



**College of Education**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

# Training Qualified Interpreters for IEP Meetings (TQII)

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

&

Illinois State Board of Education



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# Meet the Project Faculty



**Professor Kiel Christianson**  
Educational Psychology



**Professor Hedda Meadan-Kaplansky**  
Special Education



**Reynaldo Pagura**  
Translation & Interpreting  
Studies



**Professor Xun Yan**  
Linguistics



**Professor Joyce Tolliver**  
Spanish & Portuguese Studies



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# TQII Project

**The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and a team of experts at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, are working together to develop a modular online training program for people who would like to be designated as "qualified IEP interpreters." This program is a blend of synchronous and asynchronous online training and testing sessions, consisting of these three (3) modules:**

- 1. Language Proficiency Testing (in English and the target language)**
- 2. Special Education Terminology and Practices Training and Testing (6 hours)**
- 3. Interpreting Training and Testing (9 hours)**

**All "Qualified Interpreters" are required to participate in six (6) hours of "ongoing professional development." Our team will develop materials for this ongoing professional development before the first cohort of trainees reach two years post-qualification.**



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# Language Needs

**There are approximately 166 languages other than English spoken by children (and their parents) in Illinois school districts. ISBE has tasked our team to begin with the five most-commonly spoken languages other than English: Spanish, Polish, Arabic, Urdu and Russian. It is planned that all five of these languages will come online as part of the training program in the first five years. It is our hope that after these first five years, we will be able to add more languages at a faster pace, provided that funding from the state continues to be available.**

**Individuals who can demonstrate proficiency in other TARGET languages, however, are invited to contact us to discuss the possibility of a waiver in the target language (and English, too, if documentation can be provided) and arrangements for accommodation within the SPED and Interpreting training modules.**



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# Law Overview

## Illinois Administrative Code 23, Chapter 1 Part 226.800 (section k)

### k) Qualified Interpreters

#### 1) A qualified interpreter must:

- A) Meet all employment eligibility requirements of the school district.
- B) Demonstrate proficiency in English and the target language by passing State-approved language proficiency tests. A State-approved language proficiency test must include the following domains: listening, speaking, and reading (if the language exists in written form).
- C) Complete at least six hours of training on special education terminology and protocol. Individuals who already hold special education licenses, endorsements, or approvals are exempt from this six-hour training requirement.
- D) Complete at least nine hours of interpreting training
- E) Successfully pass an oral examination with a minimum score of 70% or higher & a written examination with a minimum score of 80% or higher



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# Language Waiver

**An individual is exempt from the testing requirements of this subsection (l)(1)(B) if he or she meets any of the following:**

**ii) For a target language proficiency test exemption, the individual:**

- **possesses a post-secondary degree in which the official language of instruction, as documented, is the target language;**
- **possesses the State Seal of Biliteracy with a minimum score of Advanced Low in the target language;**
- **receives a score of 4 or higher on the AP language test in the target language;**
- **currently possesses, or has possessed, an educator license with stipulations endorsed for transitional bilingual educator or professional educator license endorsed in LBSII/Bilingual Special Education Specialist or bilingual education; or**
- **currently possesses an Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts Court Interpreter Certification, a Certified Medical Interpreter Certification, or an Advanced Proficiency Level Interpreter License under 68 Ill. Adm. Code 1515, and the individual has completed additional coursework on special education terminology.**





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# Special Education Waiver

In order to obtain approval of the special education module waiver, you must submit proof of your bilingual special education endorsement to [tgii@education.illinois.edu](mailto:tgii@education.illinois.edu) **prior to the start date of the special education training module.**



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# Language Proficiency Testing Updates

**English:** The English Proficiency Exam will be available as of August 15, 2024.

**Spanish:** The Spanish Proficiency Exam will be available as of August 15, 2024.

**Remaining top-4 languages (Polish, Urdu, Arabic, and Russian):** One or more of these should be coming online as of Aug. 15, 2025

→ At present, the plan is to have oral proficiency exams available in Standard, Levantine, Egyptian, and Moroccan Arabic. (The written portion will be all in Standard.)





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# Training Updates

**Spring semester, 2024, we trained our first two full cohorts of trainees. In the first cohort, which ran from 1/15/24 to 3/2/24, we had 48 trainees register, and 18 trainees complete training. In the second cohort, which ran from 3/4/24 to 4/27/24, we had 48 trainees register, and 31 complete training. All the trainees were exempt from the English and Spanish proficiency testing, according to the law.**

**We are requesting additional funding from ISBE to double capacity of the cohorts moving forward, and to offer some summer sessions. Currently, we are piloting a couple of 10-seat summer courses to determine how best to organize/schedule during the summer.**

**Demand has been much greater than we (UIUC team) had anticipated...**



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# Contact Information

## ISBE:

- [ISBESpecED@isbe.net](mailto:ISBESpecED@isbe.net)

## UIUC:

- Natalie Grewe – project coordinator: [tqii@education.illinois.edu](mailto:tqii@education.illinois.edu)
- Professor Kiel Christianson: [kiel@illinois.edu](mailto:kiel@illinois.edu)