

INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PLAN COMPANION GUIDE



An Individual Language Acquisition Plan (ILAP) is a required, school-based, personalized action plan for every student identified as a multilingual learner.

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ILAP RESOURCES

Maine DOE Teacher Leader Fellow Professional Learning Series

- **Individual Language Acquisition Plans**
 - Session 1 | [Presentation](#)
 - Session 2 | [Presentation](#)
- **Developing Language Goals**
 - Session 1 | [Presentation](#)
 - Session 2 | [Presentation](#)

Professional Learning Resource

- Cuba, M. J., & Kangas, S. E. N. (2026). Position paper: *Promoting access to dual services for rural multilingual learners with disabilities*. Rural Special Education Quarterly.

“Multilingual learners with disabilities are legally entitled to both language development and special education services, and those services should be coordinated to address their intersecting needs. Yet too often, they are delivered in separate silos, creating additional barriers to appropriate instruction, intervention, and support. Individualized Language Acquisition Plans (ILAPs) matter because they help ensure that a multilingual learner’s language development is understood, documented, and considered in decisions about instruction, intervention, and, when appropriate, special education eligibility.

In this article, we argue that embedding ILAPs across multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) can help schools break down those barriers, strengthen collaboration, and build more equitable systems of support.”

Melissa J. Cuba, Ph.D.
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ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

An Individual Language Acquisition Plan (ILAP) is a required, school-based, personalized action plan for every student identified as a multilingual learner.

A high-quality ILAP:

- Clarifies educator roles and responsibilities.
- Identifies timely, individualized instructional supports.
- Centers students' identities, strengths, languages, and cultural assets to foster engagement, belonging and language development.
- Provides opportunities for families and the student to contribute to the planning process by sharing perspectives, assets, and goals.
- Establishes meaningful language development goals.
- Serves as a roadmap for planning instruction and assessment that promotes language acquisition and academic language development.
- Documents student growth through ongoing progress monitoring and multiple sources of assessment data.

A well-designed ILAP promotes consistency among the student's team of educators and ensures meaningful access to both language development and grade-level learning by clearly outlining goals, instructional supports, and shared responsibilities.



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS & WHY WE CREATE ILAPs

Creating meaningful Individual Language Acquisition Plans (ILAPs) for multilingual learners (MLs) means developing dynamic, student-centered documents that guide instruction, support growth, and reflect each student's evolving linguistic and academic journey. Because an ILAP is a living document, it should be reviewed and updated at least annually. The ILAP team should revisit the plan regularly throughout the school year to engage in meaningful progress monitoring, make responsive instructional decisions, and refine language goals as students grow.

At its best, an ILAP tells the story of a student's linguistic and academic journey. It brings together quantitative and qualitative evidence of growth while providing educators with a collaborative roadmap to support, monitor, and accelerate students' language development and academic success.

WHY WE CREATE ILAPs

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PLANS (ILAPs)

Ensuring meaningful access and equitable opportunities for multilingual learners in Maine schools.

1

FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS REQUIREMENTS



LEGAL BASIS:
*Lau v. Nichols (1974),
Equal Educational Opportunities Act (1974),
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act*



- Schools must provide meaningful access to instruction for multilingual learners.



- Language barriers cannot prevent equitable participation in educational programs.



- Districts must take affirmative steps to help students overcome language barriers.

2

FEDERAL EDUCATION LAW



LEGAL BASIS:
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)



- English learners must receive language development services.



- Schools must identify, assess, and monitor English learners.



- Progress toward English proficiency must be documented.



- Parents must be informed of identification and services.

3

MAINE STATE REQUIREMENTS



LEGAL BASIS:
*Maine DOE multilingual learner
guidance / Lau Plan expectations*



- Districts must maintain a plan for serving multilingual learners.



- Instructional supports must be documented.



- Language development goals should align with English language proficiency standards.



- Progress monitoring must occur regularly.

