



# **SCHOOL DISTRICT PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

## **K-12 Education: Assessing the Quality of English As a Second Language Preparation in Kansas Teacher Education Programs**

**A Report to the Legislative Post Audit Committee  
By the Legislative Division of Post Audit  
State of Kansas  
April 2008**

# ***Legislative Post Audit Committee***

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## ***Legislative Division of Post Audit***

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April 29, 2008

To: Members, Legislative Post Audit Committee

Senator Derek Schmidt, Chair  
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Representative Virgil Peck Jr., Vice-Chair  
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Representative Tom Sawyer

This report contains the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from our completed performance audit, *K-12 Education: Assessing the Quality of English As a Second Language Preparation in Kansas Teacher Education Programs*.

The report includes several recommendations for the State Board of Education to improve the ESL training that the universities' teacher education programs provide. It also includes a recommendation that the Legislature consider creating financial incentives for teachers who obtain an ESL endorsement. We would be happy to discuss these recommendations or any other items in the report with any legislative committees, individual legislators, or other State officials.

Barbara J. Hinton  
Legislative Post Auditor

## Get the Big Picture

Read these Sections and Features:

1. **Executive Summary** - an overview of the questions we asked and the answers we found.
2. **Conclusion and Recommendations** - are referenced in the Executive Summary and appear in a box after each question in the report.
3. **Agency Response** - also referenced in the Executive Summary and is the last Appendix.

### *Helpful Tools for Getting to the Detail*

- In most cases, an “**At a Glance**” description of the agency or department appears within the first few pages of the main report.
- **Side Headings** point out key issues and findings.
- **Charts/Tables** may be found throughout the report, and help provide a picture of what we found.
- **Narrative text boxes** can highlight interesting information, or provide detailed examples of problems we found.
- **Appendices** may include additional supporting documentation, along with the audit **Scope Statement** and **Agency Response(s)**.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
LEGISLATIVE DIVISION OF POST AUDIT

**Overview of English As a Second Language  
Preparation In Kansas Teacher Education Programs**

**Teacher education programs provide prospective teachers the training and education they need to obtain a teaching license.** ..... page 3  
*The Board of Education sets the requirements for obtaining a teaching license, which include obtaining a bachelor’s degree, passing tests that cover both teaching skills and subject content, and completing an approved teacher education program. The Board also sets the requirements for teacher education programs, which include completing an initial accreditation process, complying with national standards for teacher education programs, and periodically having the program reviewed and re-approved. Altogether, the Board has approved 22 teacher education programs including programs at all seven public universities.*

**The Board of Education requires teacher education programs to provide a minimal amount of English as a second language training.** ..... page 4  
The Board requires teacher education programs train prospective teachers in strategies to teach English as a second language (ESL) students, though how each program provides that training varies. For example, some programs embed small amounts of ESL training into required courses while others require specific courses dedicated to teaching ESL students.

**Do Teacher Education Programs in Kansas Colleges and Universities Adequately Prepare New Teachers To Teach ESL Students?**

**In general, Kansas teacher education programs don’t appear to adequately prepare teachers to teach ESL students.** ..... page 5  
Overall, teacher’s we surveyed indicated they didn’t feel adequately prepared to teach ESL students. They also felt less prepared to teach ESL students than other groups of students, including those with disabilities. We also found that teachers who felt the least prepared to teach ESL students were the ones who generally felt the least-prepared to teach students in general.

**Teachers from academic programs that emphasize hands-on experience tended to feel the most prepared.** ..... page 7  
We compared the types of ESL training provided by the public teacher education programs to how well prepared the teachers from those programs felt to teach ESL students. The highest-rated programs (Fort Hays State University and Emporia State University) were the only ones that require all prospective teachers obtain hands-on experience adapting lesson plans for ESL students. Teachers who responded to our survey suggested requiring more dedicated coursework, hands-on training experience, and foreign language training to improve ESL training.

**Teachers with more literate ESL students and better support from their schools tended to feel more prepared to teach ESL students.** ..... page 9  
In general, teachers felt better prepared to teach ESL students when those students already were more proficient in English. Teachers also indicated they felt more prepared when they received stronger support for teaching ESL students from their district.

