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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership

Dear Committee Members:

We present written testimony in strong support of **House Bill 1098 and Senate Bill 0882— Education - English Learners and Dual Language Immersion Programs - Funding and Establishment (Multilingualism Is an Asset Act)**, designed to fund dual language immersion programs, per recommendations in the *Final Report* of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future's Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools. Studies conducted over the past three decadesⁱ have produced clear evidence that students learning heritage languages, English, and content in Dual Language programs academically outperform their peers in non-dual language settings that instead prioritize English acquisition. **House Bill 1098 and SB0882 will require that the state of Maryland funds the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to create and expand dual language immersion programs, and mandate that schools with at least 2 English learner students be classified as equaling 20 students, mandate increased per pupil funding allocations for English learners with more amplified educational needs.** These steps are critical for ensuring Maryland's commitment to the academic success of multilingual students and broadening the global economic competitiveness of students from across the state.

Despite Maryland's rapidly growing bilingual population, few school districts offer dual language immersion programs—the Blueprint's English Learner Workgroup seeks to rectify these limited options, but **cannot do so without adequate funding and expanded dual language immersion program offerings core goals of House Bill 1098 and SB0882.**

Research overwhelmingly shows that ELs in dual language immersion programs outperform their peers in non-dual language educational settings. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences' Commission on Language Learning 2017 Final Report, *America's Languages: Investing in Language for the 21st Century*¹ highlights the need for expanded dual language immersion programs across the United States, noting that

dual language immersion programs are also more cost-effective than other kinds of language courses. Rather than adding additional units to an already crowded curriculum, or requiring new teachers dedicated only to language instruction, immersion courses

¹ American Academy of Arts and Sciences. (2017). *America's languages: Investing in language education for the 21st century*. Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

incorporate language instruction into preexisting coursework (in math, science, reading) and rely on the same teachers who teach other subjects.

In Utah, which initiated new dual language immersion programs codified by the state legislature and Governor in 2008, *over 80 percent of students participating in dual language immersion programs are functioning in their second language by the third grade*. Similar initiatives have been created in Delaware, Rhode Island, and Virginia.

House Bill 1098 and SB0882 directly address Maryland’s and the nation’s crucial need for funding the expansion of dual language immersion programs.

The College of Education at the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) is well-positioned to develop and support expansion of dual language immersion programs. Our Department of Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership can build on current programs, which certify English as a Second Language, world language, and elementary and secondary teachers. UMCP faculty are eager to bring together our expertise in Dual Language education, bilingualism, biliteracy, second language acquisition, elementary and secondary education, and world languages. We are well-equipped to guide development of new dual language immersion programs. Together, the Blueprint’s English Learner Workgroup recommendations and SB0882 lay the groundwork for moving forward with dual language immersion education initiatives across the state.

We urge a favorable vote on House Bill 1098 and SB 0882 to support Multilingualism Is an Asset Act.

Sincerely,

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ⁱ Morita-Mullaney, T., Renn, J., & Chiu, M. M. (2021). Contesting math as the universal language: A longitudinal study of dual language bilingual education language allocation. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 15(1), 43–60. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1283882>

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