

## 50-State Comparison: English Learner Policies

### Are EL-only instructors in K-12 required to hold a specialist certification or endorsement?

May 2020

Research indicates English learners perform best when teachers are required to have state certification to teach English as a Second Language (ESL), English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), bilingual or other type. At least 39 states provide for training, professional development, teaching standards, certification or endorsements for EL-specific teachers in statute or regulation. In some states, certification and endorsements are required. In other states, endorsements and certification are available, but it is unclear whether it is required. The following information was gathered from state statutes and regulations only. For additional information, visit the [state EL guidance documents](#).

View the full 50-State Comparison: English Learner Policies [here](#).

STATE	ARE EL-ONLY INSTRUCTORS IN K-12 REQUIRED TO HOLD A SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION OR ENDORSEMENT?	SOURCE
Federal Law	Federal law does not dictate specific qualifications for teachers of ELs.  Federal law provides for professional development grants to state educational agencies, local educational agencies, institutions of higher education or consortia of agencies to provide pre-service and in-service professional development for teachers serving English learners.	ESEA, Section 3231
Alabama	No endorsement or certificate requirements, but there are standards for ESOL teachers in grades P-12.	Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-3-45

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Alaska	No endorsement or certificate requirements, but there are pre-service training requirements for bilingual program teachers.	Alaska Admin. Code tit. 4, § 34.075
Arizona	Respective endorsement in bilingual instruction, ESL instruction or Structured English Immersion instruction is required.	Ariz. Admin. Code R7-2-615(J), (K), and (L)  Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 15-756.09
Arkansas	ESL and ESOL endorsement is available, but not required.	Ark. Admin. Code 005.28.3-4-9.0
California	The commission on teacher credentialing issues authorizations for teachers providing services to ELs, including authorizations for teachers providing specially designed content instruction delivered in English, content instruction delivered primarily in the primary language, and instruction for English language development.	Cal. Educ. Code § 44253.2 et.seq.
Colorado	No endorsement or certification requirements, but a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Bilingual Education Specialist endorsement is available for grades K-12.  Professional development pathways are also available for teachers of English Learners.	Colo. Code Regs. § 301-101:4.22
Connecticut	ESOL or Bilingual Education certification is required.  If a local or regional board of education is not able to hire a sufficient number of certified bilingual education teachers, the board of education may apply to the Commissioner of Education for permission to use an ESOL-certified teacher instead.	Conn. Agencies Regs. 10-145d-470  Conn. Agencies Regs. 10-145d-475  Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-17j  Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-17f

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Delaware	EL or Bilingual Education certification is required.	Code Del. Regs. 14 920 Code Del. Regs. 14 1561 Code Del. Regs. 14 1562
District of Columbia	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Florida	ESOL endorsement or certification is available, but it is unclear if it is required.	2003 Consent Decree Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 6A-6.0907 Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 6A-4.0244 Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 6A-4.0245 Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 6A-6.0904(2) Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 6A-1.0503
Georgia	ESOL endorsement or certification is required.	Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 160-4-5-.02
Hawaii	Governed by the department of education's EL guidebook or federal law rather than state policy.	
Idaho	Bilingual and ENL endorsement is available, but it is not clear if either are required.	Idaho Admin. Code r. 08.02.02.022 Idaho Admin. Code r. 08.02.02.023

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Illinois	Respective endorsement in Bilingual Education, ESL instruction or ENL instruction is required.	III. Admin. Code tit. 23, § 228.35 III. Admin. Code tit. 23, § 1.780 III. Admin. Code tit. 23, § 1.781 III. Admin. Code tit. 23, § 1.782
Indiana	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Iowa	ESL endorsement is required.	Iowa Admin. Code r. 281-60.3(280) Iowa Admin. Code r. 282-13.28(272)
Kansas	ESOL endorsement is required.	Kan. Stat. Ann. § 72-3610 Kan. Stat. Ann. § 72-3609 Kan. Admin. Regs. 91-1-202
Kentucky	ESL certification is required. ESL endorsements are available, but not required.	16 Ky. Admin. Regs. 2:200 16 Ky. Admin. Regs. 2:010
Louisiana	ESL endorsement is available, but it is unclear if it is required.	28 La. Admin Code. Pt CXXXI, § 667
Maine	Governed by the department of education's EL guidebook or federal law rather than state policy.	