**Conclusion** ..... page 10

**Recommendations** ..... page 10

**APPENDIX A: Scope Statement** ..... page 11

**APPENDIX B: Agency Response** ..... page 12

This audit was conducted by Ivan Williams. Scott Frank was the audit manager. If you need any additional information about the audit's findings, please contact Ivan Williams at the Division's offices. Our address is: Legislative Division of Post Audit, 800 SW Jackson Street, Suite 1200, Topeka, Kansas 66612. You also may call us at (785) 296-3792, or contact us via the Internet at [LPA@lpa.state.ks.us](mailto:LPA@lpa.state.ks.us).

# K-12 Education: Assessing the Quality of English As a Second Language Preparation in Kansas Teacher Education Programs

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According to the Department of Education's Statewide report card for the 2005-06 school year, students who spoke English as a second language (ESL) represented almost 6% of the total K-12 student population. They are in especially high concentrations in the large, urban districts (Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita) and in southwest Kansas. Our 2006 education cost study found that the number of ESL students grew by more than 30% from the 1999-00 school year to the 2004-05 school year. Not surprisingly, students whose primary language isn't English scored significantly lower than other students on Statewide reading and math assessment tests.

Concerns have been raised that too few teachers have been adequately trained to teach ESL students. For the 2004-05 school year, almost 19% of all ESL teaching positions were either vacant (2%) or filled by a teacher who wasn't fully endorsed (17%). In its December 2006 report to the Legislature, the 2010 Commission also found there weren't enough teachers with ESL endorsements and recommended requiring teachers to gain such an endorsement as part of teacher certification.

House Bill 2017, introduced during the 2007 legislative session, would have created a nine-member commission to study the need for more ESL coursework in teacher education programs. During the bill's hearing, representatives from several State teacher education programs told legislators they currently "embed" ESL training in teachers' other coursework, and that requiring additional coursework or a full endorsement was unnecessary and would considerably lengthen the time it takes to get a teaching degree.

Recently, Commission members have expressed an interest in learning more about the effectiveness of the ESL training that currently is embedded in Kansas teacher education programs. This school district performance audit answers the following question:

## **Do teacher education programs in Kansas colleges and universities adequately prepare new teachers to teach ESL students?**

To answer these questions, we obtained teacher education and licensure data from the Department of Education and surveyed teachers about their preparedness to teach ESL students. To obtain recent impressions of the teacher education programs, we only surveyed second- or third-year teachers who hadn't received an

ESL endorsement. We analyzed their data to determine how prepared teachers said they felt, and to identify the factors influencing their preparedness. We also contacted officials from teacher education programs to find out about the types of ESL training they provide.

A copy of the approved scope statement for this audit is included in *Appendix A*.

In conducting this audit, we followed all applicable government auditing standards. Our findings begin on page 5, following a brief overview.



## Overview of English As a Second Language Preparation In Kansas Teacher Education Programs

### ***Teacher Education Programs Provide Prospective Teachers the Training and Education They Need To Obtain a Teaching License***

The Board of Education sets the requirements for obtaining a teaching license in Kansas. These requirements generally include obtaining a bachelor's degree, passing tests that cover both teaching skills and subject content, studying or teaching within the past six years, and completing an approved teacher education program.

The Board of Education also sets the requirement for teacher education programs in Kansas. Those requirements include completing an initial accreditation process, complying with national standards for teacher education programs, and periodically having the program reviewed and re-approved. Altogether, the Board of Education has approved teacher education programs for 22 Kansas colleges and universities, including all six of the Board of Regents' institutions and Washburn University. A complete list of those institutions, along with the numbers of students recently completing their teacher education programs, is provided in **Figure OV-1**.

<b>Figure OV-1</b>					
<b>Teacher Education Programs In Kansas</b>					
	Students Completing Teacher Education Programs by Year				
<b>Public Universities</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Kansas State University	373	478	398	353	1,602
Pittsburg State University	241	266	218	232	957
Emporia State University	287	216	225	222	950
Wichita State University	227	203	160	131	721
University of Kansas	152	146	165	157	620
Fort Hays State University	89	90	114	152	445
Washburn University	99	117	69	75	360
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>	<b>1,468</b>	<b>1,516</b>	<b>1,349</b>	<b>1,322</b>	<b>5,655</b>
<b>Private Institutions</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Benedictine College	120	120	130	138	508
Newman University	75	48	58	74	255
Tabor College	n/a	66	72	63	201
Friends University	46	40	36	30	152
MidAmerica Nazarene University	27	42	37	36	142
Baker University	25	30	38	32	125
Kansas Wesleyan University	25	25	38	17	105
Southwestern College	29	19	23	25	96
University of Saint Mary	31	25	17	19	92
Bethel College	24	18	17	21	80
Bethany College	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Haskell Indian Nations University	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
McPherson College	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ottawa University	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sterling College	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Sub-Totals:</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>1,756</b>
<b>Grand Totals:</b>	<b>1,870</b>	<b>1,949</b>	<b>1,815</b>	<b>1,777</b>	<b>7,411</b>

Source: LPA survey of teacher education programs (unaudited).

