



Spring 2026 ESOL Update

DOE English Language Proficiency Assessment Updates

Below is communication emailed by Maine DOE on April 30, 2026, to all identified Assessment Coordinators and ML Director/Coordinators in NEO:

Following the release of 2026 WIDA ACCESS score reports and considering the revised [ACCESS assessment](#) and upcoming standard-setting process scheduled for July 2026, the Maine Department of Education would like to share the following:

- There are no changes to the ML exit criteria for WIDA ACCESS this year (2025-2026).

As a reminder, Multilingual Learners (MLs) who have attained a Composite Proficiency Level score of 4.5 or greater on WIDA ACCESS or PL4 on WIDA Alternate ACCESS will automatically be assigned, by the Maine Department of Education, a ML Exit Date of 06/30/2026 in Maine's state reporting system.

Additionally, students who exit from ML services must be monitored for a minimum of 2 years. For more information, review Administrative Letter 2: [ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER: Legal Requirements to Provide English Language Acquisition Services to Students Who Are Multilingual Learners \(Revised October 9, 2025\) – Maine DOE Newsroom](#)

Additional FYI - 2026 ACCESS Scores ([WIDA Update](#)):

- The ACCESS assessment has been updated, and a standard-setting process will take place in July 2026 to establish new proficiency level cut scores.
- 2026 score reports can still be used to make decisions (including exit and placement) but should be interpreted with caution.
- Scale scores should be treated as a new baseline and should not be compared to prior years.
- Proficiency levels on 2026 reports are based on older cut scores (from 2016) until updated after standard setting.
- Updated guidance and any changes to proficiency expectations will be provided after the standard-setting process is complete (anticipated in 2027).

Please continue to follow this guidance.

If you have questions specific to WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, please contact Mechelle Ganglfinger, ELP and Alternate Assessment Coordinator at Mechelle.Ganglfinger@maine.gov

If you have questions about multilingual learner identification and programming, please contact Jane Armstrong, ESOL State Specialist, at Jane.Armstrong@maine.gov

Related WIDA Assessment Resources

New Article: How Standard Setting Impacts 2026 WIDA ACCESS Scores

You need to take a bit of extra care as you use WIDA ACCESS scores this year. Read WIDA's new article, [How Standard Setting Impacts 2026 WIDA ACCESS Scores](#), to learn about the upcoming standard setting event and what it means for scores this year.

Refreshed WIDA ACCESS Score Report Resources

WIDA ACCESS score report dates are approaching. Check out these key resources to help you understand and communicate scores with your colleagues, your students and their families.

- The [refreshed ACCESS Scores and Reports page](#) now features links to important resources for families and educators at the top, a comprehensive look at the pieces of the Individual Student Report (ISR), key information to know about the scores and an overview of how scores are used.
- Visit the [WIDA Alternate ACCESS page](#) for information about WIDA Alternate ACCESS score reports for educators and families. Scroll down to the Resources to Share with Families section for the [WIDA Alternate ACCESS: Understanding Your Child's Scores flyer](#).
- WIDA has revised the [WIDA ACCESS: Understanding Your Child's Scores flyer](#). This key family resource explains how WIDA ACCESS scores are used, includes an overview of domain and composite proficiency levels and scale scores supported by graphics, and a list of questions to support families' conversations with their child's school. The flyer is available in the top 18 languages in the consortium.
- WIDA has updated the [WIDA ACCESS Parent Letters](#). These family-focused letters are available in the same 49 languages as the ISR and can be edited to include your school or district-specific information.

Upcoming DOE Assessment Professional Learning Webinar

- [English Language Proficiency Data Interpretation & Integration Webinar](#)

May 11, 2026 3:15-4:30 p.m. Register here: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

-Facilitated by Mechelle Ganglfinger, ELP and Alternate Assessment Coordinator, and Jane Armstrong, ESOL State Specialist

-Intended Audience: ACCESS Assessment Test Coordinators, Test Administrators, ESOL teachers, SPED teachers

WIDA Professional Learning Updates



To learn more, visit [Spring reading: A bundle of new PL articles from WIDA!](#)

