



WIDA English Language Development Standards Implementation Guide (*Part I*)

August 2013

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu

Contents

Introduction	2
Background	2
What's WIDA?	2
Why WIDA?	3
Implementing the WIDA ELD Standards	4
What are the key components of the WIDA Standards Framework?.....	4
How is WIDA different from previous English language standards?.....	6
What are districts expected to do in regards to the WIDA standards?.....	8
<i>Regulatory Requirements</i>	8
<i>A Multi-Year Process</i>	9
<i>Strategies for Developing an Effective WIDA Implementation Plan</i>	10
What are educators expected to do in regards to the WIDA standards?	12
How will the Department support this important work?.....	13
<i>A District Leadership Responsibility</i>	13
<i>Department Sponsored Trainings</i>	13
<i>Future Guidance</i>	14

Introduction

The Massachusetts Board of Education officially adopted the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment English Language Development standards (referred to as the *WIDA ELD standards* in this document) in June 2012 as part of the larger Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (RETELL) initiative. RETELL aims to increase the academic achievement of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the state by providing professional development, instructional resources and assessment tools to support instruction of students learning English.

The *WIDA English Language Development Standards Implementation Guide (Part I)* aims to support district leaders and educators—superintendents, curriculum directors, ELL directors, principals, teachers and support personnel—as they work together to turn a promising language development framework into increased academic achievement for every English Language Learner in their district.

This guide provides general information about the WIDA ELD standards framework, expectations for district implementation, and available support for this significant undertaking. It is intended for district leaders charged with preparing and implementing a plan for incorporating the WIDA ELD standards into curriculum. However, because ESL and content area teachers will be the ones who actually implement and carry out the new standards, this guide is also useful for educators interested in utilizing all available resources to maximize their ELLs' language learning and academic achievement.

Background

What's WIDA?

The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) is a consortium of 28 states, including Massachusetts¹. WIDA has developed a comprehensive standards and assessment framework to support ELLs' academic language development and content area learning. This framework is made up of two key components: the WIDA ELD standards and the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) assessment based on the standards. Massachusetts has adopted the WIDA standards as the state's English language proficiency framework, and the ACCESS for ELLs as the state mandated annual English proficiency assessment.

¹ For more information about the WIDA consortium and its member states, visit www.wida.us.

The WIDA ELD standards promote academic language development for ELLs in four core content areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, and thereby facilitate students' success in school. The standards promote a collaborative instructional approach in which ESL and content area teachers work together to promote ELLs' language development throughout the school day – thus maximizing language and content area learning.

Why WIDA?

The mission of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is to strengthen the Commonwealth's public education system so that every student is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education, compete in the global economy, and understand the rights and responsibilities of American citizens, and in so doing, to close all proficiency gaps. Although Massachusetts' students continually outscore and outrank students in other states, the academic achievement of ELLs throughout the state remains persistently low when compared to the performance of their native English speaking peers.

In order to strengthen the teaching and learning of ELLs and address such proficiency gaps, the Department launched the RETELL initiative in 2012. RETELL brings a systemic approach that combines professional development in Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) for educators and a new set of English language development standards and assessments for ELLs.

