1997).

³ College Entrance Examination Board, *College-Bound Seniors: 1992 Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers*, *National Report* (1992).

four or more years of foreign language study scored higher on the verbal section of the SAT than students who studied four or more years in any other subject area.⁴ Research has also revealed that children who learn to speak a foreign language before adolescence, and more specifically before 10 years of age, are more likely than older learners to attain native-like pronunciation.⁵

A 1997 national survey conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics found that, from 1987 to 1997, the number of elementary schools offering foreign language instruction increased by almost 10 percent, from 22 percent to 31 percent of all elementary schools.⁶ During this period, the number of secondary schools offering foreign language instruction remained fairly stable: 87 percent in 1987 and 86 percent in 1997.⁷ In 1997, the percentage of students enrolled in foreign language classes was as follows: more than 14 percent of elementary school students, about 36 percent of middle school students, and about 52 percent of high school students.⁸

In Florida, all high schools and middle schools currently provide foreign language instruction within a range of language including, but not limited to: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. On the elementary school level, however, offerings of foreign language instruction are limited. According to the Office of Multicultural Student Language Education within the Florida Department of Education, there are approximately 14 elementary schools in this state providing foreign language instruction through the dual-language method, which involves teaching both English and the language of a group of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students to a class composed of both native English language speakers and the LEP students. Only four elementary schools actually teach a foreign language as a separate academic subject. One of these schools, Hillcrest Elementary School in Orange County, offers instruction in four languages: Spanish, English, Vietnamese, and French.

Under current law, each school district is required to provide all courses required for high school graduation and appropriate instruction designed to ensure that students meet the standards adopted by the State Board of Education in various subject areas, including foreign languages (s. 233.061(1), F.S.). The State Board of Education is responsible for approving student performance standards by grade level in those subject areas, including foreign language (s. 229.565(1), F.S.). In 1996, the Governor and the Cabinet, sitting as the State Board of Education, adopted the Sunshine State Standards, which provided the student performance standards. The Sunshine State Standards include performance standards for foreign languages (rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C.). The standards are subdivided by grade level into four groups of

⁴ The other subject areas studied included English, art and music, social sciences and history, natural sciences, mathematics, and computer science.

⁵ Marcos, *supra*, n.1 at 3; Marcos, *supra*, n.2.

⁶ Lucinda Branaman and Nancy Rhodes, Center for Applied Linguistics, *Foreign Language Instruction in the United States: A National Survey of Elementary and Secondary Schools, Executive Summary*, at <http://www.cal.org/pubs/results.html> (last modified Nov. 11, 1999); Lucinda Branaman et al., *A National Survey of K-12 Foreign Language Education*, in 6 *ERIC Review* 13, 13 (Educational Resources Information Center, U.S. Department of Education Fall 1998).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

standards: prekindergarten through 2nd grade, 3rd through 5th grades, 6th through 8th grades (middle school), and 9th through 12th grades (high school).

Additionally, under current law, the minimum standards for undergraduate admission into a state university or college in this state require at least two credits of sequential foreign language at the secondary level or the equivalent of the instruction at the postsecondary level (s. 240.233(1)(b), F.S.).

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This committee substitute requires each district school board to develop and submit a plan to the Commissioner of Education by June 30, 2004, for implementing a K-12 foreign language curriculum, beginning in the 2006-2007 school year. The plan must address:

- Curriculum design and content;
- An implementation strategy and timeline;
- A professional development program for foreign language teachers; and
- An estimated program budget.

The committee substitute requires the Commissioner of Education to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by January 1, 2005, summarizing the plans submitted by the school districts. The commissioner's report must include a summary of:

- The progress made by school districts;
- Any problems or difficulties encountered by school districts;
- The availability of instructional resources and personnel; and
- A projected budget for the first year of program implementation.

The committee substitute also directs the Department of Education to provide technical assistance to the school districts, upon request.

In effect, the committee substitute encourages school districts to implement foreign language instruction for kindergarten through 12th grade, thereby expanding foreign language course offerings for students throughout the state, including elementary schools in which course offerings are limited.

The committee substitute provides an effective date of July 1, 2002.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The committee substitute requires school districts to develop and submit plans for implementing a K-12 foreign language curriculum, but it does not require implementation of the curriculum. Each school district and the Department of Education should be able to absorb within existing resources the costs associated with developing and submitting the plans, reviewing and summarizing the plans, and reporting on the plans to the Governor and the Legislature.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None