Summary of Public Comment – RIDE's Proposed Revisions to Multilingual Learner Regulations

Public Comment Period: *December 6, 2024, to January 20, 2025*

Introduction and Public Comment Process:

The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE), as approved by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, is proposing changes to the Regulations Governing the Education of Multilingual Learners (MLL) (200-RICR-20-30-3). The regulations were last updated in 2007 and do not currently comport with changes in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), current legal requirements, nor do they incorporate nationally recognized best practices. The following is a summary table of the major changes in the proposed regulations. The changes proposed are in alignment with the Rhode Island Blueprint for MLL Success and Strategic Plan.

At the Council's September 25, 2024, meeting, the Council formally approved the proposed regulations for the purpose of public review per Rhode Island General Law § 42-35-2.8. The following summary document details an overview of the comments provided, their main themes, the applicable areas where a change was requested, and the ensuing change or rejection of the proposed change.

The public comment period lasted 46-days (longer than the required 30-day period) from December 6, 2024, to January 20, 2025. RIDE made public comment possible via formal public hearings, mail, email, and online form at any point in time during the public comment process.

Public Comment Hearings:

RIDE conducted six (6) public hearings during the public comment hearing window. As these regulations are statewide regulations and applicable to every Local Education Agency (LEA), at least one public comment hearing was held in each county of Rhode Island, with two being held in Providence County (Providence and Woonsocket). The public hearings were advertised via RIDE's field memo, website, and social media. At these hearings, a summary document of the proposed regulations, as well as an infographic describing high-level updates, and the regulations in their entirety were made available to attendants. The overview and infographic documents were provided in the five highest incidence languages in Rhode Island public schools. Attendants were able to provide oral testimony at a podium, or written testimony by scanning a QR code to complete an online form. Interpretation services were available at all meetings including ASL, Spanish, and any other requested languages. The public hearing dates and locations are listed below:

- **December 18, 2024** at Kingston Free Library, 2605 Kingstown Rd, Kingston, RI 02881
- **December 19, 2024** at Woonsocket Hamlet Middle School, 60 Florence Dr, Woonsocket, RI 02895
- **January 7, 2025** at Providence Career and Technical Academy, 41 Fricker St, Providence, RI 02903
- **January 9, 2025** at Newport - Pell Elementary School, 35 Dexter St, Newport, RI 02840
- **January 13, 2025** at West Warwick High School, 1 Webster Knight Dr, West Warwick, RI 02893
- **January 14, 2025** at Central Falls - Calcutt Middle School, 112 Washington St. Central Falls, RI 02863

Summary of Received Public Comments:

RIDE received submissions from eighty-three (83) commentors. Among the commentors are a wide range of stakeholder groups including executive boards from national and state organizations, as well as higher education institutions, local education agencies, and community groups serving MLLs. Across six public comment sessions, twenty-nine (29) individuals gave spoken testimony; other comments were submitted in writing. Responses to proposed updates are categorized as follows: thirty-six (36) support, eighteen (18) support with amendments, eleven (11) suggested amendment but did not indicate their position, seven (7) opposed, and eleven (11) did not specify their position.

The following themes emerged

1. Overall Regulations
2. MLL Programming
3. Ongoing Professional Learning
4. Personnel
5. Identification, Assessment, and Reclassification
6. Implementation
7. Dually Identified Student Rights
8. Parent and Student Involvement
9. Responsibilities of RIDE

Understanding the Document:

Commentors

- The role/affiliation of individuals and groups that provided public comment can be found in the "Commentors" column of the table below.
- Roles/affiliations were recorded based upon how individuals identified themselves.
- If an individual did *not specify their role/affiliation*, or if they *specified multiple roles/affiliations*, they are recorded as a "community member".
- Role-like groups, such as community members, educators, students, parents, have numbers next to them depicting the number of individuals that identified themselves as that role/affiliation and that commented on the same theme/section of the regulation (e.g. "3 parents" means that 3 individuals who identified their role as being parents commented on the same theme or section).
- Groups, boards, associations, committees, or organizations that submitted public comments are recorded by their group name, without an accompanying number because it is assumed that the comment is made on behalf of that entire group.

Changes

The suggested change to language or rationale for no change describes why RIDE did or did not make a change to the proposed regulatory revision based upon the public comment received. Categories for change rationale include:

- "**Change**" means that RIDE has made a revision to the final regulatory proposal based upon this public comment.
- "**No Change**" means that RIDE has not made a revision to the final regulatory proposal based upon this comment. The entry will include the rationale for why RIDE did not incorporate this revision in the final regulatory proposal. This rationale may be that the comment is unrelated to the Multilingual Learner Regulations, that the comment is related to implementation, or that the comment is applicable to the Multilingual Learner Regulations, but RIDE has not made a change for a particular or specific reason.
- "**No Change Requested**" means that the comment was in support of RIDE's proposed regulatory language and therefore no change will be made based upon that public comment.