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***The Board of Education Requires Teacher Education Programs To Provide a Minimal Amount of English As A Second Language Training***

The Board of Education's standards for approving teacher education programs include a requirement that prospective teachers be trained in strategies to teach English as a second language (ESL) students. How each of the programs meets this requirement can vary significantly. Some programs embed small amounts of ESL training into the normally required teaching methods courses, while others require specific courses dedicated to teaching ESL students. In some cases, programs require teachers to get practical experience working with ESL students as part of their student teaching.

Teachers who want or need more extensive training with ESL students, including those who want to specialize as ESL instructors, can obtain an ESL endorsement. To get the endorsement, the teacher must take a number of additional courses (about 15-18 additional college credit hours) and pass a test covering ESL content.

In its 2006 report to the Legislature, the 2010 Commission recommended requiring all teachers to get the full ESL endorsement as a way of addressing shortages in the number of ESL-trained teachers. In hearings on a bill that would address this recommendation, representatives from several of the teacher education programs expressed concerns about the additional time it would take teachers to earn this endorsement, and testified that their programs already include ESL training as part of their basic teacher education programs. To date, the bill addressing this recommendation (HB 2017) hasn't passed.

**Names and Acronyms for Students Who Speak English as a Second Language**

Many names and acronyms are used to refer both to students who speak English as a second language and to the services they receive. The various names for these students and services include:

- English as a second language (ESL)
- English language learner (ELL)
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- limited English proficient (LEP)
- bilingual

Although there may be subtle differences in what each of these terms means, to keep things simple we've used the term ESL (e.g., ESL students, ESL endorsements, and ESL training) throughout this report.

## ***Do Teacher Education Programs in Kansas Colleges and Universities Adequately Prepare New Teachers To Teach ESL Students?***

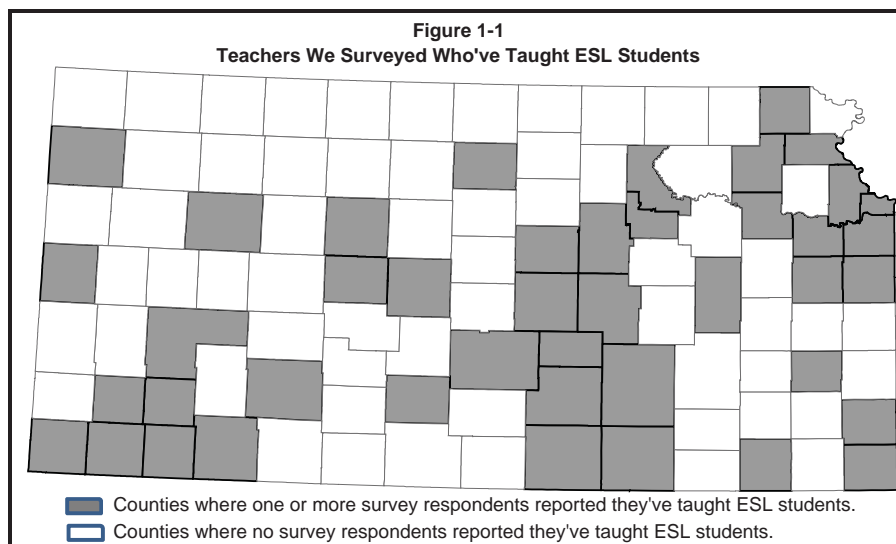
**ANSWER IN BRIEF:** *In general, teacher education programs in Kansas don't appear to adequately prepare teachers to teach ESL students. Overall, 60% of the teachers we surveyed who've taught ESL students said they didn't feel adequately prepared to teach ESL students. Those teachers also felt far less prepared to teach ESL students than to teach either the general population of students or disabled students. We also found teachers who felt less prepared to teach ESL students felt less prepared to teach all students. Teachers from academic programs that emphasize hands-on experience tended to feel more prepared than those from programs that rely primarily on classroom instruction. Teachers who recently completed their teacher education program told us requiring more dedicated coursework, hands-on training experience, and foreign language training could improve ESL training. Other factors that affected how prepared for ESL students teachers felt, included the English proficiency of their ESL students and the support they received from their school. These and related findings are discussed in the sections that follow.*

