



Date: August 30, 2023
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: Bilingual/ESL Supervisors, Human Resources Directors
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services

Bilingual Education Requirements

New Jersey Administrative Code [N.J.A.C. 6A:15](#), Bilingual Education, sets forth the programmatic and certification requirements designed to meet the educational needs of multilingual learners (MLs). Specifically, [N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.4](#) states that “a district board of education shall establish a bilingual education program whenever there are 20 or more MLs, in any one language classification, enrolled in the school district in kindergarten through 12th grades, pursuant to [N.J.S.A. 18A:35-18](#).”

A “bilingual education program” means a full-time Language Instruction Education Program (LIEP) in all courses or subjects provided in accordance with [N.J.S.A. 18A:35-18](#). Students in a bilingual education program receive instruction in the primary language of MLs enrolled in the program and in English, while also receiving English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. Educators use the primary language of instruction to enhance literacy in the primary language and as a support in the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. Students also receive instruction in the history and culture of the country, territory, or geographic area that is the native land of the parents and families of MLs enrolled in the program, and in the history and culture of the United States.

To effectively implement a bilingual education program, qualified teachers with the appropriate certifications, licensure, and training are necessary to staff the program. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is aware that some local educational agencies (LEAs) may have difficulty in locating, recruiting, hiring, and retaining bilingual teachers. LEAs, however, can take affirmative steps to address the growing need for bilingual teachers as follows:

1. Use [THREAD](#) as a resource to implement a district-wide plan for bilingual teacher recruitment and retention;
2. Incentivize current teachers with fluency in other world languages to earn an endorsement in bilingual education;
3. Learn more about how the NJDOE is reaching the [Diverse and Learner-Reader Teacher Initiative Goals](#);
4. Collaborate with [colleges and universities](#) that offer teacher certification programs in bilingual education to recruit teachers completing certification programs in bilingual education;
5. Recruit teachers from countries who speak the language(s) of the multilingual learners enrolling in the district;
6. Consider a “grow your own” program where bilingual community members and paraprofessionals are encouraged to obtain their teaching certification;
7. Explore the [Loan Forgiveness](#) program and offer financial incentives for prospective bilingual teachers; and,
8. Develop a social media campaign to recruit bilingual teachers.

The Office of Supplemental Educational is ready to support your efforts and answer any questions you may have at ML@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group
NJTESOL-NJBE