

For Immediate Release

Media Contacts: Victor Morente
Chief of External Affairs
Rhode Island Department of Education
(401) 441-4995
Victor.Morente@ride.ri.gov

Gwynn Mason
Director, Marketing and Communications
TESOL International Association
+1 703-518-2517
gmason@tesol.org

TESOL International Association and Rhode Island Department of Education Partner to Launch Statewide Self-Study Course Supporting Multilingual Learners of English

ALEXANDRIA, Va. and PROVIDENCE, Ri. (July 9, 2026) – TESOL International Association (TESOL) and the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) are proud to announce a new partnership to develop and implement a statewide professional learning self-study course titled **Rhode Island Multilingual Learner Awareness Course**.

Through a formal Memorandum of Understanding, TESOL and RIDE are collaborating to deliver a high-quality, self-study course designed to build foundational knowledge and practical skills for working with multilingual learners (MLLs). The course supports Rhode Island's new MLL Regulations and expands professional learning opportunities for educators across roles and grade levels at no cost to the participants. The goal of the partnership is to ensure that MLLs are supported by all staff throughout the school day, leading to better educational outcomes.

-more-

"RIDE was thrilled to partner with TESOL on building a self-study awareness course for Rhode Island educators to develop foundational skills and understandings to support the success of MLLs," said Commissioner Infante-Green. "In line with Rhode Island's new MLL Regulations, we are committed to expanding professional learning opportunities to reach educators in a variety of roles, from principals to counselors to classroom teachers. In Rhode Island and across the nation, there is a growing need to strengthen instructional support for multilingual learners, and we are proud to partner with TESOL to deliver high-quality professional learning that advances academic achievement for students while empowering teachers."

"At TESOL, we believe that every educator plays a critical role in supporting multilingual learners of English," said TESOL Executive Director Danielle Staudt. "Our partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education represents an important step toward building statewide capacity by making research-based, practical professional learning accessible to all educators. Together, we are strengthening instruction and improving outcomes for multilingual learners for years to come."

This foundational program is a self-paced course that offers educators structured, research-informed modules aligned with key competencies and awareness indicators. Course modules include:

- Language and literacy development
- Sociocultural context
- High-quality instruction and support
- Assessment and evaluation
- Collaboration and leadership

While the program is designed as an on-demand, self-study course, RIDE encourages districts to implement it within a facilitated professional learning community model when possible. Local education agencies may offer the course through group-based professional learning, independent self-study completion, or a hybrid approach, depending on district needs and available professional learning time.

RIDE estimates that as many as 11,000 Rhode Island educators may access this course prior to the 2030–31 school year, when local educational agencies must demonstrate compliance with the state's MLL Regulations.

Enrollment is anticipated to begin in 2026, with various district-wide implementation timelines. The course is designed to be completed in approximately 15 hours, though districts may determine pacing based on their professional learning structures.

Under the partnership agreement, along with the development of this course, TESOL will collaborate with RIDE on course management and maintenance during the first year of implementation.

For more information about this program, please email learn@tesol.org.

About TESOL International Association

TESOL International Association is the trusted global community for knowledge and expertise in English language teaching. TESOL advances the professional expertise in English language teaching to speakers of other languages in multilingual contexts worldwide through professional learning, research, standards, and advocacy. In principle and in practice, TESOL values professionalism, respect, integrity, and lifelong learning and seeks diverse and inclusive participation within the field of English language teaching. TESOL promotes equitable representation, engagement, and broad access to professional opportunities for all and works to eliminate any kind of discrimination. TESOL is a professional community of more than 8,000 English language professionals representing more than 100 countries. To learn more about partnering with TESOL, please visit <https://info.tesol.org/workshops>.

About the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE)

The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is committed to ensuring equitable access to high-quality education for all students across the state.

#