

SB

84

<TARGET><BILL>SB 84</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
84</SUBJECT><COMM>SEDC29</COMM></TARGET>

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON



ALASKA
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ROOM 504
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1182

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Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 84: Language Immersion Schools and Teacher Certification.

As a father, I know firsthand that children are not only my future, but Alaska's future. For that future to be sound, we need to encourage our children to seek a further understanding of the world around them: how it operates, different viewpoints, and how diversity makes us stronger. Having students not only learn a second language but be immersed in a second language creates a greater capacity for growth.

Some schools in Alaska have already started immersion programs. Spanish immersion is offered at Fronteras in the Mat-Su and German at Rilke Schule in Anchorage. Japanese, Russian, and Spanish immersion programs are also available in the Anchorage School District. Schools in rural Alaska, such as Ayaprun Elitnaurvik in Bethel and Nikaitchuat Iisagvait in Kotzebue are using immersion education to revitalize endangered Alaskan Native languages.

SB 84 creates a designation for language immersion charter schools, which have the specific mission to produce bilingual students, preserve or revitalize endangered languages, or provide a learning experience consistent with a foreign culture.

These language immersion schools have high statutory standards for both the teachers and the school structure. Teachers will be well qualified individuals who are both capable instructors and fluent in the language of instruction. These schools are unique in that they will have an academic policy committee that includes not just teachers, employees, and parents, but language and cultural experts.

Some of Alaska's languages have few speakers remaining, often only elders. For these languages, local governments best know who in their communities are good with children and fluent in the language. This bill allows the state to approve teacher certificates issued by local tribes to teach in local language immersion charter schools. Lastly, the bill allows children being taught in a different language to test in that language, if high-quality benchmark tests exist.

More language immersion programs would be a great asset to Alaska, both helping keep indigenous languages alive and fostering greater understanding of foreign languages and cultures.

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To: Senator Mike Dunleavy
Chair, Senate Education Committee

From: Senator Donny Olson

Re: Hearing Request for SB 84

Date: March 31, 2015

I respectfully request a hearing for SB 84, Language Immersion Schools and Teacher Certifications, before the Senate Education Committee.

Invited testifiers include:

- Jennifer Schmidt, Principal, Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School (Wasilla)
- Mike Smith, Principal, Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup'ik Immersion Charter School (Bethel)
- Brandon Locke, Director of World Languages, Anchorage School District (Anchorage)
- Diane Hirshberg, Director, Center for Alaska Education Policy Research, ISER (Anchorage)
- Lance Twitchell, Assistant Professor of Alaska Native Languages, UAS (Juneau)
- Gayle Miller, Academic Director, Lower Kuskokwim School District (Bethel)
- Deena Paramo, Superintendent, Matanuska – Susitna School District (Mat-Su)

I also request that off-site testimony be available.

Staff contact: Jacquelyn Boyer (907) 465-2828
Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov

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Sectional Analysis

Senate Bill 84

Version W

Section 1 requires the charter contract between a school board and a language immersion charter school established under section 2 of the bill to contain provisions requiring compliance with section 2.

Section 2 provides for the establishment of language immersion charter schools, describes the purpose of immersion charter schools, and describes how they differ from regular charter schools.

- Subsection (a) requires that 50% of the instructional hours at each grade level in a language immersion charter school are provided in an indigenous or foreign language. The subsection also requires language immersion charter schools to comply with all other charter school laws, except as otherwise provided in the section.
- Subsection (b) requires that an application for a language immersion charter school identify the language(s) of instruction and describe the percentage of instructional hours that will be provided in that language.
- Subsection (c) allows individuals who are proficient speakers of the language taught at the charter school or who have substantial knowledge of the culture of the people who spoke that language to serve on the school's academic policy committee, in addition to parents and school employees.
- Subsection (d) requires a language immersion charter school that does not provide at least 50% of the school's instructional hours in an indigenous or foreign language to work with the Department of Education and Early Development to develop a plan for reaching that benchmark. The plan must be submitted to the Department for approval.
- Subsection (e) requires that teachers at a language immersion charter school hold either a teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, 14.20.020, or 14.20.022 and a language immersion endorsement issued under section 3; a limited teacher certificate issued under section 6; or a certificate issued by an Alaska Native tribe under section 7.
- Subsection (f) exempts teachers teaching classes in English at language immersion charter schools from the requirement to hold a language immersion endorsement.

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Section 3 creates a language immersion endorsement. To receive a language immersion endorsement, a person must apply to the Department, hold a teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, 14.20.020, or 14.20.022, demonstrate ability to conduct classroom activities entirely in an indigenous or foreign language, and have completed a course or program of study in language immersion education. The course or program must be offered by an institute of higher education or be approved by the Department of Education and Early Development.

Section 4 amends the existing limited teacher certificate program (Type M in regulation). The section removes Alaska Native languages from the list of subjects certificate holders are eligible to teach and removes the state board of education's authority to require certificate holders to undertake academic training.

Section 5 further amends the existing limited teacher certificate program by making newly issued certificates valid for only one year. Upon certification by the school board of the district or REAA in which the person teaches that the certificate holder has demonstrated skills in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and student assessment, the certificate can be extended for an additional four years. It can be renewed afterwards in accordance with regulations. Section 5 also prohibits the state board from requiring additional academic training as a condition of certificate renewal.

Section 6 creates a new limited teacher certificate for teachers instructing in a language other than English. A certificate can be issued if the state board of education determines there are an insufficient number of certified teachers in the state capable of teaching in a language. A limited certificate is valid for teaching any subject in grades K-8, so long as the language of instruction is not English, and for teaching language classes at any grade level.

- Subsection (b) states that a limited certificate can be issued if:
 - A school board or the academic policy committee of a language immersion charter school requests issuance of the certificate;
 - The certificate applicant has demonstrated instructional skills sufficient to assure the public the person is competent as a teacher, as defined by regulation;
 - The applicant has demonstrated subject matter expertise, if teaching a class other than a language class in grades four through eight; and

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- The applicant has language proficiency sufficient to conduct classroom activities wholly in the non-English language.
- Subsection (c) prohibits the holder of a limited certificate under the section from teaching a subject other than the language itself unless the person has completed a course or program of study in language immersion education. The course or program must be offered by an institute of higher education or be approved by the Department of Education and Early Development.
- Subsection (d) provides that newly issued certificates are valid for only one year. Upon certification by the entity that requested the limited certificate that the holder has demonstrated skills in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and student assessment, the certificate can be extended for an additional four years. It can be renewed afterwards in accordance with regulations.
- Subsection (e) prohibits the state board from requiring additional academic training as a condition of certificate renewal.

Section 7 relates to teacher certificates issued by an Alaska Native tribe.

- Subsection (a) empowers the Department of Education and Early Development to recognize a teacher certificate issued by an Alaska Native tribe as valid for teaching in the state if:
 - The tribe submits a description of its certification procedures to the Department;
 - Those certification procedures include evaluations of language proficiency, subject matter knowledge, and instructional skills, including skills specific to immersion education;
 - A school board requests the certificate be recognized, if the teacher is teaching in a school that is not an Alaska Native language immersion charter school; and
 - The person submits fingerprints and fees in accordance with AS 14.20.020(c).
- Subsection (b) limits the validity of teacher certificates issued by tribes. A certificate issued by a tribe and recognized by the Department is valid for teaching in a language immersion charter school in which the language of instruction is an Alaska Native language. A certificate holder can teach in any public school, but only if the class is taught in an Alaska Native language and the school board requests the Department recognize certificates issued by the tribe.
- Subsection (c) prohibits the Department from recognizing tribally issued certificates if the person holding the certificate has been convicted of an offense under AS 11.41.410-460 (sexual assault and abuse crimes).

