

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Darshana R. Patel, Chair

AB 2652 (Sharp-Collins) – As Amended March 19, 2026

SUBJECT: Teacher credentialing: world languages: subject matter examinations: language proficiency assessments.

SUMMARY: Allows a candidate for a single subject credential in World Languages, or for a bilingual authorization, to demonstrate competency in subject matter through successful completion of an assessment maintained by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), when an assessment in that language is not administered by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Permits a candidate for a single subject credential in World Languages, or for a bilingual authorization, to demonstrate competency in subject matter through successful completion of a comparable postsecondary assessment maintained by the ACTFL, when an assessment in that language is not administered by the CTC.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires the CTC to adopt examinations and assessments to verify the subject matter knowledge and competence of candidates for the single subject teaching credentials and concentrations. (Education Code (EC 44282)
- 2) Requires that a subject matter examination authorizing teaching multiple subjects include an examination of the candidate's knowledge of the language studies, literature, mathematics, science, social studies, history, the arts, physical education, and human development. (EC 44282)
- 3) Establishes a single subject credential in World Languages. (EC 44257)
- 4) Requires that candidates for teaching credentials demonstrate subject matter knowledge (EC 44259)
- 5) Requires the CTC to develop objective and verifiable standards for an authorization for bilingual-cross-cultural competence for holders of an appropriate credential, certificate, authorization, or permit who will be serving English language learners. (EC 44253.7)
- 6) States that bilingual authorizations may be issued to persons holding an appropriate credential or authorization issued by the CTC. (EC 44253.7)
- 7) Requires candidates for the bilingual authorization, by oral and written examination, or by completing an approved program that consists of coursework or a combination of coursework and examinations, to demonstrate all of the following either at the same time as the initial preparation for the prerequisite credential or at a later date:
 - a) That the person is competent in both the oral and written skills of a language other than English;

- b) That the person is competent in both oral and written skills in the English language;
- c) That the person has both the knowledge and understanding of the cultural and historical heritage of the limited-English-proficient individuals to be served; and
- d) That the person has the ability to perform the services the candidate is certified or authorized to perform in English and in a language other than English. (EC 44253.7)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. The author states, “California is one of the most diverse places in the world. However, our world language courses offered to students do not reflect the reality of our state. Currently, California only offers testing for a select group of languages. This is creating a shortage in credentialing opportunities that disproportionately impacts multilingual communities where dual immersion programs are essential for English learners and heritage language speakers.

AB 2652 allows teachers to take language credentialing exams that California does not offer that have been approved by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). This bill ensures that public investments in bilingual education translate into classrooms staffed by qualified teachers. And it opens opportunities for more students to advance studies in their native tongue or begin learning a new language.”

Study of World Languages and expansion of dual language immersion programs is constrained by the availability of language assessments for teachers. Under current law, candidates for credentials in World Languages and for bilingual authorizations must demonstrate proficiency in the language which they will teach.

To demonstrate language proficiency, teachers must pass one of the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET) examinations in the target language, or an assessment developed by the institution at which they complete their preparation. They may also demonstrate competence by completion of a CTC-approved subject matter program, completion of a Bachelor’s degree in the target World Language, coursework evaluation, or a combination of subject matter program, CSET, and/or coursework evaluation. For many of the smaller language groups, there is no CSET examination, and candidates are unlikely to have been able to take coursework, or earn a degree in, that language.

If there is no CSET in the language the teacher wishes to teach, teacher preparation programs can only offer a credential or authorization in that language if they create their own assessment. As a result, institutions are unlikely to offer a program leading to a credential or authorization in that language, and teachers are unable to earn a credential or authorization in that language.

ACTFL examinations are available in more languages than the CSET examinations. This bill aims to increase the number of language assessments teachers can take in order to earn these credentials and authorizations, by permitting them to meet this requirement through successful completion of an assessment maintained by the ACTFL, when an assessment in that language is not administered by the CTC.

