Current Qualifications for Teacher Licensure
About

The Illinois State Board of Education has partnered with stakeholders over the past five years to streamline the requirements for qualified teachers to earn short-term approvals and endorsements in high-demand areas.

Among the changes, short-term approvals that were discontinued in 2013 returned in 2015 in response to feedback from school districts that emergency credentials were needed in all content areas to staff unfilled classrooms. The short-term approval is now available in all areas and grade spans, except in driver’s education and special education. The short-term emergency approval allows individuals who have met some, but not all, of the requirements for the Learning Behavior Specialist I endorsement to begin teaching special education. Availability of the short-term emergency approval in special education has been extended twice since 2015 to allow districts to employ individuals when a fully licensed teacher could not be found.

In addition, districts may also utilize current requirements in Illinois School Code and Administrative Code to fill hard-to-staff classrooms. This document provides a summary of existing provisions that provide districts with flexibility in staffing classrooms.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substitute Teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Contained General Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmentalized Subjects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 9-12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Education</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a Second Language (ESL)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Information Specialist</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Teacher and Reading Specialist</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Kindergarten through Age 21</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Categorical for Students through Age 5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career and Technical Education (Grades 9-12)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where to Find Licenses, Endorsements, Approvals, and Designations</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Substitute Teacher (105 ILCS 5/21B-20[3])

To substitute teach, an individual must meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold a substitute teaching license.
2. Hold any other state-issued educator license, plus hold a bachelor’s degree or higher degree.
3. Hold a short-term substitute teaching license (valid for teaching five consecutive days only).
4. The educator may substitute teach in career and technical education classrooms even if a bachelor’s degree is not held as long as he/she holds an educator license with stipulations endorsed for provisional career and technical education (ELS-CTEP) or is endorsed for part-time provisional career and technical education (ELS-PCTE).

There is no limit on the number of days that a substitute teacher may teach in a single school district, provided no individual holding a substitute teaching license teaches for longer than 90 school days for any one licensed teacher under contract in the same school year.*

Individuals who hold any of the other educator licenses listed above may substitute teach for up to 120 school days for any one licensed teacher under contract in the same school year.*

*Provision not applicable to Chicago Public Schools.

Self-Contained General Education in Early Childhood Education (Birth-Grade 2) – (23 IAC 235.20)

To be assigned to teach early childhood education (self-contained general education), an individual must hold a professional educator license and meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold an endorsement for early childhood education (self-contained general education) valid for the grades to be taught.
3. Hold an endorsement for early childhood special education (self-contained general education) valid for the grades to be taught.

Note that grade ranges for early childhood education and elementary education overlap. An educator’s license must be valid for the grade range to be served in self-contained general education.

Exceptions exist for assignments of reading teachers; reading specialists; library information specialists; and teachers in ESL, bilingual education, and special education. See requirements for these roles in each position’s unique section within this document.

Self-Contained General Education in Elementary Education (Grades K-9) – (23 IAC 1.710)

To be assigned to teach elementary education (self-contained general education), an individual must hold a professional educator license and meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold an elementary education (self-contained general education) endorsement for grades K-9 or 1-6. The educator is qualified to teach within the grade range of the endorsement.
3. Meet the predecessor requirements at a time when they were applicable.

Since September 1, 1978, each teacher also must have completed at least one course in each subject area being taught. Educators licensed prior to this date are required to have only a professional educator license endorsed for elementary education.

Exceptions exist for assignments of reading teachers; reading specialists; library information specialists; and teachers in ESL, bilingual education, and special education. See requirements for these roles in each position’s unique section within this document.

Note that grade ranges for early childhood education and elementary education overlap. An educator’s license must be valid for the grade range to be served in self-contained general education.

**Departmentalized Subjects for Grades K-5 – (23 IAC 1.710)**

To be assigned to teach a specific departmentalized subject in any of the grades K-5, an educator must hold a professional educator license endorsed in teaching for the grades to be served, plus have completed one course in the departmentalized subject to be taught. Educators licensed prior to September 1, 1978, are required to have only a professional educator license endorsed for elementary education.

Exceptions exist for assignments of reading teachers; reading specialists; library information specialists; and teachers in ESL, bilingual education, and special education. See requirements for these roles in each position’s unique section within this document.

**Departmentalized Subjects in Grades 6-8 – (23 IAC 1.720)**

To be assigned to teach departmentalized subjects in the middle grades, an individual must hold a professional educator license and meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold an elementary education (self-contained general education) endorsement if first employed in grades 6-8 prior to September 1, 1973.
2. For major teaching assignments (subjects taught for the majority of the day), hold a junior high endorsement for the subject being taught and have completed five semester hours of coursework for any subject that is not taught for the majority of the day (minor teaching assignment).
3. Hold a middle school or middle grades endorsement for any major teaching subject (subject taught for the majority of the day) and have completed six semester hours of coursework for any minor teaching assignment (subject[s] that are not the major teaching assignment).
4. Hold a short-term approval valid for the grades and the subject to be taught.
5. Meet the predecessor requirements at a time when they were applicable, as confirmed by the employing district’s verification of the individual’s qualifications.

Exceptions exist for teaching assignments of reading teachers; reading specialists; library information specialists; and teachers in ESL, bilingual education, and special education. See requirements for these roles in each position’s unique section within this document.
Departmentalized Subjects in Grades 9-12 – (23 IAC 1.737)

To be assigned to teach a specific subject in any of the grades 9-12, an individual must hold a professional educator license and meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold an endorsement valid for the grades and subject to be taught.
2. Meet the predecessor requirements at a time when they were applicable, as confirmed by the employing district’s verification of the individual’s qualifications.
3. Have completed 24 hours of coursework in the subject area if first assigned to a position on or after July 1, 2004, and be working toward the endorsement, which must be obtained within three years of assignment. Only nine semester hours of coursework are required for the areas of library information specialist and foreign language. This provision is not applicable to the safety and driver’s education endorsement.
4. Hold a short-term approval valid for the grades and subject to be taught.

