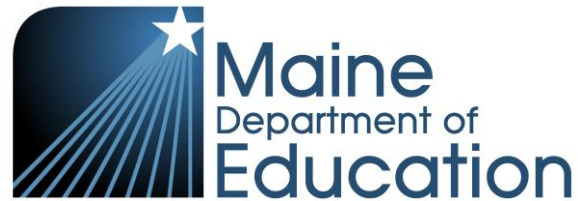# Leveraging WIDA English Language Development Standards: A Renewed Focus on Equity for Multilingual Learners

Robin Fleck, ESOL Consultant

April Perkins, ESOL & Bilingual Programs Specialist

Learning Objectives

Participants will gain familiarity with and an understanding of how to leverage the four big ideas presented in the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework, 2020 Edition: 1) Equity of opportunity and access; 2) Integration of content and language; 3) Collaboration among stakeholders; and 4) Functional approach to language development.

A note on terminology

Students with a primary/home language other than, or in addition to, English are **multilingual learners (MLs)**.

Multilingual learners who are in the process of acquiring English participate in **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)** programs.

What is WIDA?

Part of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, WIDA is an education organization that supports schools in serving multilingual learners through:

- standards and assessments

- teaching tools and instructional support to make language development and learning more effective

- opportunities for professional learning to empower educators

- continual collaboration with educators, state and local educational agencies, researchers, policy-makers and thought-leaders worldwide
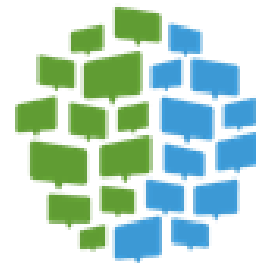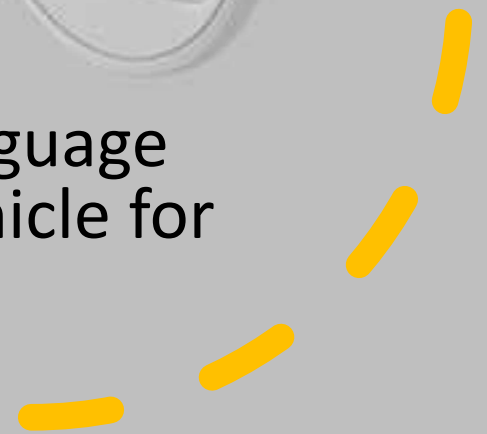
Maine Learning Results & ELD Standards

The ELD standards function as a key that gives access to the MLRs by unlocking the language demands of the content.
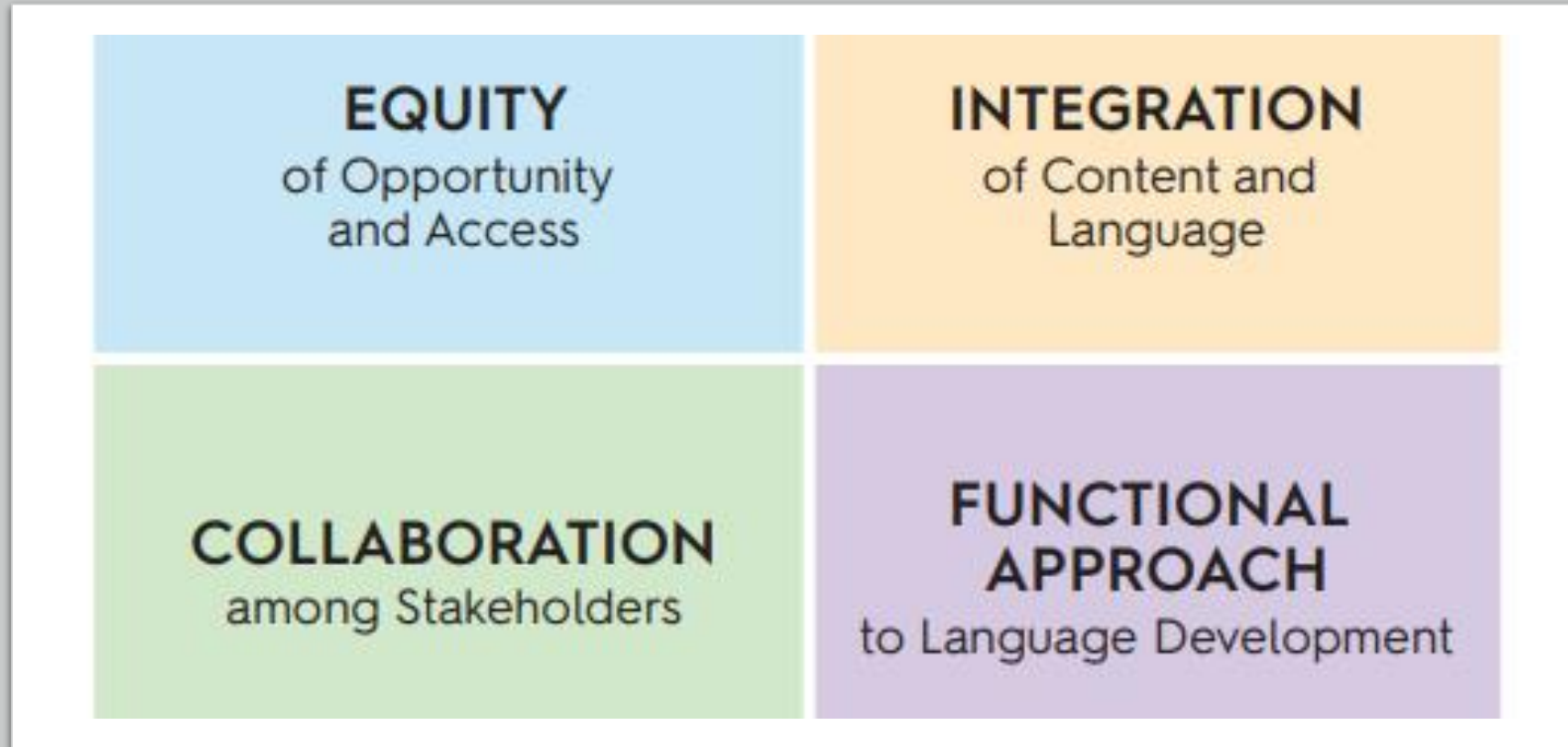
MLs acquire both content and language simultaneously. Content is the vehicle for language learning.

