Project
STELLAR

A WIDA Job-Embedded Teacher Professional Development Program in Rural Settings

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Goals of this Presentation

1. Describe how one job-embedded teacher professional development program adapted (to) WIDA content in a rural school district setting in Florida

2. Contrast this program with your own WIDA professional development program

3. Analyze/adapt your WIDA program using insights gleaned from the presentation.

Overview of the Presentation

I.   Overview and Context of Rural Education

II.   Levy County (LEA) Demographics, WIDA, ELL Data

III.   Project STELLAR: Levy County – University of Florida Partnership

- o Phase I with 24 teacher-leaders
- o Phase II with 72 teachers and educators
- o Parent engagement

IV.   Conclusions

Part I: Overview and Context of Rural Education

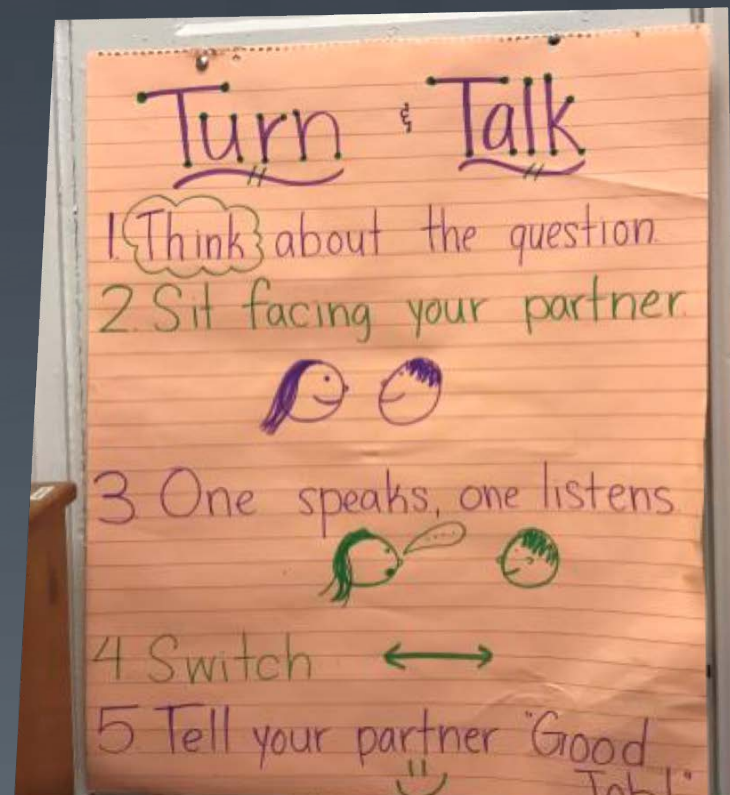# What comes to mind when you think of *rural education*?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Turn and Talk

❖ Find a partner (or two)

❖ Share your ideas about "rural education."

❖ How do these issues affect educators of English language learners?

Florida's Adoption of WIDA Timeline

- ❖June 2014 Florida adopted WIDA standards for the state
- ❖2015 Florida began to pilot WIDA framework across several districts with the ACCESS assessment
- ❖2015 Florida rolled out WIDA using regional PD opportunities for key district personnel. Limited PD for higher education to prepare preservice teachers.
- ❖2017 first set of WIDA ACCESS 2.0 data available across the state.

# The Florida Consent Decree: Helpful or Harmful?

- Since 1990, the preparation of teachers of ELLs falls under state law – the <u>Florida Consent Decree</u>
- <u>ALL</u> teachers of ELLs (all teachers) must meet the following preparation requirements:

  - 300 hours or equivalent for teachers of English Language Arts or Reading
  - 60 hours or equivalent for content-area teachers
  - 60 hours or equivalent for school leaders, counselors, and administrators
  - 18 hours or equivalent for specials: PE, art, music teachers

  If everyone is a specialist, is anyone really a specialist?

