



ESOL LISTSERV

DECEMBER 2025

As we conclude 2025 and prepare to enter a new year, we extend our sincere appreciation to educators across Maine who support multilingual learners. Your professionalism, expertise, and sustained commitment play a vital role in advancing equitable educational opportunities for students and families throughout the state.

This time of transition provides an opportunity to reflect on the collective impact of our work. Through collaboration, ongoing professional learning, and shared responsibility, you continue to champion integrated approaches that strengthen access, coherence, and instructional support for multilingual learners.

Thank you for your dedication, leadership, and advocacy. As you enter the winter break, we wish you time for rest and renewal as we look ahead to the work of 2026—bringing continued opportunities for learning, collaboration, and thoughtful implementation to strengthen support for multilingual learners further.

With gratitude and appreciation,
Jane and Melanie

Maine Solutionaries Literacy Engagement Project



The Maine Solutionaries Literacy Engagement Project is kicking off on January 27th from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm in Augusta! This free integrated professional learning opportunity focuses on educating students to be Solutionaries while strengthening content literacy skills. It is available for grades 4-12 and applicable to any content.

Up to 30 teachers can participate in the in-person and virtual training and develop a plan for how they will use the Solutionary Framework with their students. There will be an in-person kickoff on January 27 in Augusta, followed by weekly Zoom sessions through February and March. Teachers have the opportunity to earn their Solutionary Micro-credential from the Institute for Humane Education, 45 contact hours, specialized content literacy training from national expert Cris Tovani, free resources, and coaching – all free of charge. Teachers are encouraged to register in pairs or teams. Reserve your spot by filling out this registration form.

WIDA ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Testing Window, 2026

Testing Window: January 5 - February 27, 2026

All multilingual learners in Grades K-12 are required to participate in WIDA ACCESS. Visit DOE's English Language Proficiency Assessments or contact Mechelle Ganglfinger, Alternate and ELP Assessment Coordinator, at Mechelle.Ganglfinger@maine.gov for more information.

Maine DOE Contacts



- Adult Education: Amy Poland (Amy.Poland@Maine.gov)
- Assessment: Jodi Bossio-Smith (Jodi.Bossio-Smith@Maine.gov)
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Maine DOE Assessment Updates

WIDA ACCESS: Required Training

WIDA ACCESS data is utilized at the state, SAU, school, and student levels for various important purposes. It is critically important to a valid and reliable administration of these assessments that all Maine Test Administrators (TAs) have completed the most up-to-date, mandatory training requirements via the WIDA Secure Portal.

*See table for specific requirements for assessment training and date of completion per assessment.

WIDA ACCESS: Accessibility

Accessibility features are available across WIDA assessments, with the intended purpose of removing potential barriers to student access. In an assessment environment, students should have the opportunity for full participation by accessing familiar tools as needed and appropriate.

Find more information about accessibility on WIDA ACCESS in the following locations:

- [WIDA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#)
- [English Language Proficiency Assessments | Department of Education](#) (see Special Forms)
- [WIDA ACCESS Online Accommodations Checklist](#)
- [WIDA ACCESS Paper Accommodations Checklist](#)

WIDA ACCESS: Materials

Initial paper materials were shipped to Maine SAU central offices on December 11-12, and those materials were calculated based on the final October enrollment data submitted by each SAU to the state. The Additional Materials Ordering Window has now opened in WIDA AMS. DRC users with District-level access can submit orders for additional materials if enrollment numbers have updated.

- All WIDA ACCESS paper materials need to be stored securely when students are not testing.
- Maine SAUs are responsible for maintaining test security both during and after the administration window by ensuring materials are inventoried and stored, and all are returned to DRC following the administration.

Assessment	Required Training	Certification completed on or after
WIDA ACCESS Online	<i>WIDA ACCESS Online: Administration</i>	N/a <i>Annual re-certification is recommended</i>
WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten	<i>WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten: Administration and Scoring</i>	September 29, 2025
WIDA Alternate ACCESS	<i>WIDA Alternate ACCESS: Administration and Scoring</i>	July 1, 2024
WIDA ACCESS Paper*	<i>WIDA ACCESS Paper: Administration</i> <i>Speaking for Grades 1-5: Scoring WIDA ACCESS Paper</i> <i>Speaking for Grades 6-12: Scoring WIDA ACCESS Paper</i>	N/a <i>Annual re-certification is recommended</i>

For English Language Proficiency assessment questions, contact Mechelle.Ganglfinger@maine.gov



*For TAs administering a paper-based form, as approved by Maine DOE

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WIDA Professional Learning Offerings and Resources

New WIDA Webinar Partners in Language: Collaborating to Implement the WIDA ELD Standards Framework

February 17, 2026, 11:00-12:15 p.m. EST. This webinar will feature educators reflecting on practical ways of collaborating across roles to deliver language-rich lessons rooted in the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition.