Theme 1: Overall Regulations

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change
Across the regulations in multiple sections	• Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners (RITELL), Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education (MABE), RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RI Education Collective, Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee (RISEAC), Warwick Teacher's Union • 4 Teachers • 1 Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Faculty/Staff Member • 2 Community Members • 3 District Administrators • 1 Building Administrator • 6 Parents/Family Members	Commentors expressed support for the overall regulation changes that are reflected across multiple sections, including RIDE's larger effort to adopt practices and policies in our state regarding MLLs.	No Change Requested –

Theme 1: Overall Regulations

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change
Across the regulations in multiple sections	• RITELL, MABE, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RI Education Collective, RISEAC, Warwick Teacher's Union • 4 Teachers • 1 EPP Faculty/Staff Member • 2 Community Members • 3 District Administrators • 1 Building Administrator • 6 Parents/Family Members	Commentors expressed support for how RIDE is clearly aligning policy with the RI Blueprint and Strategic Plan for MLL Success.	No Change Requested –
Across the regulations in multiple sections	• RITELL, MABE, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RI Education Collective, RISEAC, Warwick Teacher's Union • 4 Teachers • 1 EPP Faculty/Staff Member • 2 Community Members • 3 District Administrators • 1 Building Administrator • 6 Parents/Family Members	Commentors emphasized how the proposed regulatory language aims at aligning with current research and best practices to provide MLL students with high-quality instruction and access to the resources they need to succeed.	No Change Requested –

Theme 1: Overall Regulations

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change
Across the regulations in multiple sections	• RITELL, MABE, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RI Education Collective, RISEAC, Warwick Teacher's Union • 4 Teachers • 1 EPP Faculty/Staff Member • 2 Community Members • 3 District Administrators • 1 Building Administrator • 6 Parents/Family Members	Commentors emphasized how the proposed regulatory language reflects a commitment to addressing systemic inequities in schools.	No Change Requested –
Introduction and Authority (3.1)	• RI MLL/EL Advisory Council • RITELL	Commentors requested specificity in the regulatory language regarding the protection of students' rights to a public education regardless of immigration status.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders. Existing RI State Law R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-54-1, through R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-54-3 outlines the educational rights of students in the state of Rhode Island. A citation of the existing law was included.

Theme 1: Overall Regulations

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change
Across the regulations in multiple sections	• RITELL, MABE, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RI Education Collective, RISEAC, Warwick Teacher's Union • 4 Teachers • 1 EPP Faculty/Staff Member • 2 Community Members • 3 District Administrators • 1 Building Administrator • 6 Parents/Family Members	Commentors expressed support for how RIDE is clearly aligning policy with the RI Blueprint and Strategic Plan for MLL Success.	No Change Requested –
Definitions (3.2) Overall	• RITELL, MABE, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RISEAC, Rhode Island School Superintendents' Association (RISSA), Coalition for a Multilingual RI • 1 EPP Faculty/Staff • 4 District Administrators • 4 Parents/Family Members • 7 Teachers	Commentors requested more specificity in the regulatory language to address: - The implementation timeline - Roles and responsibilities - Length of required training	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders in clarifying requirements and adding further specifications where applicable on the implementation timeline, roles and responsibilities of LEAs and RIDE, and professional learning. For example, the regulations now clarify that awareness training will not exceed 15 hours and the implementation timeline has been extended. Further information about implementation timelines and technical assistance and support will be provided as part of RIDE's implementation plan.
	• 1 Teacher	One commentor urged RIDE to develop regulations that are as specific as possible since vague language leaves room for interpretation. Students deserve all the best.	No Change – RIDE is committed to creating clear guidance and supports for LEAs to implement the regulations consistently across the state.

Theme 1: Overall Regulations

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change
Related but outside of regulations under review	• 1 MLL Director	Commentors emphasized RIDE's efforts to review and change the ELP measure in the accountability system, underscoring the fact that the change will positively impact MLLs.	No Change Requested –
Introduction and Authority (3.1.A.2)	• RITELL • 1 MLL Director	Commentors asked for clarification around the removal of all references to the WIDA Consortium.	No Change – RIDE has approved the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards through the same approval process as all other state academic standards at the Council meeting of April 30, 2024. Further references to WIDA products have been removed from the regulatory language to preserve the timeliness of the regulations and avoid a regulatory review solely based on the eventuality the WIDA Consortium change names to its products.
Definitions (3.2.A.6)	• 2 District Administrators	Commentors advocated for a different calculation of the graduation rate related to Newcomers and Students with Limited and/or Interrupted Formal Schooling (SLIFE). They highlighted that the current calculation negatively impacts LEAs enrolling these groups of students and impacts the school and district accountability.	No Change – Accountability and graduation rate calculations do not pertain to the regulatory language under review. RIDE will record the concern for further review.

Theme 2: Multilingual Learner Programming

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change
Restructuring of Language Instruction Educational Programs (3.2, 3.2.A.5, 3.2.A.6, 3.5, 3.5.A.2, 3.8, 3.8.A.1, 3.10)	• National Association of English Learner Program Administrators (NAELPA), RITELL, Rhode Island College Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program (RIC TESOL Program), MABE, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RISSA, Parents Leading for Educational Equity (PLEE), RI Kids Count • 2 MLL Directors • 2 Community Members • 2 Teachers • 1 EPP Faculty/Staff	Commentors expressed support for the new restructuring and definitions of program models, specifically calling out: • Updated asset-based terminology • Framework for quality instruction, support, and access to resources • Focus on best practices, including content knowledge and inclusion of home language supports • Recognition of the need for centering students in decision-making and instructional practices One commentor expressed that the updated framework is crucial to providing MLLs with both language acquisition and access to the same opportunities for academic success as their peers.	No Change Requested –
Restructuring of Language Instruction Educational Programs (3.2, 3.2.A.5, 3.2.A.6, 3.5, 3.5.A.2, 3.8, 3.8.A.1, 3.10)	• 1 MLL Director • RI MLL/EL Advisory Council	Commentors expressed support for the removal of Collaborative English as a Second Language and Sheltered Instruction as program models.	No Change Requested –