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Maryland	ESOL certification is required.	Md. Code Regs. 13A.05.07.03 Md. Code Regs. 13A.12.02.19
Massachusetts	Bilingual Education and Sheltered English Immersion endorsement is required.	603 Mass. Code Regs. 7.15 Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. 71A § 10
Michigan	ESL or Bilingual Education endorsement is required.	Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 380.1157
Minnesota	ESL or Bilingual/Bicultural certification is required.	Minn. Stat. Ann. § 122A.19 Minn. R. 8710.4400
Mississippi	Governed by the department of education's EL guidebook or federal law rather than state policy.	
Missouri	EL certification is required.	5 Mo. Code Regs. Ann. 20-400.570
Montana	Governed by the department of education's EL guidebook or federal law rather than state policy.	
Nebraska	ESL or Bilingual Education endorsement is required for teachers providing instruction to ELs. Bilingual program teachers must have both endorsements.	92 Neb. Admin. Code Ch. 15, 005 92 Neb. Admin. Code Ch. 24, 006.09
Nevada	ESL or Bilingual Education endorsement is required for teachers providing instruction to ELs. Bilingual program teachers must have both endorsements.	Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 388.411
New Hampshire	ESOL certification is required.	N.H. Code Admin. R. Ed 507.17

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New Jersey	ESL or Bilingual Education endorsement is required.	<p>N.J. Admin. Code § 6A:9B-11.5</p> <p>N.J. Admin. Code § 6A: 9B-11.6</p> <p>N.J. Admin. Code § 6A:15-1.9</p>
New Mexico	ESOL or Bilingual Education endorsement is required.	<p>N.M. Admin Code 6.64.10</p> <p>N.M. Admin Code 6.64.11</p> <p>N.M. Admin Code 6.32.2.10</p>
New York	ESL and Bilingual Education certification is available, but it is not clear if either is required.	<p>N.Y. Comp. Codes R. &amp; Regs. tit. 8, § 80-2.9</p> <p>N.Y. Comp. Codes R. &amp; Regs. tit. 8, § 80-2.10</p>
North Carolina	ESL license is available, but it is unclear if it is required.	16 N.C. Admin. Code 6D.0106
North Dakota	ESL or Bilingual Education endorsement is required.	<p>N.D. Admin. Code 67-28-01-06</p> <p>N.D. Admin. Code 67.1-02-03-05</p>
Ohio	Governed by the department of education's EL guidebook or federal law rather than state policy.	
Oklahoma	ESL license is available, but it is unclear if it is required.	Okla. Admin. Code 210:20-9-172(41)
Oregon	ESOL endorsement is required.	<p>Or. Admin. R. 584-220-0075</p> <p>Or. Admin. R. 581-023-0100(4)</p> <p>Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 336.081</p>

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Pennsylvania	Governed by the department of education's EL guidebook or federal law rather than state policy.	
Rhode Island	ESL or Bilingual Education endorsement or ESL certification is required.	R.I. Code R. 20-30-3.2 R.I. Code R. 20-30-3.5
South Carolina	Governed by the department of education's EL guidebook or federal law rather than state policy.	
South Dakota	Governed by the department of education's EL guidebook or federal law rather than state policy.	
Tennessee	Governed by the department of education's EL guidebook or federal law rather than state policy.	
Texas	ESL certification is required.	Tex. Educ. Code Ann. § 29.061 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 235.115
Utah	ESL or Bilingual Education endorsement is required.	Utah Admin. Code r. R277-520-4 Utah Admin. Code r. R277-716-5
Vermont	Bilingual Education endorsement is available, but it is unclear if it is required.	7-1 Vt. Code R. § 13:5440-39
Virginia	EL endorsements and competencies are available, but it is unclear if they are required.	Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-298.5
Washington	EL or Bilingual Education endorsement is required.	Wash. Rev. Code Ann. 28A.180.040
West Virginia	Not specified in statute or regulation.	

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Wisconsin	ESL certification is required.	Wis. Stat. Ann. § 115.97 Wis. Stat. Ann. § 115.28 Wis. Stat. Ann. § 115.955 Wis. Adm. Code § PI 34.078
Wyoming	ESL and Dual Language Immersion endorsement is available, but it is unclear if it is required.	Wyo. Admin. Code 019.0001.4 § 4 Wyo. Admin. Code 019.0001.4 § 7