

TESOL-NABE Advocacy Action Days

Two-Months Out

U.S. federal policy impacting multilingual learners of English and
their educators, schools, families, and communities

Webinar Overview

- Welcome
- Update on Legislation and Priorities
- Looking Ahead for the 120th
- Taking Action



Schools and Educational Access

Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (HR 1061 and S 455)

- Would establish statutory limits on immigration enforcement at or near designated sensitive locations, including **schools, colleges and universities, places of worship, health care facilities, and other community settings**.
- Both bills were introduced on **February 6, 2025** and have remained in their respective Judiciary Committees without further legislative action.
- Support remains overwhelmingly Democratic/Democratic-aligned, with **no Republican cosponsors**, making a bipartisan path to enactment highly unlikely before the 119th Congress concludes.

Why this matters:

Schools and other educational settings remain subject to the Administration's current immigration-enforcement policies; Congress is unlikely to restore sensitive-location protections legislatively in the near term.

Practical outlook: the legislation keeps the issue visible, but it is unlikely to alter current federal immigration-enforcement policy during this Congress.

Continuing Resolution (CR) Buys Time, Not Certainty

Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Appropriations

- House: Passed HR 9770 on 21 July, extending federal funding at FY26 levels through 4 December 2026.
- Senate: Passed an amended HR 6500 on 8 August extending federal funding at FY26 levels through 11 December 2026.
- The chambers have passed **different bills**; identical legislation still must pass both chambers and be signed by the President before September 30.
- With full FY27 appropriations unlikely to be completed by September 30, a CR remains the expected path to **avoid a government shutdown on October 1**.

Why this matters:

- A CR continuing FY26 funding would preserve the current rate of operations during the CR period for:
- **ESEA Title II-A** — educator professional learning and support
- **ESEA Title III** — English Language Acquisition
- **WIOA Title II / AEFLA** — adult education and English literacy
- **HEA Title II** — educator preparation, including Teacher Quality Partnership
- **State Department ECA** — educational and cultural exchange programs

A CR postpones proposed FY27 cuts or eliminations; it does not resolve them. Full-year FY27 funding decisions would still have to be made later.

Major Change for International Students and Exchange Visitors – now in court

DHS Final Rule: Duration of Status

- DHS finalized its rule ending **Duration of Status (D/S)** and replacing it with fixed periods of admission for international students, exchange visitors, and foreign media representatives.
- The rule is scheduled to take effect 15 **September 2026** and generally limits admission to the program period, **not to exceed four years (24 months for English learners)**, with an extension-of-stay process for individuals needing additional time.
- Until 15 September, current D/S rules remain in effect.
- On **18 August**, NAFSA and the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration led a coalition lawsuit in federal court in Massachusetts seeking to block implementation of the rule. A motion for preliminary injunction is pending.

Why this matters:

More immigration filings, greater advising and compliance burdens, less flexibility for students whose programs extend beyond the authorized period—and another potential barrier to U.S. international-student recruitment.

Over 60,000 international students are English learners.

Practical outlook: pending litigation, the final rule will insert uncertainty into the international education field and potentially deter people from pursuing study in the United States.

TESOL worked with EnglishUSA and UCIEP on an explainer for English Language Programs:



House and Senate Move in Opposite Directions

House: Codify the Transfers

- On July 15, the House Education and Workforce Committee approved a **10-bill “Less Bureaucracy, Better Education” package** intended to make many of the Administration's interagency transfers of Education Department functions permanent.
- Of particular significance to the ELT field:
 - **H.R. 9610:** Would transfer K–12 programs to Labor—including **Title II-A, Title III English Language Acquisition, National Professional Development, and HEA Teacher Quality Partnership**.
 - **H.R. 9607:** Would transfer OCTAE functions, including **WIOA Title II/AEFLA**, to Labor.
 - **H.R. 9603:** Would transfer **HEA Title VI international education/foreign-language programs and Fulbright-Hays** to the State Department.

Senate: Put limits on the transfers

- The Senate HELP Committee advanced **S. 5046** on a bipartisan basis; it was reported to the Senate on August 4.
- The bill would prohibit transfers of **OESE, OPE, OSERS, and the Office of Indian Education** to other federal agencies.
- **Notably absent:** neither the **Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)** nor **OCTAE** is explicitly protected.

The larger story

Congress is now debating not simply education policy, but where federal education policy should live.

One Education Bill with Bipartisan Support

S 4689 / HR 10031 – Reading Excellence and Achievement for Development Act (READ Act)

- Bipartisan legislation would reauthorize and reshape the **Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant** program around evidence-based instruction aligned with the “science of reading.”
- The Senate HELP Committee advanced S 4689; it was formally reported on **6 August** and placed on the Senate legislative calendar.
- A bipartisan House companion, **HR 10031**, was introduced 3 August.
- The legislation addresses literacy screening and intervention, teacher preparation and professional learning, state accountability, and evidence-based literacy instruction.