Theme 2: Multilingual Learner Programming

Restructuring of Language Instruction Educational Programs (3.2, 3.2.A.5, 3.2.A.6, 3.5, 3.5.A.2, 3.8, 3.8.A.1, 3.10)	• 1 Teacher	Commentor requested maintaining the Sheltered Instruction program model.	No Change – To move forward with asset-based terminology and align with current research-based best practices, the final regulatory language maintains the removal of Sheltered Content Instruction from the list of program models.
Bilingual Language Programs (3.1; 3.2.A.6.a, 3.6, 3.10)	• RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, NAELPA, MABE, RITELL, Coalition for a Multilingual RI, PLEE, RI Kids Count • 1 District Administrator • 2 Teachers • 1 Community Member • 1 City Council Member • 2 EPP/Faculty Staff • 1 School Committee Member • 1 Parent/Family Member	Commentors requested clarity on LEA implementation or creation of bilingual program models based on enrollment, providing the example of a threshold number to prompt opening a bilingual program.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders to encourage high-incidence LEAs to consider opening BDL programs.
		Commentors requested clear guidance and alignment of standards for students in bilingual programs.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders by clarifying BDL programs to include partner language standards. In addition, RIDE will further respond to public comment by developing exemplary program model guidance and implementation supports for bilingual programs, as required by RIGL § 16-22-37.
Bilingual Language Programs (3.1; 3.2.A.6.a, 3.6, 3.10)	• Coalition for a Multilingual RI, PLEE, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RI Kids Count	Commentors expressed support for RIDE's inclusion of delineated language around expansion and implementation of bilingual instructional programs.	No Change Requested –
		Commentors mentioned that uplifting bilingual instructional programs reflects research-based best practices and extends benefits beyond academic achievement, empowering students to be future contributors to RI's economic and cultural landscape.	No Change Requested –
		Commentors supported the redesign of MLL Language Instruction Education Program (LIEP) models, streamlined from six different program models to two overarching approaches: Bilingual Programs and Content-Based Programs.	No Change Requested –

Theme 2: Multilingual Learner Programming

Bilingual Language Programs (3.1; 3.2.A.6.a, 3.6, 3.10)	• RI Kids Count, PLEE, Coalition for a Multilingual RI • 1 Teacher • 1 School Committee Member	Commentors advocated for RIDE to prioritize educator pipelines and professional development for bilingual teachers and to align the Bilingual and Dual Language certification to National Dual Language Education Teacher Preparation Standards.	No Change – Efforts to expand bilingual and dual language professional learning and educator pipelines will be addressed as part of RIDE's implementation plan.
Bilingual Language Programs (3.1; 3.2.A.6.a, 3.6, 3.10)	• PLEE	Commentors requested to inform families of bilingual programs at the LEA registration office.	No Change – This is related to LEA procedures and is outside of these regulations. LEAs are already required to inform families of all available program models. RIDE will provide further technical assistance and support to LEAs on communication with families regarding placement decisions.
Related but outside of regulations under review	• RI Kids Count, Coalition for a Multilingual RI • 1 Community Member • 1 Teacher	Commentors advocated for the passage of policies outside of these regulations that would advance Bilingual Education: • Dual Language Immersion Model Policy and Timeline law (R.I.G.L. § 16-22-37) • Support and Access to Bilingual Education (SABE) Act • Bilingual Dual Language and World Language Teacher Investment Act	No Change – These comments encourage RIDE to advocate for new legislative policy that exists outside of these regulations. RIDE will continue to develop bilingual education policy and programs.
Dedicated ELD (3.2, 3.2.A.5, 3.2.A.6, 3.8, 3.10)	• MABE	The organization requested removing the English Language Development component requirement from Dual Language Programs since, by design, Dual Language Programs already include instruction for proficiency and literacy in both English and a partner language.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to current research-based best practices. RIDE changed the requirement for Bilingual programs to provide that Dual Language programs are not required to have Dedicated ELD period but may include it based on programmatic needs.