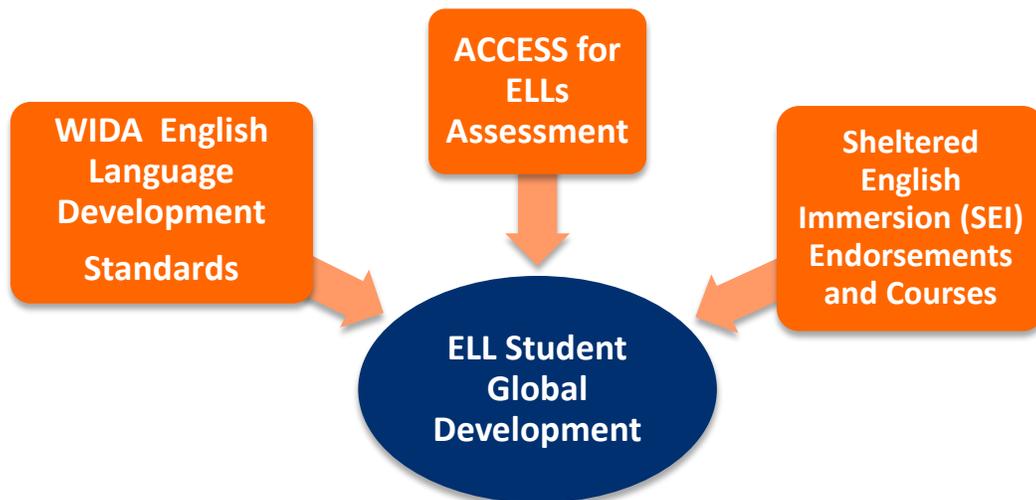


Figure 1 Components of the RETELL Initiative

The WIDA ELD standards are a foundational component of RETELL. They provide useful data and research-based resources for promoting language development along content area learning. In addition, they provide a common language between content, vocational and language teachers to maximize collaboration on behalf of ELLs.

Implementing the WIDA ELD Standards

What are the key components of the WIDA Standards Framework?

The WIDA Standards framework is composed of several key components:

1. **Five English Language Development Standards** that reflect the social and academic language expectations for ELLs in American schools. These standards promote academic language development across four core content areas and the role of all teachers as teachers of language and literacy - a key shift of the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.

ELD 1: Social and Instructional Language

ELD 2: The language of English Language Arts

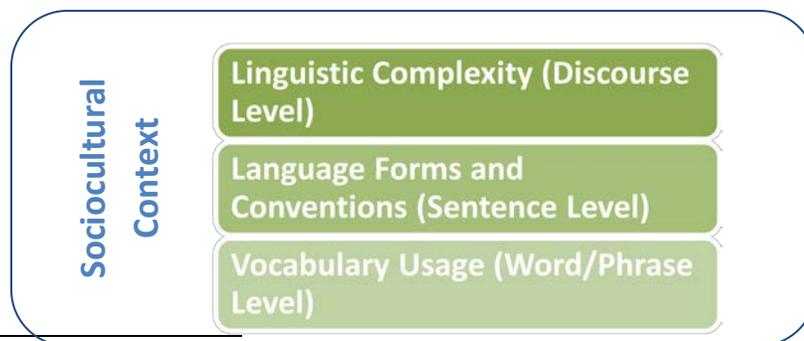
ELD 3: The language of Mathematics

ELD 4: The language of Science

ELD 5: The language of Social Studies

Figure 2. WIDA ELD Standards © www.wida.us

2. **Three Features of Academic Language** that represent WIDA's view of the language of schooling. WIDA's comprehensive view of academic language extends beyond vocabulary, often called the "bricks" and "mortar" of academic language.² It also encompasses *language forms and conventions* needed to compose sentences integrating academic vocabulary, as well as *linguistic complexity* features that help ELLs engage with academic texts. WIDA also attends to the sociocultural context in which ELLs use and process language.



*Figure 3
WIDA's
Features of
Academic
Language*

² Concept and diagram adapted from Zwiers, J. (2012) *Academic Language in School Contexts*. Keynote presentation at the *2012 Amplification of the WIDA ELD Standards Debut Conference*. Boston, MA.

3. **Five Levels of Language Proficiency** and corresponding **Performance Definitions** for all four language domains (reading, writing, speaking, listening). The *Levels of Language Proficiency* describe stages of second language development, and are aligned to the *ACCESSS for ELLs* assessment. The *Performance Definitions* describe the language ELLs can process and produce toward the end of each level of English language development when given language supports.



