

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5603

To direct the Secretary of Education to award grants to local educational agencies to establish or improve world language or dual language programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

Mr. PANETTA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Education to award grants to local educational agencies to establish or improve world language or dual language programs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “World Language Edu-
5 cation Assistance Program Act” or the “World LEAP
6 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

2 The purpose of this Act is to establish and make as-
3 sistance available to the World Language Education As-
4 sistance Program in order to—

5 (1) establish or improve and carry out World
6 Language Education Assistance Program grant pro-
7 grams;

8 (2) support and uplift dual language and world
9 language programs; and

10 (3) provide students with the language skills
11 necessary for an interconnected and global world.

12 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

13 Congress finds the following:

14 (1) Recent academic studies demonstrate that
15 America’s language capacity has reached a crisis
16 point, with only one fifth of United States residents
17 speaking a language other than English at home, 90
18 percent of United States-based employers reporting
19 a reliance on employees with language skills other
20 than English, and one third of foreign language-de-
21 pendent employers reporting a language skills gap.
22 This language crisis has real world implications for
23 business, government, the military, and diplomatic
24 and intelligence services.

1 (2) The Department of Education does not
2 have an innovative world languages program for ele-
3 mentary and secondary students.

4 (3) The Nation’s education system is suffering
5 from severe shortages of world language, English
6 learner, and bilingual and dual language immersion
7 educators that have been exacerbated by the
8 COVID–19 pandemic. Currently, foreign language is
9 the second highest teacher shortage subject area in
10 the Nation, with 6% of English as Second Language
11 or bilingual education positions vacant.

12 (4) The lack of a Federal elementary and sec-
13 ondary school world language and dual language
14 program, coupled with the continuing shortage of
15 world language and bilingual teachers, creates sig-
16 nificant obstacles to providing equitable opportuni-
17 ties for all students to develop multilingualism.
18 English learners, a population which has grown by
19 2,100,000 between 2000 and 2019, have been dis-
20 proportionately impacted.

21 (5) The Federal Government has a strong in-
22 terest in better preparing American students to com-
23 pete in the global economy.

24 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

25 In this Act:

1 (1) COMMUNITY-BASED HERITAGE LANGUAGE
2 SCHOOL.—The term “community-based heritage lan-
3 guage school” means a nonprofit, community-based
4 school that offers classes for students in pre-kinder-
5 garten through grade 12, for the purpose of main-
6 taining and teaching the language and culture of
7 non-English speaking communities.

8 (2) DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM.—The term
9 “dual language program” means—

10 (A) with respect to pre-kindergarten and
11 elementary school, a bilingual education pro-
12 gram in which students receive instruction in
13 English and a language other than English for
14 at least half of the instructional school day for
15 each year of pre-kindergarten and elementary
16 school, with the goal of achieving proficiency in
17 both languages; and

18 (B) with respect to grades 6 through 8, a
19 bilingual education program in which students
20 who participated in a program described in sub-
21 paragraph (A) continue to receive instruction in
22 English and a language other than English for
23 at least half of the instructional school day for
24 each year of such grades 6 through 8.

1 (3) ESEA DEFINITIONS.—The terms “English
2 learner”, “secondary school”, “local educational
3 agency”, “professional development”, “Secretary”,
4 and “State” have the meanings given those terms in
5 section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Act
6 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

7 (4) HERITAGE LEARNER.—The term “heritage
8 learner” means an individual—

9 (A) with proficiency in, or a cultural con-
10 nection to (through family, community, or coun-
11 try of origin), a language other than English;
12 and

13 (B) who is studying such language in pre-
14 kindergarten, elementary school, or secondary
15 school.

16 (5) WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM.—The term
17 “world language program” means a program that
18 educates and prepares pre-kindergarten, elementary,
19 or secondary school students to communicate, in a
20 proficient and culturally competent manner, with in-
21 dividuals who speak a language other than English.

