

NEWS

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jackie Matthews

217-782-4648

press@isbe.net

ISBE awards more than \$5 million in grants to support bilingual educator pipeline

Grants will assist teachers in 219 school districts across the state with getting licensed to teach English learners

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has awarded more than \$5 million in grants to support the bilingual educator pipeline. The number of English learners (ELs) enrolled in Illinois schools has increased steadily over the past 12 years, but the number of teachers qualified to teach these students has not kept pace. The Elevating Educators: Bilingual Education Grants will support up to an estimated 780 teachers in 219 school districts across the state in getting trained and licensed to teach the state’s growing number of ELs.

Illinois schools serve more than 275,000 ELs, who speak 220 different languages. English learners make up nearly 14% of the Illinois student population. Illinois schools reported more than 300 unfilled teaching positions in bilingual education as of October 2022.

A total of 456 teachers in the state have an Educator License with Stipulations endorsed for Transitional Bilingual Education, which is a temporary license that allows them to teach ELs. This temporary license expires after five years. These grants will cover expenses, such as tuition and fees, for teachers who have this temporary license so they can get their permanent teaching license and be able to meet the needs of Illinois’ growing English Learner population. Districts can also use the grant funds to cover expenses for current teachers licensed in other subjects, which will allow them to earn an English as Second Language (ESL) or Bilingual Education credential.

“Our schools are at their strongest when they serve the unique needs of every student, and the growing number of English learners in Illinois schools are a vibrant and diverse population who deserve teachers who can help them best learn,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “This grant funding from ISBE will expand the base of bilingual educators in the state and give students the tools and support they need to thrive and build language skills.”

"Bilingual educators play an invaluable role in our schools, and we are pleased to provide further support to districts in every corner of the state," **said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders**. "At a time of teacher and staffing shortages felt across the country and here at home in Illinois, we are ensuring that our schools have highly qualified bilingual educators so that our English learners have the resources to succeed."

"Urbana School District is home to a very linguistically and culturally diverse population of students, families, and staff. Our district's priority is that our students receive equitable access to education

through research-based programming. To best meet the needs of our emergent bilingual students, students must have highly qualified ESL and bilingual teachers," **said Urbana School District 116 Superintendent Dr. Jennifer Ivory-Tatum.** "The national teacher shortage has continued to impact the number of certified ESL/bilingual teachers available to hire. This grant will provide us the opportunity to invest in our current staff by assisting with tuition support for teachers wanting to teach in this highly needed area."

English learners were among the student groups whose academic achievement and attendance were most disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Funding for the grant comes from federal pandemic relief funds. Teachers pursuing licensure to teach ELs receive specialized training to meet these students' unique needs so that they grow in their acquisition of the English language, retain and strengthen their skills in their home language, and achieve content knowledge in all other subjects.

Find each recipient's grant amount, as well as more information about the Elevating Educators: Bilingual Education Grant, on the [ISBE website](#). Each grant recipient will administer its own local process for providing qualified teachers with access to the funds to pursue bilingual licensure.

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