[Register for this WIDA Webinar today](#)

WIDA highlights a Speech Language Pathologist from Maine!

WIDA's [Supporting Multilingual Learners With Disabilities webpage](#) has resources to help you support multilingual learners with disabilities through guidance, tools, and stories from the field that promote education and access for all students. Whether you teach multilingual learners with Individual Education Programs (IEPs), design inclusive instruction, or lead professional learning, this is your new go-to resource for creating meaningful learning experiences.

New WIDA Handout: Steps for Scaffolding Socratic Seminars

Multilingual learners need opportunities to build their language skills with and through grade-level content. One way to engage in content-centered language development is through Socratic seminars. [Download a detailed handout on Socratic seminars](#) on the new [Standards in Action WIDA webpage](#).

WIDA Assessment Participation Surveys

WIDA wants to hear from you.

- Annual assessment event participation survey (this covers our general assessment events)
- Alternate assessment event participation survey (this covers our alternate assessment events)

Want to be considered for a future WIDA assessment event?

Find both participation surveys on the [Building a WIDA Assessment page](#) (in the Educator Involvement section). WIDA will contact selected participants on a rolling basis throughout the 2025-2026 school year.

*To participate in a WIDA alternate assessment event, you must be an educator who has experience working with multilingual learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

WIDA Self-Paced Workshops

Professional Learning—On Your Terms

Why Choose Self-Paced?

- Support multilingual learners by building capacity in language development, instructional practices, and more
- Free for educators in participating WIDA Consortium member states
- Learn on your own schedule
- Relevant, classroom-ready content
- Perfect for individuals or professional learning communities

Available through August 31, 2026



Explore all courses at wida.wisc.edu/grow/self-paced
Scan the QR code to get started today!

Learn when you want,
where you want,
and at your pace.



Upcoming WIDA Facilitated Workshops for Maine Educators

Expanding Reading Instruction with Multilingual Learners

March 23rd and 30th, 2026, Virtual, 3:30-5 p.m. [Register HERE](#)

Participants will learn ways to build on and expand current approaches to teaching reading and to engage multilingual learners in the interactions that support reading development, K-12. **60 slots available!**

Engaging Secondary Newcomers in Content-Area Literacy

May 8, 2026, Full-day, in-person workshop in Augusta

In this 1-day workshop, educators will explore key factors that influence literacy development in content areas, focusing on how to engage students in content learning. Participants will learn strategies to analyze newcomers' literacy strengths and identify areas for growth. Through practical application, educators will gain tools for scaffolding instruction to ensure secondary newcomers can engage with grade-level content in reading and writing, promoting their academic success. **Details coming soon!**

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Seal of Biliteracy

The Maine Seal of Biliteracy continues to grow across the state, with an increasing number of students earning recognition for their multilingual skills each year. As we look ahead, schools are encouraged to keep an eye on upcoming Seal of Biliteracy timelines, including assessment windows, application deadlines, and transcript notation dates. Early planning and communication with students, families, counselors, and world language and ML staff can help ensure that all eligible students have the opportunity to participate and be recognized for their biliteracy achievements.

Did you know?

You might already have students who are eligible for the Maine Seal of Biliteracy, but they're not in a world language class. They may not have a multilingual learner (ML) identification.

The flyers included in the Maine Seal of Biliteracy Resource Kit are designed to help schools identify all potential candidates, including heritage speakers, students who use another language at home, newcomers who exited ML services, and students who developed bilingualism outside of school. Sharing these flyers with families, counselors, advisors, and community partners can surface students whose language assets may otherwise go unrecognized.



Making these resources visible is a simple first step toward ensuring equitable access to the Seal and honoring the full range of students' linguistic strengths across Maine.

