

Assembly
California Legislature



February 28, 2023

Assemblymember Phil Ting, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95816

Assemblymember, Kevin McCarty, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
1021 O Street, Suite 4510
Sacramento, CA 95816

Re: Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program

Dear Chair Ting and Chair McCarty:

We write to request that the Assembly include a \$20 million appropriation in the 2023-24 Budget Act to reinstate the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program (BTPDP) as a tool California can utilize to address the bilingual teacher shortage facing our state.

Districts have been scrambling for bilingual teachers to staff bilingual classrooms in languages such as Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, and Arabic. This shortage has increased with the expansion of Universal Transitional Kindergarten, exacerbating the already growing shortage of bilingual teachers. Empowering districts and schools to develop teacher candidates or update former bilingual teachers from their community, through the use of the BTPDP, is a proven way to fill the teacher shortage.

The previous BTPDP-funded projects provided professional learning opportunities to thousands of eligible teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals to increase the number of teachers who obtain a bilingual authorization as a result of participation in the program and to increase the number of teachers with a bilingual authorization who return to teaching in a bilingual or multilingual classroom setting.

According to a March 2021 study by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), California continues to experience an ongoing teacher shortage, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in more under-prepared educators teaching California students who would benefit from this program. LPI highlights California's difficulty in finding teachers for special education, math, science and bilingual education, categories which have historically had teacher shortages.

Compounding the current shortage of bilingual teachers is the result of the interest in and growth of bilingual and dual language immersion programs in California schools, due to the passage of

Proposition 58 in 2016, which was supported by 73.52% of the voters and gave California public schools greater control over dual language acquisition programs.

BTPDP would increase the capacity of bilingual teachers, thereby supporting local education agencies (LEAs) in their quest to hire bilingual teachers for their bilingual and dual language immersion programs. This is a “win-win” situation for all — for our students, for parents seeking bilingual programs for their children, and for LEAs, and for our state.

The successful BTPDP’s funding expired in June of 2021. Without additional funding to restore and continue this program, California will lack a significant tool needed to address the bilingual teacher shortage. Without a comprehensive approach to address the bilingual teacher shortage, California will fail to meet the educational needs of over 1.1 million of its English learner students.

I request that the Assembly include this critical program in the 2023-24 Budget Act to ensure California is not only addressing the overall teacher shortage but is concurrently addressing the bilingual teacher shortage to ensure close to one-fifth of our students are not left behind.

Sincerely,



Eloise Gómez Reyes
Assembly Majority Leader, 50th District



Juan Carrillo
Assemblymember, 39th District



Liz Ortega
Assemblymember, 20th District



Wendy Carrillo
Assemblymember, 52nd District



Monique Limón
Senator, 19th District



Esmeralda Soria
Assemblymember, 27th District