

**Educating English Language Learners:  
Building Teacher Capacity  
Roundtable Report**

**Volume III**

**State Requirements for Pre-service Teachers  
of ELLs**

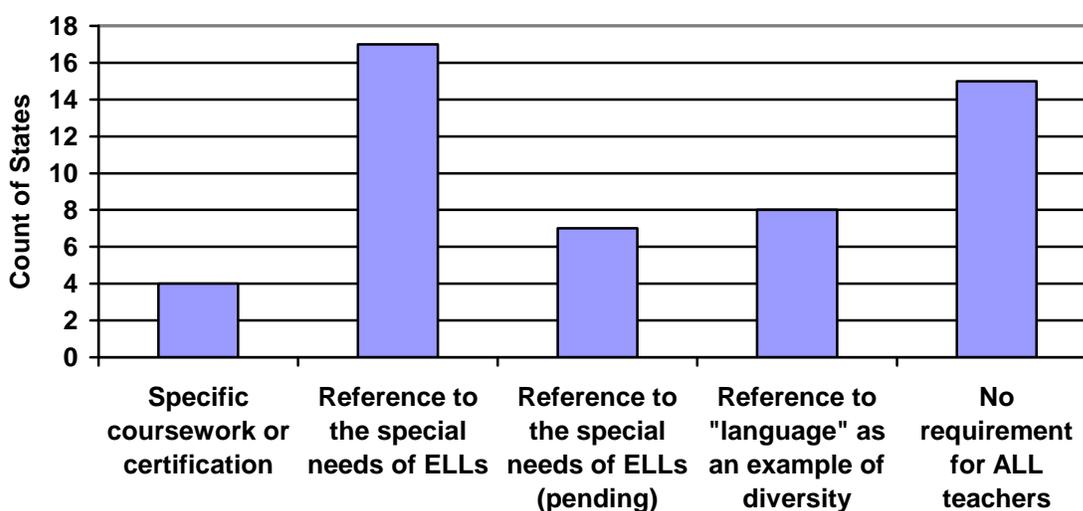
As the number of English language learners (ELLs) in the U.S. increases, states are faced with the heightened challenge of ensuring that all students receive a high quality education. It is therefore important that teacher education programs, whether offered by universities, states or local systems, include effective ELL instructional strategies for all teachers. The responsibility for educating ELLs does not lie solely with those teachers who have ESOL or bilingual education licenses, but with all teachers who have or may have ELLs in their classrooms. This report summarizes state policies and legislation that require newly qualified teachers to have experience with or education in the teaching of ELLs.

## Summary of Findings

States can be divided into the following five categories with respect to the amount of training or expertise required of all new teachers:

- States with specific coursework or certification<sup>1</sup> requirements for all teachers (4 states).
- States where teacher certification standards for all teachers contain reference to the special needs of ELLs (17 states).
- States in transition, which use the standards published by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE standards to be implemented in the Fall of 2008 contain reference to ELLs (7 states).
- States where teacher certification standards for all teachers contain reference to “language” as an example of diversity (8 states).
- States where there is no requirement that all teachers have expertise or training in working with ELLs (15 states).

*States by Category of ELL Training Required of New Teachers*



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<sup>1</sup> The terms certification/licensure and certificate/license are used interchangeably in this report.

The information presented in this report most directly applies to new teachers seeking initial licensure or certification. In order to become licensed in a given state, a prospective teacher must typically graduate from a teacher preparation program approved by that state. This report primarily considers the standards or requirements of these programs. Alternate routes to certification were not expressly addressed, nor were requirements for teacher transfers and experienced teachers. The report thus describes a small slice of the total teacher population and should not be taken as representative of the capability of all teachers of ELLs.