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- Subsection (d) prohibits the Department from imposing requirements for tribally-certified teachers beyond those requirements imposed by the tribe.
- Subsection (e) defines "Alaska Native tribe" as a tribe recognized by the US Secretary of Interior under the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994.

Section 8 requires the Department of Education and Early Development to allow students in immersion programs to take statewide standards-based assessments in the language of instruction of the school if tests comparable to the English-language tests exist and if the Department can allow such testing without violating federal law.

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Summary of Changes version W to version CS 84 E **Senate Bill 84: Language Immersion Schools and Teacher Certification**

Section 3

The title of the section has been amended by the drafter.

Paragraph (a)(3) has been amended to provide the Board of Education ("Board") the explicit authority to define in regulation how a person can meet language proficiency standards.

Paragraph (a)(4) has been amended to eliminate the costs associated with the Department of Education and Early Development ("Department") approving language immersion teacher preparation programs. In the new version CS 84 E, a course or program of study meets the requirements of the paragraph if one can earn college credit for the program.

Section 4

Language has been added that allows the academic policy committee of a charter school to request a limited teacher certificate for teachers of military science, Alaska Native culture, or vocational or technical courses.

Section 5

Subsection (b) has been amended to allow the academic policy committee of a charter school to request the extension of a limited certificate under Section 4. This is to conform section 5 to the changes in section 4.

Subsection (b) has been amended to remove the requirement that extension of limited certificates be for exactly four years.

Subsection (b) has been amended in ln 28 to change "renewed" to "extended" to clarify the nature of the limited certificate.

The last word of subsection (b) has been changed from "department" to "board" to correct a drafting error.

Subsection (c) has been amended in ln 30 to change "renewed" to "extended" to follow changes made in Section 5 subsection (b).

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Section 6

Subsection (a) has been amended to remove the requirement that the Board of Education specifically define in regulation the language for which there is an insufficient number of certified teachers in the state.

Subsection (a) has been amended to allow any charter school, not just a language immersion charter school, request a limited teacher certificate for language immersion. This conforms section 6 to changes to section 4.

To clarify section 6, subsections (a) and (b) have been rearranged. The following substantive changes have been made:

- “The department shall issue” on pg 5, ln 12 in version W has been changed to “the department may issue” (found on pg 5, ln 21 in CS 84 version E);
- A limited language certificate holder must demonstrate subject area expertise no matter what grade he or she is teaching (version S only required this demonstration if the teacher was teaching in grades four through eight);
- New sub-paragraph (a)(2)(B) has been amended to eliminate the costs associated with the Department approving language immersion teacher preparation programs;
- New paragraph (b)(2) has been amended to state that a non-English speaker may not be required to demonstrate subject matter expertise by taking an English language test, and that a person may not be required to hold a specific degree in order to demonstrate subject matter expertise; and
- New paragraph (b)(3) address a concern of the Department by giving the Board the authority to set standards for language proficiency in regulation.

Subsection (c) is amended to remove the requirement that extensions of limited certificates be for exactly four years.

The last word of subsection (c) has been changed from “department” to “board” to correct a drafting error.

Section 7

Section 7 has been amended and reorganized to reduce costs to the Department, strengthen criminal background checks, and clarify the structure of the tribal teacher certification program.

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Subsection (a) has been rearranged but makes no substantive changes. Similarly worded language appeared in subsection (b) and paragraph (a)(3) of version W.

Sub-paragraph (b) (1) (a) has been amended to clarify the intent that the language proficiency evaluation must evaluate proficiency in the language historically spoken by the Alaska Native tribe.

Small drafting changes have been made to sub-paragraph (b) (1) (B).

Paragraph (b)(2) strengthens the language in version S by requiring the tribe to submit a "complete" description of its certification program to the Department.

Paragraph (b)(3) is added to ensure the Department can keep track of teachers certified by tribes.

Subsection (c) requires that the program description submitted under (b)(2) be publicly available.

Subsection (d) is strengthened by borrowing language from AS 14.20.022(b)(2) to ensure teachers certified by a tribe are subject to the same criminal history review as all other certified teachers.

Subsection (e) is added to give the Department authority to prohibit graduates of a tribal certificate program from teaching in public schools if the program does not meet the requirements of the section.

Section 8 (ver W)

Section from version W, related to standardized tests, has been deleted.

Section 8 (CS 84 ver E)

A new section 8 gives the commissioner of the Department or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission the authority to prohibit a teacher certified by a tribe from teaching in a public school for the same reasons that any other teacher could have their teaching certificate suspended or revoked under AS 14.20.030.

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Section 9

Section 9 has been added to describe the administrative review procedures available to tribes and teachers certified in the case that the Department or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission prohibits the use of a tribal certificate in public schools.

Section 10

Section 10 has been added to provide for a transition period from the current limited teacher certificate status to the new limited teacher certificate statutes. This section is only relevant to limited certificates for teaching Alaska Native languages.

29-LS0746E
Glover
3/2/16

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 84()
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATORS OLSON, Ellis, Costello

A BILL
FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to language immersion charter schools; and relating to teacher**
2 **certification."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 *** Section 1.** AS 14.03.255(c) is amended to read:

5 (c) A charter school shall operate under a contract between the charter school
6 and the local school board. A contract must contain the following provisions:

- 7 (1) a description of the educational program;
- 8 (2) specific levels of achievement for the education program;
- 9 (3) admission policies and procedures;
- 10 (4) administrative policies;
- 11 (5) a statement of the charter school's funding allocation from the local
- 12 school board and costs assignable to the charter school program budget;
- 13 (6) the method by which the charter school will account for receipts
- 14 and expenditures;

- 1 (7) the location and description of the facility;
- 2 (8) the name of the teacher, or teachers, who, by agreement between
- 3 the charter school and the teacher, will teach in the charter school;
- 4 (9) the teacher-to-student ratio;
- 5 (10) the number of students served;
- 6 (11) the term of the contract, not to exceed a term of 10 years;
- 7 (12) a termination clause providing that the contract may be terminated
- 8 by the local school board for the failure of the charter school to meet educational
- 9 achievement goals or fiscal management standards, or for other good cause;
- 10 (13) a statement that the charter school will comply with all state and
- 11 federal requirements for receipt and use of public money;
- 12 (14) other requirements or exemptions agreed upon by the charter
- 13 school and the local school board;
- 14 **(15) a clause requiring compliance with AS 14.03.257 if the charter**
- 15 **school is a language immersion charter school.**

16 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:

17 **Sec. 14.03.257. Language immersion charter schools.** (a) A language
 18 immersion charter school may be established for the purpose of producing bilingual
 19 students, revitalizing endangered languages, or providing an education consistent with
 20 one or more indigenous or foreign cultures. Except as provided in (d) of this section, a
 21 language immersion charter school shall provide at least 50 percent of the school's
 22 instructional hours for each grade level in an indigenous or foreign language. Except
 23 as otherwise provided in this section, the requirements of AS 14.03.250 - 14.03.290
 24 apply to a language immersion charter school.

