



**Testimony in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT of
House Bill 807: Education – Teacher Preparation Programs – English Language Learners
Teacher Competency Requirements
Ways and Means**

Position: Favorable with Amendment

February 25, 2026

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the landmark Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. The Blueprint was designed to specifically address systemic inequities that disproportionately impact historically marginalized communities, specifically multilingual learners. **As a result, Strong Schools Maryland supports House Bill 807 with the amendments recommended by the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), which would require a teacher preparation program to include specific competencies related to teaching Multilingual Learners (MLs).**

Maryland’s ML population has grown significantly over the past decade and remains one of the fastest growing student groups in public schools. To meet the needs of this expanding population, all educators must be equipped with the skills to include, meet the needs of, and support language development alongside rigorous academic instruction. HB 807 takes an important step in that direction by requiring teacher preparation programs to include competencies related to understanding language acquisition, promoting equitable literacy opportunities, and effectively engaging linguistically diverse students and families. Embedding these competencies across course work, clinical experiences, and internships reflects research based best practice.

However, as written, HB807 would also require that beginning 2028–2029, Teacher Preparation Programs (TPPs) include at least one standalone three credits course in teaching multilingual learners. We are concerned that this requirement could unintentionally create barriers to teacher licensure by adding to the course load and tuition costs of aspiring educators. We support the inclusion of more specific requirements for the ML-related topics covered in teacher preparation; however, we propose an amendment to strike lines 25–26 on page 2.

As amended, the bill would facilitate more embedded ML-specific education in coursework and internships without creating barriers to licensure. While we support the strengthening of these competencies, we urge the committee to consult with impacted community members, multilingual

learner communities, and educators. This approach benefits all aspiring educators and their future students and moves us closer to achieving the promises made in the Blueprint.

For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report on HB807 along with our recommended amendment.

Please contact Kenzie Funk at kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.