



Teacher Certification at SLLIS

June 2026

At SLLIS, teacher certification is closely tied to our identity as a public charter school with a language immersion focus. Missouri law specifically recognizes and supports this model. Under Revised Statutes of Missouri (RSMo) § 160.420, charter schools whose primary mission is foreign language immersion may employ teachers who hold valid credentials from the country in which they were trained and certified, particularly when their instructional duties include teaching in a foreign language.

This statute allows SLLIS to intentionally recruit educators from around the world who are certified and experienced in their home countries. Each year, we conduct a rigorous international hiring process to identify highly qualified teachers with advanced postsecondary degrees, strong pedagogical training, and advanced fluency in French, Spanish, and Chinese. These educators bring rich linguistic and cultural expertise that is central to the immersion experience and not commonly found in neighboring schools.

Once international teachers join SLLIS, we also work closely with them to support their progress toward Missouri educator certification. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) certification process can be complex for internationally prepared educators, and SLLIS provides structured guidance and support throughout that journey. At present, nearly all international staff hold Missouri Substitute Teaching Certificates, and those who do not are actively pursuing them. The majority are also working toward full Missouri certification in their assigned content areas.

In addition to state requirements, SLLIS complies annually with federal “Right to Know” notification requirements. Federal law requires schools to notify families when a student is taught by a teacher who has not yet obtained the appropriate *Missouri* certification. This communication is not a reflection of a teacher’s qualifications, experience, or effectiveness. Rather, it is a transparency requirement intended to inform families of certification status while the educator completes state credentialing processes.

Together, these state and federal requirements reflect the unique nature of immersion education. SLLIS remains committed to hiring highly qualified educators for all positions while also supporting their pathway to Missouri certification to ensure both compliance and the continued strength of our immersion program.