



Indiana Grants 2 Million to Increase the Number of English Language Learners Teachers

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In this piece, I will use several terms, such as multilingual language learners (MLL), English language learners (ELL), and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). My preferred term is MLL which acknowledges that we don't want English to replace students' native language (s), but instead, we

want students to be literate in their native language(s) and English. Since some programs include below use other terms, I will use them in this piece.

The number of multilingual learners continues to rise in Indiana. In Florida, there is a mandate that teachers earn an English to Speakers of Other Languages license if they serve multilingual learners. Although Indiana does require a teacher of record for English learners, the state does not require classroom teachers to have the license. I think they should, and I'm glad that the Indiana Department of Education is at least taking steps to get more teachers licensed.

I started teaching in Indiana in 2006; whether I taught in the suburbs, a traditional public school, or a charter school, I had multilingual learners in my class. With less than three years under my teaching belt, I enrolled in IUPUI's Language Education master's program and picked up my ESOL license. I have served as an English learners teacher, and now I supervise and coach student teachers earning their ESOL license and teach college courses focused on multilingual learners.

The truth is that the strategies that work well for multilingual learners work well for all students. This is why all teachers should get this license. Taking college courses is expensive. Although I didn't take out any loans for my master's or currently for my doctoral program, paying your way is hard on an educator's salary and requires sacrifice. Teachers should have to sacrifice financially to improve their teaching skills.

IDOE has partnered with the University of Indianapolis to create the I-TELL (Indiana Teachers of English Language Learners) initiative. This program will help teachers financially with tuition, books, and materials.

I encourage teachers, if they have the capacity, to do the work to earn this license. This knowledge will help all students, not just MLLs.