Five English Language Development (ELD) Standards Statements

Maine Learning Results

- Language for Social and Instructional Purposes
- Language for Language Arts
- Language for Mathematics
- Language for Science
- Language for Social Studies

The Four Big Ideas

Image Source: WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition

Equity of Opportunity and Access

What does this mean?

MLs have a civil right to meaningfully access their education and to have equitable opportunities.

Language objectives are essential to providing meaningful access to content.

MLs learn the same grade-level, rigorous academic content as their non-ML peers.

MLs' primary/home languages are assets to be leveraged.

## How does it look in practice?

Every teacher is well-equipped to meet the needs of MLs, and MLs are engaged in learning at all academic levels. Professional learning on strategies and differentiation is robust.

Content and language objectives are included in every lesson.

Learning is scaffolded and MLs demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.

MLs have access to bilingual learning resources and use their language(s) in the classroom.

Integration of Content and Language
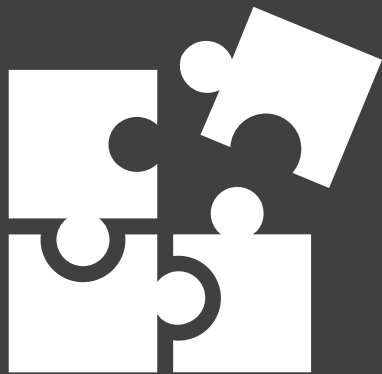
What does this mean?

Content and language are interdependent. MLs learn language through the study of specific content.

MLs learn specific language features in order to accomplish a language function that is necessary for the academic content at hand.

How does this look in practice?

From the beginning, MLs are acquiring grade-level content and academic English simultaneously.

All teachers take personal responsibility for including content and language objectives in every lesson.

Administrators include this in teacher observations.

Collaboration among Stakeholders

What does this mean?

Meeting the needs of MLs is a shared responsibility among all educators and school staff.

Administrators must put in place structures and practices that promote a culture of shared responsibility.

Families are essential contributors to students' education.

How does this look in practice?

Adequate shared planning time is included in teachers' schedules.

ESOL teachers have a voice in decision-making.

MLs with disabilities receive coordinated ESOL and special education services.

Families share insights and feedback on the educational program that is used to improve it.

Functional Approach to Language Development

What does this mean?

Language is a tool for accessing and acquiring academic content.

MLs acquire features of language in order to accomplish specific language functions.

How does this look in practice?

Teachers share with students the purpose for learning language features.

MLs are engaged in learning tasks that support them in accomplishing a genuine communicative purpose.

Suggested Next Steps

1

Continue to explore and familiarize yourself with the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition.

2

Engage in the WIDA self-paced eWorkshop WIDA ELD Standards Framework: A Collaborative Approach.

3

Sign up for the Maine DOE ESOL Listserv to receive a weekly newsletter with professional learning offerings and more.

More Professional Learning

WIDA Self-Paced eWorkshops

ExcEL Leadership Academy

WIDA Hybrid Workshop: Teacher Leaders – Planning with the ELD Standards Framework (Face-to-Face Session on 12/6 in Augusta)

Virtual PLCs (Stay tuned!)

Maine DOE Multilingual Learners Professional Learning Request Form

Contact Us

Robin Fleck, ESOL Consultant
robin.fleck@maine.gov

April Perkins, ESOL & Bilingual Programs Specialist
april.perkins@maine.gov