Figure 4. WIDA Levels of Language Proficiency

4. **Model Performance Indicator (MPI) Strand** matrices that showcase examples of how to provide ELLs access to content area instruction through differentiation. Each Model Performance Indicator contains a differentiated *language function* or language use related to a *content stem* – a topic or activity derived from curriculum frameworks and *supports* for students at each level of proficiency. MPI Strands show differentiation for students at different proficiency levels, and can be based on lesson-level or unit-level core instructional activities or tasks.

Individual Model Performance Indicator (MPI)

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Emerging	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 – Reaching
READING	Identify language that indicates narrative points of view (e.g., “I” v. “he/she”) from illustrated text using word/phrase banks with a partner	Identify language that indicates narrative points of view (e.g., “he felt scared”) from illustrated text using word/phrase banks with a partner	Categorize passages based on narrative points of view from illustrated text using word/phrase banks with a partner	Compare narrative points of view in extended texts using graphic organizers with a partner Individual MPI Components: Language function <u>Content stem</u> <i>Supports</i>	Compare and contrast narrative points of view in extended texts	

Figure 5. WIDA Model Performance Indicator (MPI) Strand © www.wida.us

For more information about each component of the WIDA ELD standards framework and WIDA resources, visit the WIDA online *Download Library* at <http://wida.us/downloadLibrary.aspx>.

How is WIDA different from previous English language standards?

The new WIDA ELD standards represent an instructional shift for educators in Massachusetts. The WIDA standards are different from what educators have traditionally come to refer to as “standards”. Moreover, WIDA’s ELD standards are different from the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes (ELPBO), Massachusetts’ former English language standards, in several ways:

The WIDA ELD standards are not a scope and sequence for language instruction.

Traditional English language proficiency standards frameworks provide a list of topics and skills that ELLs must be taught at different language and or proficiency levels. In contrast, the WIDA standards highlight specific areas where ELLs engage with academic language. The WIDA framework also provides examples of how to differentiate content area instruction for ELLs.

The WIDA ELD standards framework includes much more than just the five ELD standards.

Traditional standards frameworks consist of lists of topics and skills that educators must teach. However, the WIDA ELD standards are global statements about the type of language that ELLs encounter in schools. The WIDA framework includes additional components beyond the standards that provide additional information about how to ensure ELLs have develop academic language in the core areas represented in the standards. Full implementation of the standards requires careful consideration and integration of these other components of the WIDA framework.

The WIDA ELD standards encompass all core academic areas, not just English Language Arts. Although the ELPBO was mostly aligned with the Massachusetts English Language Arts framework, WIDA promotes a collaborative approach to language instruction. The WIDA framework highlights the importance of promoting language development alongside content area learning to promote ELLs academic achievement.

These characteristics of the WIDA framework have several implications for districts planning to integrate WIDA into their curriculum:

Characteristics of the WIDA Framework

Implications

The WIDA ELD Standards are **not a scope and sequence** for language instruction.



therefore....

The WIDA ELD standards must be used in tandem with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. WIDA provides examples of how to differentiate instruction for ELLs based on state content area standards. Implementation of the standards will require collaboration between content area teachers and ESL teachers to use both sets of frameworks to plan instruction for ELLs.

The WIDA ELD standards framework includes **much more** than just the **five ELD standards**.



therefore....

Full integration of the WIDA ELD standards requires a deeper understanding of the WIDA framework and all its components. Educators must carefully understand and apply components such as the *Features of Academic Language* as they are used in different sociocultural contexts and across language domains, the *Performance Definitions* and *Model Performance Indicator strands*. In other words, integrating WIDA is much more than just identifying standards and citing them in lessons, units or curriculum maps. Although districts have flexibility in how they incorporate these components, educators must be able to articulate how curriculum documents and classroom instruction of ELLs integrates these key components of the WIDA framework.

The WIDA ELD standards encompass **all core academic areas**, not just ESL.



therefore....

