

HOUSE No. 2058

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jeffrey Sánchez

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act for language opportunity for our kids.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Jeffrey Sánchez</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>
<i>Joseph A. Boncore</i>	<i>First Suffolk and Middlesex</i>
<i>Jack Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>
<i>Daniel J. Ryan</i>	<i>2nd Suffolk</i>
<i>Daniel M. Donahue</i>	<i>16th Worcester</i>
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>Daniel J. Hunt</i>	<i>13th Suffolk</i>
<i>Nick Collins</i>	<i>4th Suffolk</i>
<i>Evandro C. Carvalho</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>
<i>Daniel Cullinane</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>

HOUSE No. 2058

By Mr. Sánchez of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2058) of Jeffrey Sánchez and others relative to English language learner programs in public schools. Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 4566 OF 2015-2016.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)**

An Act for language opportunity for our kids.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The nineteenth paragraph of section 1I of chapter 69 of the General Laws,
2 as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after clause (j), the
3 following clauses:-

4 (k) a description of the school district’s plan to evaluate the effectiveness of its English
5 language learner programs relative to: (i) helping students attain English language proficiency
6 and master academic standards; (ii) measuring student readiness to join mainstream classrooms;
7 (iii) evaluations and measures provided in addition to department requirements; and (iv) a
8 description of the steps that the school district plans to take to address an identified deficiency;

9 (l) a record of: (i) instances in which a parent or guardian requested to withdraw a student
10 from or refused a student’s participation in an English learner program; and (ii) meetings held

11 with parents regarding a student who is not making satisfactory progress toward participating
12 and learning in an integrated classroom;

13 (m) a description of training provided by the district to staff who work with culturally and
14 linguistically diverse student populations; and

15 (n) documentation detailing the participation of English language learners in the district's
16 regular and advanced educational programs and extracurricular activities.

17 SECTION 2. The fifth paragraph of section 59C of chapter 71, as amended by section 2
18 of chapter 255 of the acts of 2016, is hereby amended by inserting after the first sentence the
19 following sentence:-

20 In school districts in which English language learners comprise more than 5 per cent of
21 the district's student population, the plan to improve student performance shall include a
22 description of the educational program models and approaches offered by the school district to
23 ensure the progress of English language learners in attaining English speaking, reading, writing
24 and oral comprehension skills and in meeting academic standards under section 1D of chapter 69
25 and curriculum frameworks under section 1E of said chapter 69.

26 SECTION 3. Section 3 of chapter 71A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting
27 at the end thereof the following sentence:- School districts shall track the academic performance
28 of students who have exited an English learner program to assess the academic achievement and
29 effectiveness of English language classroom programming.

30 SECTION 4. Section 4 of said chapter 71A is hereby amended by inserting after the word
31 “immersion”, in line 6, the following words:- , or an alternative instructional program approved
32 by the department of elementary and secondary education,.

33 SECTION 5. Section 5 of said chapter 71A is hereby amended by inserting after the word
34 "visit", in line 6, the following words:- or provide a written request to.

35 SECTION 6. Said section 5 of said chapter 71A is hereby further amended by striking out
36 the third sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentences:- A school, under
37 advisement of a teacher or guidance counselor, may also request a waiver for an individual
38 student. If a parental or school-requested waiver has been granted by the department, the affected
39 child may be transferred to classes teaching English and other subjects through bilingual
40 education techniques or other generally-recognized educational methodologies permitted by law.

41 SECTION 7. Said section 5 of said chapter 71A is hereby further amended by inserting
42 after the word “parental”, in line 18, the following words:- or school-requested.

43 SECTION 8. Said section 5 of said chapter 71A is hereby further amended by inserting
44 after the word “classroom”, in line 33, the following words:- or has a demonstrated need based
45 on his or her academic record from the previous year,.

46 SECTION 9. Said section 5 of said chapter 71A is hereby further amended by inserting
47 after the word “provided”, in line 41, the following words:- by the parent or school.

48 SECTION 10. Said section 5 of said chapter 71A is hereby further amended by inserting
49 after the word “passed,” in line 46, the following words:- unless the student has previously
50 attended the school,.