Part II: Levy County (LEA) Demographics, WIDA, ELL Data

LEVY COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS
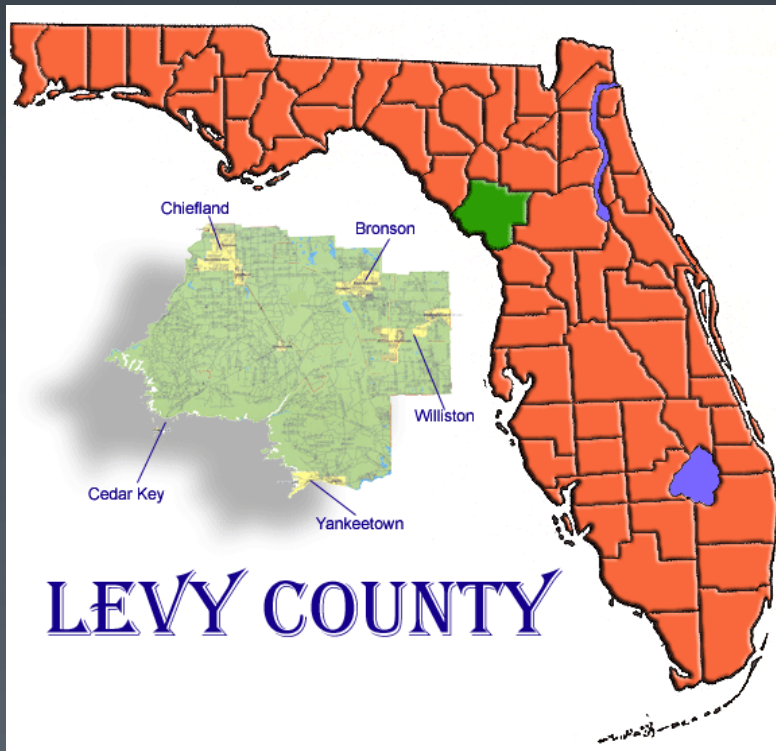
- **DEMOGRAPHICS**
  - small / rural
  - vast land coverage
  - 5 learning communities
  - 12 schools
  - 5,380 students
  - high poverty
  - growing homeless population
  - mobile student population
  - increasing mobility of teacher population
  - new and out-of-field
  - limited funding sources

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN LEVY COUNTY

- <u>ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS / ELLs</u>
- 200 ELLs / 4%
- 5 languages
- 96% Spanish-speaking
- 78% in grades KG-Grade 5
- secondary ELLs arrive late in their educational career
- identified as "high risk" due to achievement levels of ELLs

Levy County ELL Student Data

ELL Data Point	Scores
EL Graduation Rate	42.9%
Civics and US History (3 or higher)	33.3%
Science/Biology	18.2%
Mathematics	29.1%
ELA	20.6%
ACCESS 2.0 (proficient, 2017)	27%

TEACHERS PREPARED TO WORK WITH ELLS IN LEVY COUNTY

UNDER THE FLORIDA CONSENT DECREE

- Employs 323 teachers
- 172 elementary
- 151 secondary
- 18% turn-over rate
- 28 first time / new teachers
- 31 veteran teachers / new to the District
- 124 ESOL Endorsed
- 19 ESOL Certified
- 44% ESOL Endorsed/Certified
- 25 / 8% out-of-field (OOF) for ESOL
- 52 are in compliance for content-areas

STUDENT	Listen	Speak	Read	Write
A	6	4.8	2.4	3.3
B	5	2.8	3.6	2.8
C	6	5.8	3	3.9
D	4	2.5	2.8	3.7
E		5.8	3.5	3.8
F	4.5	6	3.7	3.9
G	5	3	3.9	4.3
H	2.7	1	1.9	1.7
I	5.9	5.7	4.5	3.5
J	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.6
K	3.5	4.6	3.9	4.1
L	2.8	2.4	2.1	3.1
M	5	5.4	5	3.9
N	4	4.3	4	3.6
O	4.9	4.8	4.6	4.1
P	5	4.8	3.9	3.9
Q	3	2.1	2.5	2.8
R	2.5	1.9	2.8	2.1
S	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.3
T	3.6	4.3	2.2	1.9
U	6	4.9	5.3	3.5
V	6	4.3	3.6	3.5
W	5	2.3	1.9	3.7

Levy County
ELL
ACCESS 2.0 English language proficiency data
(2016-2017)
[students of teachers in Project STELLAR]

What are some of the barriers to implementing WIDA in a small rural school district?