Spotlight: WIDA Focus Bulletins

- [WIDA Focus Bulletin](#)– Content, Language, and Literacy Learning for Secondary Newcomers, January 2026
- [WIDA Focus Bulletin](#)– Inclusive Practices for Multilingual Learners With Disabilities: Advocacy, Planning and Collaboration, January 2026
- [WIDA Focus Bulletin: Supporting Multilingual Learners Identified as Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education \(SLIFE\)](#)

Spotlight: WIDA Recorded Webinars

- [Partners in Language: Collaborating to Implement the WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#) | [WIDA Resource: Partners in Language: Unit Planning Template](#)
- [Centering Family Voices: Using Cultural Humility to Inform Educational Opportunities](#) | [WIDA](#)

For more information, visit [WIDA Webinars](#) | [WIDA](#)

Additional Professional Learning Opportunities

May 14th: NNETESOL's Maine state event is a **ZOOM** talk entitled "**Supporting ML Learners' Academic English in the Post-Secondary Setting**" with **Kristin McLaren**, Director of Student Success at the University of Maine at Augusta. Register [here!](#)

**MAINE NNETESOL
SPRING EVENT**
Free! **Register Here** Free!
Supporting ML learners' Academic English in the post-secondary setting with UMA's Kristin McLaren

When: Thursday May 14,
4:30 - 5:30 PM
Where: Zoom
Why: Help ML learners be successful college students

CONTACT US
nathaniel.berger@maine.edu
heather.reichmuth@maine.edu



Multilingual Learners with Disabilities Professional Learning

- [Finding the Golden Thread for Multilingual Learners With Disabilities](#) – WestEd

Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026 **Time:** 12-12:30 p.m. PT / 3-3:30 p.m. ET

- [Understanding and Advocating for High-Quality Instruction for ELLs with Disabilities](#) - Center for Applied Linguistics with Dr. Sara Kangas

Date: May 12, 2026 **Time:** 4 p.m. EST Live Webinar

Maine Educator Spotlight: Advocating for Multilingual Learners With Disabilities

Students who are multilingual learners with disabilities have legal and civil rights. In the article [Advocating for Multilingual Learners With Disabilities](#), WIDA Professional Learning Specialist Emily Kurth and Melissa Frans, Maine DOE Teacher Leader Fellow and Special Education Multilingual Coordinator for Portland Public Schools, outline three key approaches to advocating for students who need both language and disability services at school.

Bonus Resource: The flyer [Advocating for my Child's Language and Disability Needs](#) helps caregivers understand their child's rights to language and disability supports and is available in both English and Spanish.



SupportEd Virtual Multilingual Learner Symposium

June 4, 2026 10:00 AM-4:00 PM EST.

The event is fully online and offers an affordable way to provide high-quality professional learning for educators without the need for travel or substitute coverage. Designed for content teachers, ELD teachers, and administrators, the day includes a keynote and six interactive breakout sessions, ready-to-use resources, giveaways, and the opportunity to earn a certificate for 6 PD hours. All participants will also receive a download of our 30-strategy ML Toolbox.

You can learn more and reserve seats for your team here:

[Multilingual Learner Symposium 2026 - SupportEd](#)

Free Multilingual Learner Summit

When: July 25th, 10:00 am - 1:00pm

Where: Online

What: Three amazing speakers:



- Dr. Dorina Ebuwa (Dr. Dorito for those in the know): B.E.L.I.E.V.E.! Rooted in Language & Culture, Grounded with Radical Self-Care
- Tan Huynh: Systematically Developing Literacy
- Elise White Dias: The Lessons of Resilience and Connection We Leave Behind

How: Register [here](#).

Spotlight: National Newcomer Network

National Newcomer Network [NNN May Newsletter](#)

Visit [National Newcomer Network - The Century Foundation](#) for more information.

The logo for the National Newcomer Network features three stylized human figures in orange, blue, and purple, standing side-by-side. To the right of the logo is a text box with the title "Mission" and a paragraph of text.

Mission

The National Newcomer Network is a coalition of educators, community leaders, advocates, researchers, and policymakers from across the country committed to improving access to high quality public educational programs and equitable policies and practices for K-12 newcomer students.

Stay Connected

To preview all upcoming events offered by Maine Department of Education, visit the event calendar, found here: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/calendar>

For professional learning and resources on supporting multilingual learners, visit the [DOE Multilingual Learners website](#) for guidance on identification and screening, English language development instruction, service provision requirements, federal and state policies, and access to data dashboards.