25 (b) An application to a local school board under AS 14.03.250 for the
 26 establishment of a language immersion charter school must state that it is an
 27 application for a language immersion charter school, identify the language or
 28 languages in which the school will teach, and describe the percentage of the school's
 29 instructional hours for each grade level that will be provided in each language of
 30 instruction.

31 (c) The academic policy committee of a language immersion charter school

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shall consist of parents of students attending the school, school employees, and individuals who either are proficient speakers of the language of instruction of the school or have substantial knowledge of the culture of the people that historically spoke the language of instruction of the school.

(d) If a language immersion charter school does not provide at least 50 percent of the school's instructional hours for each grade level in an indigenous or foreign language, the academic policy committee of the language immersion charter school shall work with the department to develop a plan describing how the school will reach the goal of providing at least 50 percent of the school's instructional hours for each grade level in an indigenous or foreign language. The academic policy committee of the language immersion charter school shall submit the plan to the department for approval.

(e) A teacher at a language immersion charter school shall possess
(1) a teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, 14.20.020, or 14.20.022 and an indigenous or foreign language immersion endorsement issued under AS 14.20.021;
(2) a limited teacher certificate for language immersion teachers issued under AS 14.20.026; or
(3) a teacher certificate issued by a qualified teacher certification program established by an Alaska Native tribe as described under AS 14.20.028.

(f) Notwithstanding (e) of this section, a person who possesses a teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, AS 14.20.020, or 14.20.022, but does not possess a language immersion endorsement issued under AS 14.20.021, may teach classes in English at a language immersion charter school.

* **Sec. 3.** AS 14.20 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 14.20.021. Language immersion endorsements. The department shall issue an indigenous or foreign language immersion endorsement to a person who
(1) applies to the department on a form approved by the department;
(2) possesses a teacher certificate under AS 14.20.015, 14.20.017, 14.20.020, or 14.20.022;
(3) demonstrates, as required by regulations adopted by the board,

1 sufficient proficiency in the indigenous or foreign language to conduct classroom
2 activities entirely in the indigenous or foreign language; and

3 (4) completes a course or program of study in language immersion
4 education for which the person is eligible to receive academic credit at a
5 postsecondary educational institution.

6 * **Sec. 4.** AS 14.20.025 is amended to read:

7 **Sec. 14.20.025. Limited teacher certificates.** Notwithstanding
8 AS 14.20.020(b), a person may be issued a limited certificate, valid only in the area of
9 expertise for which it is issued, to teach Alaska Native [LANGUAGE OR] culture,
10 military science, or a vocational or technical course for which the board determines by
11 regulation that baccalaureate degree training is not sufficiently available. A limited
12 certificate may be issued under this section only if the school board of the district or
13 regional educational attendance area in which the person will be teaching or the
14 academic policy committee of the charter school in which the person will be
15 teaching has requested its issuance. A person who applies for a limited certificate
16 shall demonstrate, as required by regulations adopted by the board, instructional skills
17 and subject matter expertise sufficient to assure [ENSURE] the public that the person
18 is competent as a teacher [. THE BOARD MAY REQUIRE A PERSON ISSUED A
19 LIMITED CERTIFICATE TO UNDERTAKE ACADEMIC TRAINING AS MAY
20 BE REQUIRED BY THE BOARD BY REGULATION AND MAKE
21 SATISFACTORY PROGRESS IN THE ACADEMIC TRAINING].

22 * **Sec. 5.** AS 14.20.025 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

23 (b) A limited certificate issued under this section is initially valid for one year.
24 The department may extend a limited certificate issued under this section if the school
25 board or academic policy committee that initially requested the issuance of the limited
26 certificate requests that the certificate be extended and certifies that the person has
27 demonstrated skills in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and student
28 assessment. The certificate may be extended in accordance with regulations adopted
29 by the board.

30 (c) The board may not require, as a condition for extending a limited
31 certificate under (b) of this section, that a person complete additional academic

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training.

* **Sec. 6.** AS 14.20 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 14.20.026. Limited teacher certificates for language immersion teachers. (a) Notwithstanding AS 14.20.020(b), a person who meets the requirements of this section may be issued a limited certificate to teach in a language other than English if there is an insufficient number of certified teachers in the state capable of teaching in that language, and the school board of the district or regional educational attendance area in which the person will be teaching or the academic policy committee of the charter school in which the person will be teaching requests that the department issue the certificate. A limited certificate issued under this section is valid for teaching the

(1) language in which the person demonstrates proficiency under (b)(3) of this section in pre-elementary school through grade 12; and

(2) subject in which the person demonstrates expertise under (b)(2) of this section in pre-elementary school through grade 8 if the

(A) subject is taught in the language in which the person demonstrates proficiency under (b)(3) of this section; and

(B) person completes a course or program of study in language immersion education for which the person is eligible to receive academic credit at a postsecondary educational institution.

(b) The department may issue a limited teacher certificate to a person under this section if the person demonstrates, as required by regulations adopted by the board,

(1) instructional skills sufficient to assure the public that the person is competent as a teacher;

(2) subject matter expertise; the board may not require the person to take a test in English, unless the person is a fluent or native English speaker, or require a person to hold a specific degree to demonstrate expertise under this paragraph; and

(3) sufficient proficiency in an indigenous or foreign language to conduct classroom activities entirely in the indigenous or foreign language.

(c) A limited certificate issued under this section is initially valid for one year.

1 The department may extend a limited certificate issued under this section if the school
2 board or the academic policy committee that initially requested the issuance of the
3 limited certificate requests that the certificate be extended and certifies that the person
4 has demonstrated skills in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and student
5 assessment. The certificate may be extended in accordance with regulations adopted
6 by the board.

7 (d) The board may not require, as a condition for extending a limited
8 certificate under (c) of this section, that a person complete additional academic
9 training.

10 * **Sec. 7.** AS 14.20 is amended by adding a new section to read:

11 **Sec. 14.20.028. Teachers certified by Alaska Native tribes.** (a) A person
12 who is certified as a teacher by a qualified teacher certification program established by
13 an Alaska Native tribe and who is not disqualified under (d) or (e) of this section may
14 teach a class at a

15 (1) language immersion charter school established under AS 14.03.257
16 if the language of instruction is the language historically spoken by the Alaska Native
17 tribe; and

18 (2) public school that is not a language immersion charter school, with
19 the approval of the school board of the district or regional educational attendance area
20 in which the public school is located, if the language of instruction for the class is the
21 language historically spoken by members of the Alaska Native tribe.

22 (b) A teacher certification program established by an Alaska Native tribe is a
23 qualified teacher certification program if the

24 (1) program includes an evaluation of the person's

25 (A) proficiency in the Alaska Native language historically
26 spoken by members of the tribe;

27 (B) expertise in the subject the person is certified to teach;

28 (C) instructional skills, including instructional skills specific to
29 language immersion education;

30 (2) Alaska Native tribe provides the department with a complete
31 description of the teacher certification program; and

1 (3) Alaska Native tribe notifies the department when a person is
2 certified or when a person's certification status changes.

3 (c) The department shall make available to the public the complete description
4 of a teacher certification program provided to the department under (b)(2) of this
5 section.