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2.
3.
4.
5.
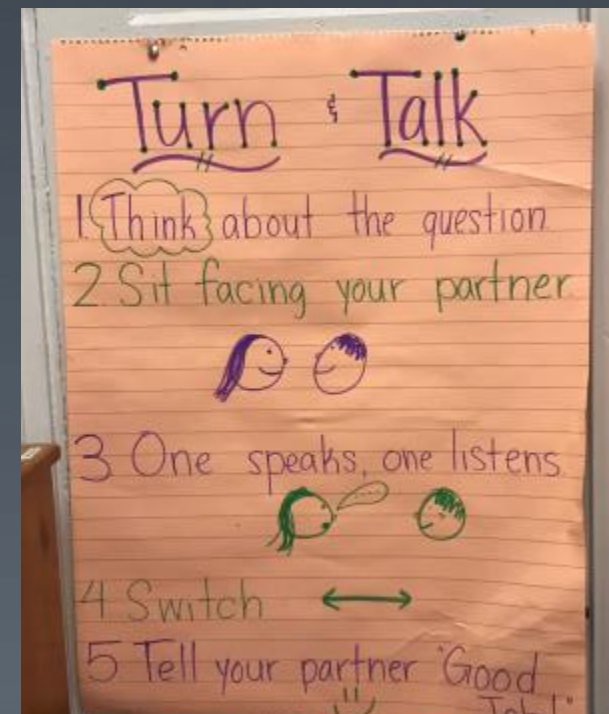
Part III: Project STELLAR: Levy County – University of Florida Partnership

LEA - University Partnership over the years

UF's School of Teaching and Learning – ESOL program

- 8 years with preservice teachers
- Bilingual paraprofessional professional development
- District / school PD on ELLs—methods and materials
- Ongoing family engagement
  - Including adult ESL in churches, schools
- Project STELLAR grant
  - National Professional Development grant from OELA 2016-2022

What is Project STELLAR?

❖ A five-year, National Professional Development grant from the US Department of Education to provide high quality professional development to teachers and educational leaders of English Language Learners (ELLs).

❖ STELLAR focuses on *rural* educators of ELs. Rural educators and EL families face challenges in geographic and social isolation, lack of access to services related to education, social programs, community connections.

❖ The grant will provide Professional Development to **96** educators from Levy County across two phases of engagement through **Communities of Practice.**

A main focus of the ESOL Methods course is to prepare educators for ELLs and to build WIDA into the district by preparing teacher-leaders (ESOL "specialists")

Project STELLAR Phases

- **Phase I (2017-18)** includes 24 educators and leaders of ELLs who will enroll in a six-course job-embedded teacher education program. Educators will have on-site support and coaching while taking six ESOL-leadership courses in the TLSI program (Teacher Leadership for School Improvement).

  - Guided Inquiry (Sum 2017)
  - **ESOL Methods (Fall 2017)* WIDA**
  - **Transforming the Curriculum***
  - Teaching in High Poverty Rural Settings
  - **Instructional Coaching for Enhanced Student Learning***
  - Teacher Leadership and School Change

Project STELLAR Phases

- **Phase II (2019-20)** includes 74 additional teachers and leaders (three for each Phase I participant) who will receive coaching support.
  - All participants receive stipends and academic credit from UF towards a Master's or advanced degree program.

- **Additionally, ELL families** participate in *talleres en español* around issues of:
  - Safety (food) and immigration*
  - Social services
  - English language learning
  - Parent engagement (learning about school, resources, roles of personnel)

- Participants in STELLAR rotate in evening programs to work with families.

