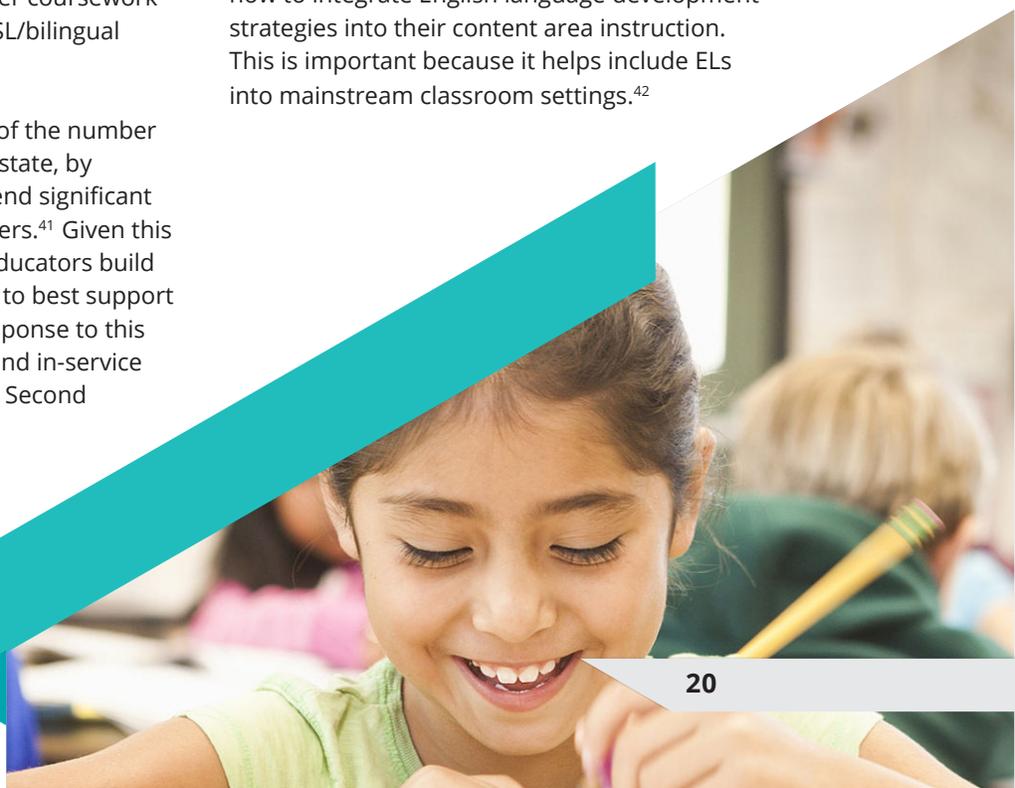


# EL Personnel: Recruitment, Retention and Evaluation

The Illinois educational landscape is well aware that the shortage of bilingual teachers is of great concern, particularly since ELs are one of the fastest-growing groups of students. Some school districts have implemented innovative strategies to grow their own bilingual education teachers. Some have career training programs in high school, which incentivize youth to enter education. Others have collaborations with universities where students are able to enroll immediately after high school and are offered incentives to pursue educational licensure. Many school districts collaborate with universities to offer coursework so their teachers can obtain the ESL/bilingual endorsement.

In addition, given the vast growth of the number of young ELs in more areas of the state, by necessity these students often spend significant time with general education teachers.<sup>41</sup> Given this situation, it is imperative that all educators build their knowledge and skills on how to best support this population. One particular response to this need is to encourage pre-service and in-service teachers to pursue an English as a Second

Language (ESL) state endorsement. The ESL endorsement requires six semester courses but does not require proficiency in a language other than English or passing any type of state test. Districts have provided professional development in specialized language instruction, like sheltered instruction. This type of training provides best practices on how to make instruction in English comprehensible through scaffolding and instructional methods specially designed for second language learning. Sheltered instruction also helps teachers learn how to integrate English language development strategies into their content area instruction. This is important because it helps include ELs into mainstream classroom settings.<sup>42</sup>



The state of Illinois has a great need for the following:

- 1 Increasing the number of general educators and school leaders to pursue the ESL endorsement, which does not require being bilingual. General education teachers who have an ESL endorsement will have the necessary specialized knowledge and skills to support their ELs' second language acquisition, although they are not bilingual; and
- 2 Fostering multiple pathways to increase the number of educators with the bilingual education endorsement, which does require passing a language proficiency test.

