BILL ANALYSIS

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Research suggests that learning a foreign language in elementary school is ideal because the human brain is twice as active as in adolescence or adulthood. Children who learn a second language prior to age 10 are more likely to speak fluently than those who learn it at a later age. Students learning a second language also show positive academic gains, enhanced creativity, and strong interpersonal skills, which can help attribute to their success and career readiness.

S.B. 671 incentivizes participation in dual language immersion programs in elementary school and acknowledges the achievements of these students by allowing them to receive one foreign language credit in high school—two are currently required. This will free up one elective for students who have already demonstrated proficiency in a foreign language through a dual language immersion program to pursue other academic endeavors.

As proposed, S.B. 671 amends current law relating to the public high school graduation credit requirements for a language other than English.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to commissioner of education is modified in SECTION 1 (Section 28.025, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 28.025, Education Code, by adding Subsection (b-21), to require the State Board of Education (SBOE), in adopting rules under Subsection (b-1) (relating to requiring SBOE by rule to require certain curriculum requirements to be successfully completed by students), to adopt criteria to allow a student to comply with the curriculum requirement for one credit under Subsection (b-1)(5) (relating to curriculum requirements of two credits in the same language other than English) by successfully completing a dual language immersion program under Section 28.0051 (Dual Language Immersion Program) at an elementary school.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.