Project STELLAR Logic Model
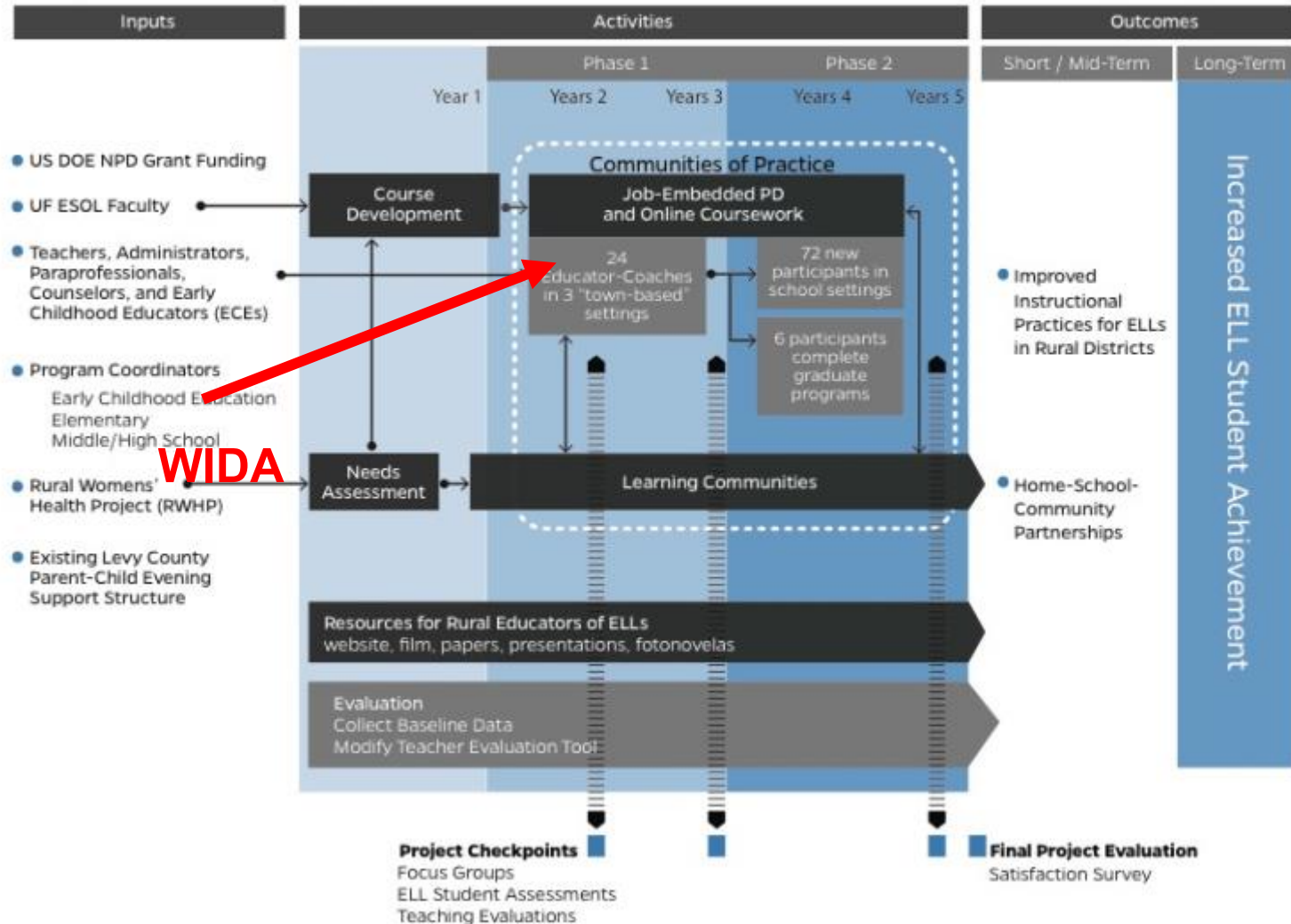
What are some of the challenges to implementing WIDA in a small rural district?

The Challenges of Rural, ELL Parent Engagement

What rural educators say about families

- Making them [multilingual parents and caregivers] not be fearful of coming to school for conferences or school events
- Fear of school reporting them as illegal or undocumented
- Families are constantly changing contact information; difficulty maintaining contact with them
- Language and culture barriers. We struggle to get families that trust us.
- Fear of the school environment and a sense of inability to help their offspring
- Fear of deportation [for undocumented families]
- How to make connections
- Predetermined misconceptions of one another and language barriers
- Lack of interpreters
- Locating previous health and educational records
- Communication barriers
- Getting to know families and their backgrounds
- Communication
- Educational expectations
- Reading out to parents
- Threat of being deported is affecting students in the classroom
- Fear of being different, not being accepted, and fear of their immigrant status
- Socio-political context
- If the parents don't speak English, I can't communicate concerns I have for their child

The Challenges of Rural, ELL Parent Engagement

What rural ELL parents say about schools

- **Challenges that multilingual families say they face:**
- Difficulty supporting my child's education
- Feeling safe
- Not being able to communicate with people in my new community
- Trust
- Anxiety
- Fear of deportation and child left abandoned. Also, not being prepared or having a plan to deal with immigration issues
- Providing for family on substandard or intermittent pay
- Not knowing whom to trust
- Lack of knowledge about transportation
- Financial concerns
- Having consistent employment
- Providing essentials (food, clothes, and medical)
- Lack of transportation, stable jobs, money
- Lack of education ourselves
- Lack of transportation [repeated by another adult]
- Inability to find resources that are friendly to our needs
- Having to have kids translate at the store, doctor, school
- Income
- Exclusion
- Economic difficulties
- Language

Turn and Talk

❖ Find a partner (or two)

❖ What themes do you see among the educator comments? The parent comments?

