

MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

SECONDARY PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

This guidance outlines a framework for equitable enrollment, placement, and academic pathways for secondary multilingual learners, consistent with federal and state law. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin; the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 requires schools to address language barriers; the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, sets expectations for English language development and academic achievement; and Maine Department of Education policies provide state oversight.

An asset-based approach considers age, goals, language proficiency, prior schooling, and academic readiness. By centering student strengths and cultural identities, schools can build inclusive, future-focused programs. Enrollment and programming are shared responsibilities requiring collaboration among school counselors, ESOL educators, school staff, content teachers, social workers, and multilingual program leaders to ensure appropriate placement, language instruction, and full access to academic and extracurricular opportunities, thereby upholding students' rights to meaningful education.



Maine statute
(Title 20-A, §5001-A)

Getting to Know the Student: Age Eligibility

To create meaningful programming, begin by learning about each student's background, goals, and strengths. A diploma from another country or state does not exclude a student from enrolling in a Maine school as long as a student meets age eligibility requirements.

- What is the student's date of birth?
- How many semesters is the student eligible to attend?

A student who has not reached age 20 before the start of the school year (July 1) may enroll.

Student and Family Goals

- What are the student's goals and aspirations?
- What are the family's goals and aspirations for the student?
- What knowledge or experiences do they bring related to graduation pathways or post-secondary education systems (in the U.S. or elsewhere)?
- If the student requires additional education beyond the semesters allowed due to age eligibility, what resources exist to support this transition?

Language Proficiencies

- Which languages do they report being able to speak/read/write/understand?
- In which languages have they been educated and at what ages?
- How long has it taken them to learn new languages in the past?
- What is their preferred language, other than English, to leverage and further develop in school?
- Is the student interested in pursuing Maine's Seal of Biliteracy?

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Planning for Purpose: Understanding the Whole Multilingual Learner

To support multilingual learners effectively, educators must engage in whole-child planning that considers both strengths and needs. The “Planning for Purpose: Understanding the Whole Multilingual Learner” graphic highlights five key areas: Social & Cultural Factors, Academic Support, Language Development, Postsecondary Planning, and Multiple Identifications, if applicable. These considerations and guiding questions will ensure access, belonging, and success while aligning with state and federal guidance.

Social & Cultural:

- What are the student’s current living or housing arrangements?
- Have there been disclosures of trauma, displacement, or caregiving responsibilities?
- What supports exist or are needed outside of school (community, faith, or cultural)?

Language Development:

- What is the student’s current English language proficiency level (WIDA Screener or ACCESS)?
- Is there data or anecdotal evidence about their literacy in their home language?
- Are all educators aware of the WIDA Can Do Descriptors for their level?
- Who is responsible for English Language Development?
- Who is creating the Individual Language Acquisition Plan (ILAP)?

Academic Support:

- What scaffolds or academic interventions are in place for this student?
- Are content and language goals aligned with their grade level and English proficiency?
- Does the student have access to bilingual materials or tutoring support?

Post Secondary Planning:

- Has the student been introduced to career pathways or postsecondary options?
- Are there barriers to accessing programs like CTE, dual enrollment, or internships?
- Is the student aware of opportunities like the Seal of Biliteracy or scholarship access?

Multiple Identifications

- Has the student been identified as needing specific supports that could be addressed through a 504 Plan?
- Does the student have an IEP?
- Did the family describe special needs from past educational settings or countries?
- Does the student qualify for Chapter 104, Gifted and Talented?
- Is there collaboration between the ESOL and special education teams?



DID YOU KNOW?

Language proficiency must never be a barrier to student participation in any aspect of the high school experience. All students, regardless of English language development level, must have equitable access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, athletics, extracurricular activities, and other school opportunities in accordance with federal and state civil rights laws. To learn more, reference your district’s Lau Plan.

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GET TO KNOW YOUR STUDENT

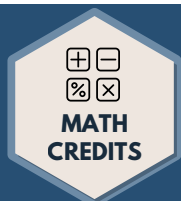
Enrollment and programming are team efforts. School counselors, enrollment staff, ESOL and content instructors, elective teachers, ILAP coordinators, social workers, and the Director/Coordinator of Multilingual Programs collaborate to build equitable learning pathways for multilingual students.

Maine DOE stipulates the minimum requirements in order for a school administrative unit (SAU) to award a high school diploma. All SAUs have the ability, through local policy, to add requirements to these minimums.

