



Pawtucket is PRIMED for Dual Language Expansion

Pawtucket Public School District has one of the largest concentrations of multilingual learners (MLLs) in Rhode Island, yet access to proven bilingual and dual-language programs remains limited. The data is clear: outcomes are better, demand is high, and current programming isn't keeping up. Pawtucket students deserve an education that centers the community's multilingual strengths. With coordinated action and strong policy initiatives, Pawtucket can become a leader in language education in the state.



Why Dual Language

Dual language programs serve both MLLs and non-MLLs and teach academic content through two languages (at least 50% of the school day is spent learning in the non-English partner language, such as Spanish). The aim is for all students to become bilingual and biliterate, have high academic achievement, and develop cross-cultural competence.

Pawtucket at a glance

23%

of students are MLLs in Pawtucket Schools

the MLL student population increased by

44%

in five years demonstrating the incredible need for bilingual education in Pawtucket

39%

of Pawtucket residents

live in multilingual households, with Spanish, Portuguese, Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, & French widely spoken

WHY IT MATTERS

Dual-language education is one of the most effective strategies for improving academic outcomes, graduation rates, and long-term economic mobility, especially in districts with high multilingual learner populations like Pawtucket.

Dual Language Programs Have Been Proven To



1. Improve reading proficiency



2. Increase high school graduation rates & likelihood of attending college

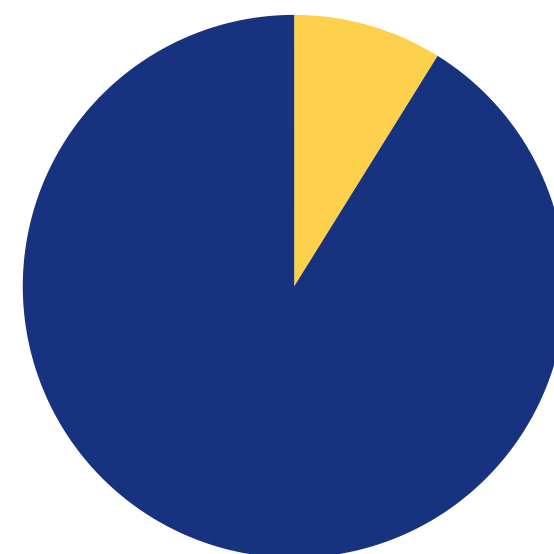


3. Improve economic outcomes for multilingual learners

In Rhode Island...

- Multilingual learners (MLL) make up **14%** of the total student population – 19,674 students.*
- Multilingual learners (MLL) in RI have increased by **92%** in the past 10 years.*
- Only 1,743 MLL students in RI are enrolled in dual language programs**

Enrolled in Dual Language Programs **8.9%**



Not Enrolled **91.1%**

*RIDE Data on Multilingual Learners
**RI Kids Count 2025 Factbook

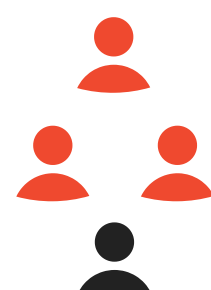
The Outcomes Are Better

MLL Students Meeting RICAS Standards

	ELA	MATH	SCIENCE
Pawtucket School District	3.9%	7%	4.2%
Raíces Dual Language Academy K-8 in CF	10.6%	17.9%	12.3%

Sense of Belonging Drives Better Outcomes

Dual language programs build connection and confidence, reducing chronic absenteeism and supporting stronger academic outcomes.



28.3% of PSD MLL students are chronically absent compared to only

12.7% at Raíces Dual Language Academy (K-8)

*Source: RIDE Report Card | School Year: 2024-25 | LEA: Pawtucket, Central Falls
Research shows dual-language education leads to stronger academic and economic outcomes for multilingual and monolingual students alike.

**Source: American Councils for International Education / Stanford CREDO



High Need, Limited Access

High Multilingual Need

Pawtucket is designated a high-incidence multilingual learner (MLL) district, meaning:

- 250+ multilingual learners, or
- 20% or more of total student enrollment

Pawtucket meets and exceeds this threshold.

Limited Dual Language Access

Pawtucket only offers a strand dual language program at Baldwin (formerly at Nathanael Greene) Elementary School. Additionally, **Raíces Dual Language Academy, nearby in Central Falls**, serves students in grades K–8. Despite strong outcomes, only a handful of students are enrolled in dual-language programs in Pawtucket.

Access has not kept pace with community need.

Local Leadership Can Close the Access Gap

Local leaders play a critical role in establishing access to dual-language education through planning, policy alignment, and advocacy for state investment.

Passing the **Support and Access to Bilingual Education (SABE) Act** would give districts like Cranston the tools to:



Plan and expand dual-language programs



Invest in multilingual teacher pathways



Meet current community and workforce needs

Take Action for Multilingual Learners

- Form a district dual language task force
- Pass the Cranston bilingual education resolution
- Come to the State House to testify in support of the SABE Act

Support and Access to Bilingual Education (SABE) Act

Representative Morales (HB 7389) and Senator McKenney (SB 2555)

1. Investing \$650,000 in funding multilingual teacher certifications and creating job opportunities for underemployed Rhode Islanders.
2. Investing \$300,000 in developing dual language programs across the state.

“This bill isn’t just about scholarships—it’s about investing in people like me....It’s about creating a sustainable teacher pipeline that ensures every student has the support they need to succeed.”

– Felix Fonseca Garcia, a RIC World Languages Student Teacher