Beyond Barriers, Toward Proficiency

MAFLA FALL CONFERENCE
October 29–30, 2027

Dear Colleagues,

I'm thrilled to introduce myself as MAFLA's President-Elect and Chair of the 2027 MAFLA Conference. My name is Evan Greenwald, and I am a Spanish teacher at Algonquin Regional High School, which serves the communities of Northborough and Southborough.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2026 conference, *Fostering a Sense of Belonging Through Multilingualism*. I extend special thanks to the 2026 Conference Chair, Katia Marticorena, and the MAFLA board for two days that reminded us how much stronger we are together, and how important it is to bring belonging to center stage in our work with language learners.

Our work continues with our theme for the 2027 conference: *Beyond Barriers, Toward Proficiency*. Throughout my career, I've seen that the students who face the most obstacles often make the greatest gains once the path to proficiency is clear. Barriers take many forms: scheduling conflicts, staffing shortages, assumptions about who belongs in a language class, students' fear of making mistakes, and how we design our lessons and assessments. Every learner can walk that path when we clear the way. Next October, we will dive into how to remove those barriers so that every student can grow.

Between now and then, I'd love for each of us to sit with four questions:

1. Who isn't in our language classes yet, and why?
2. What does growth in proficiency look like for every student?
3. Which barriers can be designed away before day one?
4. What opens access to every mode of communication?

Bring them to your department meetings, your PLCs, and your conversations with administrators. Then share your answers with us next fall.

Please join us on October 29 and 30, 2027, at the Wellsworth Hotel and Conference Center in Southbridge, MA. Our call for proposals is now open, and I hope you will share what is working in your classroom. Together, we can move beyond barriers and toward proficiency for every learner.

With gratitude,

Evan Greenwald
MAFLA President-Elect
2027 MAFLA Conference Chair