COURSE CONSIDERATIONS & KEY QUESTIONS



- How many semesters will it take for the student to complete the required English courses, considering both language development and credit accrual needs?
- Who will teach these courses, and do they have the appropriate training or certification to support English learners effectively?
- Will courses integrate language development with grade-level content to ensure access and success?



- What is the student's educational background and experience with Math? (transcripts, past classes)
- What mathematical skills & understandings does the student demonstrate with a language reduced assessment?
- Who will teach these courses, and do they have the appropriate training or certification to support multilingual learners (MLs) effectively?
- Do "in addition to" numeracy classes or supports exist, if needed, at the secondary level?



- What is the student's educational background and experience with Science and Social Studies?
- Does the student consider the content skills an academic strength or interest?
- How much U.S. history has the student learned?
- What will the student need to be academically and linguistically successful?
- Will courses integrate language development with grade-level content to ensure access and success?



- What are the student's interests and goals? (arts, music, technology, etc.)
- What Career and Technical Education opportunities are available to the student?
- What are the student's goals and aspirations for career or college readiness?
- Which classes will provide the student with the most inclusive settings to develop their English language skills alongside peers?

PATHWAY FOR SUCCESS

When developing paths to success for multilingual learners, instruction should align with the Maine Learning Results and WIDA ELD Standards. Planning must consider the time needed to meet graduation requirements while supporting English language growth. Courses should embed language development within rigorous content and be taught by educators equipped to support multilingual learners—ensuring students gain both academic knowledge and language skills for graduation and beyond.

Maine Learning Results | WIDA ELD Standards

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GRADE PLACEMENT

1. Federal Guidance

Schools must provide meaningful access for multilingual learners (MLs) to the same standards as their peers, placing MLs in age-appropriate grade levels to ensure equal access to curriculum and graduation opportunities.

(Every Student Succeeds Act, Title 1, 2015)

- ◆ Transition Years: Placement decisions during elementary- middle- high school transitions or midyear enrollments must involve school-based teams with families and students.

- ◆ Older Students: Consider student/family goals and Maine's age-eligibility statute (20-A M.R.S. §5201). In some cases, students may begin 9th grade at age 16 to provide a viable four-year graduation pathway.

2. Grade-Level Placement

Multilingual learners are placed at age-appropriate grade levels unless academic documentation and assessment data support an alternative.

- ◆ Age eligibility & student and family goals are reviewed at enrollment for transparency about graduation requirements and the time-based nature of language learning.

- ◆ Language acquisition timeline: Academic English proficiency typically takes 5–7 years depending on initial screening results.

- ◆ Older high school entrants (17–19, ELP 1–2): Transition planning should address career pathways and continued ESOL programming options.

- ◆ Not allowed: English proficiency alone can never justify grade retention or delay graduation.

3. Older Students

For students enrolling later with varied backgrounds, ELP levels, or interrupted schooling:

- ◆ Collaborative Planning: Teams and families review goals together.

- ◆ Maine Statute: Decisions align with 20-A M.R.S. §5201.

- ◆ Graduation Pathways: Some students may start 9th grade at age 16 to ensure a four-year graduation option.

4. Cultural Brokers

Cultural brokers connect families and schools by bridging language and cultural differences, ensuring inclusive and relevant education.

- ◆ Role: They interpret both words and cultural assumptions, preventing misunderstandings.

- ◆ For Schools: Offer insights into family backgrounds to support more inclusive instruction.

- ◆ For Families: Clarify the U.S. school system, including credit hours, GPA, IEPs, and college/career pathways.

Grade placement and programming decisions must **balance federal guidance, Maine law, cultural understanding, and student-centered planning** to ensure equity and access to graduation for multilingual learners.