The WIDA ELD standards must be integrated into both core content area and ESL curricula. ELLs encounter and develop the language of schooling throughout the day – not just in ESL classes. Effectively implementing the WIDA standards will require **greater collaboration between ESL and content area teachers** as they purposefully plan instruction to develop both language and content area learning.

What are districts expected to do in regards to the WIDA standards?

Regulatory Requirements

The WIDA ELD standards became Massachusetts' English language proficiency standards in June 2012. Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, districts are expected to integrate the WIDA standards into ESL and content area curricula for classes where ELLs participate.

Massachusetts G.L. c.71A, the state law governing instruction of ELLs, mandates that ELLs (with limited exceptions) are placed in Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) programs where they receive instruction that promotes both English language development and content learning in ways that are appropriate for their language proficiency levels (G.L.c.71A (4)). State guidance outlined in the Coordinated Program Review Procedures for English Language Education Programs³ (referred to as ELE CPRs throughout this document) provides additional information about expectations for ELL instruction:

- Regardless of the program model, districts provide ELL students with sheltered content instruction and ESL instruction that is aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and integrates components of the WIDA ELD standards framework (*ELE Criterion #5 – Program Placement and Structure*).
- Districts' grouping of students ensures that ELLs receive effective content instruction at appropriate academic levels and that ESL instruction is at the appropriate proficiency level (*ELE Criterion #9 – Instructional Grouping*).

As indicated by such requirements, adoption of the WIDA ELD standards **does not** mean that ELE program requirements have changed. Although the new language standards promote academic and social language development in core content area classrooms, ELL students must also continue to receive explicit and systematic English language instruction. Both sheltered content area and ESL teachers will need to integrate the WIDA ELD standards into their units and lesson plans, albeit in different ways. Sheltered content area teachers will most likely integrate the WIDA ELD standard related to their specific content area. For example, a math teacher should focus on *ELD Standard 3: The Language of Mathematics* and *ELD Standard 1: Social Instructional Language*, whereas science teachers should focus on social, instructional and academic language related to the content area of science (*ELD Standard 4: The Language of Science*). ESL teachers, on the other hand, may focus on social, instructional and academic language *across* content areas depending on the specific type of ESL program in their district (e.g., content-based ESL, pull-out ESL, etc).

³ For more information about Coordinated Program Reviews of ELE Programs, see the *Coordinated Program Review Instrument for English Learner Education in Public Schools - Chapter 71A* available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/default.html>.

A Multi-Year Process

Integrating the WIDA ELD standards into content area and ESL curriculum is a significant undertaking. It requires strategic planning from district leadership, comprehensive training about the WIDA framework, and collaboration between content area and ESL teachers. The Department recognizes that districts will need several years to fully integrate the WIDA standards.

During the 2012-2013 school year, districts participating in ELE CPRs were required to develop a plan for implementing the WIDA ELD standards. This plan may include, but is not limited to, information about:

- WIDA training opportunities for district staff, especially core content area and ESL teachers who teach ELLs and their supervising staff;
- A process and approach for reviewing or developing ESL/ELD curricula that integrates key components of the WIDA standards framework;
- A process and approach for reviewing content area curricula so that it incorporates key components of the WIDA standards framework; and
- Implementation timelines and action steps, along with specific district and/or school staff responsible for each action step.

District leaders have flexibility to develop a plan and approach for WIDA integration that reflects their local context and initiatives. WIDA implementation plans should also be regularly updated to reflect accomplishments and evaluation of initial efforts.

