



MLL Regulations Implementation Support

Proficiency and Awareness Requirements

The [Rhode Island Multilingual Learner Regulations](#) are approved by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and are effective as of April 23, 2025. To support LEAs in their implementation of the new requirements, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) developed this brief to provide an overview of the proficiency and awareness requirements for educators working with MLLs in the state of Rhode Island. This brief is intended to support planning for implementation of the new MLL Regulations by the 2030-31 school year.

<i>Audience</i>	<i>District Leadership led by Superintendent (e.g., Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum Directors, MLL Administrators, Principals, Human Resources, Finance, etc.)</i>
<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Provide support and suggested steps for LEAs to launch MLL regulations implementation</i>

I. Clarify Requirements

This brief is intended to support LEAs with the new [Rhode Island Multilingual Learner Regulations](#), recognizing that doing this work takes planning and time. In the interim, while designing full implementation of the new requirements, LEAs remain under the obligation to provide MLL students with explicit English Language Development instruction for a daily minimum of time: three, two, or one period, based on students' proficiency level, delivered by appropriately certified educators. In addition, per §3.12.A, 3.12.B, 3.12.D, 3.19.A of the [MLL Regulations](#) and per §16-97.1-1.h.(4) of the [Education Accountability Act of 2019](#), LEAs are obligated to continue to provide educators with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional learning opportunities that are based on students' needs, including MLLs and MLLs with IEPs.

Regardless of the LEA's current context (including staffing, existing MLL programming, student body composition, etc.), a close examination of the new regulations and their implications for educator professional learning and readiness is an excellent next step in planning for implementation.

A. Overview of Proficiency and Awareness Requirements

Section §3.12.C of the Regulations Governing the Education of Multilingual Learners 200-RICR-20-30-3 specifies that teachers, administrators, and other personnel employed in Rhode Island schools must demonstrate proficiency or awareness according to their role. Proficiency and awareness are aligned to MLL Competencies and differentiated by the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, and application. Table 1 below shows which educators must meet proficiency or awareness, and how to demonstrate each.

Table 1. Proficiency and Awareness Requirements and Pathways for 2030-2031

Proficiency is required for:	Proficiency is recommended , but awareness is required, for:	Awareness is required for:	Awareness is recommended for:
Teachers responsible for Integrated Language and Content Instruction (See Parts B and C below for further clarification on this role.)	Teachers not responsible for Integrated Language and Content Instruction	All other teachers, administrators, and certified personnel	Other non-certified personnel, for example, office staff, paraprofessionals, parent center staff
Demonstrating Proficiency		Demonstrating Awareness	
<p>Educators can demonstrate proficiency in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIDE-approved professional learning – Coming Soon • MLL Endorsement • MLL Integrated Content Extension Certificate – Coming Soon • Full ESOL or BDL Certificate <p>Current certifications that meet the criteria for proficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Bilingual & Dual Language Education Teacher, Gr PK-3 • Elementary Bilingual & Dual Language Education Teacher, Gr K-6 		<p>Educators can demonstrate awareness through RIDE-approved professional learning (coming soon) or completion of any of the proficiency pathways.</p> <p>RIDE is committed to providing awareness professional learning to LEAs at no cost. This professional learning will be no more than 15 hours.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle Grades Bilingual & Dual Language Education Teacher, Gr 5-8 • Secondary Grades Bilingual & Dual Language Education Teacher, Gr 6-12 • All Grades English to Speakers of Other Languages Teacher, Grades PK-12 <p>Formerly issued certifications that meet the criteria for proficiency <u>if certificate is still valid:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood English to Speakers of Other Languages Teacher, Grades PK-2 • Endorsement: English As a Second Lang- Early Childhood • Elementary English to Speakers of Other Languages Teacher, Grades 1-6 • Endorsement: English As a Second Language - Elementary • Endorsement: English As a Second Language - Middle Grades • Middle Grades English to Speakers of Other Languages Teacher, Grades 5-8 • Endorsement: English As a Second Language - Secondary • Secondary Grades English to Speakers of Other Languages Teacher, Grades 7-12 • All Grades English As a Second Language Specialist, Grades PK-12 • ESL Specialist/Consultant, Grades PK-12 • Endorsement: Content ESL Teacher 	
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Please note that RIDE does **not** require all teachers to hold certification as a Teacher of English to Speakers of other Languages; however, LEAs may establish local requirements that go beyond the state minimum requirements outline in Table 1 above.