In 2018 the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) conducted an analysis on the state's teacher shortage. The resulting Teach Illinois report showed that shortages in bilingual education were among the most pronounced in the state, along with special education and STEM fields.<sup>43</sup> While the report recognized the great need for bilingual/ESL educators, little has been done to address the issue. ISBE proposed some solutions

and actions to address the situation are underway that are dependent on the state budget.

To better understand how district and school administrators are dealing with the shortage, the Latino Policy Forum conducted a survey with more than 100 administrators across the state. The majority of respondents (93 percent) indicated they have experienced a bilingual/ESL teacher shortage within the last three years.

While this handbook explores and promotes best practices for ELs, this cannot be fully realized without a long-term commitment from state government agencies to invest in the future pipeline of bilingual education and ESL educators.

## Qualified Staff to Serve ELs

In Illinois, administrators who supervise programs for ELs have a set of required qualifications and responsibilities. District and school administrators who supervise EL programs, evaluate bilingual education teachers and organize parental involvement activities must have specialized skills. Knowledge of federal and state laws that guide EL programs, research and theories of bilingual education and language skills to communicate with parents who are not proficient in English are important prerequisites. In districts serving large numbers of ELs (over 200), the ability to speak the language of the majority of ELs is required by law. EL Program Directors often evaluate instruction that is conducted in students' native language, and guide districts when adopting instructional materials in languages other than English and for ESL. Below are excerpts from 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25 (Educator Licensure) and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and requirements of 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.783 (Requirements for Administrators of Bilingual Education Programs).

“Any person designated to administer either a TBE or a TPI program enrolling 200 or more ELs, must hold a valid administrative or a supervisory endorsement issued on a professional educator license by the State Board of Education.” Administrators supervising Bilingual Education programs must hold a Bilingual Education Endorsement (which requires passing a target language proficiency assessment). Listed below are the specific courses required for the endorsement.

## Transitional Bilingual Education

A person designated to administer a transitional bilingual education program shall:

**Hold a bilingual education endorsement issued pursuant to Section 1.781 of this Part; or**

**Hold the English as a new language endorsement issued pursuant to Section 1.782 of this Part, with a language designation; or**

**Present evidence of having completed 18 semester hours distributed among the following content:**

- 1 Foundations of bilingual education
- 2 Assessment of the bilingual student
- 3 Methods and materials for teaching ELs in bilingual programs
- 4 Methods and materials for teaching English as a Second Language
- 5 Cross-cultural studies for teaching ELs

Either linguistics (including English and non-English phonology and syntax) or bilingualism and reading shall be required in instances in which the distribution of coursework among each of the five areas in subsection (a)(1)(C) of this Section does not total 18 semester hours. In addition, state law requires 100 field experience hours conducted in bilingual education classrooms with licensed teachers who hold a bilingual education endorsement.

In cases where administrators are serving students speaking multiple languages and where TPI programs are implemented, they must also have preparation that can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. Specific options outlined:

### Transitional Program of Instruction

A person designated to administer a transitional program of instruction shall:

**Hold the bilingual education endorsement issued pursuant to Section 1.781 of this Part; or**

**Hold the English as a second language endorsement issued pursuant to Section 1.782 of this Part; or**

**Hold the English as a new language endorsement issued pursuant to Section 1.782 of this Part; or**

**Present evidence of having completed the coursework enumerated in subsection (a)(1)(C) of this Section, subject to the provision of subsection (a)(2).**

A person designated to administer a TBE or TPI program in a district with fewer than 200 TBE/TPI students shall be exempt from all but the requirement for an administrative or a supervisory endorsement issued on a professional educator license, provided that he or she annually completes a minimum of eight hours of professional development. An assurance that this requirement has been met shall be provided annually in a school district's application for funding. Documentation for this professional development activity shall be made available to a representative of the State Board of Education upon request.

A person who has been assigned to administer a TPI program in a district where the number of students eligible for bilingual education reaches 200, shall become subject to the requirements for administrative licensure and either ESL or Bilingual Education endorsement at the beginning of the fourth school year in which the eligible population equals or exceeds 200 or more students. That is, each individual may continue to serve for the first three school years on the credentials that qualified him or her to administer the program.

