



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
Seton Business Park
5800 Metro Drive, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 389
Dual Language Education - Teacher Certification Program Implementation and
Study

Education Energy and the Environment Committee

March 1, 2023

1:00pm

The Baltimore Teachers Union supports Senate Bill 389 with amendments and urges a favorable report on this bill.

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents 8,280 teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, clinicians, librarians, secretaries, community school site specialists, bus transportation aides, and many more school-based and central office support staff. We are 4 out of 5 workers in Baltimore City Public Schools, serving 75,595 students and their families. Our national union, the American Federation of Teachers, has over 1.7 million members in the United States and its territories.

The dual language teacher certification standards that form the foundation of SB389 are strong. The BTU offers the following amendments to further strengthen the bill and ensure that the resulting MSDE certification is culturally sustaining and equity-minded.

- 1.) Amendments should be added that ensures the workgroup meetings to be open, accessible, and posted with advance notice, and that at least 10 minutes during each of its meetings be reserved for comment by community members who have not been appointed to the workgroup.
- 2.) Amendments should be added that incentivizes recruiting local multilingual Marylanders into these positions, not just recruiting from abroad or other states/territories; this includes pathways from community colleges and high schools into these new positions.
- 3.) Amendments should be added to lines 14-19 on page 2 to require the state to post the requirements for dual language certification and send hard and e-copies of the most recent version to the relevant local bargaining unit and CAPAs at LEAs.

- 4.) Amend lines 7-20 on page 3 to insert language specifying who should be on the dual language education workgroup that MSDE will convene. In the 2021-2022 Blueprint/MSDE Workgroup on ELLs, there were a few slots designated for a student/recent student, teachers, and advocates, but similar language is not in this bill. The selection process in the bill is also opaque, suggesting that Superintendent Choudhury or his designate will just pick whomever they want.

The major consistent critiques of MSDE during the Workgroup on ELLs process have been lack of input from most affected stakeholders (like dual language schools in Baltimore - Baltimore International Academy) and lack of attention to older multilingual English learners (like late arriving high school students). We offer our support of the bill with amendments to draw attention to our consistent critiques around process and the needs of less well served ELs (neurodiverse, with disabilities, older, from less populous language groups, etc.).

Our amendments requiring the state to post the requirements for dual language certification are due to our concerns about the general capacity of MSDE division of certification that is understaffed as well as the general capacity and resourcing of LEA's certification offices led by individual CAPAs (certification authorized partner associate) who manage the process of educator certification.

BTU urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 389 with amendments.