

Maryland Dual Language Education - Teacher Certification, Program Implementation, and Study (HB56)

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. This will help implement the recommendations of the “Blueprint for Maryland’s Future: Workgroup on English Learners” in public schools related to dual language education.

Background

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.

For well-implemented dual language programs, it is essential to have well-prepared teachers. Research¹ indicates 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. 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.

Solution

Maryland could follow models in other states that have developed alternative certification programs, graduate certificates, and teacher residency programs to grow the supply of bilingual educators. Maryland has the opportunity to be an educational leader expanding bilingual teacher education programs by establishing:

1. A certification program for dual language teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools;
2. Guidelines for ongoing professional development for dual language teachers; and
3. Guidelines for the implementation of dual language programs in public schools.

For more information please contact:

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[1] Boyle, A., August, D., Tabaku, L., Cole, S., & Simpson-Baird, A. (2015). *Dual language education programs: Current state policies and practices*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition.