

Conference Topics & Guiding Questions

Conference Theme:

Schools and Communities Empowering One Another

Session Type:

These sessions examine research-based strategies, practices, or topics that align to the conference theme and one of the topic strands. Sessions are 75 minutes in length and should be designed and delivered in an engaging format.

| Topic Area | Description | Guiding Questions |
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| Leadership | Addresses K-12 State, District, and School leadership practices that promote equity & language development for language learners and provide communities/environments for educators & families to be engaged in language learning practice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What critical factors lead to successful programs for language learners from diverse linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds? • How can families of language learners contribute and be successfully engaged in programs? • How can data be used to support decisions to provide an equitable, successful program for language learners in a school community? • What leadership innovations (curriculum, scheduling, PD, etc.) have led to gains in language development and increased student achievement for language learners? |
| Language Assessment | Addresses effective ways to develop, interpret, and use various types of language assessments (e.g., standardized, classroom, diagnostic, placement, formative assessments) in educational settings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we develop and use classroom assessment to inform instruction? • How can we connect assessment outcomes with instruction? • How can we interpret and use standardized large-scale assessment scores to make sound educational decisions? • How can we ensure that we use valid content assessments with language learners? • What are some innovative ways to use technology for assessment? |
| Second Language Development & Bilingual Education | Cultural and linguistic diversity have become defining features of classrooms in the 21 st century. Focuses on how to move beyond simply acknowledging the reality of students' complex communicative repertoires to actively leveraging them in and through learning in the language of instruction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What instructional strategies support language and content learning at various stages of language development? • What classroom or school-wide practices create language-rich learning environments in multiple languages for second language development and emergent bilinguals? • What purposeful use of bilingual and culturally responsive resources support second language development and emergent bilinguals and how? • What instructional approaches and programmatic considerations support second language development and emergent bilinguals across the years? |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can an asset-based mindset promote students' use of language(s) in dynamic ways for meaning-making? |
| Higher Education | Focuses on preparation of pre-service teachers and ongoing development of in-service teachers in supporting language learners. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have institutes of higher education partnered with states or districts to support in-service teachers? • How have education faculty integrated WIDA resources into coursework? • How do teacher preparation programs address culturally and linguistically diverse student learning? • How have teacher preparation programs collaborated to support language learners within teacher preparation programs? |
| Language Learners with Disabilities | Addresses the programmatic, instructional, and assessment needs of language learners with potential or identified disabilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we approach and execute assessment and instruction of language learners with potential or identified disabilities? • How can we use pedagogical strategies appropriate for a wide range of disability classifications to develop lesson and unit plans that ensure access, with meaningful progressions for language learners with disabilities? • How can we integrate deep knowledge of the students' strengths, IEP goals, language development levels, and interests into the lesson and unit plans to provide rigorous language learning experiences? • How do you plan accommodations for individual students, as necessary, to measure their achievement relative to standards? • How are assessment accommodations aligned with those accommodations that the student receives during classroom language and content instruction (e.g., providing accessible text as part of a performance assessment)? |
| Family Engagement | Concerns critical discussions around family engagement including approaches and practices that promote reciprocal home-school partnerships at classroom, school, district, and state levels. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What professional learning opportunities help educators learn about and advocate for families of language learners? • What can staff do to learn about families' goals for their children's language use and how can staff use this information to support students' language development? • What measures do we have in place to communicate with families of diverse linguistic backgrounds? • How do leaders strategically support family engagement practices and make schools welcoming to linguistically and culturally diverse students and families? |
| Early Years | Addresses effective, developmentally appropriate ways to support the language development of dual language learners (ages 2.5-5.5) through standards-based | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we support young children's dual language development through routines, transitions, learning experiences, and the environment? • How do practitioners build respectful, reciprocal relationships with dual language learners and their families? |

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| | curriculum, care, instruction, and assessment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we assess, plan for, and support both receptive and expressive language development? • How do practitioners in early care and education settings provide opportunities for all dual language learners to engage in higher level thinking? |
| Newcomer, Students with Limited Formal Education, and Migrant Education | Addresses the programmatic, instructional, and assessment needs of newcomer, students with limited formal education (SLIFE), or migrant language learners. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can my students' country, culture, and education system be utilized inside and outside of the classroom? • What does it mean to be culturally and linguistically responsive in our systems or in our instruction? • What innovations (curriculum, scheduling, PD, etc.) have led to increased support and engagement of newcomers, SLIFE, or migrant language learners? • What instructional strategies support language and content learning at various stages of language development? |
| Teaching & Learning in International Schools | Focuses on the implementation of the WIDA K-12 English Language Development Standards and Assessment System in International Schools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do international schools use an asset-based approach to teaching and assessing language learners? • What systems have international schools developed to support admissions and placement, grading processes, or community and family engagement? • How is data used in international schools to inform decisions, programming, and goal-setting for language learners? • How have international schools prepared teachers to work with and implement the WIDA ELD Standards and Assessment System? |
| Effective Instructional Practices | Focuses on the intentional planning and execution of classroom practices that support language and content learning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can the unique backgrounds and strengths of students, and families be utilized inside and outside of the classrooms to build strong learning communities? • How can we differentiate for language and keep all children and students engaged in higher order thinking? • What have been successful cooperative learning techniques that have worked best for your lessons? • How do you plan instruction to support domain-specific language development? • What are some innovative uses of technology in classrooms that support language learners? |
| Science & STEM | Addresses the engagement of, programming for, and instructional practices of language learners in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are educators supporting language development and science or STEM content simultaneously? • How have educators collaborated to support science and/or STEM initiatives? • How have state, district, and school leadership supported science and/or STEM initiatives? • What have been the responses to the implementation of the disciplinary practices (Standards for Math Practice, Science and Engineering practices, etc.) for full inclusion of language learners? |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes have you made in your instruction to strengthen students’ reasoning and to support ELs’ full engagement in the discourse of complex reasoning? |
| Implementing Professional Learning in Schools & Districts | Addresses K-12 formats and programs of professional learning that support educators in providing and implementing equitable and successful language learning programs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can professional learning be organized within states, districts, and schools to provide ongoing sustained support? • How can a program of professional learning be a catalyst to successfully support language learners within a school culture? • What data can influence professional learning for educators to support equitable, culturally responsive, and/or successful language learning programs? • What features do successful professional learning & coaching programs in districts/divisions & schools need to contain? • How have you cultivated interest and “buy-in” for professional learning that supports educators in working with language learners and their families. |
| Equity and Social Justice | Addresses ideas, concepts, practices, and activities that focus direct attention on contesting linguicism, racism, and other social injustices and promoting equitable opportunities for language learners. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we engage in ongoing reflection on our own experiences with privilege and prejudice and on how our schools provide equitable opportunities for language learners? • How can we promote agency for language learners in our educational settings? • How can we collect and analyze data to provide a clearer picture of root causes and ideas for action related to systemic injustices and equitable opportunities for our language learners? • What does it mean to be culturally and linguistically responsive in our systems or in our instruction? |
| Policy | Addresses initiatives for all children and students, including ELLs and DLLs, such as the Every Student Succeeds Act, Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, States’ early learning standards, and/or updates on ASSETS, PARCC, SBAC, DLM, NCSC, that help DLLs and ELL students to be successful. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the responses to the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and other new/revised sets of standards in terms of educating ELLs and DLLs? • What initiatives are helping administrators increase the validity of content assessments for ELLs? • What initiatives are making a positive impact on ELL programs or policies at a state and/or federal level? • What have been the responses to the Every Student Succeeds Act? |