Theme 2: Multilingual Learner Programming

Dedicated ELD (3.2, 3.2.A.5, 3.2.A.6, 3.8, 3.10)	• RI MLL/EL Advisory Council • 2 Teachers • 2 MLL Directors • 1 EPP/Faculty/Staff	Commentors expressed support for changes that include a Dedicated ELD period, stating that it is clearly defined in the regulations and that it is needed to secure this time in MLL students' daily schedules. In addition, commentors praised the explanation of updated research-based program models and lexical changes, including Dedicated ELD.	No Change Requested –
Dedicated ELD (3.2, 3.2.A.5, 3.2.A.6, 3.5.A.2, 3.8, 3.10)	• RITELL, MABE • 1 District Administrator • 1 Building Administrator • 2 MLL Directors	Commentors requested further guidance around scheduling, student grouping, flexibility, and implementation of ELD periods. Specifically, several commentors requested that Dedicated ELD period count as a secondary credit toward graduation, as this affects student scheduling, time to complete graduation requirements, and school/district accountability. In addition, commentors requested that RIDE clarify pathways to graduation that include ELD in CTE, credit recovery, GED, and community college matriculation.	No Change – These comments pertain primarily to regulations and policies outside the scope of these MLL regulations, particularly the Secondary Regulations (200-RICR-20-10-2) and RIDE's federally approved accountability plan. As RIDE continues with the implementation of these regulations, further supports for program models, scheduling, and implementation will be developed and included in the RIDE implementation plan. RIDE will review how existing supports can be tailored towards supporting MLLs, such as leveraging existing scheduling and postsecondary pathway supports already provided via the Secondary Regulations implementation plan to ensure that MLLs have equitable access to college and career opportunities.
Dually Identified Students (3.7)	• RI MLL/EL Advisory Council • 1 MLL Director • 3 Parent/Family Members • 2 Special Ed Director	Commentors requested consideration of and guidance on scheduling for Differently Abled MLLs and MLLs who receive interventions.	No Change – For all program models, scheduling and implementation will be further developed and included in the RIDE implementation plan. Differently abled MLLs, special education, and MTSS are already considered and described in the regulations.
Program Standards and Student Placement Standards (3.5 and 3.6)	• RISEAC	Commentors requested listing more data around Differently Abled Students into the regulatory sections of Program Standards and Student Placement Standards.	No Change – The regulations include that LEAs use data from Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Social Emotional Learning, Special Education, and targeted interventions across the Program Standards (3.5) and Student Placement Standards (3.6) sections. In addition, RIDE included Dually Identified Student Rights in another section (3.7).

Theme 2: Multilingual Learner Programming

Program Models (3.10)	• RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RITELL • 2 EPP Faculty/Staff	Commentors emphasized support for the proposed inclusion of co-teaching as this approach will benefit all students in the Content-based program models.	No Change Requested –

Theme 3: Ongoing Professional Learning

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change
Ongoing Professional Learning (3.12)	• Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals (RIFTHP), Woonsocket Teachers' Guild, Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance, Warwick Teachers' Union, RITELL, ExcEL Leadership Academy, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council • 1 School Committee Member • 3 Teachers • 2 District Administrators • 1 Building Administrator • 2 EPP Faculty/Staff	Commentors requested further details and flexibility around time and financial investment of educators, LEAs, and EPPs to meet the awareness and proficiency requirements. Commentors stressed the full plate of teachers with this being identified as an additional requirement.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from teachers, the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders in a way that recognizes and provides flexibility to help address some of the concerns raised by stakeholders, while also ultimately maintaining the intent of the professional learning requirements to help ensure that MLLs receive quality instruction. RIDE responded to these comments in several ways. • First, RIDE has extended the full implementation deadline by one year, with school year 2025-26 being a planning year and full implementation of the professional learning requirements moved to 2030-31. RIDE provided an additional option that will allow LEAs to seek Commissioner's variance for an additional two years. • Also, in section 3.12, RIDE added that the awareness training will be no more than 15 hours. • In addition, RIDE will offer awareness training at no cost to educators/LEAs, with the encouragement to integrate it into existing PD schedules where applicable. The time investment to complete proficiency may vary according to the pathway; however, the depth of competencies is aligned across pathways and the pathway options provide flexibility for educators and districts. • Timelines for Educator Program Providers were also subsequently extended by a year in response to public comment to provide more flexibility and time for implementation. For example, the timeline for EPPS to demonstrate their programs meet awareness requirements was extended from June 30, 2028, to June 30, 2029.
	• RIC TESOL Program, MABE, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, PLEE, RI Education Collective • 4 Teachers • 1 MLL Director • 1 Building Administrator • 2 Labor Representatives	Commentors expressed support for awareness and proficiency requirements and requested clearer distinctions and alignments to specific roles.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders. RIDE provided additional clarity on awareness and proficiency requirements. For awareness requirements, RIDE specified that all certified personnel who have not met proficiency requirements must meet awareness requirements. In addition, RIDE restructured section 3.12 to provide further explanation and clarity on the options for meeting proficiency requirements.

Theme 3: Ongoing Professional Learning

Ongoing Professional Learning (3.12)	• RITELL • 2 EPP Faculty/Staff	Commentors requested further clarification of competencies, timeline, and work with EPPs.	Change – RIDE specified additional timelines for educators, LEAs, and EPPs regarding awareness and proficiency requirements. In addition, RIDE included that awareness training will be provided by RIDE at no cost to educators and will be no more than 15 hours (3.12.F.3.c). RIDE has committed to engaging with the RI MLL/EL Advisory Council and other stakeholders on the development of MLL competencies on which awareness and proficiency are based. Further clarification on technical assistance and support will be provided in the RIDE implementation plan.
	• RIC TESOL Program, PLEE • 2 EPP Faculty/Staff	Commentors expressed support for further opportunities to equip all educators with increased strategies, skills, readiness, tools, and training around working with MLLs and Differently Abled MLLs.	No Change Requested –
Ongoing Professional Learning (3.12)	• MABE, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RIC TESOL Program, ExcEL Leadership Academy • 2 EPP Faculty/Staff	Commentors requested that RIDE simplify or combine certification options, specifically by streamlining the new Integrated Language and Content Certification Extension, along with various recommendations, including: • Remove or redesign to align with MLL Coach professional development • Require Integrated Language and Content educators to have full ESOL certification and combine the program accreditation. • Clarify how this certification extension is different from the endorsement.	No Change – Upon reviewing public comment, RIDE determined that the final proposed regulations will maintain four separate ways that an educator may demonstrate proficiency to enable them to provide Integrated Language and Content Instruction: ESOL or BDL certification, Integrated Content Certification Extension, MLL Endorsement, or completing proficiency professional learning. This determination is based off additional comments and input received that educators and LEAs need flexibility to plan, select, and demonstrate required proficiency, given the unique needs of each LEA and each educator, as well as other comments that indicated support for RIDE's approach to increasing awareness and proficiency for personnel working with MLLs. RIDE clarified that all pathways must meet a minimum level of proficiency, ensuring a quality education for MLL students. RIDE's approach intends to provide flexibility and maintain rigorous requirements in service of quality education for MLL students. RIDE plans on engaging EPPs, LEAs, and educators as part of the implementation of these regulations to support the development of the various proficiency pathways, aligned to each of the four potential ways to demonstrate proficiency.