Why it matters:

Both bills explicitly include “effective language instruction” supporting literacy and oral-language development, particularly for English learners and children with disabilities.

Concern over prohibition on “three-cueing”

Outlook:

Unlike many education proposals in the 119th Congress, the READ Act has bipartisan sponsors, movement in committee, and companion legislation in both chambers. Will continue to monitor when Congress returns from its August recess.

Federal Grants: OMB Proposed Rule

Rules governing federal grants: OMB Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance

- The 29 May proposed rule would substantially revise the government-wide rules governing **grants, cooperative agreements, grant competitions, allowable costs, oversight, and award administration**.
- Because it applies government-wide, the proposal reaches well beyond Education, potentially affecting federal grants administered by **ED, State, Labor, HHS and other agencies** important to the ELT profession.
- TESOL submitted comments raising concerns about restrictions that could affect **professional learning and memberships, conferences, research and publications, and multilingual outreach** when those activities directly advance the objectives of a federal award.
- TESOL urged clear, workable rules that preserve accountability **without making legitimate professional association activities or language-access work ineligible for federal support**.

New development

- The Senate CR would prohibit OMB from issuing or finalizing this rule through December 11.
- That protection is **not yet law**, because the House CR contains no comparable provision.



TESOL's submitted comments:

<https://bit.ly/4wTTrS3>

Head Start

Proposed shift from dual-language support to English-only instruction

HHS/ACF Proposed Rule – Reducing Federal Burden for Head Start Programs

- Published **7 August**; comments are due **6 October 2026**.
- Among many proposed changes to Head Start standards, the rule would require programs to conduct **all education to children in English**.
- For children whose home language is not English and who do not speak English, programs would be directed to **prioritize English instruction**.
- This would reverse current Head Start policy requiring programs to support **both English acquisition and home-language development for dual language learners**.

Why this matters:

This is not simply an administrative change—it represents a fundamental shift in federal early-childhood language policy and the federal government's view of bilingual development.



NABE Comments:

(<https://bit.ly/NABEonHeadstartMandate>)

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION OPPOSES THE PROPOSED ENGLISH-ONLY MANDATE FOR HEADSTART

ENGLISH ACQUISITION DOES NOT REQUIRE ENGLISH-ONLY EDUCATION.

A CHILD'S HOME LANGUAGE IS AN ASSET:

- **Children can develop strong English proficiency while continuing to develop their home languages.** Home language supports learning, family, culture, identity, and development.
- **Bilingualism does not hinder development.** Effective bilingual and multilingual approaches build on the language knowledge children already possess and can strengthen cognitive and academic development.
- **Limited English proficiency ≠ limited ability.** Children developing English may already have substantial knowledge, vocabulary, reasoning skills, and conceptual understanding in another language.
- **Language is essential to family engagement.** An English-only mandate risks creating distance between children, families, and schools and undermining meaningful family participation.
- **Head Start should support the whole child—not assimilation.** NABE rejects the premise that assimilation should be an educational objective and argues that Head Start should help children thrive without disconnecting them from their families' language and culture.



Access NABE's full position statement:
<https://bit.ly/NABEonHeadstartMandate>

Federal Civil-Rights Enforcement Narrows

Two changes reshape the federal civil-rights landscape

1) Title VI enforcement narrowed

- Effective **24 July**, the Department of Education eliminated **disparate-impact liability** from its Title VI regulations.
- ED will no longer find a Title VI violation based solely on a facially neutral policy that produces an unintended disparate impact; its regulations now center on **intentional discrimination**.
- Title VI's statutory prohibition against discrimination based on **race, color, or national origin remains in force** but a longstanding regulatory enforcement theory has been removed.

2) Civil-rights enforcement shifts toward DOJ

- A 16 June interagency agreement gives the Department of Justice a much larger role in the **evaluation, investigation, and resolution of education civil-rights complaints**.
- ED says it retains its statutory authority. This shift is therefore more accurately described as a transfer of **day-to-day enforcement functions**, rather than Congress formally moving OCR out of Education.
- OCR has traditionally processed individual complaints and pursued administrative resolutions; DOJ is more litigation-focused and historically more selective about the cases it pursues. How that difference will affect access, timelines, and remedies remains uncertain.

Why this matters

National-origin protections remain, but the mechanisms used to identify, investigate, and remedy discrimination affecting English learners are becoming narrower and more fragmented.

