

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DPI 10/11/2019

LRB Number	19-4196/1	Introduction Number	AB-0509	Estimate Type	Original
Description funding for bilingual-bicultural education programs and making an appropriation					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

This bill provides additional funding to the Department of Public Instruction for bilingual-bicultural education programs in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal years. A bilingual-bicultural education program is a program designed to improve the ability of limited-English proficient pupils to speak, read, and write in the English language, so that the pupils will be able to perform classwork in English.

Subchapter VII of Chapter 115, Wis. Stats., governs BLBC education and requires districts to establish a program if they meet a certain threshold of English Learner (EL) pupils from the same language group within an individual school in the district. Section 115.97, Wis. Stats., establishes the following thresholds:

10 or more pupils in grades K-3;
20 or more pupils in grades 4-8; and
20 or more pupils in grades 9-12.

Districts required to offer programs must notify parents of eligible pupils and obtain consent before placing the pupil in a BLBC program. Programs are required to use a bilingual certified teacher; however, if one is not available, districts may use English as a Second Language (ESL) certified teacher and a bilingual aide with the permission of the State Superintendent. This exception does not apply to BLBC programs serving Spanish-speaking pupils.

Under current law, \$8,589,800 GPR is provided annually in the appropriation under s. 20.255 (2) (cc), Bilingual-bicultural education aids, to support aid payments to school districts, to offset the costs of providing BLBC programming for EL pupils. State law requires the Department to distribute \$250,000 annually among school districts whose enrollments in the previous school year were at least 15 percent EL pupils; the remaining \$8,339,800 is distributed to districts on the basis of expenditures on the districts BLBC programs (i.e., claims reimbursement model).

The most recent data shows that program reimbursed eligible school districts at 7.71 percent of eligible claims in FY19 (for FY18 expenditures). In the Department's 2019-21 budget request, growth in eligible expenditures was estimated at 4.47 percent annually. FY21. For the purpose of this estimate those same projections will be utilized.

At the current level of funding, it is projected that the FY20 and FY21 appropriations will reimburse eligible school districts at approximately 7.38 percent and 7.07 percent of eligible claims. The bill provides additional funding to increase the reimbursement rate to approximately 15 percent in FY20 and to 30 percent in FY21.

Local: This bill would increase revenues to eligible school districts. To the extent that the increase in bilingual-bicultural aid reduces a school district's reliance on general aid and property tax revenues to support a district's required bilingual programs, the bill would free up general aid and property tax revenue for regular (non-bilingual) education costs.

State: This bill would increase state appropriations by \$8,510,200 in FY20 and \$26,810,200 in FY21.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications