
TO: House Appropriations Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 807 Teacher Preparation Programs- English Language Learner Teacher Competency Requirements

DATE: February 25, 2026

SUBJECT: Letter of Support with Amendments

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board), State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) are writing to extend support, with amendments, for HB 807, which seeks to strengthen the capacity of Maryland’s educator workforce to serve multilingual learners. As Maryland’s student population becomes increasingly diverse, ensuring that every teacher is equipped with the tools to support linguistically diverse students is a critical step toward educational equity.

While the State Board, MSDE, and PSTEB applaud the bill's focus on multilingual learner-related teacher competencies, the Department and the respective Boards offer recommended amendments to reflect current research and terminology shifts within the education community.

Terminology Recommendation: "Multilingual Learner"

First, it is recommended that the bill be amended to replace the term "English language learner" with "multilingual learner." This shift is not merely cosmetic but represents a transition toward asset-based terminology, and is in sync with the adopted framework for English Language Development standards published by World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA). MSDE is also transitioning its terminology in regulations to use “multilingual learner” in place of “English language learner.”

The Current Regulatory Landscape

As a point of information for the committee, Maryland’s current teacher preparation framework already includes foundational requirements that intersect with this bill's goals:

COMAR 13A.07.06: State regulations already mandate that teacher preparation programs prepare candidates to demonstrate competencies working with multilingual learners. These competencies may be found throughout the chapter.

InTASC Standards: Maryland candidates are evaluated against InTASC standards, including Standard 2 (Learning Differences), which requires teachers to use "tools of language development" to make content accessible.

Induction of In-Service Teachers: Currently, local school systems must provide a comprehensive three-year induction program for all new teachers that includes professional learning and support for working with multilingual learners.

Standalone Courses vs. Embedded Scaffolding

While HB 807 proposes a three-credit course, educational research¹ indicates that standalone courses can inadvertently signal to teacher candidates that language support is an "add-on" rather than an essential part of all content instruction. Research suggests that incorporating these competencies in other courses throughout the curriculum, as also suggested in the bill's own description of training, is more effective for ensuring math, science, and social studies teachers can scaffold their specific academic language for all learners and offer opportunities for educators to apply instructional methods over the course of study.

Proposed Amended Language

To allow for high-quality, research-based implementation, the following amendments to the bill to require programs to demonstrate these competencies by mapping the instruction across the curriculum are recommended:

1. Strike the word "other" from the following section:

TRAINING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER–RELATED TEACHER COMPETENCIES, INCLUDING UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT, EQUITABLE LITERACY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, AND WORKING WITH LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES, AND INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER–RELATED TEACHER COMPETENCIES IN OTHER COURSES THROUGHOUT THE CURRICULUM

2. Strike the following sentence:

BEGINNING IN THE 2028–2029 ACADEMIC YEAR, REQUIRE AT LEAST ONE THREE–CREDIT COURSE IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

With these amendments, the State Board, MSDE, and PSTEB urge a favorable report on HB 807 to better serve the unique needs of Maryland's 21st-century classrooms. Please contact Darren Hornbeck, Chair of PSTEB, at Darren.Hornbeck@fcps.org, or Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov if you would like any additional information.

¹ Lee, O., Quinn, H., & Valdés, G. (2013). Science and language for English language learners in relation to Next Generation Science Standards and with implications for Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics. *Educational Researcher*, 42(4), 223–233.

Ruiz-Cecilia, R., Medina-Sánchez, L., & Rodríguez-García, A.-M. (2023). Teaching and learning of mathematics through CLIL, CBI, or EMI — A systematic literature review. *Mathematics*, 11(6), 1347.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/math11061347>

(2024). Content and languages integration: Pre-service teachers' culturally sustaining social studies units for emergent bilinguals. *Education Sciences*, 14(8), 915. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14080915>

Villegas, A. M., SaizdeLaMora, K., Martin, A. D., & Mills, T. (2018). Preparing future mainstream teachers to teach English language learners: A review of the empirical literature. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 69(5), 431–445.