6 (d) A person is only eligible to teach under this section if the

7 (1) person submits fingerprints and the fees required by the
8 Department of Public Safety under AS 12.62.160 for criminal justice information and
9 a national criminal history record check to the department;

10 (2) department submits the fingerprints and fees to the Department of
11 Public Safety for a report of criminal justice information under AS 12.62 and a
12 national criminal history record check under AS 12.62.400; and

13 (3) department finds the person to be suitable for employment as a
14 teacher under AS 14.20.020(f).

15 (e) The department may prohibit a person who is certified as a teacher by a
16 teacher certification program established by an Alaska Native tribe from teaching in a
17 public school if the department finds that the teacher certification program does not
18 meet the requirements of (b) of this section.

19 (f) In this section, "Alaska Native tribe" means a tribe that is recognized by
20 the United States Secretary of the Interior to exist as an Indian tribe under 25 U.S.C.
21 479a (Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994).

22 * **Sec. 8.** AS 14.20.030 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

23 (d) The commissioner or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission
24 may prohibit a person who is certified as a teacher by a qualified teacher certification
25 program described under AS 14.20.028 from teaching at a public school for the same
26 reasons that the commissioner or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission
27 may suspend or revoke a certificate under (a) or (b) of this section.

28 * **Sec. 9.** AS 14.20.040 is amended to read:

29 **Sec. 14.20.040. Applicability of the Administrative Procedure Act.**
30 AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act) applies to all proceedings under
31 AS 14.20.030 and AS 14.20.028(e), and revocations, [AND] suspensions, and

1 **decisions to prohibit a person from teaching in a public school under**
 2 **AS 14.20.028(e) and 14.20.030(d)** are final and reviewable in accordance with
 3 AS 44.62.560 - 44.62.570.

4 * **Sec. 10.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
 5 read:

6 TRANSITION. (a) A person who holds a valid limited teacher certificate under
 7 AS 14.20.025 that is issued before the effective date of this Act may continue to teach under
 8 the certificate until the certificate expires normally under AS 14.20.025 and regulations
 9 adopted under AS 14.20.025, as AS 14.20.025 read on the day before the effective date of this
 10 Act.

11 (b) A person who holds a valid limited teacher certificate under AS 14.20.025 that is
 12 issued before the effective date of this Act and that expires before July 1, 2017, may extend or
 13 renew that certificate under AS 14.20.025 and regulations adopted under AS 14.20.025, as
 14 AS 14.20.025 read on the day before the effective date of this Act.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2015 Legislative Session

Bill Version: SB 84
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: SB084-EED-SSA-4-10-15
Title: LANG. IMMERSION SCHOOLS/TEACHER CERTS.
Sponsor: OLSON
Requester: Senate Education Committee

Department: Department of Education and Early Development
Appropriation: Teaching and Learning Support
Allocation: Student and School Achievement
OMB Component Number: 2796

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2016 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2016 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2016	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Personal Services	***		***	***	***	***	***
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	***	0.0	***	***	***	***	***

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	***	0.0	***	***	***	***	***

Positions

Full-time	1.0		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues							
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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 (separate supplemental appropriation required)
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2016) cost: 0.0 (separate capital appropriation required)
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? yes
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed? 06/30/16

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Not applicable, initial version

Prepared By: Paul R. Prussing, Deputy Director
Division: Teaching and Learning Support
Approved By: Mike Hanley, Commissioner
Agency: Department of Education & Early Development

Phone: (907)465-8721
Date: 04/10/2015 02:37 PM
Date: 04/10/15

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SB 84

Analysis

Section 1 amends AS 14.03.255, Organization and operation of a charter school, (c) by adding: (15) a clause requiring compliance with AS 14.03.257 if the charter school is a language immersion charter school.

Section 2 amends AS 14.03, Public Schools Generally, by adding a new section AS 14.03.257, Language immersion charter schools, that defines what requirements must be met in order to be considered a language immersion charter school; such as, teachers must possess an "indigenous or foreign language immersion endorsement."

Section 3 amends AS 14.20, Teachers and School Personnel, by adding a new section AS 14.20.021, Teachers at language immersion charter schools. This requires the department to issue indigenous or foreign language immersion endorsements to a person who meets four requirements.

Section 4 amends AS 14.20.025, Limited teacher certificates, by removing the ability to teach Alaska Native Languages with a limited certificate. The bill also removes the ability of the board to require additional academic training under limited teacher certificates.

Section 5 amends AS 14.20.025, Limited teacher certificates, by adding a new subsection (b) and (c). (b) of this section defines the period of time a limited certificate may be valid. Initially, one year with and an optional four year extension based on meeting certain criteria. (c) states that "the board may not require, as a condition for extending or renewing a limited certificate under (b) of this section, that a person complete additional academic training."

Section 6 amends AS 14.20, Teachers and school personnel, by adding a new section AS 14.20.026, Limited teacher certificates for language teachers. This section authorizes the board to issue limited teacher certificates for language teachers when there are insufficient number of teachers available to a person who meet four specific criteria. Certificates issued under this section are valid under the same criteria as Section 5, AS 14.20.025, as amended.

Section 7 amends AS 14.20, Teachers and school personnel, by adding a new section AS 14.20.028, Recognition of teacher certification for Alaska Native language immersion teachers by Alaska Native tribes. This allows Alaska Native tribes to issue teacher certification for language immersion. The Alaska Native tribe must submit to the department their certification procedures, but it is not approved by the department.

Sections 3 through 7 would require a Project Coordinator to have independent and overall authority over this review at DEED. Project Coordinator = \$131.2; plus \$9.5 department chargebacks for a total cost of \$140.7.

Section 8 amends AS 14.30, Pupils and educational programs for pupils, by adding a new section AS 14.30.430, Testing in language immersion educational programs. "The department shall, to the extent permitted by federal law, allow students enrolled in language immersion charter schools established under AS 14.03.257 or other language immersion programs to take statewide standards-based assessments in the language of instruction of the language immersion charter school or language immersion program."

The fiscal note is indeterminate because currently the number of programs that fall under this bill is unknown, and an assessment would need to be developed for each language represented. The cost of the assessment development for each program would be significant as many of the languages approach words within the language differently and a simple translation will not be appropriate. The administration of the assessment will also have ongoing costs based on the number of different languages as each may require specific scoring protocols and scorers who know each language for open ended items.

Sheila Peterson

From: Jacquelyn Boyer
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2015 12:57 PM
Subject: SB 84

Good Afternoon,

My apologies for not addressing why Senator Olson chose charter schools as the medium for language immersion rather than alternative schools. Senator Olson supports language immersion programs regardless of the form they are in but for the model of SB 84 charter schools were chosen for the particular benefits they possess. Alternative schools provide a valuable resource for children but they don't have the flexibility that is offered with charter schools. Charter schools can be started by parents, teachers, or the local authority and are often focused on an uncommon practice, like language immersion, that has proven additional academic success. Alternative schools are mostly for high risk students and need to be started by the local district. Regardless of the type of school immersion education is in to produce bilingual students, Senator Olson is in support of it.

Please let me know of any additional questions or concerns you or your boss may have.

Thank you,
Jackie
Office of Senator Olson



Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School Centro Académico

Mailing address: PO Box 871433
Wasilla, AK 99687

Address: 7010 E Bogard
Wasilla, AK 99654

Phone: (907)745-2223

Fax: (907) 745-6132

Email: frc@matsuk12.us

Website: www.matsuk12.us

Wednesday, April 1, 2015

Dear Senator Dunleavy,

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I write this letter of support for SB 84, authored by Senator Olson.