❖ What themes cut across both groups?
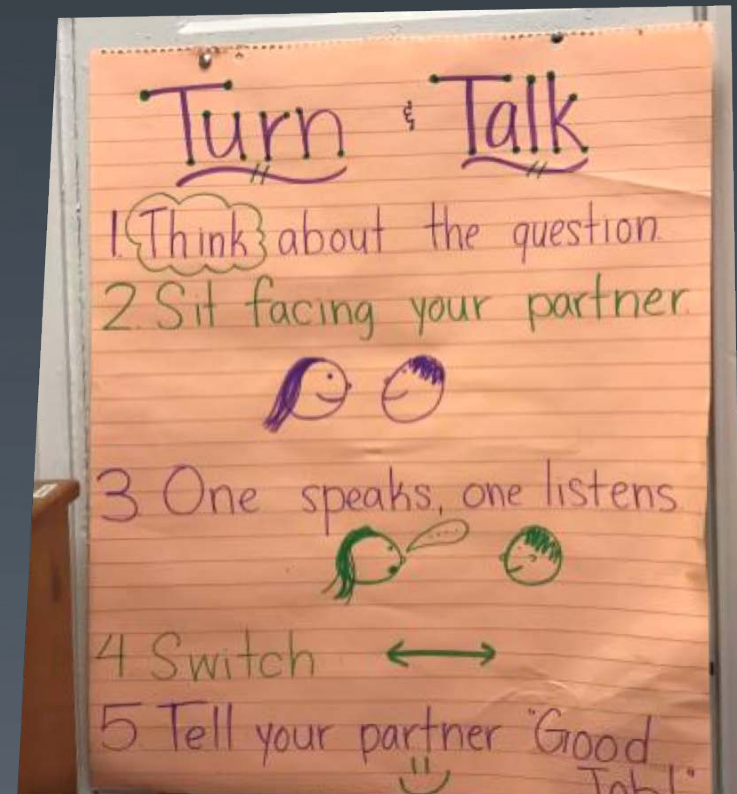
Research Design: Is this PD effective in improving ELL achievement outcomes?

Quasi experimental study that investigates the effectiveness of a job-embedded teacher preparation program. Our participants are intervention group; 17 teachers are comparison group.

Data include:

- ❖ Comparison group is 17 teachers and colleagues with similar demographic backgrounds (years of teaching, grade teaching, preparation [degree])

- ❖ ELL student data include WIDA ACCESS 2.0 ELP data, FSA data (grades 3 and higher), classroom observations

- ❖ Modified ELL-Danielson Observation Rubric, currently in validation (ELL teacher instructional effectiveness) / Domains 2 and 3 only

- ❖ *Years 1-2 benchmark data (2016-2018)*

Anticipated Outcomes of Project STELLAR

❖ **96 educators** of ELLs receive intensive preparation. About 6 from Phase I can continue to graduate coursework at UF (specialist credentialing)

❖ Increase in **teachers' effectiveness** to work with children and families that are English learning (EL-Danielson Observation protocol)

❖Increased student **achievement** of ELLs on ACCESS test (language proficiency) and FSA (student achievement test)

❖Increased **connections** between families-educators in Levy, e.g., communication and parent access to student learning

❖Increase in **professional networking** and engagement, including on-line website/ resource, on-site Communities of Practice, understanding of family functioning and engagement.

Modified Danielson-ELL Observation Rubric (in validation process)

