

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 395
Higher Education - Credit Eligibility and Transfer of Credits - English as a Second Language
Courses (Credit for All Language Learning (CALL) Act)

House Appropriations Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 395, which would require a public community college to consider a course or program for English language learning as eligible for world language or humanities credit toward an associate's degree and that certain world language or humanities credits can be transferred from community colleges to public institutions of higher education.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

As in K-12 education, emergent bilingual or multilingual students at community colleges may take English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or similar English language learning courses as they work toward fluency. ESOL courses are rigorous, expansive programs covering not only vocabulary and grammar but academic writing, literature, and intercultural communication. Multilingual students taking ESOL courses are honing an in-demand skillset, yet they often do not receive academic credits toward a degree, even as their peers receive credit for taking World Languages or writing-intensive humanities coursework.

Failing to recognize the academic value of ESOL courses is a grave inequity that implicitly undervalues the skillset of multilingual students. Maryland urgently needs a multilingual workforce in education, medicine, childcare, and more. This legislation rightly addresses this inequity by crediting multilingual students for their studies. We would also urge that the requirement to recognize ESOL coursework apply to all institutions of higher education in the state, including private nonprofit institutions.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 395.