THE VALUE OF A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH & ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN ILAP

SUPPORTING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

In 21st-century classrooms, English language proficiency cannot be viewed as a prerequisite for meaningful participation in grade-level learning. Instead, language should be understood as something that develops through meaningful engagement in rigorous, standards-aligned instruction, when students are provided with appropriate supports and equitable access to the rich curriculum our schools offer.

Because language development occurs across all learning environments, every educator shares responsibility for both engaging multilingual learners in grade-level content and fostering their language development. Developing and implementing an Individual Language Acquisition Plan (ILAP) is therefore a collaborative process that requires meaningful participation from the student's team of educators, the student, and the student's family. Through this shared responsibility, the ILAP becomes a powerful tool for coordinating instruction, strengthening communication, and supporting the student's linguistic and academic growth.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN ILAP

SECTION 1: STUDENT INFORMATION



Include relevant demographic information, a brief educational history, and share student assets and strengths. A meaningful ILAP tells the story of the student's language and learning history. The information shared in the student information section should provide the team with a robust, strengths-based picture of the student. Students and their families should have a strong voice in developing this section, as well as the ILAP as a whole.

Student data collection is a local-level decision.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION

Inviting the student, their family, and educators to collaborate in developing the *Educational History* and *Strengths and Assets* sections provides a more comprehensive understanding of the learner. Together, these perspectives create a richer picture of the student's experiences, strengths, languages, interests, and goals. This information is essential for instructional planning, fostering meaningful relationships, and supporting successful transitions.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN ILAP

SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT

These include the following:

- English Language Proficiency (ELP) Screener results, including the date of administration and the student's scores. We also strongly recommend documenting the date the parent/guardian was notified of the upcoming screening.
- Annual ELP assessment data. Present assessment results over time to illustrate the student's language development and growth.
- State assessment data.
- District assessment and progress monitoring data.
- Additional progress monitoring evidence, including formative assessments used to measure progress toward ILAP language goals.
- Observational data, such as checklists, anecdotal notes, or other classroom evidence that documents the student's language development and academic progress.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION

A multi-tiered system of support allows ESOL educators and grade-level/content educators an opportunity to collaborate in crafting progress monitoring tools that can be useful in observing and documenting the student's progress toward language goals. Language focused observations or other progress monitoring tools completed in collaboration can be a powerful addition to formative assessments.



ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN ILAP

SECTION 3: PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The *Plan Development* section contains four essential components of the ILAP. These components should be developed, implemented, and regularly reviewed through collaboration among the student's educational team to ensure coordinated, responsive support for language development and academic success.

Language Goals: Develop meaningful, measurable language goals that:

- Connect directly to grade-level content and classroom learning goals.
Reference [WIDA's Standards in Action](#) for resources.
- Support growth in academic English language proficiency.
- Align with [WIDA English Language Proficiency \(ELP\) Standards](#) and WIDA's [related resources](#).
- Include clear methods for ongoing progress monitoring.



Classroom Instructional Scaffolds, Supports, and Strategies: Identify instructional practices that:

- Provide meaningful access to grade-level content and learning.
- Foster growth in academic English language proficiency.
- Align with and reinforce the student's language goals and classroom learning goals.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION

When developing language goals, ESOL educators and grade-level/content educators should intentionally collaborate to integrate English language proficiency with grade-level learning goals. Language goals connected to classroom instruction are more meaningful, promote simultaneous language and content development, and provide authentic opportunities for progress monitoring.

Administrators and teams play a critical role by providing the time, structures, and shared expectations that support collaborative planning. Together, educators identify instructional scaffolds, monitor progress, and determine when supports should be maintained, adjusted, gradually removed, or added as students' language development progresses.

Use [Maine's Roles and Responsibilities Infographic](#) to define team roles, foster meaningful collaboration, and build coherent multilingual learner programming through aligned practices and shared responsibility for language development, access to grade-level learning, and student growth.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN ILAP

SECTION 4: WIDA CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH AN IEP OR 504 PLAN

Considerations for WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) Annual Summative Assessment for MLs with IEPs: Federal law requires all MLs (including those with disabilities) to participate in the annual ELP summative assessment starting in kindergarten.

