
FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS
House Bill 807
Education - Teacher Preparation Programs - English Language Learner Teacher
Competency Requirements

House Ways & Means Committee
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Vice President

The Maryland State Education Association supports, with an amendment, HB 807, which would require a teacher preparation program to include specific competencies related to teaching Multilingual Learners (MLs). As written, it would also require a teacher preparation program (TPP) to include a certain course in teaching MLs beginning in the 2028-2029 academic year.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

For well over a decade, Multilingual Learners have been one of the fastest-growing student population in Maryland.¹ To effectively teach MLs, teachers must have awareness of the mechanics of language acquisition and know how to provide tiered accommodations that support both MLs' linguistic development and subject-matter learning.² This is an essential skillset for all educators, not just those who are specifically licensed to work with MLs.

This bill's proposal to add more specific teacher competencies for supporting MLs to the list of required subjects covered in teacher preparation is timely. Importantly, this

¹ Trends in Maryland Public Schools: English Language Learner Enrollment. University of Maryland College of Education (2017). <https://education.umd.edu/research/centers/mep/research/k-12-education/trends-maryland-public-schools-english-language-learner#:~:text=ELLs%20represent%20one%20of%20the,serve%20this%20rapidly%20growing%20population>.

² Teacher Development to Support English Language Learners in the Context of Common Core State Standards. Stanford University (2012). <https://ul.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/resource/2021-12/10-Santos%20LDH%20Teacher%20Development%20FINAL.pdf>

approach allows TPPs to embed concepts in existing coursework, internships, and other experiential programming.

If a new 3-credit course requirement is added in law, TPPs must either eliminate an existing course – no small task, as existing courses meet other statutory, regulatory, or accreditation requirements – or, more likely, increase the overall number of credits required to complete a TPP. We are concerned that this requirement could unintentionally create barriers to teacher licensure by adding to the courseload 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 cannot support the requirement for a standalone 3-credit course without a holistic assessment of TPP requirements, programming, and capacity. **We therefore 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. This approach benefits all aspiring educators and their future students.

With the proposed amendment, we urge the committee to issue a favorable report.