Beginning in the SY2013-2014 school, districts participating in ELE CPRs will be expected to provide a plan for WIDA implementation and also demonstrate their progress in integrating WIDA into curriculum and classroom instruction. The diagram below highlights expectations for districts by school year:

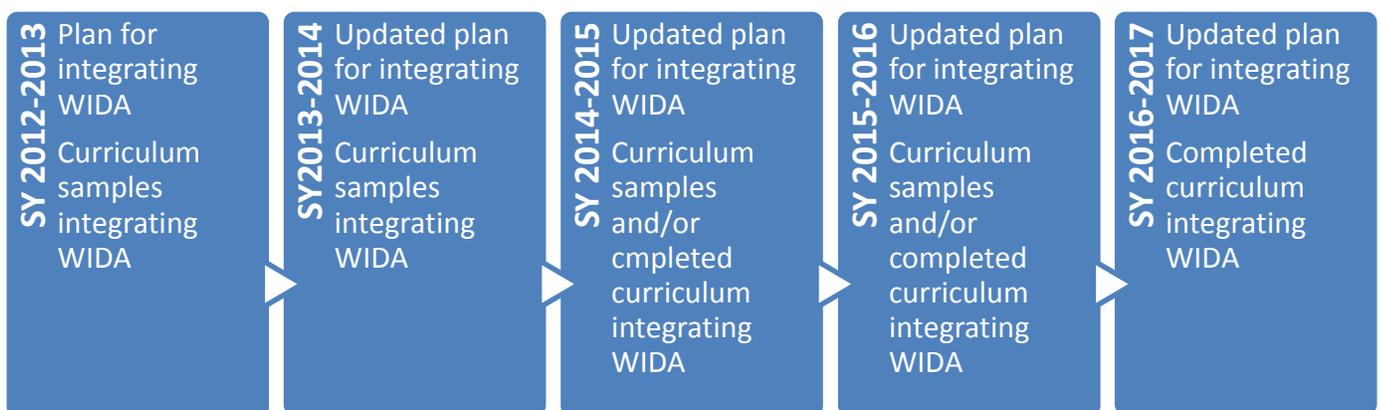


Figure 6. WIDA Integration – Expectations for Districts Participating in ELE CPRs

Strategies for Developing an Effective WIDA Implementation Plan

WIDA implementation plans will vary from district to district depending on local characteristics such as English Language Education program, ELL population, and staffing resources. The following strategies provide helpful suggestions and considerations for district leaders as they develop plans for integrating WIDA into curriculum and instruction:

- 1. Provide WIDA training for district curriculum leaders and school administrators before they begin creating a plan for integrating WIDA.** District curriculum leaders and school administrators make decisions about district curriculum products and revision processes, professional development offerings, and collaborative structures for teachers. Principals and assistant principals have an important role in evaluating instruction to ensure it is aligned to state curriculum frameworks. Therefore, it's very important that district leaders understand the WIDA framework and how it can be integrated into content area and ESL instruction before they set out to create a plan for implementation.
- 2. Ensure that the district's WIDA implementation plan includes content area and ESL teachers and administrators.** The WIDA framework promotes a collaborative approach to ELL instruction. In order to effectively promote language learning in math, science, ELA and social studies, content and language experts must be part of the conversation. An effective WIDA implementation plan will need input from content area and ESL administrators who can bring the district and school level perspective, as well as content area and ESL teachers – who can provide a grounded classroom perspective to the conversation.
- 3. Make strategic connections between current state and district initiatives and the WIDA ELD standards.** The purpose of integrating the WIDA standards is to improve the teaching and learning of ELLs. There are several other state initiatives related to teaching and learning that can be leveraged to support this work at the district level. For example, educators can be encouraged seek professional development related to the WIDA ELD standards in their individual Educator Plans as part of the new Educator Evaluation initiative. Moreover, educators, schools and districts could also develop student learning goals about ELLs, and use WIDA tools to differentiate instruction to promote ELL student learning. At the district level, literacy initiatives related to the implementation of the new *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* could also be strengthened by including explicit instruction in sentence level and discourse level features of texts – which are part of WIDA's Features of Academic Language. Making these connections between what is already happening in the district and WIDA can help educators implement seemingly separate initiatives in coherent ways and maximize the effectiveness of these initiatives.
- 4. Develop a cadre of district trainers who can provide professional development about the WIDA standards to the rest of the staff.** Districts can support teacher leaders, coaches, or other district staff to become WIDA trainers within the district. The

