

“Spanish Language Immersion Programs in Public Schools?”

Kerby Anderson

Should we be concerned about Spanish language immersion programs in public schools? Our system just started one, offering Spanish-only kindergarten and first grade classes. Am I just an alarmist or is this just another ploy to undermine our sovereignty?

Thank you for your e-mail. I have noticed that some states (like North Carolina) are implementing a Spanish language immersion program like Los Puentes. On its face, it is probably a good idea since children learn language so much easier when they are younger. So I don't think there is anything to be concerned about English-speaking students learning Spanish at a young age.

That being said, there are concerns people have raised about bilingual education that does not put Spanish speaking kids into the mainstream. Recently I had a guest on [my radio program](#) who was responsible for some of this (in particular he was the reason all ballots are in both English and Spanish).

Also, the Rand Corporation released a study that documented the costs for language assistance instruction programs. They found that the total per pupil costs was estimated to be in the range of \$460 to \$1,600 in 2007 dollars. The total cost was \$3.9 billion.

Bilingual education has been expensive, and it doesn't seem to help Spanish-speaking students. It tends to isolate them rather than integrate them.

Thanks for writing.

Kerby Anderson



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