

Statement on California Proposition 58

Alexandria, VA (18 October 2016) – TESOL International Association has always strongly supported instructional programs that incorporate native language development, such as dual immersion programs and bilingual education. For nearly 20 years, however, English learners (ELs) in California have been denied access to these programs by [California Proposition 227](#), a 1998 law prohibiting public school instruction in any language other than English. Currently, 1.4 million ELs (22% of all students) in California are in English-only immersion programs rather than dual-language programs that provide instruction in both a student’s native language and English. This November, voters have the opportunity to repeal this law by voting “yes” on [California Proposition 58](#), a measure that TESOL strongly supports.

The passage of Proposition 58 would enable school districts to meet the needs of native and nonnative-English-speaking students by authorizing them to establish dual-language immersion programs. More than half the world’s population speaks more than one language. Providing bilingual education programs allow students to become culturally competent and economically competitive global citizens. Workers who speak more than one language have an annual income \$7,000 higher than their monolingual peers. In an effort to further recognize these bilingual and multilingual students, TESOL, in conjunction with the [American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages](#), the [National Association of Bilingual Education](#), and the [National Council of State Supervisors for Languages](#), helped to create the guidelines for the [Seal of Biliteracy](#), an award given by school systems in 22 states and the District of Columbia that recognizes a student’s high level mastery of two or more languages.

TESOL [understands](#) that no single program or methodology works in all contexts and has long advocated for the right of local school districts, teachers, and parents to determine which English language programs are the most beneficial for their students. If approved, Proposition 58 would enable parents and guardians of ELs to decide which language acquisition program would best fit the needs of their child. Additionally, school districts would be required to engage with community members to discuss how ELs should be taught, giving all stakeholders a significant role in the education of their children.

As TESOL continues to support bilingual instruction in classrooms around the world, it is optimistic that Proposition 58 will offer the most comprehensive and effective educational experiences for English learners and teachers across California.