



# Illinois State Board of Education

100 W. Randolph St., Suite 14-300 • Chicago, Illinois 60601  
www.isbe.net

**Darren Reisberg**  
Chairman

**Dr. Carmen I. Ayala**  
State Superintendent of Education

## ISBE Early Childhood Division Guidance:

### Pathways to a Professional Educator License

Educators holding an **Illinois Gateways Level 5 Credential** or an **Educator License with Stipulations-Transitional Bilingual Educator (ELS-TBE)** can now acquire an **ISBE Professional Educator License (PEL)** while gaining valuable experience in an **ISBE Preschool for All (PFA)** program.

- **Public Act 100-0645** makes changes to who can teach in PFA classrooms. Between **2017 and 2023**, educators who hold one of the two following credentials and are working towards a Professional Educator License can teach in a PFA program:
  - A Gateways ECE Credential Level 5
  - An Educator License with Stipulations with a Transitional Bilingual Educator endorsement *and* have either passed the ECE content test *or* have completed at least 9 semester hours of ECE coursework.Program Administrators will have to collect evidence of coursework from ELS-TBE candidates.
- **Public Act 100-822** makes some changes to **who can participate in alternative licensure programs**.
  - This law allows for early childhood educators in alternative licensure programs to keep their jobs in community-based organizations while enrolled in the alternative licensure program.
  - Executive Directors and Lead Teachers in community-based EC programs are now considered **Qualified Equivalent** evaluators of EC educators.
- **Early Childhood Program Directors & Emergent Bilingual Program Directors**
  - The [ISBE Illinois Gateways Scholarship](#) provides financial support to candidates.
  - **Chicago candidates** working in CPS can apply for the [Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship](#)
  - The Educational Attainment Toolkit has been developed to help programs plan supports for Level 5 and TBE educators on the pathway to a PEL by creating cohorts and through partnership with higher education institutions.
  - All available approved programs (traditional or alternative) can be searched using the Directory of Approved Programs at [www.isbe.net/doap](http://www.isbe.net/doap)
    - [Alternative \(non-traditional\) teacher licensure](#) is an option for individuals who hold a bachelor's degree and have not completed traditional teacher preparation programs but have an interest in changing careers and becoming teachers.
    - Level 5 and ELS-TBE Educators are encouraged to go back to the institutions that granted their Bachelor's degrees and certifications to complete coursework towards a PEL.
- **Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs**
  - [Alternative \(non-traditional\) teacher licensure](#) is an option for those who have not completed traditional teacher preparation programs, but have an interest in changing careers and becoming teachers. If a candidate holds at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution and wishes to pursue a teaching license, alternative licensure routes are an option.
  - Institutions interested in offering a program, submit an Alternative Program Proposal (alternative)
  - Proposal documents can be found here: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Licensure-Colleges-and-Universities.aspx>, under Educator Program Resources
  - Institutions are encouraged to reach out to former graduates who received their undergraduate degrees to help them acquire and articulate towards a PEL or Early Childhood Endorsement

All available approved programs (traditional or alternative) can be searched using the Directory of Approved Programs at [https://www.isbe.net/doap](http://www.isbe.net/doap)