51 SECTION 11. Chapter 71A, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by inserting after
52 section 5 the following section:-

53 Section 5A.

54 School districts shall annually inform the parents or legal guardians of English learners of
55 their right to apply for a waiver and choose an alternative language acquisition program among
56 those offered by the school district, or to withdraw a student from a language acquisition
57 program. Notice shall be sent by mail not later than 10 days after the enrollment of the student in
58 the school district. The notice shall, to the extent feasible: (i) be in a language that is
59 understandable to the parents or legal guardians; (ii) contain a clear description of the purpose,
60 method and content of the available programs; (iii) inform the parent or legal guardian of the
61 right to visit an English learner program in the school district; and (iv) inform the parent or legal
62 guardian of available conferences or meetings to learn about the English learner programs.

63 If a school district recommends placing an English learner in an English learner program,
64 the parent or legal guardian of the student shall have the right, at the time of the original
65 notification under this section, or at the close of any marking period, to withdraw the student
66 from a program by sending written notice of the decision by mail or electronic communication to
67 the school authority designated by the school district in which the student is enrolled.

68 SECTION 12. Said chapter 71A is hereby further amended by inserting after section 6
69 the following section:-

70 Section 6A.

71 A school district operating a language acquisition program for English learners serving
72 more than 100 English learners or in which English learners are more than 5 per cent of the
73 district's student population, whichever is less, shall establish an English learner parent advisory
74 council. Any such council shall be composed of volunteer parents or legal guardians of students
75 who are or have been identified as English learners. The duties of the parent advisory council
76 shall include, but not be limited to: (i) advising the school district, school committee or board of
77 trustees on matters that pertain to English learners; (ii) meeting regularly with school officials to
78 participate in the planning and development of programs designed to improve educational
79 opportunities for English learners; and (iii) participating in the review of school or district
80 improvement plans established under section 59C of chapter 71 as they relate to English learners.
81 A parent advisory council may meet at least once annually with each school council within the
82 school district. The parent advisory council shall establish by-laws regarding officers and
83 operational procedures. In the course of its duties under this section, the parent advisory council
84 shall receive assistance from the director of language acquisition programs for the school district
85 or other appropriate school personnel as designated by the superintendent.

86 SECTION 13. Section 7A of said chapter 71A is hereby further amended by striking out
87 the second sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentences:- The evaluation shall
88 include, but not be limited to: (i) a review of individual student records of all English learners;
89 (ii) a review of the number of waivers issued by school and the type of alternative instructional
90 method provided; (iii) a review of the programs and services provided to English learners; (iv) a
91 review of the dropout, graduation, discipline and special education incidence rates of English
92 learners formerly enrolled in the district within the prior 3 years; (v) a description of the
93 processes by which school-based teams consisting of educators, administrators and support staff,

94 monitor the progress of English learners and former English learners; (vi) a review of the
95 amount, frequency and effectiveness of English as a second language instruction; and (vii) a
96 review of the administration and coordination of English learner education programs. The
97 advisory council for bilingual education established under section 1G of chapter 15 shall
98 annually review the results of the department's monitoring of English learner programs in school
99 districts.

100 SECTION 14. Not later than July 1, 2018, the department of elementary and secondary
101 education shall establish guidelines for school districts to assist in supporting English learners
102 who do not meet anticipated benchmarks in attaining English proficiency. The guidelines shall
103 include, but not be limited to: (i) ways for school districts to provide individualized goals and
104 plans for English learners who are not meeting anticipated benchmarks in attaining English
105 proficiency; (ii) best practices for ensuring that English learners meet individualized goals and
106 plans to meet benchmarks in attaining English proficiency; and (iii) ways for school districts to
107 share best practices among each other in assisting English learners in gaining English
108 proficiency.

109 SECTION 15. Not later than July 1, 2018 the department of elementary and secondary
110 education shall establish guidelines relative to English learner parent advisory councils created
111 pursuant to section 6A of Chapter 71A of the General Laws. The guidelines shall include, but not
112 be limited to the process for parents or legal guardians to be notified of English learner parent
113 advisory councils and the process for the appointment of volunteer parents or legal guardians to
114 the council.

115 SECTION 16. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, school districts
116 shall provide a copy of department of elementary and secondary education guidelines relative to
117 supporting English learners who do not meet anticipated benchmarks in attaining English
118 proficiency to the parent or guardian of each English learner, in the parent's or guardian's
119 primary language, at the beginning of each school year or upon enrollment of the student in an
120 English learner program if the enrollment is not concurrent with the beginning of the school year.