Message

Today, December 10th, is Human Rights Day. Learning about the conditions of human rights in the countries of origin of our students and their families is a powerful way to build empathy and understanding. Human Rights Watch offers many resources for developing awareness, including brief country profiles that can serve as a starting point. See also this resource from Colorín Colorado on Addressing Student Trauma, Anxiety, and Depression.

If you missed the Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning overview webinar on 12.7.21, you can view the recording here. Thanks again to Thomas Sauer of PEARLL for presenting!

April Perkins
Educator Highlight

This week, intern Isabel Honigman interviewed Farrah Giroux, a teacher of ELs at Westbrook Middle School. Thanks for sharing your story with us, Farrah!

Can you tell me a little bit about your background? What motivated you to become a teacher?

I grew up in Portland, Maine, and I went to Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts. My roommate was from the Bronx, New York, and her mother was from Puerto Rico. I became very close to her and I spent many summers with her and her Mom. She told me that she grew up speaking Spanish and did not learn English until second grade. She had never been to Puerto Rico, but her parents only spoke Spanish, and where she went to school in the Bronx, her teachers would speak Spanish to her and never taught her English. That was when I became interested in ESL education. I was fascinated by the fact that she grew up in America and did not learn to speak English. It was not until her Aunt encouraged her Mom to put her in another school that she learned English. I started volunteering in an afterschool program in Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts, with my roommate because she wanted to be an elementary school teacher. When I graduated college, I moved back to Portland and worked in many different afterschool programs, including Make It Happen, and I worked with many ESL students. I decided to attend USM for my master’s to become an EL teacher. I first taught ESL Adult Education to get my foot in the door and now I teach both Adults and EL students at Westbrook Middle School.

How do you navigate having different levels of learners in your classroom?

A lot of it is through grouping. In the beginning of the year, I’ll do a reading assessment to find out where kids’ language abilities are. Then, I start to group them through similar language abilities. I’ll group them differently depending on what activity we are working on. Sometimes I’ll group students in similar levels. But other times, I’ll group them heterogeneously, and that gives them opportunities to help students who may be in a lower level than they are. It also gives them the confidence to know they know what they are doing and a chance to show what they have learned.

If there was one piece of education policy that could be immediately implemented in the district, what would you choose?

I would like to see that college is free for everybody. Because I know for me, I did not grow up wealthy at all. I am still carrying a lot of loans, but when I went to college, I was still able to get a lot of financial aid. If I were a kid now, I don’t know if I would be able to do it. It is a huge debt that people have to carry, and it would be so much more accessible if it were free.

How do you think your teaching style differs from other teachers and what is most important to you in the classroom?

I think I know my students really well and I am very flexible. I think sometimes teachers can get stuck in the routine of things. They may find something that works once or twice and can get stuck in that routine for a number of years. I like to change up my lessons and not do the same thing every year. I think that is a nature in EL teachers because our students change so much. New kids move into the country constantly. My style is that the lessons I do one year are not going to be the same the next year. Being able to think on your feet and being flexible to meet the needs of your kids is essential in a successful classroom.
Professional Learning

All virtual Maine DOE offerings will be recorded and posted to the Maine DOE YouTube channel unless noted with an asterisk.

Maine DOE Professional Development Calendar

WIDA Self-Paced eWorkshops are available 9.1.21-8.31.22

Recording: Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning and Catalyst

Recording: New Mainers Series with Camden Public Library - Connecting Across Cultures: The Afghan Community of Maine

12.13.21 at 3pm: Maine DOE Hosts ExcEL Leadership Academy

1.27.22 at 3pm: Maine DOE Hosts French Heritage Language Program (This webinar will be an overview of the program. See their website for details.)

2.2.22-2.4.22: JNCL-NCLIS Virtual Language Advocacy Days

2.7.21 8am-4pm: National Association of English Learner Program Administrators Hybrid Conference: Advancing Linguistic Equity through Program Leadership

2.10.22-2.12.22 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Conference in NY

3.11.22: Save the Date for the Maine ESOL Meeting (Details to come!)

3.18.22-3.19.22: Multi-State Association for Bilingual Education Dual Language Conference and Pre-Conference School Visits

Summer 2022: CARLA Summer Institutes schedule now available

Articles of Interest

Maine DOE Newsroom: Celebrating Maine Heritage Through a Love of Language: Meet Jonna Bouré

Fiddlehead Focus: Acadians carrying on the tradition of ‘grosses tetes’ in Madawaska class

Maine DOE Newsroom: Maine DOE Team Member Makes U.S. History as First Somali American Elected as Mayor

Latino USA: The English Learner Who Became Secretary of Education

Daily Herald: Seal of Biliteracy signifies key life skill and opens doors

The Daily of the University of Washington: Language learning isn’t about you

Boston Herald: Services still lacking, but Boston improves on English language support for students

Vulture: The Browser Apps That Teach You Languages While You Watch TV

AATF-Maine and UMA: Virtual French Immersion Weekend

Are you looking to practice your French and learn more about French-speaking cultures? Join us for a comfortable language learning environment with French teachers who are there to support you!

The weekend runs Friday, January 14th 6:30pm and Saturday, January 15th 8am-4:45pm, and it is packed with great activities! We start out on Friday night watching the film LE CARREFOUR/THE INTERSECTION, featuring a beautiful friendship between a Franco-American woman and an African immigrant in Lewiston. We then discuss the film with the filmmakers! On Saturday, we will have workshops offered throughout the day at the intermediate and advanced levels. We will help you take your French to the next level by supporting you throughout the day! There will be a lunch break from Zoom if you need to recharge, and a midday concert with the renowned Togolese singer/performer Brice Kapel.