## Bilingual Teacher Licensure and Endorsement

Bilingual education teachers in Illinois must be proficient in English and a language other than English that is a State-approved bilingual education endorsement language. Teachers must pass a State language proficiency exam in addition to taking the 18 semester hours to earn a bilingual education endorsement. The language proficiency must be at a level that allows the teacher to conduct instruction and assessments in the language and therefore must have oral and literacy proficiency in academic language. Additionally, teachers who graduated from teacher preparation programs outside the United States must pass a State-administered English proficiency exam.

The Bilingual Education endorsement consists of 18 semester hours of study in specific content (Foundations of bilingual education; Assessment of the bilingual student; Methods and materials for teaching ELs in bilingual programs; Methods and materials for teaching English as a Second Language; and Cross-cultural studies for teaching ELs.) The coursework is offered as part of an undergraduate or graduate teacher-preparation program in most universities and colleges in the state.

State law requires that bilingual education be implemented in preschools and early childhood centers. Therefore, school districts must ensure that they have qualified bilingual education teachers to serve their young English learners, whether in school or community-based settings. Bilingual education teachers must understand research and best practices, cultural diversity, linguistics, instructional strategies and how to design assessments in multiple languages. For a complete listing of requirements see 23 Illinois Administrative Code 228, Subtitle A, Subchapter f, Part 228.35.



### Illinois Licensed Teacher

Must pass target language test



### Must take 18 semester hours in specific content and must accrue 100 field experience hours

Bilingual Methods must be one of the courses



### Can also be ESL endorsed

ESL Methods can be substituted for the elective

## English as a Second Language Endorsement

The English as a Second Language endorsement does not require proficiency in a second language. The endorsement requires specific coursework taken in teacher-preparation programs at the undergraduate or graduate level.

For the ESL endorsement, Illinois state requires 18 semester hours distributed among the following content:

- 1 Linguistics
- 2 Theoretical Foundations of Teaching ESL
- 3 Assessment of the Bilingual Student
- 4 Methods and Materials for Teaching English as a Second Language
- 5 Cross-Cultural Studies for Teaching Limited-English-Proficient Students
- 6 Either Methods and Materials for Teaching ELs in Bilingual Programs or Foundations of Bilingual Education can be taken in instances in which the distribution of coursework among each of the five areas in subsection (a)(1)(C) of this section does not total 18 semester hours. In addition, state law requires 100 field experience hours conducted in ESL classrooms with licensed teachers who hold an ESL endorsement.

Some districts have formed collaborations with Institutions of Higher Education to offer the coursework through cohorts delivered on school sites or online using professional-development funding to incentivize general education teachers to pursue the ESL endorsement. Over time a school district can increase the number of teachers and support staff who have the ESL endorsement and be in a better position to provide extended and comprehensive specialized language instruction for ELs.

## Teacher Recruitment

Illinois, like many states around the country, is experiencing a teacher shortage, which is especially acute in the availability of licensed and endorsed bilingual education teachers. Teacher recruitment efforts must begin early in the season with the intention of having all positions filled by the subsequent start of the school year. Strategies include:

- 1 Partnering with IHEs Teacher Preparation Programs to facilitate student teacher placements for bilingual candidates
- 2 Recruiting students who graduate in December (and in March for universities/colleges in the quarter system)
- 3 Attending local and statewide college fairs
- 4 Partnering with ISBE to recruit International Visiting Teachers, eligible to teach for three years in Illinois
- 5 Forming cohorts of paraprofessionals to offer career-ladder programs geared toward completing four-year degrees in education and teacher licensure
- 6 Supporting in-service bilingual staff toward earning the bilingual education endorsement.
- 7 Tapping into recent high school graduates who have earned the State Seal of Biliteracy
- 8 Creating a plan to hire only teacher candidates with ESL endorsements
- 9 Recruiting bilingual teachers from other states through national conferences such as National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), La Cosecha, Association of Two-Way and Dual



### Illinois Teacher With Licensure

Does not have to be proficient in a language  
Endorsement is attached to licensure



### ESL Endorsement

18 semester hours in specific content  
100 field experience hours

Language Education (ATDLE), American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), Illinois Association for Multilingual and Multicultural Education (IAMME), etc.

Given the need for qualified teachers to educate the growing number of ELs statewide, collaboration between ISBE, legislators and school districts could provide financial incentives for individuals who are bilingual and biliterate to enter the field of education.

