



Rhode Island School for
Progressive Education


Strengthening Rhode Island's Teacher Workforce



The Rhode Island School for Progressive Education (RISPE) is dedicated to tackling the state's most urgent educational challenges: the persistent teacher shortage and supporting its increasingly diverse student body. Our mission is to address these issues directly through programs that ensure students have access to culturally responsive, highly qualified teachers in their classrooms. Our recent data, testimonials, and outcomes demonstrate RISPE's impact on strengthening Rhode Island's teacher workforce. Our aim is to show how RISPE promotes equity, enhances teacher preparation, and ultimately supports student success throughout the state.

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RISPE

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Our Impact on Teacher Certification

In the 2025 RI KIDS COUNT Factbook, from the 2013-14 to 2023-24 school years, the number of MLL students has nearly doubled (92%) in the past decade. MLL students represent 14% (19,674) of the total student population. According to Rhode Island's Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, Rhode Island has the highest percentage of MLL students in New England. Rhode Island faces an urgent shortage of qualified English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Multilingual Learner (MLL) teachers. ***RISPE is bridging the gap by training a significantly higher number of educators in these crucial areas.***

Key Numbers

87 ESOL

Since 2019, RISPE has trained 87 ESOL-certified teachers in the state, with 38 currently progressing toward certification.

120 Educators

RISPE has trained 120 educators through our MLL Endorsement Program, with 45 active enrollees.

52% ESOL

In the 2025 RI KIDS COUNT Factbook, documented in October 2024, 2% (166) of Rhode Island public school teachers and educators held an active Bilingual, Dual Language, or ESOL certification. RISPE is responsible for 52% of ESOL-certified teachers in Rhode Island, and is still increasing.

1 of 3 Programs

RISPE is one of three institutions/organizations with an MLL Endorsement program in Rhode Island. The other two are the University of Rhode Island and ExcEL, which is part of the Pathways to Educator Certification (PRIME).

Statewide MLL Impact

- In 2023-24, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) issued 221 ESOL, Bilingual, and Dual Language emergency certifications (27% of the certificates issued). This shows the high need for RISPE programs.
- The 2025 RI KIDS COUNT Factbook highlighted that successful MLL programs in schools have highly qualified, culturally competent teachers. In the 2023-24 school year, MLL students outperformed non-MLLs on the RICAS.
- Every district that has sent a cohort of its teachers through our ESOL or MLL programs has gone on to send at least one additional cohort of teachers. This shows that our customers become repeat customers and that we contribute to higher test scores for MLL students across Rhode Island.



DISTRICT-WIDE IMPACT (CENTRAL FALLS)

- Through our partnership with Central Falls, we helped diversify the teacher workforce, with the number of teachers of color increasing from 7% to 19%, the highest statewide.
- During this period, the number of students not meeting expectations in Math dropped 10%, and the number of 3rd-grade ELA “not meeting” rates was cut in half. This contrasts with the statewide decline of ELA.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 100% of RISPE ATC and ESOL completers scored a B or better on their Student Impact Projects.
- This demonstrates measurable growth in student literacy acquisition.

RETENTION DATA

- Roughly 75% of candidates who began certification with RISPE in FY22 remain in the teaching field, and several others return for additional certification.
- RISPE is working to improve retention within districts to build a more substantial “critical mass” of RISPE-trained educators.

EXPANDING REACH & EQUITY

RISPE is reshaping the teacher pipeline to ensure every student can access excellent, culturally responsive educators.

RISPE has established four new partnerships over the past year:

- Middletown School District
- West Warwick School District,
- Segue Institute for Learning, and
- Cape Verdean American Community Development Center.

This makes a total of 19 partnerships throughout the state, including:

- 360 High School,
- Achievement First,
- Central Falls School District,
- Excel Academy Charter School,
- International Charter School,
- Meeting Street (Hope Academy and Grace School),
- Nuestro Mundo Public Charter School,
- Pawtucket Public Schools
- Paul Cuffee School,
- Providence Public Schools,
- SouthSide Elementary Charter School,
- The Met School (High School),
- The Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP),
- Westerly Public Schools,
- Woonsocket Public Schools

Teacher & Partner Satisfaction

Our goal is beyond certification. We ensure that teachers and districts feel prepared, supported, and successful. RISPE has received 100% positive ratings in the following areas of tier program experience:

- Relevance of curriculum
- Instructor proficiency
- Clarity in the explanation of the concepts of the subject matter
- Cultural competency of the instructor

CANDIDATES AND PRINCIPALS' VOICES:

RISPE is pleased to share positive remarks as part of our assessment of the impact and satisfaction of our programs:

- "This was an excellent program for the endorsement. It touched on the competencies needed for TESOL enough for general education teachers to apply in classrooms."
- "This was a great opportunity for professional development!"
- "These presenters were wonderful and extremely knowledgeable!!"
- "The training was outstanding! I especially liked learning about how to understand and access WIDA scores. The can do descriptors by WIDA scores are such a valuable way to ensure best practice with MLL students!"
- "Instructors were like a breath of fresh air!"
- "Excellent, relevant content delivered by expert instructors."
- "The instructors were great. The in-person sessions were more effective."
- "The instructors were very knowledgeable and approachable. The conversations our class had during the program were rich with content that will have a direct impact on how we teach our multilingual learner students in the classroom. I am looking forward to applying this new learning to my first graders in the Fall!"

Why This Matters

Our highest aim is to ensure a strong educational system for a strong democracy. We prepare critical and reflective practitioners who will empower every student with deep knowledge, an enduring curiosity about the world, and a strong voice for social justice. We are committed to building a powerful education workforce that reflects the strengths and diversity of our communities. (Rhode Island School for Progressive Education's Official Mission Statement) RISPE is not just filling certification gaps. We are creating a movement of equity-driven educators who:

- Reflect the students and families they serve
- Bring cultural responsiveness to every classroom.
- Are prepared from day one to support multilingual learners.

Thank You to Our Funders

RISPE extends our deepest gratitude to our generous funders and partners whose support makes RISPE's mission possible. Your belief in our work enables us to expand opportunities for aspiring educators and strengthen Rhode Island's public schools. Together, we are working to create a more equitable future for all students.



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