### ***In General, Teacher Education Programs In Kansas Don't Appear To Adequately Prepare Teachers To Teach ESL Students***

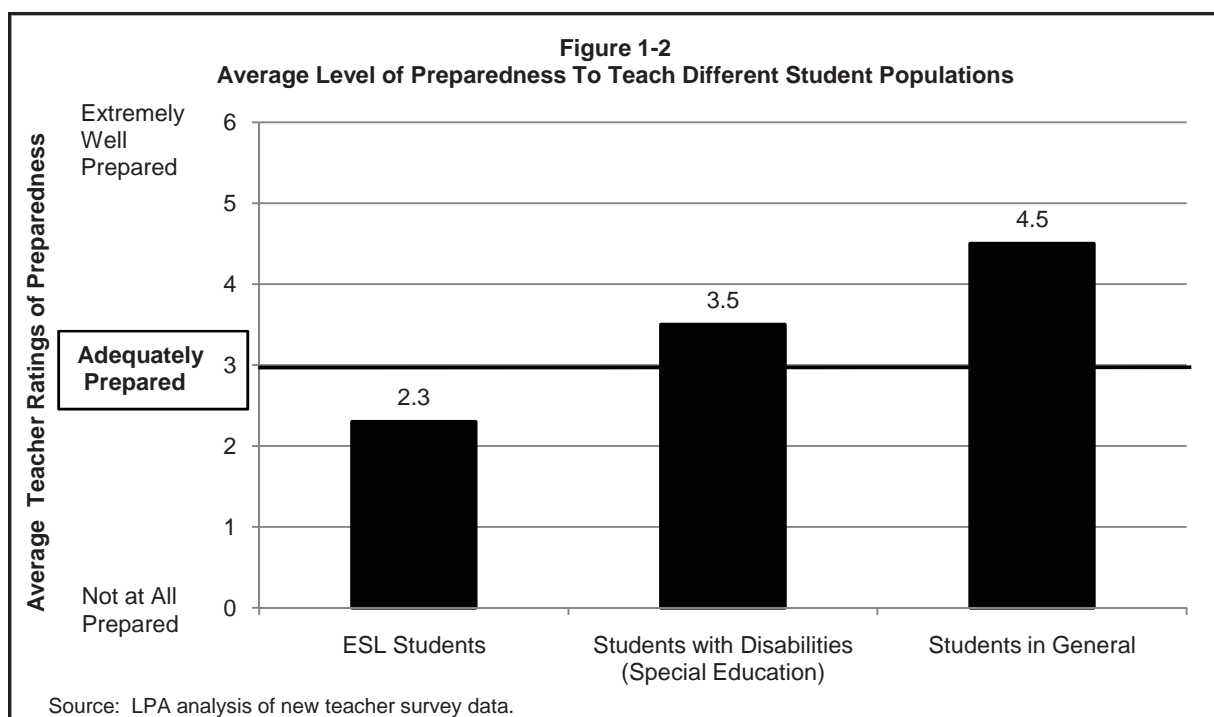
To answer the question, we surveyed almost 2,400 second- and third-year teachers who attended Kansas universities or colleges. We limited the survey to teachers who don't have an ESL endorsement to help ensure we were evaluating the basic education teachers receive. We received 591 completed surveys, for a 25% response rate. We used a series of statistical tests to verify as best we could that our questions were valid and reliable measures of how well prepared the respondents felt to teach different student populations. In general,

the respondents were representative of the population of teachers we surveyed.

Most of the teachers responding to our survey (56%) indicated they've taught ESL students in their first few years of teaching. As the map in **Figure 1-1** shows, these teachers are spread throughout the State.