B. Integrated Language and Content Instruction and the Language Instruction Educational Programs (LIEPs) – Connection to Brief 1

[Brief 1](#) provides information on program models and the Integrated Language and Content Instruction component. To reiterate, Integrated Language and Content Instruction is a required component of both Content-Based Education and Bilingual Education approaches. It refers to core content courses in ELA, math, science, and social studies that provide MLLs with content instruction and language development simultaneously, aligned to the state-endorsed academic standards and WIDA 2020 English Language Development Standards. In Content-Based program models, Integrated Language and Content Instruction is delivered in English with students' home languages used strategically for support. In Bilingual program models, Integrated Language and Content Instruction is delivered in English, in partner language, or in both (depending on the specific program model design). Regardless of the program model, the Integrated Language and Content Instruction is taught by an appropriately certified teacher who has met the proficiency requirement, utilizing one of the pathways listed in Table 1.

C. Teaching Integrated Language and Content Instruction

To reiterate, teachers responsible for Integrated Language and Content Instruction in any program model are required to demonstrate proficiency. This is determined by *teacher assignment* rather than simply by a type of certification a teacher holds. For example, an elementary-certified teacher who teaches in a Content-Based Instruction (CBI) program model is required to demonstrate proficiency; however, an elementary-certified teacher who is not assigned to teach Integrated Language and Content Instruction in a CBI program model is only required to demonstrate awareness. In other words, any educator delivering the Integrated Language and Content Instruction within the minimum required daily instruction (3-2-1 structure) is required to demonstrate proficiency. Therefore, it is crucial that LEAs first determine the implementation of program model(s), schedules, and teacher assignments before planning for the implementation of the proficiency and awareness requirements.

II. Initiate Implementation

RIDE recommends that each LEA begins examining their local assets and next steps through the snap-shot tool for [MLL Regulations Implementation Support](#), where RIDE suggests assembling a district team to plan for implementation, examine local assets, and create a snapshot of the LEA's current context. [Brief 1 Language Instruction Educational Programs](#) was subsequently published to support LEAs in examining program models and planning for updates to align with the new MLL Regulations. This brief, Brief 2, highlights proficiency and awareness requirements for district teams to consider in ensuring staff readiness to implement selected program model(s). Specifically, integrating MLL educator readiness requirements into the LEA's Strategic

Plan and each school's School Improvement Plan supports clear communication across a wider audience. To do that, LEAs should:

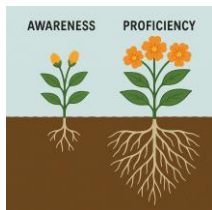
- Consider changes to program models and corresponding personnel requirements.
- Understand who is required to meet proficiency or awareness and how to demonstrate each.
- Determine what certifications and other credentials educators already have for working with MLLs and whether or not they meet the proficiency or awareness requirement.
- Proficiency:
 - Determine how to leverage existing and future pathways to proficiency (professional learning, MLL endorsement, or certification) in the next five years.
 - After completing an approval process, RIDE will publish a list of approved professional learning providers. At that time, LEAs will be able to adjust their plans to include this additional pathway to proficiency.
 - The timeline to make this professional learning available is coming soon.
- Awareness:
 - RIDE is committed to providing LEAs with awareness professional learning at no cost.
 - This professional learning will be no more than 15 hours.
 - The timeline to make this professional learning available is coming soon.
- Determine a continuing professional learning plan for embedding proficiency, awareness, and ongoing professional learning for current and incoming personnel.
- Adjust the plan as additional pathways become available.
- Ultimately, determine what updated program model(s), if any, your LEA is equipped to provide in which schools during SY2025-2026; then, map out program model updates for all schools in the LEA by 2030-2031.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are all teachers required to obtain an ESOL certification?

RIDE does not require all teachers to hold certification as a Teacher of English to Speakers of other Languages; however, LEAs may establish local requirements that go beyond the state minimum requirements outlined in Table 1 above.

2. What is the difference between proficiency and awareness?



Proficiency and awareness are aligned to MLL Competencies at different depths regarding knowledge, skills, and application. Full ESOL and BDL certifications exceed the depth of proficiency.

3. Which educators are required to demonstrate proficiency?

Educators delivering Integrated Language and Content Instruction within any program model must demonstrate proficiency. Other certified educators are encouraged to demonstrate proficiency and are required to demonstrate awareness.

By the beginning of the SY 2030-2031, and each subsequent year thereafter, teachers working in roles that require awareness who move to a role requiring proficiency will have two (2) years from the date of appointment to meet the proficiency requirement.

4. Which educators are required to demonstrate awareness?

All RIDE certified personnel not responsible for Integrated Language and Content Instruction are required to demonstrate awareness. Non-certified personnel including but not limited to central office staff, school office staff, paraprofessionals, and parent center staff, are encouraged to demonstrate awareness.

By the beginning of the SY 2030-2031, and each subsequent year thereafter, teachers working in roles that require awareness who move to a role requiring proficiency will have two (2) years from the date of appointment to meet the proficiency requirement.