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EXAMPLES OF CORE CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

<p>English Language Development (ELD) WIDA ELP Levels</p> <p>1: Entering 2: Emerging 3: Developing</p> <p>ESOL English</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also described as “parallel,” “designated” or “Intensive English Language Development” • A block of direct instruction by an ESOL certified teacher typically with other students at English Language Proficiency Levels 1, 2, 3 <p>Reminder: Language learning is not linear; it is dynamic and differentiated by expressive and interpretive language domains and proficiencies. Placement decisions include multiple data points.</p> <p><u>Maine Learning Results</u> <u>WIDA ELD Standards</u></p>	<p>WIDA English Language Development Standards</p> <p>WIDA Language Charts</p>
<p>Foundational Literacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A block of direct instruction by a Literacy specialist and/or ESOL certified teacher • For students with limited literacy skills in L1 (first languages) who need explicit instruction in foundational literacy in English in addition to content based literacy 	<p>WIDA Reading with MLs</p> <p>Maine DOE AIM Steps to Literacy Modules</p> <p>Literacy Foundations for English Learners, Elsa Cardenas-Hagen</p> <p>Supporting Early Literacy for MLs, Instruction Partners</p>
<p>Foundational Numeracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A block of direct instruction by a Math specialist (may also include co-teaching with an ESOL certified teacher) • For students who need explicit foundational numeracy instruction in addition to secondary math courses/content 	<p>Maine DOE Mathematics: Early Mathematics Development Interview</p> <p>CEFAM Family Math Resources</p> <p>WIDA Focus Bulletin: Scaffolding Learning for MLs in Math</p>
<p>ELD Embedded Instruction</p>	<p>Also known as “Integrated” “Push-in” “Co-taught”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses taught by general educators with collaboration from ESOL teachers to collaboratively scaffold instruction for multilingual learners 	<p>WIDA English Language Development Standards</p> <p>WIDA Language Charts</p> <p>WIDA Understanding What Students Can Do</p> <p>WIDA Collaboration: Working Together to Serve MLs</p>
<p>Content Educators</p>	<p>Courses taught by certified educators in their specific content area/discipline that are explicitly designed to integrate language standards and content standards using WIDA ELD Framework and student English Language Proficiency (ELP) data.</p>	<p>Maine DOE Resources</p> <p>Making Meaning: Expressive and Interpretative Considerations for Multilingual Learners</p> <p>Beyond the Surface: Stages of Language Acquisition</p>

MULTILINGUAL PROGRAMS

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Together, we create a supportive environment where every student thrives.

Collaboration is essential to the success of multilingual programming. Well-defined roles and responsibilities strengthen support systems and promote equitable access to learning. Annual WIDA trainings and ongoing professional learning are critical for building internal capacity and ensuring program coherence. When responsibilities are clearly articulated, they foster coordinated support and accountability, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for multilingual learners.

DIRECTOR/COORDINATOR OF MULTILINGUAL PROGRAMS

- Designate and lead ML programming across all grade levels, including identification, instruction, and family engagement.
- Develop and implement compliant ML programs aligned with federal and state laws.
- Coordinate professional learning on effective ML instructional strategies.
- Monitor program effectiveness and make data-informed improvements.

ESOL EDUCATOR (660 CERTIFICATION)

- Develop Individual Language Access Plans (ILAPs) and deliver WIDA-aligned ELD instruction.
- Collaborate with teachers to embed language objectives.
- Use assessment data to track progress and adjust instruction.
- Engage in ongoing professional learning through team-based structures.



DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

- Uphold federal and state civil rights laws to ensure meaningful access for MLs
- Implement school board approved Lau Plan
- Collaborate with the Director/Coordinator of Multilingual Programs
- Ensure equitable access to meaningful family communication through Section 9 of Lau Plan



EDUCATORS INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Includes grade level teachers, content teachers, Special Education teachers, and Ed Techs

- Collaborate with ESOL specialists to scaffold curriculum for multilingual learners.
- Integrate language objectives with content objectives and IEP goals, if applicable, in lesson planning.
- Use scaffolding techniques to support language development.
- Monitor and assess academic progress.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNICIANS

- Assist with language development activities under educator guidance.
- Support multilingual learners in accessing materials and resources.
- Facilitate small group or individual language support without direct instruction.

SCHOOL STAFF

- School counselors, nurses, social workers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and administrative assistants all play a role in supporting multilingual learners.



