

CERTIFICATION ALERT

Connecticut Educator Certification News from the Connecticut State Department of Education



[August 2021 \(Updated October 2021\)](#)

Significant Changes to Bilingual Education Certification Requirements

Governor Lamont recently signed into law the State Department of Education's proposed legislation regarding bilingual certification, as passed by the General Assembly. Section 2 of Public Act 21-144 amends our bilingual education statute, Section 10-145h of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). The new law changes certification significantly for bilingual education. The full text of [Public Act 21-144](#) is available on the Connecticut General Assembly website. Below is the new language of the relevant subsections of C.G.S. Section 10-145h that changed, along with information about how the new language changes certification requirements.

1. Testing [*Subsection (a) of C.G.S. Section 10-145h, as amended*]:

On and after July 1, 2021, the State Board of Education shall require an applicant for certification as a bilingual education teacher to demonstrate written competency in English and written and oral competency in the other language of instruction as a condition of certification as follows: (1) Written competency in English shall be demonstrated by (A) successful passage of the essential skills test approved by the State Board of Education, or (B) a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent, from a regionally accredited institution of higher education in which the language of instruction is English, and (2) written competency in the other language shall be demonstrated (A) on an examination, if available, of comparable difficulty as specified by the Department of Education, or (B) a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent, from a regionally accredited institution of higher education in which the language of instruction is in the other language. If such an examination is not available, competency shall be demonstrated by an appropriate alternative method as specified by the department. Oral competency in the other language shall be demonstrated by an appropriate method specified by the Department of Education.

In the past, successful passage of testing to verify proficiency in BOTH English and the other language of instruction was required of all bilingual education candidates.

As of July 1, 2021, PA 21-144 allows candidates for bilingual certification an additional option for demonstrating their proficiency in either language. The State Department of Education can now accept the award of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university to verify proficiency in the dominant language of instruction of the degree. Educators who verify completion of a bachelor's degree at an institution where English is the language of instruction will not need to verify their written proficiency in English by passing the Core Academic Skills test in writing.

- The CSDE will assume the language of instruction in most institutions in U.S. states is English.
- For institutions in Puerto Rico, the CSDE is reaching out to the major colleges of education for an official letter from the dean, so that each applicant does not need to do so. However, educators who may

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have completed a degree in Puerto Rico in a different language than that verified may still submit a letter verifying the language of their specific degree.

- Educators who completed a degree in English at institutions outside of the U.S. will need to provide a letter from an administrative official of the institution (such as the dean, certification officer or registrar) verifying the language of instruction.

Similarly educators who have completed their bachelor's degree in institutions where the other language sought for bilingual certification was the language of instruction, will not need to verify their oral or written proficiency in that language with passing scores on the ACTFL OPI and WPT tests.

- Educators who completed a degree in a language other than English will need to provide a letter from an administrative official of the institution (such as the dean, certification officer or registrar) verifying the language of instruction.

What is a Bachelor's degree or the equivalent?

The legislation allows acceptance of *"a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent."* The CSDE will accept advanced degrees awarded by regionally accredited colleges and universities, as well as completion of an approved Connecticut alternate route to certification program as equivalent to a bachelor's degree for the purposes of this provision in the legislation.

2. Grade Levels [Subsection (d) of C.G.S. Section 10-145h, as amended]:

On and after July 1, 2021, certification in (1) elementary bilingual education shall be valid for grades kindergarten to nine, inclusive, and (2) middle grades bilingual education shall be valid for grades four to nine, inclusive.

In the past, elementary bilingual education, endorsement #902, authorized service in grades K-8. Middle grades bilingual endorsements authorized service in grades 4-8.

As of July 1, 2021:

- Bilingual elementary endorsement 902 now authorizes service in grades K-9.
- Bilingual middle grades endorsements now authorize service in grades 4-9.

Note that this applies to existing certificate holders as well as to new certificates issued after July 1.

3. New Secondary Bilingual STEM and Humanities Endorsements [Subsections (e)-(g) of C.G.S. Section 10-125h, as amended]:

(e) Not later than January 1, 2022, the Commissioner of Education shall approve guidelines for unique endorsements to authorize the teaching of secondary bilingual humanities and secondary bilingual science, technology, engineering and mathematics courses.

(f) (1) A certified bilingual education teacher who has completed at least fifteen semester hours of credit in combined content coursework in the humanities shall be eligible to teach secondary humanities courses in a bilingual education program. (2) A certified teacher who does not hold an endorsement in bilingual education shall be eligible to teach secondary humanities courses in a bilingual education program if such teacher completes (A) fifteen semester hours of credit in combined content coursework in the humanities, and (B) the required

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coursework and testing for a bilingual endorsement under this section.

(g) (1) A certified bilingual education teacher who has completed at least fifteen semester hours of credit in combined content coursework in the fields of science, technology, engineering or mathematics shall be eligible to teach secondary courses in such fields in a bilingual education program. (2) A certified teacher who does not hold an endorsement in bilingual education shall be eligible to teach secondary science, technology, engineering or mathematics courses in a bilingual education program if such teacher completes (A) fifteen semester hours of credit in combined content coursework in the fields of science, technology, engineering or mathematics, and (B) the required coursework and testing for a bilingual endorsement under this section.”

In the past, teachers with language skills who wanted to add bilingual endorsements were required hold a matching content endorsement, or at least to have completed significant content coursework in a specific area. This meant that educators who held world language, special education or special subject endorsements were generally required to complete at least 30 credits in the specific subject area to be taught, in order to become eligible for a secondary bilingual endorsement.

As of July 1, 2021:

- New secondary bilingual cross endorsements may be issued to educators who document award of at least 15 semester hours of credit in humanities and/or STEM coursework on the official transcripts of regionally accredited colleges and/or universities, AND meet coursework and testing requirements for the bilingual cross endorsement. The specific 18 semester hours of credit in bilingual education are required. Bilingual coursework must be completed at ONE college or university, or alternatively, educators with at least 15 credits in humanities and/or STEM may choose to complete the ARCTEL alternate route program offered at ACES for bilingual and TESOL cross endorsement.
- Candidates must already hold a Connecticut certificate in one of the following areas: elementary, bilingual elementary, middle grades, bilingual middle grades, early childhood, bilingual early childhood, secondary education, secondary bilingual education, special education, or special subjects (e.g., TESOL, art, health, home economics, music, PE, technology education, school library media).
- The new secondary bilingual humanities endorsement (#991) authorizes the teaching of secondary bilingual humanities courses, at the discretion of the employing district. It is up to the district to ensure that the educator has the content knowledge and support to teach individual courses. This endorsement authorizes the holder to teach humanities in a bilingual setting in grades 5–12.
- The new secondary bilingual STEM endorsement (#992) authorizes the teaching of secondary bilingual STEM courses, at the discretion of the employing district. It is up to the district to ensure that the educator has the content knowledge and support to teach individual courses. This endorsement authorizes the holder to teach STEM courses in a bilingual setting in grades 5–12.

