

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1502
Ways and Means

(Delegate Gutierrez, *et al.*)

Task Force to Expand Dual Language Programs in Maryland

This bill establishes a Task Force to Expand Dual Language Programs in Maryland. The task force must (1) create a framework for dual language immersion programs in the State; (2) recommend strategies to increase the number of dual language programs in the State; and (3) identify potential funding sources. The required framework must include recommended certification criteria for dual language teachers in the State and guidelines for implementation of dual language immersion programs in public schools. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must staff the task force.

By October 1, 2017, the task force must report its recommendations on dual language certification criteria to the Governor; the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee; and the House Appropriations Committee. By October 1, 2018, the task force must report its recommendations to the same entities with regard to all aspects of the implementation of dual language immersion programs in the State.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2017, and terminates June 30, 2019.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE can provide staff support and any expense reimbursements to the task force using existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Maryland does not require bilingual or immersion certification for dual language teachers in public schools. A teacher, specialist, or administrator in Maryland public schools and in approved schools operated by State agencies must hold a valid certificate appropriate to the field of employment. According to the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), certification may be obtained in one of the following ways:

- completing a college or university State-approved educator preparation program;
- holding a valid, out-of-state professional certificate and submitting verification of 27 months of full-time satisfactory professional experience;
- meeting transcript analysis requirements; or
- completing a Resident Teacher Certification program.

In general, each teacher employed by a local school system of Maryland must hold a professional certificate in the teacher's area of major assignment, as specified in COMAR. A teacher should not be assigned to teach more than two classes outside the teacher's area of certification. If a local school system finds it necessary to assign a teacher to teach more than two classes outside the teacher's area of certification, the teacher must retain the professional certificate. For each consecutive year after the first year that a teacher is assigned to teach more than two classes outside the teacher's area of certification, the teacher must earn at least six semester hours per year toward certification in the out-of-area assignment before continuing the assignment. MSDE must monitor the assignment practices of local school systems on a periodic basis.

Each local school system must establish an English language development program for those students who have been identified as English Learners by means of a home language survey as well as the State-approved English language proficiency placement assessment. Each program must involve certified English for Speakers of Other Languages teachers.

Background: The U.S. Department of Education indicates that the goal of a dual language program is for students to develop language proficiency in two languages by receiving instruction in English and another language in a classroom that is usually comprised of half native English speakers and half native speakers of the other language.

According to reports submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, as many as 35 states (including Maryland) have dual immersion programs, but many of these states do not require these programs. MSDE advises that three elementary schools, one in Montgomery County and two in Prince George's County, provide a dual language program. MSDE further advises that, in the absence of a bilingual or immersion certificate, dual immersion programs in Maryland require certification in elementary education or world languages

with an advanced proficiency level in a language they are teaching (*e.g.*, Spanish, Chinese, etc.).

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

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