The standards and requirements for approved teacher preparation programs can be found in various types of publications from state to state. Publications reviewed for this report include the Web sites of state departments of education and boards of education; state administrative rules or codes (that is, the legally binding rules which apply to state agencies such as departments of education), and standards published by state agencies or their subcommittees. Legal requirements of course change over time; the information presented herein is correct as of February 2008. This volume was released at that time on NCELA's Web site under the title *Teaching ELLs in mainstream classrooms: State-by-State requirements for all pre-service teachers*.<sup>2</sup>

#### **States with Specific Coursework or Licensure/Certification Requirements**

This category includes states that require teachers to complete a certain number of credits or semester hours in TESOL or instructional techniques appropriate for ELLs. While these are usually completed in a state-approved teacher education program, the requirements may be satisfied in other settings. This category includes Arizona, California, Florida, and New York. Pennsylvania will require teachers graduating by 2011 from approved teacher preparation programs in the state to have completed specific coursework in working with ELLs.

##### **Arizona**

Arizona's new requirements, implemented in 2005, require an endorsement in Structured English Immersion (SEI) for all certified teachers, principals and superintendents in the state. The provisional SEI endorsement requires three semester hours for preservice teachers, and either one semester hour or fifteen clock hours of professional development for inservice teachers in instructional strategies, teaching with the Arizona ELL Proficiency Standards, and monitoring academic progress using a variety of assessment tools. A provisional endorsement is valid for three years, after which time teachers must complete the full endorsement. The SEI endorsement requires, in addition to the provisional requirements, an additional three semester hours for preservice teachers, or, for inservice teachers, 45 clock hours of professional development (Certification, 2005, 613-J.).

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<sup>2</sup> Available from [http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/policy/legislation/preservice\\_reqs.pdf](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/policy/legislation/preservice_reqs.pdf). Although this version differs slightly in format, no new substantive information is included.

### **California**

As in many states, there are various pathways to licensure in California. The majority require content in the teaching of ELLs, and all teachers who train in state approved educator programs must complete university coursework relating to the teaching of ELLs (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2006, 2007c).

For example, all new elementary and secondary teachers who train at state approved educator programs must complete the “Developing English Language Skills” requirement which includes:

a comprehensive reading instruction course that includes the following: the systematic study of phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding; literature, language and comprehension; and diagnostic and early intervention techniques  
(California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2007a)

Out-of-state teachers wishing to be certified in California are required to complete the Cross-Cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) credential or an equivalent (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2007b). Beginning elementary school teachers must also pass a standardized test in the teaching of reading (California Council on Teacher Credentialing 2006).

### **Florida**

All Florida teachers are required to complete at least three semester hours or equivalent of training in TESOL. These provisions apply to both new and experienced teachers; they may meet the requirements via university coursework or in-service training. For teachers from whom students receive primary literacy instruction (usually at the elementary level) the requirement is for 15 semester hours or the equivalent (Florida Department of Education, 2001, pp. 6-8).

### **New York**

All teachers graduating from approved teacher preparation programs in New York are required to complete six semester hours in language acquisition and literacy development. The coursework applies to both native English speakers and ELLs (Registration of curricula in teacher education, 2006, (b)(2)(ii)(c)).

### **Pennsylvania (Pending)**

Current Pennsylvania regulations do not require that all teachers have training or expertise in working with ELLs (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2006). By January 2011, however, teachers graduating from approved Pennsylvania programs must complete 3 credits or 90 hours of coursework or other preparatory work addressing the instructional needs of ELLs (Certification of Professional Personnel, 2007, (b)(4)(i)).

## States with Reference to Special Needs of ELLs

There are seventeen states in which the standards for approved teacher preparation programs mandate that teachers should be experienced with, familiar with, or competent in addressing the special needs of ELL students. States in this category are:

Alabama	Maryland	North Dakota
Colorado	Massachusetts	Rhode Island
Idaho	Michigan	Tennessee
Illinois	Minnesota	Vermont
Iowa	Nevada	Virginia
Louisiana	New Jersey	

An additional six states (see “NCATE states”, below) are likely to fall into this category by Fall 2008.

