



BROWN

Education Department  
164 Angell Street

May 16, 2026

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 2555, the Support and Access to Bilingual Education (SABE) Act. SABE addresses two urgent needs in our state: the shortage of qualified bilingual educators and access to high-quality bilingual and dual-language programs for all students in grades K-12.

As a faculty member in Brown University's Department of Education, I work in our Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. The year-long MAT program combines intensive coursework, immersive teaching experiences, and personalized coaching to prepare teachers to become culturally sustaining high school educators. Through completion of my course, *Teaching Language and Literacy to Emerging Bilinguals Across the Disciplines*, MATs learn about evidence-based programs and practices to support multilingual learners (MLLs) in their classes. They complete a one year student teaching residency in districts with high numbers of MLLs, including Providence, Central Falls, and Pawtucket.

Every year's cohort of aspiring educators includes bilingual and multilingual individuals. This year's group includes heritage speakers of Portuguese, Spanish, Tagalog, Khmer, Urdu, and Arabic. While they are able to integrate their language skills and attention to cross-cultural development in their English medium-settings, many of these candidates would welcome the opportunity to serve in a bilingual dual language program. As part of the PRIME (Preparing Rhode Island's Multilingual Educators) group with the Coalition for a Multilingual RI, I collaborate with local providers of high quality Bilingual/Dual Language certification routes. I would be thrilled to refer these new teachers to their programs in order to pursue their full certification **IF** there were financial supports for their efforts and **IF** there were positions in secondary dual language programs for them to enter. These incredible new teachers are poised to step into - and help develop - high quality secondary dual language programs in their schools in local districts. SABE directly addresses both necessary "**IFs**" in this equation.

This is one example of myriad ways in which SABE can help leverage the assets and talents that already exist in our communities in order to support the linguistically and culturally diverse students in our schools. Research is clear: high quality K-12 dual language programs yield the best results, both academically and socioemotionally, for *all* students. Rhode Island youth deserve nothing less. We have the necessary building blocks to expand on current bilingual programs and to develop new ones, and SABE provides the crucial blueprint to get to work. ¡Adelante!

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