As the Principal of the only immersion school in the Mat-Su Borough School District, Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School, I have first-hand knowledge of the difficulty immersion programs face when hiring qualified instructional staff that must fulfill state requirements. SB 84, if passed, will significantly and positively impact current and future immersion charter schools. Currently, instructional staff must have an Alaska State Type A teaching certificate and be Highly Qualified in the subject/grade level they teach. In the past four years as Fronteras' administrator, I have met many native and heritage (Spanish) speaking individuals with classroom experience and a strong desire to teach, but lack certification. Not only have these particular individuals possessed the cultural knowledge and desired dialect, but they have the innate ability to dispense knowledge in a purposeful and appropriate manner.

I applaud Senator Olson for recognizing the hole this has left in immersion programs, and his desire to correct it. Creating a special certificate, similar to the already existing Type M, will allow immersion charter schools to employ native speaking individuals, who through the use of their language, will deliver a standards based educational program, all while honoring cultural awareness.

Research shows that a language immersion education provides individuals with increased problem-solving skills, improved linguistic awareness, higher academic achievement among peers, and an increased advantage in both national and international job markets.





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Lastly, I would like to address the importance that SB 84 brings to our Alaska Native tribes and community members specifically. The sustaining and/or revitalization of Alaska's languages are of the utmost importance if we are truly invested in the preservation of Alaska's rich history.

I highly recommend and support the passing of SB 84.

Most Sincerely,

Jennifer A. Schmidt
Principal
Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School



Mission: Mat-Su Borough School District prepares students for success.

"Utah's Dual Immersion programs help to prepare our students for the jobs of tomorrow. Dual Immersion gives students a tremendous and early advantage in learning to navigate the national, cultural, and linguistic complexities inherent in our increasingly global marketplace."

*Governor Gary Herbert,
Utah Governor*

"In this increasingly competitive world, it is critical for Utah students to be able to deliver services and information in various languages and appreciate the subtleties of doing business in other cultures, much of which is learned through language study."

*Sen. Howard Stephenson,
Utah State Senator*

"With dual immersion, we have a way forward to ensure that Utah students are acquiring the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to be competitive in the world marketplace."

*Dr. Larry K. Shumway,
Utah State Superintendent of Public Instruction*

"Utah's Dual Immersion Program effectively provides an excellent strategy for Utah students to realize their potential to become an advanced multilingual workforce, better prepared for the challenges of the world economy."

*Lew Cramer,
President World Trade Center Utah*



The Utah State Office of Education is proud to support Dual Immersion programs in Utah public elementary schools in CHINESE, FRENCH, GERMAN, PORTUGUESE, and SPANISH.



For more information:

UTAH'S DUAL IMMERSION WEBSITE

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/dualimmersion>

OFELIA WADE

Portuguese Dual Immersion Specialist
ofelia.wade@canyonsdistrict.org



Utah State Education



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UTAH'S PORTUGUESE DUAL IMMERSION PROGRAM

Offering children the gift of a second language.



2012-2013

Parkside Elementary, Murray School District
Rocky Mountain Elementary, Alpine School District

WHY IMMERSION?

More than forty years of research consistently documents the power of immersion programs to help students attain high levels of second language proficiency. No other type of instruction, short of living in a second-language environment, is as successful. Young children especially thrive in this type of instructional environment. Happily, language immersion is also the least expensive way to deliver second language instruction.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The Dual Immersion program seeks to enroll students of varying backgrounds and all abilities. Applications are open to all students entering first grade. However, it may not be a wise choice for children experiencing significant communication delays in their primary language.

PROVEN BENEFITS

Second Language Skills

Students achieve high proficiency in the immersion language.

Improved Performance on Standardized Tests

Immersion students perform as well as or better than non-immersion students on standardized tests of English and math administered in English.

Enhanced Cognitive Skills

Immersion students typically develop greater cognitive flexibility, demonstrating increased attention control, better memory, and superior problem solving skills as well as an enhanced understanding of their primary language.

Increased Cultural Sensitivity

Immersion students are more aware of and show more positive attitudes towards other cultures and an appreciation of other people.

Long-Term Benefits

Immersion students are better prepared for the global community and job markets where a second language is an asset.

Utah Dual Immersion

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Maximize students' second language proficiency
- Provide a rich academic environment in both first and second languages
- Develop students' abilities to work successfully in multiple cultural settings
- Offer a rich, culturally diverse experience for the entire community



PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Commit to long-term participation in the immersion program
- Develop an understanding of immersion education
- Read with your child (in English) 20-30 min. daily
- Encourage the use of Portuguese outside of school
- Provide community support and, when possible, volunteer
- Enjoy the challenges; celebrate the results

HOW TO ENROLL MY CHILD

For more information about enrolling your child in one of Utah's Portuguese/English Dual Immersion programs, please contact Parkside Elementary (Murray School District) or Rocky Mountain Elementary (Alpine School District).

WHY PORTUGUESE?

- With over 220 million speakers, Portuguese is the seventh most widely spoken language in the world, and is the official language of eight countries, including Portugal, Angola and Brazil.
- Portugal has produced some of the world's greatest explorers and literature.
- Brazil is famous for samba and bossa nova music, Carnaval, capoeira, and its five World Cup titles in soccer. Brazil is also a major tourist destination, boasting the Amazon rain forest and some of the world's most beautiful beaches. Because of Brazil's rapidly expanding economy (currently ranked 6th worldwide in GDP), many American businesses are eager to hire Portuguese speakers.
- Portuguese is a good springboard to learning other Romance languages; students who speak Portuguese can generally understand and learn Spanish with little difficulty.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN

A DUAL IMMERSION PROGRAM

- Dual Immersion offers a rich bilingual experience for young learners when their minds are developmentally best able to acquire a second language.
- Instruction is divided between two high quality, creative classrooms: one English and one Portuguese.
- Students enjoy the advantage of two caring, qualified teachers. The English-speaking teacher uses half of the instructional day to teach English language arts (reading, writing, and spelling) as well as other elements of the curriculum (science, social studies, math, etc.)
- The Portuguese-speaking teacher uses the other half of the day to teach Portuguese literacy, math, and portions of social studies, science, art, music, P.E., and health topics from the grade-appropriate level of the Utah State Core Curriculum.
- In class, the Portuguese teacher speaks only in Portuguese and communicates using a range of engaging strategies including pictures, songs, games, body language, expressions, pantomime, drama, etc. Children at this age are adept at picking up language in meaningful contexts. After a brief period at the beginning of the year, students too will speak only in Portuguese during Portuguese class.

“Utah’s Dual Immersion programs help to prepare our students for the jobs of tomorrow. Dual Immersion gives students a tremendous and early advantage in learning to navigate the national, cultural, and linguistic complexities inherent in our increasingly global marketplace.”

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Navajo Immersion in the Navajo Nation

FLORIAN TOM JOHNSON & JENNIFER WILSON, WINDOW ROCK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 8

Window Rock Unified School District located at the capitol of the Navajo Nation in Arizona is providing for the unique cultural and academic related needs of Navajo children by reverting back to the historic values of Diné (Navajo) language and culture and using the knowledge from traditional Diné education to produce increased academic achievement of our students.