World Language GIS Map

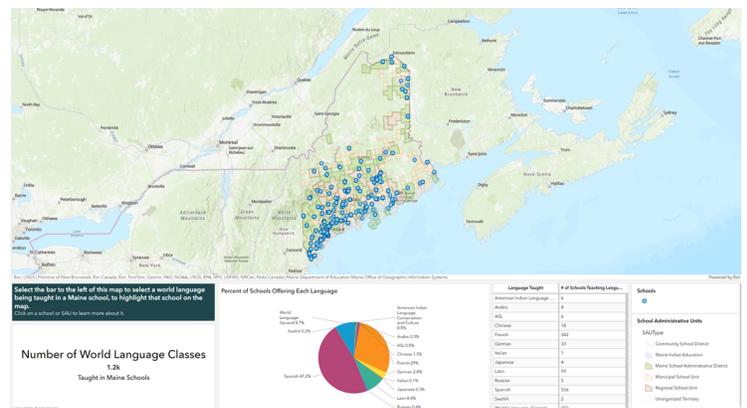
NEW

The Maine Department of Education (DOE) is introducing a new resource designed to support the expansion of world language opportunities for students across the state: the Graphic Information System (GIS) World Language Educator Map.

Available on the [Maine DOE World Languages webpage](#), this interactive map provides a statewide view of where world language instruction is offered and the language options available. On the map, each Maine school offering world language instruction appears as an interactive point, displaying the school administrative unit (SAU) that the school is a part of, as well as the language(s) taught.

These insights directly support the development of pre-K–12 pathways that prepare students for the [Maine Seal of Biliteracy](#).

[Maine DOE Newsroom Article](#)
[World Language Webpage](#)



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Teacher Leader Fellow Updates



Rebecca Carey and **Melissa Frans**, in their second year as *Teacher Leader Fellows*, designed and implemented a 2-part professional learning series titled *“Developing Effective Individual Language Acquisition Plans (ILAPs) for Multilingual Learners with Collaboration and Instructional Planning in Mind.”*

The series focused on actionable, collaborative approaches to ILAPs that are responsive, aligned with WIDA Standards, and supportive of instructional planning.

Visit the [Maine DOE website](#) to access presentation slides, recordings, &resources.



COMING UP in JANUARY 2026

Join Rebecca Carey as she leads a workshop series designed to strengthen your approach to **developing language goals within Individual Language Acquisition Plans (ILAPs)**, creating meaningful, measurable goals that support and monitor student growth.

January 12th and January 13th from 3:30-5 p.m. Each session includes one hour of structured learning followed by 30 minutes of workshoping language goals, sharing, and discussion.

[REGISTER HERE.](#)

DOE’s Interdisciplinary Instruction Professional Learning Offerings

- **March 6: Mapmaking with Renee Keul of Osher Public Map Library, Portland**

A hands-on exploration of how mapmaking strengthens foundational literacy skills across disciplines. Led by Renee Keul of the Osher Public Map Library, this workshop examines how creating and interpreting maps activates the same cognitive processes that support literacy development. Participants will explore maps from diverse times and places, examine the brain science connecting mapmaking to literacy, and engage in creating their own maps to support cross-curricular learning in geography, history, math, science, and language arts.

- **April 10: Object-Based and Writing Process with Deb Johnson of Maine Mineral & Gem Museum AND Ronni Blaisdell, author, Bethel**

A hands-on professional learning experience connecting the natural world with the writing process to deepen literacy instruction. Hosted on-site at the Maine Mineral and Gem Museum in Bethel, this interactive workshop explores how Object-Based Learning—using real-world artifacts and natural materials—can spark curiosity, strengthen observation, and support foundational reading and writing skills. Space is limited, and participants are encouraged to bring lunch or explore local options nearby.

- **May 15: Engaging Reluctant Readers with Cris Tovani, Camp Chamberlain, Augusta**

The fourth and final session in the Maine Department of Education’s four-part Integrating Literacy workshop series features renowned educator and author Cris Tovani (*Why Do I Have to Read This?*). Participants will explore student dispositions, engage in the creation and application of Tovani’s “placement” strategy to support knowledge building, and learn practical, inquiry-based strategies to foster motivation, confidence, and engagement in reluctant readers. Space is limited, and participants are encouraged to bring lunch or explore local options nearby.

Register for any or all of the workshops with this link: <https://forms.office.com/g/7tcHSc9W77>

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State and National Resources

Are YOU a teacher who wants to speak out in support of your immigrant students?

Apply to the Elevating Voices of Educators of Newcomers (EVEN) Fellowship

With the federal government pushing an overtly harmful anti-immigrant agenda, much of the recent public discourse about immigrants has been negative—and false. But teachers have the power to change the narrative.

