## **Maine Learning Results**

## **English Language Arts/Literacy Standards**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Literacy is a basic human right, achievable by all students. Today’s learners need to know how to read, write, speak, and communicate effectively in order to survive in an ever-changing and challenging global society. English Language Arts/Literacy is the foundation for learning in all of the content areas. The literacy continuum develops across an individual’s lifetime, but literacy does not reside solely in the individual person; it requires and creates relationships with others through communication and interaction. Literacy is a developmental process that empowers students to become lifelong, effective learners and communicators.

The Maine Learning Results English Language Arts/Language standards are organized into four strands: Language, Speaking and Listening, Reading, and Writing. Each strand represents a body of knowledge and skills that students need to become lifelong learners. These strands are further broken down into standards that identify enduring understandings and skills that transfer across contexts, content areas, and grade levels. As students progress through the curriculum, the standards are broken down into Performance Expectations that are grouped by grade level through grade 5 and then are banded 6-8 and 9-Diploma. The Performance Expectations define skills and establish measurable articulations of what the student understands and can do.

The standards reference “various text types” rather than emphasizing any one particular genre. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of text types, including literature and informational texts in multiple formats. The skills outlined by the standards are designed so that students can receive literacy instruction with each text they encounter across all disciplines.

**Guiding Principles**

The Guiding Principles steer education in Maine and are reflected and embedded throughout the English Language Arts/Literacy standards. Examples of how students can show evidence of those guiding principles in English Language Arts/Literacy may include (but are not limited to) the following suggestions:

1. **Clear and effective communicator:** Students participate in a range of evidence-based discussions and generate detailed writing that are both used to communicate ideas clearly with others.
2. **A self-directed and lifelong learner:** Studentsapply knowledge in new contexts and demonstrate flexibility including the ability to learn, unlearn and relearn.
3. **A creative and practical problem solver:** Students use inquiry and writing processes that require adaptation to feedback through the use of reflection, sometimes persevering through multiple attempts.
4. **A responsible and involved citizen:** Studentsdemonstrate ethical behavior, particularly during the discussion of ideas, maintaining awareness of, and respect for, multiple and diverse perspectives.
5. **An integrative and informed thinker:** Students frequently read, evaluate, and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources, incorporating it into both oral and written communication.

**LANGUAGE**

Throughout the developmental continuum in English Language Arts/Literacy and across all content areas, language is the core of understanding and comprehension. Context is key. Human understanding is founded in communication and language, and organic experiences are the most effective means of learning language skills. While the language standards are presented separately from reading, writing, speaking, and listening, they are best utilized and presented as embedded skills within the other strands. A balance must be found between direct instruction of standards, like vocabulary acquisition and spelling, and integrated instruction of standards, like vocabulary use and nuance.

These standards are not a checklist, but key components of reading, writing, speaking, and listening instruction, and they should be treated as such. Frequent, intentional reference to and instruction in these skills is essential to teaching students to be clear communicators in every medium and field.

Each language standard may contain multiple concepts, at different levels of complexity. In early adolescence and adolescence grade spans, these are best taught in order as listed, even across grade levels, to provide students with the foundational knowledge required for success as they progress, not just through school, but through life. Developing facility with the language standards is key to building comprehension and fluency with increasingly complex texts and communications.

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

Speaking and listening are essential components in our schools, our homes, our communities, and our places of work. Direct, interpersonal communication is the cornerstone of human relationships, and nowhere is this more clearly articulated than in dialogue, discussion, presentation, and debate. Successful students must be able to communicate in multiple mediums, through conversations, interviews, digital presentations, and countless day-to-day interactions that build understanding of their world and the perspectives of their peers. Key to success in our modern world is interaction with diverse others and ever-changing groups, and creating and following community guidelines and rules, which is a critical practice for civic responsibility later in life.

Speaking and listening standards do not stand alone; like all English Language Arts skills, they are interconnected. Early speaking and listening skills in primary grades are foundational to close reading skills in later grades, and throughout school and life the ability to understand, analyze, and evaluate others’ words helps everyone develop a richer and deeper awareness of human motivation and purpose.

**READING**

The goal of all reading instruction is to help students become competent consumers of a wide variety of texts in diverse forms so that they can achieve independence, find meaning, and use literacy for lifelong learning, empowerment, and enjoyment.

A text is anything that can be read, heard or viewed. Texts may include words, images, objects, sounds, and symbols that convey messages from developers to consumers. They broadly encompass multiple purposes, audience appeal, and a wide variety of human experiences that create meaning for the reader. When choosing texts, teachers must consider the qualities of complexity and the diversity of texts each student should experience.

The reading standards are designed progressively, using specificity and scaffolding to engage all readers in pursuing skills and experiences that contribute to personal, communal, and global needs and interests. This design promotes essential reading skills, allowing students to understand and enjoy a wide range of texts from a variety of perspectives. Teachers must employ a balance of research-based instructional approaches and strategies designed to provide multiple opportunities for transfer of learning.

**WRITING**

Writing is a lifelong, essential tool for communication. In order to prepare students for varied and evolving writing tasks, students should write routinely, in both long- and short-time frames, as a means of building writing stamina. Moreover, students should write in a breadth of modes and forms across all disciplines. This includes the foundational instruction of legible handwriting forms and skills such as printing, cursive, typing, as well as the use of technology to compose, where the use of formatting supports the task, audience, and purpose.

In order to manage the increasing complexity of what students read and write, educators provide guidance and support when developmentally appropriate, with the understanding that students need to develop autonomy and independence over time, particularly at the upper grade levels. To that end, the standards include a developmentally appropriate progression of performance expectations that includes all grade levels. The K-5 performance expectations reflect a foundational level of skill acquisition, while the 6-8 and 9-Diploma grade bands expect that writing grows in sophistication and complexity.

The strand of writing includes three standards, which have been arranged to reflect a traditional learning progression in the classroom, incorporating the use of technology when authentic to the task. Students begin with an exploration of a variety of texts/ideas, then use a process to refine, plan, and craft the communication of ideas, and finally compose with a style that reflects awareness of task, audience, and purpose. The standard and performance expectations for composing are consistent regardless of mode; therefore, the performance expectations for common modes (argument/opinion, informational/expository, and narrative) have been outlined in supporting documents.