## Professional Development Requirements for Staff Serving ELs

Ongoing professional development is a key component to implementing effective instruction and assessment for ELs. Illinois has specific requirements for districts to design annual professional development plans. A portion of state and federal funds must be allocated to the training of staff working with ELs. Below are the state requirements stated in ISBE 23 Illinois Administrative Code 228.35 Subtitle A Subchapter f.

- Each school district having an EL program shall annually plan professional development activities for the licensed and non-licensed personnel involved in the education of ELs.
- This plan shall be included in the district's annual application for funding.

Program staff beginning their initial year of service shall be involved in training activities that will develop their knowledge of the requirements for the program and the implementation of the district's relevant policies and procedures.

Training activities shall be provided to all bilingual program staff at least twice yearly and shall address at least one of the following areas:

- A)** current research in bilingual education;
- B)** content-area and language proficiency assessment of ELs;
- C)** research-based methods and techniques for teaching ELs;
- D)** research-based methods and techniques for teaching ELs who also have disabilities; and
- E)** the culture and history of the United States and of the country, territory or geographic area that is the native land of the students or of their parents.

In addition to any other professional development required, each individual responsible for administering the prescribed screening instrument for identification of ELs or the annual English language proficiency assessment shall be required to complete online training designated by the State Superintendent of Education and to pass the test embedded in that material.

Each district that operates either a TBE or a TPI program for students of Spanish language background in kindergarten and any of grades 1 through 12 shall provide annually at least one training session related to the implementation of the Spanish language arts standards for staff members of that program who are providing instruction in Spanish language arts.

Schools where teachers share the work of educating ELs are often successful. Ongoing professional development that pairs bilingual and general education teachers to work together to serve students yield the best results. If a pull-out resource ESL program is implemented in a TPI setting, also having an ESL endorsed classroom teacher is highly beneficial.

## Performance Evaluation for EL Teachers

Teacher performance evaluations are on the ISBE website (<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Evaluations.aspx>). A number of unique considerations must be taken into account when evaluating bilingual/ESL education teachers. Best practice specifies that native language be part of daily instruction in addition to ESL. ELs learn best when classrooms are designed to be interactive with multiple opportunities for students to engage in speaking with each other in class. Classroom environments should be welcoming and reflect ELs' language/s and their cultures. Classroom visual materials should include print posted in both English and the home language.

In addition to research-based principles, these key practices must be incorporated into the teacher observation/evaluation system:

- Program staff beginning their initial year of service shall be involved in training activities that will develop their knowledge of the requirements for the program and the implementation of the district's relevant policies and procedures.
- Training activities shall be provided to all bilingual program staff at least twice yearly and shall address at least one of the following areas:
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  - B)** content-area and language proficiency assessment of ELs;
  - C)** research-based methods and techniques for teaching ELs;
  - D)** research-based methods and techniques for teaching ELs who also have disabilities; and
  - E)** the culture and history of the United States and of the country, territory or geographic area that is the native land of the students or of their parents.
- In addition to any other professional development required, each individual responsible for administering the prescribed screening instrument for identification of ELs or the annual English language proficiency assessment shall be required to complete online training designated by the State Superintendent of Education and to pass the test embedded in that material.
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- In addition to research-based principles, these key practices must be incorporated into the teacher observation/evaluation system:
  - Evaluators must have knowledge and expertise in EL education.
  - Evaluators of teachers using native language instruction must be fluent in the language of the lessons they are observing.
  - EL growth data must be based on assessments that are valid and reliable for ELs and include assessments in their native language.
  - Evaluator must allow the bilingual/ESL teacher to explain specialized instructional strategies.
  - Adequate instructional materials must be provided to the teacher in both English and the students' native language.
  - Evaluator must be knowledgeable about the program type (TBE, TPI, DL) and the intended goals and outcomes (English proficiency only, or biliteracy).
  - Evaluator must be familiar with effective team teaching if the district is employing this model.
  - Evaluators must note ways in which bilingual/ESL teachers are working with parents and families.

Performance evaluations must be fair and conducted by administrators who have background in EL education. As teacher-performance evaluation is negotiated with the local bargaining unit, there should be delineated expectations and processes tied to equity and validity in evaluating bilingual and ESL teachers.

## Teacher Retention

In order to maintain quality bilingual education and ESL programs, retention of qualified bilingual education educators is critical. Studies show that teachers who come from the same ethnic, racial and linguistic backgrounds as their students often produce higher academic outcomes for their students. Specifically, Latinos who enter service-oriented careers have a connection to their communities and often possess the language skills to be effective teachers.