As the 119th Closes Out: What to Watch

Date / Window	What to Watch
15 September	Scheduled effective date of DHS Duration of Status rule; federal litigation could intervene
30 September	FY26 funding expires; House and Senate must agree on a CR
6 October	Comments due on Head Start proposed rule
Fall 2026	Possible Senate action on READ Act and S. 5046; House action on ED restructuring bills
4 / 11 December	Likely next federal funding deadline, depending on final CR agreement
January 2027	End of the 119th Congress; unresolved legislation must be reintroduced in the 120th

Taking Action

- State and Local Advocacy
- Continue to Raise your Voice to Congress
 - Vote (<https://vote.gov/>)
 - Invite Members to your programs
 - Write or call your Members
- Respond to NPRM on Head Start



Advocacy Action Center
tesol.org/action



TAKE ACTION:

PROTECT MULTILINGUAL CHILDREN IN HEADSTART

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR COMMENT:

- 1 Visit: <https://www.regulations.gov>
- 2 Search for docket: **ACF-2026-0595**
- 3 Select “**Comment**”
- 4 Personalize and submit your message **before October 6, 2026.**

You may also email your comment to Deregulation@acf.hhs.gov. Include “ACF-2026-0595” or “RIN 0970-AD30” in the subject line.

Please personalize the message by explaining how this proposal would affect your students, children, families, program, or community.



SAMPLE

“I strongly oppose the proposed English-only requirement for Head Start under § 1301.04(a). Children can develop strong English proficiency while continuing to learn and communicate in their home languages. A child’s home language supports learning, family engagement, cultural identity, and healthy development.

Multilingual services are essential—not ‘non-essential.’ Head Start should build upon the linguistic strengths children bring to the classroom, not require them to sacrifice their home languages to succeed.

I urge the Administration for Children and Families to withdraw the proposed English-only requirement and preserve policies that support English development, home-language development, meaningful family engagement, and culturally and linguistically responsive early childhood education.”



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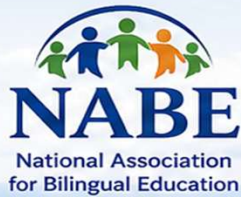
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NABE, PRDE, and PRABE

Stronger Together for Puerto Rico's Future



Advancing Bilingual Education. Expanding Opportunities. Building a Legacy.

A HISTORIC MOMENT FOR PUERTO RICO



Puerto Rico has taken a historic step forward by establishing bilingual education as public policy for all schools.

Bilingualism is an investment in our students and in the future of our Island.

NATIONAL PRESS CONFERENCE



During a national press conference, Puerto Rico's Secretary of Education, **Eliezer Ramos Parés**, joined leaders and partners to announce this landmark policy.

Present at the Announcement:

- **Eliezer Ramos Parés**, Secretary of Education, PRDE
- **Jeannine Ortiz**, Director of Bilingual Education, PRDE
- **Luis Rosario Alvarez**, PRABE
- **Miriam Alvarez**, PRABE
- Leaders from PRDE and the Bilingual Education Program
- Educators and bilingual education advocates
- **NABE President, Dr. Margarita Machado Casas and Judy Lewis**

OUR COLLABORATION



PUERTO RICO
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION



NABE is proud to partner with the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) and our affiliate, the Puerto Rico Association for Bilingual Education (PRABE), to advance high-quality bilingual education for every student.

Together, we will turn this vision into lasting impact in classrooms and communities across Puerto Rico.

THE GROWTH OF BILINGUAL PROGRAMMING



Expansion of bilingual programs across all regions and grade levels



Stronger support for educators through professional learning and resources



High-quality bilingual instruction that promotes academic excellence, biliteracy, and bicultural competence



Greater opportunities for students to succeed in Puerto Rico and thrive in a global society

NEXT STEPS IN OUR PARTNERSHIP



MOU between
NABE and PRDE



Bilingual Education
Week in Puerto Rico
October 27



Feature in
Global Perspectives
Magazine



Webinar/Podcast
Highlighting
Puerto Rico's Work



Collaboration with
PRABE Learn



Membership
Growth



Showcasing PRDE
at the NABE
National Conference



Standards Support
and Strategic
Planning

Educación Bilingüe: Dos Idiomas, Infinitas Posibilidades. ★

NABE is honored to walk alongside PRDE and PRABE as we build a brighter, bilingually empowered future for Puerto Rico.



NABE
National Association
for Bilingual Education

NABE 2027

✦ ✦ *Speak the World: Inspire Global Connections* ✦ ✦



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56th Annual International Bilingual Education Conference



Disney's Coronado Springs Resort
Lake Buena Vista, Florida



FEBRUARY 17–19, 2027



FEBRUARY 17, 2027

School Visits &
Pre-Conference Institutes



FEBRUARY 18–19, 2027

Main Conference



Join bilingual and multilingual educators, researchers, advocates, leaders, and partners from around the world as we celebrate innovation, collaboration, and the power of multilingual education.

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NABE Leadership Institute



coming Spring 2027
in Hawaii.



More information to follow, stay tuned!

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