

CITY OF NEWPORT

R E S O L U T I O N
OF THE
C O U N C I L
No.2026-35

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE SUPPORT AND ACCESS TO
BILINGUAL EDUCATION (SABE) ACT**

- 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, and that to compete effectively Rhode Island requires a multilingual and multicultural workforce, with proficiency in one or more additional languages serving as 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 encourages all citizens to become proficient in English in order to facilitate full participation in society and promote cross-cultural communication; and
- WHEREAS, Rhode Island General Law § 42-5.1-1(j) and (k) further affirms that native language instruction facilitates the development of English proficiency for multilingual learners and boosts their overall academic achievement; and
- WHEREAS, decades of research confirm that high-quality dual language bilingual programs lead to increased academic engagement and achievement, reduced chronic absenteeism, and improved social-emotional development and overall well-being; and
- WHEREAS, these outcomes directly advance the strategic priorities of the Rhode Island Department of Education related to equity, excellence in learning, engaged communities, and world-class talent; and

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island Blueprint for Multilingual Learner Success (2021) calls for a system that secures and allocates human and fiscal resources to support high-quality core instruction to meet the diverse needs of multilingual learners, including professional learning opportunities for 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; AND

WHEREAS, despite eleven (11) local education agencies, including Newport Public Schools, 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 or dual language programs; AND

WHEREAS, this limited participation is due in part to the shortage of certified language educators and the lack of sufficient dual language bilingual programs in the State; AND

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island Regulations Governing the Education of Multilingual Learners encourage local education agencies to establish bilingual or dual language programs, particularly in districts where enrollment includes 250 or more multilingual learners who share the same home 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, providing culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, serving as role models for students, and fostering inclusive school communities; AND

WHEREAS, these educators may improve academic outcomes including student motivation, engagement in learning, consistent attendance, and academic achievement; AND

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

WHEREAS, increased preparation and training of bilingual, dual language, and world language teachers can be effectively supported through direct financial assistance to traditional public school districts or community-based organizations working in partnership with those districts to expand dual language programs in Rhode Island; AND

RESOLVED, that the Newport City Council and hereby express their support for the establishment of a Bilingual Education Support Fund within the Rhode Island Department of Education in the amount of \$950,000 to support the implementation and expansion of bilingual, dual language, and world language education programs and the growth of related teaching certifications; AND

RESOLVED, that this program will assist 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 languages and cultures of Rhode Island's diverse communities; AND

RESOLVED, that the program will require the Rhode Island Department of Education to collaborate with the Rhode Island 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 the purpose of increasing the number of qualified teachers serving local education agencies with a high incidence of multilingual learners.

ELLEN PINNOCK
STEPAHNIE SMYTH
CHARLES M. HOLDER, JR.

IN COUNCIL
READ AND PASSED
MARCH 25, 2026


Laura C. Swistak, CMC
City Clerk