Exceptions exist for assignments of reading teachers; reading specialists; library information specialists; and teachers in ESL, bilingual education, and special education. See requirements for these roles in each position’s unique section within this document.

Bilingual Education – (23 IAC 1.780[a])

To serve as a bilingual education teacher, an individual must meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold a professional educator license, plus a bilingual endorsement, and qualify to teach the subject and grade range to be taught. (See specific subject within this document.)
2. Hold an educator license with stipulations endorsed for Transitional Bilingual Educator with a bilingual endorsement specific to the language of instruction.
3. Hold an educator license with stipulations endorsed for Visiting International Educator and have passed the English Language Proficiency test.
4. Hold a professional educator license valid for the grade ranges to be taught and was first assigned to teach in a bilingual education program prior to September 1, 1985.

English as a Second Language (ESL) – (23 IAC 1.780[b])

To teach English as a Second Language in any of the grades PK-12, an individual must meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold a professional educator license with an English as a Second Language or English as a New Language (ENL) endorsement for the grades to be taught.
2. Hold an educator license with stipulations endorsed for Visiting International Educator and have passed the English Language Proficiency test.

To teach English as a Second Language in any of the grades PK-6, an individual must meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Meet either of the two requirements above.
2. Hold a professional educator license endorsed for bilingual education valid for the grades to be taught.
3. Hold a professional educator license endorsed for ENL with a language designation (e.g., ENL-Spanish) valid for the grades to be taught.
4. Hold a professional educator license valid for the grade range(s) to be taught and was first assigned to teach in a bilingual education program prior to September 1, 1985.
Library Information Specialist – (23 IAC 1.755)

To provide library and audio-visual services to students as a library information specialist, an individual must hold a professional educator license valid for the grade levels of students to be served and meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold an endorsement for library information specialist, media, or library science.
2. Have met one of the following requirements between September 1, 1978, and June 30, 2004:
   a. Completed 18 semester hours of coursework in the areas of library administration, organization (cataloging and classification), reference, and selection of materials for elementary or secondary levels.
   b. Completed 32 semester hours in the areas of media, library administration, organization (cataloging and classification), reference, selection of materials for elementary AND secondary levels, production, and communications.
3. Hold a short-term approval for library information specialist.
4. Have completed 24 semester hours of college coursework in library information science on or after July 1, 2006, within three years of beginning the position.

Reading Teacher and Reading Specialist – (23 IAC 1.745)

A reading teacher endorsement is only valid for teaching reading to students; a reading specialist endorsement is valid for teaching reading to students and providing technical assistance or professional development to other teachers.

To teach reading to students, an individual must hold a professional educator license valid for the grade levels of students to be served and meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold an endorsement for reading teacher or reading specialist, as appropriate.
2. Meet the predecessor requirements at a time when they were applicable, as confirmed by the employing district’s verification of the individual's qualifications.
   a. Have completed 18 semester hours of coursework in the areas of foundation or survey of reading fundamentals, including reading in the content areas; testing procedures and diagnosis of reading disabilities; diagnostic teaching techniques and materials; clinical or laboratory practicum in reading; and literature appropriate for the age of students included in the program between September 1, 1978, and June 30, 2004.
   b. Hold a short-term approval for reading teacher or reading specialist.
3. Have completed 24 semester hours of college coursework in reading on or after July 1, 2006, within three years of beginning the position of reading teacher.

Special Education for Grade Kindergarten through Age 21 – (IAC 226.800[b])

To serve as a special education teacher in any grade kindergarten or higher, an individual must meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold a professional educator license endorsed for Learning Behavior Specialist I (LBSI), Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Blind and Visually Impaired, or Speech Language Pathologist–Teaching.
2. Hold a short-term emergency approval for special education.
3. See the next section for requirements to teach cross-categorical special education in prekindergarten.
Cross-Categorical Special Education for Students Through Age 5 – (226.800[b]; 226.720)

To teach students through age 5 with a range of disabilities and learning needs (cross-categorical special education), an individual must meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold a professional educator license endorsed for early childhood special education.
2. Hold a professional educator license endorsed in a special education area or self-contained early childhood education, plus the early childhood special education approval.

Grades 9-12 Career and Technical Education: Skill Level Instruction – (IAC 1.737[c]); 23 IAC 1.Appendix A)

To serve as a career and technical education teacher for grades 9-12, an individual must meet ONE of the following requirements:

1. Hold a professional educator license endorsed for grades 9-12 with the appropriate career and technical education endorsement. (The educator must complete 2,000 hours of work experience - outside of his/her current teaching position - within four years of assignment. The employing school district must maintain these records.)
2. Hold an educator license with stipulations endorsed for career and technical education to teach grades 7-12.
3. Hold an educator license with stipulations endorsed for provisional career and technical educator to teach grades 11-12.
4. Hold an educator license with stipulations endorsed for part-time provisional career and technical educator to teach grades 6-12.

Where to Find Licenses, Endorsements, Approvals, and Designations

Administrators can find an educator’s licenses, endorsements, approvals, and designations on the Education Licensure Information System (ELIS) credentials page. Each header has its own section, written in green text, on each educator’s ELIS Credentials screen. Below is an example of where to find these specific credentials in ELIS:

Click here to log in to ELIS and view a specific educator’s credentials page.
Definitions

- Course/coursework: Non-remedial coursework completed with a “C-” or higher from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.
- Major teaching assignment: The course that is taught for the majority of the day.
- Minor teaching assignment: A course (or courses) not taught for the majority of the day.