

SENATE BILL 246

By Gardenhire

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to English language learners.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1.

(a) The department of education shall convene a working group to study and develop best practices, strategies, and programming for English language learner (EL) educators in this state to utilize in educating EL students enrolled in a public school in this state in any of the grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12).

(b) The working group must be composed of:

(1) Directors of EL programs in K-12 public schools in this state,
appointed by the commissioner of education;

(2) Members of the state board of education, appointed by the executive
director of the state board;

(3) Representatives of the department of education, appointed by the
commissioner of education;

(4) Individuals with significant experience working with EL students and
educators, appointed by the commissioner of education;

(5) Members of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker
of the house of representatives; and

(6) Members of the senate, appointed by the speaker of the senate.

(c) The working group shall:

(1) Study best practices in other states;

(2) Seek input from individuals and organizations with specialized knowledge and experience working with EL students and educators; and

(3) Examine strategies designed to improve educational outcomes for EL students and to assist EL educators in the classroom, such as:

(A) Expanding professional development opportunities;

(B) Creating an EL endorsement for licensed educators;

(C) Employing the instructional practice of scaffolding in EL classrooms by introducing concepts gradually and using supports such as sentence frames and visual aids, including graphic organizers;

(D) Utilizing collaborative learning in EL classrooms to foster opportunities for peer interaction through group work, and utilizing cooperative learning by pairing EL students with proficient English speaking students to promote language practice and social integration;

(E) Employing explicit vocabulary instruction in EL classrooms;

(F) Providing regular assessments and feedback for EL students and educators to assist EL educators in understanding student data and how to use student data to inform EL instruction; and

(G) Encouraging family involvement in EL instruction by providing resources in their native language and encouraging the whole family to participate in school activities both in-person and virtually.

(d) The department shall submit a report to the education committee of the senate and the committee of the house of representatives having jurisdiction over EL instruction for students in any of the grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12) outlining the findings of its study and including any recommendations for legislation. The department shall submit the report required in this subsection (d) by January 1, 2026.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.