✓ Accommodations that impact ELP summative assessments are documented in this section of the ILAP and in Section 6 of the IEP.

Key Considerations

- **Team-Driven Decisions:** IEPs and ILAPs require interdisciplinary collaboration. Accommodations must be decided by the full IEP team, including a second language acquisition expert.
- **Targeted Support:** Accommodations are only available to MLs with an active IEP or 504 Plan.
 - Golden Rule: Testing accommodations should reflect the everyday strategies the student uses in the classroom.
- **Annual WIDA Reviews:** IEP teams should consider relevant accommodations at annual IEP meetings and throughout the year, as needed, using the current WIDA Accessibility & Accommodations Manual and Accommodations Checklists to select the appropriate accommodations based on specific test formats and language domains.
 - WIDA Paper (Grades 1-12) and Alternate ACCESS (K-12) formats require an IEP and/or 504 Plan designation

For more support, contact Maine Department of Education's English Language Proficiency Assessments and Office of Special Services and Inclusive Education teams.

STRATEGIES & SUPPORTS

ESOL Teacher IEP Preparation

- **Team Membership:** Are you formally invited to the meeting and prepared to participate as the second language acquisition expert?
- **Student Review:** Have you reviewed the student's current IEP, language proficiency data, and classroom performance?
- **WIDA Guidelines:** Have you reviewed the current WIDA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for this year's specific rules?
- **Classroom Alignment:** Have you identified which linguistic accommodations/strategies the student uses consistently in the learning environment?

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN ILAP



SECTION 4: WIDA CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH AN IEP OR 504 PLAN

OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION

Throughout Section 4, it is evident that ongoing collaboration between the ESOL educator and the special educator is essential. These educators must work in an integrated and sustained partnership to support the students' linguistic and disability-related needs. Information should be shared and reviewed consistently, and both ESOL and special education professionals should be actively involved in meetings, instructional planning, and decision-making.

WIDA's [Information Collection Tool](#) provides examples of information for teams to collect about multilingual learners with disabilities to inform ways to build an inclusive learning environment.

This collaborative approach is critical to ensuring that dually identified students receive coordinated services and equitable access to meaningful educational opportunities.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN ILAP

SECTION 5: COMMENTS

- Document what is shared by all team members.
- Ensure that all voices are heard and considered.
- Create a welcoming environment for families to share about their child and to ask questions.
- Provide a record of important conversations and anecdotal information related to the student. Anecdotal information can often be valuable in conversations or addressing concerns in the future.



SECTION 6: PROGRAM OF ESOL SERVICES

Program of ESOL Services: This final section provides an outline of ESOL services to support students' language acquisition:

- Type of instruction
- Frequency
- Description

The DOE recommends that MLs with English Language Proficiency (ELP) composite levels one and two (as measured by WIDA assessments) should receive at least two periods of ESOL instruction per day, and MLs with ELP composite levels above level two should receive at least one period of ESOL per day. *ESOL instruction can be designated or parallel (pull out) and/or integrated/embedded (push in.)* In the case of block scheduling, a student who is an ML may have ESOL services every other day, similar to other content areas. More information about Multilingual Programming Requirements and Guidance can be found on the DOE website.

ILAP COMPANION GUIDE: PARENTS & MEETINGS

IN CASE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN REFUSAL OF ESOL SERVICES

Parents/guardians may refuse ESOL services provided they have been afforded a meaningful opportunity to understand:

- ESOL programming and the possible outcomes of removing their student from ESOL services.
- The school's responsibility to continue ensuring the student's academic and language learning needs are met.
- Schools are required to administer annual ELP assessments and to create appropriate and effective programming regardless of a parent/guardian's refusal of services.
- The parent/guardian must provide written documentation of ESOL Program refusal to the school each year.

For more details about service provision and parent/guardian refusal of services, reference [Maine DOE Multilingual Programming Requirements and Guidance](#) and [Maine DOE Administrative Letter #2](#) as you develop the ILAP to ensure each student is provided with appropriate and effective programming for their language development.