Department sponsors Basic WIDA Training of Trainers (ToTs) for educators across the state. Participants who complete these ToTs can provide basic professional development about the organization and application of the WIDA ELD standards to other staff *in their district*.⁴

5. **Make a short term and a long term plan.** Because WIDA represents an instructional shift for many educators, district leaders should develop a long term strategic plan with multiple short term goals and corresponding action plans. For example, districts will need a multi-year plan outlining key steps for training educators and developing curriculum. They will also need to establish several short term plans outlining processes and timelines for providing professional development, creating collaborative curriculum development teams, revising and refining curriculum samples, and other critical implementation tasks.
6. **Collaborate with other district leaders.** Districts across the Commonwealth are working on approaches for integrating WIDA into content area and ESL curriculum. Collaboration with other districts with similar ELL programs and populations could help break down this significant task into manageable projects where educators share expertise across district borders.
7. **Provide regular collaboration opportunities for ESL and content area teachers.** Full implementation of the WIDA standards requires collaboration between educators may not have opportunities to interact meaningfully. This type of sustained collaboration focused on instructional practice cannot be achieved without regular, structured collaboration time. School level administrators thus play a key role in structuring the school day and school year in ways that promote this type of collaboration.
8. **Provide training for non-core academic teachers and school support staff that interact with ELLs.** ELLs interact with a host of school and district level staff other than their official content area and ESL teachers. In order to truly maximize academic language development and learning for ELLs across academic and nonacademic activities, special education teachers, physical education and health teachers, librarians, school counselors, art and music teachers who work with ELLs should also learn about academic language and differentiation techniques championed in the WIDA standards framework.
9. **Seek out training opportunities beyond those offered by the Department.** Although the Department is committed to providing professional development and support for

⁴ Participants who complete the Basic WIDA ToTs sponsored by the Department are **not qualified** to provide professional development about the WIDA ELD standards outside of their district. In order to offer professional development about the WIDA standards to participants from other districts or states, educators must become **WIDA certified trainers**. For more information on how to become a certified WIDA trainer, visit <http://certification.wceruw.org/>.

educators, district leaders can also be proactive about other opportunities to learn about WIDA standards implementation. For example district leaders may consider sending teachers and administrators to WIDA consortium workshops, academies, institutes and/or conferences to continue building capacity for WIDA implementation in their district.

- 10. Make sure teachers and district staff receive training about ACCESS for ELLs.** The WIDA standards and ACCESS for ELLs assessment are part of an integrated system. Educators who work with ELLs will need training not just on how to administer the ACCESS test, but also on how to interpret ACCESS data and use it to plan effective instruction for students at different proficiency levels.

What are educators expected to do in regards to the WIDA standards?

Beginning in the SY 2012-13, educators who teach ELLs are expected to integrate components of the WIDA ELD standards framework into their instruction and assessments. Because the WIDA standards promote an integrated approach to support English language development, both ESL and content area teachers should be teaching academic language and differentiating instruction for ELLs based on their specific teaching context.

For example, a science teacher with Emerging (Level 2) and Developing (Level 3) ELLs should incorporate *ELD Standard 4: the Language of Science* into his and her instruction by explicitly teaching academic language related to the specific topic or science standards addressed in the unit or lesson. This science teacher should also provide his or her ELL students access to the content standards by differentiating language expectations, supports, and assessments in ways that are appropriate for the ELLs' language proficiency levels. Similarly, an ESL teacher working with these ELLs might support their language development by providing explicit instruction focused on social and instructional English language used in science classrooms, helping science teachers identify specific language features commonly used to communicate about scientific topics, and/or pre-teaching or reinforcing academic language taught in the science classroom.

