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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 2239 **Hearing Date:** June 13, 2018  
**Author:** Eduardo Garcia  
**Version:** May 15, 2018  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Brandon Darnell

**Subject:** Pupil instruction: world language courses: A–G course certification.

### SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Department of Education to encourage the governing board of each school district, and the governing body of each charter school, whose schools offer world language courses that are specifically designed for native speakers and that are not approved as “A–G” courses, to support their respective schools in submitting those courses to the University of California (UC) for certification and addition to the schools’ “A–G” course list.

### BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes requirements for graduation from a California public high school, including the requirement that a student take a one year course in one of the following subjects: foreign language, visual and performing arts, or career technical education. (Education Code § 51225.3)
- 2) Requires the California State University (CSU), and requests the UC, to establish a model uniform set of academic standards for high school courses for purposes of recognition for admission to the CSU and to the UC, respectively. These uniform set of academic standards are commonly referred to as the “A–G” subject requirements. (EC § 66205.5)
- 3) Encourages the governing board of a school district to support schools in submitting any computer science course that a school wishes to use to fulfill school district imposed mathematics subject area requirements to the UC for certification and addition to the school’s “A–G” course list. (EC § 51225.35)
- 4) States the intent of the Legislature that local educational agencies submit course outlines for ethnic studies for approval as “A–G” courses which meet the admissions requirements of the UC and the CSU. (EC § 51226.7)
- 5) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Instructional Quality Commission to recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) revisions to the content standards in world languages, and authorizes the SBE to adopt, reject, or modify the revised standards by January 31, 2019. (EC § 60605.5)

## ANALYSIS

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to encourage the governing board of each school district, and the governing body of each charter school, whose schools offer world language courses that are specifically designed for native speakers and that are not approved as “A–G” courses, to support their respective schools in submitting those courses to the University of California for certification and addition to the schools’ “A–G” course list.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Currently, the governing board of a school district must submit a foreign language course, such as a heritage language course, to the University of California (UC) for certification in order to be added to the school’s “A-G” course list. If the school district does not submit a course, students cannot use this course to fulfill the foreign language requirement. Many students enrolled in California high schools are bilingual but are oftentimes restricted to adding on a third language in order to meet the California State University (CSU) and UC requirements because their school district has not submitted a heritage language course to the CSU or UC for certification. Instead of vastly improving the writing and comprehension skills that are behind higher level language courses, these students are left spending two years learning a third language that may not be as useful to them in their educational or career goals. By requiring the CDE to encourage the governing board of each school district to support schools submitting these courses, our office hopes to see more students have further flexibility in planning out their high school and college pathways.”
- 2) ***Commonly known as heritage language courses.*** The Center for Applied Linguistics defines a heritage language learner as a student who “has some proficiency in or a cultural connection to that language through family, community, or country of origin. Heritage language learners have widely diverse levels of proficiency in the language (in terms of oral proficiency and literacy) and of connections to the language and culture.”

Heritage language courses are designed for students who might have conversational or social proficiency with a language due to its use in their home, making beginning language courses inappropriate, but who lack proficiency in academic language – reading, writing, and vocabulary, for example – or some other aspect of language, which would also make placement in an advanced language course inappropriate.

- 3) ***“A-G” approved heritage language courses in California.*** Data from the CDE on course offerings and enrollment in heritage language courses for 2016-17, as well as the number which are “A-G” approved, is shown below:

Course	Enrollment	Schools offering course	Courses offered	Courses A-G approved
Spanish for native speakers	111,173	792	3,762	3,568
Other language course for native speakers	2,816	44	117	99
Korean for native speakers	39	1	2	2

The University of California (UC) “A-G” course portal lists heritage language courses at public schools in Hmong, Armenian, Arabic, Hmong, Tagalog (Filipino), and Vietnamese. These courses are some of the courses labeled “other language courses for native speakers” by the California Department of Education (CDE). If a heritage language course is not “A-G” approved, a student who has taken these courses must either take additional approved courses (perhaps starting over in another language) or be ineligible for admission to the UC and the California State University (CSU). The author argues that making a student take a new language when he or she has already taken coursework in their heritage language poses an unnecessary barrier to college eligibility. According to the CDE’s data, this bill could result in an approximately 200 additional “A-G” approved heritage courses.

- 4) **UC and CSU foreign language requirements.** The UC and CSU systems each require completion of foreign language courses to be eligible for admission. The UC requires two years in the same language (or equivalent to the second level of high school instruction) and recommends a third year. CSU requires two years in the same language, but if a student can demonstrate competency in a language other than English that is equivalent to or higher than that expected of students who have completed two years of language other than English study, the student may be allowed a waiver for this language requirement.
- 5) Related legislation. AB 2319 (Nazarian, 2018) replaces the term “foreign language” with “world language” throughout the Education Code. AB 2319 is pending in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

**SUPPORT**

California Immigrant Policy Center  
 California Language Teachers Association  
 California Teachers Association  
 Common Sense Kids Action

**OPPOSITION**

None received