MEETING PREPARATION

Consider using the Maine DOE ILAP meeting preparation template to support team readiness for ILAP planning meetings and collaborative discussions. The template may be adapted and revised to align with local needs and context.

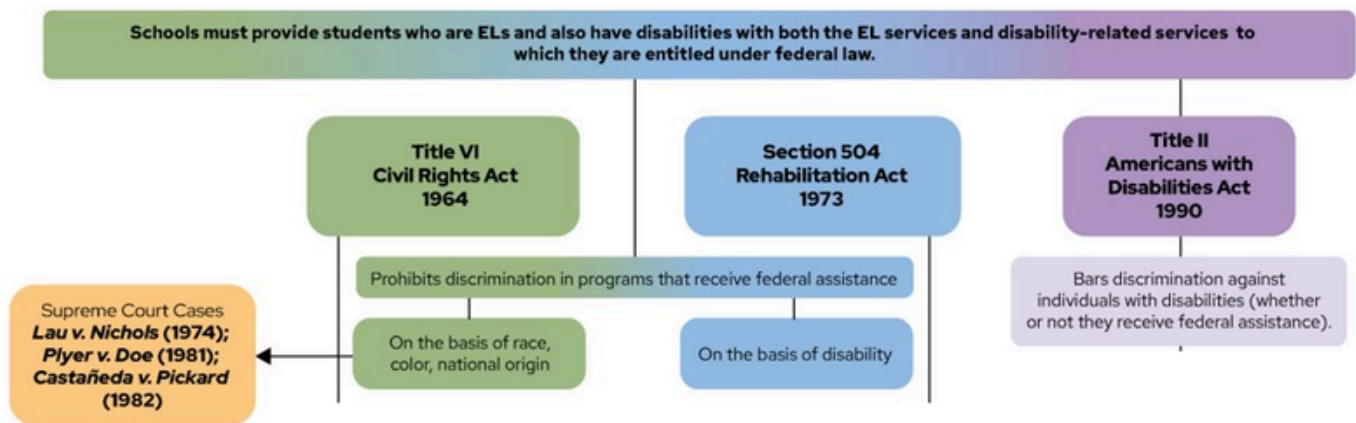
[Individual Language Acquisition Plan \(ILAP\) Team Meeting Preparation Checklist Template](#)



CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CRAFTING ILAPs FOR MLs WITH DISABILITIES

Legal Obligations for Equal Access to Education for Multilingual Learners With Disabilities

Of the 5.2 million English learners (ELs) in the United States, 832,000 (16%) are also students with disabilities. Three U.S. laws dictate that students who are ELs with disabilities must receive equal access to education programs and activities.



- **Increased Collaboration Needed:** Developing ILAPs for these students requires deeper integration of information, expertise, and teamwork.
- **Dual Legal Entitlement:** Multilingual learners with disabilities are legally entitled to services that address both their disability-related needs **AND** their language-related needs.
- **Equal Priority under Federal Law:** Federal laws state that neither set of services supersedes the other. Prioritizing one over the other—purposefully or incidentally—prevents full, meaningful access to learning opportunities.
- **Civil Rights Protection:** Practices that deny equal access to both sets of services violate students' civil rights. [Maine Human Rights Act](#) | [Federal Office of Civil Rights](#)
- **Integrated Delivery:** All services must be provided in a collaborative and integrated way.

For more detailed information and further guidance regarding Multilingual Learners with Disabilities refer to:

- [Maine DOE Multilingual Learners with Disabilities](#)
 - [Maine DOE Identifying & Serving Multilingual Learners with Disabilities Policy and Resource Guide](#)
- [WIDA Multilingual Learners with Disabilities](#)
 - [WIDA Inclusive Practices for Multilingual Learners With Disabilities: Advocacy, Planning, and Collaboration](#)
 - [Advancing ALTELLA Toolkit: Applying the Framework](#)
- [Maine DOE Office of Special Service and Inclusive Education Alternate Assessments](#)