State guidelines in this category vary considerably. For example, Maryland has a specific 6-12 semester hour literacy requirement (Maryland State Department of Education, 1999, 2004), whereas Idaho’s states that “the teacher knows strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English” (Idaho State Board of Education & Idaho State Department of Education, 2005).

Maryland and Michigan both require that teachers graduating from state-approved programs complete coursework that includes content in reading instruction for ELLs. Tennessee stipulates in the introduction to its standards that the requirements apply to all populations within schools, including English language learners (Tennessee Department of Education, 2003).

The remaining states can be divided into two categories: those that require teachers from state-approved programs to have knowledge of second language acquisition or literacy research; and those that require new teachers be knowledgeable about ELL education or demonstrate effective ELL instructional strategies.

### Maryland & Michigan

Both Maryland and Michigan have “reading instruction” requirements for new teachers which include detailed reference to ELLs within their standards.

Teachers graduating from an approved educator preparation program in Maryland must complete a requisite number of semester hours in reading instruction – six semester hours for secondary content area teachers, and twelve hours for early childhood or elementary level certification (Maryland State Department of Education, 1999, 2004). The reading instruction must include attention to reading for English language learners, and the relevant standards detail knowledge of: language influence on literacy; the impact of language on student learning in content area classrooms; the nature of reading and writing difficulties associated with limited language proficiency; the selection of varied reading materials; and strategies which assist readers with challenging texts.

Michigan requires six semester hours in reading instruction for elementary teachers, and three semester hours for secondary teachers. Standards for secondary content teachers require knowledge of literacy instruction theory and practice as they pertain to ELLs (Michigan State Board of Education, 2002a, 2002b).

### **Knowledge of SLA and strategies to support ELLs**

Standards in Alabama, Illinois, Minnesota, Nevada<sup>3</sup> and New Jersey are essentially identical in their requirements for all teachers with respect to ELLs. Each of the five states requires training in second language acquisition and in “strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English” (Alabama Quality Teaching Standards, 2007; Standards for all Illinois teachers, 2002; Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers (MN), 2007; INTASC, 1992; Professional Licensure and Standards (NJ), 2006).

### **Strategies or accommodations for ELLs**

The following nine states stipulate that teachers who graduate from state-approved education programs must have knowledge of strategies or accommodations appropriate for English language learners:

Colorado	North Dakota
Idaho	Rhode Island
Iowa	Vermont
Louisiana	Virginia
Massachusetts	

Below is a typical example of a standard from this category, taken from the *Performance-Based Standards for Colorado Teachers*:

The teacher has demonstrated the ability to:  
6.2 Design and/or modify standards-based instruction in response to diagnosed student needs, including the needs of exceptional learners and English language learners.  
(Colorado Department of Education, 2000)

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<sup>3</sup> Note that Nevada adopts by reference the standards of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC, 1992).

### The NCATE States: Pending

The licensure requirements for the following seven states will likely be revised according to the upcoming changes in the standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE):

Alaska	Georgia	Mississippi
Connecticut	Kansas	South Carolina
Delaware		

These states do not directly approve teacher preparation programs but rely on NCATE or the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) for their teacher education standards. The most current NCATE standards (NCATE, 2006) do not require that all teachers have training or expertise in working with ELLs. The standards to be implemented in the Fall of 2008 include the following statement (NCATE, 2007):

Curriculum and field experiences provide a well-grounded framework for understanding diversity, including English language learners ... They challenge students toward cognitive complexity and engage all students, including English language learners and students with exceptionalities, through instructional conversation. (NCATE, 2007, Standard 4a)

Alaska and South Carolina require that teachers seeking initial certification graduate from NCATE-approved institutions (Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, n.d.; Teacher Training Institutions (SC), 2006)). Connecticut requires that teacher preparation programs are either approved by NCATE or a state using NCATE standards (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2007). Delaware and Mississippi require that teachers graduate from programs approved by NCATE or NASDTEC<sup>4</sup> (Delaware Department of Education, n.d.; Certification of Teachers and Administrators (MS), 1972). The newly ratified standards will thus move these states automatically into the category of states with reference to ELLs in their standards.