About the EVEN Fellowship

The [National Newcomer Network \(NNN\)](#) is launching the **Elevating Voices of Educators of Newcomers (EVEN) Fellowship**, a new paid fellowship for teachers who work directly with newcomers, children of immigrants, and/or English learners—and who want to tell the world about the many ways these children make our schools and communities better.



What EVEN Fellows Will Do

EVEN Fellows will join a community of teachers determined to improve public discourse about immigrant students. Together, they will:

- Participate in a series of **monthly trainings**
- **Write, edit, and publish a narrative** highlighting their experiences working with immigrant communities
- **Engage with journalists and reporters** to uplift these critical narratives to broader audiences in local and national media



Fellowship Logistics

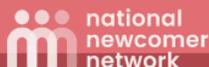
- **Program dates:** February 2 to June 26, 2026
- **Expected commitment:** Attend 1 monthly meeting, with ongoing 1-on-1 support from NNN staff and experts
- **Stipend:** \$1,500



Apply Here:
bit.ly/EVENfellows2026



Questions?
Contact vazquezbour@tcf.org



National Newcomer Network

EVEN Fellowship application: If you are a newcomer or EL teacher, apply for our Elevating Voices of Educators of Newcomers (EVEN) Fellowship – a paid, five-month program for K-12 educators who want to actively push back on negative portrayals of U.S. immigrants and share the many ways these children make our schools and communities better! The program will run from early February to late June 2026, and selected applicants will receive \$1,500 for their participation. Please share this with your networks! Applications are due January 4th, 2026!



What's Working for MLs in Content Classrooms: Practical Tips from Seidlitz Education

Recorded webinar with [Larry Ferlazzo](#), [Dr. Merica Clinkenbeard](#), and [Anna Matis](#)

- [Slides](#)
- [Recording](#)

At the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC), our mission is to improve legal, social, and economic conditions for immigrants in the state of Maine.

MIRC brings together more than **110 organizations** to form a unique statewide network representing diverse ethnic communities. These organizations, a majority of which are led by people of color, work together to foster immigrant inclusion and integration through both support programs and policies.

<https://maineimmigrantrights.org/mirc-resource-hub/>



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Personnel Update

A brief personnel update to share: Melanie Junkins has served as the Multilingual and Bilingual Education Specialist in a limited-time position and will be transitioning out of that role in February 2026. She has accepted an opportunity to continue supporting the Maine Department of Education as a part-time contractor through August 2026 and will remain engaged with:

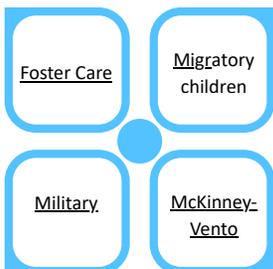
- [Pine Project](#)
- [Maine Seal of Biliteracy](#)
- [World Language initiatives](#)
- Grant manager for *Building Capacity for Multilingual Learners across Maine*

During this transition, you will continue to receive the high-quality support you have been accustomed to. If you are looking for support unrelated to these initiatives, please visit the Maine Multilingual homepage to find the latest contacts for your specific question: [Maine Multilingual Homepage](#)

Multilingual Learners and Highly Mobile Students

Across Maine, many multilingual learners are also part of highly mobile student populations, including students experiencing homelessness, foster care placement, or frequent school changes. These transitions can disrupt instructional continuity, relationships, and access to services. For multilingual learners, mobility may also interrupt English language development services, Individual Language Access Plans (ILAPs), integrated MTSS Tier 1 supports, and consistent family communication in a home language.

When schools intentionally connect multilingual learner identification and services with best interest and mobility-related decisions, they help protect students' language development, identity, and sense of belonging, key factors in academic success and well-being. Ensuring continuity of supports during transitions is not only a best practice, but an equity imperative for Maine's growing multilingual population



Federally identified highly mobile student categories include students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, migratory children, and students from military-connected families. These groups often experience frequent school transitions that can disrupt learning, making intentional coordination of academic, language, and family supports especially critical, particularly for multilingual learners.

- **McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Office Hours** are available **3-4:00 PM on the first Thursday** of each month, starting on September 4th. [Register here.](#)
- If a student is experiencing housing instability that presents as a barrier to accessing education, do you know who your local McKinney-Vento liaison is and how they can assist? [Click here](#) to utilize the Maine DOE's McKinney-Vento liaison search tool.
- Sign up for the **McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Newsletter** [here](#) for additional resources and updates. Contact Signe.Lynch@maine.gov with questions.