

Sec. 10-17e. Definitions. Whenever used in sections 10-17 and 10-17d to 10-17g, inclusive:

(1) “Eligible students” means students enrolled in public schools in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, whose dominant language is other than English and proficiency in English is not sufficient to assure equal educational opportunity in the regular school program;

(2) “Program of bilingual education” means a program that: (A) Makes instructional use of both English and an eligible student’s native language; (B) enables eligible students to achieve English proficiency and academic mastery of subject matter content and higher order skills, including critical thinking, so as to meet appropriate grade promotion and graduation requirements; (C) provides for the continuous increase in the use of English and corresponding decrease in the use of the native language for the purpose of instruction within each year and from year to year and provides for the use of English for more than half of the instructional time by the end of the first year; (D) may develop the native language skills of eligible students; and (E) may include the participation of English proficient students if the program is designed to enable all enrolled students to become more proficient in English and a second language.

(3) “English as a second language program” means a program that uses only English the instructional language for eligible students and enables such students to achieve English proficiency and academic mastery of subject matter content and higher order skills, including critical thinking, so as to meet appropriate grade promotion and graduation requirements.

Sec. 10-17f. Duties of boards of education regarding bilingual education programs.

Development of state English mastery standard. Regulations. (a) Annually, the board of education for each local and regional school district shall ascertain, in accordance with regulations adopted by the State Board of Education, the eligible students in such school district and shall classify such students according to their dominant language.

(b) Whenever it is ascertained that there are in any public school within a local or regional school district twenty or more eligible students classified as dominant in any one language other than English, the board of education of such district shall provide a program of bilingual education for such eligible students for the school year next following. Eligible students shall be placed in such program in accordance with subsection (e) of this section

(c) On or before July 1, 2000, the State Board of Education, within available appropriations, shall develop a state English mastery standard to assess the linguistic and academic progress of students in programs of bilingual education. On and after September 1 2000, each local and regional board of education shall assess, annually, the progress made by each student toward meeting the state standard. If a student is not making sufficient progress toward meeting the state standard based on the assessment,

the local or regional board of education shall provide language support services to the student in consultation with the parent or guardian of the student to allow the student to meet the state standard. Such services may include, but need not be limited to, summer school, after-school assistance and tutoring. If a student meets the state standard based on the assessment, the student shall leave the program. Each local and regional board of education shall document on a student's permanent record the date the student begins in a program of bilingual education and the date and results of the assessments required pursuant to this subsection.

(d) Each local and regional board of education shall limit the time an eligible student spends in a program of bilingual education to thirty months, whether or not such months are consecutive, except that summer school and two-way language programs pursuant to subsection (i) of this section shall not be counted. If an eligible student does not meet the English mastery standard at the end of thirty months, the local or regional board of education shall provide language transition support services to such student. Such services may include, but need not be limited to, English as a second language programs, sheltered English programs, English immersion programs, tutoring and homework assistance.

Families may also receive guidance from school professionals to help their children make progress in their native language. If an eligible student enrolls in a secondary school when the student has fewer than thirty months remaining before graduation, the local or regional board of education shall assign the student to an English as a second language program and may provide intensive services to the student to enable the student to speak, write and comprehend English by the time the student graduates and to meet the course requirements for graduation.

(e) Each local and regional board of education shall hold a meeting with the parents and legal guardians of eligible students to explain the benefits of the language program options available in the school district, including an English language immersion program. The parents and legal guardians may bring an interpreter or an advisor to the meeting. If the parent or legal guardian of an eligible student opts to have such student placed in a program of bilingual education, the local or regional board of education shall place the child in such program.

(f) The board of education for each local and regional school district which is required to provide a program of bilingual education shall initially endeavor to implement the provisions of subsection (b) of this section through in-service training for existing certified professional employees, and thereafter, shall give preference in hiring to such certified professional employees as are required to maintain the program.

(g) The State Board of Education shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to establish requirements for: (1) Such programs, which may be modeled after policy established by the Department of Education for bilingual education programs; (2) local and regional boards of education to integrate bilingual and English as a second language program faculty in all staff, planning and curriculum development

activities; and (3) all bilingual education teachers employed by a local or regional board of education, on and after July 1, 2001, to meet all certification requirements, including completion of a teacher preparation program approved by the State Board of Education, or to be certified through an alternate route to certification program.

(h) Each board of education for a local and regional school district which is required to provide for the first time a program of bilingual education shall prepare and submit to the Commissioner of Education for review a plan to implement such program, in accordance with regulations adopted by the State Board of Education.

(i) Each local and regional board of education that is required to provide a program of bilingual education pursuant to this section shall investigate the feasibility of establishing two-way language programs starting in kindergarten.

Sec. 10-17g. Application for grant. Annual evaluation report. Annually, the board of education for each local and regional school district that is required to provide a program of bilingual education, pursuant to section 10-17f, may make application to the State Board of Education and shall thereafter receive a grant in an amount equal to the product obtained by multiplying the total appropriation available for such purpose by the ratio which the number of eligible children in the school district bears to the total number of such eligible children state-wide. The board of education for each local and regional school district receiving funds pursuant to this section shall annually, on or before September first, submit to the State Board of Education a progress report which shall include (1) measures of increased educational opportunities for eligible students, including language support services and language transition support services provided to such students, (2) program evaluation and measures of the effectiveness of its bilingual education and English as a second language programs, including data on students in bilingual education programs and students educated exclusively in English as a second language programs, and (3) certification by the board of education submitting the report that any funds received pursuant to this section have been used for the purposes specified. The State Board of Education shall annually evaluate programs conducted pursuant to section 10-171. For purposes of this section, measures of the effectiveness of bilingual education and English as a second language programs include state-wide mastery examination results and graduation and school dropout rates.

Sec. 10-17h. Planning, development or operation of initially required bilingual program. Section 10-17h is repealed.

Sec. 10-17i. Encouragement of increased language instruction. Proficiency in language recognized on permanent record. (a) The Department of Education shall assist and encourage local and regional boards of education to institute two-way language programs and provide early second language instruction for English-speaking students.

(b) The department shall encourage local and regional boards of education to recognize students' proficiency in languages other than their native languages on their permanent records.

Sec. 10-17j. Request to commissioner to use certified English as a second language teacher in place of bilingual education teacher in cases of teacher shortage. Teacher exchange programs. (a) If a local or regional board of education is not able to hire a sufficient number of certified bilingual education teachers, the board of education may apply to the Commissioner of Education for permission to use a certified teacher of English as a second language to fill its need and the commissioner may grant such request for good cause shown.

(b) The Department of Education shall promote and encourage teacher exchange programs and provide information to local and regional boards of education on such programs in order to increase foreign language proficiency and cultural understanding.