

2026-27 Identifying Novice Educators

Identifying Novice Educators for use of BEST Grant Funds

Teachers

First-Year (Year 1) Teacher

A certificated teacher who has not yet taught a full school year (180 days) in a continuous, certificated teaching assignment in public, charter, or private schools in the United States. Substitute teaching experience should only be counted if the substitute teacher was teacher-of-record for at least twenty (20) days continuously. Certificated Pre-K teachers should be counted and supported in the same way other novice teachers are supported.

Education Staff Associates (ESAs)

ESA Roles

In Washington, certain specialists who serve in the K-12 schools are certified as Education Staff Associates (ESAs). Any ESA in their first year in a school-based role with an ESA certificate may be supported by BEST. This includes School Counselors, Psychologists, Nurses, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists (OTs), Physical Therapists (PTs), Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) and Audiologists. Some other ESAs may be included if they are certificated roles- sometimes this includes Librarians, Behavior Specialists, or others. ESAs who are hired through a contract and/or work among multiple districts are eligible if they are certificated and in their first year. *For more information about ESA roles, see [OSPI's ESA page](#).*

First- Year (Year 1) ESAs

Determine the novice year status based on the number of days the ESA has served in a continuous, certificated, school-based role. A First-Year ESA has worked for less than 180 days.

Determining Experience Level of Educators

Count experience for educators only if the answer to all four questions is YES:

1. Location: Was the work inside the United States?
2. Setting: Was the work done in a public, charter, or private school?
3. Assignment: For teachers, was the teacher the continuous teacher-of-record for at least 20 days of the school year?



4. Certificated: Was a certificate (e.g., residency, conditional, emergency) required for the position?

Do not consider:

- Substitute experience that is less than 20 continuous days in a single classroom
- Overseas or other out-of-country experience
- Non-certificated experience
- Business or industry experience related to career and technical education positions
- Full-time Equivalent (FTE) status