

NJTESOL/NJBE, Inc.

AN AFFILIATE OF NJEA, TESOL, NABE

New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/New Jersey Bilingual Educators, Incorporated

A professional organization for those concerned with the teaching of English as a Second Language,
Bilingual Education and Standard English as a Dialect

TO: The Hon. Lou Greenwald
New Jersey Assembly Majority Leader
FROM: NJ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/ NJ Bilingual Educators
(NJTESOL/NJBE)
RE: Support on Bills
DATE: December 20, 2020

Dear Assemblyman Greenwald,

On behalf of NJTESOL/NJBE, a professional organization for those concerned with the needs of English Learners, we want to pledge our support on your proposed bills regarding assisting students with their mental health needs (A4433, A4434, A4435, A4436, A4437).

Our membership is comprised of educators and administrators dedicated to the instruction of English learners (ELs) at all levels of public and private education. Interests include classroom practices, research, curriculum development, funding, employment and socio-political concerns. In light of your legislative package, we would like to ask that you specify the need for bilingual mental health professionals by including language in and surrounding these bills recognizing that students will respond best to assistance in their home languages.

NJTESOL/NJBE's mission is to actively support the development of bilingual education and the teaching of English as a Second Language by strengthening instruction at all levels. In order to do this, students need to be ready to learn which requires a healthy mental state. Students suffering from trauma and personal mental issues are not comprehending new knowledge at optimum levels. When students' primary language is not English it is even more difficult to meet these mental health needs.

In support of this mission we also promote activities and advocacy to support English learners, their families, and teachers. These efforts focus on issues of equity including access to information and opportunity in schools and society. This would include a request that the mental health needs of these students be met in the most appropriate manner which would include service by mental health professionals who speak their home languages.

It is our pleasure to offer our assistance and expertise in all English as a Second Language, Bilingual Education, and Dual Language initiatives within the New Jersey Senate and Assembly. We appreciate our past collaborations with various personnel in several offices and committees and look forward to continuing this successful collaboration in the service of the many multilingual students of New Jersey.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Fernandez
Kathleen Fernandez
Executive Director NJTESOL/NJBE

Margaret Churchill
Margaret Churchill
President NJTESOL/NJBE