Tséhootsooi Diné Bi'ólta' (Diné Language Immersion School) is one of the six schools operated by the district. It uses the immersion model in grades K-6 as a Diné language revitalization and maintenance effort among families served by the school district. Parents must choose to put

their children in the immersion school where in kindergarten and first grade the language of instruction in all content areas is Navajo. Starting in second grade, English instruction is added until in sixth grade; fifty percent of the instruction is in English. The Navajo Nation's *Diné Cultural Content Standards* are coupled with Arizona's state academic standards as the framework for instruction in which Diné language is predominantly used as the language of instruction, resulting in students who are speakers and thinkers in Diné while meeting state academic expectations and standards in English.

The main goal of Tséhootsooi Diné Bi'ólta' is to maintain and/or

revitalize the Diné (Navajo) language among school age children within the communities the Window Rock Unified School District serves, through a culturally and linguistically relevant educational program, and its primary focus is oral language proficiency. It enrolls approximately 200 students taught by 15 Diné language teachers instructing only in Diné while three English language teachers instruct only in English, allowing for the use of the Diné Language if necessary.

At all grade levels content instruction is based upon the integration of the Navajo Nation's Diné cultural content standards with the Arizona state academic standards in reading, writing, math, foreign language as well

Figure 1
 3rd Grade Student Achievement Data Comparison
 THTILC 2004

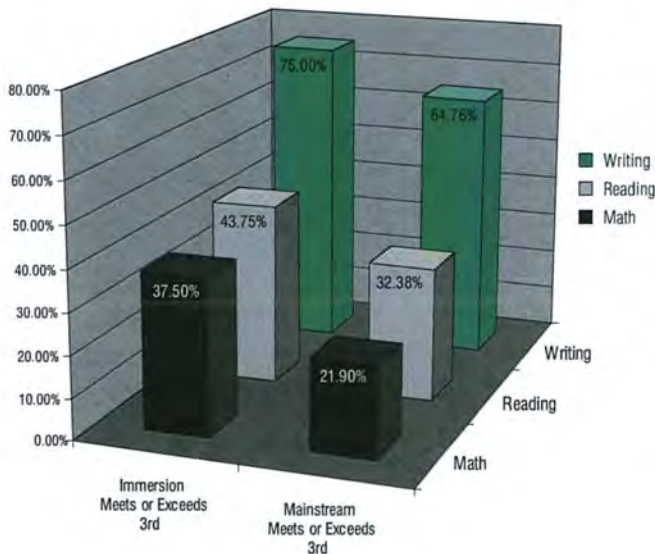
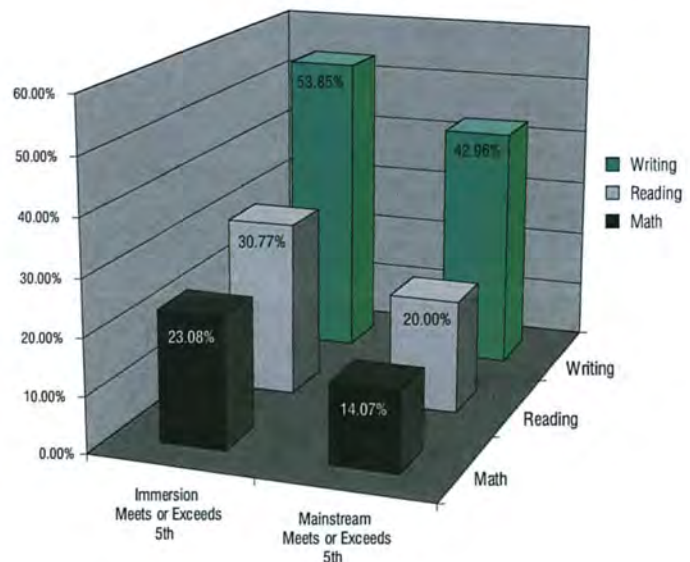


Figure 2
 5th Grade Student Achievement Data Comparison
 THTILC 2004



as science and social studies. This relates to the district's vision of being "an exemplary student-centered learning organization reflecting the Diné values of life-long learning."

The immersion school cannot make modifications in the administration of the state assessments, yet data shows that Diné language immersion students outperform their mainstream peers on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS). The 2004 scores of immersion and non-immersion students attending Window Rock Unified School District on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) criterion referenced test that is mandated by the state are shown in Figures 1 and 2. Table 1 summarizes the lessons learned since the first kindergarten Diné immersion classroom was started in 1986. *NN*

**Table 1:
Lessons Learned from Navajo Immersion at Window Rock**

WHAT WORKS:

- Learning Diné Language (speaking, reading and writing) helps the students to increase skills in English
- Exposure to Diné Language increases language learning providing a language base for academic learning
- Using Diné language to learn state academic standards increases rate of Diné language learning
- Constant exposure to Diné culture provides a feedback system to Diné language learning
- Using and reflecting on student's life experiences makes learning relevant for students
- The use of Diné language and integrating the Diné culture validates students' identity
- Standards Based System (Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Grading, Reporting)

RESULTS:

- Language Proficiency in Diné /English
- Literacy in Diné/English
- Retention & High School Graduation Rate
- Teacher Retention
- Family Involvement in Responsibility for student learning
- Culture Knowledge
- Diné values
- Language Revitalization/Maintenance

WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE:

- Use of Diné (Heritage) language as medium of instruction
- Consistent integration of Diné (heritage) culture in instruction
- Strong parent involvement motivates student learning (child & parents learning together)
- Visionary leadership

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Vivian B. Harvey, Educational Programs
(614) 487-0965 (Ohio)
(52) 777-318-6407 (Mexico)
Email: cemanahuac1@cs.com
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Note: This chapter was originally published by the Asia Society as a chapter in the handbook entitled *Chinese Language Learning in the Early Grades*. The full publication can be found at: <http://asiasociety.org/education/chinese-language-initiatives/chinese-language-learning-early-grades>

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What the Research Says About Immersion

by Tara Williams Fortune

*Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition
University of Minnesota*

Over nearly half a century, research on language immersion education has heralded benefits such as academic achievement, language and literacy development in two or more languages, and cognitive skills. This research also exposes some of the challenges that accompany the immersion model, with its multilayered agenda of language, literacy and intercultural skills development during subject matter learning. This chapter outlines key findings for both advantages and challenges.

Benefits of Language Immersion

Academic and Educational

Without question, the issue investigated most often in research on language immersion education is students' ability to perform academically on standardized tests administered in English. This question emerges again and again in direct response to stakeholder concerns that development of a language other than English not jeopardize basic schooling goals, high levels of oral and written communication skills in English, and grade-appropriate academic achievement. The research response to this question is longstanding and consistent. English proficient immersion students are capable of achieving as well as, and in some cases better than, non-immersion peers on standardized measures of reading and math.^[i]

This finding applies to students from a range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds,^[ii] as well as diverse cognitive and linguistic abilities.^[iii] Moreover, academic achievement on tests administered in English occurs regardless of the second language being learned. In other words, whether learning through alphabetic languages (Spanish, Hawaiian, French, etc.) or character-based languages (Mandarin, Japanese, Cantonese), English-proficient students will keep pace academically with peers in English-medium programs.^[iv]

It is important to acknowledge that early studies carried out in one-way total immersion programs, where English may not be introduced until grades 2–5, show evidence of a temporary lag in specific English language skills such as spelling, capitalization, punctuation, word knowledge, and word discrimination.^[v] That said, these studies also find that within a year or two after instruction in English language arts begins, the lag disappears. There were no long-term negative repercussions to English language or literacy development.