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EXAMPLES: STUDENT PROFILES AND SCHEDULES

Student Profile (at enrollment)	Core Classes Semester 1 ---> 2	Elective Classes (Semesters 1 or 2)	Additional Support and Planning
Grade 9, age 15 WIDA ELP Level 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No schooling interruptions • Math - at / just below grade level • <u>Interests</u>: Engineering, Basketball • <u>Languages</u>: French, Portuguese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Semesters: 8 • ESOL English 1 ---> 2 • Science ---> SS (co-teaching) • Algebra ---> (next level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Education • Art • Music • STEM / Computers • French (Advanced) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual meeting with family to review ILAP and programming • Plan for Seal of Biliteracy • Peer mentor, advisory program • After school homework club • Support to sign up for basketball
Grade 10, age 16 WIDA ELP Level 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schooling interruptions in elementary and middle school • Basic literacy in Spanish • Math below middle school level • <u>Interests</u>: Medicine, Soccer • <u>Languages</u>: Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Semesters: 6 • Foundational Literacy • Foundational Numeracy • ESOL English 1 • Science ---> SS (co-teaching) • Algebra (ELD embedded) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Education • Art • Music • Spanish (Advanced) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family meeting each semester to review program • Plan for Seal of Biliteracy • Adult Mentor • Social work support • After school homework club • Support to sign up for soccer
Grade 11, age 17 WIDA ELP Level 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No schooling interruptions • Transcript with Algebra 1, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, Physics credits • <u>Interests</u>: Psychology, Swimming • <u>Languages</u>: Kinyarwanda, French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Semesters: 4 • ESOL English 2 ---> 3 • Social Studies (ELD embedded) • Science (ELD embedded) • Math (at grade level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Education • Health • Art • Music • French (Advanced) • Career and Technical Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family meeting each semester to review programming • Adult Mentor • Plan for Seal of Biliteracy testing this year or next. • Plan for Early College options next year
Grade 12, age 19 WIDA ELP Level 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interruptions in high school • Transcript not available • <u>Interests</u>: Electrician, Mechanics • <u>Languages</u>: Pashto, Dari 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Semesters: 2 • ESOL English 3 ---> English • Social Studies (grade level) • Science (grade level) • Algebra 1 ---> (next level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math Intervention • Physical Education • Health • Art • Music • STEM / Computers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family meeting each semester to review program and transition to Adult Ed (as appropriate) • Plan for Seal of Biliteracy testing this year. • Coordinate with Adult Ed

MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

ENROLLMENT, REGISTRATION, PROGRAMMING

RESOURCES

- **Age Eligibility**
 - [Chapter 213: Maine Statute](#)
- **Student and Family Goals**
 - [WIDA Focus Bulletin: Collaboration](#)
 - [Student Portrait example](#)
 - [DLL Student Profile](#)
- **Language Proficiencies**
 - [Guidance: Family Education](#)
 - [History Intake Form](#)
 - [Identifying Language Proficiency for Program Placement](#)
 - [Academic Screening Resources](#)
 - [Maine Seal of Biliteracy](#)
- **Family Engagement**
 - [DOE Translation & Interpretations](#)
- **WIDA**
 - [WIDA Screener](#)
 - [Family Engagement Resources](#) (translated)
- **Enrollment**
 - [Enrollment Interview Form: Family Education and History](#)
 - [Transcript Analysis: *Process determined at the local level*](#)
 - [DOE School Health Sample Forms](#) (translated)
 - [WIDA English Language Proficiency Screener](#)
 - [DOE ML Identification Process](#)
 - [Identifying Language Proficiency for Program Placement](#) (¡Colorín Colorado!)
 - [Academic Screening Resources](#) (MA)
- **Student and Family Goals**
 - [Support ED Padlet: Supporting Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education](#)
 - [NCELA Family Toolkit](#) (English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese)
 - [WIDA Student Portrait](#)
 - [DOE DLL Student Portrait](#)
 - [DOE Seal of Biliteracy](#)
- **Adult Education**
 - [DOE Adult Education](#)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

- **Lau Plan Framework**
 - [Section 1: Legal Foundations](#)
 - [Section 2: English Learner Identification](#)
 - [Section 3: Development of Individualized Language Acquisition Programs](#)
 - [Section 4: Meaningful and Equitable Access to Academic and Extracurricular Programs](#)
 - [Section 5: Equitable Personnel, Facilities, and Materials](#)
 - [Section 6: Annual English Language Proficiency Assessment](#)
 - [Section 7: Exit and Monitoring Guidance](#)
 - [Section 8: Ongoing Program Evaluation](#)
 - [Section 9: Meaningful Communication with Parents/Guardians](#)
- **Maine DOE Diploma Pathways**
- **Maine Content Standards**
- **DOE Literacy Hub**
- **DOE STEAM Hub**
- **DOE Numeracy Hub**
- **Elective Courses**
 - [Tools and Resources for Creating an Inclusive Environment](#) (Ch 5 USDOE EL Tool Kit)

