



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE
STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT
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Bill Number: S. 0490 Introduced on January 27, 2021
Author: Talley
Subject: Language Equality and Acquisition of Deaf Kids (LEAD-K)
Requestor: Senate Education
RFA Analyst(s): Wren
Impact Date: February 19, 2021

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill requires the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education (SDE) to select language developmental milestones for the purpose of developing a resource that parents of deaf or hard-of-hearing children may use to monitor and track language acquisition and developmental stages. SDE must also select existing tools or assessments for educators that can be used to assess the language and literacy development of deaf or hard-of-hearing children. The superintendent must establish an advisory committee to solicit input from experts pursuant to the provisions of this bill. The bill applies only to children from birth to five years of age.

This bill is expected to increase General Fund expenses of SDE by a range of \$173,100 to \$177,420 in FY 2021-22 and a range of \$131,100 to \$135,420 beginning in FY 2022-23. SDE indicates these expenses are necessary for assessments for deaf and hard of hearing children, training for teachers and parents, substitute teachers, 0.5 FTE for the department, web resources, mailings, and various expenses for the advisory committee meetings. The aforementioned ranges include \$4,320 for substitutes for teachers who attend required training. It is unclear if SDE or the local school districts will be responsible for expenses associated with substitute teachers. The bill may affect Federal Funds expenditures if SDE is required to use General Funds for expenses covered by Federal Funds currently.

This bill will have no expenditure impact on the School for the Deaf and Blind as expenses associated with the assessments selected by SDE can be managed within current appropriations.

The language in the bill is unclear as to whether SDE or local school districts will be responsible for the estimated \$4,320 expense associated with substitute teachers. Therefore, the expenditure impact on local school districts is undetermined.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 27, 2021

State Expenditure

This bill requires the State Board of Education and the SDE to select language developmental milestones for the purpose of developing a resource that parents of deaf or hard-of-hearing children may use to monitor and track the expressive and receptive language acquisition and developmental stages toward English literacy. SDE must also select existing tools or assessments for educators that can be used to assess the language and literacy development of deaf or hard-of-hearing children. Additionally, SDE must disseminate the parent resource to parents and guardians of deaf or hard-of-hearing children, disseminate the educator tools and assessments to local educational agencies, and assist deaf and hard of hearing children in becoming linguistically ready for kindergarten.

The bill requires the superintendent to establish an advisory committee to solicit input from experts on the selection of language developmental milestones for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The advisory committee must consist of thirteen members, including parents, credentialed teachers, experts that research language outcomes, advocates, an early intervention specialist, and a speech pathologist. Members of the committee may not receive mileage or per diem. SDE must provide the advisory committee with a list of existing language developmental milestones from existing standardized norms before March 1, 2022. Before June 1, 2022, the advisory committee must recommend language developmental milestones for selection, and SDE must inform the advisory committee of which language developmental milestones were selected before June 30, 2022. SDE must also produce a report before June 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, that is specific to language and literacy development of deaf and hard of hearing children, including those who also have other disabilities, relative to their peers who are not deaf or hard of hearing.

All activities conducted with the implementation of this bill must be consistent with federal law regarding the education of children with disabilities and federal law regarding the privacy of pupil information. Further, implementation of this bill is contingent upon appropriations from the General Assembly. If the provisions of the bill require SDE to expend funds, the General Assembly must appropriate sufficient funds to cover the associated costs. This bill applies only to children from birth to five years of age.

State Department of Education. SDE indicates that expenses associated with this bill could be covered by existing Federal Funds awarded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, language in the bill requires the General Assembly to appropriate funds to cover expenses associated with the implementation of this bill. SDE indicates that if funds are appropriated, the agency would not be able to use Federal Funds because of federal regulations preventing supplanting of funds.

Further, SDE indicates that expenses associated with formal assessments for deaf and hard of hearing children would total \$43,200 for initial assessment kits in FY 2021-22 and \$1,200 for additional assessment kits beginning in FY 2022-23. Expenses associated with informal

milestone measures and resources to train parents of deaf and hard of hearing children are expected to total \$36,000 beginning in FY 2021-22. Training expenses are expected to be approximately \$51,120 beginning in FY 2021-22, which includes teacher training materials, vendor costs, and \$4,320 for substitute teachers. It is unknown if SDE or the local school districts will cover the expenses for substitute teachers. SDE anticipates the need for 0.5 FTE to assist with the provisions of this bill. Salary, fringe, and materials for the 0.5 FTE are expected to total \$41,000 beginning in FY 2021-22. Web resources and mailings to parents are expected to total approximately \$2,500 beginning in FY 2021-22. Meeting supplies, space rental, and expenses for sign language interpreters for advisory committee meetings are expected to total \$3,600 beginning in FY 2021-22. Further, this bill may impact Federal Funds expenditures if SDE receives General Funds for expenses that may be covered by Federal Funds currently.

In summary, since it is unknown as to whether SDE or local school districts will be responsible for expenses associated with substitute teachers, this bill is expected to increase General Fund expenses of SDE by a range of \$173,100 to \$177,420 in FY 2021-22 and a range of \$131,100 to \$135,420 beginning in FY 2022-23.

School for the Deaf and Blind. The School for the Deaf and Blind indicates that any expenses associated with the assessments selected by SDE can be managed within current appropriations. Therefore, the bill will have no expenditure impact on the School for the Deaf and Blind.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

This bill requires the State Board of Education and SDE to select language developmental milestones for the purpose of developing a resource that parents of deaf and hard of hearing children may use to monitor and track the expressive and receptive language acquisition and developmental stages toward English literacy. The bill applies only to children from birth to five years of age.

Local School Districts. SDE indicates that expenses for substitutes for teachers attending mandated training will be approximately \$4,320 annually beginning in FY 2021-22. It is unknown if SDE or the local school districts will be responsible for expenses to employ substitute teachers. Therefore, the expenditure impact on local school districts is undetermined.

Local Revenue

N/A



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director