



California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THOSE CONCERNED WITH TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE OR DIALECT AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION
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January 25, 2011

Hon. Felipe Fuentes
State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

AB 124: SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Fuentes:

CATESOL has reviewed your AB 124 and has taken a position of support for this very important bill. CATESOL is a statewide organization that promotes professional competency and standards for teaching English to speakers of other languages. The organization also works to represent the needs of students and teachers.

AB 124 would establish a 13 member English Language Development Standards Advisory Committee. The committee's charge is to update, revise and align the state's English language development standards (ELD) and to present the changes to the State Board of Education for adoption.

CATESOL strongly supports this bill because student assessment data shows that English language learners are continuing to fall behind in comparison to English only students (was confusing with other language). While California has an existing set of ELD standards, they are outdated and CATESOL recognizes the dire need to update the standards and their articulation. For example, Currently, there is no "roadmap" that provides teachers direction on how to link ELD and English Language Arts (ELA) content standards to ensure fully integrated lessons based on the level of a student's English language proficiency.

AB 124 requires that the advisory committee work to realign the ELD standards to grade level and that they shall be as rigorous and specific as the academic content standards for English language arts. In short, this bill is requiring that California's ELD standards provide the same level of academic rigor and focus to be more aligned in language and direction as other California Content Standards. Only with the upgrading of our ELD standards will California be able to provide the necessary support and structure for our EL students to succeed.

AB 124 is also very important because it will enable us to create a greater level of uniformity. Currently, neither the state's ELD standards nor the CELDT are aligned, thus the standards do not align to the assessment, as is the case with the ELA and Math content standards. It is necessary then that the ELD standards become updated and fully aligned to a state assessment for ELD, and AB 124 will help this happen. California needs to have those standards aligned to a specific curriculum and then develop an assessment that reflects those standards. Until California policy treats ELD as a content area, we will not have the appropriate standards and curriculum to ensure success for our English learner students. Virtually every other state in the nation has fully aligned ELD standards, curriculum and assessments.

Again, CATESOL supports AB 124. If we can be of further assistance on this bill please contact me at (916) 447-8420.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Frost
CATESOL Legislative Advocate

cc: Assembly Education Committee members