



**Multistate Association for Bilingual Education – Northeast, Inc**

*An educational nonprofit promoting multilingualism, equity and social justice in communities*

March 4, 2022

Dear Senator Doug McCrory, Representative Bobby Sanchez, and Members of the Legislative Education Committee,

On behalf of the [Multistate Association for Bilingual Education-Northeast \(MABE\)](#), we would like to express support for bill H.B. No. 5280 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT. We urge you to report this bill favorably out of Committee.

MABE provides advocacy and support for Dual Language Education (DLE) programs in MA, CT, and RI. It is a mission of MABE to promote widespread implementation of DLE programs. DLE programs are a research-proven way to increase academic achievement for all students, and the only research-based program to close the opportunity gap for English learners, especially in districts with the highest percentage of diverse students. MABE has witnessed reluctance for implementing DLE programs, particularly in districts with large language minority populations. The reasons are varied and include, but are not limited to: lack of understanding about program goals and structure, lack of funding for planning, professional development, and early stages of implementation, and bilingual teacher shortages.

The seed grant program as stated in H.B. No. 5280 to provide grants to local and regional boards of education for the purpose of establishing new or expanding existing DLE programs is critical to realistically expand bilingual education in Connecticut. The [Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education](#), a research-based nationally recognized document from the Center for Applied Linguistics, reinforces how important it is to have state policies that support well-implemented DLE programs:

“For dual language education programs, strong administrative support needs to come from the school district, the local board of education, and **state policies**, as these entities and policies can facilitate or hinder program implementation”. (page 122).

A similar policy and seed grant program exists in Massachusetts, after passage of the [LOOK Act](#) in 2017. (MABE is a founding member of the Language Opportunity Coalition, which advocated for passage of the LOOK Act.) The increase in DLE programs in Massachusetts is absolutely attributed to the grants to local and regional boards of education stipulated in the LOOK Act. Since 2017, more than a dozen new DLE programs are in different stages of implementation in as many school districts. Funds are used to assist district leaders in: understanding why DLE programs are so effective, how to support the implementation of DLE programs, assisting leadership teams with planning and implementing the DLE program at the school level, the purchasing of curriculum materials in The Language Other Than English (LOTE), and professional development for teachers and administrators.

MABE has developed tools and resources to provide technical assistance and professional development to district and school leadership teams and educators with planning and implementation of DLE programs in multiple states. The financial support and technical assistance from the seed grant program will ensure school districts are able to establish a strong foundation for implementation of high quality DLE programs in Connecticut, as the LOOK Act did in Massachusetts.

The seed grant program as stated in H.B. No. 5280 will help grow DLE programs in Connecticut, especially in districts with the highest percentage of diverse students, which are also the districts and populations that would most benefit from such programs. DLE programs have the potential to narrow

opportunity gaps for bilingual learners, and so it is our responsibility to urge you to report this bill favorably out of Committee, so that more students in Connecticut can reach their full potential

We thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

*Phyllis Hardy*

Phyllis Hardy, Executive Director  
Email: [PhyllisHardy@mabene.org](mailto:PhyllisHardy@mabene.org)