We asked teachers to rate how well they thought their teacher education programs prepared them to teach three groups of students—ESL students, students with disabilities, and students in general. The ratings were on a scale from “0” (not at all prepared) to “6” (extremely well prepared). A rating of “3” indicated the teacher felt “adequately prepared.” *Figure 1-2* summarizes the teacher’ ratings for each of the groups. As the figure shows:



- **Overall, the teachers’ responses indicate they didn’t feel adequately prepared to teach ESL students.** Of the teachers we surveyed who indicated they’ve taught ESL students, 60% didn’t feel adequately prepared to teach ESL students. The average rating of their preparedness to teach ESL students was 2.3—less than “adequately prepared.” The ratings of teacher education programs at public universities ranged from 2.8 at Fort Hays State University to 1.9 at the University of Kansas (*Figure 1-4* on page 7 shows these ratings.)
- **The responses also indicate that teachers felt far less prepared to teach ESL students than other groups of students, including those with disabilities.** As shown in *Figure 1-2*, teachers’ average rating of their preparedness to teach ESL students (2.3) was much lower than their ratings for students with disabilities (3.5) and students in general (4.5).

**Teachers who felt least prepared to teach ESL students were the ones who generally felt least-prepared to teach all students.** We identified two groups of teachers—those who felt adequately prepared to teach ESL students and those didn’t. For those two groups of teachers, *Figure 1-3* on page 7 compares how well-prepared each group said they felt to teach other groups of students.

As the figure shows, teachers who felt less than adequately prepared to teach ESL students also felt less prepared to teach students with disabilities (3.0 vs. 4.7) and students in general (4.2 vs. 5.2).

**Figure 1-3**  
Average Level of Preparedness To Teach Different Student Populations  
Teachers Who Felt Adequately Prepared for ESL Students vs.  
Those Who Didn't Feel Adequately Prepared for ESL Students

The average teacher rating (a) of...	For teachers who said they felt...		
	...adequately prepared to teach ESL students	...not adequately prepared to teach ESL students	Difference
...preparedness to teach students with disabilities (special education)	4.7	3.0	1.7
...preparedness to teach students in general	5.2	4.2	1.0

(a) Teachers rated each item on a six-point scale, with "6" being the highest.  
Source: LPA analysis of new teacher survey data.

**Teachers From Academic Programs That Emphasize Hands-On Experience Tended To Feel the Most Prepared**

We used a statistical technique called “multiple regression” to determine how well prepared teachers from different teacher education programs in Kansas felt to teach ESL students. This technique allowed us to “level the playing field” as best we could by taking into consideration factors that might affect how well prepared a teacher feels but that are outside a program’s control.

For example, if a disproportionate share of the teachers from a particular program teaches in schools that have a lot of difficult ESL

students, the teacher education program might appear to have done a poor job of preparing its teachers, when in reality the teachers may feel overwhelmed by the difficult teaching environment. The results of this analysis are summarized in **Figure 1-4**.

**Figure 1-4**  
Comparing Teacher Ratings of Preparedness To Teach ESL Students  
To the Types of ESL Training Provided  
By Teacher Education Program

Teacher Education Program	Teacher Ratings of Preparedness To Teach ESL Students	Types of ESL Training Provided		
		Embedded Instruction	Required Dedicated ESL Coursework	Required Hands-On Experience Adapting Lesson Plans
Fort Hays State University	2.8	X	X (a)	X
Emporia State University	2.6	X	X	X
Private Institutions	2.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kansas State University	2.1	X	X	
Pittsburg State University	2.1	X	X (b)	
Washburn University	2.1	X		
Wichita State University	2.0	X	X	
University of Kansas	1.9	X	X	
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>2.3</b>			

(a) Required for early-late childhood education majors, elementary education majors, and alternative licensing program candidates.  
(b) Required for early-late childhood education majors and restricted license program students.  
Source: Teacher preparedness ratings from LPA analysis of new teacher English language learner preparedness survey. Teacher education program data from LPA survey of teacher education programs.

Next, we contacted the teacher education programs at the six Regent's institutions and Washburn University to find out what types of ESL training they provide as part of their normal program. The types of training tended to fall into these categories:

- **Embedded Instruction**—Training is provided throughout multiple courses that aren't primarily focused on ESL students. For example, in learning how to teach elementary math, prospective teachers also are taught how to effectively communicate basic math concepts to ESL students.
- **Dedicated ESL Coursework**—Training is provided in one or more courses that primarily focus on (or have a major component that primarily focuses on) teaching ESL students. For example, prospective teachers may be required to take a diverse-learners course that specifically addresses teaching students with different needs, such as ESL students, students with disabilities, and at-risk students.
- **Hands-On Experience Adapting Lesson Plans**—Requiring prospective teachers to develop lesson plans as part of their student teaching that show how they would teach ESL students.