Theme 3: Ongoing Professional Learning

	• PLEE	Commentors requested RIDE to require LEAs to annually report educator participation rates in professional learning and its measurable impact.	No Change – The section on Professional Learning under RIDE's Responsibilities (3.12.F.5) includes that RIDE will annually report the percentage of each LEA's educators that meet these requirements. In addition, RIDE's Assessment Data Portal and the publicly available School Report Card site provide data on student growth and proficiency. As part of the implementation plan, RIDE will evaluate the impact of the professional learning requirements on student outcomes.
	• RIFTHP, RISSA, Woonsocket Teachers' Guild • 1 Teacher	Commentors requested that LEAs have scheduling flexibility; for example, the use of half-day student release to provide time for professional development.	No Change – This is related to LEA school year calendars and scheduling, which is outside the scope of the MLL regulations under review. LEAs are already offered the opportunity by statute to "establish a school year that is the equivalent of one hundred eighty (180) days" by submitting "a detailed school day plan and proposed school calendar" to RIDE in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-2-2(a)(1), and could use that option for the purpose of effectuating compliance with the proposed MLL regulations, assuming the plan and calendar were academically sound and fiscally efficient. Therefore, no change is necessary to align the MLL regulations with existing law.
	• Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance, RIFTHP	Commentors questioned RIDE's legal authority to impose professional learning requirements.	No Change – RIDE confirmed with legal counsel that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education (Council) possesses the legal authority to implement the professional learning requirements as articulated in the proposed regulations. As per R.I. General Laws §§ 16-54-1 and 16-54-3 (quoted infra in full), the General Assembly has specifically authorized the Council to establish criteria to provide "limited English proficient students" with "appropriate programs and services which will make their educational opportunities equal to their English dominant peers." Moreover, the Council has requisite authority pursuant to the more general delegation of authority under R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-60-4 (quoted infra). Therefore, no changes were made to the proposed final regulations.

Theme 4: Personnel

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change
Personnel Definitions (3.2.A.4) and MLL Administrator and Personnel Requirements (3.11)	• RITELL, RIC TESOL Program • 1 EPP Faculty/Staff • 1 MLL Director	Commentors requested clarity in the personnel definitions within section 3.2.A.4 of the regulations, noting that it contains unclear language on certain requirements of certain positions, including Bilingual and Dual Language teachers, and MLL administrators.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector clarifying the roles of personnel. Certification and professional learning requirements have been further aligned to roles, in addition to clarifying the requirements for the school and community liaison's role.
	• RITELL, MABE, Coalition for a Multilingual RI, PLEE	Commentors requested a school and community liaison for all districts, rather than just high incidence. Commentors expressed that schools benefit from having more than the one required School and Community Liaison.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders extending the requirement to all districts. This change reverts to prior language in the regulations, reflecting commentors' prioritization of the school and community liaison role. This role may be combined with other roles in the district.
	• PLEE	Commentors requested to add a student liaison position, to be held by a current student.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from parents and community stakeholders intentionally including the role of a student liaison as an encouraged mechanism for soliciting student input to MLL programming and school improvement efforts.
	• RITELL, MABE, PLEE • 1 District Administrator	Commentors requested more specification on the certification required to teach in bilingual programs.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders by including a paragraph on the role and certification required by teachers in a bilingual program.
Personnel Definitions (3.2.A.4), and MLL Administrator and Personnel Requirements (3.11)	• PLEE, Progreso Latino, RITELL, MABE • 1 Student	Commentors expressed support for the school and community liaisons, stating that this role is very important for families and students.	No Change Requested --
	• RI Kids Count, PLEE, Coalition for a Multilingual RI • 1 Student	Commentors expressed support for bilingual counselors.	No Change Requested --

Theme 4: Personnel

	• Coalition for a Multilingual RI, MABE, PLEE, RITELL • 2 Teachers • 1 Community Member	Commentors expressed support for the inclusion of highly qualified staff as being a strength of the regulations, including but not limited to the school-community liaison position.	No Change Requested --
Requirements (3.11), Personnel Definitions (3.2.A.4), MLL Administrator and Personnel Requirements (3.11)	• RIFTHP, RISSA, Warwick Teachers' Union, Woonsocket Teachers' Guild • 2 Teachers • 1 Community Member	Commentors expressed concern around funding for additional teachers, paraprofessionals, and counselors.	No Change – Funding distribution does not pertain to the regulatory language under review. RIDE will continue to seek additional funding opportunities and support LEAs. In addition, under current regulations, LEAs should be leveraging existing funding to support personnel in alignment with prior instructions to LEAs on their use of MLL allocated funding within the state funding formula.
	• 1 Community Member	Commentors requested that schools with high and medium incidence student population should have certified professional translators and interpreters in languages needed for formal meetings, such as special education meetings, parent teacher conferences, school committee meetings, formal evaluations, and meetings with administrators.	No Change – Current proposed regulatory language indicates that any interaction of the school with parents, including the list provided, must be carried out in the parents' preferred language.
	• PLEE	Commentors requested that the regulatory language mandates, rather than recommends LEAs to employ at least one bilingual school counselor.	No Change – LEAs are already required to hire the necessary amount of school counselors to support all students. As certified personnel, all counselors will need to meet the awareness level of competencies for working with MLLs. In addition, RIDE included the recommendation (3.11.G) that high and medium incidence LEAs employ school counselors who are proficient in at least one of the predominant languages of the school's or LEA's MLL population.

