



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: February 28, 2023
RE: SB0388/HB0056 Public Schools - Dual Language
Education - Teacher Certification, Program Implementation, and Study

The MLLC supports SB0388/HB0056 Public Schools - Dual Language Education - Teacher Certification, Program Implementation, and Study

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of SB0388/HB0056.

Dual language programs lead to superior academic achievement, promote multilingualism, and bring the multiple benefits of integration across linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic levels. Dual language education offers benefits for both emergent bilinguals (English language learners) and English-speaking students who wish to acquire a second language. There are 5,484 elementary school grades in Maryland that have dual language population ratios, and nearly all elementary school grades (79.8%) have at least one English Learner.¹ For well-implemented dual language programs, it is essential to have well-prepared teachers. Research indicates that English language learners perform best when teachers possess not only the knowledge and skills necessary for their grade level/content area, but also the understanding of second language acquisition, bilingual child development, and strong proficiency in the languages they teach.² Given the proliferation of dual language programs, the need for well-prepared dual language education educators is imperative. Schools across the state are facing a shortage of qualified bilingual educators, which could compromise the quality of language program implementation.

This bill will require that the State Board of Education adopt regulations for the certification of dual language teachers in public schools, and the development of guidelines for dual language implementation to support teachers and teacher preparation programs. These requirements will ensure that Maryland teachers can acquire and maintain dual language teacher certification in order to best serve the multilingual student population in Maryland schools.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on SB0388/HB0056.

¹ Opportunities for Dual Language Learning in Maryland (Preliminary Analysis). (n.d.). *Maryland State Department of Education*.

² Boyle, A., August, D., Tabaku, L., Cole, S., & Simpson-Baird, A. (2015). Dual Language Education Programs: Current State Policies and Practices. *U.S. Department of Education of English Language Acquisition*.