Does this same finding apply to students in two-way immersion (TWI) settings whose first language is other than English? In the past fifteen to twenty years, US researchers found that English learners' academic achievement also attained the programs' goals. By the upper elementary, or in some cases early secondary grades, English learners from different ethnicities, language backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, and developmental profiles perform at least as well as same background peers being schooled in English only.^[vi] Most English learners in TWI come from Latino families whose home language is Spanish. As an ethnic minority in the United States, Latinos are both the fastest-growing student population and the group with the highest rate of school failure.^[vii] Research in Spanish/English TWI contexts points to higher grade point averages and increased enrollment in post-secondary education for this student group, compared to Latino peers participating in other types of educational programs such as transitional bilingual education and various forms of English-medium education.

Although the vast majority of TWI research has been carried out in Spanish/English settings, Dr. Kathryn Lindholm-Leary^[viii] recently reported results from a study of two Chinese/English TWI programs. Students in grades 4–8 whose home language was Chinese tested at or above their grade level and the same as or well above peers with similar demographic profiles participating in non-TWI programs. Leary's findings align with those of other TWI programs.

Language and Literacy

The immersion approach first gained traction in North America because educators believed in its potential to move students further towards bilingualism and biliteracy. Immersion language programs took root in areas such as St. Lambert, Canada, and Miami, Florida, where educators felt that more than one language was necessary for children's future economic and social prosperity. Program designers wagered that making the second language the sole medium for teaching core subject content, instead of teaching the second language separately, would result in more students reaching higher levels of proficiency. These early immersion programs started by committing one-half or more of the school day for teachers and students to work only in the second language. Students were socialized to adopt the new language for all classroom communication and subject learning.

This approach to second-language and literacy development proved itself to be the most successful school-based language program model available. English-proficient immersion students typically achieve higher levels of minority (non-English) language proficiency when compared with students in other types of language programs.^[ix] Immersion students who begin the program as English speakers consistently develop native-like levels of comprehension, such as listening and reading skills, in their second language. They also display fluency and confidence when using it.^[x] Further, the more time spent learning through the non-English language, the higher the level of proficiency attained. To date, early total (one-way) and nearly total (90:10) two-way immersion programs demonstrate higher levels of minority language proficiency than partial or fifty-fifty programs.^[xi]

Initial concerns about the possible detriment to English language and literacy development were eventually laid to rest. English-proficient immersion students who achieved relatively high levels of second-language proficiency also acquired higher levels of English language skills and metalinguistic awareness—that is, the ability to think about how various parts of a language function. Researchers posit that metalinguistic skills positively impact learning to read in alphabetic languages, because it facilitates the development of critical literacy

sub-skills such as phonological awareness and knowledge of letter-sound correspondences for word decoding.^[xii] The important relationship between phonological awareness and successful reading abilities is clearly established. However, we now also have evidence that instructional time invested in developing important decoding sub-skills in an immersion student's second language can transfer and benefit decoding sub-skills in their first language.^[xiii]

Research about the relationship between character-based and English literacy sub-skills continues to grow. To date, evidence points to the transfer of phonological processing skills for children whose first language is Chinese and are learning to read in English as a second language.^[xiv] Studies also indicate a relationship between visual-orthographic skills in Chinese, the ability to visually distinguish basic orthographic patterns such as correct positioning of semantic radicals in compound characters, and English reading and spelling.^[xv] Much remains to be learned in these areas, however, when it comes to English-proficient children in Mandarin immersion programs who are acquiring literacy in Chinese and English.

In TWI programs, research illuminates what Lindholm-Leary and Dr. E. R. Howard referred to as a "native-speaker effect."^[xvi] In a nutshell, the "native-speaker effect" describes the tendency of native speakers of a language to outperform second language learners of the same language on standardized measures administered in the native speakers' language. For example, if Spanish proficient and Spanish learners are evaluated using standardized Spanish-medium tools, Spanish proficient outperform Spanish learners. Similar outcomes occurred when tests were given in English and Mandarin.^[xvii]

In general, research finds that immersion students whose first language is not English become more balanced bilinguals and develop higher levels of bilingualism and biliteracy when compared with English proficient students or home language peers participating in other educational programming. For example, Dr. Kim Potowski^[xviii] found that the oral and written language skills of English learners in TWI were only slightly behind those of recent Spanish-speaking arrivals and significantly better than their English-proficient peers. English learners' higher bilingual proficiency levels are also linked to higher levels of reading achievement in English, increased academic language proficiency, and successful schooling experiences in general.^[xix]

Cognitive Skill Development

There's a well-established positive relationship between basic thinking skills and being a fully proficient bilingual who maintains regular use of both languages. Fully proficient bilinguals outperform monolinguals in the areas of divergent thinking, pattern recognition, and problem solving.^[xx]

Bilingual children develop the ability to solve problems that contain conflicting or misleading cues at an earlier age, and they can decipher them more quickly than monolinguals. When so doing, they demonstrate an advantage with selective attention and greater executive or inhibitory control.^[xxi] Fully proficient bilingual children have also been found to exhibit enhanced sensitivity to verbal and non-verbal cues and to show greater attention to their listeners' needs relative to monolingual children.^[xxii] Further, bilingual students display greater facility in learning additional languages when compared with monolinguals.^[xxiii]

While much evidence supports the benefits associated with full and active bilingualism, the

relationship between language immersion education and long-term cognitive benefits is as yet less well-understood. Some research does indicate greater cognitive flexibility^[xxiv] and better nonverbal problem-solving abilities among English-proficient language immersion students.^[xxv]

Decades ago, Dr. Jim Cummins cautioned about the need for a certain threshold level of second language proficiency before cognitive skills might be positively impacted.^[xxvi] Accordingly, children who develop "partial bilingualism" in a second language may or may not experience cognitive benefits. While some studies report positive cognitive effects for partial or emerging bilinguals, Dr. Ellen Bialystok concurs that it is bilingual children with a more balanced and competent mastery of both languages who will predictably exhibit the positive cognitive consequences of bilingualism.^[xxvii]

Economic and Sociocultural

Increasingly, proficiency in a second language and intercultural competency skills open up employment possibilities. Many sectors require increasing involvement in the global economy, from international businesses and tourism to communications and the diplomatic corps. High-level, high-paying employment will demand competence in more than one language.^[xxviii] In the United States, world language abilities are increasingly important to national security, economic competitiveness, delivery of health care, and law enforcement.^[xxix]

Beyond economics are the countless advantages that bi- and multilingual individuals enjoy by being able to communicate with a much wider range of people from many different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Knowledge of other languages enriches travel experiences and allows people to experience other societies and cultures more meaningfully. Besides access to foreign media, literature, and the arts, bi- and multilingual people can simply connect and converse more freely. Becoming bilingual leads to new ways of conceptualizing yourself and others. It expands your worldview, so that you not only know more, you know *differently*.