*Figure 1-4* compares the types of ESL training provided by these programs to how well prepared the teachers from those programs felt to teach ESL students. As the figure shows, Fort Hays State University and Emporia State University are the only public programs that require all prospective teachers obtain hands-on experience adapting lesson plans for ESL students. While student teachers from other programs may gain experience adapting lesson plans if they end up teaching an ESL student, Fort Hays State and Emporia State are the only programs where all teaching candidates obtain this experience in the field.

**Teachers told us requiring more dedicated coursework, hands-on training experience, and foreign language training could improve ESL training.** We asked teachers what teacher education programs could do to improve their ESL training. Altogether, 388 respondents (73%) offered one or more suggestions. Those suggestions are summarized in *Figure 1-5*, on page 9.

As the figure shows, almost 75% of the teachers with suggestions felt ESL training could be improved with more or better dedicated ESL coursework.

Figure 1-5 Teacher Suggestions for Improving ESL Training	
Suggestion for Improvement	% of Teachers Who Made This Suggestion (a)
Require, improve, or offer more dedicated ESL coursework	72%
Provide practical experience with ESL students	22%
Require / offer foreign language training	16%
Provide information on communicating / working with parents of ESL students	8%
Make the ESL Endorsement more available / accessible for teachers	1%

(a) Percentages of survey respondents that had a suggestion who suggested this improvement in ESL training.  
Source: LPA analysis of new teacher survey responses.

***Teachers With More Literate ESL Students And Better Support From Their Schools Tended To Feel More Prepared To Teach ESL Students***

To get a better sense of how the teaching environment might affect a teacher’s feeling of preparedness to teach ESL students, we asked teachers to rate the level of support their schools provided and the English language proficiency of their ESL students. **Figure 1-6** compares these ratings for two groups of teachers—those who felt adequately prepared to teach ESL students and those who didn’t. As the figure shows:

- **The more proficient in English the ESL students already were, the better prepared teachers felt to teach them.**
- **In general, teachers who rated their school district’s support for teaching ESL students higher felt more prepared to teach those students.**

Figure 1-6 Comparison of Teacher Ratings of Their Teaching Environment			
The average teacher rating (a) of...	For teachers who said they felt...		
	...adequately prepared to teach ESL students	...not adequately prepared to teach ESL students	Difference
...the English proficiency of the teacher’s ESL students	4.0	3.5	0.5
...the level of support the teacher receives from the school to help teach ESL students	4.1	3.0	1.1

(a) Teachers rated each item on a six-point scale, with "6" being the highest.  
Source: LPA analysis of new teacher survey data.

These results suggest that the school environment in which a teacher works does affect how well prepared the teacher feels to teach ESL students.

**Conclusion:**

As our results indicate, the majority of new teachers who responded to our survey have taught at least one ESL student in their first couple of years—a task for which most said they don't feel adequately prepared without a full ESL endorsement. These teachers have indicated a need for additional ESL coursework and hands-on experience. However, additional ESL training—especially requiring all teachers obtain an ESL endorsement as recommended by the 2010 Commission—comes at a cost. Requiring more ESL training could make it more difficult to complete a teacher education program, and should be weighed against the need to find more teachers to address growing teacher shortages. In reality, schools with ESL students may benefit the most from having more teachers pursue a full ESL-endorsement. To that end, policymakers may want to explore ways to create incentives for teachers to get the full endorsement.

**Recommendations:**

1. To help ensure that all new teachers who complete Kansas teacher education programs are adequately prepared to teach ESL students, the State Board of Education should consider adding the following requirements for teacher education programs:
  - a. have prospective teachers complete a dedicated course that covers the unique issues involved in teaching ESL students.
  - b. have prospective teachers demonstrate their ability to adapt lesson plans to the needs of ESL students as part of a field experience.
  - c. provide prospective teachers a minimum level of foreign language training focused on helping them teach ESL students and communicate with both ESL students and their parents.
2. To help increase the number of teachers who pursue an ESL endorsement, the Legislature should consider creating financial incentives such as salary differentials or bonuses for teachers who obtain an ESL endorsement.



## APPENDIX A

### Scope Statement

This appendix contains the scope statement approved by the 2010 Commission for this audit on June 1, 2007.

