

# INCREASING ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

## HELPING EDUCATORS TEACH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



### ENSURING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

As required by state and federal laws, the Colorado Department of Education works to increase educational achievement of all students through a variety of strategies and programs. One such strategy is to ensure that all Colorado educators have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the state’s growing population of English language learners.

Colorado has the sixth-highest number of English language learners in the country. The current teacher endorsement in English Language learner education is offered through Colorado colleges and universities and requires 24 semester hours of credit, focusing on the needs of effective teaching practices for English learners.

The U.S. Department of Justice recently asked whether English language learners have an opportunity to receive an equitable education in Colorado. In response, the State Board of Education directed CDE to convene a group of stakeholders representing districts with the most English language learners to develop recommendations for ensuring that all educators have at least basic knowledge about serving English language learners.

### INCREASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROPOSED

The stakeholder group proposed a more flexible approach to providing all educators with the knowledge and skills they need to support English language learners.

1. *Help new teachers* meet the needs of English language learners by integrating standards for English language learners into all educator preparation programs statewide.
2. *Support existing teachers* by providing six semester hours of professional development to be required at their next license renewal following the adoption of rules implementing this requirement. Current teachers would have between five and 10 years to complete the new professional development requirements. The stakeholder group recommended multiple, flexible pathways for educators to meet this requirement, including online modules, district-offered programs and programs at institutes of higher education.

### TIMELINE

In February 2017 the State Board of Education directed department staff to continue working with stakeholders to develop rules to implement flexible approaches to integrating English language learner standards into educator preparation programs and professional development programs for new teachers. Draft rules are expected to be presented to the board for consideration and for public hearings in fall 2017.

### English Learners in Colorado

Over the last 10 years, the number of English language learners in Colorado’s public schools grew 38.1 percent, more than double the 15.1 percent rate of growth in the total student population.

There now are approximately 126,000 English language learners in Colorado, comprising approximately 14 percent of the total K-12 population.

Districts with the most English learners:

Denver	23,000	33%
Aurora	16,000	40%
Jeffco	6,600	8%
Adams 12	6,500	17%
Cherry Creek	5,700	11%
Greeley	4,800	23%
St. Vrain	4,400	15%
Westminster	4,000	42%