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](https://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](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.

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