Theme 5: Identification, Assessment, and Reclassification

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change

Theme 5: Identification, Assessment, and Reclassification

Language Identification of Potential Multilingual Students (3.3)	• RI Kids Count	Commentors requested that Early Learning (Infancy to K) identification and program development be included in the proposed regulations.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from stakeholders, with specific language extending to pre-kindergarten.
		Commentors requested the addition in the regulatory language of the pre-kindergarten age range.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from community stakeholders, clearly indicating the pre-kindergarten age range where pertinent. For example, RIDE added that Language Instruction Education Programs may extend to pre-kindergarten (3.2.A.5.a) and that LEAs shall ensure regular communication around family engagement with MLL families, including with pre-kindergarten families (3.11.F). In addition, RIDE added that LEAs must include pre-kindergarten personnel and support staff in comprehensive professional learning plans (3.12.B).
		Commentors requested the expansion of access to high-quality Early Learning and development programs for MLLs and the expansion of policies to provide developmentally appropriate multilingual instruction.	No Change – The current proposed regulatory language includes data collection from pre-kindergarten to expand LIEP bilingual programming.
Initial Assessment for Program Placement (3.4), (3.4.A), (3.4 & 3.14)	• RISEAC, Coalition for a Multilingual RI • 1 District Administrator	Commentors requested to factor in Special Education Individualized Education Plan (IEP) when placing students in LIEPs.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders by adding in the section Dually Identified Student Rights (3.7) that "Dually identified MLLs must receive the entirety of services to which they are entitled according to 20 U.S.C. § 1400, et seq., 34 C.F.R. 300.1, et seq., and 200-RICR-20-30-61, et seq." In addition, the regulations already include special education as a consideration in Program Standards (3.5) and Student Placement Standards (3.6).
		Commentors requested the consideration to list more data around Differently Abled Students into Program Standards and Student Placement Standards.	No Change - The regulations include that LEAs use data from Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Social Emotional Learning, Special Education, and targeted interventions across the Program Standards (3.5) and Student Placement Standards (3.6) sections. In addition, RIDE included Dually Identified Student Rights in section (3.7).

Theme 5: Identification, Assessment, and Reclassification

Student Placement (3.6), (3.6.A.8), (3.6.B.4)	• MABE, Coalition for a Multilingual RI • 1 Parent/Family Member	Commentors requested to include assessment options in students' home languages and in bilingual program in the partner languages.	No Change – RIDE allows for standardized state assessment completion in the student's native language if appropriate and when such an assessment is available and deemed as beneficial to the student by a team of educators.
	• MABE, RI Kids Count, RITELL, RISEAC, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council • 1 District Administrator • 1 Teacher • 1 Community Member	Commentors requested that trauma-informed, Social Emotional Learning, Newcomers, Students with Limited and/or Interrupted Formal Education and special education considerations are prioritized when placing students in a program.	No Change – RIDE already provides support to LEAs indicating the need for a team decision when placing a student in a LIEP. Upon the passage of the proposed regulations, more technical assistance and support will be made available to LEAs.
		Commentors requested guidance around Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Multilingual Learners.	No Change – Upon the passage of the proposed regulations, more technical assistance and support will be made available. In addition, RIDE includes MTSS in the following sections of these regulations: (3.2) (3.5.A.11) (3.5.A.14).
		Commentors requested further standardized guidance and tools for meaningful family and student engagement in understanding assessment and monitoring data.	No Change – These regulations already require that LEAs include MLL parents in school improvement planning and district strategic planning, which by nature includes reviewing assessment and monitoring performance data. Upon the passage of the proposed regulations, more technical assistance and support will be made available.
Initial Assessment for Program Placement (3.4), Student Placement Standards (3.6)	• 1 MLL Director • 2 District Administrators	Commentors requested guidance around grading policy for MLLs and for Newcomers' intake and placement process.	No Change – These are LEA level policies and do not fall in statewide regulations. Upon the passage of the proposed regulations, more technical assistance and support, specifically around Newcomers, will be made available.
Exit criteria cut score and processes not part of the regulations under review	• RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RISEAC • 1 Teacher	Commentors requested that the English Language Proficiency exit criteria take special education, class grades, and teacher recommendations into consideration.	No Change – RIDE already provides support to LEAs indicating the need for team decisions when exiting a student from a LIEP. RIDE updates the Identification and Reclassification document upon approval of procedural changes. RIDE's State ESSA Plan includes exit criteria and processes.