5. Which certified personnel are considered to have met both awareness and proficiency requirements?

Teachers, administrators, and other certified personnel who hold English to Speakers of Other Languages Certificate, Bilingual and Dual Language Certificate or hold any of the

other certificates listed in Table 1 are considered to have met both awareness and proficiency requirements.

6. What do these requirements mean for hiring and staffing going forward?

By the beginning of the SY 2030-2031, if an in-service teacher has not met proficiency requirements, LEAs shall not place that teacher in a role requiring proficiency. LEAs may grant teachers who were unable to meet the proficiency requirement due to extenuating circumstances one (1) additional year to do so and remain in a position requiring proficiency. Out-of-state teachers, administrators, and other certified personnel will have two (2) years from date of appointment to provide evidence of meeting proficiency or awareness requirements, as determined by their role. For information on new teachers, please see question #7.

7. Will completers of Rhode Island Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) meet proficiency and awareness requirements?

All candidates matriculating as of August 2030 will meet the *awareness* requirement as per their course of study. However, since EPPs do not determine an educator's future assignment, they are not responsible for ensuring *proficiency*. It is the responsibility of LEAs to determine which educators – based on their specific assignments – must meet the *proficiency* requirement and to provide pathways for them to do so.

Beginning in the 2030-31 school year, newly hired teachers, administrators, and certified personnel will have up to two years from their date of appointment to demonstrate proficiency, if required for their assignment.

Educators who complete certification or endorsement programs listed in Table 1 are considered to have already met both the proficiency and awareness requirements.

8. What if an educator already holds an ESOL or BDL certification or MLL endorsement?

Educators holding ESOL or BDL certification or MLL endorsement meet the proficiency requirement. If also holding a content certification, these educators can deliver Integrated Language and Content Instruction.

Teachers holding an ESOL certification *only* (without content certification) can only deliver Dedicated ELD. If a teacher holds both ESOL and content certifications, they can deliver both Dedicated ELD and Integrated Language and Content Instruction.

9. Are the non-certified staff required to demonstrate awareness or proficiency?

No, non-certified personnel are not required to complete proficiency or awareness. Per MLL Regulations, awareness is recommended for non-certified staff, such as paraprofessionals, parent center staff, etc. Based on the local context and LEA incidence, LEAs may establish local requirements that go beyond the state minimum requirements.

10. Are School and Community Liaisons required to demonstrate proficiency or awareness?

Per §3.11.E.2 of the Regulations Governing the Education of Multilingual Learners 200-RICR-20-30-3, School and Community Liaisons need to demonstrate knowledge of the culture(s) and linguistic diversities of the LEA's MLL population and/or have completed cultural competency training to enable them to carry out the duties of a School and Community Liaison. School and Community Liaisons may meet this requirement by completing awareness or proficiency training as outlined in Table 1.

11. Where and when will proficiency and awareness professional learning be available?

RIDE will publish a list of approved *proficiency* providers once the approval process is complete. Information and timeline for *awareness* professional learning are coming soon. The awareness training is expected to be online and asynchronous.

12. Who is responsible for the cost of awareness and proficiency requirement?

Section 3.12.D of the MLL Regulations states that LEAs will provide proficiency and awareness training at no cost to the teachers, administrators, and other school personnel needing proficiency and/or awareness professional learning. When possible, proficiency and awareness professional learning will be completed during the workday. RIDE is committed to providing awareness professional learning to LEAs at no cost with completion capped at 15 hours. LEAs have flexibility in choosing a proficiency pathway and provider that best meets the district's needs.

13. Where do we go for more information or help?

For certification questions, email egac@ride.ri.gov or go to <https://ride.ri.gov/teachers-administrators/educator-certification>.

For MLL regulations and implementation questions, email david.sienko@ride.ri.gov or go to <https://ride.ri.gov/students-families/multilingual-learners-mls>

References and Resources

Regulations:

200-RICR-20-30-3 Regulations Governing the Education of Multilingual Learners (April 23, 2025). <https://rules.sos.ri.gov/Regulations/Part/200-20-30-3>

200-RICR-20-20-1 Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island (June 4, 2025). <https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/2025-06/Certification-Regulations-2025.pdf>

MLL Regulations Implementation Support Tools:

[*MLL Regulations Implementation Support*](#) (May 2025)

[*Brief No. 1 – Language Instruction Educational Programs*](#) (May 2025)

Additional Resources:

Rhode Island Professional Learning Standards (RIPLS) See [*200-RICR-20-20-1 Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island*](#) (June 4, 2025)

RIDE's [*High Quality Professional Learning Guide: A Framework and Guidance for Creating Effective Systems of Professional Learning*](#) (2025)

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24677>.