See the website for details and registration. Limited community scholarships are available. To inquire, write: goreyn@link75.org or chelsea.d.ray@maine.edu On a hâte de vous voir tous ! A bientôt!
ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

A Message from the Assessment Team

The Assessment Team has received confirmation from WIDA that ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs materials will be shipped to Maine SAUs beginning today, 12/9/21. As in previous years, the boxes will be shipped to SAU central offices with inventory lists and packaged assessment materials for each applicable school.

As you know, this year Maine DOE instituted a change to the ordering process for ACCESS materials. Initial materials orders were generated for each Maine SAU using Synergy enrollment and demographic data as of 11/8/21 (following the 10/30/21 enrollment deadline). This process was a shift from previous years when SAUs facilitated their own initial materials orders. The Assessment Team looks forward to connecting with SAUs following the close of the assessment window in April 2022 to gather data around whether this change to protocol had the intended effect of providing further support to EL administrators and teachers by removing this administrative task.

As with any change to process, we anticipate there will be some bumps in the road and lessons learned. As we enter the ACCESS for ELLs administration window, please do not hesitate to reach out to the team with questions, feedback, or if additional support is required.

Preparing for Assessment: SAU and School Coordinators, please read carefully!

- Check in with ACCESS Test Administrators to ensure times have been scheduled for students to participate in practice sessions. If students have accommodations, these should also be activated in the practice session. More information about practice sessions for students can be found here.
- Secure materials are stored securely; inventory of materials received completed in WIDA AMS.
- Confirm with SAU/school technology staff that DRC/Insight has been installed and tested for any devices used for the assessment. More information about technology requirements can be found here.
- Confirm all English learners are present in WIDA AMS. Establish additional test sessions as needed and ensure each student has been assigned to a session for all domains.
- Meet with case managers / Special Education Directors to review assessment accommodations for any ELs with an IEP or 504 Plan. Confirm that these accommodations have been selected in the WIDA AMS platform for the student. More information about assigning accommodations can be found here (pg. 57).
- Create an assessment schedule and share with all building stakeholders to minimize interruptions and confusion during the assessment window. Build in time for makeup sessions.

12/15/21: Initial Materials orders received by SAU central offices. Additional Materials Ordering becomes available to SAUs in WIDA AMS. For more information about this process, please see the Additional Materials Ordering webinar in the WIDA Secure Portal (login required).

Helpful Links & Resources
Accessibility and Accommodations
Preparing for Assessment: Practice and Sample Items
WIDA AMS User Guide

Questions? Concerns? Please reach out!
Jodi Bossio-Smith, State Coordinator for Alternate and WIDA Assessments
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207.530.1462
Job Opportunities

Maine DOE Restorative Practices Coordinator

French Heritage Language Program Teacher (See announcements to right for details.)

Rhode Island DOE Multilingual Learners (World Languages) Specialist

Brewer Long-Term Substitute French Teacher

Westbrook Communications Specialist

Westbrook Long-Term Sub ELL HS Teacher

Westbrook Long-Term Sub ELL Elementary Teacher

Auburn Cultural Broker/Interpreter Park Ave Elementary

Maine DOE Educational Technology Infrastructure Specialist (Limited Period)

RSU 51 French Teacher

RSU 3 Long-Term Substitute Spanish Teacher

RSU 2 Hall-Dale MS Spanish Teacher (French also desired)

Westbrook ELL Elementary Ed Tech III (One Year)

RSU 44 ELL Tutor

Falmouth HS Latin Teacher (One Year)

MSAD 54 Part-Time ELL Tutor

Announcements

Maine DOE Pre-Screening Tool for School Attendance

The pre-screening tool has been updated and translated into the following languages:

- English
- Arabic
- Chinese
- French
- Vietnamese
- Swahili
- Spanish
- Somali
- Portuguese
- Kinyarwanda
- Khmer

REL West Resource

REL West has released Supporting Integrated English Learner Student Instruction: A Guide to Assess Professional Learning Needs Based on the Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School Practice Guide. “It comprises two tools—the Teacher Self-Reflection Tool and the Classroom Observation Tool—and outlines a 10-step process to help districts align their professional learning decisions with the data collected from these tools.”

Seeking French Heritage Language Program Teacher

Alliance Française du Maine (afdume.org) would like to start a Heritage Language Class for francophone children ages 8 to 12, either in presence at the Immigrant Welcome Center, 24 Preble St, in Portland, or via Zoom. We are looking for a competent, experienced French Teacher interested in this project. Classes will happen once a week, at the day and time chosen by the Teacher, who will choose Zoom or in presence. Classes will start the week of January 10, 2022. The salary for each class is $50 an hour, paid monthly by AFduME, regardless of numbers of participants. Classes will have no more than 10 or 12 children at the most. If interested, please contact Regine Whittlesey, Presidente of AFduME, with a letter of motivation and a CV. Send documents to regine.whittlesey@gmail.com.

Report on Bilingual Education

Region 4 Comprehensive Center has released a new brief on Bilingual Education Across the United States. Three other briefs will follow in the series.

ESOL

3rd Wednesday of Each Month

Next: 12.15.21 at 3:30pm
Focus Topic: Culturally-responsive practices around the holidays; Receipt of ACCESS materials: inventory and assessment security. Best practices for assigning accommodations for the ACCESS.

Register by 12.12.21

World Languages

Discontinued due to low interest. Contact April Perkins at april.perkins@maine.gov with any questions or needs for support you may have.