Kansas and Georgia have adopted NCATE standards “by reference”, essentially writing the NCATE standards directly into their statutes or official teacher standards material (Georgia Standards Commission, 2000; Kansas State Department of Education, 2005, p.33). It is not clear how such adoption by reference will be affected by the change at NCATE.

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<sup>4</sup> NASDTEC standards are only available to members and could not be reviewed for this study.

## States with Reference to Language As An Example of Diversity

While the standards for the following eight states do not explicitly refer to ELLs nor ELL pedagogy, they do require that teachers have an appreciation of diversity in the classroom and demonstrate effective strategies to teach diverse groups of learners. This category includes states in which language is mentioned as an example among other areas of diversity including, for example, race, religion, or socioeconomic background.

Arkansas	Ohio
Montana	Oregon
New Mexico	West Virginia
North Carolina	Wyoming

A typical example is provided by North Carolina (from the North Carolina *Standards and Indicators for Teacher Education Programs*):

### 2-1 Diversity Standards

#### Introduction

Effective beginning teachers are successful in teaching a diverse population of students. They affirm that diversity truly exists and believe that education is fundamentally a cultural process that ultimately contributes to the academic success or failure of students. Diversity includes exceptionalities, race, ethnicity, religious backgrounds, gender, language (linguistic differences) socio-economic levels, and any of the other ways in which our society defines human differences (age, geography, sexual orientation, and national origins).

...

**Standard 2:** Teachers understand how students' cognitive, physical, socio-cultural, linguistic, emotional, and moral development influences learning and address these factors when making instructional decisions. (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006).

Although there is far less variation in this category than in the previous, two states are worthy of further mention: West Virginia and Wyoming.

The West Virginia *Educator Preparation Program Standards* state that teachers must “know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.” Linguistic diversity in this case is relegated to a footnote which reads:

“All students” include students with exceptionalities and the different ethnic, racial, gender, language, religious, socioeconomic and regional/geographical origins.”  
(Approval of Educational Personnel Preparation Programs, 2007, Appendix A-5 I Standard 1).

In contrast, the standards required by the Professional Teaching Standards Board of Wyoming make a clear connection between language and learning and require a more specific set of competencies, though they do not explicitly reference ELLs.

Language and Communication. The teacher candidate is knowledgeable about the connections between a student's use of language and his/her success in learning; is competent in developing all students' language

skills and communication techniques across the curriculum; and models effective language skills and communication techniques. (Professional Teaching Standards Board, 2005, 5(a)(vi)).

## States with No Requirement for All Teachers

In establishing that a state has no requirement that all teachers have training or expertise in working with ELLs, care was taken to thoroughly assess all possible avenues in which standards might be presented (for example within Administrative Codes, or rules of Standards Boards internal to Boards of Education, etc.). The documents that were assessed are listed in the References section under the relevant state.

The following fifteen states were found to have no requirement that all teachers have training in or expertise with working with ELLs.

District of Columbia	Missouri	South Dakota
Hawai'i	Nebraska	Texas
Indiana	New Hampshire	Utah
Kentucky	Oklahoma	Washington
Maine	Pennsylvania	Wisconsin

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- Interstate New Teacher Assessment And Support Consortium (INTASC). (1992). *Model Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing, Assessment and Development: A Resource for State Dialogue*. Retrieved November 26, 2007 from <http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/corestrd.pdf>
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### Alaska

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See specifically Standard 6.2.

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### **Iowa**

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Kansas State Department of Education. (2005). *Teacher Education and Licensure Regulations and Standards for Kansas Educators*. Retrieved November 26, 2007 from <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=311>

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## **Appendix: Roundtable Panelists**

**The U.S Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) and the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) deeply appreciate the commitment, time and excellent contributions made by the following panelists.**

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