

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1098  
Education - English Learners and Dual Language Immersion Programs -  
Funding and Establishment (Multilingualism Is an Asset Act)**

**House Appropriations Committee  
March 7, 2023**

**Lauren Lamb  
Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 1098, which would provide additional funding for English learners, establish the Dual Language Immersion Program in the State Department of Education to develop, fund, implement, scale up, and sustain the expansion of research-based dual language two-way immersion programs in the State, and require the Governor, in fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter, to include \$10,000,000 in the annual budget bill for dual language immersion grants under the Program.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students for the careers and jobs of the future. 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).

English Learners (ELs) represent 11.5% of Maryland's K-12 students and are the fastest growing student population in the state.<sup>1</sup> ELs are entitled to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) services by law, and at present, monolingual English instruction is the most widely used ESOL model in Maryland public schools. However, several LEAs have student populations that would support dual language

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<sup>1</sup> Blueprint for Maryland's Future Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools: Final Report. <https://marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Documents/Reports122021/WorkgroupEnglishLearnersPublicSchoolsFinalReport.pdf>, p. 18 (Accessed March 2023).

immersion programs, meaning that there is a substantial population of English Learners who speak one language.<sup>2</sup>

Dual language models are proven to accelerate language acquisition and improve English Learners' academic outcomes compared to monolingual English instruction.<sup>3</sup> Further, dual language immersion has benefits for all students, including stronger literacy in both languages and greater opportunities for future employment.<sup>4</sup> Montgomery County and Prince George's County have already begun to establish dual language immersion programs, and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools recommends scaling this approach where opportunities exist.<sup>5</sup> This legislation provides an effective mechanism to do so by establishing criteria and a funding source for dual language programs and requiring that they prioritize equity and sustainability.

This bill complements House Bill 56 in its efforts to prepare educators for dual language instructional settings, promote multilingualism for all students, and provide more effective instruction for English Learners. Maryland should take advantage of the opportunity to embrace an innovative, research-based language acquisition model that benefits all students.

**We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1098.**

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 47-48.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 47-48.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 49.