As shown below, CSET assessments are currently available in 23 languages. The ACTFL offers assessments in the 99 languages shown below:

- CSET: American Sign Language, Arabic, Armenian, Cantonese, Farsi, Filipino, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmong, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Latin, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Vietnamese.
- ACTFL: Afrikaans, Akan-Twi, Albanian, Algerian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Assyrian, Azerbaijani, Baluchi, Bengali, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cambodian, Cantonese, Cebuano, Chavacano, Chechen, Czech, Danish, Dari, Dutch, Egyptian, English, Finnish, French, Ga, Georgian, German, Greek, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmong/Mong, Hungarian, Igbo, Ilocano, Indonesian, Iraqi, Italian, Japanese, Javanese, Jordanian, Kazakh, Kikongo, Kinyarwanda, Korean, Krio, Kurdish, Lao, Lebanese, Levantine, Lingala, Malay, Malayalam, Mandarin, Mandingo-Bambara, Mongolian, Moroccan, Nepali, Norwegian, Palestinian, Pashto, Persian Farsi, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Quechua, Romanian, Russian, Serbian/Croatian, Sindhi, Sinhalese, Slovak, Somali, Spanish, Sudanese, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tajik, Tamil, Tausug, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Turkish, Turkmen, Uighur, Urdu, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Wolof, Yemeni, Yoruba, Zulu.

Range of languages in which students earn the State Seal of Biliteracy reflects the diversity of home languages students wish to study. Current law authorizes local educational agencies (LEAs) and charter schools to award a State Seal of Biliteracy (SSB) to students who have demonstrated proficiency in English and another language.

As migration patterns change, students arrive in California schools speaking different home languages. To help them continue to develop their home language and become biliterate, schools must offer courses of study in their home languages. They cannot do so if teachers are unable to take a language examination leading to a credential or authorization in that language.

The list below of smaller languages in which the SSB was earned in 2024-25 demonstrates the breadth of home language assets students bring to their education, and the number of languages they may wish to study in school. Languages for which there is no Advanced Placement assessment, and for which LEAs reported awarding the SSB, include:

Akan, Albanian, Amharic, Assyrian, Bangali, Bosnian, Sacramento, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cebuano, Chaldean, Czech, Danish, Dari, Dutch, Fijian, Finnish, Greek, Gujarati, Hungarian, Hupa, Igbo, Ilonggo, Indonesian, Kannada, Kazakh, Khmer, Lahu, Lao, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luganda, Luiseño, Malayalam, Mayan, Mongolian, Nepali, Otomian languages (Mixteco), Pashto, Patois, Persian, Philippine languages, Polish, Pomo, Romanian, Samoan, Serbo-Croatian, Sinhala, Sino-Tibetan, Swahili, Swedish, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tibetan, Alameda, Tigrinya, Tolowa, Tongan, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Visayan, Yoruba, and Yurok.

Other states use ACTFL assessments for teacher licensure. According to the ACTFL, 27 states use ACTFL language assessments for purposes of teacher licensure. Additionally, many states use the ACTL assessments for purposes of their SSBs.

ACTFL examinations can be used to earn the State Seal of Biliteracy. As of the 2023-24 school year, students can demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English, for purposes of fulfilling a requirement to earn the State Seal of Biliteracy, by passing a World Language ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) and an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) with scores of Intermediate Mid or higher.

English Learner Roadmap emphasizes an assets-based orientation toward home language. In 2017, the State Board of Education (SBE) approved the California English Learner Roadmap. This policy is intended to provide guidance to LEAs on welcoming, understanding, and educating the diverse population of students who are English learners attending California public schools.

A key tenet of this policy is Principle 1: Assets-Oriented and Needs-Responsive Schools. This includes the key element: “The languages and cultures English learners bring to their education are assets for their own learning and are important contributions to learning communities. These assets are valued and built upon in culturally responsive curriculum and instruction and in programs that support, wherever possible, the development of proficiency in multiple languages.”

Speaking a home language is obviously an asset that could be put to use in earning authorization to teach World Languages or in bilingual settings, but given the limited number of CSET examinations, this is not possible for some teachers.

Multiple policies promote biliteracy as a state goal. A number of state policies enacted or adopted in recent years support the goal of students achieving biliteracy. They include:

- The California English Learner Roadmap, adopted by the SBE in 2017, promotes an assets orientation toward primary language while students are also learning English, and that these assets are “valued and built upon in culturally responsive curriculum and instruction and in programs that support, wherever possible, the development of proficiency in multiple languages.”
- The Global California 2030 report, published by the California Department of Education (CDE) in 2019, set as a goal that by 2030, half of all K–12 students would be participating in programs leading to proficiency in two or more languages, either through a class, a program, or an experience, and by 2040, three out of four students would be proficient in two or more languages, earning them an SSB.
- The SSB, established by AB 815 (Brownley), Chapter 618, Statutes of 2011, recognizes proficiency in two languages in the form of a seal affixed to students’ high school diplomas.
- Proposition 58, passed by the voters in 2016, authorizes school districts to establish dual language immersion (DLI) programs for both native and non-native English speakers.
- The state has created and funded several programs aimed at increasing the number of DLI programs and increasing the number of teachers who hold bilingual authorizations.