Challenges Faced by Language Immersion

Designing, implementing, and providing ongoing support for language immersion education is no easy task. Pressing challenges include staffing, curriculum development and program articulation. Program administrators struggle to find high-quality, licensed teachers who can demonstrate advanced levels of oral and written proficiency in the chosen language. Once teachers are hired, the search begins for developmentally appropriate curriculum, materials, and resources that meet local district and state standards. Elementary-level challenges are met with additional secondary-level issues such as scheduling and balancing students' educational priorities as the program moves up and through the middle and high school years.

Inadequate teacher preparation for immersion programs remains a challenge in this field. Teachers need specialized professional development support to meet the complex task of concurrently addressing content, language, and literacy development in an integrated, subject-matter-driven language program.^[xxx] However, teacher educators and immersion specialists who can provide useful and relevant professional learning experiences for the immersion staff are in short supply. In addition to professional development related to curriculum design and pedagogical techniques, both native and non-native teachers report the need for ongoing support for their own proficiency in the immersion language.^[xxxi]

Chinese teachers whose educational experiences took place in more traditional, teacher-centered classrooms are aware of significant cultural differences and participant expectations. For example, US schools place a strong emphasis on social skills and language for communicative purposes. Children expect learner-centered activities with real-life tasks. Chinese teachers often hold a different set of expectations for students and thus, they frequently need support for classroom management strategies and techniques. [\[xxxii\]](#)

Immersion teachers face significant hurdles in the sheer range of learner differences. The impact of students' variations in language proficiency, literacy development, learning support available to the student in the home, achievement abilities, learning styles, and special needs grows exponentially when teaching and learning occurs in two languages. [\[xxxiii\]](#) Educators and parents struggle to identify and implement research-based policies and practices for learners who have language, literacy, and learning difficulties. Many immersion programs lack the necessary resources and bilingual specialists to provide appropriate instructional support, assessment, and interventions. [\[xxxiv\]](#)

Promoting student understanding of more abstract and complex concepts becomes increasingly difficult in the upper elementary grades and beyond. Some upper-elementary immersion teachers, in particular those who teach in partial or 50:50 programs, report difficulties in teaching advanced-level subject matter because students' cognitive development is at a higher level than their proficiency in the second language. [\[xxxv\]](#) This challenge becomes more pronounced in programs where the immersion language is character-based, since literacy development is more time-consuming and demanding. [\[xxxvi\]](#)

One of the greatest challenges for immersion teachers is to keep their students using the second language, especially when working and talking amongst themselves. This challenge is particularly pronounced once the children have moved beyond the primary grades. For instance, studies in both one-way and two-way immersion classes point to fifth-grade students using English more frequently than their non-English language. [\[xxxvii\]](#) Facilitating student use of the immersion language in ways that promote ongoing language development is an uphill battle for teachers. [\[xxxviii\]](#)

Finally, outcome-oriented research reveals that immersion students, especially those who begin the program as native English speakers, don't quite achieve native-like levels of speaking and writing skills. Studies consistently find that English-speaking immersion students' oral language lacks grammatical accuracy, lexical specificity, native pronunciation, and is less complex and sociolinguistically appropriate when compared with the language native speakers of the second language produce. [\[xxxix\]](#) Further, students' use of the immersion language appears to become increasingly anglicized over time, [\[xl\]](#) and can be marked by a more formal academic discourse style. [\[xli\]](#) Even in high-performing immersion programs, advancing students' second language proficiency beyond the intermediate levels remains a much sought after end goal.

[\[i\]](#) [Genesee, 2008](#); [Lindholm-Leary, 2001, 2011](#); [Turnbull, Lapkin, & Hart, 2001](#)

[\[ii\]](#) [Bruck, Tucker, & Jakimik, 1975](#); [Caldas & Boudreaux, 1999](#); [Holobow, Genesee, & Lambert, 1991](#); [Krueger, 2001](#); [Lindholm-Leary, 2001](#); [Slaughter, 1997](#)

[iii] [Bruck, 1982](#); [Genesee, 2007](#); [Myers, 2009](#)

[iv] [Lindholm-Leary, 2011](#); [Patterson, Hakam, & Bacon, 2011](#)

[v] [Swain & Barik, 1976](#)

[vi] [Christian, 2011](#); [Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2010](#); [Lindholm-Leary & Hernandez, 2011](#); [Myers, 2009](#); [Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002](#)

[vii] [Fry, 2010](#); [Passel & Cohn, 2008](#)

[viii] [2011](#)

[ix] [Campbell, Gray, Rhodes, & Snow, 1985](#); [Curtain & Dahlberg, 2010](#); [Forrest, 2007, 2011](#); [Lindholm Leary & Howard, 2008](#)

[x] [Genesee, 1987, 2004](#)

[xi] [Genesee, 1987](#); [Lindholm Leary, 2001](#); [Turnbull, Lapkin, & Hart, 2001](#)

[xii] [Bournot-Trites & Denizot, 2005](#); [Harley, Hart & Lapkin, 1986](#)

[xiii] [Erdos, Genesee, Savage & Haigh, 2010](#); [Genesee & Jared, 2008](#)

[xiv] [Gottardo, Yan, Siegel, & Wade-Woolley, 2001](#); [Wang, Perfetti, & Liu, 2005](#)

[xv] [Leong, Tan, Cheng, & Hau, 2005](#)

[xvi] [2008](#)

[xvii] [Lindholm-Leary, 2011](#); [Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008](#)

[xviii] [2004](#)

[xix] [Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003](#); [Kovelman, Baker, & Petitto, 2008](#); [Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2010](#); [Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008](#); [Ramirez, Perez, Valdez, & Hall, 2009](#); [Rolstad, 1997](#)

[xx] [Bialystok, 2001](#); [Cenoz & Genesee, 1998](#); [Hakuta, 1986](#); [Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2009](#); [Peal & Lambert, 1962](#)

[xxi] [Bialystok, 2009](#)

[xxii] [Lazaruk, 2007](#)

[xxiii] [Cenoz & Valencia, 1994](#); [Sanz, 2000](#)

[xxiv] [Bruck, et al., 1975](#)

[xxv] [Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991](#)

[xxvi] [1981](#)

[xxvii] [2001, page 228](#)

[xxviii] [Fixman, 1990](#); [García & Otheguy, 1994](#); [Halliwell, 1999](#); [Mann, Brassell, & Bevan, 2011](#)

[xxix] [Jackson & Malone, 2009](#)

[xxx] [Fortune, Tedick & Walker, 2008](#); [Howard & Loeb, 1998](#); [Kong, 2009](#); [Met & Lorenz, 1997](#); [Snow, 1990](#); [Walker & Tedick, 2000](#)

[xxxi] [Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003](#); [Fortune, Tedick & Walker, 2008](#)

[xxxii] [Hall Haley & Ferro, 2011](#)

[xxxiii] [Walker & Tedick, 2000](#)

[xxxiv] [Genesee, 2007](#); [Fortune, with Menke, 2010](#)

[xxxv] [Met & Lorenz, 1997](#)

[xxxvi] [Met, 2002](#)

[xxxvii] [Carrigo, 2000](#); [Fortune, 2001](#); [Potowski, 2004](#)

[xxxviii] [Lavan, 2001](#)

[xxxix] [Harley, 1986](#); [Menke, 2010](#); [Mougeon, Nadaski & Rehner, 2010](#); [Pawley, 1985](#); [Salamone, 1992](#); [Spilka, 1976](#)

[xl] [Lyster, 1987](#)

[xli] [Fortune, 2001](#); [Potowski, 2004](#); [Tarone and Swain, 1995](#)

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