Theme 6: Implementation

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change
Multiple sections across the document, including Time Requirements, Instructional Program Models, Personnel, Ongoing Professional Learning	• Warwick Teachers' Union, Woonsocket Teachers' Guild, RIFTHP, Pawtucket Teacher's Alliance • 3 District Administrators • 2 Teachers	Commentors requested an extended timeline for implementation, naming that: • LEAs have already confirmed budgets for the 2025-26 school year. • District-wide professional development requires planning and funding. • Adequate time and planning will support more successful implementation.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector and community stakeholders. RIDE extended the timeline by one year to include that the 2025-26 school year is a planning year and full implementation is required by the 2030-31 school year. In addition, RIDE understands that LEAs may need time and support over the planning year with understanding how MLL State Funding Aid may be used in meeting these requirements.
Time Requirements (3.8)	• RITELL • 2 District Administrators	Commentors requested flexibility in meeting the implementation timeline through a waiver.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector and community stakeholders. RIDE added in section 3.12 that if an LEA has demonstrated progress but has not met full implementation by 2030-31, that LEA may request a waiver for up to two years. The waiver would be at the discretion of the Commissioner and must include an action plan for how the LEA will meet the full requirements of the regulations should a waiver be issued.

Theme 6: Implementation

Overall, and Ongoing Professional Learning (3.12)	• RI Education Collective, RISEAC • 1 Former Superintendent	Commentors expressed support for and urgency of the regulations moving forward, recognizing that: • There is a cost, but the cost of inaction is greater. • With the 5-year runway, LEAs can reevaluate their current resource allocation to determine where shifts in budget and personnel may be necessary and begin building capacity. • While the regulations pose challenges to LEAs, the needs of our students come first and the proactive response in these regulations cannot wait.	No Change Requested –
Overall	• 1 Teacher	Commentor expressed their personal willingness to engage in and support RIDE's implementation process by providing an educator's perspective.	No Change Requested -
Time Requirements (3.8.D)	• RITELL	Commentor requested further details on the performance-based waivers for LEAs.	No Change – The language around performance-based waivers states that a school must make adequate yearly progress to apply for a waiver request. The Commissioner shall review the academic performance of MLLs, school's program models, and adherence to the regulations. RIDE will maintain this language in support of positive student outcomes.

Theme 7: Dually Identified Student Rights

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change

Theme 7: Dually Identified Student Rights

Dually Identified Student Rights (3.7)	• RISEAC, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council • 2 Parent/Family Members • 1 MLL Director	Commentors requested further explanation around services for dually identified MLLs, specifically on the coordination of instructional supports and educational experiences of MLLs with IEPs.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders. In the section on Dually Identified Student Rights, RIDE expanded the sentence stating that students must receive the entirety of services to which they are entitled. Included in the expansion, RIDE added the citation to the IDEA statute and regulations and the RI Regulations.
	• RISEAC, RITELL, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council • 1 EPP Faculty/Staff • 1 MLL Director	Commentors expressed support for the added language around the rights of dually identified MLLs and the need to appropriately identify and serve this student population.	No Change Requested –
	• 2 District Administrators • 2 MLL Directors	Commentors requested guidance around scheduling and serving dually identified students, especially those with significant needs.	No Change – This request does not fall in the purview of these regulations. Working with MLLs who are also differently abled requires flexible, individualized approaches to best meet the needs of students in their specific contexts. RIDE is actively developing a statewide blueprint for services and supports for all differently-abled students, which will include supporting MLLs who are also identified as differently-abled students.
	• RITELL, MABE	Commentors requested that students be able to access special education services in their home language.	No Change – This request does not fall in the purview of these regulations. The IDEA statute and regulations include this language.

Theme 8: Parent and Student Involvement

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change

Theme 8: Parent and Student Involvement

Language Instruction Educational Programming and LEA Strategic and School Improvement Planning (3.19, 3.19.E)	• PLEE, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, Coalition for a Multilingual RI	Commentors expressed support and request for increasing the structured opportunities for listening to MLL students' voices, including MLL student representation in strategic and school improvement planning. Specifically, commentors named the importance of MLL student contributions in planning and decision-making structures, including opportunities to express academic, social, and emotional needs.	Change – The final regulatory language responds to feedback from the education sector, parents, and community stakeholders. RIDE made several additions to add MLL Students in section 3.22, beginning with adding students to the title of the section. In addition, RIDE clearly called out MLL Students as participants in LEA strategic planning and school improvement processes. Furthermore, RIDE added that schools are encouraged to solicit student input from MLL student-led advisories, mentors, and liaisons.
Parent Involvement (3.20) Multilingual Parent and Educator Input in LEA Strategic and School Improvement Planning (3.22, 3.22.B)	• PLEE • 1 District Administrator • 1 MLL Director • 1 EPP Faculty/Staff • 1 Parent/Family Member	Commentors expressed support for the emphasis in the regulations on the need for certified interpreters and translated documents to ensure accurate and culturally sensitive communication with MLL families that includes understanding of educational terminology.	No Change Requested –
Overall	• PLEE • 1 Community member	Commentors expressed support for the overall approach in the regulations that recognize the value of MLL families' cultural backgrounds and experiences as assets to the wider educational community.	No Change Requested –
	• MABE, PLEE • 1 Teacher • 1 MLL Director	Commentors expressed support for the overall approach in the regulations toward increased equity, access, and collaboration between LEAs, schools and families, recognizing families as invaluable contributors to improving educational outcomes for MLLs.	No Change Requested –