Arguments in support. One student writes, “In Los Angeles County, over 100,000 people speak Bengali, yet it isn’t offered in public schools because California lacks a Bengali Language Teacher Credential.

At fifteen, I navigated the bureaucratic maze of teacher credentialing, working with Los Angeles Unified School District, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), and university officials, only to discover the core obstacle: no state proficiency exam exists for Bengali, placing the burden on institutions to create one—a process discouraging institutions from starting a program. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) already offers this exam, a standard accepted in 24 other states, including New York and Texas. We need California to utilize it.

Today, the CTC administers proficiency exams in only a handful of languages. Children from communities that speak less commonly spoken languages receive limited public school support to preserve their mother tongue, while students from Spanish- or Chinese-speaking communities benefit from established programs that help them excel in their native language.

AB 2652 better supports world language and bilingual education in California by:

- 1) Allowing world language teaching credential candidates to fulfill the subject matter requirement through a comparable ACTFL assessment in languages where the Commission offers no exam, opening a rigorous pathway for speakers of 120+ languages.
- 2) Allowing bilingual and English learner authorization candidates to fulfill their language requirement through an ACTFL assessment, so no language is suppressed simply because their mother tongue lacks a state proficiency exam.
- 3) Expanding bilingual services to California communities with concentrated speaker populations but no credentialing pathway
- 4) Ensuring children from all linguistic backgrounds see their language and heritage reflected in the classroom, sending a message that every culture belongs here.”

Recommended Committee amendments. *Staff recommends that the bill be amended*, to add “including but not limited to” to reference the ACTFL assessments, to recognize that there may be other comparable assessments that are suitable for this purpose.

Related legislation. AB 2325 (Alvarez) of the 2025-26 Session would require the CDE in consultation with the CTC, to establish the Bilingual Clinical Placement Registry, an online database for the purpose of connecting the preparation, credentialing, and long-term retention of teachers seeking to provide instruction in bilingual and multilingual settings.

AB 1306 (Muratsuchi), Chapter 727, Statutes of 2025, authorizes the CTC to approve a teacher education program offered by an LEA for purposes of enabling candidates to earn a cross-cultural language and academic development certificate (CLAD) or a bilingual authorization certificate, including a California Teacher of English Learners (CTEL) program.

AB 865 (Gonzalez) of the 2025-26 Session would have established the Dual Language Immersion Education Instructional Materials Grant Program for the purpose of providing additional supports to LEAs to increase available instructional materials in partner languages for DLI programs. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2074 (Muratsuchi), Chapter 926, Statutes of 2024, requires the CDE to develop a statewide implementation plan for the English Learner Roadmap Policy.

AB 154 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 43, Statutes of 2022, appropriated \$5 million for the Asian Language Bilingual Teacher Education Program Consortium with the California State University, to increase the number of credentialed teachers with Asian language bilingual authorization.

SB 952 (Limon) of the 2021-22 Session would have revised and recasted a three-year competitive DLI grant program administered by the CDE. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2514 (Thurmond), Chapter 763, Statutes of 2018, establishes the Pathways to Success Grant Program, for the purpose of providing grants for the establishment and expansion of DLI programs, developmental bilingual programs for English learners, and early learning dual language learners programs.

AB 130 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 44, Statutes of 2021, appropriated \$10 million for a DLI grant program, to award 25 one-time grants over a period of 3 fiscal years to eligible entities to expand or establish DLI programs.

AB 952 (Reyes) of the 2017-18 Session, as it passed this Committee, would have established the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program and requires the CDE to allocate grant funding for purposes of providing professional development services to specified teachers and paraprofessionals to provide instruction to ELs. This bill was vetoed by the Governor, who stated:

California recently provided funds to support teachers and paraprofessionals interested in becoming bilingual teachers. This past spring the Commission awarded one-time grants to higher education institutions that sought to create or improve four-year integrated teacher education programs, including for bilingual teachers. Before making additional investments on this matter, I believe it's wise to first assess the success of our current programs.

AB 99 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 15, Statutes of 2017, establishes the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program and requires the CDE to allocate grant funding for purposes of providing professional development services to specified teachers and paraprofessionals to provide instruction to ELs.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

1 individual

Opposition

None on file

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