

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 136

BY REPRESENTATIVE MORENO

EDUCATION: Requests the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to study establishing two-way dual language programs in public schools

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to study the  
3 feasibility of establishing two-way dual language programs in public schools and to  
4 submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the House Committee  
5 on Education and the Senate Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior  
6 to the 2017 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

7 WHEREAS, the Constitution of Louisiana provides that it is the goal of the public  
8 educational system "to provide learning environments and experiences, at all stages of  
9 human development, that are humane, just, and designed to promote excellence in order that  
10 every individual may be afforded an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential"; and

11 WHEREAS, the state constitution requires the legislature to provide for the education  
12 of the people of the state and to establish and maintain a public educational system; and

13 WHEREAS, in fulfilling this constitutional responsibility, it is important that more  
14 instructional programs are provided for students from diverse cultural and educational  
15 backgrounds with limited English proficiency; and

16 WHEREAS, although the state's total population of students with limited English  
17 proficiency is still below five percent, in the last three years some schools have seen  
18 dramatic increases in the number of such students they have served; and

19 WHEREAS, as of October 2015, five public school districts reported total limited  
20 English proficient student populations above five percent including Jefferson (13%), Union  
21 and St. Mary (6.5%), East Baton Rouge (5.9%), and Orleans (5.6%); and

1           WHEREAS, Louisiana's English language learners receive support through a variety  
2 of instructional models including:

3           (1) Structured English immersion programs that teach the students in English at the  
4 level they can comprehend and that focus on grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and  
5 pronunciation skills.

6           (2) Transitional bilingual education programs that provide students with instruction  
7 in their native languages from bilingual teachers who gradually transition to English.

8           (3) Push-in and pull-out programs that provide support for students through tutors  
9 or teachers who assist the students in their regular classrooms and provide more targeted  
10 support outside of the classroom; and

11           WHEREAS, Louisiana currently offers one-way dual language programs in various  
12 parishes in which the majority or all of the students in the class are native English speakers  
13 who receive instruction in English and another language including the following:

14           (1) Spanish immersion settings in fourteen schools in Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge,  
15 Jefferson, and Lafayette for students in prekindergarten through grade eight.

16           (2) French immersion settings in twenty-seven schools in Assumption, Calcasieu,  
17 East Baton Rouge, Iberia, Jefferson, Lafayette, Orleans, St. Landry, and St. Martin parishes  
18 and the International School of Louisiana, L'Ecole Bilingue, and Lycee Francais de la  
19 Nouvelle Orleans, serving over four thousand students in prekindergarten through grade  
20 twelve.

21           (3) Mandarin immersion programs in East Baton Rouge and Lafayette, serving  
22 approximately sixty students; and

23           WHEREAS, Louisiana does not currently have any two-way dual language programs  
24 that provide all content instruction to English language learners and native English speakers  
25 in two languages; and

26           WHEREAS, researchers Wayne Thomas and Virginia Collier's eighteen-year  
27 longitudinal comparison study of English only, transitional bilingual, and dual language  
28 classes in twenty-three districts across fifteen states found that two-way dual language  
29 models maximize benefits for English learners and English proficient students alike  
30 including:

1 (1) Eliminating the achievement gap between English language learners and native  
2 English speakers.

3 (2) Developing school cultures that are more inclusive of cultural differences.

4 (3) Increasing parent involvement; and

5 WHEREAS, a more recent study of the impact of two-way dual language programs  
6 in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district from 2007-2010 found that students in two-way  
7 dual language programs consistently outperformed non dual language programs and that the  
8 two groups of students who benefit most from dual language instruction are English  
9 language learners and African American students with both groups testing higher in reading  
10 and math than their non dual language peers; and

11 WHEREAS, these studies identified that success across dual language programs  
12 varied depending on the extent to which programs implemented specific practices and  
13 recommended that all dual language programs include the following:

14 (1) A minimum of six years of bilingual instruction with English learners not  
15 segregated.

16 (2) A focus on core academic curriculum and not remedial skills.

17 (3) A high quality language arts curriculum for both languages.

18 (4) A separation of the instruction of each language such as avoiding translation or  
19 repeating the same instruction in both languages.

20 (5) Use of non-English language at least fifty percent of the instructional time and  
21 as much as ninety percent in early grades; and

22 WHEREAS, districts and schools planning to implement two-way dual language  
23 programs must consider increased initial start-up costs, teacher training and recruitment,  
24 community demand, student demographics, and evaluation methods among other factors;  
25 and

26 WHEREAS, the recently reauthorized federal Every Student Succeeds Act increases  
27 the number of years before English language learners are required to take assessments in  
28 English thereby providing the state and districts with the flexibility to foster both native  
29 language and English language instruction; and

1           WHEREAS, in order that every student may be afforded an equal opportunity to  
2 develop to his full potential as provided in the state constitution, including students from  
3 diverse cultural and educational backgrounds with limited English proficiency, it is  
4 imperative that proven methods such as two-way dual language programs are implemented  
5 in public schools.

6           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby  
7 urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to study the  
8 feasibility of establishing two-way dual language programs – also referred to as dual  
9 language, two-way immersion, or dual immersion programs -- in public schools and to  
10 submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on  
11 Education and the Senate Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the 2017  
12 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

13           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the  
14 president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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Moreno

Requests the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education to study the feasibility of establishing two-way dual language programs in public schools and to submit a written report of findings and recommendations to the House and Senate education committees not later than 60 days prior to the 2017 R.S.