Theme 8: Parent and Student Involvement

	• MABE, PLEE, RI Education Collective, Coalition for a Multilingual RI • 1 Teacher • 1 MLL Director	Commentors expressed support for the overall approach in the regulations toward meaningfully engaging families.	No Change Requested -
Reporting Student Progress (3.13)	• PLEE, Coalition for a Multilingual RI • 2 Teachers • 1 Community Member	Commentors expressed support for providing families with reports of student progress in the family's home/native language.	No Change Requested -
Multilingual Parent, Student, and Educator Input in LEA Strategic and School Improvement Planning (3.22)	• PLEE • 1 Teacher	Commentors expressed support for including families in strategic planning.	No Change Requested -
	• PLEE • 1 MLL Director	Commentors requested further accessibility to schools and meetings through considering scheduling at convenient times for families and providing provisions such as transportation, childcare, and compensation.	No Change – This request falls outside of these regulations as the scheduling of meetings is an LEA decision. However, these regulations include a School and Community Liaison role, which includes supporting families with involvement and access to LEAs and schools.
Multilingual Parent, Student, and Educator Input in LEA Strategic and School Improvement Planning (3.22)	• RI Kids Count, PLEE • 1 Teacher • 1 MLL Director	Commentors requested enhanced access for families to accountability reports and accessibility to data and implementation progress.	No Change – This request falls outside of these regulations as it pertains to reporting through the statewide accountability system and school report card. However, several measures provided in these regulations address enhancing families' access to data and accountability. For example, these regulations require LEAs to include family and student representation on LEA strategic planning and school improvement planning processes, which include response to data and accountability. In addition, these regulations require that all LEAs have at least one person to serve as a School and Community Liaison, who shall develop a written parent involvement plan describing outreach and information in families' home/native languages that includes the LEA's responsibility to provide translation and/or interpretation services to support parent involvement.

Theme 9: Responsibilities of RIDE

Topic & Regulation Section	Commentor's Role	Summary of Comment	Suggested Change to Language, No Change Requested, or Rationale for No Change

Theme 9: Responsibilities of RIDE

Overall	• PLEE • 1 MLL Director	Commentors expressed support for RIDE and LEAs to collaborate and enact systems of support to improve outcomes for MLL students.	No Change Requested
Ongoing Professional Learning (3.12)	• 1 Teacher	Commentors expressed support for clear deadlines for LEAs and EPPs.	No Change Requested –
Definitions (3.2.A.3)	• RI MLL/EL Advisory Council, RISEAC, RITELL • 1 MLL Director	Commentors expressed support for low, medium, and high incidence LEAs based on MLL students as expanded categorizations of LEAs.	No Change Requested –
Responsibilities of RIDE (3.17)	• RI Kids Count • 1 Teacher	Commentors requested that RIDE provide annual updates and data on implementation for each LEA.	No Change - Existing regulatory language already includes that RIDE will annually report the percentage of each LEA's educators that meet these requirements.
	• 1 Building Administrator	Commentors requested clear guidance from RIDE on HQIM ELD Curriculum.	No Change – RIDE will continue to promote and focus on implementation of high-quality curricular materials as part of its state-wide efforts, including MLLs in all content areas. RIDE will provide further technical assistance and support regarding selection of approved HQIM for ELD.
Review of Regulations (3.24)	• RITELL	Commentors requested that regulation revisions should occur every 3 years as opposed to every 5 years.	No Change – These regulations outline a 5-year implementation, plus the addition of a planning year in 2025-26. RIDE believes a 5-year time frame for reviewing regulations is consistent with best practices and did not feel that an earlier time frame was appropriate. As RIDE implements these regulations, RIDE is open to revising the regulations earlier if changes are needed.

Theme 9: Responsibilities of RIDE

Ongoing Professional Learning (3.12)	• Coalition for a Multilingual RI, RI MLL/EL Advisory Council • 2 EPP Faculty/Staff	Commentors requested that regulations include RIDE deadlines aligned with LEA and EPP deadlines for implementation. One commenter specified that RIDE deadlines should be met at least 1 year prior to LEA and EPP implementation.	No Change – The RIDE Responsibilities section of Professional Learning (3.12) states that starting in school year 2026-27, RIDE will annually report the percentage of LEA educators that meet these requirements. For RIDE to meet this internal deadline, it must expediently complete the following, stated in the same section: • Articulate MLL Competencies for the awareness and proficiency requirements, providing detailed differences between the two. • Publish a list of approved awareness and proficiency training providers. RIDE will articulate anticipated timelines for these items in addition to other key supports as part of its implementation plan.
Ongoing Professional Learning (3.12)	• 2 Teachers • 1 EPP Faculty/Staff • 1 District Administrator	Commentors requested a list of research-based instructional practices (3.12.F.1.a).	No Change – RIDE provides resources and research-based lists on the MLL page of the RIDE website. The MLL implementation plan will include further research-based resources.
Definitions (3.2.A.3)	• 1 MLL Director • 1 Teacher	Commentors requested clarification on RIDE's support for high incidence LEAs, with one suggestion to create a 4th incidence category: >50%.	No Change – Upon reviewing federal categorizations and its own data, as well as other public comment, RIDE determined that the current updated categorization definitions were sufficient for LEA incidences, and did not feel that a 4th designation was warranted to differentiate high-incidence LEAs further in a way that would lead to material differentiation of requirements within the regulations and supports.