

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Monica Colucci, Vice Chair }
Ms. Mary Blanco }
Mr. Danny Espino }
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SUBJECT: 2025 REVISED FLORIDA TEACHER STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL) ENDORSEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FROM THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (FDOE)

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL, & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS, LEADERS, & STAFF

As Florida’s population becomes increasingly diverse, the need for qualified ESOL teachers continues to rise. With more than 300,000 English Language Learners (ELLs) enrolled across the state, Florida’s diversity of ELLs surpasses most states in the country. Florida is ranked third in ELL population, and although Spanish is the major native language of these students, the ELLs speak more than 243 different languages (*Florida Department of Education*). Over 80,000 ELLs students were reported in Miami-Dade County Public Schools last year (*2024-2025 Statistical Highlights*). Currently, there are approximately 77,000 ELL students in M-DCPS. There is a clear indication that there is a growing demand for educators equipped to meet the unique needs of multilingual students. Earning an ESOL endorsement not only meets state certification requirements but also opens doors to meaningful careers in bridging cultural and linguistic divides.

On August 20, 2025, the State Board of Education approved updates to Rule 6-A-4.02451, Florida Administrative Code, which outlines the 2025 Florida Teacher Standards for ESOL Endorsement. These changes focus on updating the required competencies for earning an ESOL endorsement. The revised standards aim to better prepare educators to support English Language Learners (ELLs) using strategies that enhance academic performance.

These standards form the foundation for the ESOL endorsement and emphasize practical, evidence-based performance indicators across five strands. These strands are:

1. Communication and Understanding for English Language Learners (ELLs);
2. Applied Linguistics (AL);
3. Methods of Teaching ESOL;
4. ESOL Curriculum and Material Development;
5. Testing and Evaluation of ESOL

The new ESOL standards, as reported by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) will:

- Contribute directly to school improvement efforts by ensuring all educators are equipped to meet the needs of ELLs.
- Focus on current educational and linguistic strategies that promote the academic success of ELLs.
- Offer concrete, actionable approaches that can be implemented in teacher preparation programs, school districts, charter management organizations with approved ESOL ADD-ON Endorsement Programs, and demonstrated effectively in classroom instruction.
- Serve as a strong foundation for high-quality professional learning opportunities to build teacher capacity in supporting ELLs.

In accordance with the updated standards, school districts and state-approved teacher preparation programs are required to submit revised ESOL endorsement matrices to the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) by June 1, 2026, for review and approval. To support this process, the FDOE will offer training and technical assistance on the ESOL Endorsement Matrix to both institutions of higher education and school districts that have approved ESOL Add-On Endorsement Programs. The ESOL endorsement serves as an additional certification for teachers, supports compliance with the META Consent Decree, increases the pool of ESOL-certified instructional staff available to serve English Language Learners, and it is anticipated to reduce the number of out-of-field teachers.

While Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) may outperform state averages in English language progress, continued improvement is essential to fully realize the district's goals for student achievement through language acquisition. Given that English language progress is a key accountability measure by improving subgroup(s) performance such as the ELL school's student population, under the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, maintaining and building upon this growth remains a critical priority.

To support sustained growth in English language proficiency and align with the district's commitment to high academic achievement for all students, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) should leverage the 2025 Revised Florida Teacher Standards for ESOL Endorsement. These updated standards provide a critical framework for enhancing instructional quality and ensuring that educators are equipped to meet the needs of English learners.

Expanding targeted professional development aligned with these revised standards will be essential in strengthening teacher capacity, promoting instructional consistency, and improving student outcomes. This proactive approach will support schools in maintaining or exceeding progress expectations, thereby mitigating the risk of receiving a school improvement rating. Ultimately, this strategy will accelerate English language acquisition, increase the number of students successfully exiting the ESOL program, and drive long-term academic success across the district. M-DCPS should reach out to the FDOE to seek professional development technical assistance regarding the new endorsement standards and the ESSA performance standards for subgroups.

Add-On Certification (Endorsements) and addition of professional learning components are approved by the Board before being submitted to the Florida Department of Education. This approval typically takes place through an agenda item presented by the Chief Human Capital Officer. A similar item is anticipated to be brought before the Board ahead of the June 1, 2026, deadline. As the district works to meet the June 1, 2026, submission deadline to the FDOE, it is critical to fully utilize the technical assistance provided by the Department and finalize revisions to the endorsement courses, pursuant to the new approved standards offered by M-DCPS before seeking Board approval and submitting to the FDOE.

This agenda item has been reviewed and approved by the Office of the General Counsel as to form and legal sufficiency.

ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR

MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, supports the Superintendent of Schools of all actions necessary to finalize the revisions of the ESOL endorsement courses pursuant to the updates approved by the State Board of Education on August 20, 2025 to Rule 6-A-4.02451, Florida Administrative Code, which outlines the 2025 Revised Florida Teacher Standards for ESOL Endorsement; and seek professional development technical assistance from the Florida Department of Education, as appropriate and feasible, regarding the new ESOL endorsement standards and the *ESSA* performance improvement standards for the ELL subgroup, in order to reduce the likelihood of receiving a school improvement rating.