However, too often, teachers who work with ELs report that because administrators lack knowledge of the instructional needs of ELs, the teachers are not supported adequately in their work. Many bilingual education and ESL teachers report lacking appropriate instructional materials in the native language and for ESL instruction. Teachers report they are often pulled away from the classroom to translate documents or to interpret for parents. In addition, bilingual education teachers have additional tasks and responsibilities that general education teachers do not have (e.g. translating materials, finding native language assessments, teaching ESL, etc.) as well as having to catch their students up academically while they are developing English as their second language. Teacher burnout is a serious issue across the education field, but it is especially problematic for bilingual education teachers who often feel isolated, overburdened and underappreciated.

**When a school environment values linguistic and cultural diversity, teachers are more likely to stay.**

Ways to create inclusive school environments that foster teacher retention include:

- Providing a vision that fosters multilingualism
  - Respecting and highlighting cultural diversity
  - Ensuring that bilingual education classrooms are adequate and not segregated
  - Providing adequate instructional materials in the languages that students speak
  - Including bilingual/ESL education teachers in school leadership positions
- Fostering teacher teams to design curriculum and assessments in multiple languages
  - Providing staff or hired consultants to translate school information and to interpret for parents
  - Encouraging bilingual/ESL education teachers to serve on district level committees
  - Compensating bilingual/ESL teachers for efforts beyond the defined school day

## District Highlight

### School District U-46 Collaboration with Illinois State University: Building a Bilingual Teacher Pipeline

#### What are the goals of the partnership?

Illinois State University (ISU) has partnered with Elgin U-46 since 2001. The Bilingual Teacher Pipeline program began in 2012. The key goal was to support the implementation of dual language programs in the district by increasing the workforce to 100 qualified ESL/bilingual endorsed teachers. The program comprises five initiatives:

- ✔ Established a steering committee and learning community between U-46 and ISU.
- ✔ Offered a sequence of graduate courses leading to the ESL endorsement to 50 district general education monolingual or dominant English-speaking teachers.
- ✔ Provided 25 provisionally endorsed bilingual educators the coursework to qualify for teacher licensure as well as bilingual education and ESL endorsements.
- ✔ Provided 25 bilingual paraprofessionals the coursework leading to a BA in Elementary Education, licensure, and the bilingual/ESL endorsements.
- ✔ Improved the student teaching experience of traditional ISU students through placement in Elgin’s dual language classrooms.

The partnership was not only able to complete the five initiatives, it also succeeded in training 100 teachers through various pathways. Districts wishing to replicate this model could consider using some Title II and III federal funding.

**How has the teacher-training program supported the district’s dual language programs?**

The first important outcome was the preparation of 26 bilingual paraprofessionals to become endorsed bilingual education teachers. Several paraprofessionals were already working in the U-46 District when they began the program. They completed student teaching in dual language classrooms in the district and upon graduation, U-46 hired 15 to teach in dual language positions starting in fall 2016.

The program further supported the U-46 dual language program by preparing general education teachers (who speak only English) to effectively work with bilingual learners in their classrooms. It was important that the monolingual English-speaking teachers in the district understand the benefits of bilingualism, and the research and practices that support dual language. By earning the ESL endorsement, these teachers are better prepared to support bilingual students in dual language programs.

Another important outcome was the preparation of 27 bilingual education teachers to receive licensure and bilingual education and ESL endorsements.

**What can other districts learn from this initiative?**

- ✔ Be intentional in partnerships with universities (clearly express what you want and need).
- ✔ Commit individuals (administrators, teachers, etc.) to participate. For example, the program included a steering committee composed of faculty and staff from ISU, but also the director of programs for ELs, an elementary school principal and a teacher leader from the school district.
- ✔ Grow your own: identify, recruit and enroll bilingual/biliterate paraprofessionals, community leaders and school volunteers.

**LOCAL CONVERSATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

- ✔ Do an adequate number of teachers, support staff and school leaders within your district have bilingual/ESL endorsements?
- ✔ How can your district employ an adequate number of teachers to serve the EL population?
- ✔ How can your district form an ongoing relationship with an institution of higher learning for teacher recruitment?
- ✔ Does your district have strategies for retaining bilingual education teachers?
- ✔ Has your district had conversations with the bargaining unit regarding evaluation of bilingual education teachers?