Component	Unsatisfactory "ELL"	Developing/NI "ELL"	Effective "ELL"	Highly Effective "ELL"
3a: Communicating with students	Teacher does not communicate with ELLs. Examples include unclear communication or no communication of expectations for ELL learning; directions and procedures are unclear, confusing or nonexistent for ELLs; teacher language contains errors and/or is inappropriate or not adapted for ELLs' culture or linguistic background; does not seek out language support so that miscommunication and student misconceptions occur	Teacher infrequently or sometimes communicates/sometimes communicates effectively with ELLs. Examples include inconsistent and/or ineffective communication of expectations for ELL learning; directions and procedures are limited and/or sometimes unclear; explanations of content are clarified after initial confusion; typically does not seek out language support so that miscommunication and student misconceptions occur.	Teacher generally and effectively communicates with ELLs. Examples include clear expectations for ELL learning, including clear directions, and procedures; explanations are generally clear to ELLs and reflect students' cultures and linguistic development; teacher seeks out language support, which is generally responsive to learner needs/abilities, to ensure smooth communication; r generally seeks to reduce student miscommunication and misconceptions after problems occur.	Teacher consistently and effectively communicates with ELLs. Examples include clear expectations for ELL learning; including clear directions, and procedures for ELLs and the use of multiple languages; teacher seeks out language support to ensure smooth communication and proactively seeks to reduce student miscommunication and misconceptions.
3b: Using questioning and discussion techniques	Teacher does not use appropriate questioning and/or discussion techniques appropriate to ELLs' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Examples include little to no use of questions, wait time, sentence frames or starters, visual aids or grouping strategies	Teacher infrequently or sometimes uses limited questioning and/or discussion techniques appropriate to ELLs' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Examples include yes/no questions, known answers, one- word answers for all ELLs without considering linguistic proficiency; some/limited use of wait time, sentence frames/starters, visual aids and grouping strategies	Teacher generally and effectively uses questioning and/or discussion techniques appropriate to ELLs' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Examples include general use of questions across the stages of proficiency, wait time, sentence frames, visual aids, grouping. Techniques may align with WIDA (Can Do Descriptors, ELD levels).	Teacher consistently and effectively uses questioning and/or discussion strategies for ELLs. Examples include consistent use of questions across proficiency levels, wait time, modeling, sentence frames, visual aids, grouping, meta-linguistic and/or meta-cognitive techniques; techniques are aligned with WIDA (Can Do Descriptors, ELD levels).

STELLAR Teachers
(early observations with modified Danielson-ELL rubric)
## Domain 3 (instruction)

	Communicating with students	Using questioning and discussion techniques	Engaging students in learning	Using Assessment in Instruction	Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness	Total Domain 3
n	10	10	10	9	8	8
Mean	1.30	1.20	1.30	1.11	1.13	6.63

Addressing Rural Teacher PD and WIDA

- Rural educators are professionally isolated
  - STELLAR will establish an online resource website for rural educators to access as a professional sharing space (Fall, 2017) underscoring WIDA framework and shareable resources
  - Continue town-based Communities of Practice (Fall, 2017) to build local support network for educators using WIDA
- Rural educators are under-resourced
  - STELLAR is providing on-site resources (program coordinators, technology, coaching) for educators
- Rural educators must fill multiple roles
  - STELLAR is networking with community agencies (RWHP, immigration, health care) and providing interpretation, translation to support teachers, on-site coaching
- Rural EL families are socially isolated
  - STELLAR is building upon an existing student homework / parent involvement support structure to create a Parent Academy – *talleres* for parents (bilingual) with English language classes

Sharing Your Ideas

- Please take 3 minutes to share / compare or contrast this program with your WIDA professional development program, if you have one, with a colleague

- Share out how this program relates to your WIDA PD

- We welcome your suggestions, comments, and questions
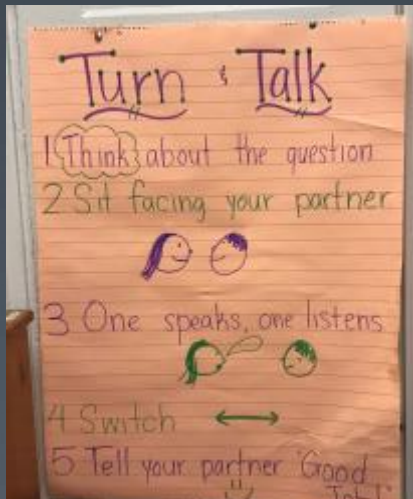
Ticket Out

- Take a 3 x 5 card

- Leave us with one suggestion that you have for implementing WIDA in a rural school district

- Please leave your card in the bag (back of room)

Thank you!
Maria and Valerie

Your feedback is valuable! Please complete a brief survey about this session on the WIDA conference mobile app.

Website and Resources

Levy County School Board
http://www.levy.k12.fl.us/

Project STELLAR (current site)
https://education.ufl.edu/esol/degrees/project-stellar/