#### **K-12 Education: Assessing the Quality of English as a Second Language Preparation in Kansas Teacher Education Programs**

According to the Department of Education's Statewide report card for the 2005-06 school year, students who spoke English as a second language (ESL) represented almost 6% of the total K-12 student population, with especially high concentrations in the large, urban districts (Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita) and in southwest Kansas. The January 2006 Legislative Post Audit education cost study found that the number of ESL students grew by more than 30% from the 1999-00 school year to the 2004-05 school year. Not surprisingly, students whose primary language isn't English score significantly lower than other students on Statewide reading and math assessment tests.

Concerns have been raised that there aren't enough teachers that have been adequately trained to teach ESL students. Data compiled during a July 2006 post audit found that for the 2004-05 school year, almost 19% of all ESL teaching positions were either vacant (2%) or filled by a teacher that wasn't fully endorsed (17%). In its December 2006 report to the Legislature, the 2010 Commission also found that there weren't enough teachers with ESL endorsements and recommended requiring teachers to gain such an endorsement as part of teacher certification.

House Bill 2017, which was introduced during the 2007 legislative session, would have created a nine-member commission to study the need for more ESL coursework in teacher education programs. During the bill's hearing, representatives from several of the State's teacher education programs told legislators they currently embed ESL training in teachers' other coursework, and that requiring additional coursework or a full endorsement was unnecessary and would lengthen the time it takes to get a teaching degree considerably.

Recently, Commission members have expressed an interest in learning more about the effectiveness of the ESL training that currently is embedded in Kansas teacher education programs. This school district performance audit would answer the following question:

- 1. Do the teacher education programs in Kansas colleges and universities adequately prepare new teachers to teach ESL students?** To answer this question, we would interview officials from the teacher education programs in the State and review information submitted by the Board of Regents to the Legislature during the 2007 session to determine what ESL training Kansas colleges and universities currently include in their teacher education programs. We would then survey recent graduates from the teacher education programs to find out if that training adequately prepared them to teach ESL students in their initial teaching assignments.

**Estimated Resources: 1 staff (6-8 weeks)**

## APPENDIX B

### Agency Response

On April 16, 2008 we provided copies of the draft audit report to the Board of Regents, Department of Education, and the teacher education programs at Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, Kansas State University, Pittsburg State University, the University of Kansas, Washburn University and Wichita State University. The Department of Education, Board of Regents, and Pittsburg State University provided written responses to the draft report. These responses are included in this Appendix. In general, the agencies concurred with the report's findings and conclusions, although the Department of Education and Pittsburg State University had comments about some of our recommendations.

The report recommended the State Board of Education consider adding several requirements for teacher education programs to help ensure teachers are adequately prepared for ESL students. In its response, the Department outlined a number of steps it intends to take to increase the level of ESL training in teacher education programs. While the Department's proposed actions may be important in addressing the findings of this report, we still think it's important for the Board to consider the recommendations we've addressed to them.

In its response, Pittsburg State University disagreed with the report's recommendation that the State Board of Education *consider requiring teacher education programs provide foreign language training*, citing the large number of different languages spoken in K-12 schools. Although we agree that there are a large number of different languages spoken by ESL students, we found in our 2006 Cost Study Analysis that more than 80% of all ESL students in Kansas speak Spanish. Because Spanish is so prevalent, we continue to think this recommendation is something the State Board of Education should consider.



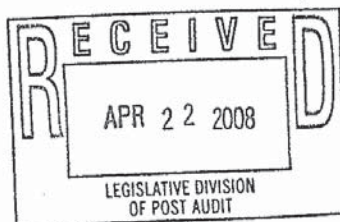
## Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services

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April 22, 2008

Mrs. Barbara J. Hinton  
Legislative Post Auditor  
Legislative Division of Post Audit  
800 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 1200  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-2212



Dear Ms. Hinton:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your performance audit, *K-12 Education: Assessing the Quality of English As a Second Language Preparation in Kansas Teacher Education Programs*. Listed below are the recommendations applicable to the State Department of Education and our response.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To help ensure that all new teachers who complete Kansas teacher education programs are adequately prepared to teach ESL students, the State Board of Education should consider adding the following requirements for teacher education programs:

- a. Have prospective teachers complete a dedicated course that covers the unique issues involved in teaching ESL students.
- b. Have prospective teachers demonstrate their ability to adapt lesson plans to the needs of ESL students as part of a field experience.
- c. Provide prospective teachers a minimum level of foreign language training focused on helping them teach ESL students and communicate with both ESL students and their parents.