22 **SEC. 5. WORLD LANGUAGE EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PRO-**
23 **GRAM.**

24 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award,
2 on a competitive basis, grants to local educational
3 agencies to establish and carry out new, or improve
4 existing world language or dual language programs.

5 (2) DURATION.—A grant awarded under this
6 section shall be for a period of 3 years and may be
7 renewed at the discretion of the Secretary.

8 (b) APPLICATION.—A local educational agency desir-
9 ing a grant under this section shall submit to the Sec-
10 retary an application at such time, in such manner, and
11 containing such information and assurances as the Sec-
12 retary may require.

13 (c) CRITERIA FOR SELECTION.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—In awarding a grant to a
15 local educational agency under this section, the Sec-
16 retary shall select applications describing programs
17 that—

18 (A) provide approaches to instruction that
19 lead to demonstrated growth in language pro-
20 ficiency from kindergarten through grade 12;

21 (B) can be disseminated and duplicated in
22 other local educational agencies;

23 (C) have a plan for how the program will
24 continue after the conclusion of the grant pe-
25 riod; and

1 (D) include a professional development
2 component.

3 (2) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this
4 section, the Secretary shall give priority to applica-
5 tions describing programs that—

6 (A) include intensive summer professional
7 development for world language program and
8 dual language program teachers;

9 (B) enter into partnerships with commu-
10 nity-based heritage language schools and com-
11 munities;

12 (C) provide world language and dual lan-
13 guage immersion programs across all socio-
14 economic and demographic groups, including
15 English learners and heritage learners;

16 (D) are carried out through a consortium
17 that shall include the agency receiving the grant
18 and an elementary school or secondary school
19 served by such agency, with a preference for
20 consortia that include an institution of higher
21 education;

22 (E) collaborate with the appropriate State
23 licensure office to broaden pathways for lan-
24 guage or dual language teacher certification; or

1 (F) conduct outreach and recruit sec-
2 ondary and post-secondary students of diverse
3 socioeconomic backgrounds, including former
4 English learners and heritage learners, into
5 programs that prepare such students to become
6 dual language or world language program
7 teachers.

8 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—A local educational agency that
9 receives a grant under this section shall—

10 (1) reserve not less than 20 percent of such
11 grant funds to provide—

12 (A) accessible pathways for paraprofes-
13 sionals to gain certification and licensure as
14 world language or dual language teachers; and

15 (B) professional development for certified
16 and licensed world language or dual language
17 teachers; and

18 (2) reserve not more than 5 percent of such
19 grant funds to evaluate the efficacy of programs car-
20 ried out with funds awarded under this section; and

21 (3) after making the reservations required
22 under paragraphs (1) and (2), use the remainder of
23 such grant funds to establish and carry out new,
24 and improve existing, world language or dual lan-

1 guage programs (including any associated adminis-
2 trative expenses).

3 (e) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months
5 after receiving a grant under this section, each local
6 educational agency shall submit to the Secretary a
7 report that—

8 (A) describes the implementation of the
9 program for which the local educational agency
10 received the grant; and

11 (B) includes data that identifies—

12 (i) the number of students enrolled in
13 language education at the elementary and
14 secondary schools served by the local edu-
15 cational agency prior to receiving a grant
16 under this section;

17 (ii) the number of students enrolled in
18 such language instruction as of the date of
19 submission of the report;

20 (iii) the number of certified bilingual
21 educators working for the local educational
22 agency prior to receiving a grant under
23 this section;

24 (iv) the number of certified bilingual
25 educators working for the local educational

1 agency as of the date of submission of the
2 report; and

3 (v) levels of community support for
4 language education—

5 (I) prior to receiving a grant
6 under this section; and

7 (II) as of the date of submission
8 of the report.

9 (2) STUDENT PRIVACY.—A local educational
10 agency shall prepare the report required under para-
11 graph (1) in a manner that protects the privacy
12 rights of each student in accordance with section
13 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20
14 U.S.C. 1232g; commonly known as the “Family
15 Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974”).

16 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
17 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
18 \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2024 and for each subsequent
19 fiscal year.

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