

**RESOLUTION PRESENTED TO PAWTUCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE ON BEHALF
OF THE COALITION FOR A MULTILINGUAL RI**

SUBJECT: THE SUPPORT AND ACCESS TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION (SABE) ACT:
This piece of legislation would create a bilingual education support fund within the department of elementary and secondary education for local education agencies (LEAs), community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education recipients to support the growth and expansion of dual language programs in traditional LEAs that serve a high-incidence of multilingual learners (MLLs) and prepare bilingual dual language and world language educators for these programs.

WHEREAS, consistent with Rhode Island’s vision for education, every Rhode Island student deserves access to the highest quality education possible in order to thrive, graduate, and step into college or a career ready to succeed; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island General Law § 42-5.1-1 (c) and (d) affirms that the economic well-being of the state depends on foreign trade and international exchange. To compete effectively, Rhode Island requires a multilingual and multicultural workforce, and proficiency in one or more additional languages is a key driver of economic growth and global competitiveness; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island General Law § 42-5.1-1(j) affirms the right of every resident to nurture their native language and also encourages all citizens to become proficient in English to facilitate full participation in society and promote cross-cultural communication; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island General Law § 42-5.1-1(j) and (k) affirms that native language instruction facilitates the development of English proficiency with multilingual learners and boosts their overall academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, decades of research confirm that high quality dual language bilingual programs lead to academic engagement and achievement, a drop in chronic absenteeism, and promote positive social-emotional development, and overall well-being. These outcomes directly advance the Rhode Island Department of Education’s strategic priorities related to equity, excellence in learning, engaged communities, and world class talent; and

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island Blueprint for a Multilingual Learner Success (2021) calls for a nimble system that "secures and allocates human and fiscal resources to support high-quality core instruction to meet the diverse needs of MLLs, including professional learning opportunities for all teachers and administrators[;]" and

WHEREAS, the state faces increasing numbers of multilingual learners and an insufficient number of certified bilingual dual language and world language teachers. Despite eleven (11) local education agencies, including Pawtucket School Department, having a high incidence of Multilingual Learners, as determined by the Rhode Island Regulations Governing the Education of Multilingual Learners (200-RICR-20-30-3), only eight percent (8%) of multilingual learners are enrolled in bilingual/dual language programs. This is a result of both the shortage of certified language educators and the related challenge of too few dual language bilingual programs in the state; and

WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Regulations Governing the Education of Multilingual Learners (200-RICR-20-30-3) encourage LEAs “to open Bilingual/Dual Language Programs, especially LEAs where overall student enrollment includes 250 or more MLL students who share the same home/native language[;]” and

WHEREAS, a diverse educator workforce, comprised of certified bilingual dual language and world language educators, is essential to the success of dual language programs. These educators provide culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, serve as role models for students, and foster inclusive school communities and may, in turn, improve academic outcomes such as student motivation, renewed interest in academics, consistent attendance, and grades; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the state, its residents, and its students to develop and support dual language and world language teachers; and

WHEREAS, support for increased preparation and training of bilingual, dual language and world language teachers can successfully be leveraged by providing direct financial support to traditional public school districts or community-based organizations in collaboration with traditional public school districts in Rhode Island working to expand dual language programs K-12; and

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the **PAWTUCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE** supports the establishment of a bilingual education support fund within the department of elementary and secondary education (RIDE) (total \$950,000) to support, *inter alia*, the implementation of the aforementioned programs and the expansion of teaching certifications for bilingual dual language and world language teachers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the program will help traditional local education agencies in partnership with community-based organizations and/or institutions of higher education to design, launch, and implement language education programs that reflect the language and cultures of Rhode Island’s diverse communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the program will also require RIDE to collaborate with the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, in consultation with approved educator preparation programs, to increase and streamline the issuance of world language and bilingual dual language certifications for purposes of increasing the number of bilingual dual language and world language teachers in LEAs with a high-incidence of MLLs.