The way in which ESL and content area teachers collaborate to implement the WIDA standards will vary depending on the type of language program established in their school or district. Irrespective of the language program model, ESL and content area educators will need to develop an understanding of the key components of the WIDA framework, how to use them and how to collaborate to maximize student learning. The SEI Endorsement courses provides introductory information about the WIDA ELD standards framework; however, educators who participate in the SEI Endorsement courses should also participate in **additional, in-depth professional development** about the components of the WIDA framework and how to integrate them into content area and ESL curriculum. Educators may choose to participate in ESE-sponsored WIDA trainings, learn from other district staff who participated in WIDA Training of Trainers (ToTs), or attend WIDA consortium professional development offerings.

Educators should also note that participation in WIDA trainings is not required by law and **will not fulfill requirements** for earning an SEI Endorsement.⁵ There are four options for incumbent SEI teachers and administrators to qualify for the endorsement:

- Successfully complete a Department-approved course of study;
- Pass a Department-approved test;
- Hold a bachelor's degree in a major approved by the Department (e.g., applied linguistics) or have other graduate level training approved by the Department that embodies the required standards; or
- Hold an English as a Second Language or English Language Learners educator license.

However, Professional Development Points (PDPs) earned from WIDA trainings can be used to fulfill the 15 SEI PDPs required for license renewals on or after July 1st, 2016 (603 CMR 44.06 (2)).

How will the Department support this important work?

A District Leadership Responsibility

District leaders are ultimately responsible for local content area and ESL curricula. Therefore, district leaders are expected to develop a strategic plan for integrating WIDA into curricula, and making sure educators incorporate WIDA into ELL instruction. However, because of the scope of this work and its essential role in ensuring the success of the RETELL initiative, the Department has come alongside districts to provide guidance to districts and help build capacity for WIDA implementation.

Department Sponsored Trainings

The Department has sponsored multiple WIDA trainings for district leaders and educators since the adoption of the standards in 2012. The purpose of Department sponsored WIDA trainings is not to train every Commonwealth educator on the basic components of the WIDA framework and how to use the new standards. Instead, the Department hopes to provide district curriculum leaders and educators with opportunities to learn about the new standards so they can return to their districts equipped to provide additional WIDA professional development to other district staff.

So far the Department has offered the following types of trainings at no cost to districts:

⁵ For more information about the SEI Endorsement and how to obtain it, see the *Guidelines for the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher and SEI Administrator Endorsements* available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/>.

-
- 1-day and 2-day Basic WIDA Overviews focused on the principles, organization and key components of the WIDA framework;
 - 3-day Basic WIDA Training of Trainers focused on the principles, organization and key components of the WIDA framework and how to provide in-house basic WIDA professional development;
 - ELL Curriculum Development trainings presenting approaches for integrating WIDA into curricula at the lesson and unit level;
 - Consultations and workshops about the WIDA framework led by WIDA consultants working through the DSACs and directly with Commissioner's Districts; and
 - WIDA standards presentations for state networks (Literacy Leaders, Math Liaisons, ELL Curriculum Supervisors) and in state conferences (Curriculum Summit).

In addition, the SEI Teacher Endorsement Courses incorporate basic training about the WIDA framework. The SEI Courses provide foundational information about the WIDA standards; however, educators who participate in the SEI Endorsement Courses will still need additional training on the WIDA standards and district-specific approaches to WIDA implementation in order to effectively incorporate the standards into their teaching practice.

Future Guidance

The Department hopes to provide additional guidance and support for WIDA implementation in ways that are useful to districts. In the next couple of years the Department will continue disseminating best practices for WIDA implementation through regional presentations to diverse stakeholder groups and WIDA trainings. In addition, the Department hopes to provide sample approaches for integrating the WIDA standards into curricula through publicly released state Model Curriculum Units that integrate components of the WIDA framework. The Department also hopes to provide additional training and guidance about the development of ESL curriculum integrating WIDA in upcoming years.

For more information about WIDA trainings and guidance, visit the WIDA ESE page at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/wida.html> or email WIDA@doe.mass.edu.