

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: Foreign Language Instruction

DATE: March 5, 2002 REVISED: _____

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

I. Summary:

This bill will require school districts to develop a plan for a K-12 foreign language curriculum to be implemented in the 2006-2007 school year and thereafter.

This bill creates an unnumbered section of the Florida Statutes:

II. Present Situation:

A 1992 study by the College Entrance Examination Board showed that students who averaged four or more years of foreign language study scored higher on the verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) than students who had not. High academic achievement is not the only benefit discovered by researchers who study foreign language acquisition. Increased job opportunities, the ability to develop a deeper understanding of one's culture and that of others, and an heightened problem-solving ability have also been cited.

Currently all high schools and middle schools in Florida offer foreign language instruction in 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. However, foreign language instruction on the elementary school level lags behind. According to representatives of the Office of Multicultural Student Language Education at the Department of Education (DOE), there are approximately fourteen elementary schools that teach a foreign language through the dual language method. That method 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

them, Hillcrest Elementary School led by Principal Aliette Scharr, offers instruction in four languages: Spanish, English, Vietnamese, and French.

Section 233.061, F.S., requires that the school districts provide all classes required for graduation including foreign language courses. Section 229.565, F.S., requires that the State Board of Education create student performance standards for all courses. The lack of instruction on the elementary school level persists despite the existence of these statutory provision and the adoption of the Sunshine State Standards in 1996 by the State Board of Education. Those standards currently outline a curriculum for language learning beginning in pre-kindergarten and ending with grade 12.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill would required district school boards to devise a plan for a K-12 foreign language curriculum to be implemented in the 2006-2007 school year and thereafter. The plan should address: (a) an implementation strategy and timeline; (b) professional development; and (c) an estimated program budget.

Once developed, the plan should be submitted to the Commissioner of Education no later than June 30, 2004 who will prepare a summary of the plans for the Governor, President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House no later than January 1, 2005. This summary must address: (a) progress made by districts in developing their plans; (b) difficulties encountered in doing so; (c) the availability of personnel and instructional resources to accomplish the purpose of this provision; and (d) a projected budget for the first year of the program.

If enacted, this measure may assist in the actual implementation of the Sunshine State Standards for foreign language instruction at the elementary school level. It may also cause schools to exercise increased deliberation in the implementation and structuring of language learning at their schools.

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:

There are no associated costs with this bill at this stage. However, as schools begin to implement their curricula and seek to hire personnel, they may incur additional unknown costs.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