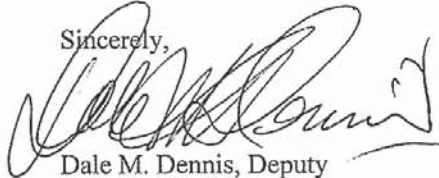
**RESPONSE:** Professional education standards addressed by all teacher preparation programs require teacher candidates to study adaptation of instruction for diverse populations, including ESL learners. As indicated in the audit, all teacher education programs embed these competencies into various courses within their teacher preparation programs. In addition, five of the institutions also require dedicated coursework in ESL. The State Department of Education must weigh the costs associated with a requirement of additional ESL coursework that extends the completion time of the preparation program against an already well documented teacher shortage problem in the State and the need to get teacher candidates out of the programs as expeditiously as possible. The State Department of Education will require all teacher education institutions to submit for review a plan to strengthen the existing ESL component of their preparation programs. The ESL component must be aligned to the indicators for diverse learners in professional education standard #3. The plan must include how each candidate in a teacher education program will complete a field experience component that demonstrates their ability to adapt a lesson to the needs of an ESL student. The plan must also indicate how each candidate will be informed and assessed on the process of second language acquisition (foreign language) and strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English.

Mrs. Barbara J. Hinton  
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April 22, 2008

As indicated in the audit, the school environment in which a teacher works and the support a district provides for teaching ESL students affects how well prepared a teacher is to address ESL student issues, regardless of the specific preparation program that the teacher completed. The State Department will review mentoring and inductions standards for new teachers, and provide guidance to districts with ESL student populations for strengthening the mentoring of new teachers with ESL students in their classrooms.

Please feel free to contact this office if we can assist you further.

Sincerely,



Dale M. Dennis, Deputy  
Commissioner of Education



Pamela Coleman, Director  
Teacher Education and Licensure

DMD:PC:tjm

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April 22, 2008

Barbara J. Hinton  
Legislative Post Auditor  
Legislative Division of Post Audit  
800 SW Jackson Street, Suite 1200  
Topeka, KS 66612-2212



Dear Ms. Hinton:

Thank you for providing me with a copy of your completed performance audit, *K-12 Education: Assessing the Quality of English as a Second Language Preparation in Kansas Teacher Education Programs*. The Kansas Board of Regents truly appreciates the value of the information you have gathered in this important study.

We note that the Board of Regents is not among those at which the report directs any of its specific recommendations. However, even so, we will ensure that this report is broadly shared among those who lead teacher preparation programs within the state university system. We will also engage those leaders in discussions about how to respond productively to the information that your report presents.

Given the shifting demographics of our state's population, it is increasingly important that teachers who complete teacher education programs in Kansas be adequately prepared to teach students for whom English is a second language. Your report provides information that will help us to meet that objective more fully; we appreciate your work.

Thank you, as always, for the courtesy and professionalism that you and your talented staff exhibit as you conduct your valuable work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reginald L. Robinson".

Reginald L. Robinson  
President and CEO

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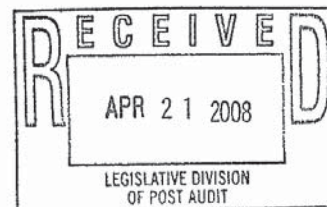


Pittsburg State University  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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April 18, 2008

Ms. Barbara J. Hinton  
Legislative Post Auditor  
Legislative Division of Post Audit  
800 S.W. Jackson, Ste. 1200  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-2212



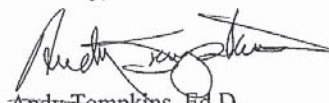
Dear Ms. Hinton,

I first want to express my thanks to you and your staff for communicating with us in a professional and helpful manner during the audit. We found the results of your audit to be helpful and informative.

I am writing to question the effectiveness of one of the recommendations made in the audit. As you reported in the audit, surveyed teachers mentioned that "foreign language training could improve ESL training." This was also included in the recommendations made to KSDE. Since over 70 different languages are spoken in our schools, I am not convinced that this recommendation would prove helpful.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the audit and hope that our response will be of assistance to the committee.

Sincerely,



Andy Tompkins, Ed.D.  
Dean