



Teaching in the languages of our community: English, español, Português

May 18, 2026

Re: Senate Bill No. 2555

Dear Chairman Louis P. DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On May 19, 2026 you will hear testimony on **Senate Bill No 2555**. I would like to express my support for the intent of the legislation while sharing my concern with its limited scope.

I write as the Director of the International Charter School (ICS), a dual language elementary public charter school with two dual language programs: Spanish/English and Portuguese/English. ICS has had our two dual language strands since 2001, when we opened. I have been the Director of the school since 2003.

As you might imagine, I am a huge advocate for dual language education as I have witnessed the positive impact on our students and families first hand for the past 22 years at ICS. Such impact is not limited to ICS, however, as bilingual and dual language education are both proven to be beneficial for students who participate in those programs, English learners and non-English learners alike across the country<sup>1</sup>. I commend the sponsors of this bill for their commitment to increasing resources for dual language programming and teacher training.

However, like you, I am acutely aware of the shortage of dual language teachers in Rhode Island. As schools with dual language programs, we literally trade the limited number of dual language educators amongst ourselves each year. The problem is not new. An artist captured the conversation we were having at a Rhode Island dual language meeting several years ago in this image:

---

<sup>1</sup> Keong, M., Greenberg Motamedi, J., and Young, Yoon, S. (2018). *Common practices for recruiting, training and retaining bilingual and diverse teachers*. REL Northwest.



The need for a “hydroponic teacher farm” was suggested due to the scarcity of dual language teachers, a scarcity that has only increased over time. As a state, we need to intentionally nurture future educators, encourage them to pursue dual language certification, and support them along the way.

The proposed legislation begins to address this issue by allocating funds for increasing the number of bilingual dual language teachers, creating a dual language teacher “farm” like the one envisioned years ago. However, as currently written, the legislation is inequitable. It makes funds available only for traditional charter schools and neglects the needs and opportunities within charter public schools. To fulfill your commitment to equity, these funds should be made available to all public schools and programs throughout the state.

Sincerely,



Julie Nora, Ph.D.

Director

C: ICS Staff

Board of Trustees