



Arizona Department of Education

UNDERSTANDING [HCR2026](#)

What it is: A 2020 ballot referral to repeal Proposition 203, commonly known as Arizona’s “English-Only” law.

History of “English-Only” education law: In 2000, Arizona voters approved [Proposition 203](#), repealing the then bilingual education law and requiring English-only instruction in Arizona public schools. This led to the development of the program known as “Structured English Immersion” (SEI). SEI mandated the placement of English learners (EL’s) in daily, four-hour blocks of English language development instruction—separated from their native English-speaking peers.

What will HCR2026 do? By repealing Proposition 203, voters will simultaneously replace the current law with new provisions, by which, each public school must ensure EL’s receive the highest quality of education and master the English language using evidence-based methods. Moreover, Arizona public schools would be allowed to offer dual language immersion programs for children with a native language other than English. (A legislative staff summary of HCR2026 can be found [here](#))

Wasn’t the four-hour block repealed earlier this legislative session? Yes, earlier this year the Legislature passed SB1014, eliminating the restrictive and controversial four-hour instruction block. While this legislation eases the four-hour block requirement as part of the SEI program, Proposition 203 remains in place. This means there are still voter protected restrictions on local control and the models of English language instruction.

Will HCR2026 remove the requirement of Bilingual Parental Waiver Request Applications? Yes, HCR2026 repeals A.R.S. §15-753 and would thus allow all ELs to fully participate in bilingual education without qualifying for a *Parental Waiver Request* (current application can be found [here](#)).

What else would be repealed if voters approve this? Statutory definitions of *bilingual education*, *English learner*, *SEI*, along with other definitions. A repeal would also eliminate the Proposition 203 language in statute for the Superintendent of Public Instruction to select a standardized, “nationally-normed” written test of academic subject matter to be administered once per year to all public school students in grades 2-12.

Wait, so does HCR2026 repeal state-wide assessments? No. Under a different Arizona statute, the State Board of Education is required to adopt and implement a statewide assessment to “measure pupil achievement of the State Board-adopted academic standards in reading, writing and mathematics”¹. As such, AzMERIT and tests chosen by districts from the Menu of Assessments currently remain the statewide achievement tests. The requirements in Proposition 203 are redundant and not needed. **HCR2026 would NOT AFFECT statewide assessments.**

Does HCR2026 repeal assessments for English language proficiency? No. Arizona law requires parents or guardians to identify the primary or “home language” when enrolling a student in a school district or charter school. When a parent or guardian indicates a student’s primary or home language is not English, then a school must assess a student’s English language proficiency². All Arizona schools use the “Arizona English Language Learner Assessment” (AZELLA), for both placement and annual reassessment purposes. Each EL student takes AZELLA once per year until the student achieves proficiency. **HCR2026 would NOT AFFECT the AZELLA test for EL students.**

Will HCR2026 impact Arizona’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan? No. Other areas of Arizona’s education laws under Title 15 ensure the State aligns with the federal law. In exchange for federal funding under ESSA, states must adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards for speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and measure student progress against those standards.

¹ A.R.S. §15-741(A)(1)

² A.R.S. §15-756